

BUDGET REVISION FOR THE APPROVAL OF REGIONAL DIRECTOR

	<u>Initials</u>	<u>In Date</u>	<u>Out Date</u>	<u>Reason For Delay</u>
<u>ORIGINATOR</u>				
Country Office or Regional Bureau on behalf of Country Office
<u>CLEARANCE</u>				
Project Budget & Programming Officer, RMBP
Chief, RMBP
Chief, ODLT (change in LTSH and/or External Transport)
<u>APPROVAL</u>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Director

Project title: Food assistance as a support to Liberia’s transition from recovery to sustainable development.			
Cost			
	Current budget	Increase	Revised budget
Food cost	US\$6,582,683	US\$2,091,600	US\$ 8,674,283
External transport	US\$1,753,077	US\$ 378,626	US\$ 2,131,703
LTSH	US\$3,031,343	US\$1,190,381	US\$ 4,221,724
ODOC	US\$ 535,092	US\$ 90,022	US\$ 625,114
DSC	US\$2,159,892	US\$ 992,902	US\$ 3,152,794
ISC (7.0 percent)	US\$ 984,346	US\$ 332,047	US\$ 1,316,393
Total cost for WFP	US\$15,046,433	US\$5,075,578	US\$20,122,011

<u>TYPE OF REVISION</u>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional commodity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional DSC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional ODOC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional LTSH
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional external transport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extension in time	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

NATURE OF THE INCREASE

1. The budget revision (BR) to Development Project 107330 proposes to: (i) extend the implementation period for 3 months, from September – November 2011; ii) increase food commodities by 3,987 mt, valued at US\$2,091,600; (iii) increase external transport, landside transport, shipping and handling, other direct operational costs, and direct support costs by US\$ 2,651,931; and iv) add indirect support costs of US\$ 332,047.
2. This BR will: i) add 258,000 school meals beneficiaries from PRRO 108210 to the current DEV caseload of 62,000 beneficiaries; ii) provide a total of 320,000 school children with one daily hot meal, girls' take home family rations benefiting 36,000 people and cooks' take home family rations benefiting 15,000 people. This consolidation of the PRRO caseload through this budget revision will bring the total caseload of this DEV to 371,000 beneficiaries; iii) begin to align WFP's programme cycle with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). This BR supports WFP Strategic Objective (SO) 4: Reduce chronic hunger and under nutrition; and SO5: Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger. WFP's country strategy, currently under preparation, considers school feeding an investment in human capital through social protection.
3. The cost of this budget revision (3,987 mt of food commodities and associated costs) will be fully covered through the resource transfer of the remaining McGovern-Dole FFE contribution from PRRO 108210. The McGovern-Dole FFE grant was approved to support school feeding under the PRRO. However, in order to merge the school feeding activities from the two projects into a single school feeding project under the DEV, the Country Office has formally requested donor approval for the resource transfer to the expanded project.

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXTENSION-IN-TIME AND BUDGET INCREASE

Summary of existing project activities

4. School feeding under PRRO 108210, operating since 2009, assists approximately 258,000 primary school children in 7 counties where more than 45 percent of households have poor or borderline food consumption: Lofa, Gbarpolu, Nimba, Bong, River Cess, Grand Bassa and Bomi.¹ To encourage attendance, the PRRO provides monthly take home rations to 8,800 girls enrolled in grades 4-6 attending at least 80 percent of total school days per month.
5. The PRRO school feeding project provided the Ministry of Education (MoE) with initial decentralized programming and monitoring experience and provided communities and schools access to the services of County and District Education Officers. Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) were mobilized to form Food Management Committees, however accountability issues of misuse of food in schools and weaknesses in enrolment and attendance figures remain on the MoE's management agenda. Agricultural learning using school gardens was put into practice at the school and community levels.
6. School feeding under DEV 107330 has been operating since 2008, reaching 62,000 primary school children in five food insecure southeastern counties: Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland, Sinoe and Grand Kru. Monthly take home rations are distributed to 4,300 girls in counties where the gender gap in primary attendance is 15 percent or more.

¹ 2008 Comprehensive food security and nutrition survey.

7. DEV 107330 supports government efforts in addressing issues of chronic food insecurity and gender disparity in access to education in the southeast of the country. As part of this project, WFP started a capacity development strategy aimed at transferring monitoring and reporting capacity and systems to the Government through the Ministry of Education School Feeding Unit at central and decentralized levels.
8. Through WFP's support over the past year, the MoE established regional school feeding coordination structures covering four regions of the country. This structure ensures a direct link between the County Education Office and the Division of School Feeding at the central level.
9. In 2010, WFP began using rice purchased locally through Purchase for Progress (P4P) as part of the take-home rations for girls. Girls take-home rations are intended to serve as an incentive for families to keep girls in school in order to help reduce the gender differential in primary education. The rations are distributed in public and community primary schools where the gender gap is 15 percent or more.
10. The goals of DEV 107330 are to:
 - Ensure the integration of school feeding into national and decentralised education strategies, resource mobilization, and management;
 - Reduce social and economic barriers to enrolment and attendance;
 - Facilitate school feeding as a platform for developmental activities (e.g., essential package, school gardening);
 - Further enhance interaction between communities and local governance to assure a school environment free of corrupt practices and food theft, and efficient delivery of educational goods and services.

Key findings of the school feeding review

11. WFP's February 2011 school feeding review assessed the current challenges facing youth, households, and communities in Liberia, the Liberian education system, and the modalities of WFP-supported school feeding. The review confirmed that school meals saved household expenditures on food for school-going children and recommended combining the PRRO and DEV school feeding projects into one single development project.
12. The main challenges for school feeding in Liberia, to be addressed in this Budget Revision, the subsequent Budget Revision (December 2011-December 2012), and in the upcoming WFP Country Programme (2013-2017), include:
 - The incipient decentralized education system needs time to transition to a functional education and local government system that can adopt development strategies and approaches;
 - To face current social, economic and educational challenges, the MoE needs to provide leadership in mobilizing a wider participation of sectors and development partners;
 - Conducting regular internal and external audits, jointly with other development partners, can further support WFP spearheading anti-corruption activities with the MoE and the Liberian Anti-corruption Committee, thus supporting the PRS framework of strengthening fragile governance and rule of law;
 - Community participation in improving the quality of education, supporting requirements of meal preparation, and monitoring stock management;
 - Streamlining school feeding data collection and analysis within the MoE system to ensure better absorption of findings in the Government programme and management structures and allow for verification of one MoE data set;

- Strengthening the relevance of education, in particular the student curriculum, and teacher training on agricultural learning through school gardening;
- Ensure a clear national policy framework for girls' education to ensure that discriminatory barriers to education for girls are removed.

Purpose of extension and/or budget increase

13. The Government of Liberia is nearing the end of its first post-war development plan (PRS-I) and is now holding consultations for the preparation PRS-II, expected to begin in 2013. The Country Office, in consultation with both the regional bureau and headquarters, agreed specifically to prepare a budget revision to both the PRRO and DEV with two main purposes: 1) To merge the two school feeding activities into a single portfolio under the DEV project, as the PRRO school feeding project was increasingly focusing on the same objectives as the DEV project; 2) To bridge the time gap and allow for the alignment of WFP's programme cycle (a Country Programme integrating remaining activities under the PRRO and the DEV) with those of the new UNDAF (2013-2017) and the PRS-II.
14. This 3-month BR serves as the first step in aligning DEV 107330 with the UNDAF and PRS-II cycles, which run through 2012, and will extend the DEV to the end of November 2011 to allow incorporation of the PRRO school feeding program, to prepare to expand school meals to cover grades 7-9 as a result of the 2011 Education Reform Act (see below for explanation), and to begin the design of a transition strategy. A follow-up 13-month extension to the end of 2012 will complete the alignment and test the transition strategy that will be incorporated into a 2013 Country Programme, in line with the 2013 – 2016 PRS.
15. WFP will continue to provide school meals to children in public and community schools from primary to basic education levels in twelve counties: Grand Bassa, River Cess, Grand Gedeh, Gbarpolu, Grand Kru, Sinoe, River Gee, Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Bomi and Maryland. The 2011 Education Reform Act defines basic education as completion of grade nine. To address the dramatic drop in net enrolment rate (NER) between primary (grades 1-6) and junior high (grades 7-9), as seen in Table 1 below, the MoE has declared that school feeding in Liberia should be extended to cover basic education through grade nine.

Table 1: Net Enrolment Rates in WFP-assisted Counties

County	2008/09 Net Enrolment Rate (NER)			
	Pre-primary	Primary	Grades 7-9	Grades 10-12
Bomi	45%	24%	6%	1%
Bong	43%	36%	2%	1%
Grand Bassa	42%	28%	3%	1%
Grand Gedeh	39%	29%	2%	1%
Grand Kru	68%	56%	2%	0%
Lofa	39%	46%	4%	1%
Maryland	31%	36%	2%	1%
Nimba	48%	39%	3%	2%
River Cess	41%	20%	0%	0%
Sinoe	33%	26%	1%	1%
River Gee	28%	22%	1%	0%
Gbarpolu	71%	50%	1%	0%

16. As such, WFP will work with the MoE to gather the most recent enrolment numbers during the course of this BR and prepare the inclusion of children in junior secondary grades 7-9. Following the consolidation of beneficiaries from the PRRO under this BR, the actual increase in beneficiaries will begin with the next BR (December 2011 – December 2012) and will be an important part of the transition strategy to a Country Programme.
17. In addition to the WFP-supported school feeding programme, two other international organizations support the MoE's school feeding activities: Mary's meals (covering 28,400 primary school children in Montserrado and Bomi counties); and International Relief and Development (IRD) in Margibi and Montserrado counties with a caseload of 30,000 primary schoolchildren. WFP coordinates with Mary's Meals in Bomi county to avoid overlap; the WFP project does not cover Margibi or Montserrado counties.
18. The national gender parity index (GPI) for Liberia is 0.88 at the primary level and 0.75 at the secondary school level. WFP monitoring shows that the drop in girls' attendance begins at grade four and the gender parity ratio continues to drop thereafter, as seen in Table 2 below. To address this, WFP distributes take-home rations to girls in grades 4-6 in 25 school districts (out of 88) in the 12 counties. These 25 school districts targeted by WFP have been identified by the MoE as having gender gaps of 15 percent or more (i.e., GPI ratios of 0.85 or less).
19. The MoE prioritizes support to girls' education in Liberia with the following objectives: a) that girls enter school at the appropriate age; b) that girls stay in school so that they reach a significant level of education before risks of drop-out grow and; c) to support teenage girls to fight anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies, increasing the already high risk of teenage pregnancies.

Table 2: Gender Parity Index in WFP-supported counties

County	2008/09 GER Based GPI		
	Primary School (Grades 1-6)	Junior High School (Grades 7-9)	Senior High School (Grades 10-12)
Bomi	0.93	0.88	0.59
Bong	0.88	0.74	0.59
Gbarpolu	0.75	0.50	0.38
Grand Bassa	0.79	0.72	0.59
Grand Gedeh	0.86	0.74	0.47
Grand Kru	0.76	0.61	0.28
Lofa	0.86	0.52	0.38
Maryland	0.88	0.72	0.6
Nimba	0.92	0.82	0.74
River Cess	0.83	0.55	0.27
River Gee	0.86	0.47	0.35
Sinoe	0.88	0.60	0.41

20. This budget revision also proposes to provide monthly take home family rations for 3,000 school cooks who spend significant portions of their time each school day preparing meals for the pupils. Ensuring the availability of school cooks for regular and timely preparation of daily school meals is a major challenge for the government and the local school communities. The Government is still unable to provide salaries and incentives for a significant number of classroom teachers, let alone school cooks.

21. As part of capacity development for the MoE under the PRRO, NGO cooperative partners have provided training to MoE staff at the county and district levels in programme planning, monitoring, and reporting. The MoE now has the minimal institutional framework in place to assume these responsibilities. Starting in September 2011, WFP school feeding implementation contracts with NGOs will not be continued. Instead, WFP will seek strategic partnerships with NGOs on the basis of cost-shared common objectives. This might required a revised list of NGOs with whom WFP works at present.
22. School gardens are critical elements for community involvement and education. WFP will engage the MoE and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to discuss the inclusion and elaboration of school garden programmes and the division of responsibility at decentralized level. This will include support to MoE by the Division of Agriculture and Environment on the formulation and implementation of a National Agriculture and Environmental Science Curriculum and foster agricultural activities in all schools in the country.
23. Table 3 shows the shift in beneficiaries under this budget revision:

TABLE 3. BENEFICIARIES BY ACTIVITY TYPE				
Activity	Category of beneficiaries	Present	Increase	Revised
School Meals	Public basic education students	62,000	258,000	320,000
Girls Take Home Rations	Members of families of girls enrolled in public basic education *	17,200	18,800	36,000
Cooks Take Home Rations	Members of families of cooks	0	15,000	15,000
Total		79,200	291,800	371,000

*This number is multiplied by 4 instead of 5 because each girl receives a daily school meal in addition to the take home ration.

24. Table 4 shows the modifications to food rations:

TABLE 4: PROPOSED MODIFICATION OF DAILY FOOD RATION BY ACTIVITY (g/person/day)			
Commodity	Hot Meals	Girls' Take Home Rations** (family ration)	Cooks' Take Home Rations** (family ration)
	Revised	Revised	Revised
Bulgur wheat	150	167	167
Rice		167*	0

Yellow split peas	30	0	0
Vegetable oil	10	12	0
Salt	5	0	0
Cash/voucher (US\$/pers/day)	0	0	0
Total	195	179	167
Total kcal/day	716	691	585
% Kcal from protein	12.6	10.6	12.6
% Kcal from fat	15.9	19.1	3.9
Number of feeding days per year or per month (as applicable)	54 feeding days	60 feeding days	54 feeding days

*Rice is provided instead of bulgur wheat in districts where P4P local procurement takes place.

**Take home rations are monthly rations for a family of 5: 25 kg of cereals and 1.8 kg of vegetable oil.

FOOD REQUIREMENTS

Activity	Commodity	Food requirements (mt)		
		Current	Increase	Revised total
School Meals	Food	7,028	3,369	10,397
Girls' Take Home Rations	Food	3,869	483	4,352
Cooks' Take Home Rations	Food	0	135	135
Total		10,897	3,987	14,884

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