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Draft Armenia country strategic plan (2019–2024)

Duration	1 July 2019–30 June 2024
Total cost to WFP	USD 27,928,197
Gender and age marker*	3

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

Executive summary

In April and May of 2018, a series of peaceful demonstrations dubbed “the velvet revolution” led to a change in political power in Armenia, with the new Government promising wide-ranging reforms. Recent elections have solidified the political transition and demonstrated confidence in the new Government to deliver on promises of reform. Despite macroeconomic progress and structural reforms implemented during the last decade, growth has been weak and unevenly distributed in the country, and a rising state debt has put pressure on the budget, hindering the implementation of national social safety nets and driving many Armenians to emigrate in search of economic opportunities elsewhere. Although the country has made significant progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as maternal and child health, access to safe and reliable water supply, and improved sanitation in urban areas, more effort is needed to reduce poverty and food insecurity. Food insecurity affects 16 percent of the population in Armenia and is primarily an issue of access, which is exacerbated by poverty, gender inequalities and geographical factors. Malnutrition is a concern, evidenced by high rates of stunting for children under 5, while overweight and anaemia are also prevalent, particularly among women of reproductive age. Lack of data is a major challenge to addressing malnutrition in Armenia and more effort is needed to expand the evidence base in support of nutrition-sensitive and targeted activities.

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WFP's flagship activity in Armenia has been school feeding. WFP has worked with the Government and partners to develop a comprehensive model of school feeding, and the handover of school feeding activities to the Government began in 2014. Under this country strategic plan for 2019 to 2024, WFP will not only continue to support the Government to ensure a smooth handover of school feeding, it will also work to develop a more sustainable and innovative home-grown model that is more nutritious and benefits vulnerable communities. At the request of the Government and in cooperation with partners and the Rome-based agencies, WFP will expand technical support to the Government to include important areas identified in the national strategic review, including on generating evidence to inform nutrition and emergency preparedness efforts.

Accordingly, this country strategic plan contains two strategic outcomes:

- Strategic outcome 1: Vulnerable populations in Armenia, including schoolchildren, have access to adequate and nutritious food year round.
- Strategic outcome 2: National policies, programmes and systems are strengthened so that they improve food security and nutrition among targeted groups by 2024.

These strategic outcomes contribute directly to WFP Strategic Results 1 and 5 as well as Sustainable Development Goals 2 on improving access to food, 17 on strengthening the capacity of governments and 4 on ensuring quality education. WFP will support the Government to ensure inclusive and equitable education in Armenia, improved livelihoods for the vulnerable and better nutrition information and evidence, fostering equitable opportunities and equal access to resources for all people. The country strategic plan is in line with the priorities identified through the 2018 national strategic review and the focus on human capital development and the improvement of social protection set out in the Armenia development strategy 2014–2025, as well as the goals of the Armenia United Nations development assistance framework (2016–2020).

Draft decision*

The Board approves the Armenia country strategic plan (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/1) at a total cost of USD 27,928,197.

* 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. Armenia is an upper¹ middle-income country with a population of 3 million people; it is landlocked and a net importer of food. In May 2018, a new government² came to power, proclaiming the launch of wide-ranging reforms meant to increase transparency and accountability in public governance, reduce corruption and improve the rule of law, gender equality and human rights.³ Armenia hopes to promote economic development and expand into a more service-based economy, focusing efforts on modernization and information technology and reducing gender inequalities in the economic and technology spheres.
2. As one of the most shock-prone countries in the Central Asia and Caucasus region, Armenia is susceptible to natural disasters such as droughts, hailstorms, floods and landslides. Climate change impacts the frequency and intensity of such shocks and can cause significant damage to agricultural productivity, with losses estimated at 7–14 percent for all types of agricultural products.⁴ Situated in one of the most seismically active regions of the world, Armenia has been estimated to lose an average 3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) due to earthquakes, while a 25-year flood could reduce GDP by 6 percent or more.⁵
3. Food insecurity affects 16 percent of the population, with higher prevalence among large and poor households and households headed by unemployed people (affecting men and women equally, with pensioners at a slightly higher risk).⁶ Food insecurity is primarily an issue of access to nutritious food, particularly a lack of financial means, the low profitability of agricultural production, gender and economic inequalities, limited job opportunities and poor awareness of and education on nutrition. Malnutrition is an issue in Armenia, manifesting in a double burden of stunting and overweight, particularly among children under 5.⁷
4. Almost one person in three lives below the poverty line in Armenia. Women and girls make up 57 percent of the poor, and children under 18 are even more vulnerable: the estimated child poverty rate in 2016 was 34.2 percent (36.1 percent of girls and 32.4 percent of boys).⁸ Despite economic gains made during the last decade, Armenians (primarily men) leave the country each year in search of economic opportunities elsewhere, resulting in increased responsibilities for women in managing households and financial dependence on

¹ World Bank. *New country classifications by income level: 2018–2019* (<https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-country-classifications-income-level-2018-2019>).

² Although at the time of writing (January 2019), the new Government is still incomplete, 30 of 132 newly elected parliament members are women.

³ *SDG Implementation Voluntary National Review (VNR) Armenia: Report for the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*. 2018. Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19586Armenia_VNR_2018.pdf.

⁴ WFP, United Nations Children's Fund and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. 2016. *Armenia Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis, revised. December 2017*. Available at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000020456/download/>.

⁵ World Bank. *Armenia: Required Resilience to Natural Disasters in the Urbanization* (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/events/2016/01/19/drmhubtokyo-armenia-national-disaster-risk-management-program-launch>).

⁶ WFP, United Nations Children's Fund and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. 2016. *Armenia Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis, revised December 2017*. Available at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000020456/download/>.

⁷ National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia. January 2018. Available at https://www.un.am/up/library/NSR_ExSum_2018-01-11-ENG.pdf

⁸ National Statistical Service. *2017 Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia*. Available at <https://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1988>.

remittances. Among food-insecure households, remittances were found to make up over 75 percent of household income.⁹

5. Armenia ranked 83rd out of 189 on the Human Development Index in 2017¹⁰ and 97th out of 144 according to the Global Gender Gap report. The percentage of women and girls aged 15 to 64 participating in the labour force was 59.6 percent in 2017, compared with 77.7 percent among men and boys.¹¹ Employment opportunities are limited and persisting gender inequalities further restrict the opportunities for women to access economic resources and decent work, which ultimately hinders Armenia's socio-economic development and the progress towards achieving zero hunger. In addition, the sex ratio at birth in Armenia favours boys, with 110 boys born to every 100 girls in 2017, indicating serious discrimination against women.¹² Though the ratio is decreasing, this fact will transform population structures and severely affect the dynamics of marriage in the decades to come.

1.2 Progress towards SDG 2

Targets

6. The recent political transformations in Armenia are expected to have a positive effect on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In July 2018, the Government presented a voluntary national review, showcasing progress made in areas such as maternal and child health, access to safe and reliable water supply, and improved sanitation in urban areas. Yet, there are areas where Armenia has made slow or mixed progress, particularly related to poverty reduction, educational attainment (undermined by high dropout rates from secondary school), gender equality, the efficient use of water and irrigation systems, environment issues including deforestation and land degradation, access to sanitation services in rural areas, and the facilitation of sustainable consumption and production practices.¹³
7. *Access to food:* Armenia's relatively strong agricultural performance since 2001 has substantially increased its self-sufficiency in its main food products and overall food availability. About 66 percent of the total dietary energy per person available for consumption comes from domestic production.¹⁴ However, food availability is still highly dependent on food imports, especially for cereals and meat.
8. Those most vulnerable to food insecurity and undernourishment are people living below the poverty line, girls and boys, unemployed or informally employed people, large households, and households headed by women.¹⁵ Rural areas are more prone to food insecurity than urban areas. Although food security is high on the Government's agenda, the most vulnerable groups of the population and specific localities with lower access to

⁹ WFP, United Nations Children's Fund and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. 2016. *Armenia Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis, revised December 2017*. Available at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000020456/download/>.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. 2018. *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update*. Available at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf.

¹¹ World Economic Forum. 2017. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*. Available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf.

¹² *SDG Implementation Voluntary National Review (VNR) Armenia: Report for the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*. 2018. Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19586Armenia_VNR_2018.pdf.

¹³ National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia. January 2018.

See https://www.un.am/up/library/NSR_ExSum_2018-01-11-ENG.pdf.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

food are not delineated in policies directly aimed at achieving food security, making it difficult to provide strategic, targeted support that can eliminate hunger and malnutrition.

9. *End malnutrition:* The Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015/16 revealed that 4.2 percent of children under 5 were wasted (5.0 percent of girls and 3.6 percent of boys) while 13.6 percent were overweight (14.5 percent of boys and 12.7 percent of girls).¹⁶ The levels of overweight were higher among rural children (16.4 percent) than urban children (11.5 percent). Among children aged 6–23 months, only one in four met the minimum acceptable dietary standards and 16 percent of those aged 6–59 months were anaemic. While the demographic and health survey gives some insight into the nutritional situation in Armenia, further data and analysis are required, particularly related to stunting, where findings have raised questions.¹⁷
10. Exclusive breastfeeding of children younger than 6 months increased from 35 percent in 2010 to 45 percent in 2016, indicating a marked improvement.¹⁸ However, several factors contribute to undernutrition among children, including a lack of information among parents about when to introduce complimentary foods and about proper nutrition, the poor quality of counselling provided by primary healthcare providers and irregular and inaccurate checks of weight and height in healthcare facilities.
11. *Smallholder productivity and incomes:* Agriculture employs 34 percent of the total labour force, including 39 percent of the female workforce and 31 percent of the male workforce.¹⁹ Although smallholder farmers produce over 97 percent of agricultural output, their productivity is low because of issues with land ownership and size, poor irrigation practices, low mechanization, the selection of crops that are not very profitable, inaccessible roads, poor access to markets and credit, and climate change. Many farmers suffer from land fragmentation (holding just 1.48 ha of land on average), which creates additional logistical complexities and pushes up transportation costs and the overall cost of production. Smallholder farmers have weak bargaining power in the market and are highly dependent on market prices dictated by medium and large processors. Gender inequalities in agriculture significantly limit women's opportunities. Men are the main owners of land, property and vehicles (including 100 percent of agricultural machinery and 84 percent of land), which reduces the income-earning opportunities of women, the productivity of the agricultural sector and achievement of food security.²⁰
12. *Sustainable food systems:* Most farmers involved in subsistence and semi-subsistence farming are frequently exposed to a wide range of market constraints along the value chain. Small-scale farmers face low and fluctuating commodity prices, inability to access credit, limited means of transportation, and a lack of access to public-private solutions, such as crop insurance. Women smallholder farmers are disproportionately affected by issues such as limited access to productive resources and inequitable access to markets, which hinder their ability to create their own capital and the development of their communities.²¹ The

¹⁶ National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Health and ICF International. *Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16*. Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR325/FR325.pdf>.

¹⁷ The prevalence of stunting presented by the DHS has been a point of contention within the Government, donor community and civil society after the official publication of the Armenia DHS results in 2017. The reasons for the sharp decline (from 19.3 percent in 2010 to 9.4 percent in 2015-2016) are unclear in the context of poverty and undernourishment trends and stable public expenditures on healthcare and social protection.

¹⁸ National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, Ministry of Health and ICF International. *Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015/16*. Available at <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR325/FR325.pdf>.

¹⁹ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia. 2018. *Statistical yearbook of Armenia, 2018*. Available from <https://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=586>.

²⁰ WFP Gender Analysis in Food Security Areas Report, September 2017. Not available online.

²¹ *Ibid.*

food systems, however, are greatly underpinned by the unpaid care and domestic work primarily undertaken by women.

Macroeconomic environment

13. During the last decade, Armenia's economy has experienced major economic shocks triggered by the global financial crisis in 2008. The drop in GDP in 2009 was particularly severe (14.1 percent), representing one of the deepest declines in the region; GDP per capita has gradually improved since then and stood at USD 3,936 in 2017.²² On the back of sustained favourable external economic conditions that followed and subject to robust structural reforms, the International Monetary Fund has forecast GDP growth of 4.8 percent in 2019 and 4.5 percent in 2020.²³
14. One in four households was involved in internal or external migration between 2013 and 2016, when 76 percent of all migration was external. It is largely men who emigrate: a study conducted in 2014 found that 82 percent of emigrants were male²⁴ and that there were high rates of emigration among active age groups (20–54).²⁵ This trend increases the household management responsibilities of women, swells their workloads and creates financial dependence on remittances. Households who receive remittances have fewer women participating in the labour force than households without migrants, though in rural areas remittances encouraged self-employment by women.

Key cross-sectoral linkages

15. *Education:* School enrolment rates are high in Armenia, and almost the entire population is literate and has received some level of education. Yet just 28.9 percent of children under 5 were enrolled in pre-school institutions in 2016, with rates rising to 35.6 percent in urban areas but as low as 17.2 percent in rural communities.²⁶ At all levels of education, female enrolment rates are equal to or higher than those of males, with the exception of preliminary vocational education.²⁷ An estimated 8,000 children have special educational needs, though only half appear to be enrolled in special education institutions or inclusive schools.²⁸
16. Rehabilitating aging school infrastructure is a priority of the Government of Armenia, particularly to ensure safety in emergency situations and natural disasters. In 2015, the Government launched the national 'Safe School Improvement Programme' with the goal of improving the infrastructure of the country's educational facilities by 2030.²⁹

²² National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, official website. *Gross domestic product at market prices, min. drams / 2018*. See <http://armstat.am/am/?nid=12&id=01001>.

²³ International Monetary Fund. 2018. *IMF DataMapper: Real GDP growth* (https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD/ARM).

²⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2017. *Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development in Armenia*. Available from <http://www.oecd.org/countries/armenia/interrelations-between-public-policies-migration-and-development-in-armenia-9789264273603-en.htm>.

²⁵ International Organization for Migration. 2014. *Report on Household Survey on Migration in Armenia*. Available at <https://publications.iom.int/books/report-household-survey-migration-armenia>.

²⁶ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia. 2017. *Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2017*. Available at <https://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1988>.

²⁷ *SDG Implementation Voluntary National Review (VNR) Armenia: Report for the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*. 2018. Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19586Armenia_VNR_2018.pdf.

²⁸ Ministry of Education and Science. 2015. *Education for All 2015 National Review*. Disaggregated data not available.

²⁹ World Bank. 2018. *Armenia takes important steps towards a disaster resilient future* (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/08/08/armenia-takes-important-steps-toward-a-disaster-resilient-future>).

17. *Energy*: Armenia faces significant challenges in meeting its energy needs due in part to the country's dependency on natural gas imports, mainly from Russia, which has caused several sharp increases in energy tariffs since 2013. Energy costs put additional pressure on food and other household expenditures, particularly for poorer households, who typically spend around 15 percent of their disposable income on energy – and even more in winter. To reduce the high risks posed by dependency on energy imports, Armenia plans to increase its energy production, including through renewables and other sources of green energy.³⁰
18. *Gender equality*: Though Armenia's constitution and laws guarantee gender equality, women are underrepresented in economic, business and political decision-making positions. Women's wages are around 36 percent lower than men's, and women traditionally have limited access to agricultural assets, including land, property and vehicles, as well as to credit and entrepreneurship, which impedes income-earning opportunities for women and sustainable development for all.³¹ Prevalent discriminatory social norms contribute to the unpaid care and domestic work primarily being done by women, limiting their participation in the public and economic spheres and making them more vulnerable to poverty and hunger. A time budget analysis showed that women in Armenia spent five times more on unpaid work (family care and domestic work) than men.³² The situation has largely remained the same over the past decade: in 2017, around 31.5 percent of women aged 15–75 reported being either unemployed or occupied with household tasks.³³

1.3 Hunger gaps and challenges

19. The national strategic review, completed in January 2018, was based on analysis of the four interlinked pillars of food security: availability, access, utilization and stability. These were used to identify gaps and challenges that need to be addressed in order to achieve SDG 2.
20. *Food availability*: Armenia's relatively strong agricultural performance since 2001 has increased the country's self-sufficiency in main foods such as grains, potatoes, vegetables and fruit, improving overall food availability. However, Armenia remains highly dependent on food imports, especially for cereals and certain types of meat: 50.5 percent of the wheat, 42 percent of the legumes, 78 percent of the poultry, 42 percent of the pork and 92 percent of the vegetable oil consumed in the country is imported. As Armenia is landlocked and the geopolitical situation is complex, only two of its four borders are open for trade and transit. Accordingly, the import of essential and non-essential items remains a challenge and a risk to food availability, especially in the event of an emergency.
21. Despite investments in agricultural production and self-sufficiency for several local food commodities, little has been done to improve access to markets for smallholder farmers and producers. The few initiatives that have been carried out have, however, sought to empower women and address gender inequalities. Climate change has an impact on Armenia's ability to ensure its food supply, as projections show that the yield of main

³⁰ WFP, United Nations Children's Fund and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. 2016. *Armenia Comprehensive Food Security, Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis, revised December 2017*. Available at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000020456/download/>.

³¹ National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia. January 2018. See https://www.un.am/up/library/NSR_ExSum_2018-01-11-ENG.pdf.

³² National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. 2009. *Report On Time Use Sample Survey in the Republic of Armenia*. Available at https://www.armstat.am/file/article/time_use_09e.pdf.

³³ National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. 2016. *Women and Men in Armenia 2016*. Available from <https://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1846>.

- agricultural land will drop by between 8 and 14 percent by 2030 due to rising temperatures and droughts.³⁴
22. *Food access:* Food insecurity in Armenia is closely linked poor economic access to nutritious food, which is due to low incomes, gender inequalities and limited job opportunities. About 16 percent of households – approximately 480,000 people – are food insecure, with households led by men and women almost equally affected.³⁵ Around 4.4 percent of households are undernourished.
 23. *Food utilization:* Poor food utilization is seen in nutrition indicators, especially among children up to 5 years of age. Unhealthy dietary habits and lifestyles are the norm in Armenia, and severe regional disparities are seen in the prevalence of extreme poverty, undernourishment, food insecurity and malnutrition.³⁶ The double burden of child malnutrition is a major concern. Recent national data indicate that 47 percent of household food consumption consists of starches and carbohydrates such as baked goods and potatoes, fruit and vegetables comprise one third of consumption and protein-rich meat, fish and eggs make up only 9 percent.³⁷
 24. *Food stability:* Armenia's high dependency on food imports leave food prices highly vulnerable to shocks in external food markets. The domestic food price volatility index³⁸ stands at nearly 12 percent, demonstrating the high month-to-month fluctuation in the prices of foods.³⁹
 25. Food security and nutrition policies and action plans tend to focus on food availability, primarily in terms of agriculture and self-sufficiency. Food accessibility and utilization receive much less attention at the policy and the implementation levels. Inconsistencies and contradictions in the evidence base is a challenge to food security and nutrition policy formulation. A combination of poverty, structural inequalities (including gender inequalities), disparities between different population groups and territories, and limited job opportunities also hinder access to healthy diets.
 26. Gender-transformative programming should be used to target discriminatory socio-cultural practices regarding land ownership and inheritance. These are a major constraint on the ability of rural women to improve the productivity of the land they use. Addressing these issues would rebalance decision-making power and raise women's status in the household and in the community, delivering broader benefits and development for their communities and the country. Legally, land ownership is awarded to the head of the household, meaning that women only gain ownership of land in the absence of a male head of household. Despite this, women are often responsible for managing land, partly as a result of high levels of male out-migration in rural areas.⁴⁰ Women's entrepreneurship was identified as crucial to socio-economic development, including food security and nutrition, requiring gender-transformative approaches to redress the impacts of the overall socio-economic

³⁴ Government of Armenia. 2010. *Second national communication on climate change: a report under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Available at <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/armnc2e.pdf>.

³⁵ National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia. January 2018. See https://www.un.am/up/library/NSR_ExSum_2018-01-11-ENG.pdf.

³⁶ WFP. 2018. Armenia Cost of the Diet (<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000062242/download/>).

³⁷ National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia. January 2018. See https://www.un.am/up/library/NSR_ExSum_2018-01-11-ENG.pdf.

³⁸ See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Food Security Indicators (<http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-fs/ess-fadata/en/#.XlpFAyhKiUk>); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2015. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf>.

³⁹A higher percentage indicates higher volatility.

⁴⁰ Social Institutions and Gender Index. See https://www.genderindex.org/country/armenia/#_ftn61.

crisis, increasing poverty rates and labour migration trends, which leave a serious economic burden on women's shoulders.⁴¹

1.4 Key country priorities

Government

27. Given the recent political changes in Armenia, the priorities of the new Government have yet to be translated into strategies and policies, although there is a clear emphasis on innovation and technology to drive modernization and boost economic development. The Government is currently updating the Armenia development strategy, extending it to 2030. The strategy will incorporate SDG principles and targets through a participatory process involving stakeholders from the public and private sectors and civil society. In 2013, parliament ratified a law on equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women, and the new Government remains committed to gender equality.
28. The three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – are reflected in Armenia's development strategy for 2014–2025, which sets out strategic goals, targets and indicators in multiple economic and social areas, and serves as a framework for sector-specific strategy documents and action plans. The strategy outlines four priorities:
 - growth of employment;
 - development of human capital;
 - improvement of social protection systems; and
 - institutional modernization of the public administration and governance systems.
29. The national strategic review made the following six recommendations for achieving SDG 2 targets in Armenia by 2030. Addressing gender inequality is a cross-cutting issue and all action taken to achieve SDG 2 must be gender-responsive or transformative where possible.
 - i) Ensure programmatic synergies that cover all pillars of food security in order to guarantee access to nutritious food for everyone, throughout the country;
 - ii) Apply well-targeted healthcare, social protection and territorial policies to reduce disparities in hunger and malnutrition throughout the country;
 - iii) Revise social protection policy instruments to cover the most deprived;
 - iv) Increase public awareness of healthy nutrition and SDG 2 focus areas while building and maintaining a comprehensive evidence base;
 - v) Implement innovative approaches and schemes to increase the productivity and competitiveness of smallholder farms and mitigate the consequences of extreme weather and climate change; and
 - vi) Coordinate and manage the implementation and progress of policies related to food security and SDG 2 on a sustainable basis.

United Nations and other partners

30. The United Nations in Armenia operates within the United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF) for 2016–2020, which has four operational areas: equitable sustainable development; democratic governance; social services and inclusion; and environmental sustainability and resilience-building. A new UNDAF cycle is set to commence in 2021. WFP has taken steps to ensure alignment with the new plan, engaging with the Resident Coordinator, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme

⁴¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2017. *Gender, Agriculture and Rural Development in Armenia*. Available at https://www.un.am/up/library/Gender_Agriculture_and_Rural_Development_in_Armenia_Eng.pdf.

(UNDP) and other partners. The new UNDAF is expected to fit in with government strategies, which have been informed by the national strategic review for issues related to food security and nutrition. WFP will partner with Armenia's council dedicated to ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities between men and women in order to ensure that gender-responsive and transformative approaches are used for all activities.

2. Strategic implications for WFP

2.1 WFP's experience and lessons learned

31. The Government of Armenia and its national and international partners are committed to fully nationalizing the school feeding programme, as outlined in the national sustainable school feeding strategy developed with WFP's technical assistance and ratified in 2013. Steady advocacy efforts, coupled with technical support, have resulted in a mutually agreed plan for a gradual handover of the management and implementation of the school feeding programme to the Government by 2023. The Government has allocated USD 5.5 million for the programme through the state budget mid-term expenditure framework. An independent operational evaluation of WFP's development project 200128 undertaken in February 2015 also recommended stepping up advocacy efforts and scaling up technical support and training activities.⁴²
32. An impact review conducted in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) estimated that the school feeding programme contributed to a 0.4 percentage point reduction in the national poverty rate. Given the limited size of the school feeding transfer and the small number of families with primary school-aged children, the school feeding programme is undeniably cost-effective in terms of poverty reduction compared with other safety net programmes.^{43,44} Similarly, a cost-benefit analysis conducted in July 2016 found that each dollar invested in Armenia's national school feeding programme over a five-year period would generate a lifetime return of USD 7.1.⁴⁵ In the meantime, lessons learned from the initial handover of programme implementation to the Government revealed the need for a gradual approach with forward planning and targeted capacity development activities at all levels to safeguard programme quality. The Systems Approach for Better Education Results study conducted in collaboration with the World Bank in 2016 recommended the following:
 - including school feeding in all relevant national sector policies;
 - improving inter-ministerial coordination;
 - creating a national school feeding unit with qualified personnel;
 - developing a funding strategy and seeking additional funding from fiscal and cost containment initiatives and the private sector;
 - reviewing school menus to include local agricultural produce; and
 - implementing a home-grown school feeding model.

⁴² WFP. 2015. *Operation evaluation: Armenia DEV 200128: Development of Sustainable School Feeding: A mid-term evaluation of WFP's operation (2010–2016)*. Available at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/bc00af826c194b4ba8dc74443ec946ad/download/>.

⁴³ WFP. 2018. *Scoping Study on Social Protection and Safety Nets for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition in Armenia* (not yet complete or available).

⁴⁴ Assessing Poverty Alleviation through Social Protection: School meals and family benefits in a middle-income country (not yet complete or available).

⁴⁵ WFP. 2016. *Armenia's National School Feeding Programme Cost-Benefit Analysis - July 2016*. Available at https://www.un.am/up/file/Cost%20Benefit%20Analysis_%20Armenia%20School%20Feeding.pdf.

33. As part of WFP's efforts to establish a more sustainable, gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive approach to school feeding, WFP has piloted the use of greenhouses and gardens, together with purchasing from local producers through cash-based transfers (CBTs). The results of these initiatives have been exceptional: all of them supported the provision of a more nutritious and diverse school meal for girls and boys at school, they created employment for men and women in the community, and they encouraged local economic development by purchasing most foods from local producers. A review of the CBT pilot in Tavush province, conducted in mid-2017, found that CBTs were important in simplifying the handover process. Greenhouses were found to provide a crop surplus that created revenue for the schools and was used to fund the additional costs of school meals, the salaries of workers and additional classroom rehabilitation needs.

2.2 Opportunities for WFP

34. The national strategic review highlighted opportunities for WFP to utilize its expertise, extensive reach and ability to scale up operations in order to contribute to achieving food security and ending malnutrition in Armenia. WFP discussed and validated the review recommendations through group and bilateral consultation meetings with partners, including all relevant line ministries. The results of these discussions are reflected in this country strategic plan (CSP). WFP has also integrated the results of the outcome monitoring survey conducted in 2017 with all stakeholders and beneficiaries, including headmasters, parents and the kitchen staff of beneficiary schools, in the design of its interventions. Given WFP's successful experience with school feeding, there is an opportunity to support the development of a more comprehensive, gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive national school feeding model that engages partners and benefits the communities around the schools.
35. Schools play a unique and central role in communities in Armenia. Several partner agencies, recognizing this potential, have engaged in small-scale initiatives with schools. The World Bank has been working to establish pre-schools and to rehabilitate schools to be shelters in case of natural disasters, while FAO and UNDP have piloted the installation of greenhouses in a few schools. Conducting joint programming and making use of programmatic synergies could be instrumental in Armenia, where WFP's extensive direct reach with communities and expertise in schools could help expand opportunities and accelerate progress towards the SDGs.
36. The home-grown school feeding approach has been demonstrated to have great potential in Armenia, diversifying diets, particularly increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables, as well as providing livelihood opportunities. In general, addressing food insecurity and nutrition through a more holistic food value chain approach has the potential to support the livelihoods of agricultural households while promoting healthier diets among the general population. WFP will work with partners to pilot new approaches supporting smallholder farmers along a nutrition-sensitive food value chain. In support of sustainability and to minimize environmental impact, WFP will explore the potential use of solar energy in combination with greenhouses. Solar power could cover a substantial portion of the energy needs of schools and generate additional funds to support the sustainability of school feeding and cover other costs.
37. Engaging women in local food value chains in the context of school feeding activities and beyond could represent an important step towards promoting gender equality and ensuring sustainability of the programme, increasing the capacity of communities and families to support the programme. WFP's adoption of a more gender-transformative approach will support the existing state gender policy, which promotes equal rights and opportunities for women in line with the Armenia development strategy, which sets women's entrepreneurship as a priority for developing the country's economy.

38. The national strategic review created momentum in Armenia to strengthen national capacities and systems, including those related to food security, nutrition and education, in order to accelerate progress towards development objectives. The broader 2030 agenda in Armenia has been driven by the national strategic review process and the nationalization of the SDGs. The Government is working on the Armenia development strategy up to 2030 and on the national programme of education development up to 2030. At the request of the Government, WFP will support national efforts to improve food security and nutrition at the strategic and policy levels, starting with improving the evidence base to foster relevant and equitable strategies, policies and programmes. In collaboration with government partners and the other Rome-based agencies, WFP will also support the establishment of coordination bodies and working groups that will be responsible for exchanging food security information and findings and supporting the design of sectoral guidelines and national food security strategies and policies, including those related to emergency preparedness.
39. The current dialogue among national and international partners regarding the nutrition findings of the demographic and health survey point to the need for deeper analysis of the current levels and root causes of malnutrition, including the prevalence of malnutrition-conditioned diseases and micronutrient deficiencies. The Government has requested support from WFP and UNICEF to develop the evidence base around nutrition, noting that a proper situation analysis and results monitoring – with disaggregated data and gender analyses – are key to the design of appropriate programmes, strategies and policies to tackle malnutrition. The national strategic review and WFP outcome survey findings also indicated the need for significant investment in improving nutrition knowledge at all levels through gender-informed social and behaviour change communications (SBCC) and nutrition education on various forums, including schools, and with differentiated messaging for targeted men, women, boys and girls.
40. Armenia is exposed to multiple natural hazards that have caused substantial social and economic damage over the past few decades and will continue to absorb vast sums of scarce resources unless measures are taken to mitigate and prepare for them. Current institutional structures, responses, mitigation programmes and overall capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies are fragile in the face of large-scale disasters. Multiple mitigation programmes and inter-agency activities could be more effective if they were coordinated under a comprehensive national mitigation strategy, which could help eliminate overlapping responsibilities and boost the effectiveness of scarce funding. This will require an in-depth review of current legislation, policies and regulations. The Government needs to develop a mitigation strategy to prioritize actions and funding, beginning by refurbishing at-risk infrastructure and buildings including schools and other community and public buildings.
41. To ensure effective crisis response, the Government needs to fund, equip and train emergency response services; develop a national emergency call number; provide updated communications equipment; and establish a modern functioning operations centre. The Government could empower and encourage communities to take action to reduce disaster risk by providing information and supporting local initiatives including public-private partnerships, with attention to transforming gender roles, relations and responsibilities.

2.3 Strategic changes

42. WFP Armenia's core activity has been school feeding, although WFP has also engaged in asset creation and food for training activities around agricultural practices in the past. This CSP marks a strategic shift whereby WFP will move from implementer to enabler, supporting and enabling national ownership of the school feeding programme while working with partners to establish a more comprehensive, gender-transformative national home-grown school feeding programme. Given the strategic and unique role of schools in Armenia, the involvement and interest of partners to work within schools, and the Government's desire

to create more linkages between schools and local agricultural communities, this CSP sets out how WFP can use its comparative advantage to transform school feeding in order to contribute to broader development objectives that are equitable and empowering for the target populations.

43. Given WFP's successful experience working with the Government and national entities, and at the request of the Government, more emphasis will be placed on strengthening state policies and regulatory frameworks for evidence-based, effective and equitable programmes and policies, including on sustainable school feeding management, food security, malnutrition and education. WFP will work with government partners to reinforce policy dialogue and strengthen national capacities to institutionalize and promote more comprehensive, coherent and gender-transformative food security and nutrition-related governance at all levels.
44. WFP will continue to provide technical support and assistance to the Government at the national, regional and community levels to enhance emergency and risk planning; disaster preparedness, mitigation and response; and adaptation to climate change and disasters.

3. WFP strategic orientation

3.1 Direction, focus and intended impacts

45. This CSP seeks to facilitate the sustainable handover of a comprehensive nutrition-sensitive school feeding programme embedded in the national social protection system by 2024 and support the development of gender-transformative and inclusive policies and systems that respond to the gaps identified in the national strategic review. The Government of Armenia is committed to this shared vision and sees school feeding as embedded within the social protection, education and health systems. The long-term vision of the CSP is that all people in Armenia have access to sufficient and nutritious food all year round. Achieving this vision will require shock-responsive, nutrition-sensitive safety nets and policies, public-private partnerships, and an emphasis on the empowerment of women.
46. The CSP has linkages to SDGs beyond SDGs 2 and 17, showing the importance of taking an integrated approach with other United Nations agencies and partners. The school feeding activities contribute to SDG 4 on education, and the CSP fits in with the priorities of the Armenia development strategy (2014–2025) regarding human capital development and the improvement of social protection, as well as outcome 5 of the Armenia UNDAF for 2016–2020 on improving the access of vulnerable populations to basic education and social protection services.
47. In accordance with the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) and Gender Policy (2015–2020), gender will be integrated throughout the development, implementation and monitoring of the CSP. WFP will ensure the sex- and age-disaggregation of all person-related data; the embedding of gender analysis in all assessment, research, technical assistance, knowledge, information management and related work; the mainstreaming of gender across programme, policy and capacity-strengthening initiatives; and the engagement of women, men, girls and boys (and their organizations and institutions) in a manner that is empowering, fosters equality of outcome and advances gender equality. Activities will benefit girls, boys, women and men of all ages.

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

Strategic outcome 1: Vulnerable populations in Armenia, including schoolchildren, have access to adequate and nutritious food year round

48. WFP will support efforts to make the national school feeding programme in Armenia more gender-transformative and inclusive while engaging more with local communities.

Focus area

49. The focus of this outcome is root causes as it contributes to achieving development objectives by addressing the underlying drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition.

Expected outputs

50. This strategic outcome will be achieved through the following four outputs:
- Schoolchildren in targeted areas receive a nutritious, hot, diversified meal every day they attend school to meet their basic food and nutrition needs.
 - Communities benefit from an enhanced national school feeding programme, including nutrition education, enabling them to meet their basic food and nutrition needs.
 - Schoolchildren benefit from rehabilitated school facilities and equipment, including kitchens, that improve delivery of school meals.
 - Communities, including smallholders, benefit from joint efforts to link local production with procurement of school meals to improve their incomes.

Key activity

Activity 1: Strengthen and complement the national school feeding programme to facilitate handover to the Government

51. Under activity 1, WFP will continue the shift from a traditional school feeding programme towards an innovative and comprehensive nationally owned programme, to be handed over to the Government by 2023, that embodies sustainability and inclusivity and contributes to healthier diets among schoolchildren and gender equality among vulnerable communities, including persons with disabilities. Among other awareness-raising activities, campaigns could be organized involving both girls and boys for the elimination of school-related gender-based violence.
52. WFP will continue the provision of school meals, progressively reducing direct assistance as schools are handed over to the Government. WFP-supported schools will gradually shift to a CBT model, thus supplementing the incomes of local producers, especially women smallholder farmers and their organizations, and linking them with schools to diversify school meals and facilitate gradual handover to the Government. Under the CBT model, the procurement and preparation of school meals is a joint school-community task, with schools responsible for purchasing essential items from local producers, and parent committees funding additional items to complete the meals. Kitchen staff, all women from the community, are employed in the schools to prepare the meals and receive training on food safety and handling, cooking, menu development, and nutrition. This has the added advantage of providing the women with vocational skills that could open up better employment opportunities for them in the future.
53. At the national level, WFP will work to improve the nutritional quality of school meals by facilitating a home-grown school feeding model. In coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development and local authorities, school rehabilitation work will expand beyond securing access to potable water and renovating kitchens to include greenhouses, school gardens and the provision of solar technology where possible and based on needs assessments. Rehabilitation efforts serve as another platform for community engagement and partnership building: community contributions are a precondition for rehabilitation work, for which WFP provides a limited list of construction materials.
54. In coordination with UNICEF, WFP will focus on accommodating the special needs of boys and girls with disabilities by ensuring the accessibility of schools and canteens. WFP will

coordinate efforts with the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, UNDP and UNICEF, who have various initiatives in and around schools, especially related to disaster risk reduction.

55. WFP will pilot innovative methods of engaging with smallholder farmers, such as providing farmers with solar technology to meet their energy needs, in exchange for which the farmers could provide food to schools. WFP will work with partners, including the Ministry of Agriculture and UNDP, to link smallholders to markets, including schools. Potential areas of support for smallholder farmers include supporting and improving supply chain mechanisms; the establishment and management of adequate storage spaces; and transport optimization. WFP can also provide smallholders with training on topics such as procurement mechanisms, loss control and quality control measures.
56. Expanding the number of greenhouses and school gardens, which can provide employment opportunities equitably for targeted men and women in the community, has the added advantage of educating children on sustainable food and agricultural practices while emphasizing healthy eating habits. School gardens can also contribute to changing discriminatory gender norms, for example by involving both girls and boys in training and in the same school gardening tasks.
57. To ensure adequate nutrition for schoolchildren and their families, WFP will support school administrators, parents, caregivers, teachers, cooks and schoolchildren with tailored nutrition education and awareness activities on healthy diets, which will contribute to changing discriminatory social norms and gender roles.

Strategic outcome 2: National policies, programmes and systems are strengthened to improve food security and nutrition among targeted groups by 2024

58. Through this outcome and as requested by the Government, WFP will support the capacity strengthening needs identified in the national strategic review. This will include capacity strengthening efforts to support the handover of school feeding and to generate an evidence base, together with advocacy for gender-transformative and inclusive government strategies, policies and programmes on food security, malnutrition and emergency preparedness.

Focus area

59. This strategic outcome addresses the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.

Expected outputs

60. This strategic outcome will be achieved through the following four outputs:
 - Vulnerable groups benefit from enhanced national social protection systems and coherent policies to ensure their basic food and nutrition needs are met.
 - Communities have enhanced awareness and consumption of healthy, nutritious and diverse diets.
 - Vulnerable communities benefit from investments in emergency preparedness and improved disaster response capacities in local systems.
 - National institutions have strengthened capacities to implement a comprehensive nutrition-sensitive national school feeding programme.

Key activity

Activity 2: Provide technical support to national institutions to generate an evidence-base and inform policies, strategies and systems to address food insecurity and malnutrition in Armenia

61. At the core of WFP's capacity strengthening efforts is the support provided to the Government in strengthening the state policy and regulatory frameworks and systems to ensure a successful and sustainable handover of the school feeding programme to the Government. Furthermore, at the request of the Government, WFP will work closely with the Government and international partners to strengthen national capacities for the evidence-based development of coherent and equitable policies, strategies and systems to address food insecurity and malnutrition. WFP will advocate policies that are nutrition-sensitive, inclusive of people with disabilities and gender-transformative.
62. Leveraging its global comparative advantages, partnerships, experience and understanding of context, WFP will support the development of a new or updated gender-transformative, nutrition-sensitive and sustainable school feeding strategy. Government capacities to find and manage viable financial solutions for the school feeding programme need to be systematically increased to safeguard the sustainability of the programme. WFP will focus on supporting national entities, at all levels, to strengthen their capacity to coordinate, manage, monitor, evaluate and secure the necessary resources for the implementation of a sustainable national school feeding programme.
63. Furthermore, WFP will support the re-establishment of the inter-ministerial working group comprised of representatives from the ministries of education and science, health, agriculture, finance, labour and social affairs, and territorial administration. The working group will be responsible for drawing up ministerial sectoral guidelines as well as the overall coordination and implementation of the national school feeding policy.
64. WFP will support government efforts to expand the evidence base around food security and nutrition, filling the gaps in information to develop informed, equitable policies and programmes. On nutrition, WFP will work with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health to carry out nutrition assessments with systematically integrated gender and age analyses that will support the development of targeted policies and interventions, including to tackle micronutrient deficiencies and promote exclusive breast-feeding. WFP will support national efforts to improve awareness of healthy diets and of the importance of limiting the consumption of saturated fats, trans fats, free sugars and foods with high salt content through coordinated SBCC campaigns, developed in coordination with the Government and partners and cognizant of gender and age considerations in the design, implementation and monitoring.
65. Given that Armenia is shock-prone and extremely susceptible to earthquakes, WFP will support the Government in improving emergency preparedness, focusing on enhancing supply chain capacities and planning to ensure adequate food capacity in the event of a natural or human-induced disaster.

3.3 Transition and exit strategies

66. WFP's successful partnership with the Government, whereby WFP has been able to commence the gradual handover of the school feeding programme, demonstrates a very clear and precise transition strategy for WFP in Armenia, which could be a model for other countries. This transition has been enabled by national ownership and commitment to ensuring access to food for all, accompanied by dedicated financial resources. Over the course of the CSP, WFP will continue to work with the Government, and national and international partners to support capacity strengthening efforts to enable the complete nationalization of the school feeding programme by 2023. Advancing gender equality will

also be a part of the transition and exit strategy as gender equality is a requirement for sustained food security and nutrition.

67. The allocations from the state budget for the sustainable school feeding programme and the financial support of international and private sector donors will be instrumental for the successful implementation of the strategy. WFP will support the Government in documenting and showcasing the innovative school feeding model to other countries, promoting South–South cooperation and sharing best practices to benefit other countries. The transition to capacity strengthening efforts on food security, malnutrition and other areas also shows how WFP has taken up an advisory partnership role with the Government.

4. Implementation arrangements

4.1 Beneficiary analysis

68. Under strategic outcome 1, WFP will provide up to 60,000 schoolchildren (28,200 girls and 31,800 boys) annually with daily school meals, progressively decreasing the number of students assisted as schools are handed over to the Government by 2023. WFP will provide take-home entitlements (in-kind and CBTs) to 1,700 kitchen staff (all women) and their families, an additional 6,800 people (2,712 women and 4,083 men), a number that will be scaled down over time as the Government assumes responsibility for the activities. School-level training will be provided on topics such as local procurement, food safety, food preparations and nutrition.
69. Within WFP-supported schools, the transition from an in-kind to a CBT school feeding model will benefit local producers, who will be the main suppliers of essential food products to schools. WFP will seek to engage, train and purchase from women producers to contribute to their empowerment and gender equality.
70. School rehabilitation efforts will target schools in Armenia in need of repair, including but not limited to those covered by WFP school feeding assistance. Based on assessments carried out in coordination with the Government, school rehabilitation may include infrastructure repair (including efforts to ensure accessibility), the provision of kitchen equipment, and the installation of greenhouses, gardens and solar panels to support the home-grown school feeding model.
71. The transition to home-grown school feeding will create employment opportunities for vulnerable community members. WFP will advocate the employment of women in the management of greenhouses and gardens, in addition to the preparation of school meals, so as to address economic inequalities.

Strategic outcome	Activities	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Total
1	1	29 115	32 840	3 502	3 043	68 500
2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Total		29 115	32 840	3 502	3 040	68 500

* Girls and boys are beneficiaries under 18 years old.

4.2 Transfers

Food and cash-based transfers

72. Under the school feeding activities, WFP will move away from in-kind school meals to a decentralized CBT model, allowing schools to purchase food from local producers and ultimately facilitating handover to the Government. CBTs are already used for school feeding in several schools, and monitoring reports indicate that these school meals have better nutritional value and provide greater benefits to local communities than those provided in kind. The design of the CBT model has been informed by feedback from men and women beneficiaries.
73. The value of the school meal transfer has been set with the Government at AMD 140 per child per day, which is transferred to schools who then purchase the required foods from local producers through WFP-established procurement mechanisms. Parent committees are also involved in this process, selecting menus and contributing supplemental foods to maximize the nutritional value of the meal.
74. Parents' in-kind and monetary contributions increase their involvement in the provision of school meals and in the school life of their children, while increasing the accountability of schools. According to WFP monitoring reports, around 80 percent of parents make monthly contributions, equivalent to 20 percent of the cost of the school meals.

TABLE 2: FOOD RATION (g/person/day) or CBT VALUE (USD/person/day) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY		
	Strategic outcome 1	
	Activity 1	
Beneficiary type	Schoolchildren	Kitchen staff and family members
Modality (indicate food or cash)	Food and CBTs	Food and CBTs
Cereals	160	500
Pulses	15	30
Oil	10	30
Salt	-	-
Sugar	-	-
SuperCereal	-	-
SuperCereal Plus	-	-
Micronutrient powder	-	-
Total kcal/day (to be completed for food and cash modalities)	586	2 188
% kcal from protein	9	10.9
CBTs (USD/person/day)	0.25	0.3
Number of feeding days per year	180	180

TABLE 3: TOTAL FOOD AND CASH-BASED TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS AND VALUE		
Food type/CBTs	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	5 371	2 564 507
Pulses	447	257 954
Oil and fats	332	567 258
Total (food)	6 150	3 389 719
CBTs and comm. vouchers		1 891 579
Total (food and CBT value)	6 150	5 281 298

Capacity strengthening including South–South cooperation

75. Through the handover of the school feeding programme, WFP will support capacity strengthening efforts that go beyond school feeding, supporting the national entities involved in nutrition and emergency preparedness at the strategic and implementation levels. On nutrition, WFP will support capacity strengthening efforts that enable the Government to roll out gender-aware nutrition education and SBCC nationally. Disaster preparedness capacity strengthening support will focus on supply chain solutions that ensure food security and timely response during emergencies, including solutions that ensure the country has adequate reserves of essential foods at all times.
76. Given that Armenia’s school feeding model showcases a successful partnership and engagement with the Government, Armenia has potential to be an excellent case study to share with other countries in the region and globally. WFP will support government efforts to showcase the school feeding model through South–South cooperation, particularly among countries in the region.

4.3 Supply chain

77. Armenia is a landlocked country and its borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan have been closed since 1991, restricting the number of supply chain corridors available. Most imports, including those by the international community, come through the northern corridor via the port of Poti (Georgia), especially goods imported from Europe and the Russian Federation.
78. WFP purchases in-kind food from the Russian Federation or locally on a “delivered-at-place” basis, with suppliers delivering commodities directly to WFP warehouses in Armenia. WFP Armenia is responsible for the storage and regular (four to five cycles per year) delivery of food to WFP-supported schools following the in-kind school feeding model. Food is transported by commercial trucking companies, who are selected through a competitive and transparent tendering process. In-country transport, storage and handling costs are covered by the host government. Overall, the supply chain strategy has been designed to avoid any additional storage costs while maintaining stocks to last at least two to three months.
79. The shift to CBTs has been supported by sectoral assessments, including assessments of markets and retailer capacities. The cash is transferred to each school’s bank account opened specifically for WFP CBTs. WFP has developed and facilitated training on procurement, food handling and safety for school administrators, who are the managers of the transfers. WFP has developed a food basket with 20 food commodities (12 of which are locally produced) to diversify school menus and ease the procurement process for the schools. Retail assessments and capacity strengthening efforts will continue to support the scale up of CBTs in WFP-supported schools across Armenia.

4.4 Partnerships

80. WFP's main partners in Armenia are the Government of Armenia, United Nations agencies, development partners and civil society organizations. A dynamic technical and capacity building partnership with the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute, WFP's main implementing partner, has contributed to the success of the school feeding programme since its launch in 2010.
81. WFP Armenia's relationship with the Government has remained consistently strong, and WFP works in close cooperation particularly with the Ministry of Education and Science. Other key government partners include the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development and the Ministry of Emergency Situations on issues around school feeding, food security, malnutrition and emergency preparedness with a strong emphasis on and interlinkages with cross-cutting issues such as gender-transformative approaches and environmental protection.
82. The Government with WFP will support the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group comprised of representatives from the ministries of education, health, agriculture, social affairs, and territorial administration. The working group will be the national body driving policy design and the strategic direction of the national school feeding programme and it will oversee the work of the national institution mandated and accountable for the implementation of the school feeding programme.
83. WFP benefits from a strong relationship with other United Nations agencies particularly the World Bank, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNDP and FAO, whose activities are complementary in the areas of agriculture, nutrition, social protection and education. WFP will expand operational partnerships with civil society organizations, fostering synergies and maximizing the impact of WFP efforts on school infrastructure rehabilitation, as well as work with the United Nations Gender Theme Group and Extended Gender Theme Group to make use of synergies towards achieving gender equality. WFP will continue its partnership with organizations representing the Armenian diaspora, including the Fund for Armenian Relief and the Children of Armenia Fund, and it will maintain close communication with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on refugees, asylum seekers and displaced populations. The country office has numerous partnerships with the private sector and academia, including with IFPRI and the Caucasus Research Resource Center.

5. Performance management and evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

84. The country office has improved its monitoring and evaluation system following the recommendations of the external evaluation of development project 200128. Successive enhancements were made to improve information timeliness, accuracy and reporting. Regular in-house output and process monitoring, complemented by an outsourced gender-responsive annual outcome monitoring survey, will continue to inform WFP's activities and help ensure that targets are achieved. The country office will collect baseline data for newly introduced indicators, ensuring the disaggregation of data by sex and age where possible, and conduct gender analyses. Using corporate guidelines and best practices, special attention will be paid to strengthening beneficiary counting and feedback mechanisms to ensure they are safely accessible to all.
85. Capitalizing on the lessons learned, WFP has developed a comprehensive gender-responsive CSP monitoring, review and evaluation plan, aligned with the WFP Corporate Results Framework and incorporating linkages with national SDG targets. In line with its commitment to strengthening the capacity of its national partners, WFP will support

the establishment of effective and gender-responsive national monitoring and evaluation frameworks. In coordination with the Government of Armenia, the Statistical Committee and line ministries, joint monitoring arrangements will be developed in collaboration with relevant ministries and national partners to enable knowledge transfer of data collection and analysis techniques.

86. A decentralized evaluation commissioned by WFP Armenia in collaboration with IFPRI and with financial support from WFP headquarters will explore the impact of school feeding on learning and will support the Government's efforts to strengthen the design and implementation of the national school feeding programme. A midterm review will be conducted by the country office in 2021, and a CSP evaluation will be led by WFP's Office of Evaluation in 2023. WFP will further carry out assessments to evaluate the impact of pilot initiatives, such as those planned with smallholder farmers, to inform future design and support the scaling up or down of such activities.

5.2 Risk management

Strategic risks

87. Armenia faces the risk of natural disaster, including earthquakes, as it is in a seismically active area, and the risk of the mass displacement of populations. These risks highlight the importance of ensuring that national emergency preparedness and response systems are equipped to respond effectively to the food security, logistic and communication aspects of possible crises. WFP Armenia will support the Government's emergency preparedness efforts to ensure that in case of any emergency adequate food is provided to vulnerable populations, with consideration of the specific needs and requirements of men, women, girls and boys.
88. Structural gender inequalities and discriminatory socio-cultural norms and practices may pose a risk to CSP implementation. WFP will therefore pursue gender-transformative programming, strengthening the gender-related competences of government counterparts and partners.

Operational risks

89. The handover of school feeding activities to the Government requires adequate planning on the part of WFP, including for the monitoring and assessment needs of pilots to maintain quality and facilitate a smooth transition. WFP will work with partners to ensure timely implementation and capacity strengthening efforts to support schools and communities in managing the programme, including the newly piloted components. Policies and legislation also need to be put in place to ensure adequate funding and an enabling environment to safeguard the sustainability of programmes.
90. Inflation in local markets could increase prices, reducing the purchasing power of beneficiaries receiving CBTs. WFP will continue to monitor changes in market prices and inflation to ensure beneficiaries' food security is not harmed by market fluctuations.

6. Resources for results

6.1 Country portfolio budget

Strategic outcome	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
1	2 579 525	4 467 079	4 230 648	4 075 277	3 541 426	1 390 921	20 284 875
2	784 785	1 630 836	1 611 282	1 445 862	1 353 620	816 937	7 643 321
Total	3 364 310	6 097 915	5 841 930	5 521 139	4 895 045	2 207 858	27 928 197

91. The largest share of the CSP budget is dedicated to strategic outcome 1, under which WFP will continue to support the national school feeding programme through a range of activities. As schools are handed over to the Government, budget requirements will decrease. Strategic outcome 2 activities in capacity strengthening will have different implementation timelines, resource allocation and spending. Spending under this outcome will also gradually decline as the Government takes over the investment in this area.

6.2 Resourcing outlook

92. WFP Armenia received generous multi-year, multilateral contributions from the Russian Federation for school feeding activities and will work to ensure continuation of this funding in the coming years to cover a substantial portion of the needs for strategic outcome 1 and part of the needs for strategic outcome 2. WFP Armenia is committed to allocating adequate resources to activities contributing to the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

6.3 Resource mobilization strategy

93. WFP Armenia will continue to seek support from the Russian Federation and will develop short and long-term approaches to build strategic and complementary partnerships with other international donors, the private sector, the Armenian diaspora and other United Nations entities in order to cover the remaining funding for the CSP.

94. Developing and showcasing joint and complementary initiatives will support fundraising efforts, including for example, developing triangular fundraising proposals between WFP, the World Bank and the Armenian Government.

95. Armenian diaspora communities and organizations have been increasingly significant stakeholders in the development efforts of Armenia. The interest of the diaspora in contributing to Armenia's development has grown with the recent political changes. WFP Armenia considers the diaspora a potential partner with a long-lasting potential and will make efforts to reach, engage and partner with the diaspora – from its non-profit and humanitarian organizations to private companies and foundations.

ANNEX I**LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ARMENIA COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN**

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: Vulnerable populations in Armenia, including schoolchildren, have access to adequate and nutritious food year round

Outcome category: Nutrition sensitive
 Enhanced social and public-sector capacity to assist populations facing acute, transitory or chronic food insecurity
 Focus area: Root causes

Assumptions

State budget includes funding for the National School Feeding Programme

Outcome indicators

Hand-over strategy developed and implemented [1=not achieved; 2=partially achieved; 3=achieved]

Retention rate/Drop-out rate (new)

SABER School Feeding National Capacity (new)

Activities and outputs**1. Strengthen and complement the national school feeding programme to facilitate handover to the Government (SMP: School meal activities)**

Communities benefit from an enhanced national school feeding programme, including nutrition education, enabling them to meet their basic food and nutrition needs (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Communities, including smallholders, benefit from joint efforts to link local production with procurement of school meals to improve their incomes (D: Assets created)

Communities, including smallholders, benefit from joint efforts to link local production with procurement of school meals to improve their incomes (F: Purchases from smallholders completed)

Schoolchildren benefit from rehabilitated school facilities and equipment, including kitchens, that improve delivery of school meals (N*: School feeding provided)

Schoolchildren in targeted areas receive a nutritious, hot, diversified meal every day they attend school to meet their basic food and nutrition needs (A: Resources transferred)

Schoolchildren in targeted areas receive a nutritious, hot, diversified meal every day they attend school to meet their basic food and nutrition needs (N*: School feeding provided)

Strategic Goal 2: Partner to support implementation of the SDGs

Strategic Objective 4: Support SDG implementation

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic outcome 2: National policies, programmes and systems are strengthened to improve food security and nutrition among targeted groups by 2024

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

Close cooperation with the national stakeholders

Outcome indicators

Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening (new)

Activities and outputs**2. Provide technical support to national institutions to generate an evidence-base and inform policies, strategies and systems to address food insecurity and malnutrition in Armenia (CSI: Institutional capacity strengthening activities)**

Communities have enhanced awareness and consumption of healthy, nutritious and diverse diets (E: Advocacy and education provided)

National institutions have strengthened capacities to implement a comprehensive nutrition-sensitive national school feeding programme (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

National institutions have strengthened capacities to implement a comprehensive nutrition-sensitive national school feeding programme (I: Policy engagement strategies developed/implemented)

Vulnerable communities benefit from investments in emergency preparedness and improved disaster response capacities in local systems (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Vulnerable communities benefit from investments in emergency preparedness and improved disaster response capacities in local systems (I: Policy engagement strategies developed/implemented)

Vulnerable groups benefit from enhanced national social protection systems and coherent policies to ensure their basic food and nutrition needs are met (K: Partnerships supported)

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.1.2: Proportion of project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analysed and integrated into programme improvements

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

ANNEX II

INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME (USD)			
	Strategic Result 1	Strategic Result 5	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	
Transfer	13 588 973	4 835 437	18 424 410
Implementation	3 313 238	1 511 897	4 825 135
Adjusted direct support costs	2 144 621	829 494	2 974 115
Subtotal	19 046 831	7 176 828	26 223 659
Indirect support costs (6.5%)	1 238 044	466 494	1 704 538
Total	20 284 875	7 643 321	27 928 197

Acronyms used in the document

CBT	cash-based transfers
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institution
SBCC	social and behaviour change communications
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDAF	United Nations development assistance framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme