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Benin country strategic plan (2019–2023)

Duration	1 July 2019–31 December 2023
Total cost to WFP	USD 129,476,091
Gender and age marker*	3

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

Executive summary

With a gross domestic product of USD 9.27 billion in 2017 and a 2017 Global Hunger Index score of 24.4, the Republic of Benin is a low-income, food-deficit country that has succeeded in reducing chronic malnutrition but still faces development challenges, including food insecurity, malnutrition and gender inequalities. Wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiencies persist among large segments of the population, with variations among regions and between rural and urban localities.

The proposed country strategic plan for 2019–2023 will enable WFP to reposition itself and transition from providing direct assistance to performing an advisory and enabling role, supporting the Government in the design and implementation of a national integrated home-grown school feeding programme.

Based on a 2018 zero hunger strategic review, evaluations and lessons learned and in line with government priorities, WFP will take an integrated approach to support the Government in addressing food insecurity at the household, community and individual levels, focusing on root causes through school feeding under an integrated, nutrition-sensitive, multisectoral approach (with linkages to social protection, education, health, agriculture, hygiene and sanitation); nutrition assistance, with an emphasis on the prevention of malnutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies among children and pregnant and lactating women and girls; and institutional

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capacity strengthening, with home-grown school feeding as an entry point for promoting local food production, particularly in support of smallholder farmers, especially women.

Demand-driven institutional capacity strengthening is central to WFP's approach, and WFP will work through partnerships to maximize its effectiveness.

The country strategic plan is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Government's national development plan for 2018–2025 and the United Nations development assistance framework for Benin for 2019–2023. It will contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17 and to WFP Strategic Results 1, 2, and 3 through the following three strategic outcomes:

- Strategic outcome 1: Vulnerable populations in Benin, including school-aged children, have adequate access to safe, nutritious food and basic social services all year.
- Strategic outcome 2: Vulnerable populations, including children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women and girls in targeted areas, have improved nutritional status in line with national targets by 2023.
- Strategic outcome 3: National and local institutions in Benin have increased capacity, and improved inclusive systems for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2, including for integrated school meals and food security, by 2023.

WFP will adopt a whole-of-society approach¹ and will leverage partnerships with national, regional and international financial institutions, United Nations agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the private sector to address Benin's hunger and malnutrition. The country strategic plan for 2019–2023 will pave the way for full capacity strengthening, policy support and an advocacy focus in country strategic plans beyond 2030.

The country strategic plan is the result of a wide-ranging consultative process within the country involving all stakeholders, including the Government, United Nations agencies, donors, non-governmental organizations and other public and private sector partners. It also responds to the priorities identified in the zero hunger strategic review conducted in 2018.

Draft decision*

The Board approves the Benin country strategic plan (2019–2023) (WFP/EB.A/2019/8-A/2) at a total cost to WFP of USD 129,476,091.

¹ A whole-of-society approach is a comprehensive approach to sustainable consumption and production that is needed to address and prevent negative rebound effects. It requires the involvement not only of government but of local and national stakeholders, with a strong capacity-strengthening component to help communities lead and sustain their own fights against hunger.

* 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. Benin is a low-income,² food-deficit³ country with an estimated population of 10.9 million people that are predominantly rural.⁴ Most of the population is located in the south, with the highest concentration along the Atlantic coast. The north is sparsely populated, with a higher concentration of people in the west. Over 50 percent of the country's population is under 18 years of age.
2. In 2018, Benin was reported to be one of the countries of the world most vulnerable to climate change.⁵ It is predicted that changes in rainfall patterns, including with regard to intensity, will further exacerbate droughts and floods in the country, with rural populations and smallholder farmers being the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change on agricultural production. Every year since 2009, the country has faced localized droughts and floods affecting thousands of people in the area around the towns of Karimama and Malanville in the north of the country and in the departments of Oueme, Mono and Couffo in the south.
3. Benin is politically stable and has been a democracy since 1990, with a decentralized system of governance and a socio-political environment that is friendly and conducive to business. The country nevertheless ranked 163rd of 188 countries on the 2017 Human Development Index.⁶ National poverty rates are rising, increasing from 37.5 percent in 2006 to 40.1 percent in 2015, with higher rates in the departments of Alibori, Mono and Couffo.⁷ Fewer households headed by women experience poverty (28 percent compared to 38 percent of households headed by men), but women suffer structural and socio-cultural discrimination that limits their access to economic opportunities and are under-represented in high-level decision-making positions.⁸ The prevalence of HIV and AIDS, which affect women more than men, decreased from 2 percent in 2006 to 1.2 percent in 2014.
4. The education system in Benin faces persistent challenges: only 38 percent of the population is literate (50 percent of men and 27 percent of women). The quality of education and school infrastructure is poor. Although the 2015 national net enrolment rate was 98 percent (99.6 percent for boys and 96.3 percent for girls), Benin still has several rural districts with net enrolment rates below 50 percent, especially in the north. The primary school completion rate was 81 percent nationwide in 2016 (76 percent of girls and 85 percent of boys).⁹ The percentage of men with at least some secondary education (30.8 percent) is almost double that of women (15.8 percent).¹⁰

² Benin's gross domestic product was USD 9.27 billion in 2017. <https://tradingeconomics.com/benin/gdp>.

³ Klaus von Grebmer and others. 2017. *2017 Global Hunger Index: The inequalities of hunger*. <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2017.pdf>. Benin scored 24.4 on the 2017 Global Hunger Index, placing it in the "serious" category in terms of level of hunger.

⁴ According to the Fourth General Population and Housing Census (*Quatrième recensement général de la population et de l'habitat*), undertaken in 2013, 51.2 percent of the population is female and 17 percent of the population is under 5 years of age (17.6 percent of boys, 16.4 percent of girls).

⁵ Benin is ranked 155th of 181 countries. <https://adaptation-undp.org/projects/benin-nap-process>.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme. 2018. *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update*. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf.

⁷ Institut national de la statistique et de l'analyse économique. *Cinquième recensement général de la population et de l'habitat*. Note: At the time of writing, the document was still in the validation process and was not yet available online.

⁸ Women constitute 7.2 percent of national parliamentarians. <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

⁹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

5. The Government considers school meals to be essential to improving access to primary education and increasing the retention rate, particularly among girls. A national school meals programme has been in place since 2000 and was expanded from 1,579 primary schools in 2017 to 3,179 in 2018. WFP will support the Government in further expanding the programme.

1.2 Progress towards SDG 2

Targets

6. Benin's progress towards and challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 are laid out in its national development plan for 2016–2025 (*Plan national de développement 2016–2025*), 2025 strategic development plan for the agriculture sector (*Plan stratégique de développement du secteur agricole 2025*),¹¹ education sector plan for 2018–2030 (*Plan sectoriel de l'éducation post 2015 (2018–2030)*)¹² and 2018 zero hunger strategic review (ZHSR), together with the supporting policy documents.
7. *Access to food*: Although Benin's score on the Global Hunger Index improved from 31.7 in 2008 to 24.4 in 2017,¹³ food insecurity in Benin remains serious. A 2017 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis showed that 9.6 percent of the population (one million people) were food-insecure.
8. Food insecurity rises during the lean season, is higher in rural areas (13 percent) than in urban areas (9 percent)¹⁴ and shows regional disparities: Atacora in northwestern Benin (24 percent of households) is the most affected, followed by Couffo (16 percent) Collines (15 percent) in central Benin and Zou in the south (12 percent).
9. The regions most affected by food insecurity show both higher poverty levels and lower human development. In 2017, households spent on average 46 percent of their overall budget on food (59 percent in Atacora), underscoring their vulnerability to food insecurity.¹⁵ Food insecurity is aggravated by low agricultural productivity, seasonal price variations and price volatility, as well as natural hazards linked to climate change.
10. Negative coping strategies such as the sale of crops and other assets on poor terms, reduced consumption of food and increased consumption of poor-quality food are frequent during shocks, as is increased migration to towns, particularly among young people, which affects agricultural production and further threatens food security. Rural women are more affected by shocks because they own fewer productive assets and have limited coping capabilities.¹⁶
11. *End all forms of malnutrition*: The ZHSR showed that the main causes of malnutrition include poverty, lack of access to nutrients and limited knowledge of nutrition, which leads to poor feeding practices. Structural and socio-cultural gender inequalities are underlying causes of malnutrition that extend from the individual to the community and national levels.
12. At the national level, 17 percent of children are underweight, 4 percent severely.¹⁷ Like food insecurity, underweight is more prevalent in rural areas (18 percent) than in urban areas

¹¹ http://www.agriculture.gouv.bj/IMG/pdf/synthese_psd2025_pniasan_2021_cadre_prog_cadre_insti_promo_fil.pdf.

¹² <https://www.globalpartnership.org/download/file/fid/75684>.

¹³ Klaus von Grebmer and others. 2017. *2017 Global Hunger Index: The inequalities of hunger*. <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2017.pdf>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 2017 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis.

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. 2015. *Rapport national sur le développement humain 2015: Agriculture, sécurité alimentaire et développement humain au Bénin*. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/rndh_2015_benin.pdf.

¹⁷ Sex disaggregated data are not available.

- (15 percent). The northern departments of Alibori, Atacora and Borgou have the highest prevalence, at 19.4, 18.8 and 18.3 percent, respectively. The national prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 fell from 8.4 percent in 2006 to 5 percent in 2017; however, the prevalence in Alibori, Atacora, Borgou and Mono (8.6, 5.7, 5.6 and 6.6 percent, respectively)¹⁸ remains alarming.
13. The prevalence of stunting and wasting in Benin is 32 percent for children under 5 and varies significantly by locale. Prevalence among rural children is 36 percent and among urban children 28 percent. At 19 percent, the prevalence in Cotonou is far below the national average for urban areas.
 14. The implementation of a national protocol for the management of acute malnutrition has contributed to a decline in infant mortality, which decreased from 89 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2001 to 55 in 2017.¹⁹ Despite the reduction in child morbidity and mortality rates, however, the root causes of child malnutrition have been only partially addressed.
 15. Exclusive breastfeeding reduces infant mortality due to common childhood illnesses such as diarrhoea and pneumonia and leads to quicker recovery from illness. Only 46 percent of women breastfeed within an hour of birth, however, and fewer than 43 percent of children under 6 months of age are exclusively breastfed. Only 14 percent of children under 2 have a minimum acceptable diet.
 16. Benin faces multiple burdens of malnutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies. According to the latest demographic and health survey, 72 percent of children 6–59 months of age and 58 percent women of reproductive age are anaemic.²⁰
 17. *Smallholder productivity and incomes:* More than 70 percent of the population of Benin is employed in the agriculture sector. Seventy percent of the female population live in rural areas, where women perform 60 to 80 percent of the agricultural work and up to 44 percent of the household work.²¹
 18. Agriculture accounts for 25 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Farmlands are small and fragmented and productivity is low, however, and the country relies heavily on cereal imports. At the national level, 50 percent of households cultivate fewer than two hectares and only 20 percent of women in farming households own land.²² There is significant discrimination against women in ownership and succession rights, affecting their capacity to participate effectively in food security and nutrition development programming. Furthermore, with limited access to land, women are also excluded from decision-making and have limited access to credit.
 19. Although they account for 95 percent of the agricultural economy,²³ smallholder farmers engage primarily in subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture, investing little and

¹⁸ Ministry of Planning and Development, National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis (Ministère du plan et du développement, Institut national de la statistique et de l'analyse économique). 2018. Fifth Demographic and Health Survey of Benin 2017–2018 (*Cinquième enquête démographique et de santé au Bénin 2017–2018*). At the time of writing, the document was still in the validation process and was not yet available online.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 1995. *Women, Agriculture and Rural Development: A Synthesis Report of the Africa Region*. <http://www.fao.org/3/x0250e/x0250e00.htm#TopOfPage>.

²² 2017 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis.

²³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 1995. *Women, Agriculture and Rural Development: A Synthesis Report of the Africa Region*. <http://www.fao.org/3/x0250e/x0250e00.htm#TopOfPage>.

producing little marketable surplus. Training and effective farming technologies and inputs are available only to a limited extent.

20. *Sustainable food systems*: The sustainability of Benin's food systems is threatened by population growth, gender inequalities, soil erosion, natural disasters, reduced land productivity, land and environmental degradation and climate change. Post-harvest losses stood at 50 percent in 2017.²⁴ The implications of environmental damage in rural areas are particularly serious for women, who are generally found on the most marginal land, have the primary responsibility for household subsistence and have few alternative income-generating opportunities.
21. Despite continued vulnerability there is potential to develop agriculture, including by expanding men and women smallholder access to markets. The support of WFP and its partners has led to positive trends in smallholder incomes in recent years, but smallholders still have difficulty penetrating local markets. The lack of land titles and other factors (e.g., access to and ownership of land) hinder the ability of most smallholder farmers, particularly women, to invest in equipment such as drip irrigation systems or to obtain loans.²⁵
22. WFP will consult with the Government and its partners on the suitability of conducting a country analysis of climate vulnerability and its impact on food security, with the goal of identifying ways to strengthen WFP's programming on resilience in the country and ensuring that the country strategic plan for 2019–2023 (CSP) is aligned with national climate policies and frameworks such as its 2008 national adaptation plan and its 2017 intended national determined contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Macroeconomic environment

23. Benin's economy is characterized by a large informal sector that represents an estimated 65 percent of the total economy. Real GDP growth rose from 4 percent in 2016 to an estimated 5.5 percent in 2017 and is projected to reach 6.5 percent in 2019.²⁶ Economic performance in 2016–2017 was principally the result of reforms adopted under the Government's action programme for 2016–2021, known as "*Bénin Révélé*",²⁷ to increase public investment in infrastructure, agriculture, tourism and basic services. This positive performance is also attributable to substantial increases in agricultural production, especially in cotton (estimated at 450,000 mt in 2016), an increase in electricity production and economic recovery in Nigeria, an important trading partner.
24. Despite overall progress in reform and investment efforts, Benin remains affected by a lack of infrastructure, poor economic and financial governance, a weak enabling environment and outdated business and commercial laws. Regional disparities and gender inequalities reflect inequitable access to the benefits of economic growth. Additional challenges include infrastructural deficit in the educational sector, lack of employment opportunities for young people, particularly young women, and deficiencies in transport and energy, economic diversification and effective and representative governance.

²⁴ Zero hunger strategic review. 2018.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/benin/benin-economic-outlook/.

²⁷ <https://www.presidence.bj/benin-revele/read/>.

Key cross-sectoral linkages

25. Persistent gender inequalities impede Benin's economic and social development, economic growth and poverty reduction, deny women and girls their rights and limit the options and well-being of some men and boys.
26. Benin ranked 146th of 189 countries on the 2017 Gender Inequality Index, with a score of 0.611.²⁸ The 2017 Gender Development Index showed an estimated gross national income per capita of USD 1,795 for women and USD 2,329 for men.²⁹ The gender dimension of climate change also shows inequalities: a study focusing on dry grains found that as a consequence of climate change only 28 percent of surveyed households headed by women were able to cover their basic annual needs, compared to 43 percent of households headed by men.³⁰
27. Sexual and reproductive health is a key driver of gender equality in Benin. The current total fertility rate is 5.7 births per woman and the prevalence of contraceptive use is low (13.6 percent).³¹ This is detrimental to girls' health and may restrict their opportunities, as early pregnancies often lead to girls dropping out of school and being confined to low-skilled jobs. Although 69 percent of working-age women are employed, few obtain leadership or decision-making positions. Thirty percent of women aged 20–49 married before age 18.
28. Despite an improvement in primary health care coverage from 59 percent in 2013 to 63 percent in 2015, Benin continues to register a high maternal mortality rate, with 347 deaths for every 100,000 live births, and an infant mortality rate of 106 deaths per 1,000 live births.³² Maternal and infant deaths are related to women's poor health due to malnutrition, infectious and parasitic diseases, a lack of adequate health facilities in peri-urban and rural areas (including sexual and reproductive health services) and limited access to water, sanitation and education.
29. According to a survey by the Ministry of Family in 2009, up to 69 percent of women and girls in Benin have experienced some form of gender-based violence, including physical abuse, rape, trafficking and female genital cutting. Gender-based violence is also prevalent in schools, leading many young girls to drop out. Although the Child Code bans a wide range of harmful practices, girls suffer multiple forms of abuse, including rape, sexual harassment and abduction.
30. Furthermore, because of a lack of knowledge or of means, families, particularly in rural areas, often do not declare the births of their children, which can result in the denial of access to public services such as education.³³ Children living with disabilities generally do not have access to the conventional educational system, and there are no legal requirements for buildings to permit access for all.

²⁸ United Nations Development Programme. 2018. *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update*. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Afavi P. Dah-gbeto and Grace B. Villamor. 2016. "Gender-specific responses to climate variability in a semi-arid ecosystem in northern Benin", *Ambio*, vol. 45, suppl. 3, pp. 297–308. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-016-0830-5>.

³¹ Ministry of Planning and Development, National Institute for Statistics and Economic Analysis (Ministère du plan et du développement, Institut national de la statistique et de l'analyse économique). 2018. *Fifth Demographic and Health Survey of Benin 2017–2018 (Cinquième enquête démographique et de santé au Bénin 2017–2018)*. At the time of writing, the document was still in the validation process and was not yet available online.

³² Klaus von Grebmer and others. 2017. *2017 Global Hunger Index: The inequalities of hunger*. <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2017.pdf>.

³³ <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2017&dliid=276969#wrapper>.

31. The achievement of zero hunger (SDG 2) is a multisectoral goal that particularly affects agriculture, health, nutrition, gender and social protection, and WFP will support the achievement of all the SDGs by using a multisectoral approach.

1.3 Hunger gaps and challenges

32. Despite Benin having numerous policy documents and strategic plans, its food and nutrition security has improved only marginally. The national strategy for achieving food security and improving nutrition is undermined by fragmented implementation, including insufficient coordination among institutions and inadequate coherence among stakeholder programmes.
33. The ZHSR identified further gaps in the national response to food security and nutrition challenges in Benin, including:
- lack of a food and nutrition security policy to safeguard the continuity of a long-term vision across changing governments;
 - restricted access to land for smallholder farmers, particularly women;
 - low resilience of vulnerable people to the impacts of climate change;
 - a lack of effective early warning systems and weak preparedness and response mechanisms that are insufficiently linked to the nascent social protection system;
 - limited connectivity to markets and limited access to credit and other financing for smallholder farmers, leading to low productivity; and
 - high youth unemployment, which could be lowered through greater political support and financial investment in agriculture.
34. In addition, the ZHSR highlights issues that affect people's nutrition and health status and require appropriate action. These include post-harvest loss, lack of food safety and quality controls, limited access to water, restricted access to health centres and low education levels among heads of households.

1.4 Key country priorities

Government

35. The ZHSR identified the following priorities for achieving food security and addressing malnutrition:
- supporting the growth and development of agricultural production;
 - strengthening vulnerable populations' resilience to shocks;
 - strengthening national early warning and food security and nutrition monitoring systems;
 - developing an integrated approach to school meals and promoting schools as the core of local development;
 - developing comprehensive strategies for the reduction of post-harvest losses;
 - ensuring that the school meals programme is aligned with the broader social protection system and complements other children's programmes to maximize impact;
 - strengthening the capacities of structures for the support and improvement of food safety and quality, including through the enhancement of control mechanisms;
 - promoting and strengthening nutrition-sensitive interventions;

- promoting and strengthening gender-informed advocacy and communications for healthy diet and nutrition;
 - advocating legislation to support and achieve food and nutrition security in Benin; and
 - addressing gender inequalities systematically.
36. To stimulate the country's economy, the Government's action programme for 2016–2021 acts simultaneously on the political, administrative, economic and social levels and emphasizes educational performance and social protection. Specifically, in order to reach zero hunger by 2030, the programme develops priority projects and programmes across key sectors, with a focus on decentralization.
37. Both the strategic development plan for the agriculture sector and the national plan for agricultural investment and food and nutrition security for 2017–2021 (*Plan national d'investissements agricoles et de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle*)³⁴ aim to reinforce the link between agricultural performance and social and economic development, with a focus on community participation and modernization and improvement of the food value chains and information systems.
38. The reduction of food insecurity and poverty in Benin, especially in rural areas, is a national priority. The Government's strategic development plan for the agricultural sector for 2017-2025³⁵ emphasizes strengthening the capacities of smallholder farmers to promote local production and food security.
39. In its strategic development plan for food and nutrition (*Plan stratégique de développement de l'alimentation et de la nutrition*),³⁶ the Government has put nutrition at the heart of development, with specific activities and nutrition-sensitive interventions within a multisectoral approach. One of the priorities highlighted in this plan is the implementation of nutrition-sensitive activities at the community level.
40. The Government has established a social protection policy that strives to provide social safety nets and in that context sees the school meals programme as the main social transfer vehicle in the education sector and an important contributor to improving and maintaining access to education.
41. WFP has been the Government's closest partner for school meals since 2000, with the country relying on WFP for technical assistance and implementation and policy guidance. Reflecting the Government's increased commitment, the national school meals policy was developed in 2014 with the objective of contributing to primary education for all through a gradual expansion of school meals, which reached 31 percent of primary school students in 2017, 51 percent by 2018 and is expected to reach full coverage by 2025.
42. Based on the success of WFP's school meals programme, the Government requested WFP's support for the implementation and coordination of its national integrated school meals programme (*Programme national d'alimentation scolaire intégré*, or PNASI).³⁷ With WFP's support, the Government took concrete steps by investing USD 47 million to expand and strengthen the programme, which in 2017 covered 1,579 of the country's 7,616 primary schools. In 2018, the Government raised its contribution to USD 50 million to

³⁴ http://www.agriculture.gouv.bj/IMG/pdf/psdsa_2025_et_pniasan_2017_-_2021_version_finale_adoptee.pdf.

³⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (Ministère de l'agriculture, de l'élevage et de la pêche). 2017. *Plan Stratégique de développement du secteur agricole (PSDSA) 2025 et Plan national d'investissements agricoles et de sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle PNIASAN 2017–2021*. http://www.agriculture.gouv.bj/IMG/pdf/psdsa_2025_et_pniasan_2017_-_2021_version_finale_adoptee.pdf.

³⁶ <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/ben149119.pdf>.

³⁷ Not yet available online.

expand the programme to 3,179 schools. This expansion started in the 2018–2019 school year and is being implemented by WFP.

43. The health sector nutrition policy for 2016–2025 (*Politique du secteur de la santé pour la nutrition*)³⁸ promotes a multisectoral approach linking education, health and local agricultural production to decrease stunting among children under 5 and anaemia among women, particularly pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWG). The policy also addresses the double burden of malnutrition and aims to reduce the number of overweight people by 30 percent, mainly among children and adolescents.
44. Discussions are ongoing on the reinforcement of the food and nutrition security legal framework, including the development of a law on food and nutrition security and the integration of school meals into an existing 2003 law on education.
45. Benin has committed to gender equality and women’s empowerment. In March 2009 the Government adopted a national gender promotion policy that aims to achieve equality and equity between the sexes by 2025 with a view towards sustainable human development. In January 2012, a law on the prevention and punishment of violence against women was enacted.

United Nations and other partners

46. The United Nations country team will work with the Government based on the common country assessment framework for 2019–2023, which constitutes an important analysis of the United Nations system in Benin.
47. The United Nations development assistance framework for 2019–2023 (UNDAF)³⁹ is aligned with the Government’s action programme and the growth programme for sustainable development for 2018 (*Programme de croissance pour le développement durable*).⁴⁰ It is focused on three strategic priorities:
 - promoting inclusive, strong and sustainable economic growth;
 - strengthening human capital development; and
 - consolidating democracy and the rule of law and promoting good governance.
48. WFP, in collaboration with other Rome-based agencies, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), supports the Government in enhancing policies to improve economic development, improved food and nutrition security and resilience to shocks. At the same time, it provides support to reinforce government institutions, particularly in education and health.

2. Strategic implications for WFP

2.1 WFP’s experience and lessons learned

49. WFP has been operating in Benin since 1964. The design of the CSP for the period 2019–2023 is informed by lessons learned from recent evaluations and reviews, as described below, as well as key recommendations. In addition, an internal review of WFP’s Benin country programme 200721 (2015–2018) has helped refine WFP’s school meals approach.

³⁸ Not available online.

³⁹ www.bj.undp.org/.../benin/.../planification-strat-gique-du-cadre-de-coop-ration-snu-g.

⁴⁰ Government of Benin. 2018. *Programme de croissance pour le développement durable (PC2D) 2018–2021*. https://www.finances.bj/fileadmin/user_upload/pc2d_2018-2021_complet.pdf.

50. By integrating daily school meals and nutrition support for malnourished children into country programme 200721, WFP contributed to a 5 percent increase in the average school enrolment rate in targeted schools from 2016 to 2017 (boys and girls almost equally). In addition, interventions supporting the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in the north of the country positively affected the nutritional status of targeted beneficiaries, with the recovery rate rising from 92.8 percent in 2016 to 94 percent in 2017.
51. All interventions benefited from synergies and complementary actions with United Nations agencies, including WHO, and the Government in the north of Benin. The implementation of a joint programme in the north showed an improvement in the nutritional status of children and PLWG in areas targeted by WFP assistance.
52. A 2017 assessment of national capacities for school feeding using the Systems Approach for Better Education Results – School Feeding (SABER-SF)⁴¹ concluded that school meals programmes contributed to improved access and attendance among girls and highlighted the need for greater focus on sustainability, capacity strengthening and cost and quality control.
53. A 2017 internal review carried out in 300 of the 1,579 PNASI schools and a recent review of the Benin country programme for 2015–2018 highlighted the need to improve community participation, strengthen ownership and sustainability, build or rehabilitate infrastructure, develop and provide training for school management committees, encourage men’s and women’s equitable participation and promote school gardens. The study also highlighted the value of using approaches that foster gender equality when formulating policy and implementation guidelines, promoting inclusive participation and adopting a multi-agency approach to address issues such as gender-based violence.
54. In July 2018, workshops were held at the decentralized and national levels to assess the initial stage of PNASI implementation and discuss the way forward. The main findings were that there was a need to reinforce the integrated approach, encourage local production and strengthen partnerships, including with local representatives. As part of the last phase of the transitional interim country strategic plan (which covers late 2018–early 2019), the country office is currently undertaking a mid-term evaluation of the PNASI jointly with the Government of Benin, with the findings expected in September 2019.
55. A WFP regional synthesis of operation evaluations⁴² made further recommendations that are relevant at the country level and provide broad strategic guidance, emphasizing broadening support for national social protection mechanisms, improving monitoring and management systems and enhancing WFP’s enabling role.

2.2 Opportunities for WFP

56. WFP has built its reputation with the Government and people of Benin by addressing food and nutrition insecurity at the household and child levels, specifically through school meals and malnutrition prevention and treatment. The PNASI scale-up to universal coverage in 2025 offers WFP the opportunity to enhance its support for the Government’s decentralization efforts and to contribute to a sustainable, high-quality, gender-responsive school meals programme.
57. The school meals programme expansion also provides the opportunity to look further into aligning the programme with the broader social protection system in Benin to ensure that

⁴¹ *Assessment of national capacity for school feeding using systems approach for better education results (SABER-SF) 2017.* <http://saber.worldbank.org/index.cfm?indx=2&ctrn=BJ>.

⁴² WFP Office of Evaluation. 2017. *Operation Evaluations Series: Regional Synthesis 2013–2017, West and Central Africa Region.* Report number OEV/2017/009. https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000023758/download/?_ga=2.86514968.1074270791.1540296645-298904814.1505738065.

the impact of investments in school feeding is maximized through investments in complementary programmes targeting children, their caregivers and smallholder farmers.

58. WFP's role as an enabler and partner in the implementation of the PNASI offers further opportunities to enhance learning through South–South cooperation and with other country offices in the region. Lessons learned through technical workshops and round tables will build the momentum needed to contribute to establishing the Government's leadership in sustainable school meals programming.
59. Due to the multisectoral nature of the PNASI, coordination is complex, with specific responsibilities under various ministries. WFP will support the Government in strengthening the existing structures and streamlining coordination. This approach will also reinforce the capacity of national institutions for a smooth transition to government ownership.
60. WFP will work closely with the Government, communities and other actors such as UNICEF to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. Based on the assessed barriers preventing children with disabilities from attending school, WFP will work with partners to facilitate their inclusion through the school meals programme. WFP will also coordinate closely with the Government, communities and other partners to facilitate school attendance by children lacking birth certificates.
61. WFP will promote synergies and complementarity in facilitating the development of food systems, the agricultural value chain and market access.

2.3 Strategic changes

62. Where relevant, WFP will work with partners to strengthen the Government's capacity to manage social safety nets. The focus will be on establishing or reinforcing the links between school meals (outcome 1) and preparedness and response mechanisms (outcome 3) and the Benin social protection system. South–South learning will involve countries of the Economic Community of West African States. Brazil and China will assist in establishing a coherent policy framework for expanding safety nets using SCOPE, WFP's digital platform for beneficiary and transfer management. A participatory approach of inclusiveness, gender equality and women's empowerment will be embedded in all initiatives.
63. As recommended in the ZHSR, WFP will focus on advocacy and policy work for the elaboration of school meals legislation that promotes local production. WFP will encourage and support a food and nutrition security legislative review, including the development of a law on food and nutrition security, and the integration of school meals into the existing 2003 law on education.
64. WFP will support the institutionalization of an approach that considers regional specificities and diversity of needs, where implementation will prioritize women and people living with disabilities HIV, AIDS and tuberculosis.
65. WFP will ensure that the programme is accountable to all members of the community through information and inclusive participation. WFP will ensure that complaint and feedback mechanisms are set up to ensure community engagement and to encourage community members to communicate their needs, suggestions and complaints.
66. WFP will aim to ensure that gender inequalities and discriminatory social norms are recognized and addressed in order to achieve sustainable equitable outcomes for women, men, girls and boys.
67. These changes are achievable thanks to strategic partnerships and increased government commitment and investments that will allow the Government to gradually assume greater responsibility for the planning, implementation and funding of programmes to ensure food and nutrition security.

3. WFP strategic orientation

3.1 Direction, focus and intended impacts

68. WFP will support the Government in addressing food and nutrition security challenges through a focus on school meals (Strategic Result 1), nutrition assistance (Strategic Result 2) and capacity strengthening (Strategic Result 5). The CSP will contribute to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 17.
69. WFP will support the Government in gradual scale-up of school meals by leveraging its own successful nutrition-sensitive, integrated approach linking social protection, education, health and agriculture and by placing greater focus on home-grown school feeding and gender inequalities. This will entail mapping out steps for the piloting and implementation of a sustainable school meals model, exploring ways of providing cash-based transfers (CBTs) to schools, linking school meals to local production and integrating objectives for rural women's empowerment through professionalization.
70. WFP will continue to support the Government in working towards a national sustainable school meals programme in Benin. The partnership will allow both the Government and WFP to leverage their respective comparative advantages to strengthen capacity at all levels until the Government assumes ownership of the programme, with WFP in an enabling advisory role.
71. To better support the Government in achieving zero hunger, WFP will continue its participation in several processes, including the UNDAF, the Scaling Up Nutrition movement, the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative, the technical working group for education and the permanent secretariat of the national food and nutrition council (*Secrétariat permanent du conseil de l'alimentation et de la nutrition*). The country office will continue to use its logistics system and capacities to support Sahelian countries in food transport through the port of Cotonou and other corridor activities while also managing Global Commodity Management Facility stocks.

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

Strategic outcome 1: Vulnerable populations in Benin, including school-aged children, have adequate access to safe, nutritious food and basic social services throughout the school year

Focus area

72. Activities under strategic outcome 1 will focus on root causes, ensuring that schoolchildren, their families and local communities have access to food (Strategic Result 1; SDG Target 2.1).

Expected outputs

73. This strategic outcome will be achieved through the following three outputs:
- Targeted schoolchildren (girls and boys equitably) receive timely and adequate nutritious meals every school day, including food produced by smallholder farmers, that meets their basic food and nutrition needs and improves school enrolment and retention.
 - Smallholders farmers (equitably men and women) have improved access to markets and information in relation to integrated school feeding that improves their livelihoods.
 - Schoolchildren and their families and local communities benefit from gender-responsive capacity strengthening for integrated school meals management committees that improves nutrition, health and hygiene outcomes.

Key activity

Activity 1: Provide integrated, inclusive and gender-transformative school meals programmes in targeted communities in a way that relies on and stimulates local production

74. WFP will support the Government in providing school meals to 3,799 government-assisted primary schools and 620 WFP-assisted schools, targeting a total of 966,504 children (equitably girls and boys) throughout the school year. For the duration of this CSP, WFP will implement the PNASI on behalf of the Government with a view to handover by mid-2023.
75. Simultaneously, a strategic process lasting about a year will allow the exploration and design of the future sustainable gender-equitable model of school feeding, which will be developed into a national integrated school feeding strategy. Steps in the process will include a plan for the intended expansion of the current school meals programme, a school mapping exercise and the design of an operating and financing model. The national strategy will also clarify the multisectoral approach and how various sectors will contribute to and benefit from a national school meals programme in Benin. Supply chain analysis and costing will be carried out to ensure that the Government makes informed decisions on the most suitable, efficient, equitable and cost-effective model.
76. The process will be government-led and will include a national steering committee that provides guidance and ensures political support (aiming for equal representation of women and men and a national technical working group that will discuss and advise on the elements of the strategy. It will be an inclusive, participatory process involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Catholic Relief Services, working towards a common programmatic approach when and where relevant. Regular consultations with United Nations agencies will be formalized for clear roles and responsibilities and joint planning, including for budgeting and resource mobilization.
77. As part of the design and development of a national model, WFP and the Government have identified 50 schools to pilot a home-grown school feeding model for the first year. A mapping exercise that will provide baseline information on prevailing conditions with regard to school feeding infrastructure and practices and agricultural production will facilitate the identification of local smallholders.
78. The technical assistance provided to smallholder farmers will focus on facilitating access to markets and information. Connections will be made between smallholder farmers and home-grown school feeding procurement systems. Given the clear linkages between improved nutrition and women's economic empowerment, this activity will aim to strengthen women's capacity. Pilot activities will help define the most relevant type of support.
79. To reach one of its important objectives, the PNASI needs to be nutrition-sensitive. At present the PNASI works with food baskets comprising cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, iodized salt and limited fresh ingredients. Most of the food is purchased from wholesalers or imported from regional markets. The pilot project will explore different models for sourcing food, including through local farmers, particularly women processors or their groups. These will include top-ups of the food basket with fresh food bought locally, local procurement of all items in the basket and adaptation of the basket to local production capacities. This activity will also aim to empower women by strengthening their capacity and improving their access to farmland.
80. The pilot phase will also allow for reflection on the role of fortification, including local fortification, and on how food safety and quality will be ensured in the national model (Strategic Result 2).

81. Once the school meals model for Benin is defined⁴³ it will be possible to outline capacity strengthening interventions (Strategic Result 5).⁴⁴ At that point implementation and capacity strengthening will run in parallel with a gradual phase-out of WFP's direct implementation role.

Strategic outcome 2: Vulnerable populations, including children under 5, adolescents and pregnant lactating women and girls in targeted areas, have improved nutrition status in line with national targets by 2023

82. Under this outcome, WFP will support the Government in its fight against malnutrition through direct implementation and capacity strengthening. This includes assisting the Government in reducing undernutrition among children under 5 and PLWG, providing in-kind transfers to mothers of children under 5, along with access to nutrition services at therapeutic feeding centres, and providing blanket supplementary feeding over a six-month period for children aged 6–23 months.

Focus area

83. Activity 2 under strategic outcome 2 focuses on root causes to prevent and treat malnutrition, contributing to WFP Strategic Result 2 (No one suffers from malnutrition) (SDG target 2.2). Gender equality, protection for those living with disability, HIV or AIDS and nutrition enhancement will be cross-cutting.

Expected outputs

84. WFP's assistance will contribute to strategic outcome 2 through the following outputs:
- Children aged 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls suffering from moderate acute malnutrition in targeted areas receive specialized nutritious foods and nutrition counselling that improves their nutrition status.
 - Targeted children aged 6–23 months (girls and boys), adolescents and pregnant and lactating women and girls receive nutritious food or supplements that prevent malnutrition.
 - Caregivers (men and women), pregnant and lactating women and girls and adolescents receive social behaviour change communication and advocacy that promotes healthy infant and young child feeding practices and prevent malnutrition.
 - Targeted populations (women and men) benefit from enhanced government capacity for nutrition education and social and behaviour change communication activities that improve their nutritional status and health.

Key activity

Activity 2: Provide nutritious food and safety net access to children and pregnant and lactating women and girls to treat malnutrition and prevent stunting and support Benin health services on nutrition education and gender-transformative behaviour change

85. WFP will work with UNICEF to strengthen the capacity of government-mandated agencies to manage and implement food and nutrition security programmes through inclusive community-based approaches.
86. This activity will address the immediate causes of acute malnutrition before it becomes life threatening, thereby reducing its human and financial cost. WFP will undertake regular

⁴³ See suggested timeline in Annex I.

⁴⁴ *Roadmap for the integrated National School Feeding Programme in Benin, November 2018, draft 1, annex 1. Not available online.*

nutrition screenings in all targeted areas. Funds permitting, WFP will initially conduct a SMART⁴⁵ survey to assess the nutritional status of the population and establish a baseline, after which children and PLWG affected by MAM will be referred to MAM nutritional recovery centres. Gender-informed nutrition messaging will be provided at the nutritional recovery centres. The impact of the activity will be measured at the end of the CSP.

87. An integrated approach to the prevention and treatment of malnutrition will be implemented, including a targeted supplementary feeding programme to treat malnutrition, blanket supplementary feeding to prevent malnutrition and salt iodization, bio-fortification of local food and access to safe, nutritious food to reduce micronutrient deficiencies.
88. Nutrition activities will focus on supporting national programmes to reduce hunger and malnutrition. They will promote nutrition-specific interventions, treatment of acute malnutrition and prevention of all forms of undernutrition among nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children aged 6–59 months, adolescents and PLWG. In addition, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Council on Food and Nutrition (*Conseil de l'alimentation et de la nutrition*), gender-informed social and behaviour change communication sessions will be organized for adolescent girls, mothers and other caregivers to raise awareness and to promote good practices in nutrition and hygiene. They will cover nutrition needs and care during pregnancy, complementary feeding for young children after the period of exclusive breastfeeding, personal hygiene, family planning and other related life skills. Formative research will be conducted with the support of headquarters and the Regional Bureau to ensure that materials, tools and approaches are context-sensitive.

Strategic outcome 3: National and local institutions in Benin have increased capacity and improved inclusive systems to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, including for improved integrated school meals and food security, by 2023

89. Activity 3 under strategic outcome 3 will contribute to SDG 17 through capacity strengthening to shape and institutionalize the national school meals programme and support a progressive handover to the Government. The model, tools and processes elaborated under this outcome will be supported by the activity under strategic outcome 1 (Strategic Result 1), as the two outcomes are interrelated. While school meals are the main focus of the CSP, emergency preparedness and food security monitoring are also part of the package that the country office will further develop during implementation.

Focus area

90. Interventions under this strategic outcome focus on root causes and building the long-term capacity of institutions at the national and regional levels to roll out the PNASI and manage emergency preparedness autonomously (SDG Target 17.9).

Expected outputs

91. This strategic outcome will be achieved through the following three outputs:
 - Schoolchildren benefit from strengthened capacity of national institutions for effective implementation of a gender responsive sustainable and inclusive scaled-up, cost-effective national integrated school meals programme that ensures access to food.

⁴⁵ SMART stands for “standardized monitoring and assessment of relief and transitions”.

- Schoolchildren benefit from support provided to national institutions in the development of school feeding legislation that meets their basic food and nutrition needs equitably.
- Vulnerable populations (women and men) benefit from the enhanced capacity of national and local government to manage early warning and food security and monitoring systems and thus equitably improve their access to food and their resilience.

Key activity

Activity 3: Provide technical assistance and policy support, including through South–South cooperation, to local and national institutions in the areas of gender-responsive school feeding, food security and emergency preparedness and response

92. A capacity strengthening plan will be established by the end of 2019 for operationalization as of 2020. In collaboration with government counterparts, capacity strengthening interventions will be designed and developed in consultation with implementing partners and United Nations agencies. The plan will be designed to support both strategic outcomes 1 and 2.
93. The capacity strengthening plan will address the following components:⁴⁶
- *Policy and regulatory framework*, with a focus on integrating multiple sectors into school feeding and ensuring that school meals are truly nutrition-sensitive.
 - *Institutional mandate and coordination*: The elements of a future continuous governance structure for school feeding and inclusive and representative coordination bodies at different levels of decentralization will be established, with clear mandates.
 - *Programme design and implementation*: Systems and tools for the effective, equitable, efficient and transparent execution of assigned tasks will be developed. WFP will increasingly implement the programme through the future national structures and gradually decrease its own role in implementation.
 - *Role of non-state actors*: The participation of communities in programme monitoring and a potential parallel feedback mechanism will be strengthened. National academic or research institutions will be involved in regularly exploring the impact of school feeding or in researching the impact of specific programme features.
94. WFP will ensure that stakeholder capacity needs are mapped and validated by institutional stakeholders, counterparts and other United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

3.3 Transition and exit strategies

95. The CSP includes the development of an exit strategy. Once the national school-feeding model is defined in the early stage of implementation, WFP will gradually expand it to get all actors used to it and to facilitate the eventual handover of PNASI implementation to national actors. The exit strategy will include the absorption of the 620 schools presently supported by WFP into the PNASI, starting with 50 pilot schools of excellence.
96. WFP's strategy will include the following important steps:
- elaboration and implementation of the capacity strengthening plan;

⁴⁶ This section on capacity strengthening is based on the Roadmap for the integrated National School Feeding Programme in Benin, November 2018, draft 1, annex 1. Not available online.

- development of a national school feeding strategy;
 - a switch to a national school feeding model;
 - increasing work through national structures; and
 - gradual transition from programme implementation to an advisory role.
97. In addition, during the first years of implementation, WFP will work with the Government to establish quality criteria for programme transfer and identification of achievements at the exit/sign-off stage. The SABER-SF tool will be used to measure the level of preparation required to recommend a transfer plan. WFP recognizes that advancing gender equality is required to achieve sustained food security and nutrition and thus the necessity of incorporating gender into the strategy.
98. In line with the corporate goal of the handover of hunger solutions as agreed with the Government, WFP will transition from its role as a direct implementer of the school meals programme to supporting the Government as an enabler of the PNASI as an entry point for local development.
99. WFP will ensure that the emphasis for monitoring and evaluation processes is on learning and strengthening capacities for improved operation and increased Government ownership.

4. Implementation arrangements

4.1 Beneficiary analysis

TABLE 1: BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY (ALL YEARS)						
Strategic outcome	Activity	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Total
1	1	425 262	541 242	-	-	966 504
2	2	4 656	5 044	1 850	-	11 550
3	3	-	-	415	400	815
Total^a		429 918	546 286	2 265	400	978 869

^a Without overlap

100. Of the total direct beneficiaries, 44 percent are girls and 56 percent are boys, with the difference attributable to the fact that there are more boys in the targeted schools. Adult men and women constitute only 0.3 percent of direct beneficiaries. By far the greatest proportion of direct beneficiaries, 98.7 percent, are under strategic outcome 1, followed by 1.2 percent and 0.1 percent under strategic outcomes 2 and 3, respectively.
101. Schools will be targeted using the following criteria: schools in the most food-insecure communities with low education indicators within the 12 administrative regions of Benin (based on the 2017 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis); schools close to Nigeria and Togo, to prevent children from attending schools (with canteens) abroad;

schools in areas where schools are more than 3 km from the nearest households; and schools with low enrolment (particularly for girls). Targeting criteria will take into consideration additional factors influencing access to schools, including gender, age and disability.

102. WFP aims to improve the dietary intakes and nutritional status of children, adolescents and PLWG in the districts deemed the most nutritionally vulnerable based on socio-economic and nutrition indicators.⁴⁷ Based on their nutritional situation, WFP will target six districts, including three defined as the convergence zone for United Nations interventions under the UNDAF.

⁴⁷ The content of the school meal will be reviewed to optimize nutrient intake – particularly vitamins and minerals – while further exploring local procurement and supply options. This will be done with support from the WFP regional bureau and Headquarters.

4.2 Transfers

Food and cash-based transfers

TABLE 2: FOOD RATIONS (g/person/day) AND CBT VALUES (USD/person/day) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY										
	Strategic outcome 1			Strategic outcome 2				Strategic outcome 3		
	Activity 1			Activity 2				Activity 3		
Beneficiary type	Primary schoolchildren			Children 6–23 months	Children 6–59 months	Pregnant and lactating women	Adolescents	Vulnerable households	Local institutions	National institutions
Modality	Food	Cash- based transfers	Capacity strengthening	Food				Capacity strengthening		
Maize	75						450			
Rice	75									
Pulses	15						60			
Split peas	15									
Oil	10					25	25			
Salt	3						5			
SuperCereal (with sugar)						250	50			
SuperCereal Plus				200						
Plumpy'Sup					100					
Total kcal/day	745			787	500	939	2 234			
% kcal from protein	12			17	10	16	10.6			
Cash-based transfers (USD/person/day)		0.098883								
Number of feeding days per year	175			180	90	270	15			

TABLE 3: TOTAL FOOD AND CASH-BASED TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS AND VALUES		
Food type/cash-based transfer	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	76 418	40 899 996
Pulses	15 280	12 278 949
Oil and fats	5 152	5 498 577
Mixed and blended foods	1 578	1 918 935
Others	1 528	255 280
Total (food)	99 957	60 851 738
CBTs (incl. commodity vouchers)		5 743 328
Total (food and CBT value)	99 957	66 595 066

103. Calorie-rich maize and beans will be purchased locally to boost the local economy. Rice will continue to be included in the school feeding food basket. Rations for school feeding are based on WFP standards, the food consumption gap and community habits. An assessment will be carried out to determine transfer modality, preferences, protection, risk and seasonal factors, cost efficiency and price trends, integrating gender and age analyses. Under CBTs, cash and vouchers will be used. The selection of transfer modality will be determined by the principles of effectiveness, efficiency, economy and safety. The transfer values are based on a designed food basket meeting nutritional needs and local eating habits and preferences, valued at average market prices.
104. Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children under 5, adolescents and PLWG affected by MAM, will receive targeted supplementary feeding and children aged 6-23 months will benefit from blanket supplementary feeding, while caregivers of children referred for treatment of severe acute malnutrition will receive food rations. During programme implementation, WFP, together with the Government, will assess the possibility of providing vouchers to the caregivers, with decisions to be informed by gender and age analyses (to ensure no harm, be equitable and potentially contribute to empowering outcomes).

4.3 Supply chain

105. WFP will regularly seek to address supply chain challenges, including in port operations, transit, customs, local purchases, transport, storage, quality control and food distribution, and to improve its cost effectiveness through efficiencies in procurement and planning.
106. WFP will use food transfers and CBTs under strategic outcomes 1 and 2 to support household access to food and promote equitable livelihood opportunities for women and men. Food will be purchased from local and regional suppliers or through the WFP Global Commodity Management Facility to minimize delays and reduce post-harvest losses; when necessary it will be purchased internationally. WFP will sign agreements with traders, including former beneficiaries, to ensure that food is available for CBT beneficiaries and to strengthen local markets. Other transfer modalities will be assessed and used when necessary.
107. WFP will strengthen the Government's capacity in procurement and supply chain efficiency, including through the development of a procurement operation manual and training in inventory and warehouse management, to ensure that high food quality standards remain a common goal in the regular supply to school canteens. Staff capacities in market research, procurement procedures, vendor background checks and maintenance of WFP's proprietary, vendor and consultant rosters will be strengthened.

108. WFP will use the cash or voucher modality, depending on market functioning, mobile money transfer systems and gender and age analyses. Mobile money transfer systems will be used to scale up WFP's delivery capacity at the national level where the relevant technology, familiarity with the tool, technical capacity and network are available. Sophisticated delivery mechanisms, flexibility and adequate infrastructure will enhance WFP's operational efficiency. WFP will partner with the MTN telecommunications company and other United Nations agencies to make use of their technology for mobile money transfers.

4.4 Country office capacity and profile

109. To ensure organizational readiness, the country office will obtain the buy-in and full engagement of its employees by ensuring the right level of awareness through effective and inclusive communication systems.
110. The country office's organizational structure is being reviewed to ensure that it is fit for the purposes of the CSP, including the staff positions needed to achieve the strategic outcomes and implement related activities. As most of the technical skills and competencies required can be sourced locally, the country office will acquire most of the needed staff in the local labour market and will hire internationally to fill short-term needs or to acquire specific technical expertise (e.g. in food systems, food technology, value chain analysis and development or compliance) not available locally. The country office will optimize the use of technical missions and expert support from the regional bureau and headquarters to achieve the goals of the CSP.
111. The review of the country office structure will also support the country office's gender parity goals and ensure the proper use of available contract modalities.
112. Staff skill and capability development will remain a priority for the country office; a learning and development strategy will be put in place and monitored to enhance service quality and performance.
113. Following the organizational review, identified talent gaps will be addressed through the development and implementation of a talent acquisition and sourcing strategy. WFP has a main office in Cotonou and a sub-office in Parakou, with about 18 percent of the 48-person country office workforce covering the northern region within the four administrative departments. Given the gradual increase in programme coverage and expansion of the integrated school feeding programme, WFP plans to open two more field offices, in Bohicon and Natitingou.
114. WFP will identify new roles and responsibilities to optimize staff talents and ensure that the strategic outcomes are achieved. It will negotiate with the Government to put a team in place from relevant government institutions for a twinning programme with WFP as part of an exit strategy.

4.5 Partnerships

115. WFP will cooperate and coordinate with the Government at the national and regional levels and will work with local authorities to strengthen their coordination and planning capacity. WFP will continue to work with the national directorate for school meals (*Direction de l'alimentation scolaire*) and the ministries responsible for primary education, agriculture, health, planning and development to ensure a sustainable school feeding programme that stimulates local production.
116. WFP will build a partnership with the World Bank to strengthen mutually reinforcing programmatic approaches and programme risk reduction through the identification of common issues and increased stakeholder outreach. WFP is also developing its relationship with the African Development Bank to address the links between smallholder productivity and sustainable food systems and will explore the possibility of developing further

partnerships with other cooperating institutions, agencies and the private sector with regard to impact- and evidence-based results.

117. WFP will collaborate with United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the International Labour Organization, as well as with UNFPA and UNDP, to achieve complementarity and synergy in the areas of agriculture, nutrition, integrated school feeding, social and behaviour change communication, sexual and reproductive health, livelihoods, resilience and youth employment.
118. The country office will pursue its partnership with the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil and further capitalize on the “Beyond Cotton” project to promote links with school meals in Benin. Beyond Cotton is a new partnership between WFP, Brazil and Benin that supports smallholder farmers and public institutions adding value to cotton products through South–South cooperation.
119. Partnerships will also be developed with NGOs, civil society organizations (including Government entities, such as social promotion centres, working on family issues and women’s empowerment), professional smallholder networks and other partners, including in relation to gender equality commitments, competencies and capacities, to foster transformative change.
120. WFP will facilitate public-private partnerships and continue to work with social enterprises, including in relation to post-harvest loss reduction, to leverage expertise and innovation potential in a demand-driven approach to agriculture and market support.

5. Performance management and evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

121. The country office has a monitoring, review and evaluation plan in place. WFP’s monitoring and evaluation systems will be aligned with the regional monitoring and evaluation strategy and will be gender-responsive while taking into consideration country needs mapping and country capacity strengthening. As part of a joint commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Rome-based agencies will support the Government in assessing its strategic position, complementarity and policy and programme coherence. Standard operating procedures are in place for identifying roles and responsibilities at the country office and sub-office levels. The country office monitoring and evaluation tool (COMET) is fully functional, with ongoing training to strengthen staff use of the tool.
122. The country office will undertake CSP evaluations and reviews. In 2021, the country office will undertake a mid-term review in line with corporate monitoring and evaluation requirements, which will contribute to the evaluation of the UNDAF. Thematic reviews, including donor-specific reviews, will focus on knowledge gaps and lessons learned regarding specific activities under the CSP.
123. In 2021 the country office will commission a WFP/Government of Benin final joint decentralized evaluation of the PNASI to meet learning and accountability needs and serve as a follow-up to the mid-term evaluation that will take place in 2019.
124. In 2022, the CSP will undergo an independent country strategic plan evaluation managed by the WFP Office of Evaluation. The evaluation will meet accountability requirements for WFP’s overall country portfolio performance, and the results will inform future strategic programmatic orientation. WFP will invest in strengthening its partners’ capacities for data collection and analysis through training in the use of new tools such as the mobile data collection and analytics tool, a robust digital data collection system already being used by the country office. To ensure data quality, all data, from raw datasets to indicator outputs, will be stored in a WFP corporate server and in a single location accessible to regional and national users for validation, aggregation and analysis.

5.2 Risk management

Strategic risks

125. Climate shocks and malnutrition could exacerbate current vulnerabilities, especially in northern regions. To mitigate the risk, the CSP focuses on long-term resilience building, as well as on supporting the Government in establishing functional early warning systems.
126. The slow but consistent encroachments of jihadi groups from the Sahel (including Mali and Burkina Faso) constitute a threat to Benin.
127. Weak coordination among line ministries could affect the integrated home-grown school feeding approach and consequently the success of the CSP. To mitigate these risks, WFP will enhance its capacity-building work with the Government to improve coordination and collaboration among relevant ministries, supported by technical inputs, expertise and facilitation.

Programmatic risks

128. The main programmatic risks are failure to achieve transformative change for targeted communities and beneficiaries due to a failure to integrate activities and resistance to the gender-transformative approach and failure to sustain an adequate level of activities in the shift to government-led management. WFP will build on lessons learned to ensure that programme results remain to the benefit of the communities and beneficiaries even after handover to the Government. WFP will also establish an operational agreement with the Government to establish shared expectations; capacity-strengthening plans will include clearly defined outputs and milestones.

Institutional risks

129. The main institutional risk is reputational, as WFP is considered the partner of choice to support the Government in its implementation and expansion of the PNASI. To avoid reputational risks and deliver on the promises of the CSP, WFP will implement strong mitigation measures to comply with operational procedures and timelines, ensure that good-quality commodities are distributed, ensure effective and efficient monitoring of operations and establish effective compliance measures for dealing with food diversions, fraud and beneficiary abuse. In addition, internal and external controls and learning processes will be strengthened through effective risk management procedures.

6. Resources for results

6.1 Country portfolio budget

Strategic outcome	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
1	11 023 262	28 310 437	29 699 694	30 766 667	23 383 603	123 183 663
2	689 583	794 772	811 317	816 732	814 161	3 926 566
3	353 014	534 712	510 514	517 902	449 719	2 365 861
Total	12 065 860	29 639 922	31 021 524	32 101 301	24 647 484	129 476 091

6.2 Resourcing outlook

130. The five-year CSP (2019–2023) has a budget of USD 129,476,091 for the three strategic outcomes, for an annual average of USD 25,895,218. The Government has already committed USD 110,000,000, representing 85 percent of the estimated funds required.

Adequate resources will be allocated to enable implementation of activities advancing gender equality under each of the CSP activities. Changes or increases in activities will be addressed through revisions of the CSP and the country portfolio budget. WFP will explore new funding sources and the Government will develop a strategy to jointly mobilize resources with WFP from donors and the private sector to cover gaps in funding.

6.3 Resource mobilization strategy

131. The resource mobilization strategy for Benin focuses on positioning WFP as a partner of choice for addressing hunger and supporting the achievement of the SDGs in the country. The strategy will be strongly intertwined with the CSP, and the latter will be a fundamental component in its delivery and impact. Closely related to funding, however, is the question of trade-offs between increasing the quantity and quality of the contents of the food baskets and increasing the number of food baskets distributed. WFP will ensure continuous dialogue with and engagement of resource partners with the aim of generating more tangible community benefits while at the same time increasing programme coverage.
132. A sustainable school feeding programme depends on sustainable funding. WFP will work with the Government in developing a resource mobilization strategy that will prioritize long-term funding for the school meals programme in the national development strategy and investment plans. In addition, WFP will expand its donor base through donor mapping to identify existing and new opportunities from emerging funding sources, including in the private sector. WFP will seek multi-year funding from potential donors to support sustained supplementary and complementary activities aimed at improving the quality of school feeding. The generation of additional benefits (health, agriculture and social protection) will require further budget prioritization.

ANNEX I**LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR BENIN 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 Benin, including school-aged children, have adequate access to safe, nutritious food and basic social services throughout the school year

Outcome category:

Nutrition sensitive

Maintained/enhanced individual and household access to adequate food

Focus area: Root causes

Assumptions

Resources available as required

Co Project areas are accessible and safe

Good absorption capacities of the cooperating partners

Complementary services and items such as healthcare, water, sanitation, hygiene, school garden, protection, non-food items, among others, are provided by the Government of Benin and other United Nations agencies and NGOs

School infrastructure and teaching are of sufficient quality

Turn-over of staff at national and sub-national levels of government institutions

Community is aware and supports intervention

Sufficient resources are allocated to school feeding programme

Outcome indicators

Attendance rate

Enrolment rate

Gender ratio

Pass rate

Retention rate / Drop-out rate (new)

Activities and outputs**1. Provide integrated, inclusive and gender-transformative school meals programmes in targeted communities in a way that relies on and stimulates local production (SMP: School meal activities)**

Schoolchildren and their families and local communities benefit from gender-responsive capacity strengthening for integrated school meals management committees that improves nutrition, health and hygiene outcomes (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Smallholders farmers (equitably men and women) have improved access to markets and information in relation to integrated school feeding that improves their livelihoods (F: Purchases from smallholders completed)

Targeted schoolchildren (girls and boys equitably) receive timely and adequate nutritious meals every school day, including food produced by smallholder farmers, that meets their basic food and nutrition needs and improves school enrolment and retention (A: Resources transferred)

Targeted schoolchildren (girls and boys equitably) receive timely and adequate nutritious meals every school day, including food produced by smallholder farmers, that meets their basic food and nutrition needs and improves school enrolment and retention (N*: School feeding provided)

Strategic Objective 2: Improve nutrition**Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition**

Strategic outcome 2: Vulnerable populations, including children under 5, adolescents and pregnant lactating women and girls in targeted areas, have improved nutrition status in line with national targets by 2023

Outcome category: Improved consumption of high-quality, nutrient-dense foods among targeted individuals

Focus area: Root causes

Assumptions

No outbreak of communicable diseases in programme intervention areas

Food pipeline and funding remains healthy all year round

Other non-food items and complementary services are provided by other partners (Government of Benin, other United Nations agencies and NGOs)

Community is aware of and supports interventions

Capacities are sufficiently strengthened at child treatment centres and therapeutic centres

Outcome indicators

MAM Treatment Default rate

MAM Treatment Mortality rate

MAM Treatment Non-response rate

MAM Treatment Recovery rate

Minimum Dietary Diversity – Women

Proportion of children 6–23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet

Proportion of eligible population that participates in programme (coverage)

Proportion of target population that participates in an adequate number of distributions (adherence)

Activities and outputs**2. Provide nutritious food and safety net access to children and pregnant and lactating women and girls to treat malnutrition and prevent stunting and support Benin health services on nutrition education and gender-transformative behaviour change (NTA: Nutrition treatment activities)**

Caregivers (men and women), pregnant and lactating women and girls and adolescents receive social behaviour change communication and advocacy that promotes healthy infant and young child feeding practices and prevent malnutrition (E*: Social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) delivered)

Children aged 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls suffering from moderate acute malnutrition in targeted areas receive specialized nutritious foods and nutrition counselling that improves their nutrition status (A: Resources transferred)

Children aged 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls suffering from moderate acute malnutrition in targeted areas receive specialized nutritious foods and nutrition counselling that improves their nutrition status (B: Nutritious foods provided)

Targeted children aged 6–23 months (girls and boys), adolescents and pregnant and lactating women and girls receive nutritious food or supplements that prevent malnutrition (A: Resources transferred)

Targeted children aged 6–23 months (girls and boys), adolescents and pregnant and lactating women and girls receive nutritious food or supplements that prevent malnutrition (B: Nutritious foods provided)

Targeted populations (women and men) benefit from enhanced government capacity for nutrition education and social and behaviour change communication activities that improve their nutritional status and health (E*: Social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) delivered)

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 3: National and local institutions in Benin have increased capacity and improved inclusive systems to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, including for improved integrated school meals and food security, by 2023

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

Focus area: Root causes

Assumptions

Resources available as required

Outcome indicators

Emergency Preparedness Capacity Index

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

SABER School Feeding National Capacity (new)

Activities and outputs**3. Provide technical assistance and policy support, including through South–South cooperation, to local and national institutions in the areas of gender-responsive school feeding, food security and emergency preparedness and response (CSI: Institutional capacity strengthening activities)**

Schoolchildren benefit from strengthened capacity of national institutions for effective implementation of a gender responsive sustainable and inclusive scaled-up, cost-effective national integrated school meals programme that ensures access to food (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Schoolchildren benefit from support provided to national institutions in the development of school feeding legislation that meets their basic food and nutrition needs equitably (I: Policy engagement strategies developed/implemented)

Schoolchildren benefit from support provided to national institutions in the development of school feeding legislation that meets their basic food and nutrition needs equitably (J: Policy reform identified/advocated)

Schoolchildren benefit from support provided to national institutions in the development of school feeding legislation that meets their basic food and nutrition needs equitably (M: National coordination mechanisms supported)

Vulnerable populations (women and men) benefit from the enhanced capacity of national and local government to manage early warning and food security and monitoring systems and thus equitably improve their access to food and their resilience (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

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

C.2.2: Proportion of targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges (new)

C.2.3: Proportion of targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified (new)

C.2.4: Proportion of targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes (new)

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANNEX II

INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME (USD)				
	Strategic Result 1 SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 2 SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 5 SDG Target 17.9	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	
Transfer	84 151 006	2 789 964	1 532 020	88 472 991
Implementation	25 294 958	698 537	570 000	26 563 495
Adjusted direct support costs	6 219 447	198 415	119 446	6 537 308
Subtotal	115 665 412	3 686 916	2 221 466	121 573 794
Indirect support costs (6.5%)	7 518 252	239 650	144 395	7 902 297
Total	123 183 663	3 926 566	2 365 861	129 476 091

Acronyms used in the document

CBT	cash-based transfer
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
MAM	moderate acute malnutrition
NGO	non-governmental organization
PLWG	pregnant and lactating women and girls
PNASI	<i>Programme national d'alimentation scolaire intégré</i> (integrated national school meals programme)
SABER-SF	Systems Approach for Better Education Results – School Feeding
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	standardized monitoring and assessment of relief and transitions
UNDAF	United Nations development assistance framework for 2019–2023
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
ZHSR	zero hunger strategic review