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Draft Nicaragua country strategic plan (2019–2023)

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Total cost to WFP	USD 66,815,944
Gender and age marker*	4

* <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-in-programming/gender-and-age-marker/>

Executive summary

In the last decade, Nicaragua has achieved sustained economic growth and social development with improving nutrition indicators making it one of the countries that has reduced hunger the most in the region. However, natural disasters, climate change, poverty and social and economic fragility still threaten the food security of the most vulnerable people, particularly those in rural and remote areas. Targeted and coordinated efforts are therefore needed in order to reach Sustainable Development Goal 2 on zero hunger.

Working in line with Nicaragua's national human development plan for 2018–2021, WFP will help to accelerate action towards the achievement of zero hunger. The five-year country strategic plan for 2019–2023 has the aim of tackling the underpinning causes of food and nutrition insecurity by promoting long-term solutions to hunger. At the same time, considering the persistent levels of poverty and vulnerability to food insecurity in the country, WFP will continue to provide direct assistance with a view to ensuring that the most vulnerable people have access to nutritious and adequate food, including during emergencies. In this work, WFP's added value lies in its capacity to operate at the humanitarian–development nexus.

Informed by the national zero hunger strategic review and consultations with government partners, the country strategic plan has four strategic outcomes, which address hunger gaps identified in Nicaragua:

Focal points:

Mr M. Barreto
Regional Director
Latin America and the Caribbean
email: miguel.barreto@wfp.org

Ms A. D'Aprile
Country Director
email: antonella.daprile@wfp.org

- Strategic outcome 1: People in targeted areas who are living in poverty or vulnerable to food insecurity have access to adequate nutritious food all year round by 2023.
- Strategic outcome 2: Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers in targeted areas benefit from sustainable food systems and have strengthened capacities to cope with shocks, climate change and natural hazards by 2023.
- Strategic outcome 3: National institutions have improved capacities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and to incorporate gender-transformative approaches into programmes, contributing to the achievement of zero hunger by 2023.
- Strategic outcome 4: Populations affected by shocks have access to adequate and nutritious food during and after an emergency.

For WFP, the country strategic plan represents a strategic shift towards new areas of collaboration, including climate change adaptation, resilience building and the pursuit of gender equality as a catalyst for zero hunger. WFP will also strengthen national social protection programmes and disaster risk reduction systems in order to improve the efficiency of food security and nutrition interventions. Consideration of nutrition issues will be integrated into all activities as a cross-cutting theme for ensuring the delivery of nutrition-sensitive responses.

The country strategic plan is aligned with the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) and contributes to Strategic Results 1 on access to food, 4 on sustainable food systems and 5 on capacity strengthening. It supports Nicaragua in the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17, working in partnership and coordination with the Government, United Nations agencies, academic institutions and other actors.

Draft decision*

The Board approves the Nicaragua country strategic plan (2019–2023) (WFP/EB.1/2019/6-A/7) at a total cost to WFP of USD 66,815,944.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

1. Country analysis

1.1 Country context

1. As a lower-middle-income country in Central America, Nicaragua has achieved increased human development and sustained economic growth over the past five years. This has been accompanied by reductions in the prevalence of poverty, which was about 30 percent (29 percent among women and 31 percent among men) in 2014, and extreme poverty, which was 8 percent (9 percent among men and 8 percent among women) in the same year.¹ However, low incomes, the predominance of informal employment, economic and social fragility, systemic gender inequalities, climate change and natural disasters continue to threaten food security. Nicaragua remains among the poorest countries in the region, with poverty affecting children under 17 years of age in particular. With a Gini coefficient of 0.47, Nicaragua has an unequal income distribution and ranked 124th of 189 countries in the 2017 Human Development Index. In addition, as the result of a surge in social instability, the country is now facing an economic downturn, which may lead to an increase in poverty and threaten the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people.²
2. With 6.4 million inhabitants (50 percent women and girls and 50 percent men and boys), Nicaragua has a large rural population accounting for 42 percent of the total. Disparities between urban and rural areas are significant: about 70 percent of poor people live in rural areas. Scattered and isolated rural communities face shortages of infrastructure and insufficient access to electricity, water and sanitation. Poverty rates are also high in the central area and the Northern and Southern Autonomous Atlantic Caribbean Regions (RACCN and RACCS).³ Indigenous groups, including Mayagna, Miskito, Rama, Kriol and Garifuna, account for 9 percent of the population and have historically suffered from lower levels of development.⁴
3. Nicaragua ranks 6th on the Global Gender Gap Index as a result of improvements in women's political participation and access to secondary education.⁵ However, challenges remain regarding gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment. Nicaragua also presents one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the Latin America and Caribbean region. As a result, it ranks 106th on the Gender Inequality Index.⁶ In addition, 37 percent of households are headed by women, which has implications for the women's paid and unpaid labour and by adding to their economic and caring responsibilities.

¹ National Institute for Development Information (Instituto Nacional de Información de Desarrollo, or INIDE). 2014. *Nicaragua living standards measurement survey 2014 (Encuesta de Medición de Nivel de Vida 2014)*. Available (in Spanish) at <https://www.ilo.org/surveydata/index.php/catalog/1618/study-description>. An update of the Nicaragua living standards measurement survey indicates that poverty prevalence declined to 25 percent in 2016, but no data disaggregated by sex and age are available. INIDE. 2016. *Report on Poverty and Inequality (Reporte de Pobreza y Desigualdad)*. Available (in Spanish) at <http://www.inide.gob.ni/Emnv/Emnv17/Reporte%20de%20Pobreza%20y%20Desigualdad%20-%20EMNV%202016%20-%20Final.pdf>.

² Central Bank of Nicaragua. 2018. *BCN President presents updated projections (Presidente del BCN expone proyecciones actualizadas)* (https://www.bcn.gob.ni/divulgacion_prensa/notas/2018/noticia.php?nota=808).

³ INIDE. 2014. *Nicaragua living standards measurement survey 2014 (Encuesta de Medición de Nivel de Vida 2014)*. Available at <https://www.ilo.org/surveydata/index.php/catalog/1618/study-description>.

⁴ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). 2010. *Indigenous Peoples in Latin America* (<https://www.cepal.org/en/infografias/los-pueblos-indigenas-en-america-latina>).

⁵ World Economic Forum. 2018. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*. Available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2018. *Gender Inequality Index 2017*. See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>.

4. Located in a hotspot for natural disasters and climate change, Nicaragua ranks fourth among the world's countries that have been most affected by natural events over the last 20 years⁷ and is 14th among the countries at highest risk because of its low coping capacity.⁸ Recurrent earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and droughts, coupled with environmental degradation threaten the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people, who lack the resources to withstand shocks. In the last 45 years, 14,500 human lives and about USD 4.5 billion have been lost to natural disasters.⁹

1.2 Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 2

Progress on SDG 2 targets

5. *Access to adequate food all year.* Food supply has been improving in Nicaragua, with the daily caloric intake per person increasing from 1,774 kcal in 1990–1992 to 2,649 kcal in 2014–2016.¹⁰ A lack of access to nutritious food continues to be a main driver of food insecurity, however, particularly for poor and extremely poor people, whose daily energy intakes are well below the national average, 2,080 kcal for poor people and 1,655 kcal for extremely poor people. In rural areas, diets comprise only 15 food products, compared with 24 in urban areas.¹¹ Lack of food access is related to socio-economic constraints, including poverty, low incomes, limited education and lack of employment, which have different effects on women and men and on people in different age groups. While the richest quintile of the population accounts for 41 percent of total consumption,¹² the minimum salary is not sufficient to cover the cost of a basic basket of food and non-food items. The agriculture sector has the lowest minimum wage, which covers only 28 percent of the basket and 43 percent of its food content. Although the Government guarantees food availability from domestic production and food imports, food prices are volatile. In rural areas, access to food is further impaired by the uneven geographical distribution of and poor access to markets.¹³ Despite recent improvements, Nicaragua's road infrastructure is among the poorest in the region, particularly in RACCS and RACCN.¹⁴
6. *End all forms of malnutrition.* Nicaragua is among the countries of the region that have reduced hunger the most since the 1990s. During this period, the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies decreased significantly, and the number of undernourished people went down from 2.3 million to 1 million, aided by food fortification and social

⁷ Germanwatch. 2017. *Global Climate Risk Index 2018*. See <https://germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/publication/20432.pdf>.

⁸ United Nations University. 2016. *World Risk Report 2016*. Available at https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:5763/WorldRiskReport2016_small_meta.pdf.

⁹ National Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Awareness System (Sistema Nacional para la Prevención Mitigación y Atención de Desastre, or SINAPRED). 2015. *National Integrated Disaster Risk Management Policy 2015–2016 (Política Nacional de Gestión Integral de Reducción del Riesgo ante Desastres 2015–2016)* (not available online).

¹⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2015. *Regional Overview of Food Security: Latin America and the Caribbean*. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4636e.pdf>.

¹¹ Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (Instituto de Nutrición de Centroamérica y Panamá. 2011. *Analysis of the food situation in Nicaragua (Análisis de la Situación Alimentaria en Nicaragua)*. Available at http://www.incap.int/index.php/es/publicaciones/doc_download/661-nicaragua-informe-analisis-de-situacion-alimentaria

¹² INIDE. 2016. *Report on Poverty and Inequality (Reporte de Pobreza y Desigualdad)*. Available (in Spanish) at <http://www.inide.gob.ni/Emnv/Emnv17/Reporte%20de%20Pobreza%20y%20Desigualdad%20-%20EMNV%202016%20-%20Final.pdf>.

¹³ General Directorate of Rural Development and Forestry (Dirección General de Desarrollo Rural y Política Forestal). 2009. *Política de Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria y Nutricional desde el Sector Público Agropecuario y Rural*. Available at <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/sites/default/files/NIC%20Pol%C3%ADtica%20SSAN%20Sector%20Agropec.pdf>.

¹⁴ Inter-American Development Bank. 2017. *Approach Paper: Nicaragua 2013–2017 Country Program Evaluation*. Available at <https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/8623/Approach-Paper-Country-Program-Evaluation-Nicaragua-2013-2017.PDF?sequence=7>.

protection programmes. The prevalence of chronic undernutrition is still 17 percent (18 percent among boys and 16 percent among girls), however, and reaches 28–30 percent in Madriz, Nueva Segovia and Jinotega departments.¹⁵ Overweight and obesity are also increasing: overweight affects 51 percent of women, 41 percent of men and 8.5 percent of children under 5.¹⁶ This double burden of malnutrition can be associated with inadequate nutrition practices, lack of dietary diversity and poverty.¹⁷ Anaemia affects 10.5 percent of children under 5 and 1.5 percent of women and girls aged 15–49 years.¹⁸ Other issues affecting nutrition are poor sanitary conditions, which compromise food utilization. In addition, only 32 percent of mothers exclusively breastfeed for the first six months of their children's lives.¹⁹

7. *Double agricultural productivity and the incomes of smallholder farmers.* Agriculture is the primary livelihood for 80 percent of the rural population and contributes 17 percent of gross domestic product.²⁰ Together with the fishing sector, agriculture engages 30 percent of the employed population, which is double the regional average.²¹ Medium-scale and smallholder farmers generate 90 percent of the staple food consumed in the country and half of the agricultural exports. However, farmers' production is constrained by gender inequalities, climate variability, environmental degradation, isolation and limited access to agricultural services.²² Of Nicaragua's total agricultural area, only 6 percent is irrigated.²³ Smallholder farmers' lack of financial resources for investments result in high post-harvest losses and low integration of the farmers into formal markets. Women farmers represent only 7 percent of the people directly employed in primary production agriculture²⁴ and tend to perform non-paid tasks, including domestic work. Although they carry out agricultural labour, they are not recognized as agricultural workers and have little access to inputs, services and

¹⁵ INIDE and Ministry of Health. 2014. Nicaragua Demographic and Health Survey 2011–2012 (Encuesta Nicaragüense de Demografía y Salud 2011–2012).

Available at

http://www.inide.gob.ni/endesa/Endesa11_12/HTML/endesa11/assets/common/downloads/Informepreliminar.pdf.

¹⁶ El 19. 2017. *Rosario disclosed national census data (Rosario da a conocer algunos datos del censo nutricional)* (<https://www.el19digital.com/articulos/ver/titulo:56717-rosario-da-a-conocer-algunos-datos-del-censo-nutricional>).

¹⁷ General Directorate of Rural Development and Forestry (Dirección General de Desarrollo Rural y Política Forestal). 2009. *Política de Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria y Nutricional desde el Sector Público Agropecuario y Rural*. Available at <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/sites/default/files/NIC%20Pol%C3%ADtica%20SSAN%20Sector%20Agropec.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ministry of Health. 2011. Integrated System for Nutrition Intervention Monitoring: 2010 Advance Results (Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia de Intervenciones Nutricionales: *Avance de Resultados 2010*). (Not available online.)

¹⁹ INIDE and Ministry of Health. 2014. *Nicaragua Demographic and Health Survey 2011–2012: Preliminary Report (Encuesta Nicaragüense de Demografía y Salud 2011–2012: Informe Preliminar)*. Available at http://www.inide.gob.ni/endesa/Endesa11_12/HTML/endesa11/assets/common/downloads/Informepreliminar.pdf.

²⁰ World Bank. 2015. *Agriculture in Nicaragua: performance, challenges, and options*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/532131485440242670/Agriculture-in-Nicaragua-performance-challenges-and-options>.

²¹ Central Bank of Nicaragua. 2017. 2017 Annual Report (Informe Anual 2017). Available at https://www.bcn.gob.ni/publicaciones/periodicidad/anual/informe_anual/Informe%20Anual%202017.pdf.

²² World Bank. 2015. *Agriculture in Nicaragua: performance, challenges, and options*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/532131485440242670/Agriculture-in-Nicaragua-performance-challenges-and-options>.

²³ Inter-American Development Bank. 2016. *Assessment of the situation and potential of the irrigation sector in Nicaragua (Diagnóstico sobre la situación y potencial del sector riego en Nicaragua.)* Available (in Spanish) at <https://publications.iadb.org/bitstream/handle/11319/7766/Diagnostico-sobre-la-situacion-y-potencial-del-sector-riego-en-Nicaragua.pdf?sequence=1>.

²⁴ World Bank. 2015. *Agriculture in Nicaragua: performance, challenges, and options* (<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/532131485440242670/Agriculture-in-Nicaragua-performance-challenges-and-options>).

decision-making power.²⁵ Women own 23 percent of landholdings.²⁶ In this context, reaching the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target on doubling productivity and the incomes of smallholder farmers will require targeted and gender-transformative interventions.

8. *Sustainable food systems.* Despite the vast availability of natural resources, Nicaragua is a food-deficit country.²⁷ Recent increases in productivity are associated with the unsustainable expansion of the agricultural frontier. Food production and sustainable food systems are constrained by climate variability, climate change, natural disasters and degradation of ecosystems.²⁸ Projections indicate that climate change will reduce agricultural productivity by between 9 and 13 percent by 2100.²⁹ Altogether, these phenomena have different effects in Nicaragua's different climate zones. In the Atlantic area, floods and hurricanes have negative effects on indigenous populations and on settlements along riverbanks, while farming households in the Dry Corridor face water scarcity and droughts. Since 1961, Nicaragua has had 13 years of moderate or severe El Niño events, increasing in intensity and frequency in recent years,³⁰ with an estimated 45 percent of the population being affected by dry spells that cause losses in agricultural production.³¹ At times of scarcity, low-income households adopt negative coping strategies such as reducing their food intake and removing children from school. Climate change is known to exacerbate poverty and reinforce existing inequalities between women and men.

Macroeconomic environment

9. During the period from 2012 to 2017, Nicaragua achieved sustained economic growth, averaging 5 percent per year, making it one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America and the Caribbean,³² despite having the second lowest per capita gross domestic product.³³ The growth was accompanied by increasing public spending and social programmes oriented towards long-term development rather than crisis control.³⁴ However, Nicaragua is now entering an economic downturn, with signs of economic recession, prompted by waves of civil unrest that started in April 2018. Growth projections have been revised down from 4.5–5 percent to 1 percent, and the unemployment rate is rising.³⁵ Public

²⁵ WFP. 2014. *Study on gender empowerment and gender based violence in the context of WFP's P4P Programme in Nicaragua.* (Not available online.)

²⁶ INIDE. 2012. *Fourth National Agricultural Census: Final Report (IV Censo Nacional Agropecuario: Informe Final).* Available at <http://www.inide.gob.ni/Cenagro/INFIVCENAGRO/IVCENAGROINFORME/assets/basic-html/page9.html>.

²⁷ FAO. 2018. *Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries – List 2016* (<http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/lifdc/en/>).

²⁸ FAO. 2012. *Análisis de la cadena de valor del frijol rojo y negro en Nicaragua con enfoque de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional.* https://coin.fao.org/coin-static/cms/media/14/13540579183450/libro_frijol_30-07-2012-2.pdf.

²⁹ Government of Nicaragua. 2018. *Presentación de la Política Nacional de Mitigación y Adaptación al Cambio Climático del Gobierno de Nicaragua.* (Not available online.)

³⁰ Solorzano, J.L., Cuadra, O.N., Guarrero, R.A. and Castillo, J.B. 2016. *Perspectivas sobre la seguridad alimentaria en Nicaragua en el contexto del cambio climático.* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315610820_Perspectivas_sobre_la_seguridad_alimentaria_en_Nicaragua_en_el_contexto_del_cambio_climatico_Reflexiones_y_propuestas.

³¹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. 2008 and 2010. *Nicaragua: Climate Change Effects on Agriculture (Efectos del cambio climático sobre la agricultura).* Available at <https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/25925/1/lcmexl964.pdf>.

³² Executive Secretary: Central American Monetary Council (Secretaría Ejecutiva del Consejo Monetario Centroamericano). 2018. *Statistics, Real Sector* (<http://www.secmca.org/simafir.html>).

³³ World Bank 2018. *GDP per capita* (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>).

³⁴ FAO. 2015. *Regional Overview of Food Insecurity: Latin America and the Caribbean 2015.* Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4636e.pdf>.

³⁵ BCN President presents updated projections (Presidente del BCN expone proyecciones actualizadas) (https://www.bcn.gob.ni/divulgacion_prensa/notas/2018/noticia.php?nota=808).

finances have been negatively affected and the fiscal deficit is expected to widen as a result of lower tax revenues.

Key cross-sector linkages

10. In the past, Nicaragua was characterized by gender inequalities and patriarchal social constructs. While progress has been made, with almost half of national parliamentarians being women, only 50.3 percent of women are formally employed, compared with 84 percent of men.³⁶ In addition, women tend to be relegated to lower-skilled jobs and have lower incomes. In rural areas, women's exclusion is greater and social norms hinder women's access to land and resources. Gender-based violence is considered a public health issue affecting women and girls under 13 years in particular, with high rates of intra-family and intimate partner violence.³⁷
11. Low educational attainment and food insecurity are interrelated: chronic undernutrition affects 31 percent of the children under 5 whose parents lack formal education, compared with 6 percent among those whose parents have higher education.³⁸ The national primary school enrolment rate is 94 percent and is equal for boys and girls, but in indigenous and remote areas, such as RACCN and Jinotega, schooling averages only three to five years. Enrolment rates are a challenge for preschools, at 65 percent, and secondary schools, at 82 percent.³⁹ The reasons for non-enrolment, absenteeism and dropout differ: for boys, they tend to include involvement in farm work and income generation, while for girls, reasons include involvement in childcare, housework and farming and pregnancy.⁴⁰
12. While Nicaragua has reduced the rates of maternal and infant mortality,⁴¹ the prevalence of boys and girls with low birth weight has increased slightly, to about 10 percent. Among the top three chronic diseases affecting health are hypertension and diabetes, associated with dietary behaviour. A significant proportion of children under 5 are affected by respiratory and diarrhoeal diseases, particularly in rural areas with limited access to safe water and poor sanitary conditions.⁴² Overall, 20 percent of households have insufficient access to such services and the figure is almost six times higher in rural areas than urban centres.⁴³

1.3 Hunger gaps and challenges

13. Informed by the national zero hunger strategic review and consultations with the Government, WFP identified a set of areas where improvement is needed in order to achieve zero hunger:

³⁶ UNDP. 2018. Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf.

³⁷ Supreme Court of Justice (Corte Supremo de Justicia). 2016. *National Study on Gender-Based Violence (Estudio Nacional Sobre la Violencia de Género)*. Not available online.

³⁸ INIDE and Ministry of Health. 2014. Nicaragua Demographic and Health Survey 2011–2012 (Encuesta Nicaragüense de Demografía y Salud 2011–2012). Available at http://www.inide.gob.ni/endesa/Endesa11_12/HTML/endesa11/assets/common/downloads/InformePreliminar.pdf.

³⁹ Nicaraguan Institute for Social Security (Instituto Nicaragüense de Seguridad Social). 2016. *Statistical Annual (Anuario Estadístico)* https://www.inss.gob.ni/images/anuario_estadistico_2016.pdf.

⁴⁰ WFP. 2014. *Study on gender empowerment and gender-based violence in the context of WFP's P4P programme in Nicaragua*. Not available online.

⁴¹ El 19. 2017. *Nicaragua reduces maternal mortality (Nicaragua reduce la mortalidad materna)* (<https://www.el19digital.com/articulos/ver/titulo:57078-nicaragua-reduce-la-mortalidad-materna>).

⁴² INIDE and Ministry of Health. 2014. *Nicaragua Demographic and Health Survey 2011–2012: Preliminary Report (Encuesta Nicaragüense de Demografía y Salud 2011–2012: Informe Preliminar)*. Available at http://www.inide.gob.ni/endesa/Endesa11_12/HTML/endesa11/assets/common/downloads/InformePreliminar.pdf.

⁴³ INIDE. 2016. *Unsatisfied Basic Needs: Continuing Household Survey 2009–2016 (Necesidades Básicas Insatisfechas: Encuesta Continua de Hogares 2009–2016)*. Available at <http://www.inide.gob.ni/ECH/Modulo%20de%20Vivienda%20-%20ECH%202009%20-%202016%20NBI%20FINAL.pdf>.

- Nicaragua has policies in place for protecting food and nutrition security, but their implementation is hampered by funding constraints and limited institutional capacity. For instance, the rice fortification norm has not yet been implemented; interventions focus on undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, but do not consider obesity and overweight; and there is a need to tackle the double burden of malnutrition.
- The strategic review showed that social protection programmes would benefit from greater coordination among institutions and the creation and use of a comprehensive beneficiary registry. There is need for more evidence in order to inform assessments of the impact of programmes, as monitoring mechanisms tend to focus on output data. Increased use of evidence in informing decision making would facilitate the design of programmes that meet the needs of women and men of all age groups more effectively, including during emergencies.
- Some of the main challenges that Nicaragua faces in reaching zero hunger are related to climate change, climate variability and extreme weather events but individuals and institutions have insufficient resources for addressing climate risks. There is a pressing need to promote climate-resilient livelihoods and disaster risk reduction.
- Persistent gender inequalities affect rural areas in particular and hinder women's economic and social advancement and their role in agricultural production. This calls for increased understanding of the relationship between gender equality and food security, and transformative action aimed at reducing inequalities.

1.4 Country priorities

Government

14. This country strategic plan (CSP) was designed with the aim of accelerating Nicaragua's progress towards SDG 2. It supports implementation of the national human development plan for 2018–2021,⁴⁴ which paves the way for achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda, the food and nutrition security and Sovereignty law and the 2009 food security and nutrition policy.⁴⁵ The right to food is safeguarded in the 1987 Constitution as an obligation of the state.
15. The national human development plan promotes inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Its main pillars are socio-economic development; gender equality; agricultural production, particularly by medium-scale and smallholder farmers; environmental sustainability; and disaster risk reduction. In 2018, Nicaragua launched a national climate change policy, reflecting the urgency of tackling the impacts of climate change. Promoting gender equality is a core pillar of the national human development plan and a cross-cutting priority of the national food and nutrition security policy. It is also highlighted in Nicaragua's law on equality of rights and opportunities.
16. To reach its development targets, the Government implements social protection programmes that cover the lifecycle and include "Love for the Youngest", mother and infant homes and the national school feeding programme. Nicaragua's annual national production, consumption and commerce strategy fosters the development of the productive sector. Productive social protection programmes, such as the zero hunger programme, home

⁴⁴ Government of Nicaragua Ministry of the Presidency (Gobierno de Nicaragua – Secretaria de Presidencia de la República). 2017. *Pillars of the National Human Development Programme 2018–2021* (Ejes del Programa Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2018–2021). Available at <https://www.el19digital.com/app/webroot/tinymce/source/2018/00-Enero/Del22al28Enero/Viernes26Enero/EJES%20DEL%20PROGRAMA%20NACIONAL%20DE%20DESARROLLO%20HUMANO.pdf>.

⁴⁵ General Directorate of Rural Development and Forestry (Dirección General de Desarrollo Rural y Política Forestal). 2009. *Política de Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria y Nutricional desde el Sector Público Agropecuario y Rural*. Available at <https://extranet.who.int/nutrition/gina/sites/default/files/NIC%20Pol%C3%ADtica%20SSAN%20Sector%20Agropec.pdf>.

gardens (Patio Saludable) and the zero usury programme support family farming and prioritize assistance for women.

United Nations and other partners

17. During implementation of the CSP, WFP aims to strengthen its collaboration with other United Nations agencies. Currently, United Nations agencies coordinate their efforts in inter-agency groups that support Nicaragua in the attainment of the SDGs and focus on early childhood development and food security; human rights, gender issues and relations among people of different cultures; HIV; disaster risk reduction; emergency response; value chains; and implementation and monitoring of activities aimed at achieving the SDGs.

2. Strategic implications for WFP

2.1 WFP's experience and lessons learned

18. The mid-term evaluation of country programme 200434 (2013–2018),⁴⁶ internal assessments, consultations with beneficiaries, regional reviews and a scoping exercise for resilience building interventions in the Dry Corridor provided lessons for guiding WFP's future direction. These exercises found WFP's previous portfolio to be pertinent and effective, particularly its school feeding activities and support for smallholder farmers, and provided recommendations that informed the design of the CSP:
 - The mid-term evaluation included a recommendation for revisiting the resilience building approach, which had not been followed as planned and could be more effective if integrated with support for smallholder farmers. It was also suggested that alternative nutrition interventions be adopted in order to ensure outcomes at scale.
 - WFP's disaster risk reduction activities have been recognized as good practices, enabling WFP to build a constructive partnership with the national system for disaster prevention, mitigation and response (SINAPRED). Building on the foundation that has been established in recent years, the CSP creates an opportunity to broaden the collaboration into strategic areas of work such as climate risk management and resilience building for food security. WFP's support for national shock-responsive social protection programmes, such as the school feeding programme, also constitutes a positive experience in the region, giving WFP the potential for delivering quicker and more efficient responses before, during and after crises through tested administrative systems.
 - The mid-term evaluation encouraged the continuation of gender assessments, such as the one that informed WFP's support to smallholder farmers, recalling the importance of gender-transformative approaches in programming.

2.2 Opportunities for WFP

19. Building on these advantages, WFP is in a strong position to support Nicaragua in the following areas:
 - WFP will work on the strengthening of social protection programmes with a view to fostering food security by promoting gender- and nutrition-sensitive approaches that address the double burden of malnutrition and promote behaviour change.
 - WFP will enhance disaster risk reduction, climate risk management and resilience-building with a view to fostering sustainable food systems. It will also aim to

⁴⁶ WFP 2016. *Operation evaluation: Mid-term evaluation of Nicaragua country programme 220434 (2013–2018)* (Evaluación de Mitad de Período de la Operación del Programa de país en Nicaragua – PP 200434 (2013–2018)). Available at https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp284202.pdf?_ga=2.63088751.1323491841.1542046258-163325202.1541357826.

empower women farmers through a strategy designed to promote women's participation in productive activities and decision making processes.

- WFP will contribute to analyse the links between gender equality and food security in Nicaragua. Building on results from analyses, WFP and its partners will identify and promulgate solutions for addressing gender inequalities that hinder progress towards SDG 2, including through the design and implementation of gender-transformative programmes.
- WFP is well positioned for strengthening national shock-responsive social protection systems and providing food assistance in the event of a natural or human-caused emergency, including an economic shock or other crisis. At this time of economic decline, WFP is particularly committed to responding to the food needs of the Nicaraguan people.

2.3 Strategic changes

20. During implementation of the CSP, WFP will begin to set establish the conditions that will allow it to shift in the medium term from providing food assistance to enabling development. To do so, it is focusing more closely on capacity strengthening and technical assistance, seeking to empower populations and promote evidence-based food and nutrition security interventions that have transformative capacity.
21. Compared with WFP's previous approach, the CSP also introduces a series of strategic shifts for the country office towards new areas of collaboration for tackling the hunger gaps identified in the country strategic review, including in the following ways:
 - A renewed focus on sustainable food systems. In promoting smallholder farmers' access to markets, WFP will adopt a holistic approach, incorporating resilience building, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and inclusive value chains.
 - An integrated approach to the strengthening of the national social protection system and its main programmes, generating greater cohesion and focusing more closely on nutrition issues. WFP will introduce nutrition-sensitive programming – rather than nutrition-specific interventions – promoting the use of social and behaviour change communication and seeking to strengthen the nutrition component of national programmes, including during emergencies.
 - WFP is placing the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment at the forefront of the CSP, bringing previous interventions for empowering rural women to scale and providing support to government institutions.

3. WFP strategic orientation

3.1 Direction, focus and intended impacts

22. Through the CSP, WFP aims to help tackle the underpinning causes of food insecurity, promoting transformative approaches and behaviour change that provide long-term solutions to hunger. The CSP has a strong focus on technical assistance, the generation of evidence and improved information and data collection. At the same time, given the persistent levels of poverty, recurrent natural hazards and vulnerability to economic shocks and other crises, WFP will continue to ensure that the most vulnerable people have access to nutritious food through its direct provision of food assistance.

3.2 Strategic outcomes, focus areas, expected outputs and key activities

Strategic outcome 1: People in targeted areas who are living in poverty and/or are vulnerable to food insecurity have access to adequate nutritious food all year round by 2023

23. With inadequate access to nutritious food being one of the main drivers of food insecurity, ensuring that low-income and vulnerable populations meet their food needs is key to the achievement of SDG 2. Work under this strategic outcome therefore complements government efforts by providing direct support in the implementation of the largest social protection programme, the national school feeding programme. At the same time, WFP will seek to strengthen other national initiatives, such as Love for the Youngest and mother and infant homes, providing technical assistance to help consolidate the social protection system and make it nutrition-sensitive, gender-transformative and shock-responsive.
24. The national school feeding programme reaches 1.2 million children in public schools across the country. Working with the Ministry of Education, WFP will contribute to the implementation of the ministry's comprehensive programme for school nutrition in the Northern Autonomous Atlantic Caribbean Region and Jinotega by providing school meals for 182,000 pre-, primary and secondary schoolchildren (50 percent boys and 50 percent girls), including indigenous populations and children with disabilities.
25. WFP will work in coordination with government institutions, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Family, Adolescence and Childhood. It will seek to strengthen its collaboration with other United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund and the Pan American Health Organization to advance access to nutritious food and promote behavioural change.

Focus area

26. This strategic outcome tackles the underpinning causes of hunger and its focus area is therefore root causes.

Expected outputs

27. The following four outputs will contribute towards the attainment of this outcome:
 - School boys and girls in targeted areas receive nutritious school meals to meet their basic food needs and provide an incentive for access to education.
 - School boys and girls and their parents in targeted areas benefit from improved storage and food preparation facilities to promote safe access to food.
 - School boys and girls benefit from a nutrition-sensitive national school feeding programme incorporating local food purchases and nutrition counselling to improve nutrition behaviour.
 - Beneficiaries of social protection programmes benefit from strengthened, effective, nutrition-sensitive and gender-sensitive interventions to improve their access to food and their consumption of nutritious and diverse foods.

Key activity

Activity 1: Provide nutritious school meals to school boys and girls in targeted areas, complementing the national programme, and strengthen national nutrition and gender-sensitive social protection programmes that promote food security

28. As well as providing access to nutritious food, school meals are a key incentive for promoting school enrolment and attendance, thereby contributing to educational attainment in areas characterized by high poverty and low schooling. WFP will provide a fortified and nutritionally balanced in-kind food basket, adapted to the preferences of targeted populations. The

basket will comprise rice, maize (in Jinotega) or fortified wheat flour (in the Northern Autonomous Atlantic Caribbean Region), beans, fortified vegetable oil, SuperCereal and dates. Meals will be delivered daily to pre- and primary schoolchildren and on Saturdays to secondary schoolchildren as part of a special measure designed to tackle school dropout by boys and girls after primary education. Some food items will be purchased locally from women and men smallholder farmers, contributing towards the local economy and generating synergies between local food chains and social protection programmes. The activity will also include the establishment of water harvesting systems providing water for human consumption, cooking, the watering of school gardens and personal hygiene; the improvement of cooking facilities; and the introduction of ecostoves and similar energy-efficient options. There will be a strong focus on the design and implementation of an exit strategy for the handover of the food component of the programme to the Government during the implementation of Nicaragua's next country strategic plan.

29. WFP will provide technical assistance for enhancing the cohesion of the social protection system and its focus on nutrition. WFP will work in coordination with government partners on conducting assessments of current programmes and gauging their contributions in tackling the different forms of malnutrition, taking gender issues into consideration. Together with partners, WFP will also introduce social and behaviour change communication that promotes dietary diversity and healthy nutrition behaviour through social protection programmes. The strategies will be designed to ensure respect of local cultures, including those of indigenous groups, consideration of the needs and preferences of target groups and the adoption of gender-sensitive approaches. As part of these efforts, WFP will help to enhance shock-responsive programmes.

Strategic outcome 2: Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers in targeted areas benefit from sustainable food systems and have strengthened capacities to cope with shocks, climate change and natural hazards by 2023

30. Activities under this strategic outcome will follow a holistic approach to tackling some of the systemic constraints affecting food production, transformation and consumption. The aim is to promote disaster risk reduction and help generate inclusive food value chains that are resilient to environmental degradation, climate change and other shocks, both natural and economic, while generating opportunities for smallholder farmers.
31. WFP will provide technical assistance and agricultural inputs, equipment and tools to women and men smallholder farmers, and will promote disaster risk reduction at the institutional level. In Jinotega, Nueva Segovia, Matagalpa, Madriz and Estelí departments, WFP will target 4,500 smallholder farmers (50 percent women and 50 percent men) who have the potential to produce food surplus and who are associated in 20 farmer organizations, and 6,000 subsistence farmer families in rural and peri-urban areas.
32. For the implementation of these activities, WFP will work with the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention, the Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology, the Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies and the Ministry of Family Economy, Community Associations and Cooperatives. It will also aim to establish strategic and operational partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), seeking complementarity in the areas of early warning systems and climate services in order to combine FAO's work at the policy level with WFP's presence on the ground. WFP will also partner with academic institutions with a view to improving national data collection systems and vulnerability mapping.

Focus area

33. The focus area of this strategic outcome is resilience building.

Expected outputs

34. The following six outputs will contribute to the attainment of the outcome:
- Populations vulnerable to climate events benefit from enhanced Government capacities in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation to promote food security.
 - Vulnerable populations benefit from strengthened institutional capacities to improve emergency preparedness and protect food security.
 - Smallholder farmers and populations vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change benefit from strengthened early warning and information systems to increase climate resilience and promote sustainable food systems.
 - Men and women farmers equitably receive training, agricultural inputs, services and climate information to improve their resilience and adaptation to climate change.
 - Men and women farmers equitably receive training, services and inputs to improve their sales in formal and institutional markets and thus improve their incomes and food security.
 - Women farmers receive training, services and inputs as part of the women's economic empowerment strategy to improve their access to markets and thus increase their incomes and food security.

Key activities

Activity 2: Provide government institutions with technical assistance in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation with a view to reducing the vulnerability to food insecurity of populations prone to disasters

35. WFP will support the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention in fostering disaster risk reduction in order to ensure that populations benefit from strengthened capacities and climate risk information for reducing vulnerability to shocks. This work will include the enhancement of telecommunication systems and early warning mechanisms so that national institutions can monitor, analyse and convey climate information effectively. This will be accompanied by the design and implementation of a communication strategy on disaster risk reduction informed by gender- and age-disaggregated data on target groups and aimed at fostering a culture of preparedness.
36. At the same time, WFP and partners will support the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention vulnerability mapping exercises at the subregional and local levels, strengthening national methodologies and incorporating a focus on gender and age-related issues, food security and livelihoods in order to enrich the data collected. The data will then be used by national and subregional actors to inform the development and updating of municipal integrated disaster risk management plans. Such plans may include "climate proofing"⁴⁷ and wider risk management strategies for augmenting emergency preparedness.
37. WFP will also provide the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention with technical assistance for the development of a comprehensive national beneficiary registry with a view to making national social protection programmes interoperable and will transfer methodologies and tools such as its emergency food security assessment and seasonal livelihood programming tools. WFP will support the implementation of the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention national training plan, whereby field staff and targeted populations are instructed on how to prepare for and respond to shocks,

⁴⁷ Climate proofing refers to the measures that need to be taken to ensure that the different plans, programmes, and elements of a specific surrounding are resilient to current and future climate impacts.

by providing technical assistance in gender issues, nutrition, protection and food security assessments in emergencies.

Activity 3: Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers in order to increase their resilience, improve their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to adverse climate events

38. Through this activity, WFP will provide a comprehensive package of support that ranges from climate services, resilience building and climate change adaptation to market support, gender-transformative approaches and linkages between local value chains and social protection programmes. The package will contribute to the development of sustainable food systems, while promoting the economic and climate resilience of smallholder farmers, who are the backbone of agricultural production, with a focus on women's empowerment. To reach this goal, the activity was designed in consultation with targeted populations and will use various approaches tailored to the needs identified.
39. To foster climate resilience and climate change adaptation, WFP will use participatory and inclusive methodologies such as its seasonal livelihood programming consultations, which will lead to the identification and subsequent implementation of resilience building actions. Working with partners, WFP will also test "last-mile" climate services for improving farmers' timely access to climate information, i.e., providing effective information channels with appropriate content that enables farmers to make informed choices. WFP will also promote the recovery of degraded ecosystems and will provide training on the sustainable management of natural resources and good agricultural practices complemented by training in food security and nutrition and on the impacts of climate change on food security. With its government partners, WFP will explore opportunities for introducing insurance tools and will test and disseminate drought-resistant and bio-enriched bean seeds with higher iron and zinc content, thereby contributing to the Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology's promotion of nutrition-sensitive agriculture.
40. For smallholder farmers associated in farmer organizations, WFP and its partners will provide technical assistance on topics such as commercialization, post-harvest management, good manufacturing practices, value aggregation (through, e.g., production of higher-quality grains or processed foods) and entrepreneurship. WFP will continue to leverage its own food procurement by purchasing part of the food requirements for the school feeding programme (strategic outcome 1) from smallholder farmers and will promote the scale up of linkages between smallholder farmers' production and national social protection programmes.
41. In rural and peri-urban areas, WFP will support subsistence farming households in sustainably improving the production of nutritious food and will promote dietary diversity, generating synergies with national programmes for food production such as home gardens and the food security grant programme. WFP's support will include the introduction of home gardening, efforts to reduce households' dependence on markets and the offering of sustainable solutions for ensuring adequate food consumption. Gardens will either be for individual households or be communal, and women's participation will be encouraged.
42. To address the gender gap, WFP will scale up implementation of the women's economic empowerment strategy, which was designed through a consultative process with participants. Women farmers will receive an enhanced package of support, including inputs and training on financial management, production and commercialization. WFP will also support the development of gender policies in farmer organizations with a view to increasing women's participation in decision making processes and will conduct activities with both women and men aimed at promoting women's identity as agricultural producers, deconstructing gender stereotypes and promoting gender equitable masculinity.

Strategic outcome 3: National institutions have improved capacities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and to incorporate gender-transformative approaches into programmes, contributing to the achievement of zero hunger by 2023

43. Gender equality is a widely recognized requirement for reaching zero hunger and it is at the centre of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, in line with national development priorities, work under this strategic outcome is aimed at accelerating action for gender equality and women's empowerment as a catalyst for the achievement of zero hunger. WFP will promote transformative approaches and the horizontal and vertical coordination of institutions and other actors, adopting a "whole of society" approach. In working towards this strategic outcome, WFP will generate synergies with the other three outcomes and will provide recommendations based on the evidence collected to inform the advancement of gender equality.
44. Partnerships will be essential for activities under this outcome. WFP will work closely with universities, United Nations agencies and government partners, including the Ministry of Education, National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention, the Ministry of Family Economy, Community Associations and Cooperatives, the Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology, the Ministry of the Woman and Ministry of the Family, Adolescence and Childhood.

Focus area

45. This strategic outcome involves tackling some of the underpinning causes of hunger and underdevelopment. Its focus area is therefore root causes.

Expected outputs

46. The following two outputs will contribute towards the attainment of this outcome:
 - Nicaraguans benefit from enhanced knowledge, evidence and awareness to foster equitable gender relations and contribute to food and nutrition security.
 - Nicaraguans benefit from gender-transformative policies, social protection and productive programmes to promote gender equality and food security.

Key activity

Activity 4: Provide technical assistance to the Government in designing and implementing gender-transformative interventions for promoting gender equality and food security and nutrition

47. Work under this outcome addresses the need for enhanced evidence on how the actions of women and men – individually and through their institutions – contribute to food security and food insecurity and how their roles and relations affect their access to food in Nicaragua. WFP and partners will study the linkages between food security and gender equality, including the different roles, relations and responsibilities of women and men, based on the findings of in-depth research and assessments. Building on these definitions, WFP will support the design and implementation of gender-transformative national programmes and awareness raising campaigns tailored to different demographic groups. WFP will also support school-based campaigns that encourage equitable behaviour and seek to eliminate gender-based violence and sexual harassment against girls. Working with United Nations agencies and other partners, WFP will organize workshops and fairs for the transfer of knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment, facilitating exchanges between different population groups on the links between gender issues and food and nutrition security.
48. WFP will strengthen the capacity of national policy makers to understand the relevance of gender equality for achieving sustainable development outcomes such as food security and nutrition. It will provide government staff with technical assistance in gender-transformative

programming and gender analysis tools, promoting inclusive approaches that involve women and men equitably.

Strategic outcome 4: Populations affected by shocks have access to adequate and nutritious food during and after an emergency

49. Given Nicaragua's high exposure to natural disasters and its vulnerability to economic shocks and other human-caused crises, the purpose of this strategic outcome is to ensure that the most vulnerable people receive timely, nutritious and adequate food assistance that meets their food needs in the event of shocks. Work under the outcome will include responding to seasonal hunger during the lean season – when droughts tend to affect the Dry Corridor – using social protection programmes such as the school feeding programme as a shock-responsive safety net for supporting vulnerable groups.
50. Emergency responses will be coordinated with the Government and the United Nations emergency team, leveraging resources to maximize efficiency and putting the needs of the people at the centre of all planning and action. Responses will also benefit from WFP's efforts to boost capacities in disaster risk reduction and to design a comprehensive beneficiary registry under strategic outcome 2, following an integrated approach that ranges from preparedness to mitigation and response.

Focus area

51. Work under this strategic outcome responds to immediate and prolonged crises and will only be carried out in the event of need. The focus area of the strategic outcome is therefore crisis response.

Expected output

52. The following output will contribute towards the attainment of this outcome:
 - Populations affected by disasters and other crises have access to nutritious food to meet their food needs during and after emergencies.

Key activities

Activity 5: Provide food assistance to populations affected by shocks

53. In carrying out this activity, WFP will provide unconditional food assistance, including in-kind transfers and/or vouchers, to affected populations in order to save lives and ensure swift relief and recovery. Nutritious food rations will include fortified foods and will cover 80 percent of people's daily nutritional requirements. Where possible, local purchases from smallholder farmers will be prioritized. Rations will comprise rice, maize, beans, fortified vegetable oil, SuperCereal and salt. WFP will also support the carrying out of emergency food security assessments and will carry out other assessments to assess the feasibility of introducing of cash-based transfers and distributing vouchers. Leveraging its positive experiences of past years in providing efficient and quick response, WFP will use shock-responsive social protection programmes whenever possible, increasing transfer sizes and/or numbers of beneficiaries targeted as needed. WFP will also pre-position contingency stocks in order to guarantee response within 72 hours of an emergency event. The design of responses will take nutrition, protection, human rights, environmental and gender aspects into consideration, ensuring that the assistance provided meets the needs of women, girls, men and boys.

3.3 Transition and exit strategies

54. Over the period covered by the CSP, WFP expects to move progressively away from direct implementation of activities, if conditions allow. The CSP therefore places strong emphasis on programme sustainability in order to facilitate this transition. For school feeding activities, WFP and the Ministry of Education, through its comprehensive programme for school

nutrition, will design and implement a handover strategy that lays the foundations for handover of the food component to the Government after 2023. The strategy will be informed by assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the national programme. Timeframes, targets and benchmarks for guiding the process will be identified.

55. Sustainability and ownership are also at the centre of strategic outcome 2, as WFP's aim is for farmer organizations to graduate from WFP support over the coming years. Benchmarks will be established and progress towards this goal will be monitored throughout the CSP period. WFP also aims to foster inclusive community organizations and to create the conditions for achieving self-reliance in targeted subsistence households.
56. At the institutional level, increased technical capacities of national partners will reduce their reliance on external support, including WFP's. For instance, through the enhancement of telecommunication systems, information platforms and risk mapping and planning tools, national institutions will have augmented capacities to reach vulnerable people in the event of shocks. Over recent years, SINAPRED has noticeably increased its capacity to manage and respond to risks.
57. The aim of strategic outcome 3 is to institutionalize actions that will lead to gender equality and women's empowerment. This will be achieved through the provision of capacity strengthening for government staff aimed at ensuring that they are well equipped to contribute to systemic change and the removal of the structural constraints that prevent the achievement of gender equality that facilitates the achievement of zero hunger. By working on institutional change at different levels while promoting social behaviour change, under this strategic outcome WFP will create the conditions for ensuring the sustainability of actions beyond 2023.
58. WFP and its partners will also foster inclusive community engagement in order to encourage the ownership of programmes by targeted populations and thus to promote the sustainability of activities beyond the duration of the CSP. For instance, the school feeding programme will be implemented together with school meal committees that comprise parents and teachers who are responsible for food handling, preparation and storage.

4. implementation arrangements

4.1 Beneficiary analysis

59. For its beneficiary targeting, WFP will prioritize areas with high levels of poverty, above-average levels of chronic malnutrition, a predominance of indigenous populations, gender inequalities, exposure to natural disasters and poor education indicators. CSP activities are focused mainly on rural areas, the Caribbean region and the Dry Corridor. WFP will also prioritize regions where access is difficult, which the Government struggles to reach. WFP's emergency food assistance and its school feeding programme will respond to the food needs of persons with disabilities who are targeted by national programmes.
60. As well as the direct support that it will provide to its targeted beneficiaries, WFP will contribute towards the strengthening of national programmes and the implementation of awareness raising campaigns, among other actions with national reach. Strategic outcomes 1, 2 and 3 therefore include indirect beneficiaries (tier 3) who will benefit from strengthened social protection programmes and disaster risk reduction and gender-transformative actions at the national level, implemented with the support of WFP.

Strategic outcome	Activity	Tier	Girls*	Boys*	Women	Men	Total
1	1	1	91 000	91 000	-	-	182 000
		3	650 000	650 000	100 000	-	1 400 000
2	2	3	513 400	506 600	336 600	343 400	1 700 000
	3	1	-	-	5 250	5 250	10 500
3	4	3	1 930 935	1 905 360	1 265 977	1 291 552	6 393 824
4	5	1	80 400	79 600	39 600	40 400	240 000
Total tier 1			171 400	170 600	44 850	45 650	432 500
Total tier 3			1 930 935	1 905 360	1 265 977	1 291 552	6 393 824

* Girls and boys are beneficiaries who are under 18 years of age.

4.2 Transfers

61. The preferred transfer modality of the Government of Nicaragua is in-kind assistance, as this is the mechanism used in national programmes and initiatives. WFP will also use vouchers or a combination of in-kind and voucher transfers, depending on the context. In remote areas, where communities are scattered and there is limited availability of markets, in-kind assistance will be the chosen modality.
62. The in-kind food basket will respond to the needs of target groups and will be adapted to their cultural preferences. The ration for activity 1 will therefore vary according to the geographical area, with fortified wheat flour in the Caribbean area (RACCN) and maize in the Pacific region (Jinotega). Rations will have high nutritional content and will include specialized nutritious products (SuperCereal) and fortified foods with high micronutrient content (vegetable oil and wheat flour). Maize and beans will be locally procured from smallholder farmers, with a view to strengthening local food value chains.

TABLE 2: FOOD RATIONS (<i>g/person/day</i>) AND CASH-BASED TRANSFER VALUES (<i>USD/person/day</i>) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY								
	Strategic outcome 1				Strategic outcome 4			
	Activity 1				Activity 5			
	Preschool and primary school children (Jinotega)	Secondary school children (Jinotega)	Preschool and primary school children (RACCN)	Secondary school children (RACCN)	Shock-affected populations			School-children (Dry Corridor)
Modality (indicate food or cash)	Food	Food	Food	Food	Food	Cash-based transfers	Commodity voucher	Food
Cereals	80	80	85	85	400			80
Pulses	25	25	25	25	60			25
Oil	10	10	10	10	25			10
Salt					5			
SuperCereal	35	35	35	35				30
Dates	10	10	10	10				
Total kcal/day	621	621	621	621	1 861			574
% kcal from protein	44	30	45	30	77			39
Cash (<i>USD/person/day</i>)						0.50	0.67	
Number of feeding days per year	180	40	180	40	40	30	30	60

Food type/cash-based transfer	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	15 445	9 718 560
Pulses	4 274	5 128 796
Oil and fats	1 716	1 755 143
Mixed and blended foods	5 780	3 178 777
Other	1 476	2 051 384
Total (food)	28 690	21 832 660
Cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers		1 200 002
Total (food and cash-based transfer value)	28 690	23 032 661

Capacity strengthening including South–South cooperation

63. WFP will incorporate capacity strengthening activities under all strategic outcomes, providing technical assistance and promoting the transfer of knowledge to national institutions and targeted populations. Throughout the five-year period of the CSP, WFP and the Government will explore opportunities for capacity strengthening through South–South cooperation in areas such as social protection systems and school feeding. At the same time, the Government can offer its expertise in using its social protection programme as a shock-responsive tool for responding to emergencies through the scale-up of operations.

4.3 Supply chain

64. WFP will distribute food and non-food items following standard procurement procedures based on cost-effectiveness and using its global commodity management fund to source food when feasible, shortening lead times and securing better prices. In order to guarantee successful local purchases from women and men smallholders, WFP will provide farmer organizations with technical assistance in storage, food handling and other areas. It will also provide training to government partners with a view to improving food management in emergencies and increasing the efficiency of the school feeding programme's supply chain. Logistics capacity and other assessments for measuring the feasibility of introducing cash-based transfers may also be carried out.

4.4 Country office capacity and profile

65. The country office has a multidisciplinary team of professionals specialized in a variety of topics including nutrition, gender, climate resilience, agriculture, construction and information technology. Given the programmatic shift, it will augment its capacities where needed to ensure the effective management of the portfolio. WFP has five offices in Nicaragua, including four in the field, allowing staff to monitor progress in the implementation of projects and to build close relationships with participants, beneficiaries and relevant authorities.

4.5 Partnerships

66. Given Nicaragua's status as a lower-middle-income country, WFP operates in coordination with government partners. WFP will partner with the Ministry of Education on the implementation of school feeding activities, using well-established communication mechanisms and annual operation plans for guiding food distributions and yearly capacity strengthening activities. For the enhancement of the social protection system, WFP aims to establish a new partnership with the Ministry of Family Economy, Community Associations and Cooperatives and to strengthen cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Adolescence and Childhood. It also aims to start collaboration with the Ministry of Family Economy,

Community Associations and Cooperatives and the Ministry of the Woman on the advancement of women's empowerment and gender equality.

67. WFP will coordinate with the Ministry of Family Economy, Community Associations and Cooperatives on the provision of support for subsistence families in peri-urban areas and on strengthening the integration of smallholder farmers in institutional markets. Work in partnership with the Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology will complement these efforts and enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers. For disaster risk reduction, WFP has formed a partnership with SINAPRED, which has strong capacities in risk management and views WFP as a strategic partner. WFP also aims to work with the Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies on enhancing the analysis and dissemination of climate information.
68. WFP will expand its partnerships with other United Nations agencies. An area of collaboration that will be key in bringing actors together is gender equality through joint efforts to generate transformative change. Strategic and operational partnerships will be pursued with FAO and IFAD for the advancement of rural development, enhancement of early warning systems and strengthening of national programmes that focus on home gardening, sustainable agricultural production and linkages to smallholder farmers. WFP, UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization will work together on the design of nutrition-sensitive national programmes for addressing issues throughout the life cycle.
69. WFP will enhance its collaboration with the academic sector, including universities. This will be key for the generation of evidence in the areas of gender equality and women's empowerment for zero hunger and for vulnerability mapping and the improvement of data collection by national disaster risk reduction institutions.

5. Performance management and evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

70. WFP will monitor performance in collaboration with government partners, following a results-based and gender-responsive approach for measuring outcomes, processes and output indicators in targeted municipalities. The logical framework will provide the basis for the monitoring system: WFP will conduct a baseline study in order to set outcome indicator values and targets. Electronic systems and mobile devices will optimize the processing of data, which will be collected through field visits and surveys complemented by records provided by partners and suppliers. Monitoring will be conducted after distributions take place and outcome monitoring will be carried out annually with the findings measured against baseline values. All indicators will be disaggregated by age and gender and data collection will be followed by gender and age analyses. WFP will use feedback from stakeholders to inform the design and implementation of corrective measures as required. A beneficiary feedback mechanism will be established if possible and WFP will invest in ensuring that monitoring personnel are knowledgeable and skilled in gender-responsive monitoring.
71. An independent country portfolio evaluation managed by the Office of Evaluation will be carried out in order to meet the requirements for accountability for the performance and results of WFP's overall country portfolio, informing the future strategic orientation of programmes. The evaluation will be complemented by a decentralized evaluation in 2020, which will be designed in accordance with evidence and learning needs.

5.2 Risk management

Strategic risks

72. Natural disasters, increases in food prices, economic shocks and socio-political instability may affect the food security of low-income households, undermining CSP results. In addition, criminal activities may affect the security of WFP personnel and beneficiaries during activity

implementation. WFP will monitor the situation and measures will be taken to mitigate contextual risks through contingency planning.

73. Low funding from donors and national budget cuts could undermine the implementation of the CSP. To mitigate this risk, WFP has designed a partnership action plan: in the event of funding constraints, low-income and vulnerable groups, including schoolchildren, will be prioritized for food assistance.
74. A national economic downturn could affect the financial liquidity of local banks. Should financial systems fail, the country office will use international or regional banks and will request support from headquarters in managing its disbursements.

Operational risks

75. As WFP supports government programmes, it relies on the Government's capacity to ensure effective co-implementation: limited operational capacity or changing government priorities could compromise the implementation of WFP's activities. The strong commitment of government institutions is essential, particularly for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. WFP will seek to maintain constant engagement with the Government in order to foster the continuation of political will.

6. Resources for results

6.1 Country portfolio budget

Strategic outcome	Year 1 2019	Year 2 2020	Year 3 2021	Year 4 2022	Year 5 2023	Total
1	4 509 006	7 024 847	7 017 816	7 281 597	7 252 955	33 086 221
2	4 833 682	5 044 380	5 122 222	4 841 469	3 834 251	23 675 904
3	291 749	429 650	446 573	468 681	429 497	2 066 149
4	1 209 284	1 773 965	1 786 468	1 862 547	1 335 406	7 987 670
Total	10 843 721	14 272 842	14 372 978	14 454 294	12 872 109	66 815 944

76. With a total budget of more than USD 66.8 million, the distribution among outcomes reflects WFP's strategic orientation in Nicaragua. The largest share of the budget is allocated to strategic outcome 1, reflecting the importance of guaranteeing access to food in vulnerable areas, in line with national priorities. Another significant portion of the budget is dedicated to capacity strengthening for national institutions and targeted populations in order to promote sustainable solutions to hunger. WFP will also allocate funds to the advancement of gender equality under strategic outcome 3 and throughout the other strategic outcomes.

6.2 Resourcing outlook

77. The resourcing outlook for WFP in Nicaragua is strong according to forecasts and confirmed contributions from existing and new donors. During formulation of the CSP, WFP held consultations with the donor community and partners, who signalled strong interest in the CSP. Current forecast and confirmed contributions account for 80 percent of the overall CSP funding requirements. Over the past five years, WFP has demonstrated the ability to mobilize about 80 percent of its overall needs. WFP expects to maintain good funding levels, because the CSP was designed on the basis of needs and funding projections for a well-resourced and operable plan.

6.3 Resource mobilization strategy

78. WFP's resource mobilization strategy will adopt a two-pronged approach: consolidating partnerships with existing donors to WFP's country office in Nicaragua, advocating for multi-year support; and pursuing opportunities with new partners, in order to broaden the donor base. WFP will also seek systematic engagement from the Government, which was the third largest donor to the last cycle of WFP activities in Nicaragua. While opportunities for private sector engagement at the country level are limited, WFP has received consistent support from private donors at the regional and global levels and aims to maintain this support throughout implementation of the CSP through close coordination with its Regional Bureau in Panama and liaison offices. To guide resource mobilization, WFP has developed a partnership action plan.

ANNEX I**LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR NICARAGUA COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN (2019–2023)****Strategic Goal 1: Support countries to achieve zero hunger****Strategic Objective 1: End hunger by protecting access to food****Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food****Strategic outcome 1: People in targeted areas who are living in poverty and/or are vulnerable to food insecurity have access to adequate nutritious food all year round by 2023**

Outcome category:

Maintained/enhanced individual and household access to adequate food

Nutrition sensitive

Focus area: root causes

Assumptions

The government keeps school meals and social networks as a priority

The office has the necessary funds to meet the planned objectives

There is stability in the prices of the basket

WFP has access to sites

Outcome indicators

Attendance rate

Enrolment rate

Gender ratio

National Capacity Index (School Meals)

Proportion of trainers who retain key nutrition skills

Retention rate

Activities and outputs

1. Provide nutritious school meals to school boys and girls in targeted areas, complementing the national programme, and strengthen national nutrition and gender-sensitive social protection programmes that promote food security (SMP: School meal activities)

Beneficiaries of social protection programmes benefit from strengthened, effective, nutrition-sensitive and gender-sensitive interventions to improve their access to food and their consumption of nutritious and diverse foods (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

School boys and girls and their parents in targeted areas benefit from improved storage and food preparation facilities to promote safe access to food (A: Resources transferred)

School boys and girls benefit from a nutrition-sensitive national school feeding programme incorporating local food purchases and nutrition counselling to improve nutrition behaviour (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

School boys and girls in targeted areas receive nutritious school meals to meet their basic food needs and provide an incentive for access to education (A: Resources transferred)

Strategic outcome 4: Populations affected by shocks have access to adequate and nutritious food during and after an emergency

Outcome category:
Maintained/enhanced individual
and household access to
adequate food

Focus area: crisis response

Assumptions

WFP has the necessary funds to meet the planned objectives

WFP has logistical, human and technical capacity to access affected sites

The Government requires WFP support for the assistance

Outcome indicators

Attendance rate

Consumption-based Coping Strategy Index (Average)

Food Consumption Score

Gender ratio

Retention rate

Activities and outputs**5. Provide food assistance to populations affected by shocks (URT: Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food)**

Populations affected by disasters and other crises have access to nutritious food to meet their food needs during and after emergencies (A: Resources transferred)

Strategic Objective 3: Achieve food security**Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable**

Strategic outcome 2: Vulnerable communities and smallholder farmers in targeted areas benefit from sustainable food systems and have strengthened capacities to cope with shocks, climate change and natural hazards by 2023

Outcome category: Improved household adaptation and resilience to climate and other shocks

Focus area: resilience building

Assumptions

WFP has the necessary funds to carry out activities as planned

The government maintains its priorities established in The National Human Development Plan and its alliance with WFP

Socio-political stability and security allows for the implementation of WFP programs and activities

Prices of goods and services on national and international markets remain relatively stable, allowing WFP to regularly plan and implement activities

Outcome indicators

Consumption-based Coping Strategy Index (Average)

Emergency Preparedness Capacity Index

Food Consumption Score

Percentage of smallholder farmers selling through WFP-supported farmer aggregation systems

Value and volume of pro-smallholder sales through WFP-supported aggregation systems

Activities and outputs**2. Provide government institutions with technical assistance in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation with a view to reducing the vulnerability to food insecurity of populations prone to disasters (CSI: Institutional capacity strengthening activities)**

Populations vulnerable to climate events benefit from enhanced Government capacities in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation to promote food security (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Smallholder farmers and populations vulnerable to natural hazards and climate change benefit from strengthened early warning and information systems to increase climate resilience and promote sustainable food systems (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Vulnerable populations benefit from strengthened institutional capacities to improve emergency preparedness and protect food security (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

3. Provide technical assistance to smallholder farmers in order to increase their resilience, improve their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to adverse climate events (CAR: Climate adaptation and risk management activities)

Men and women farmers equitably receive training, agricultural inputs, services and climate information to improve their resilience and adaptation to climate change (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Men and women farmers equitably receive training, services and inputs to improve their sales in formal and institutional markets and thus improve their incomes and food security (F: Purchases from smallholders completed)

Women farmers receive training, services and inputs as part of the women's economic empowerment strategy to improve their access to markets and thus increase their incomes and food security (F: Purchases from smallholders completed)

Strategic Goal 2: Partner to support implementation of the SDGs

Strategic Objective 4: Support SDG implementation

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic outcome 3: National institutions have improved capacities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and to incorporate gender-transformative approaches into programmes, contributing to the achievement of zero hunger by 2023

Outcome category: Enhanced capacities of public- and private-sector institutions and systems, including local responders, to identify, target and assist food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations

Focus area: root causes

Assumptions

Government partners are willing to participate in Gender strengthening activities

Government of Nicaragua maintains as a priority the implementation of its gender policy

Outcome indicators

Zero Hunger Capacity Scorecard

Activities and outputs**4. Provide technical assistance to the Government in designing and implementing gender-transformative interventions for promoting gender equality and food security and nutrition (CSI: Institutional capacity strengthening activities)**

Nicaraguans benefit from enhanced knowledge, evidence and awareness to foster equitable gender relations and contribute to food and nutrition security (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Nicaraguans benefit from gender-transformative policies, social protection and productive programmes to promote gender equality and food security (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Strategic Goal 1: Support countries to achieve zero hunger**C.1. Affected populations are able to hold WFP and partners accountable for meeting their hunger needs in a manner that reflects their views and preferences****Cross-cutting indicators**

C.1.1: Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, length of assistance)

C.2. Affected populations are able to benefit from WFP programmes in a manner that ensures and promotes their safety, dignity and integrity**Cross-cutting indicators**

C.2.1: Proportion of targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges

C.3. Improved gender equality and women's empowerment among WFP-assisted population**Cross-cutting indicators**

C.3.1: Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers, disaggregated by transfer modality

C.3.2: Proportion of food assistance decision-making entity – committees, boards, teams, etc. – members who are women

C.3.3: Type of transfer (food, cash, voucher, no compensation) received by participants in WFP activities, disaggregated by sex and type of activity

C.4. Targeted communities benefit from WFP programmes in a manner that does not harm the environment**Cross-cutting indicators**

C.4.1: Proportion of activities for which environmental risks have been screened and, as required, mitigation actions identified (*enhanced methodology*)

ANNEX II

INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN (USD)					
	Strategic Result 1	Strategic Result 1	Strategic Result 4	Strategic Result 5	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 4	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	
Focus area	Root causes	Crisis response	Resilience building	Root causes	
Transfers	24 499 126	6 184 917	16 995 374	1 480 513	49 159 931
Implementation	2 665 171	384 561	2 511 194	216 251	5 777 177
Adjusted direct support costs	3 902 577	930 682	2 724 327	243 281	7 800 868
Subtotal	31 066 874	7 500 160	22 230 896	1 940 046	62 737 976
Indirect support costs (6.5%)	2 019 347	487 510	1 445 008	126 103	4 077 968
Total	33 086 221	7 987 670	23 675 904	2 066 149	66 815 944

Acronyms used in the document

CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
RACCN	Northern Autonomous Atlantic Caribbean Region
RAACS	Southern Autonomous Atlantic Caribbean Region
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SINAPRED	National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention