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POLICY ISSUES

Agenda item 4

For approval

REVISED SCHOOL FEEDING POLICY

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper updates WFP's 2009 school feeding policy four years after its approval. It clarifies WFP's new approach of supporting government-led programmes, and outlines innovations. The revised policy increases alignment with the new Strategic Plan (2014–2017), the draft Strategic Results Framework, and the safety net and nutrition policies, and supersedes the 2009 policy.

What's New?

While continuing to advocate for the universal adoption of school feeding programmes that help increase children's access to learning opportunities and improve their health and nutrition status, WFP will focus increasingly on helping countries to establish and maintain nationally owned programmes linked to local agricultural production. In countries still requiring WFP's operational support, it will implement school feeding programmes with clear hand-over strategies, where appropriate.WFP will engage in policy dialogue and provide technical assistance, using its own experience and that of individual countries through the WFP Centre for Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil and other South–South initiatives. It will systematically assess progress in the transition to national ownership in all operations, using the Systems Assessment for Better Education Results framework developed with the World Bank, and will track the costs of its school feeding projects.

In line with the global emphasis on improving the quality of education, WFP will help ensure that school feeding contributes to learning, and has reinforced its partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund through the Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds initiative. WFP will also continue its successful partnership with the World Bank and the Partnership for Child Development and will strengthen its partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on supporting links between school feeding and local agricultural production.

WFP will work with partners to assess the cost-effectiveness of school feeding, with its many outcomes, and the efficiency of different implementation models. WFP will explore better ways of reaching beneficiaries, such as by using cash and vouchers to replace take-home rations or to enable local procurement. WFP will assess individual cases to decide whether to purchase higher-priced, locally produced food, given the potential to benefit the local economy and increase the sustainability of school feeding programmes.

WFP will continue to ensure that school feeding addresses micronutrient deficiencies among schoolchildren. The primary delivery mechanism will continue to be through multi-fortified foods where foods with high micronutrient contents are not readily available or are unaffordable. Where feasible, WFP will explore ways of diversifying the food basket, including with fresh and locally produced foods.

WFP will support governments in considering nutrition concerns – including emerging overweight and obesity issues – in the design and implementation of school feeding

programmes. WFP will seize opportunities for reaching adolescent girls through school feeding programmes, including to deliver micronutrients and nutrition education.

This policy presents two types of expected results, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated. One type relates to changes in children's lives brought about by school feeding programmes, affecting their food security, productivity, education, health and nutrition. The other type relates to institutional changes – within and outside of WFP – that derive from implementation of this policy.

WFP will develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy to measure these two sets of results. Revised corporate outcome and output indicators in line with the new Strategic Plan and this revised policy are included in the Strategic Results Framework. WFP will administer a global school feeding survey every two years to measure progress in implementing the revised policy against the five policy goals, which replace the eight school feeding quality standards of 2009.

More than half of the sustainable national programmes currently being implemented in 64 middle- and low-income countries began with support from WFP. This revised policy presents results and lessons learned from analyses of these experiences over the last five years. By adopting these new policy directions, WFP will be better placed to assist governments in developing effective school feeding programmes that contribute to the elimination of poverty and hunger and promote prosperity.

DRAFT DECISION*

The Board approves "Revised School Feeding Policy" (WFP/EB.2/2013/4-C).

* 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.

THE SHIFT IN THINKING ABOUT SCHOOL FEEDING AND WFP'S POLICY EVOLUTION

1. Prior to the 2008/09 food and financial crises, the development community viewed school feeding as primarily a food aid tool to enhance access to education. Since the crises, however, it has become evident that governments consider these programmes as safety nets, which – in addition to their contribution to education – also provide direct food support to affected children and their families, as part of national poverty- and hunger-reduction policies.

2. The *Rethinking School Feeding* report, published in 2009 in response to government demand for better information about school feeding, confirmed that as countries develop, their capacity to fund and manage school feeding programmes increases and their reliance on external assistance decreases as they progress along the "transition to sustainability".[1]

3. The 2009 publication also established that school feeding programmes are important not only for their educational benefits, but also because in the short term they provide a safety net during crises and in the long term they act as investments in human capital, local economies, hunger reduction and equity.

4. The findings of *Rethinking School Feeding* prompted WFP to change its own school feeding policy in the context of the broader shift from food aid to food assistance. The 2009 policy introduced the safety net element and repositioned WFP's school feeding approach to emphasize sustainability, with WFP providing time-bound support with the objective of eventually phasing out its assistance.[2]

5. In 2009, WFP reinforced its partnership with the World Bank and the Partnership for Child Development (PCD) to support the new policy direction by establishing a research agenda, undertaking the first global quantitative review of school feeding,[3] providing technical support to governments, and developing tools and guidance to help countries through the transition to national ownership.

6. In 2011, to enhance its capacity to support governments, WFP established a Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in partnership with the Government of Brazil. As a platform for South–South cooperation, the centre benefits from Brazil's experience of hunger reduction, including school feeding. The centre helps governments establish national programmes by engaging in high-level policy dialogue, facilitating study visits and providing technical assistance.

7. In 2012, WFP updated its programme guidance and trained programme officers from 50 countries, emphasizing topics such as policy dialogue and the transition to national ownership. In the last quarter of 2012, the online Global School Feeding Network was launched, enabling WFP field staff to exchange good practices.

8. In 2012, in response to recommendations from a corporate evaluation of the school feeding policy,[4] WFP management committed to revising the policy to develop WFP's new approach, clarify its own objectives and guide country offices on the

[1] Bundy, D., Burbano, C., Grosh, M., Gelli, A., Jukes, M. & Drake, L. 2009. *Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector*. Washington, DC, World Bank and Rome, WFP.

[2] "WFP School Feeding Policy" (WFP/EB.2/2009/4-A).

[3] WFP. *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013*. http://www.wfp.org/content/state-school-feeding-worldwide-2013

[4] See "Summary Evaluation Report of WFP School Feeding Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2012/6-D).

limitations and trade-offs in WFP's school feeding efforts.[5] The need for a revision was emphasized by: i) launch of the Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds initiative for improving education quality and learning; ii) growing awareness of the double burden of malnutrition, and the reform of national school feeding programmes to address this issue;[6] iii) growing interest in local food purchase; and iv) country-level innovations in school feeding.

9. This paper updates WFP's 2009 school feeding policy four years after its approval, and is part of the evolving policy framework for school feeding. It clarifies WFP's new approach of supporting government-led programmes, and outlines innovations. The revised policy increases alignment with the new Strategic Plan (2014–2017), the draft Strategic Results Framework (SRF)[7] and the safety net[8] and nutrition policies.[9] It also takes into account learning from South–South collaboration facilitated by the Centre of Excellence Against Hunger, and the first global quantitative review of school feeding. By presenting revised objectives, policy goals and expected outcomes, this revised policy supersedes the 2009 policy. WFP expects to produce a new policy in the next few years, incorporating insights from implementation of the Strategic Plan, research and practical experience.

WFP'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION IN SCHOOL FEEDING

School Feeding Worldwide and WFP's Vision

10. WFP's *State of School Feeding Worldwide*, published in May 2013 in collaboration with the World Bank and PCD, presents the first global picture of school feeding and provides the context for WFP's evolving policy. The report estimates that at least 368 million children worldwide receive school meals, with an annual investment of US$47–75 billion a year (see Figure 1).[3]

11. WFP supports governments in reaching 7 percent of these children – approximately 24.7 million – mostly in low-income countries where school feeding coverage is lowest and needs are greatest; at 49 percent of primary schoolchildren, coverage in lower-middle income countries is significantly higher than in low-income countries, at 18 percent.[10]

12. In many high-income countries, school feeding is an important element of national social protection systems, and – along with other safety nets – an integral part of care for

[5] This policy responds directly to the first recommendation of the corporate evaluation, and also includes information on how WFP has addressed the other three interrelated recommendations. Recommendation 2 has been addressed through staff training, an update of the guidance, a cost benchmarking exercise and strengthening of partnership frameworks. Recommendation 4 has been addressed through publication of *State of School Feeding Worldwide* and conducting a global school feeding survey every two years. For more information on WFP's response to the other recommendations, see "Management Response to the Recommendations of the Summary Evaluation Report of WFP School Feeding Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2012/6-D/Add.1).

[6] The double burden of malnutrition refers to the persistence of undernutrition, especially among children, along with a rapid rise in overweight, obesity and diet-related chronic diseases.

[7] This policy document will be modified to reflect any changes to the final SRF.

[8] "Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy" (WFP/EB.A/2012/5-A).

[9] "WFP Nutrition Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2012/5-A).

[10] This revised policy uses the World Bank classification of countries by income groups. High- and upper-middle income groups are combined because the characteristics of school feeding in these two groups are similar. Lower-middle and low-income countries differ greatly in terms of school feeding budgets, costs and implementation. See *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013.*

the most vulnerable. WFP's support is focused primarily on low-income countries, where school feeding is less well institutionalized: only 30 percent of these countries have a school feeding policy framework, compared with 86 percent of high-income countries. Low-income countries also depend greatly on donor assistance, which accounts for 83 percent of resources for school feeding in these countries (see Figure 2) – much of it channelled through WFP.

Figure 1: School Feeding Beneficiaries around the World

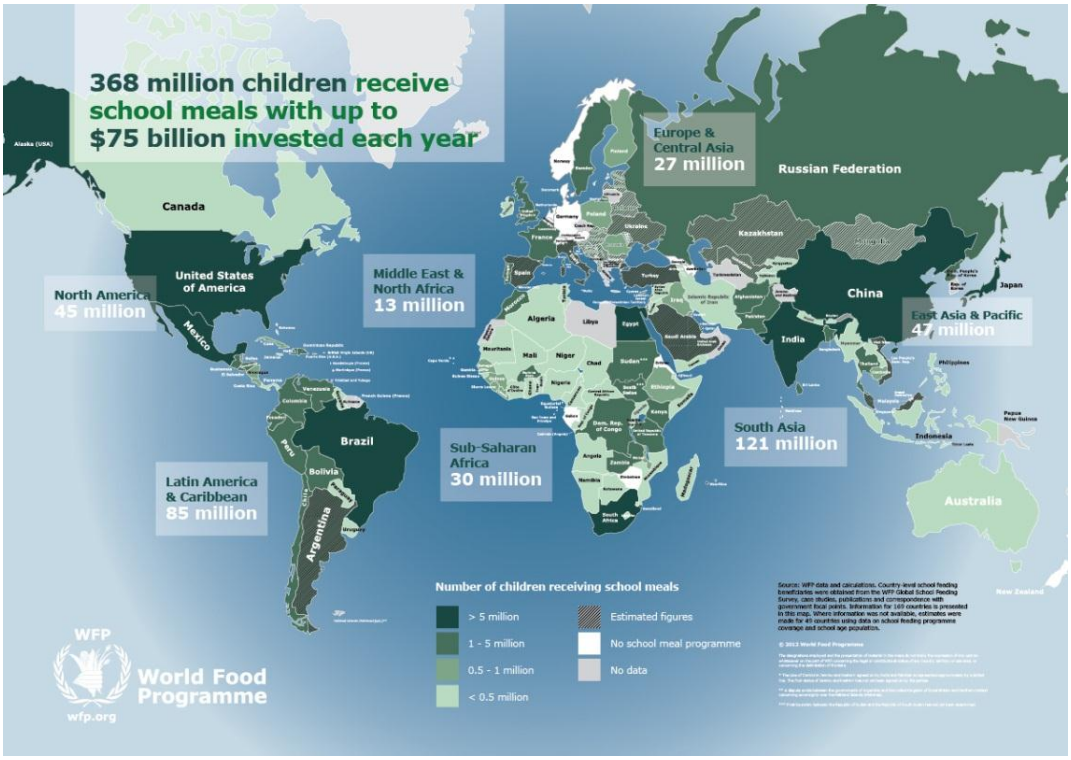
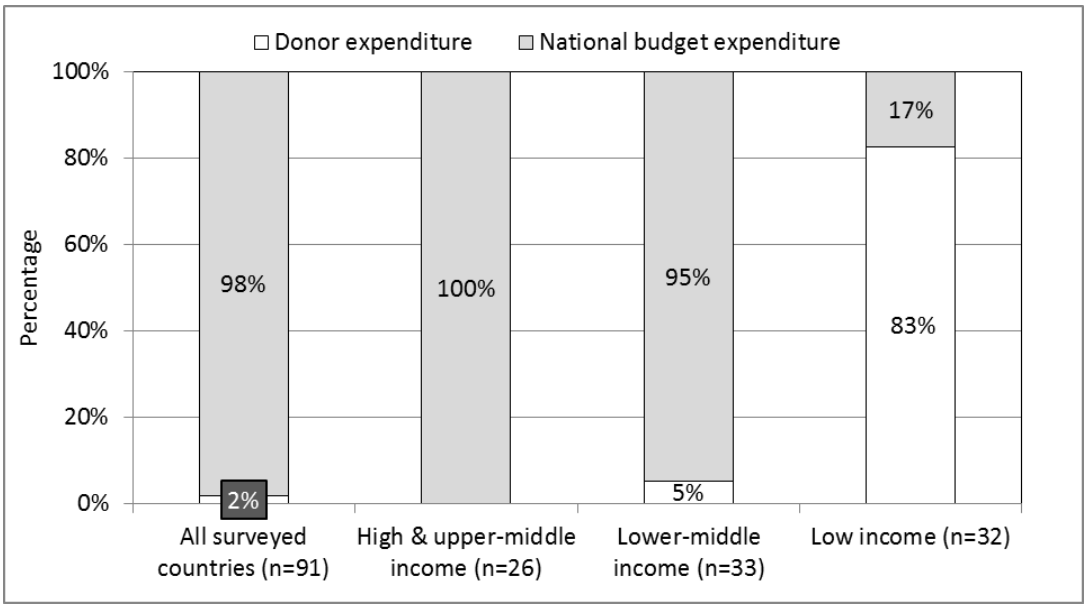


Figure 2: Breakdown of Aggregate Public Expenditure on School Feeding, by Funding Source



13. WFP's overarching vision is to continue advocating for the universal adoption of school feeding programmes as a safety net that helps increase children's access to education and learning opportunities and strengthens their health and nutrition status. WFP will focus increasingly on helping countries to establish and maintain nationally owned programmes linked to local agricultural production. In countries still requiring WFP's operational support, it will implement school feeding programmes with clear hand-over strategies, where appropriate.

The Transition to Nationally Owned Programmes

14. Since 1970, 38 countries have transitioned from WFP-supported to nationally led and funded programmes. Three factors are critical for this transition: i) an appropriate policy or legal framework; ii) the institutional capacity to implement a programme; and iii) the financial capacity to fund it. Generally, the move from low-income to lower-middle income country status is the strongest indicator of readiness to finance a school feeding programme, while external funding and support continue to be justified in fragile and low-income contexts. As countries develop, their reliance on external support should decrease.

15. Over the past three years, WFP and the World Bank have worked with governments and other partners[11] to develop a framework for systematic planning of the transition to national ownership. The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) framework enables countries to assess their transition stage, devise strategies for improving the quality and sustainability of programmes, and track progress.[12] It defines four transition stages:

- **Stage 1 – Latent:** *Unstable contexts, limited capacity.* Government relies on WFP and others to implement school feeding.
- **Stage 2 – Emerging:** *Stable contexts, limited capacity.* Government may rely on WFP and others to implement school feeding, but transition planning can be initiated.
- **Stage 3 – Established:** *Stable contexts, medium capacity.* Government has established a national programme but lacks the capacity to cover all requirements. The transition is under way, with WFP decreasing operational support.
- **Stage 4 – Advanced:** *Stable contexts, high capacity.* Government has an established national programme managed without WFP support.

16. About 20 percent of country offices are at the established or advanced stage, while 81 percent are at the latent or emerging stage, according to analysis of data from the 2012 school feeding survey (see Table 1). These results are not surprising: they show that WFP's support is focused on countries with the least capacity. WFP will ensure that transition strategies are put in place, especially in those countries at the emerging stage.

17. The two indicators in Table 1 will be among those used to track the institutional outcomes of this policy (see paragraphs 67–68). This analysis will be repeated every two years to determine the general direction of WFP's operations, but not to set specific targets for the number of countries moving from one stage to another, which will depend on government priorities and whether there have been sudden changes in context, such as

[11] Including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), PCD, Save the Children and academic institutions.

[12] The SABER framework assesses a country's school feeding efforts against a set of indicators. It has been used in more than 18 countries. http://worldbank.org/education/saber

political instability, emergencies or economic crises. SABER will be introduced into all school feeding projects, to allow systematic planning of the transition at the country level.

TABLE 1: WFP TRANSITION STAGES AND STATUS OF TRANSITION STRATEGY*

	Stage 1 – Latent	Stage 2 – Emerging	Stage 3 – Established	Stage 4 – Advanced
Percentage of all the country offices operating school feeding programmes, by stage	39	42	17	3
Percentage of country offices with a transition strategy agreed with the government in each stage	18	28	60	N/A

* Transition stages were determined using information from the 2012 global school feeding survey and three indicators: income level of the country; existence of a policy framework; and existence of a national programme. A transition strategy for the countries in the advanced stage (lower-right hand quadrant) is not applicable as WFP is primarily providing technical support.

Defining WFP's Role

18. As the largest external partner supporting school feeding, WFP helps governments develop national school feeding programmes so that children in low-income countries have access to the quality school feeding that is available elsewhere.

19. Depending on the transition stage of the country, WFP will play one or both of the following roles:

i) *Service delivery.* WFP has operated school feeding programmes for more than 50 years, working with children and their families, government counterparts, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and, increasingly, the private sector. WFP sub-offices, country offices, regional bureaux and Headquarters have expertise on appraisal, design, targeting, funding, management, logistics, procurement and monitoring.

ii) *Capacity development and knowledge building.* Its experience has established WFP as a repository of global school feeding expertise. It analyses knowledge from countries and disseminates it among them, providing policy advice and technical support to low- and middle-income countries. Establishment of the Centre of Excellence Against Hunger has significantly enhanced WFP's facilitation of South–South learning, policy dialogue and support to countries.

20. Table 2 illustrates the links between the SABER transition stages and WFP's new Strategic Objectives and school feeding roles. In earlier transition stages, particularly in fragile contexts, WFP will focus on service delivery, shifting to capacity development at later stages. Experience has shown that the transition process is non-linear, with setbacks caused by disasters or political instability. The framework should therefore be taken as a general guide, and WFP will need to assess and determine its role according to the situation.

TABLE 2: SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN THE TRANSITION STAGES – WFP'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, ROLES AND FOCUS

	Stage 1 – Latent	**Stage 2 – Emerging**	**Stage 3 – Established**	**Stage 4 – Advanced**
WFP Strategic Objectives connected to the Strategic Plan	1 – Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies 2 – Support or restore food security and nutrition and establish or rebuild livelihoods in fragile settings and following emergencies	2 – Support or restore food security and nutrition and establish or rebuild livelihoods in fragile settings and following emergencies 3 – Reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs 4 – Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger	3 – Reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs 4 – Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger	4 – Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger
WFP's roles	Role 1: Service delivery. Provide income transfers to beneficiaries and their families; protect or restore access to education and nutrition	Role 1: Service delivery. Restore or enhance access to education and nutrition; provide income transfers Role 2: Capacity development and knowledge-building. Support national institutions, setting the ground for transition	Role 2: Capacity development and knowledge-building. Focus on the transition Role 1: Service delivery. Enhance access to education and nutrition; provide income transfers	Role 2: Capacity development and knowledge-building. Provide specialized technical support to high-capacity countries
WFP's possible focus	Use WFP's operational capacity and ability to reach difficult areas Design simple programmes for quick scale-up, considering the eventual scale-down strategy; ensure that required infrastructure is in place Establish operational partnerships	Initiate dialogue with government on transition and establishing a budget line, while maintaining operational support Put transition strategies in place with government; focus on generating political will Initiate assessments and pilots for linking school feeding to local agricultural production Start estimating the time until full transition	Support government in drafting the policy or legal framework Evaluate experiences of linking school feeding to local agriculture, and innovations with potential for scale-up by government Start scaling down WFP operations; estimate government's financial capacity for school feeding and support funding strategies	(Transition completed; WFP does not deliver services, but can provide technical assistance) Establish South–South agreements and other technical cooperation Learn from government experience for other countries

21. In most countries, WFP provides both technical advice to governments and direct support to operations. WFP country offices have to evaluate which is more important, to guide their decisions regarding staffing, resources and engagement at the technical and policy levels.

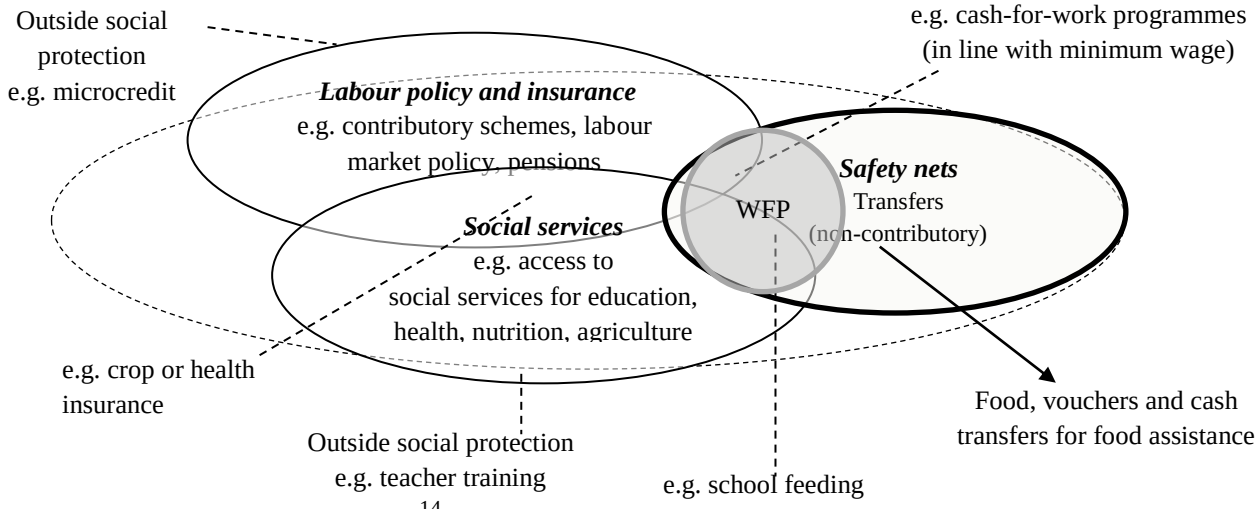
22. Rather than taking the lead in areas where it does not have a comparative advantage, WFP will support the efforts of specialized agencies or institutions. WFP will continue to build on its successful partnership with the World Bank on social protection, education, agriculture, policy dialogue, financing of school feeding operations and technical assistance to countries. WFP will work closely with UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to strengthen the links to education, including teachers, textbooks, curricula, etc. It will strengthen its partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and PCD on the link between school feeding and local agricultural production. Partnerships with academic institutions such as PCD and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) will continue to be essential for conducting randomized controlled trials and other academic research that will provide insights into WFP's future policy directions.

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK – SCHOOL FEEDING'S MULTIPLE BENEFITS

Social Protection and Child Development

23. WFP's new Strategic Plan cites school feeding as a tool for contributing to all four Strategic Objectives.[13] As a non-contributory transfer of resources to households, it functions similarly to other food- or cash-based transfers and has educational and nutrition benefits. WFP's safety nets policy positions school feeding at the intersection of social services and hunger-related social safety nets, as part of WFP's broader support to governments on hunger-related safety nets, which are, in turn, part of larger national social protection systems (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Social Protection Components[8]



Source: Adapted from Gentilini & Omamo, 2011[14]

[13] "WFP Strategic Plan (2014–2017)" (WFP/EB.A/2013/5-A/1)

[14] Gentilini, U. & Omamo, S.W. 2011. Social Protection 2.0: Exploring Issues, Evidence and Debates in a Globalizing World. *Food Policy*, 36(3): 329–340.

24. Within a social protection framework, school feeding acts as a reliable income transfer to poorer families; offsets education and food costs; provides important nourishment for children in chronically food-insecure families; safeguards child nutrition and allows households to return to normalcy during and after crises; and decreases the risk that children are withdrawn from school.[15]

25. School feeding can increase enrolment and attendance – particularly of girls – and can contribute to learning if combined with quality education.[16] With appropriately designed rations, school feeding can improve the nutrition status of preschool and primary school-aged children by addressing micronutrient deficiencies.[17] Combined with local agricultural production, school feeding can also provide small-scale farmers with a predictable market. Thus, school feeding provides both short-term benefits during and after crises, helping communities recover and build resilience, and longer-term benefits, in building human capital. [18]

26. School feeding programmes have proved relatively easy to scale up in crises. Almost 40 countries scaled up programmes between 2008 and 2012, in response to shocks such as armed conflict, natural disasters and food and financial crises.[19] Heightened interest in school feeding has also been evident in recession-hit, high-income countries.[20]

27. Recent reviews based on in-depth studies reveal that when compared with other safety nets such as conditional cash transfers school feeding fares quite well in term of outcomes, targeting equity, sustainability and appropriateness.[21]School feeding can increase human capital investments while also providing support to poor households. Thus, it serves to support ongoing hunger- and poverty-reduction programmes while making the need for future assistance less likely.[22].

28. Almost every country in the world is feeding its schoolchildren in one way or another so questions about whether countries should implement school feeding or not, or whether they should choose between this and other programmes are perhaps not the right ones. Reviews conclude that the central issue is how WFP and partners can help governments improve the effectiveness and sustainability of existing school feeding programmes.

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[15] Honkanen, T. 2013. WFP School Feeding: The Implications of a Social Protection Lens. Background paper for the 2013 revised school feeding policy (unpublished).

[16] For evidence on educational outcomes see: Adelman, S., Gilligan, D. & Lehrer, K. 2008. How Effective are Food-for-Education Programmes? A Critical Assessment of the Evidence from Developing Countries. Washington DC, IFRPI; and Jukes, M., Drake, L. & Bundy, D. 2008. School Health, Nutrition and Education for All: Levelling the Playing Field. Cambridge, MA, CABI Publishing.

[17] WFP & PCD. (forthcoming). Joint Position Paper: School Feeding and Nutrition.

[18] WFP. (forthcoming). Policy Position Paper on Resilience.

[19] School feeding in conflict and post-conflict situations is described in the case study in *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013*. For experiences in five African countries and the Philippines please see Wodon, Q. & Zaman, H. 2010. Higher Food Prices in Sub-Saharan Africa: Poverty Impact and Policy Response. *World Bank Research Observer*, 25(1): 157–176; World Bank. 2010. *Global Monitoring Report 2010: The MDGs after the Crisis*. Washington, DC.

[20] Such as in Spain, Greece and Portugal. See Murillo, P. La comida principal es la del cole. *El País*, 6 April 2013; Barca, J.A.Los platos más rebañados, los lunes. *El País*, 6 April 2013; Alderman, L. More Children in Greece are Going Hungry. *New York Times*, 17 April 2013.

[21] Grosh, M., del Ninno, C., Tesliuc, E. & Ouerghi, A. 2008. *For Protection and Promotion. The Design and Implementation of Effective Safety Nets*. Washington, DC, World Bank.

[22] Alderman, H. & Bundy, D. 2012. School Feeding Programmes and Development: Are We Framing the Question Correctly? *World Bank Research Observer*, 27(2): 204–221; Honkanen, T. 2013. WFP School Feeding: The Implications of a Social Protection Lens. Background paper for the 2013 revised school feeding policy (unpublished).

Cost-Effectiveness, Quality and Implications for WFP

29. The effectiveness of school feeding is difficult to assess because of school feeding's many benefits, which fall into in four main categories: safety nets, education, nutrition and local economies. There is strong evidence documenting school feeding's effects on individual outcomes[23] but no method for quantifying their aggregate impact. Based on a modelling exercise, WFP estimates that school feeding has a cost–benefit ratio of between 1:3 and 1:8.[24]

30. WFP and partners will assess the cost-effectiveness of school feeding and are developing tools for analysing the *ex-ante* cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of cash, vouchers and food transfers. Internal evaluations of the process for selecting transfer modalities are ongoing. PCD has begun three impact evaluations on school feeding in Africa, which are expected to provide more evidence on the cost-effectiveness of the programmes in different contexts. The World Bank and WFP are conducting a joint evaluation of a pilot project, comparing conditional cash transfers and take-home rations in primary schools in Cambodia. Results of such evaluations, which are part of the long-term research agenda, will become available by late 2015.

31. The difficulty in measuring cost-effectiveness also affects other programmes with multiple benefits, and many of the issues described below are similar to those faced by other safety nets.

32. *Predictability and adequacy.* Predictability refers to the regularity of meal provision; adequacy refers to the quantity, nutritional quality and timeliness of rations. Factors that affect service provision include lack of stable funding, unavailability of food, and weak or unstable local capacity to prepare and provide food. Governments, WFP and partners need to avoid pipeline breaks or resourcing problems that may cause reductions in ration sizes and numbers of feeding days.

33. *Synergies with other programmes.* School feeding is a multisectoral intervention, normally led by the education sector. About 90 percent of the countries in WFP's 2012 school feeding survey reported more than two sectors collaborating in school feeding.[25] According to recent case studies, coordination across ministries is a challenge, especially in fragile or low-capacity contexts, where a gradual integration of programmes and technical assistance from WFP and other partners may be needed. School feeding should be linked to programmes assisting children at different stages of the life cycle[26] and to community development, asset creation and resilience initiatives.

34. *Equity.* School feeding programmes risk excluding the poorest children and including children of non-poor households. In areas with pockets of out-of-school children, barriers to school attendance should be identified to determine whether school feeding can address them.[27]

[23] WFP Office of Evaluation. June 2012. *Learning from Evaluations of School Feeding: a Synthesis of Impact Evaluations*. This synthesis forms Volume I of Annex I to the report "School Feeding Policy: A Policy Evaluation" (OE/2012/002).

[24] WFP and The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) developed the "school feeding investment case", which quantifies the value created for each dollar invested in school feeding using evidence from three sets of benefits: nutrition, education and income transfer. The tool does not yet incorporate the impact of school feeding on local agricultural production.

[25] The main collaborating sector is health, followed by agriculture and local development.

[26] Such as mother-and-child nutrition, early childhood development, and school health and nutrition programmes.

[27] The number of out-of-school children worldwide has declined significantly, from 101 million in 1990 to 57 million in 2011 so exclusion errors for school feeding are less likely now than they were ten years ago. In fact, in many cases school feeding has been a crucial part of the strategy to increase school enrolment.

35. The extent of inclusion errors depends on the context, the targeting approach and the cost of targeting. About 90 percent of low-income countries and all WFP-supported operations use geographical targeting rather than the individual targeting commonly used in high-income countries, because the selection and registration process is less complex and costly and less likely to stigmatize children.[28] In countries with high poverty rates and where school feeding targets the poorest areas, most of the benefits reach the poor without requiring individual targeting. In more heterogeneous contexts, there is greater chance of providing free meals to children whose families have the capacity to pay for them.[29] Recent evidence suggests, however, that inclusion errors may not be a significant problem in school feeding programmes. A comparative study of safety nets in Latin America showed that school feeding programmes differentially benefit the poor over the non-poor: about 80 percent of the benefits go to the poorest two quintiles of the population.[30] More evidence is needed on low-income settings in Africa.

36. To reduce potential inclusion errors in some countries, individual targeting or the introduction of cost-recovery methods – with non-poor families paying for meals to offset the costs of feeding poorer children – may be more appropriate, although the government, WFP and partners will need to weigh the costs against the potential benefits.

37. Some governments prefer to provide some school feeding to all regions of the country, which increases the political impact but dilutes the efficiency of targeting. Urban areas may be prioritized over rural areas, or accessible schools over harder-to-reach ones. Evidence-based policy advice from WFP and partners can facilitate better decision-making to ensure that programmes prioritize the poor.

38. *Costs:* Although school feeding costs in most countries are close to international benchmarks – on average, per-child school feeding costs constitute 15–20 percent of the costs of basic education[31] – in some low-income countries the per-child cost of school feeding exceeds that of education, indicating opportunities for cost containment.[3] WFP and partners are working with these countries to explore the cost drivers of the programmes by, for example, examining food purchase, transport and handling costs.[32]

[28] A few countries provide meals to all schoolchildren under universal school feeding programmes.

[29] For more information, see Grosh, M., del Ninno, C., Tesliuc, E. & Ouerghi, A. 2008. *For Protection and Promotion. The Design and Implementation of Effective Safety Nets*. Washington, DC, World Bank.

[30] Bundy, D., Burbano, C., Grosh, M., Gelli, A., Jukes, M. & Drake, L. 2009. *Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector*. Washington, DC, World Bank and Rome, WFP.

[31] Gelli, A. & Daryanani, R. 2013. Are School Feeding Programs in low-Income Settings Sustainable? Insights on the Costs of School Feeding Compared with Investments in Primary Education. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 34(3): 310–317(8).

[32] For example, in Ghana total costs of the programme were reduced by 28 percent through more efficient staffing, lower office expenditures, and by replacing corn-soya blend with a combination of rice, pulses and micronutrient powder. See: BCG. 2009., Ghana school feeding cost analysis: Cost benchmark and cost containment opportunities.

THE FIVE OBJECTIVES OF WFP'S WORK IN SCHOOL FEEDING

39. The particular objectives and roles of each operation depend on national goals, the context, needs, and government capacity. A single programme may not achieve all the objectives, and the pursuit of each objective presents trade-offs against the others. The objectives must take into account the conditions on the ground and the availability and capacity of partners.

Objective 1: To Provide a Safety Net for Food-Insecure Households through Income Transfers

40. School feeding transfers income in the form of food to households. The transfer value depends on the modality, the ration contents and the context. Take-home rations or vouchers can provide higher transfer values: in Cambodia they averaged 26 percent of household income,[33] while in Bangladesh snacks averaged 4 percent[34] and meals averaged 10–14 percent.[1]

41. This objective is particularly important in crises and periods of stress when households may need additional food support. After the initial shock of a crisis, the school system can provide an effective way of scaling up safety nets, such as school feeding, providing a sense of normalcy, protecting children and teachers, and building social cohesion.

Objective 2: To Support Children's Education through Enhanced Learning Ability and Access to the Education System

42. WFP school feeding has traditionally focused on access to education. Strong evidence shows that school feeding can act as an incentive to enhance enrolment and reduce absenteeism, especially for girls.[35] Access to education will continue to be a focus where there are large numbers of out-of-school children, gender disparities persist, and school feeding – with other interventions – can help to draw hard-to-reach children into the education system.

43. In line with global efforts to improve the quality of education, WFP will increase its focus on ensuring that school feeding is complementing the efforts of governments and partners to enhance children's learning. School feeding may enhance a child's ability to concentrate if it provides appropriate micronutrients, particularly if the meal is consumed before lessons begin. WFP will continue to ensure that school feeding is provided where other elements – trained teachers, curricula, infrastructure and text books – are already in place, through the Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds initiative launched in 2013 and other partnerships in the education sector.

[33] Godden, K., Leguéné, P., Rüdiger, J., Ruegenberg, D. & Steen Nielsen, N. 2010. *WFP Cambodia School Feeding 2000–2010: A Mixed-Method Impact Evaluation.* Rome, WFP Office of Evaluation.

[34] Downen, J., Walters, T., Gomes, M. & Finan, T. 2011. *School Feeding in Bangladesh (2001–2009): A Mixed-Method Impact Evaluation.* WFP, Office of Evaluation, OE/2011/024.

[35] Gelli, A., Meir, U. & Espejo, F. 2007. Does Provision of Food in School Increase Girls' Enrolment? Evidence from Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin,* 28(2): 149–155; Drèze, J. & Kingdon, G. 2011. School Participation in Rural India. *Review of Development Economics,* 5(1): 1–24; Jacoby, H.G. 2002. Benefits of a School Breakfast Programme among Andean Children in Huarez, Peru. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin,* 17(1): 54–64; Kristjansson, E., Robinson, V., Petticrew, M., MacDonald, B., Krasevec, J. & Janzen, L. 2007. School Feeding for Improving the Physical and Psychosocial Health of Disadvantaged Elementary School Children. Cochrane Database Syst. Rev. (1).

Objective 3: To Enhance Children's Nutrition by Reducing Micronutrient Deficiencies

44. WFP provides nutritious meals in all school feeding projects.[36] Where micronutrient deficiencies are high,[37] it will design programmes to provide the lacking micronutrients, including vitamin A, iodine, iron and zinc, which can affect the ability to learn. The primary delivery mechanism will continue to be through multi-fortified foods, as a cost-effective way of ensuring a nutrient-rich diet where foods of high micronutrient content – meat, fruits and vegetables – are not readily available or are unaffordable.

45. Where feasible, WFP will design programmes that promote dietary diversity by using foods from several food groups. It will keep track of costs and ensure appropriate nutrient intake for children, in coordination with partners with expertise and resources, including ministries, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, NGOs and communities.

46. WFP will work with partners to ensure that school feeding is provided alongside school health and nutrition interventions – such as water and sanitation, deworming, health and nutrition education, and periodic health screenings – that contribute to an environment conducive to learning and protective of children's health.

47. While WFP will continue to focus on primary schoolchildren, it will seize opportunities for delivering micronutrients and nutrition education to pre-primary children and adolescents, especially girls, who are at high risk of micronutrient deficiencies and key to reversing the cycle of hunger and malnutrition,[38] but difficult to reach by other routes.

48. In developing school feeding programmes, WFP, governments and partners will take nutrition concerns into account, including emerging overweight and obesity issues. WFP will incorporate these concerns into programme design tools. WFP can, for example, review the content of food rations and work with the government and partners developing nutrition and health education curricula so that the meals reinforce messages concerning appropriate eating habits.

Objective 4: To Strengthen National Capacity for School Feeding through Policy Support and Technical Assistance

49. WFP will continue to meet government demand for assistance in integrating school feeding into national policy and legal frameworks, designing efficient and sustainable national programmes and securing stable sources of funding. WFP will support governments in developing school meal policies that are culturally sensitive and in line with national dietary guidelines.

50. WFP will enhance the capacity of national institutions to integrate school feeding into broader safety net systems, by providing technical assistance in targeting, nutrition, procurement, logistics, food processing, quality control, cost analysis, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

[36] This policy will continue to follow current WFP guidance on food basket requirements and minimum ration standards, which has not been changed and can be found in the school feeding section of WFP's *Programme Guidance Manual.*

[37] When anaemia levels among school-aged children are above 40 percent.

[38] Bhutta, Z., Das, J., Rizvi, A., Gaffey, M., Walker, N., Horton, S., Webb, P., Lartey, A. & Black, R. 2013. *Evidence-based interventions for improvement of maternal and child nutrition: what can be done and at what cost? The Lancet,* 382 (9890): 452–477. .

51. Where appropriate and cost-efficient, WFP will provide governments with services such as procurement, logistics and capacity development to support the transition to government ownership.

52. WFP will continue to promote South–South and triangular cooperation to strengthen national capacities for school feeding and facilitate policy dialogue, particularly through the Centre of Excellence Against Hunger. WFP is developing partnerships with countries to support South–South and triangular collaboration in food security and nutrition areas, and reviewing good practices from its own experiences.

Objective 5: To Develop Links between School Feeding and Local Agricultural Production Where Possible and Feasible

53. Governments are increasingly interested in linking school feeding to locally produced food, for long-term food security,[39] supporting not only beneficiary children but also the development of markets, the livelihoods of smallholder farmers,[40] traders and caterers, and local food processing industries.[41]

54. WFP has considerable experience in sourcing and processing food in developing countries; helping local manufacturers implement quality control measures and optimize production processes for maximum nutritional benefits, shelf-life and acceptability; and working with agricultural development partners, farmers' organizations, small- and medium-scale traders and nascent trading platforms through the pilot Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme and other country-led initiatives.[42]

55. Depending on the country and policy environment, WFP can: i) adapt its school feeding programmes to include local purchase, especially to benefit smallholder farmers, particularly women; and/or ii) advise governments on strategies for linking national school feeding programmes to local agricultural production.

56. Several country offices have begun innovative school feeding programmes that include local purchase, local processing or decentralized procurement, with partners such as FAO and IFAD.[43] At least seven of the 21 P4P countries report linking P4P to school feeding.[44]

57. Evidence of the impacts of these programmes on the local economy and smallholder farmers is expected in 2014. Through the P4P learning agenda, WFP and specialized partners are documenting good practices and impacts, to help determine the specific results that WFP should seek to achieve and how to measure them.

[39] High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE/FSN). 2012. *Social Protection for Food Security. A Report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security*. Rome, HLPE/FSN.

[40] Sumberg, J. & Sabates-Wheeler, R. 2011. Linking Agricultural Development to School Feeding in Sub-Saharan Africa: Theoretical Perspectives. *Food Policy*, 36: 341–349.

[41] Alderman, H. & Yemtsov, R. 2012. Productive Role of Safety Nets. Social Protection and Labor Discussion Paper No. 1203. Background paper for the World Bank 2012–2022 Social Protection and Labor Strategy. Washington, DC, World Bank.

[42] For example, the 2012 Government of Brazil, WFP and FAO Purchase from Africans for Africa initiative in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, the Niger and Senegal.

[43] Longford, S. 2013. WFP Position Paper on Linking School Feeding to Local Agricultural Production. Background paper prepared for 2013 WFP revised school feeding policy.

[44] According to a recent inquiry by the P4P Unit. Another four country offices plan to establish such links.

DEFINING THE OBJECTIVES IN PRACTICE – TRADE-OFFS AND KEY DECISIONS

58. WFP's school feeding programmes should be sustainable, targeted and cost-effective and should provide nutritious rations, using locally produced foods to the extent possible. Balancing these issues may require some of the following trade-offs.

59. *Choosing the primary objective(s) of the operation*. Not all objectives can be achieved in one programme, and each presents trade-offs in relation to the others. Based on situation analysis, governments and WFP must determine the primary objective(s) and design the operation accordingly. A central element is the modality – snacks, meals, take-home rations or a combination – each of which has different benefits, costs and operational requirements.[45] Meals and snacks can increase children's energy and micronutrient intake, while take-home rations are shared with the family and may not contribute to improving children's nutrition status. Meals provide more calories than snacks, but may require storage, cooking facilities and levels of community participation that may not be available in fragile or urban settings. Take-home rations are the most expensive modality, but can target specific beneficiaries, such as girls, orphans or children affected by HIV/AIDS; provide more income to the entire household; and do not require school infrastructure.

60. *Nutritional quality of locally purchased foods.* Locally purchased food must meet the nutrient needs of children, which it does not always do. Micronutrient powders can complement meals with below-standard micronutrient contents. Some country offices are piloting the introduction of fruits, vegetables and dairy products to diversify diets and increase micronutrients, but WFP's ability to purchase these products is limited by cost, stability and food safety concerns. The expansion of cash and voucher transfers represents a significant opportunity for increasing the local sourcing of school feeding supplies. The participation of government, partners and communities is essential for expanding the use of locally purchased foods.

61. *Purchasing locally, regionally or internationally.* Purchasing from farmers' groups close to schools may increase the costs because of lower economies of scale, but can also lower transportation and handling costs and increase community support and participation in school feeding programmes. Where WFP manages procurement with donor funding, it will review individual cases to assess whether paying higher prices for locally produced food is justified by the benefits to the local economy, farmers' access to markets and food security. Where governments finance the programmes, they may choose to pay higher prices for locally produced or procured food to benefit local economies.

62. *Exploring better ways of reaching beneficiaries*. Wherever feasible, country offices should incorporate new tools such as cash, vouchers or local purchase, to increase the effectiveness of programmes, explore better ways of providing assistance to beneficiaries and facilitate potential hand-over to governments. This may lead to programmes providing cash to districts, as in Ethiopia, or schools, as in Kenya; providing vouchers in conjunction with local caterers; or substituting in-kind take-home rations with cash, as in Cambodia.[46] Each programme type presents trade-offs in addition to the nutrition and cost issues: i) food may not always be available near the school, especially in the most food-insecure

[45] Bundy, D., Burbano, C., Grosh, M., Gelli, A., Jukes, M. & Drake, L. 2009. *Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector*. Washington, DC, World Bank and Rome, WFP. Table 5.3.

[46] Country offices should refer to the WFP Operations Department Directive of 8 December 2011. Cash and Voucher Programming (OD2011/004).

areas; ii) some models may be appropriate for urban and others for rural areas; iii) local-level accountability systems may need to be reinforced; and iv) the capacity of the district or community should be analysed to avoid exacerbating inequities because poorer areas may be less able to provide quality services.

TWO NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR WFP SCHOOL FEEDING OPERATIONS[47]

63. *Assessment.* The SABER assessment framework will be mainstreamed into the preparation of all WFP school feeding projects. The development of the SABER framework was led by the World Bank in collaboration with WFP and other partners. The tool was based on the school feeding quality standards presented in WFP's 2009 policy, which have been replaced by five policy goals (see Table 4). This change was made following consultations with governments and testing in more than 15 countries. The switch from "quality standards" to "policy goals" reflects the preference of governments and partners for moving towards goals rather than setting standards. Each policy goal has a corresponding set of indicators, a comprehensive questionnaire and a scoring system.[48]

64. The framework will enable governments and WFP country offices to assess the quality of programmes and address challenges. Country offices will be required to present the results of the assessment in all project documents with a school feeding component. SABER results from all projects will be compiled at Headquarters for overall analysis of trends and compliance with the school feeding policy.

[47] WFP will continue to: i) ensure that elements of the Essential Package are provided – promotion of girls' education, potable water and latrines, health and nutrition education, deworming, HIV and AIDS education, psycho-social support, malaria prevention, fuel-efficient stoves and school gardens; ii) mainstream protection and gender considerations into all projects; iii) adhere to the International Network for Education in Emergencies' Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies; and iv) ensure context analysis to minimize protection risks such as violence towards students, especially girls. WFP's position on school gardens continues to be that they are very useful learning and demonstration tools as part of the overall curriculum on nutrition education to help strengthen community participation. They can supplement school meals in some cases, but should not be expected to produce enough food to cover all the needs of programmes. School gardens should not form part of sustainability strategies in which the community, the teachers or the children are expected to sustain the programme entirely.

[48] This revised policy aligns WFP's policy and practice to the internationally recognized assessment framework for school feeding. Existing guidance will be updated and augmented in line with the new five policy goals.

TABLE 4: CONVERTING THE EIGHT QUALITY STANDARDS INTO THE FIVE NEW POLICY GOALS

Quality Standards (WFP 2009 School Feeding Policy)	SABER Policy goals (2013 Revised School Feeding Policy)
1. Sustainability	1. Policy frameworks
2. Sound alignment with the national policy framework	
3. Stable funding and budget	2. Financial capacity
5. Strong institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring and accountability	3. Institutional capacity and coordination
7. Strong partnerships and inter-sector coordination	
4. Needs-based, cost-effective quality programme design	4. Design and implementation
6. Strategy for local production and sourcing	
8. Strong community participation and ownership	5. Community roles – reaching beyond schools

65. *Costs*. In all new projects with a school feeding component, country offices will be required to report the planned absolute cost of school feeding per child, per year in all new project documents. This information will then be compared with established thresholds for acceptable, high or very high costs at the Headquarters level. Country offices with very high costs will need to provide a justification and/or devise cost containment strategies.[49]

66. Guidance on these new requirements will be developed and disseminated to all country offices together with this revised policy.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

67. This policy presents two types of expected results, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated. One type relates to changes in children's lives brought about by school feeding programmes affecting their food security, productivity, education, health and nutrition. Annex I presents the theory of change and related results.

68. The other type of results relates to institutional changes – within and outside of WFP – that derive from implementation of this policy. Institutional results affect outcomes for children. Annex II presents WFP's policy commitments and outlines what is expected to change as a result of this policy.

[49] WFP and BCG developed the cost benchmark methodology for determining the actual costs of WFP school feeding operations in each country, based on analysis of sea access, number of items in the food basket, income status and country context – emergency versus more stable. Annual data collected since 2008 enable the calculation of five-year averages and a standard deviation range, on which WFP will base its cost thresholds.

69. WFP will develop a comprehensive M&E strategy to measure both types of results. The M&E strategy will establish guidelines and responsibilities for country offices, regional bureaux and Headquarters for reporting, triangulating information from several sources. Annual Standard Project Reports will continue to generate outcome- and output-level data for WFP school feeding programmes. Corporate outcome and output indicators related to these results, with targets, are included in the new SRF (Annex III). The global school feeding survey will be fielded every two years to track policy implementation. Country specific progress will be tracked through the SABER assessment framework and the annual cost benchmark exercise.

70. The P4P learning agenda, the evaluation report scheduled for 2014 and the M&E framework based on P4P experiences – which will include public procurement and the connection between P4P and school feeding – will inform future changes in WFP's guidance and indicators.

MOVING FORWARD – WFP PRIORITY ACTIONS

Supporting Quality of Education through a Renewed Partnership

71. Recognizing their complementary roles, WFP, UNICEF and UNESCO launched the Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds initiative to ensure that improved coordinated action improves the quality of education. WFP's role will be to ensure that school feeding operations are implemented in coordination with the other two agencies, which have the lead in the education sector. This field-led effort will be implemented in four pilot countries with potential for innovation and opportunities for defining replicable partnership models – Haiti, Mozambique, the Niger and Pakistan. As well as strengthening existing collaboration, including with governments, the three-year initiative will seek support from private sector partners. Expected outcomes include improved child health and nutrition; expanded access to early childhood care; improved enrolment rates for girls, focusing on adolescent girls; collaboration with communities and governments in building school environments that are conducive to learning; and evidence demonstrating the synergies among education, health and nutrition.

Continue Strengthening the Evidence Base

72. WFP will continue to work with partners on the 2009 research agenda that was updated in 2013.[50] Research topics include the efficiency of geographical targeting in low-income countries; in-depth analysis on the cost drivers of programmes; country-specific impact evaluations; and the impacts of purchasing from smallholder farmers. Specialized academic partners such as PCD will lead most of the research, with support from WFP. Two publications on school feeding lessons learned and good practice will be launched in 2014.

[50] WFP has established a partnership with the United Kingdom-based research consortium Public Health Nutrition Research (PHNR) to gather and analyse information about school feeding in high-income countries – a major knowledge gap that is beyond WFP's mandate and capacity.

Supporting Governments in Establishing and Maintaining National Programmes

73. WFP will continue to respond to countries' demand for policy advice and technical assistance for sustainable national programmes, as part of broader support to safety nets.[51] It will make efforts to bring together the education, health and agriculture sectors, strengthen its relationship with FAO and make optimum use of support from the private sector.

74. Through the Centre of Excellence Against Hunger and other initiatives, WFP will continue to triangulate collaboration among countries and support high-level policy dialogue on broader issues related to food security, nutrition and safety nets. WFP and the World Bank will strengthen collaboration on school feeding in the context of a broader partnership agreement between the two organizations.

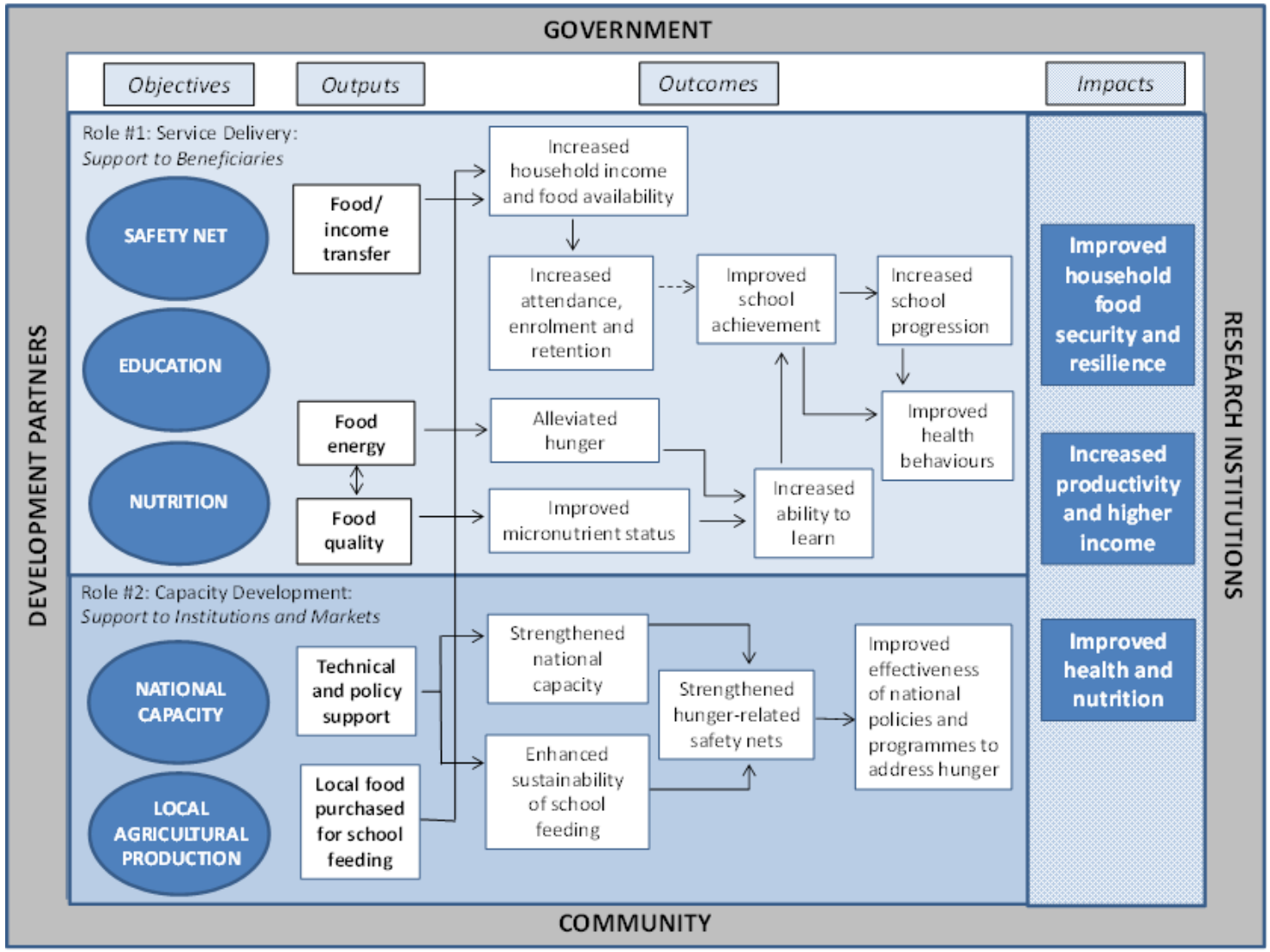
75. WFP's plan for implementing this policy will focus on disseminating the policy, updating guidance and training WFP staff in new areas contained in the policy. During 2014, the two new requirements on costs and the use of SABER will be tested in selected country offices. A training package on the policy will be developed for regional bureaux and country office staff, and will include a training developed with the World Bank on SABER.

76. More than half of the sustainable national programmes currently being implemented in 64 middle- and low-income countries began with support from WFP. This revised policy presents the results and lessons learned from analyses of these experiences over the last five years. By adopting these new policy directions, WFP will be better-placed to assist governments in developing effective school feeding programmes that contribute to the elimination of poverty and hunger and promote national prosperity.

[51] WFP is developing a comprehensive guidance framework for hunger-related safety nets, including school feeding, for dissemination to country offices in early 2014.

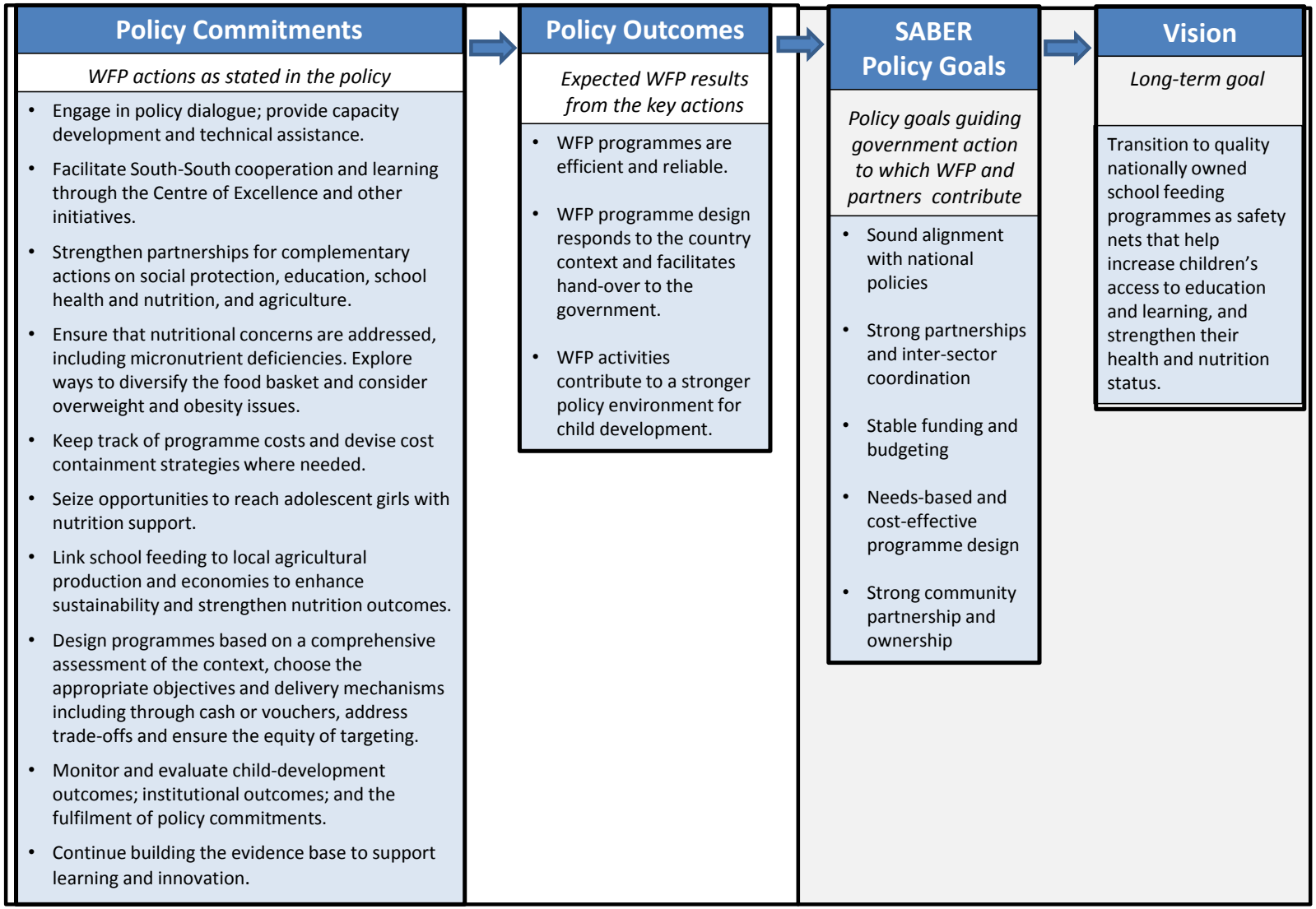
ANNEX I

First Type of Results: Child Outcomes and Theory of Change for School Feeding



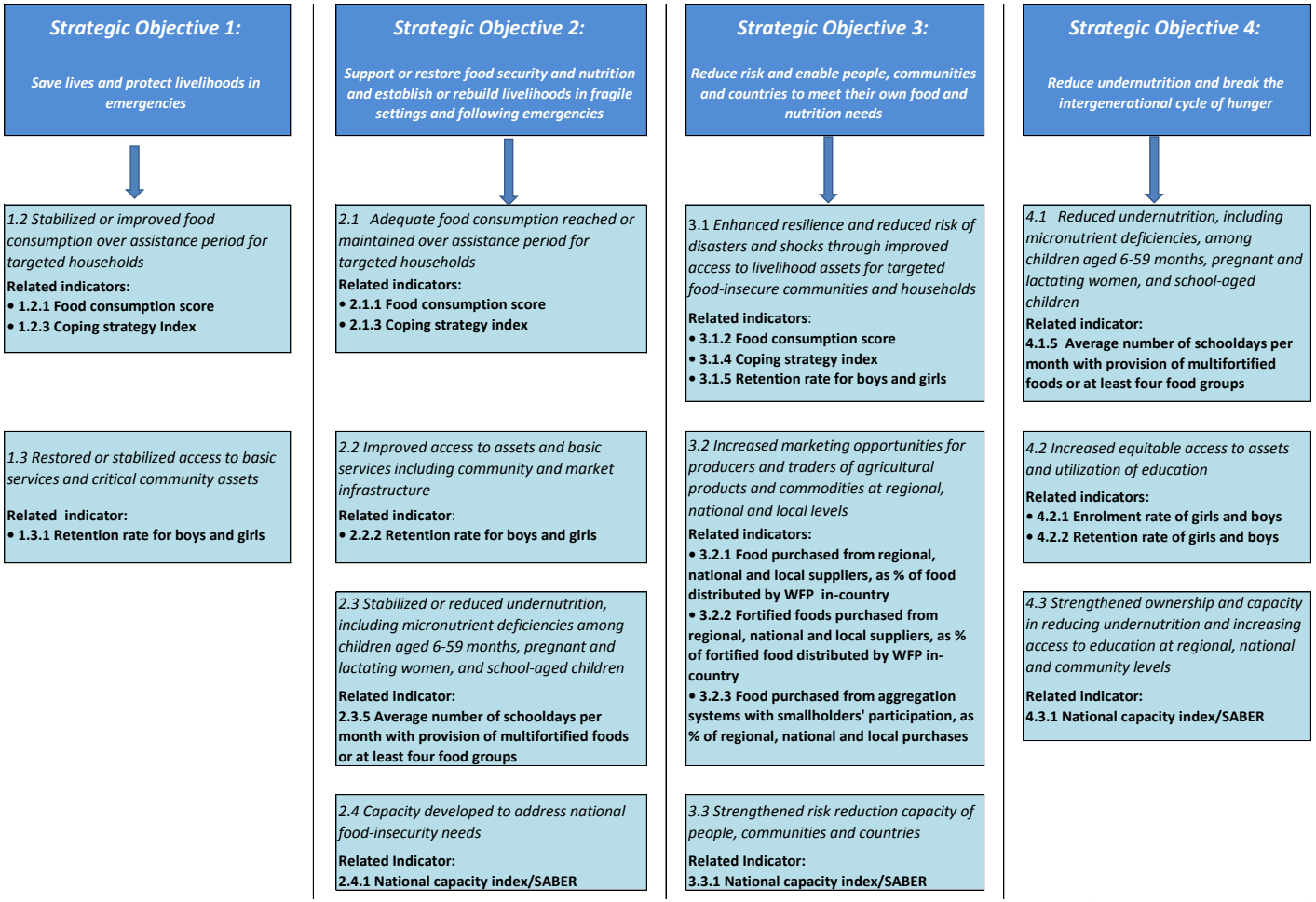
ANNEX II

Second Type of Results: Institutional Outcomes Resulting from Policy Implementation



Note: WFP will determine indicators of progress for each institutional outcome as part of the overall M&E strategy for school feeding. Many indicators are already being collected through the global school feeding survey and SPRs. Examples of indicators include: the number of programmes that have been handed over to governments (this indicator is related to the long-term goal); and percentage of country offices operating school feeding programmes by transition stage (this indicator is featured in Table 1 and will be used to measure achievement of the SABER policy goals).

School Feeding as Reflected in WFP's Strategic Results Framework



Some indicators are already used in WFP school feeding; others are being introduced for the first time. Two WFP outcome-level indicators are relevant to measuring safety net objectives, each providing a slightly different picture: the food consumption score and the coping strategy index. A new indicator has replaced anaemia levels to measure the effect of school feeding on micronutrient deficiencies (see indicator 4.1.5). The national capacity index for school feeding will be based on the SABER framework. Guidance on how to use and measure these indicators for school feeding will be issued with the SRF and the review of the indicator compendium.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

BCG	The Boston Consulting Group
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organization
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PCD	Partnership for Child Development
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization