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Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

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Evaluation reports

For consideration

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Ecuador (2017–2021)

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Ecuador for 2017–2021.
2. The evaluation was conducted between April 2021 and June 2022 and assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementation and the factors that explain its performance.
3. The evaluation provides evidence on which to base an assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the CSP in achieving its objectives. Taking a utilization-focused, consultative approach, the evaluation served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informed the preparation of a new CSP for Ecuador.
4. The evaluation made four strategic and two operational recommendations that address key issues for the next CSP for Ecuador.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECUADOR (2017–2021)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High Deadline: January 2023 Recommendation 1: WFP should strengthen its approach to the triple nexus (humanitarian, development and peace) and protection in its response in Ecuador, leveraging existing protection systems and alliances.</p>	Country Director (country office, regional bureau, headquarters Programme and Policy Development Department)	Agreed	The country office will continue to incorporate WFP's contribution to the humanitarian–development–peace nexus into its programmes and projects through the strengthening of social cohesion when possible. Within the framework of agreements signed with other United Nations entities and local partners, it will strengthen and implement comprehensive food security, integration and livelihood actions. The new CSP outlines WFP's contribution to the triple nexus.	Country office programme unit	January 2023
<p>1.1 Incorporate host communities into WFP's response as a conflict prevention strategy. Priority: High (January 2023)</p>	Country Director (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	Further expansion of the inclusion of host communities is envisaged, depending on the availability of funding. The country office will continue to implement projects with host communities, following an approach based on the first 1,000 days of life and with a social protection and conflict prevention perspective that includes conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity risk assessments to inform programming. The country office is coordinating with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion on the horizontal expansion ¹ of the national social protection system (the first phase of which started in November 2020, the second in December 2021 and the third in August 2022).		Completed.

¹ "Vertical" expansion refers to the extension of the duration of assistance given to existing beneficiaries, while "horizontal" expansion relates to the inclusion of new beneficiaries or communities.

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1.2 Assess and update vulnerability criteria to include a gender perspective and the specific risks faced by adult men in the current setting (from a protection perspective), and climate and disaster vulnerability criteria. Priority: High (January 2023)	Country Director (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	Since 2018, the country office has been conducting food security assessments and updating the vulnerability criteria for the population of Ecuador. The country office will continue to conduct food security assessments every year, taking gender, age and diversity into account according to emergency conditions. WFP will also seek to define specific actions that support the inclusion of men at protection risk.	Country office programme unit	Completed.
1.3 Organize a planning event with partners to identify and determine new opportunities for joint work and collaboration on the triple nexus. Priority: High (December 2022)	Country Director (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	The programme unit will continue to hold meetings with partners, including the United Nations peace and development advisor in the regional coordinator's office, in order to identify complementary activities to assist the most at-risk population groups and fall within the framework of the triple nexus. Meetings will also be held between WFP suboffices through which it will be possible to connect the work of smallholder producers with the response provided to the migrant population.	Country office programme manager (regional bureau)	December 2022

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1.4 Undertake risk and vulnerability assessments that include environmental impact criteria. Priority: High (December 2022)	Country Director, programme manager (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	In June 2022, a mission from the regional bureau reviewed the environmental and social safeguards of the programmes and projects implemented by the country office. The country office is coordinating with the regional bureau on the development of an action plan and the implementation of the safeguards. The measures are being incorporated into a binational project “Building Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change through Food Security and Nutrition Actions in Vulnerable Afro and Awá Communities in the Colombia-Ecuador Border Area” and will be incorporated into other projects, in accordance with the action plan.	Country office programme unit	December 2022
1.5 Develop programme guidance for WFP staff and partners, listing a wide variety of possible activities for the improvement of resilience through agricultural production (harvests and reduced post-harvest losses) and income generation for women. The guidance will serve as the basis for a justified and documented selection of future resilience and climate change activities, linked to the country office’s humanitarian response where possible. Priority: High (December 2022)	Country Director, programme manager (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	The country office will further strengthen and diversify the activities under the current CSP (under strategic outcomes 2 and 3) that aim to develop the capacity and encourage the participation of smallholder producers, especially women, in the establishment of food systems that are based on sustainable agriculture and that generate equitable, resilient and sustainable livelihoods. The country office will develop a programme guide that includes a list of possible activities for strengthening the country office’s work with smallholder producers under the new CSP. This development of activities will take into consideration the possibility of linking the country office’s humanitarian response to resilience and climate change activities.		December 2022

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<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: June 2023</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Capitalize on WFP's strategic position and learning by continuing to strengthen the organization's role in supporting public policy design and implementation. This recommendation can be implemented by adjusting country office human resource profiles, systematizing knowledge and developing a knowledge management and advocacy plan with the Government.</p>	Country Director (country office)	Agreed	<p>The country office will continue to strengthen its activities in public policy advocacy. Through those activities it has supported the school feeding law and the development and implementation of the "1,000 days" project, emergency response and social protection.</p> <p>The country office has a constant presence in key public debate forums such as the technical advisory committee on school feeding of the Ministry of Education, the Secretariat that supported the Government in the national dialogues on the 2021 United Nations food systems summit, and the national agricultural strategy for rural women, with the Ministry of Agriculture.</p> <p>The provision of technical support to the Government on specialized topics requires funding and should be a continuous process.</p>	Country Director (country office programme unit)	June 2023
<p>2.1 Strengthen country office human resources with technical and political expertise required to provide technical support to the Government in project and policy design and implementation, incorporating a gender-transformative approach.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (June 2023)</p>	Country Director (country office)	Agreed	In May 2022, a strategic workforce planning exercise was conducted to identify the skills that personnel will require for the new CSP. The country office will implement the recommendations arising from that exercise by strengthening its office structure (in 2022) and implementing other initiatives to enhance country office staff skills (starting in 2023).	Country Director (human resources unit)	December 2023

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<p>2.2 Systematize learning and achievement related to school feeding activities and their connection to WFP smallholder production.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (June 2023)</p>	Country Director (country office)	Partially agreed	The country office has already systematized the school feeding model in a report on that model issued in July 2019. A case study on linking smallholder producers to alternative markets (such as schools) has also been conducted with the McKnight Foundation in 2017–2018.	Country office programme unit	Completed.
<p>2.3 Develop a knowledge management and advocacy plan aimed at ensuring knowledge exchange in support of the national school feeding strategy, other social protection and nutrition programmes, national strategies for public food procurement and for WFP's own cash-based transfer activities. In knowledge management, WFP should prioritize systems and tools for the compilation and dissemination of learning and achievements. Potential areas of learning include capacity strengthening for smallholder farmer associations along the production chain, the boosting of local and institutional food markets, and the reduction of barriers in the public procurement system.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (December 2022)</p>	Country office, programme manager (regional bureau, headquarters Innovation and Knowledge Management Division)	Agreed	<p>The country office has developed a concept note on implementing the school feeding model, with a clear handover strategy. It continues to work on a guide to the registration of small farmers in the national public procurement system with the aim of reducing a major barrier to smallholder participation in public procurement.</p> <p>Based on a road map developed with the Ministry of Education, WFP will continue to advocate with local governments and the private sector to mobilize resources, combine funds from government budgets and engage additional actors with a view to ensuring the sustainability and scale-up of the school feeding model.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, WFP will finalize the toolbox of technical assistance for smallholder producers, which will include assistance in marketing, participation in associations, food security, nutrition and gender matters.</p> <p>The country office will strengthen knowledge generation, systematization and the sharing of internal and external learning. It will hire a team of consultants to develop the knowledge management strategy and action plan.</p>		December 2022

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: January 2023 Recommendation 3: Revise the country strategic plan structure to include a clear definition of coordination mechanisms in order to increase internal synergies among strategic outcomes throughout the project cycle, particularly with regard to needs assessments, targeting and the design, implementation and monitoring of activities.</p>	<p>Country office, programme manager (regional bureau, headquarters Programme and Policy Development Department)</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>The country office will finalize and implement the action plan for strategic workforce planning in order to identify the personnel with the skills required for the new CSP, thereby strengthening its positioning with the Government and contributing to public policy.</p> <p>The country office staff structure will be analysed and updated in line with the new CSP outcomes and other strategic needs (such as strengthened partnership and communication roles). It also seeks to improve coordination and supervision.</p> <p>The country office will strengthen the generation and sharing of internal and external learning. It will hire a team of consultants to develop a knowledge management strategy and action plan.</p> <p>The country office has already recruited two international consultants, one working in the partnerships area (for resource mobilization) and the other with the research, assessment and monitoring team.</p>	<p>Country Director (human resources unit)</p>	<p>January 2023</p>

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: January 2023 Recommendation 4: Ensure that nutrition is addressed as a cross-cutting topic in the new country strategic plan, emphasizing the prevention of chronic malnutrition and obesity and the promotion of breastfeeding.</p>	Country office nutrition specialist (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	<p>The country office will continue to implement activities, following a nutrition-sensitive approach focused on chronic malnutrition, obesity and nutrient deficiency. Activities will be designed using the Programme Impact Pathways tool, with various country office teams taking part.</p> <p>Under the new CSP, activities, programmes and projects will be implemented with a cross-cutting approach to nutrition, gender, protection and conflict sensitivity.</p>	Country office nutrition specialist (programme unit)	January 2023
<p>4.1 Develop a global theory of change for the new country strategic plan that is nutrition-sensitive and includes plans and a budget for human and financial resources sufficient to guarantee the integration of nutrition-sensitive approaches into all strategic outcomes and the establishment of a unit specialized in nutrition, with relevant experience in chronic malnutrition, breastfeeding, behaviour change and nutrition-sensitive social protection.</p> <p>Priority: High (July 2022)</p>	Country office nutrition specialist (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	<p>As part of the design process for the new CSP, and with the support of the regional bureau, the country office has developed a theory of change that includes a nutrition-, gender- and protection-sensitive approach.</p> <p>The new CSP considers nutrition to be a cross-cutting issue, which will be reflected in the organizational chart. For all activities, adequate funds have been allocated to efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. The budget for gender-related activities is 15 percent of the CSP budget of USD 144 million.</p>		Completed.

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<p>4.2 Ensure that the new country strategic plan broadens the response for pregnant women and lactating mothers, as a group with specific nutrition vulnerabilities, to cover improved feeding practices for infants and small children and strengthened mechanisms for referrals to specialized entities for case management when necessary.</p> <p>Priority: High (January 2023)</p>	Country office nutrition specialist (country office)	Agreed	<p>In 2020 the country office launched a “first 1,000 days of life” programme for migrant and refugee pregnant and lactating women and girls. Based on that experience, the country office supported the national Government in the formulation of a “1,000 days” strategy targeting vulnerable Ecuadorians living in extreme poverty. The strategy is considered a cornerstone of public policies against malnutrition and includes targeted approaches for pregnant and lactating women and girls.</p> <p>CSP outcome 2 in the new CSP incorporates the implementation of the first 1,000 days of life programme with the aim of preventing teenage pregnancy through the provision of voucher-based food assistance, supported by nutrition-sensitive activities such as the implementation of a social and behaviour communication strategy and possible supplementary nutrition support.</p>	Country office programme unit (nutrition specialist)	January 2023
<p>Priority: High Deadline: July 2023 Recommendation 5: Improve the integration of monitoring, programme management and financial tracking systems so that programme managers better understand the achievement of goals, objectives and cost-efficiency.</p>	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	<p>The country office will strengthen the integration of monitoring, programme implementation and financial tracking activities and will develop reports and dashboards for the sharing of information using Tableau Software.</p> <p>The country office will continue to hold monthly meetings of its resource management committee, at which the alignment between programme implementation and financial tracking will be verified in a timely manner.</p>	Country office programme unit, monitoring and evaluation unit	December 2022

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<p>5.1 Review indicators and promote their measurement and integrated analysis under the new country strategic plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensuring the integration of process and result indicators for cross-cutting areas under all planned outcomes of the new country strategic plan; and - allowing the integration of ad hoc monitoring frameworks into WFP's corporate monitoring framework. <p>Priority: Medium (December 2022)</p>	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (country office, regional bureau)	Agreed	<p>The country office will continue to hold monthly working meetings between the monitoring and evaluation and programme units in order to strengthen internal coordination and indicator tracking.</p> <p>The country office will strengthen the monitoring plans for, and the follow-up on, the output and outcome indicators developed for each CSP outcome.</p> <p>The new CSP incorporates the process and outcome indicators for cross-cutting areas.</p> <p>The country office holds monthly meetings of its resource management committee at which the budget for each strategic outcome is reviewed against the implementation timeline set out in the grants framework. The meetings provide the opportunity to adjust the actions implemented in order to ensure the appropriate and efficient management of resources.</p>		December 2022
<p>5.2 Introduce a procedure for the periodic analysis of the country office's financial statements, disaggregated by strategic outcome and activity, for the purpose of cost efficiency analysis.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (July 2023)</p>	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (country office)	Agreed	The logical frameworks of the current and new CSPs incorporate food security indicators: the food consumption score, dietary diversity and the consumption-based coping strategy index. The data collected will be disaggregated by vulnerable group and reported either yearly or in accordance with the planning of each CSP outcome.		December 2022

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5.3 Ensure the inclusion of indicators for the measurement of dietary diversity and quality, with data disaggregated according to the various vulnerable groups that WFP supports. Priority: Medium (December 2022)	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (country office, regional bureau)	Partially agreed	The country office will continue to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation plans by ensuring that the funds necessary for data collection are available. The country office will define the criteria for, and the cost of, monitoring. Results will be taken into consideration in the following monitoring and evaluation plan.		Completed
5.4 Ensure that the country office and suboffices have resources sufficient for regular data collection and analysis (monitoring) and promote the use of monitoring findings for programmatic and strategic decision making during country strategic plan implementation. Priority: High (January 2023)	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (country office)	Agreed	Monitoring results are presented online through dynamic dashboards designed using Tableau Software. Several Tableau dashboards are already being used in the country office, supporting various tasks from financial reconciliation to the tracking of beneficiaries and vouchers. Findings from those dashboards are available to management and supporting staff to inform their monitoring of activities and, when necessary, their readjustment.		Completed

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<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: July 2023 Recommendation 6: Strengthen the capacity of all country office employees working in programme and cross-cutting areas, particularly in relation to gender, protection, nutrition, monitoring and climate change. In addition, strengthen the capacity of those employees who work directly with migrants to deal with matters related to mental health and psychosocial support.</p>	Country office programme manager (regional bureau)	Agreed	<p>The country office will develop and implement a capacity development plan for strengthening staff knowledge regarding gender, nutrition, protection, monitoring and climate change, human mobility and conflict sensitivity, mental health, including the basics of psychosocial support provision, and the use of a triple nexus approach, among other topics.</p> <p>As part of implementation of the plan, the country office will facilitate the professional and personal development of its employees by providing training through corporate platforms (e.g., WeLearn), self-learning, interagency training, webinars, regional bureau missions, etc.</p> <p>The possibility of temporary duty assignments and the development of work meetings for the dissemination of project activities and results will also be considered in the plan.</p>	Country office programme unit (regional bureau programme unit)	July 2023