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Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Kyrgyz Republic (2018–2022)

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018–2022.
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementation and the factors explaining its performance. It was conducted using a theory-based, mixed-methods approach designed to serve the dual purpose of accountability and learning and to inform the preparation of a new CSP for the country, applying the five pathways to change outlined in WFP's corporate approach to country capacity strengthening developed around the same time as the evaluated CSP.
3. The evaluation was based on an analysis of data, documents and the perspectives of a broad range of internal and external WFP stakeholders, including beneficiaries. It was conducted from June 2021 to February 2022 and covered WFP's strategy, interventions and systems in the Kyrgyz Republic.
4. The evaluation made six recommendations, each with several related, more detailed sub-recommendations. Four recommendations are strategic and two are operational. The recommendations are to be implemented primarily by the Kyrgyz Republic country office, with support from the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and headquarters. They are aimed at addressing key issues related to strategic positioning, coherence and the generation of an evidence base.

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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 implementation of those recommendations. In some instances, the country office has agreed to the recommendations but has fine-tuned the proposed timelines to ensure consistency and alignment among actions.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC (2018–2022)					
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>Deadline: June 2023</p> <p>Recommendation 1: Internal integration, adaptation and coherence. When developing the next country strategic plan, WFP should strengthen the overarching and strategic outcome-specific conceptual frameworks, in particular for country capacity strengthening. WFP should also establish clearer links among strategic outcomes to enhance the internal coherence of the country strategic plan and foster greater contributions to long-term development outcomes.</p>	Country office	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Aimed at overall integration and coherence, including with United Nations country team partners, this action is closely linked to the implementation of recommendations 3 and 6.</p>		Country office (regional bureau, resident coordinator's office)	June 2023
<p>1.1 Develop an overarching conceptual framework for the entire country strategic plan drawing from theories of change specific to each strategic outcome and establish clearer links among strategic outcomes, connecting them conceptually through a pathway for contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>Priority: High (October 2022)</p>	Country office (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, regional bureau)	Agreed	Building on the evaluation's finding that "linkages among strategic outcomes are largely ad hoc instances", policy and capacity strengthening work has been mainstreamed into the CSP for 2023–2027, which is based on the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) and has an overarching theory of change and theories of change specific to each CSP outcome. The impact pathways include clearly defined linkages among CSP outcomes and contributions to		Completed in September 2022

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			Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), facilitating joint action with development partners.		
1.2 Update the country capacity strengthening strategy grounded in a documented capacity gap assessment and mainstream it across the whole country portfolio. Priority: High (October 2022)	Country office (Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service and Country Capacity Strengthening Unit)	Agreed	WFP has contributed to the formulation of the national development programme and the design of the UNSDCF to address the challenges identified therein. Further assessments of sectoral capacity gaps, including through use of the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) for social protection, joint Rome-based agency assessments and Scaling Up Nutrition assessments, informed the development of a country capacity strengthening strategy, which, in combination with the implementation of recommendation 6, will be finalized in the second quarter of 2023.		Given ongoing work, the country office aims to complete this recommendation by June 2023 instead of the proposed deadline of October 2022

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<p>1.3 Review the country office organizational structure and staffing capacity to identify gaps and develop approaches to enhance country office expertise in gender, climate change adaptation and country capacity strengthening to support country strategic plan implementation.</p> <p>Priority: High (June 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed	<p>In line with the guidance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, development of the UNSDCF (and of WFP's CSP within the UNSDCF) was based on an assessment of the capacity of the United Nations country team and extensive stakeholder mapping, which informed the external sourcing of personnel with the necessary expertise (e.g., on gender through joint delivery with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) and internally (e.g., through the addition of P-3 positions in cash-based transfers and digital assistance and in value chains).</p> <p>An organizational alignment exercise will be completed by the second quarter of 2023, when staffing needs and the availability of funding for responding to the global food crisis are clearer.</p>		June 2023

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<p>Deadline: May 2023</p> <p>Recommendation 2: Social protection strategic positioning. For the next country strategic plan, WFP should continue to expand its social protection strategic positioning.</p>	Country office	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The CSP for 2023–2027 has been formulated with the vision that “people in the Kyrgyz Republic will have substantially increased access to national social protection systems and livelihood opportunities that safeguard and foster their ability to meet their food security, nutrition and associated essential needs, and to manage the risks and shocks they face”.</p>		Country office (regional bureau, United Nations country team and government partners)	May 2023

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<p>2.1. Draw on the findings from the joint Core Diagnostic Instrument assessment, co-funded by the World Bank, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the International Labour Organization and WFP, when defining WFP’s social protection positioning with regard to all strategic outcomes and in relation to other agencies with the aim of expanding access to national social protection systems that foster people’s ability to meet their food security, nutrition and other essential needs.</p> <p>Priority: High (October 2022)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, government representatives for social protection and climate change adaptation)	Agreed	The CODI assessment initiated by the Development Partners Coordination Council, led by WFP and the United Nations Children’s Fund in partnership with the International Labour Organization and the World Bank is expected to be completed in January 2023. In the meantime, WFP has leveraged the 2030 Fund for the promotion of the “social contract” and other funding opportunities for digital social protection and preparedness measures in order to scale up responses through the national protection system. WFP is finalizing a road map and concrete implementation strategies for the new CSP.		Completed in September 2022
2.2 Identify means whereby the country strategic plan can contribute to enhancing the management and delivery of existing government social protection mechanisms (such as public works, the social contract, capacity development centres and disaster risk reduction rehabilitation activities sponsored by the Ministry of Emergency Situation). This could include linking nutrition awareness	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Social Protection Unit, government representatives for social protection and climate change adaptation)	Agreed	With a national systems-strengthening social protection vision, activities under the new CSP will reach the individual, community and systems levels under each CSP outcome with productive measures for social development and protective and adaptive measures for shock-responsive social protection and will promote schools as a		May 2023

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<p>activities to existing education curriculum reform, increasing wraparound support for vulnerable families through interconnected programming or linking activities to existing employment opportunities through state services.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (May 2023)</p>			<p>platform for efforts to achieve SDG 2 and other benefits.</p> <p>At the same time, these activities will maintain the potential for scaling up emergency assistance at the Government's request.</p> <p>Interconnected programming approaches will be strengthened through an enhanced targeting strategy, which will be aimed at improving the delivery of existing social protection mechanisms. A comprehensive social and behaviour change communication approach that facilitates further alignment with the national system will be developed.</p>		
<p>2.3 Contribute to ongoing discussions on the development of a single United Nations social protection road map, setting out a joint United Nations country team multi-year long-term plan for providing support for national social protection with priority areas for policy development and technical support.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (May 2023)</p>	Country office (United Nations country team social protection representatives)	Agreed	The CODI assessment is being completed in time for the development of the UNSDCF joint workplan. Outcome 1 of the UNSDCF articulates a joint multi-year, long-term plan for the United Nations country team that provides support for national social protection with policy development and technical support in priority areas.		May 2023

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<p>Deadline: May 2024</p> <p>Recommendation 3: Partnerships and collaboration for impact and sustainability. In the next country strategic plan, WFP should build on existing good practices to continue strengthening its partnerships with the Government, other United Nations entities and civil society for enhanced complementary programming and sustainability.</p>	Country office	Agreed	<p>Under the CSP for 2023–2027, WFP will increase its collaboration with the Government, the United Nations country team, civil society, the private sector and other development partners.</p> <p>The country office has developed a partnership action plan for the implementation of the CSP for 2023–2027, setting out the planned systematic and strategic partner engagement and positioning of WFP with respect to the Government, other United Nations entities, donors, international financial institutions and civil society.</p>	Country office (regional bureau, resident coordinator's office)	May 2024

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<p>3.1 <i>Government</i>: In order to strengthen the sustainability of country strategic plan outcomes, continue to support the Government and develop a transition strategy that articulates how the Government would continue country strategic plan activities beyond the life of the country strategic plan, including the maintenance of the school meals programme by schools, community development outcomes and country capacity strengthening engagements.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (September 2023)</p>	Country office (government representatives involved in development and social protection)	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>The ability of the Government to sustain WFP programmes after WFP's exit depends on various factors. The theories of change guiding the new CSP foresee longer transition periods, especially after the current global crisis, which risks undermining two decades of development achievements relevant to SDG 2.</p>	<p>WFP will maintain its operating approach to work jointly with the Government on the piloting of innovative measures such as the "social contract" concept, which WFP piloted in 2022 and rolled out nationwide using a national budget allocation. WFP will also continue to hand over to the Government the management of downstream logistics assets such as warehouses and transport contracts for food-based community asset creation and human capital development activities, which will be further supported by a policy and approach for strengthening information technology systems under the new CSP. The updated country capacity strengthening (CCS) strategy (please see recommendation 1) will include feasible approaches that ensure that results are sustained where possible and that the achievements of CCS work implemented together with development partners continue to bring benefits to people. Appropriate measurement of and reporting on CCS achievements will also be reinforced (please see recommendation 6).</p>		September 2023

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<p>3.2 <i>United Nations country team:</i> Continue to strengthen partnerships with other United Nations entities that have complementary expertise and identify possible synergies across programmes that could be pursued even in the absence of funding for joint programmes. For example, collaborate with the United Nations Development Programme on improving the quality of community-based action plans under strategic outcomes 2 and 3; work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on agricultural programmes aimed at reducing post-harvest losses; partner with the International Labour Organization to link income-generation training to long-term employment opportunities, especially in peri-urban contexts.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (September 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Partnerships and Advocacy Department, United Nations country team representatives involved in development and social protection)	Agreed	The activities under the CSP for 2023–2027 are part of a UNSDCF that describes and promotes joint action throughout the United Nations system. As well as from United Nations partners, joint and coordinated programmes are also emerging from active engagement in the Development Partners Coordination Council. WFP is committed to selecting the partners, both inside and outside the United Nations system, that are best placed to enhance the outcomes of its CSP.		September 2023

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<p>3.3 <i>Civil society</i>: Work throughout the next country strategic plan to establish self-sustaining multi-stakeholder non-state actor platforms that can serve as mechanisms for information exchange, continuous socialization and community mobilization on emergent issues in collaboration with the Government. This could include building platforms of school meals programme service providers or expanding project coordination committee membership to include more civil society or women representatives.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (May 2024)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, civil society and non-governmental organizations involved in development and social protection)	Agreed	WFP will continue to actively engage with civil society, academia and the private sector to leverage platforms (in ways that are similar to its engagement in the 2021 United Nations food systems summit and regular activities through the Scaling Up Nutrition initiative), strengthening the use of the United Nations Partner Portal, including by revising its approach to working with cooperating partners through updated standard operating procedures and – most importantly – continuing to serve as an active broker and mobilizer between the Government and citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, applying a people-centred approach that enables diverse rights groups, especially those that are “left behind”, to genuinely participate in the design and development of policy and in programming decisions (please see UNSDCF annex 1 on key strategic concepts for attaining transformative results in line with the sustainable agenda).		May 2024

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<p>Deadline: December 2023</p> <p>Recommendation 4: Resource diversification. As part of the next country strategic plan, WFP should continue to seek to diversify its donor base.</p>	Country office	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>While the country office agrees with the recommendation and commits to continuing its efforts to diversify the donor base, such efforts (including the use of adjusted language) have existed throughout the current CSP.</p>	The new CSP has been designed with funding continuity and diversification in mind, noting that the current global crisis will make resource mobilization even more competitive than it already is, requiring more innovative approaches and targeted efforts.	Country office (regional bureau, resident coordinator's office, headquarters Strategic Partnerships Division, Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division (PPF), Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division (PPR))	December 2023 (with continued efforts throughout implementation of the new CSP)
<p>4.1 Maintain strong relationships with long-standing donors by reviewing donor directions and strategic plans.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (December 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, PPF, PPR)	Agreed	Capacity in donor relations has been strengthened and a partnership action plan has been prepared to ensure that the landscape of donor directions and strategic plans are regularly reviewed and updated. Under the partnership action plan, the country office will prioritize the actions necessary to maintain strong relationships with existing donors and will seek to diversify the donor base. In addition, the country office is working with the Government to advocate support for not only WFP's operational needs but also the financial needs of the Government		December 2023

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			and other relevant stakeholders. The country office is also focusing on joint fundraising for the UNSDCF with the United Nations country team.		
4.2 Systematically review where and how WFP corporate terminology and concepts may inhibit donor willingness to support WFP and adapt materials accordingly before approaching new donors. Priority: Medium (December 2023)	Country office (regional bureau, PPF, PPR, Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Unit)	Agreed	The formulation of the new CSP entailed the development of new dissemination materials and communication materials and strategies that are better targeted and more oriented towards development work. In addition, the country office is continuing its efforts to provide information on WFP's positioning in the country to the regional bureau and headquarters support functions engaged in communication with donors. Additional corporate indicators are aimed at rectifying the underreporting of results identified and addressed through the country office's mid-term review of the CSP for 2018–2022.		December 2023

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: April 2023 Recommendation 5: Coverage and targeting. For the next country strategic plan, WFP should continue to refine and reassess its coverage and targeting to better reach extremely vulnerable or potential new beneficiary groups covered by WFP direct assistance programmes and country capacity strengthening interventions.</p>	Country office	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>By expanding its assistance programmes to urban and peri-urban areas, including under the current CSP, WFP is able to increase its beneficiary reach. As the lead agency in “leave no one behind” analysis, WFP’s support is requested by the Government – especially for active labour market programmes and the social contract, including through a successful pilot – as it promotes a mindset shift that facilitates a transition away from poverty, enabling the Government to reach the most vulnerable groups with adequate social protection</p>	<p>For the new CSP, the country office refined and reassessed programme coverage and targeting so as to better reach previously excluded extremely vulnerable groups and potential new beneficiary groups (such as by integrating options for unconditional transfers for those groups). In line with recommendations 1 and 2 and building on the CODI and other assessment exercises, WFP is finalizing a detailed targeting strategy that will also serve as part of policy advice and systems strengthening support for the national social protection system and will inform WFP’s horizontal and vertical¹ scaling of national social protection measures in alliance with partners committed to supporting UNSDCF objectives.</p>	Country office (resident coordinator’s office, regional bureau)	April 2023

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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		payments in a shrinking fiscal space. Recommendations are very specific and are tied to the previous CSP, but the new UNSDCF-derived CSP allows WFP to operationalize the ideas behind the evaluation recommendations.			
5.1 <i>Extremely vulnerable groups</i> : Integrate unconditional transfer options into projects as part of the WFP support package in line with government social assistance cash transfers. Priority: High (October 2022)	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Unit, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division (RAM))	Agreed	A new CSP activity 1 allows the use of unconditional transfers to vulnerable households that lack productive capacity, and the continuation of activities such as the current support for social inpatient institutions.		Completed in October 2022

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<p>5.2 <i>Extremely vulnerable groups</i>: Support the formulation of an inter-agency strategy for complementary holistic wraparound support through multiple interventions aimed at targeted vulnerable households.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (April 2023)</p>	Country office (United Nations country team agencies engaged in social protection)	Agreed	Through joint workplans currently being developed for the UNSDCF, and building on the regular updating of the common country analysis (for which WFP leads on leave no one behind analysis) ² and other assessments, joint and coordinated activities will be defined, including for the vulnerable groups highlighted in the evaluation, with special attention to the impact of the global crisis on the Kyrgyz Republic.		April 2023

² The “left behind” socioeconomic groups listed in the UNSDCF for the Kyrgyz Republic are:

- poor rural households with high dependency ratios;
- rural women and poor female-headed households;
- children, adolescents and young people;
- urban and peri-urban poor households;
- returned and internal migrants, migrant workers and households dependent on remittances;
- informal sector workers; and
- refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.

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<p>5.3 <i>Peri-urban vulnerable groups</i>: Build on early recovery assistance to introduce a development strategic outcome for peri-urban populations and establish new partnerships to link interventions with municipal employment opportunities.</p> <p>Priority: High (October 2022)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service, Country Capacity Strengthening Unit, Social Protection Unit)	Agreed	During 2022, food security and nutrition assessments will be conducted nationwide in rural, urban and peri-urban locations in order to identify differences in needs and inform recommendations regarding the targeting and programming approaches to be used in various areas. Based on those findings, the targeting strategy for the new CSP will be developed.		In line with the timeline for sub-recommendation 5.2 above, the country office aims to complete this recommendation by April 2023 instead of the proposed deadline of October 2022
<p>Deadline: September 2023</p> <p>Recommendation 6: Evidence base for development outcomes. In the next country strategic plan WFP should invest further in evidence generation either through WFP-led studies or by supporting government capacity to track long-term contributions to development outcomes, enhance project management and inform policy development</p>	Country office	Agreed	Under the new CSP the country office will strengthen research, assessments, monitoring and evaluation, internally and in support of national systems, in order to address the evidence needs of the Government. WFP will align its measurement approaches with a holistic United Nations country team approach to enhancing impact measurement for tracking SDG-related achievements and will integrate that approach into the national systems covered by the UNSDCF for 2023–2027.	Country office (resident coordinator's office, regional bureau)	September 2023

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<p>6.1 Under school meals programme-related work, advocate, and support the Government in the measurement of long-term education, health and food security outcomes derived from the school meals programme. Support the integration of WFP tools for assessing school performance into government systems and undertake an assessment of all schools implementing the school meals programme since 2013 to determine their ability to continue the school meals programme after their transition away from WFP support.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (September 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters RAM, School-Based Programmes, Corporate Planning and Performance Division, government representatives with linkages to the school meals programme)	Agreed	WFP will support the Government in measuring the long-term outcomes of the school meals programme through joint nutrition and education assessments. Performance monitoring for all WFP-supported schools will collect data that tracks the progress achieved and the sustainability of results.		September 2023
<p>6.2 Under livelihoods and resilience activities, support the Government in undertaking, or directly carry out, studies to track the long-term effects on beneficiaries of participating in food assistance for assets or food assistance for training projects, i.e., their effects beyond the duration of the projects.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (September 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters RAM, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Corporate Planning and Performance Division, government representatives with linkages to food assistance for assets or training)	Agreed	Asset creation and human capital building activities under the new CSP outcomes 1 and 2 will benefit from a strengthened outcome measurement methodology that enables the tracking of long-term effects on beneficiaries participating in food assistance for assets or training projects over time.		September 2023

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<p>6.3 Under livelihoods and resilience activities, consider reintroducing the community asset indicator in the next country strategic plan logical framework and support Government-led mechanisms for measuring the quality and robustness of community infrastructure over time and understanding the long-term contributions and sustainability of WFP-supported interventions and their long-term effects on communities.</p> <p>Priority: High (December 2022)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters RAM, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division)	Agreed	More relevant indicators for measuring the functionality, benefits and sustainability of community assets will be tested and introduced.		In line with the timeline for sub-recommendation 6.2 above, the country office aims to complete this recommendation by September 2023 instead of the proposed deadline of December 2022
<p>6.4 Under livelihoods and resilience activities, support Government-led mechanisms for identifying the combination of project types to be implemented in a district that is best able to maximize community development outcomes.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (September 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters RAM)	Agreed	The project selection and review process will be strengthened to ensure transparent community engagement. Work towards the handover of monitoring and evaluation approaches and tools to the Government will be intensified.		September 2023

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<p>6.5 For country capacity strengthening interventions, consider developing additional country capacity strengthening output and outcome indicators beyond the current corporate results framework indicators to capture the entirety of WFP country capacity strengthening interventions and measure progress in a more comprehensive and accurate manner.</p> <p>Priority: High (December 2022)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters RAM, Corporate Planning and Performance Division, Country Capacity Strengthening Unit)	Agreed	Following the updating of the country office CCS strategy, the Rome-based agency collaboration plan and the UNSDCF joint workplan, WFP will consider ways of strengthening the measurement of achievements, together with relevant partners, with a view to enabling the Government to meet the SDG targets. Relevant SDG reviews and annual common country analysis updates will inform the development and results of the policy and CCS activities undertaken by partners. WFP will develop a more visible and systematic way of reporting on its CCS work, based on the tracking of key milestones in the food security, nutrition and social protection sectors.		In line with the timeline for sub-recommendations 6.2–6.4 above, the country office aims to complete this recommendation by September 2023 instead of the proposed deadline of December 2022