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SPR Reading Guidance



**Capacity Development in Support of the Strategic Grain Reserve
in Afghanistan**

Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of (AF)



World Food Programme

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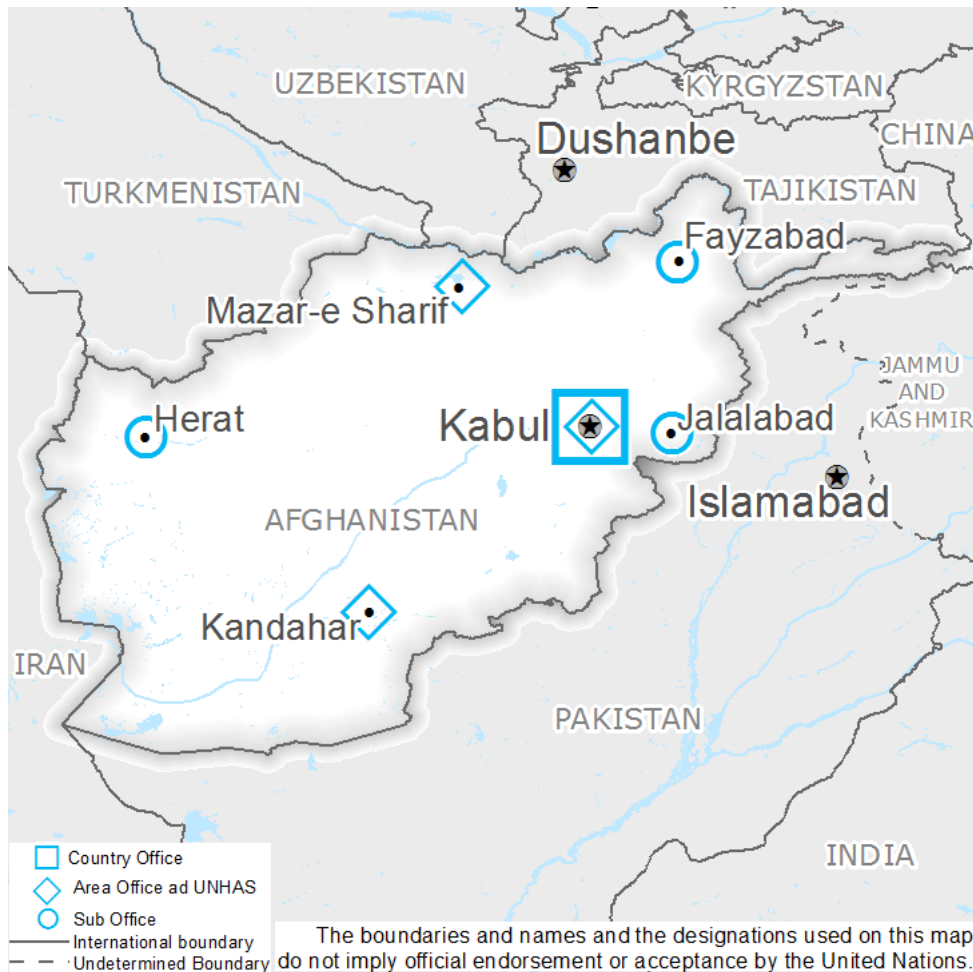
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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

After decades of war, and with ongoing conflict, Afghanistan ranks 171 out of the 188 countries in the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 2015. Afghanistan is a food-deficit country that relies on imports to meet national consumption needs. The long term complex emergency in Afghanistan is characterised by political and economic uncertainty alongside a dire security situation. The presidential elections in April 2014 resulted in political tensions that continue to threaten the National Unity Government. The country also experienced severe economic deterioration as a result of the loss of revenue from foreign military disengagement, and an ambitious return strategy which failed to secure large-scale remittances. This economic deterioration resulted in both 2015 and 2016 being characterised by the highest levels of in-country insecurity and military confrontation. This reality has been exacerbated by a period of political turmoil that resulted in a delay of the 2016 provincial elections.

According to the 2014 Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS), 3.4 million people are severely food insecure, which represents 12 percent of the total population. Another 5.9 million people (21 percent) are moderately food insecure, in a situation where they cannot sustainably cope with regular and repeated shocks – both natural and human-induced. Poor infrastructure, limited livelihood opportunities, food under utilisation, prevailing insecurity and intermittent market access continue to negatively impact household food security.

In terms of gender, the 2015 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index ranks Afghanistan as one of the most gender unequal countries globally. For example, gender inequity remains a major concern in education. According to the ALCS, the disadvantage of girls and women compared to boys and men is

reflected in a low school-life expectancy (5.6 against 9.5 years of expected education), low literacy rates (19 percent for adult women and 37 percent for female youth, against 49 and 66 percent for male adults and youth, respectively), and low attendance ratios for all levels of education (45 against 62 percent in primary education, 27 against 47 percent in secondary education and 5 against 13 percent in tertiary education).

Also, gender-based violence is a pervasive problem in Afghanistan. It stems from complex inequalities and cultural practices which, when aligned with poverty and lack of awareness, subordinate women to men and prevent them from acting on or receiving support. Studies by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) suggest that 87 percent of Afghan women experience at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological violence, and 62 percent experience multiple forms, in their lifetime.

Food utilisation is generally poor as a result of inadequate access to improved water and sanitation services and inappropriate young child feeding practices. According to the Afghanistan National Nutrition Survey (2013) the prevalence of all types of malnutrition is high (wasting is 9.5 percent, stunting 40.9 percent and underweight 25 percent) in children 0–59 months, which further compounds the food security situation. More than a quarter of all provinces (9 out of 34) have acute malnutrition rates above 15 percent, thus classifying them as being at emergency levels. The pregnancy-related mortality ratio in Afghanistan based on sibling histories was estimated to be 327 per 100,000 births for the seven years preceding the Afghanistan Mortality Survey (AMS) 2010. This means that for every 1,000 live births, it is estimated that about three women die during pregnancy, in childbirth, or in the two months after delivery.

Despite the successes of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Warsaw Summit on Afghanistan in July 2016, and the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016, where the international community pledged USD 15.2 billion in assistance for 2017-2020 for Afghanistan, the widespread consensus was that the political and security situation is not improving and may indeed be deteriorating. The international community continues to work with the Government to make major advances in reducing corruption so that donors can commit further.

In July 2016, the number of newly arriving undocumented Afghan returnees from Pakistan to eastern Afghanistan increased dramatically from an average of 10-15 families a day to around 300-400 families a day by the end of August. As a result of the application of stricter policies from the Pakistan Government towards both undocumented and documented refugees (those with the proof of registration cards (PoR)), accompanied by reports of intimidation and harassment, it is estimated that up to 263,000 undocumented returnees and 363,000 documented refugee returnees arrived in Afghanistan by the end of 2016. The sudden increase in returns took place against a backdrop of sustained high levels of conflict-induced internal displacement, with more than 400,000 newly internally displaced persons recorded across the country.

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

WFP Afghanistan began to support the process of the Afghanistan Zero Hunger Strategic Review in 2016. With support from the WFP Executive Director and the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, the former Vice President of Afghanistan agreed to be the Lead Convener. The Advisory Committee was convened in late November to launch the Review with the final report expected by May 2017.

The Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) was prepared with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP in 2012, but has not yet been signed by the President because of the lack of an operational strategy, implementation plan and budget. The AFSANA contains a policy statement by the Government, reaffirming its commitment to address the multiple determinants of hunger and malnutrition in a coordinated fashion; a comprehensive framework with a specific goal and targets, strategic priorities and fields of action; and coordination structures needed to overcome the interrelated challenges of food and nutrition insecurity.

The goal of AFSANA is to ensure that no Afghan suffers from hunger and every Afghan is well-nourished at all times. The strategic objectives are to: (i) assure the availability of sufficient food for all Afghans; (ii) improve economic and physical access to food, especially for vulnerable and food-insecure population groups; (iii) ensure a stable food supply over time and in disaster situations; and (iv) promote better diets and adequate food utilisation particularly by women and children.

There is agreement amongst key stakeholders in the Government and the United Nations that the Strategic Review will help to activate the AFSANA which will, become the foundation for operationalising the Strategic Review recommendations.

The current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2015-2019) is comprised of six pillars, of which WFP has added value to assist the Government in three: equitable economic development – support to

rural livelihoods and community asset creation; provision of social services on an equitable basis – programmes to treat moderate acute malnutrition of children and pregnant and lactating women are implemented through the Government's basic package of health services programmes at clinics across the country; and securing social equity and investing in human capital – vocational skills training to enhance workforce participation and school feeding that invests in the future of school-age children.

For disaster risk reduction (DRR), WFP is in the process of expanding joint programming with partner United Nations agencies. To bring coherence to DRR programming at the interagency level, WFP has established and leads the DRR Working Group under the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Asset creation for the most shock-prone and frequently food-insecure districts and communities has benefited from expanded strategic partnerships and joint programmes with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), FAO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, and the National Environmental Protection Agency.

WFP is the co-lead with FAO for the Food Security and Agriculture cluster under the Humanitarian Country Team and is an active member of the Nutrition Cluster. Humanitarian food security and nutrition activities are included in the Humanitarian Response Plan which is reviewed annually.

In 2016, emphasis has been put on knowledge exchange and capacity development in support of a Strategic Grain Reserve project, for which WFP has been in close coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

In 2016, the country office initiated budget revisions to its PRRO and special operations to realign them with the evolving situation and to be a more efficient partner of the Government through engagement with line ministries and United Nations counterparts. WFP strengthened partnerships with humanitarian and development actors, particularly with other United Nations agencies towards Delivering as One with the goal of achieving zero hunger in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 and 17.

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation: PRRO 200447 (2014-2018), approved budget USD 764 million, responded to the food security and nutritional needs of severely food-insecure people in Afghanistan. Assistance included general distributions (food and/or cash-based transfers) for internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, refugees, and those affected by conflict, natural disaster and economic stress; nutrition programmes through targeted supplementary feeding; school take-home rations; disaster risk reduction and asset creation, and vocational training activities. Under its Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme, WFP increased production and productivity, and promoted market development for smallholder farmers through the local purchase of fortified wheat flour.

Emergency Operation: IR-EMOP 201023 (September-November 2016), approved budget USD 1.3 million, allowed WFP to respond to the immediate food needs of the first large influx of Afghan refugee returnees from Pakistan, and also allowed for the necessary preparations and assessment to take place, which paved the way for an EMOP.

Emergency Operation: EMOP 201024 (2016-2017), approved budget USD 67 million, met the immediate food needs of documented and undocumented returnees as well as an unusually high number of conflict-affected IDPs, especially during the winter months of 2016. The EMOP also provided monthly food support to refugees from Pakistan who have settled in eastern Afghanistan.

Special Operation: SO 200635 (2014-2018), approved budget USD 14 million, provided support to the development of a Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR). The special operation was prepared in order to: 1) provide emergency food assistance to transitory food-insecure households; 2) support communities and farmers with storage facilities; 3) assist producers to secure fair prices at harvest times; and 4) contribute to domestic food price stabilisation. In order to achieve those objectives, the SGR special operation, P4P and PRRO projects work in tandem with the Government. In 2016, the WFP approach to SGR support was re-targeted in agreement with the Government, to focus on strategic grain mechanisms and budgets (capital to buy wheat grains and cover running costs).

Special Operation: SO 200870 (2016-2017), approved budget USD 33 million, enabled the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) has been providing safe and reliable passenger and cargo air services to the entire humanitarian community and remains the only service that provides an extensive air network in Afghanistan.

Trust Fund (2014–2017), approved budget USD 12 million, which began in December 2014 when WFP and the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a Letter of Understanding under which the Ministry would

provide USD 12 million through WFP to manage the activities of a United States-based non-governmental organization, Nutrition and Education Initiative, aimed at developing the soybean industry in Afghanistan. This project has since been implemented under the WFP P4P umbrella. In 2016, the activities were geared to develop further the soybean value chain by focusing more on processing and transformation and market sector developments, while continuing to support smallholder soybean farmers.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

The extensive increase in global humanitarian needs caused by outbreaks of various humanitarian crises in many parts of the world impacted the funding level of operations in 2016, which remained at unexpectedly low levels compared with the trends from previous years. This was especially true for the PRRO, which received less than half of the approved budget requirements for the year.

The launch of the EMOP, which had relatively better funding, had a somewhat adverse effect on the funding situation of the PRRO. Despite a substantial increase in the number of people requiring WFP assistance, the total funding available for Afghanistan remained limited. As a result, WFP prioritised nutrition activities, reduced ration sizes and further targeted the most vulnerable beneficiaries (this included up to 50 percent reduction in natural disaster and conflict-affected beneficiaries for two months, and a suspension in non-lifesaving activities, such as vocational skills training). These mitigation measures were for a limited period of time so as to better manage available resources, but such sporadic interruptions in WFP's interventions threaten to reduce the overall positive effect in Afghanistan.

Given the poor resourcing situation, WFP Afghanistan undertook a series of cost reduction actions: merging the country and Kabul area offices into a single compound, relocating the Kandahar and Mazar area offices in the warehouse compounds; and reducing fuel usage. As a result, the fixed costs for offices, warehouses and staff accommodations were reduced while fuel usage for vehicles and generators also decreased. In addition, thanks to appropriate office asset management practices, WFP was able to reuse office assets for the newly launched EMOP.

Human resources were managed through a structure and staffing review that was conducted in the middle of the year. The review resulted in a reduction in the overall number of staff from nearly 500 to 440 at the end of the year. Apart from a significant reduction in international staff positions, the greatest reduction in staff was in the area of logistics as a result of the decrease in cargo handling. At the same time, the number of drivers and support staff was reduced in Kabul as a result of consolidating the office and international staff residences into one location.

During the year, WFP explored possibilities to attract contributions from new potential donors. At the same time, the country office actively tried to assist donor organizations in humanitarian policy development at the country level. In addition, the country office continued consultation with various international organizations that could become partners in the future. These discussions aimed to create synergies among assisting agencies such as establishing a common database and sharing knowledge and new technologies for more coordinated assistance. These efforts are expected to lead to a positive funding trend in 2017.

Both current and newly acquired multi-year contributions greatly supported the operation during this period of funding shortage. The assurance of continuous funding through multi-year contributions helped WFP improve programme planning and provide timely food assistance. The need for longer term assistance is expected to grow in the coming years as the importance of the humanitarian development nexus is increasingly emphasized.

During the reporting period, budget revisions were approved for PRRO 200447, Special Operation 200635 and Special Operation 200870. For the PRRO and Special Operation 200870, the projects were extended in time, and budgets were increased. For Special Operation 200635, the timeline was extended only a few months while the budget was decreased.

Achievements at Country Level

WFP Afghanistan reached 3.5 million food-insecure and undernourished people in 2016, which was 96 percent of the plan as a result of operational and funding constraints.

The use of cash-based transfers (CBT) was expanded with the total transfer amount being 2.5 times larger than in 2015, which still represents a small share of the PRRO portfolio. WFP increased the number of service providers from one to four in order to cover different parts of the country and used different delivery mechanisms such as cash, electronic voucher and pre-paid cards. The joint CBT feasibility assessment was done in close collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's fund (UNICEF) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The improved coverage, system and knowledge will be a great asset to future CBT expansion in Afghanistan.

The corporate SCOPE platform (WFP's digital platform for beneficiary and transfer management) was launched through the EMOP in late 2016 but with a focus on registration only by the end of the year. Direct cash distributions were piloted in four locations of the country at the end of 2016 in order to plan for a scale-up in 2017. WFP's strategic expansion of cash-based transfer modalities has been aligned with the Government's prioritisation of more market-based responses. As the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, supported by the World Bank's Safety Net and Pensions Support Project (piloting unconditional cash transfer interventions), is starting to consider the development of social protection/safety nets programmes, WFP will support the strengthening of its capacities in this field with conceptual and technical support.

To improve targeting, the food security partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock have enhanced their engagement so as to improve the quality of data and assessments and have integrated their information systems to support decisions on targeting and response options, especially for medium-term and long-term food security interventions. This was achieved through applying extensive analysis using the latest multiple data sets and updated methodologies such as the Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS), Integrated Context Analysis (ICA), Seasonal Food Security Assessment (SFSA), and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

In the last quarter of the year, WFP piloted the use of remote data collection, through the mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) application, in order to monitor local food market conditions and conduct rapid assessments in eastern Afghanistan to gather information on the returnees and IDPs. It was also used for a rapid assessment of remote areas in the northern part of the country that were affected by conflict and winter weather (snow). The use of mVAM for monitoring activities will be expanded in 2017.

With the support of key donors, WFP purchased locally fortified wheat flour from commercial millers who were supported through the Afghanistan P4P programme on national fortification. Millers are required to source 40-50 percent of their wheat from local smallholder farmers. These millers were already involved in the national fortification programme as part of WFP's support to Afghanistan's National Nutrition Strategy to fortify flour for sale on the public markets with an aim to reduce micronutrient deficiency. As part of this programme, 27 large-scale flour millers around the country received training and equipment for fortification. In addition, a WFP food technologist conducted training on food safety systems such as the Good Manufacturing Practice and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point for millers enrolled in the programme. In order to increase awareness of the benefits of consuming fortified foods, the P4P unit supported the Ministry of Public Health to develop a communication and media campaign that was launched in the fourth quarter of 2016 in several provincial capitals. Additional support to the Ministry of Public Health was provided to establish national food safety standards and quality control protocols and to build their capacity for quality control and certification of locally produced foods. For instance, six food quality laboratory technicians were trained in basic food quality analysis and the necessary laboratory equipment were also provided. The Ministry is now capable of undertaking basic analysis for food quality and safety control, including micronutrient analysis (vitamin A and iron content), food composition analysis (protein, fiber, fat moisture and ash content) as well as some microbiology analysis.

The MAM treatment programme achieved its set targets with the exceptions of default rate and the reasons for this are explained under the section on results/outcomes. This achievement was made possible because the Public Nutrition Department of the Ministry of Public Health coordination structure included the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) working group, which provides political and policy direction to ensure that the sector is working towards achieving the basic package of health services (BPHS). The Ministry of Public Health BPHS cooperating partners received the Public Nutrition Department endorsed training on the management of acute malnutrition and on food management and handling. The cooperating partners also received, and are using, the IMAM field guide which was prepared by the IMAM working group based on the national IMAM protocol. All IMAM, including MAM, monthly statistical information is stored in a database housed at the Public Nutrition Department.



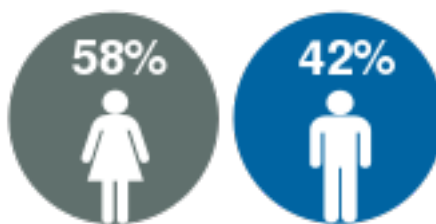
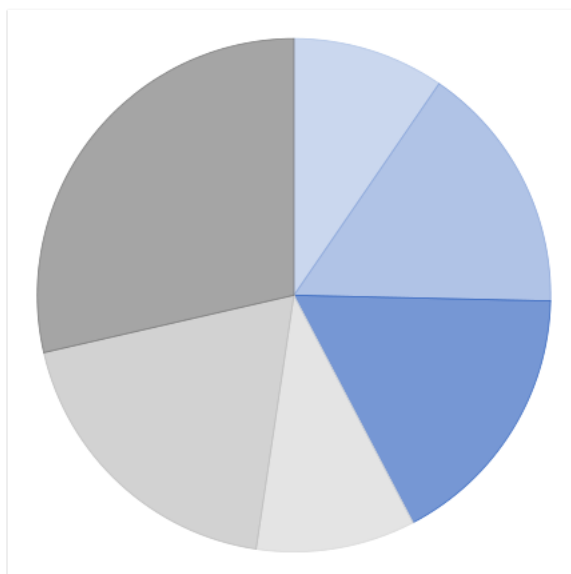
Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	335,194	351,910	687,104
Children (5-18 years)	553,130	667,660	1,220,790

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Adults (18 years plus)	594,353	1,001,834	1,596,187
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	1,482,677	2,021,404	3,504,081

Country Beneficiaries by Gender and Age

- Children (under 5 years)
- Children (5-18 years)
- Adults (18 years plus)
- Children (under 5 years)
- Children (5-18 years)
- Adults (18 years plus)



Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country EMOP	3,264	241	183	5	14	3,706

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country IR-EMOP	464	34	32	-	2	533
Single Country PRRO	54,082	7,698	6,687	1,439	462	70,367
Total Food Distributed in 2016	57,810	7,974	6,902	1,444	477	74,607

Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Single Country EMOP	143,878	-	-
Single Country PRRO	-	6,140,637	-
Total Distributed in 2016	143,878	6,140,637	-

Supply Chain

As a result of WFP's decision to use fortified wheat flour instead of grain in all food baskets, the amount of fortified wheat flour purchased locally increased significantly in 2016, thus increasing market supply demand from local smallholders and sellers. This increase was achieved by maintaining a commercial partnership with a national network of mills in Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad and Mazar-e-Sharif, developed to provide a stimulus to an important sector of the national economy.

WFP procured the majority of the food locally, mainly fortified wheat flour which represented 69 percent of the food basket in 2016, while 29 percent of food received in the country came from in-kind contributions or purchases from international markets. Only 2 percent was purchased regionally from Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Local purchases enabled WFP to respond to critical programme needs and winter pre-positioning with cost-effective purchases and short lead times. From an operational point of view, WFP Afghanistan drew significant benefits from these local purchases of wheat flour in terms of cost-effectiveness and reduced lead time when compared with that of international/regional purchases.

Following last year's improvement of the food supply chain in the southern corridor through Pakistan (Karachi Port) covering over 30 percent of WFP project food requirements, the Spinboldak transshipment warehouse (inside Afghanistan) was established. It is used to store and dispatch food in the western part of the country covered by Kandahar and Herat offices while the Jalalabad storage space was reinforced (10,000 mt storage capacity) to store and dispatch food for the eastern part of the country covered by Jalalabad, Kabul, Mazar and Faizabad offices.

WFP opened the northern corridor through Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in an effort to mitigate risks incurred by using only the Pakistan corridor, which eventually shortened the lead time for some commodities such as pulses. In addition, WFP Afghanistan agreed with WFP Tajikistan on the modality to serve the northern part of Badakhshan province from Tajikistan. For this purpose, cargoes were procured internationally and shipped through the Riga port in Latvia to Dushanbe in Tajikistan to cover winter pre-positioning for the northeastern region (Badakhshan districts). This mountainous area is not accessible from Afghanistan during the winter period. The food supply throughout the northern corridor represents only 1 percent of the overall food received in the country in 2016 under the PRRO. However, this corridor can scale up deliveries in case the Pakistan corridor encounters obstructions.

In order to urgently serve the needs of beneficiaries under the emergency response in the eastern provinces, assorted food items were borrowed from the PRRO for the IR-EMOP 201023, and also for the EMOP 201024, of which certain amounts have been repaid.

WFP continued to use both its own fleets and commercial transport companies for food deliveries. The usage of WFP's fleets remained at about the same level (35 percent) as in 2015. These fleets were concentrated mainly on

routes which required specialised vehicles because of difficult terrain, and were also used for relatively small tonnage deliveries to avoid high costs for the commercial companies.

Insecurity remained a challenge for food deliveries across the country in 2016, resulting in higher costs when routes had to be changed or food deliveries was kept on hold until movement restrictions were lifted.

Post-delivery losses in 2016 were minimal. The majority of incurred losses was caused by food diversions by anti-government elements in many insecure areas of Afghanistan. Better identification of safe transport routes through WFP access teams in the field offices and the contracting of high-performing transporters will be part of the continuous effort to minimise future losses.

With regard to the support for the entire humanitarian community in the country, as a lead agency for the Logistics Cluster, WFP continued providing storage and transport services to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as well as several NGOs, at full cost recovery through service-level agreements. Such cost recovery efforts amounted to USD 410,500 in 2016.

WFP pre-positioned assorted food items for over 188,000 beneficiaries in 60 priority districts in eight provinces between October and December 2016 in order to ensure that the required food was available for distribution to the beneficiaries in the areas that were likely to become inaccessible during the winter.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
High Energy Biscuits	121	-	121
Iodised Salt	2	509	511
Micronutrition Tablets	-	19	19
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	-	1,778	1,778
Split Peas	-	5,946	5,946
Vegetable Oil	-	3,611	3,611
Wheat Flour	66,055	230	66,285
Wheat Soya Blend	-	1,909	1,909
Total	66,178	14,002	80,180
Percentage	82.5%	17.5%	

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

The mid-term operation evaluation of the PRRO, which was concluded in late 2015, provided nine recommendations in programmatic and operational areas, pertinent to the operational and political context of Afghanistan. The evaluation offered a timely validation of the appropriateness of the WFP Afghanistan programme portfolio and strategic direction.

Actions implemented during 2016 as per the nine evaluation recommendations were as follows:

1. Prioritisation and targeting of activities—In response to reduced funding, programme activities in the approved PRRO budget revision were re-prioritised and the number of priority districts was reduced by more than half.
2. Development of an exit strategy—The exit strategy is under development through the ongoing Afghanistan National Zero Hunger Strategic Review and Country Strategic Plan (CSP) process.

3. Gender considerations—Women's involvement in asset creation increased in 2016 as a result of specifically designed activities for women, such as mushroom or pickle production and nursery; in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), WFP began work on a plan to introduce the safe markets model in 2017; and new gender indicators were developed and used as work began to improve the gender focus of skills training programmes.
4. Purchase for Progress (P4P) activities within the PRRO—Integration of P4P began in the second half of 2016 with full integration expected in the first quarter of 2017.
5. Working as One with UN partners—Some work was done in the area of joint and collaborative programming with United Nations partners, though actual delivery as one is yet to be achieved. Regarding joint programmes, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have selected the Samangan province of the northern region for a joint programme on building resilience among communities through the implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. The initial surveys were completed and both agencies agreed on the nature, scope and timeframe of the work. Technical and operational support to operationalise the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSANA) was included in the UNDAF action plan for 2016 as joint activities by WFP, FAO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and collaborative efforts continue.
6. Expanding funding opportunities—Towards the fourth quarter of 2016, WFP was expanding its donor base as a way to mitigate against reduced funding from the traditional donors in the future.
7. Use of Programme Assistance Team—WFP benefited from the internal audit recommendations in 2015 on the use of third party monitors which provided guidance for the way forward. Their performance is monitored and evaluated on an annual basis and their contracts were adjusted accordingly.
8. Improved communication with beneficiaries and communities—There was progress towards improving communication with beneficiaries, partners and field-based staff through the nutrition media campaign under P4P and strengthened engagement with the local authorities and communities in asset creation activities. WFP has improved its collaboration with the community development councils in the provinces to strengthen women's involvement in designing and implementing gender-sensitive asset creation such as home gardening and home-based nurseries. The compliance unit proactively monitored hotline calls and the issues raised by the beneficiaries through the calls were discussed and followed up in a monthly compliance committee meeting.
9. Data management—During 2016, the Country Office Tool for Managing (programme operations) Effectively (COMET) was rolled out in Afghanistan and used for programme management, capturing and reporting of programme data, as well as reconciliation with commodity movements captured under the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS). WFP plans to launch improved technology for mobile data collection and analytics (MDCA) in 2017, a newly developed data management system developed in the WFP regional bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

Motivated by the need to monitor 'people on the move' under the new EMOP, and supported by the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) team in Rome and the regional bureau, WFP Afghanistan piloted the use of the mobile VAM (mVAM) application for rapid food security and market assessments, enabling WFP to assist people in hard-to-reach areas, especially women. WFP continues to conduct mVAM surveys to monitor the market feasibility and functionality for cash-based interventions, and monitoring and emergency assessments of IDPs and returnees. The first mVAM pilot survey was conducted in October 2016 and by the end of the year, three rapid assessments were conducted in the conflict-affected districts in Faryab and Kunduz; one market monitoring survey in the capitals of Farah, Helmand, Kandahar and Urozgan provinces; and three assessments monitoring the food security and market situation in Laghman, Kunar and Kabul provinces, all areas with a high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees. The mVAM pilot was successful in terms of its relevance, accuracy and, most importantly, timeliness, as it informed emergency responses of both WFP and the humanitarian community.

In an environment characterised by increasing insecurity, accessing beneficiaries at the time when assistance is needed the most will continue to be a major challenge for WFP Afghanistan. In 2016, with facilitation from WFP global headquarters and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva, the country office conducted training for all of its access teams. This training resulted in the introduction of a systematic approach to manage access issues coupled with timely assessment of risks and management decision-making. This new approach improved WFP's reach to beneficiaries and credibility with partners and local authorities. In addition, cash-based transfers were deployed successfully on a number of occasions to overcome physical challenges of moving food, particularly in areas where markets continued to function despite the clashes and siege of population centres. These programmatic tools still need to be systematically used to overcome access constraints with forward planning to include contingency purposes.

Finding a way in — overcoming access constraints

Insecurity across the country remained a challenge for WFP programme delivery in 2016. The most insecure provinces with a high programme concentration included Helmand and Uruzgan provinces in the south, Kunduz and Baghlan in the north, Farah, Faryab and Badghis in the west, Khost, Paktya, Ghazni and Paktika in the southeast, the province of Ghor in the center of the country and Badakhshan in the northeast.

WFP Afghanistan foresaw the effect of insecurity at the launch of the PRRO late in 2013, when it was clear that the withdrawal of the NATO forces in 2014 would create a security vacuum in some parts of the country. In 2016 alone, some 15 districts across the country became totally inaccessible for WFP's partners, resulting in temporary or total suspension of food assistance, most notably nutrition and school meals programmes.

In order to adopt and overcome obstacles caused by insecurity and continue delivering the programme, WFP took the following additional measures:

1. **Organizational change to tackle access issues**—Measures in this respect included the formation and strengthening of field offices access negotiation teams, consisting of staff from programme, logistics and security functions. Similarly, the country office access working group was re-organized. In the new structure, the WFP Country Director is leading the effort to provide timely decisions and support for field offices. Also, terms of reference were developed for both groups to enable clear and timely directions.
2. **Capacity development in access negotiation**—In collaboration with WFP's global headquarters and a consultant from the International Red Cross Commission, a two-day formal training on access negotiation approaches was provided to 25 staff from the access negotiation teams of both the country office and field offices. The training aimed to equip frontline and other staff in the country office with a better understanding of how to approach access issues in a structured way, including tactical tools to maintain momentum in access negotiations for the longer term.
3. **Adaptation of programme modalities**—Programme modalities such as cash-based transfers were deployed to meet food needs, particularly in isolated areas where roads were blocked preventing food convoy movement, but where there were still functioning markets. The direct cash modality was also introduced to augment programme tools to circumvent physical access constraints and meet the food needs of beneficiaries in a timely manner;
4. **Cooperation with third party monitors**—In order to assess situations of food insecurity and ensure the accountability of WFP activities, WFP explored opportunities to cooperate with third party agents to conduct assessments and monitoring, and liaising with local authorities, especially in areas where WFP staff could not visit because of security constraints.

In summary, in 2016, the extreme challenges of accessibility resulted in the non-delivery or delay of WFP food assistance for 293,000 beneficiaries among the targeted 3.7 million beneficiaries. In terms of the volume of food, deliveries of 4,500 mt out of the total programmed quantity were either delayed or cancelled.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is cognizant of the country's humanitarian and development challenges including natural and man-made disasters inducing food insecurity. Aware of the efficiency and effectiveness of food reserves, and informed by studies conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Government devised a Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR) programme supported through the WFP special operation 200635. The objectives of the programme are to:

- Provide emergency food assistance to transitory food-insecure households;
- Support communities and farmers with storage facilities;
- Assist producers to secure fair prices at harvest times; and
- Contribute to domestic food price stabilisation.

Although the initial project objectives remained unchanged in 2016, the focus on infrastructure such as the storage capacity of 22,500 mt constructed in Kabul under phase I of the project, was reviewed and a new line of support was defined to: (1) stimulate production and productivity by providing both technical and marketing support to farmers, (2) provide technical support to the milling industry, and (3) use the SGR to regulate the market and to provide an immediate response capacity for natural disasters, crises and emergencies. WFP's approach was re-targeted in agreement with the Government to focus on strategic grain mechanisms and budgets (capital to buy wheat grains and cover associated running costs) and a completed SGR implementation project document was submitted to the Government in end-December 2015.

Government resourcing efforts are a critical factor for the successful implementation of the programme. The availability of sufficient resources from the Government to fund a sustainable SGR purchase strategy would support the rationale for continued investment in such large-scale storage projects.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	11,665,783
Direct Support Costs	1,520,362
Indirect Support Costs	923,030
Total	14,109,175

Project Activities

In the new phase of WFP's support to the Government, emphasis has been placed on knowledge exchange and capacity development to support the SGR. To this end, WFP held a number of meetings with the World Bank team as well as with the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock. WFP has also purchased store fitments, such as plastic pallets, fire extinguishers, stitching machines, moisture meters and gluten and protein test machines, at a cost of USD 600,000.

The World Bank has developed a USD 30 million project to be implemented in phases spanning a five-year period (2017- 2021), which involves the construction/rehabilitation of strategic nation-wide storages/silos and the replenishment of stocks of up to 40,000 mt of wheat. The project document has been reviewed to articulate WFP's engagement in supporting the capacity development of the Strategic Grain Reserve Agency as well as WFP's role and responsibilities in the project, e.g., structure design, engineering and supervision of the construction. The proposal is due to be presented for approval to the World Bank Board in early 2017.

With WFP's technical guidance, the Government has also finalised a purchase deal of 100,000 mt of wheat grain from Uzbekistan, in addition to the ongoing bilateral agreement with the Government of India for a donation of 130,000 mt of wheat grain out of the initial pledge of 170,000 mt. The difference in tonnage (between pledged and delivered quantities) will be translated into transport payment value from India to Chabahar port in Iran for onward transport to Herat (western part of Afghanistan), therefore opening a new corridor identified by WFP for this purpose. It is anticipated that the SGR will kick off with this initial stock capital of wheat grain from India and Uzbekistan, in line with the Government's aim to build a stock of up to 250,000 mt.

A number of government-owned silo facilities and flat stores are operational in the country with a combined capacity of approximately 235,000 mt, but none of the stores is currently operating to its full capacity. Silo facilities require a supporting capital injection to undertake necessary maintenance and refurbishment to achieve adequate levels of operational capability. These newly constructed assets can be utilised to their full potential once the Government has identified a viable strategy, including a funding option, to comprehensively sustain a strategic stock position. In support of the Government's efforts, WFP has been facilitating a strategic partnership with FAO and the World Bank.

Operational Partnerships

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank and WFP are working together to support the Government's SGR initiative in Afghanistan. WFP is tasked with the planning and designing of the bagged storage facilities and technical operational training. In addition, the World Bank and WFP are exploring the possibility of a formal agreement to extend the scope of the SGR to include scaled-up fortification and social safety nets for the food- and nutrition-insecure populations in Afghanistan. Such an agreement would pave the way for a strong WFP-World Bank partnership which could be expanded further in the region.

Results/Outcomes

In line with the aim of increasing marketing opportunities for producers and traders of food and other agricultural products at the national and local levels, according to the budget revision, WFP Afghanistan increased the amount of food purchased from national and local markets and smallholder farmers compared with previous years. The aim was to boost the SGR initiative, focusing on the project component: "stimulate production and productivity by providing both technical and marketing support to farmers". During this period, the food purchased from national and local suppliers amounted to 65,082 mt compared to the target of 60,000 mt, and the food sourced from smallholder Afghan farmers amounted to 26,033 mt over a target of 24,000 mt, and respectively accounted for 69 percent (against a target of 70 percent) and 35 percent (against a target of 40 percent) of the total food distributed by WFP in Afghanistan.

WFP also provided training to government counterparts, with a view to building national capacity in preparing for, assessing and responding to emergencies.

While good progress has been made in terms of immediate project objectives, the effect on the overall national emergency response capacity and domestic market price stabilisation of wheat grain and wheat flour will be evident only after the SGR is fully operational.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP/Hukomat Khan

Road block in Shatoo Mountain between Yakawlang and Panjaw district of Bamyan Province during food delivery in Central Highlands.

Project Indicators

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO1: Special Operation (Logistics)				
Number of equipment distributed	unit	14	14	100.0%
Number of government counterparts trained	individual	6	6	100.0%
Number of technical assistance activities provided	unit	1	1	100.0%