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Evaluation reports

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## **Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Tajikistan (2019–2024)**

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 Tajikistan for 2019–2024.
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to serve the dual objective of accountability and learning. It was designed to provide evaluation evidence and learning on WFP's performance in order to inform country-level strategic decision making, especially for the development of WFP's future engagement in Tajikistan, and to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.
3. The evaluation was based on all WFP activities (including those aimed at the achievement of cross-cutting results) carried out during the period from January 2018 to August 2021 (the end of the data collection phase), including those under the current CSP, those under the preceding transitional interim CSP and those carried out during the development and associated decision making processes for the transitional interim CSP.
4. The evaluation made six strategic recommendations and 15 operational sub-recommendations that elaborate on how each strategic recommendation will be implemented.
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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<b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TAJIKISTAN (2019–2024)</b>					
<b>Recommendations and sub-recommendations</b>	<b>Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)</b>	<b>Management response</b>	<b>Actions to be taken</b>	<b>Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)</b>	<b>Action deadline</b>
<p><b>Priority: High</b>  <b>Deadline: March 2023</b>  <b>Recommendation 1: The logic of intervention under the next country strategic plan should ensure deep interlinkages between humanitarian assistance and development activities, capitalizing on the added value of WFP's corporate capacity and its strategic shift towards country capacity strengthening to maximize its delivery of more sustainable results in line with its commitment to working in the humanitarian–development nexus.</b></p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The country office has integrated those linkages into the new CSP through the addition of a “build back better” approach to emergency response. Life-saving responses in the context of natural disaster or human-induced displacement stemming from conflict or political instability will be coupled with life-changing resilience and livelihood building projects. Emergency support will be short-term and phased out as development assistance becomes more central.</p>		Country office (regional bureau)	Completed in May 2022

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1.1 Devise activities based on evidence of approaches that are proven to produce results; on lessons learned from implementation of this cycle of the country strategic plan and outstanding gaps within WFP's thematic areas. The new country strategic plan activity logic should take into account what can realistically be achieved based on expected resource mobilization and credible assumptions in order to curtail unrealistic ambitions. (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	When designing the new CSP, the country office relied on draft recommendations from the evaluation, significant independent research on various topics relevant to food security and nutrition and lessons learned from, and reviews of, activities. In addition, careful consideration of resource availability, taking into account trends and ongoing discussions, was integrated into the design process.	Country office	Completed in May 2022
1.2 Devise and integrate sustainability measures across all thematic areas, fully considering risks and mitigating factors. In particular, sustainability measures for asset creation interventions such as support for local governance and maintenance or mobilization mechanisms should be conceptualized and implemented. (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed. For asset creation activities, project management committees are established at each project site to monitor activities and the use of assets. The committees highlight any issues that arise, including those related to the maintenance of assets.	WFP will strengthen community mechanisms aimed at ensuring the sustainability of initiatives through capacity strengthening and enhancing linkages with relevant district-level government entities. However, the implementation of asset creation activities has been delayed, so the recommended timeframe for their completion will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to December 2023.	Country office (programme unit, resilience team)	December 2023

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			Under school feeding activities, a strategy for the gradual handover and transition to a national programme is being developed and will ensure the sustainability of the programme. Public financing and the building of capacity at multiple levels are two examples of the many activities to be integrated into the transition.		
1.3 Continue to invest in consultation mechanisms to promote participatory decision making in the design of WFP programme activities by strengthening mechanisms for reaching out and consulting affected populations in targeting for food assistance for assets activities and other relief and development activities, as well as the complaint and feedback mechanism. (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	WFP will continue to invest in the three-pronged approach to programming, which includes community-based participatory planning ensuring community participation in programme design.  Localized feedback mechanisms have been established in project areas while WFP establishes a community feedback mechanism for all project implementation areas. However, the recommended timeframe for the full rollout of the mechanism, including processes for closing the feedback loop and adequately tracking and documenting the feedback	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, resilience team, research, assessment and monitoring team)	December 2023

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			exchanged, will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to December 2023.		
1.4 Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment, disability and accountability to affected populations principles into country strategic plan design and implementation. (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed. The gender and age marker for the new CSP design is 4. In addition, the country office is collaborating with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and a dedicated staff member for gender, protection, accountability to affected populations and disability inclusion is being recruited.	The country office will implement an action plan developed with UN-Women and the activities developed under the CSP gender budget. The country office will ensure that the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment, disability inclusion and accountability to affected populations are embedded in any new projects and will explore new opportunities for engaging in such activities and promoting the principles.	Country office (regional bureau, all units)	Design completed. Implementation throughout the new CSP period.

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<p><b>Priority: High</b>  <b>Deadline: June 2023</b>  <b>Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a country capacity strengthening strategy focusing on areas where WFP can add value</b></p> <p>The Tajikistan country office should assess its strategic positioning and opportunities as a provider of country capacity strengthening in the context of school feeding, nutrition, climate change and resilience. The assessment should serve as a basis for articulating a sound country capacity strengthening activity logic with strategic vision and direction for at least a 5–10-year horizon.</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>For further guidance and collaboration, the country office has been in contact with subject matter experts in the regional bureau. The regional bureau can support the country office's internal capability development plan through on-demand technical support, mentoring, knowledge brokering with other country offices on specific problems or challenges, and the mobilization of external expertise where needed. The support will also help to embed a coherent understanding of WFP's approach to country capacity strengthening (CCS) and will be provided in close coordination with headquarters CCS focal points and country office programme managers.</p> <p>The recommended timeframe for completion of the recommendation will not</p>		Country office (regional bureau programme unit, supply chain unit)	July 2024

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		be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to July 2024 to accommodate the various steps in the development of a CCS strategy.			
2.1 Conduct an assessment of the country capacity strengthening needs of government institutional partners at the national and subnational levels with regard to the five policy pathways, collecting data on capacity gaps, needs and priorities. Functional and/or fiscal analyses could be considered as useful tools for such an assessment, as exemplified by the school feeding public financing analysis. (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	The country office will roll out skills gap analyses to determine the specific training needs of government counterparts. The recommended timeframe for this action will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to December 2023 to accommodate the various steps in the development of a CCS strategy.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, supply chain unit)	December 2023
2.2 Based on the findings of the assessment in 2.1, conceptualize Tajikistan-specific country capacity strengthening approaches for the five policy pathways. Include WFP's main partners (the Government, cooperating partners, donors, etc.) in the consultation on country capacity strengthening approaches and their conceptualization. (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	The country office will develop support plans for CCS training and development in accordance with the country office CCS strategy. The recommended timeframe for this action will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to July 2024 to accommodate the various steps in the development of a CCS strategy.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, supply chain unit)	July 2024

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<p>2.3 Mainstream country capacity strengthening activities across all WFP thematic activities. The new country strategic plan should have country capacity strengthening fully (and visibly) mainstreamed into all thematic activities, with clear country-specific capacity strengthening activities, outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>(March 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	<p>The country office will receive technical support for the effective linking of programme operations and compliance to WFP's global CCS policy directives. The support should include a training and development programme for selected staff members tasked with implementing capacity strengthening actions that takes into consideration WFP's niche areas and technical comparative advantages, and skills assessment to determine the specific staff competency required for effective and strategic engagement with government partners. The recommended timeframe for completion of this action will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to December 2024 to accommodate the various steps in the development of a CCS strategy.</p>	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, supply chain units)	<p>December 2023 for the initial staff skills assessment.</p> <p>December 2024 for the alignment of staff skills with strategy requirements.</p>



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2.4 The country capacity strengthening monitoring framework should include a set of intermediate objectives, baselines, process milestones and targets, along with their accompanying qualitative and quantitative indicators. The indicators should go beyond WFP's corporate indicators to include country-specific indicators, to help WFP to understand the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of country capacity strengthening efforts in Tajikistan. (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	The country office will develop a CCS monitoring framework and continue to monitor corporate CCS indicators while developing a country-specific framework in line with its CCS strategy. The recommended timeframe for this action will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to July 2024 to accommodate the various steps in the development of a CCS strategy.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, supply chain unit)	July 2024
2.5 Implement country capacity strengthening efforts in conjunction with national entities, applying a cascade approach to transfer information to the sub-national level as appropriate. (December 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	Based on the CCS strategy developed, the country office will formulate an action plan that includes the scaling up of CCS activities to various levels of government entities. The recommended timeframe for this action will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to July 2024 to accommodate the various steps in the development of a CCS strategy.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, supply chain unit)	July 2024

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<p><b>Priority: High</b>  <b>Deadline: December 2023</b>  <b>Recommendation 3: Support government fiscal planning and optimization processes for school feeding and resilience building.</b></p> <p>In the light of the fact that budget and fiscal planning issues are obstacles to implementation of the school feeding programme, WFP should consider expanding its country capacity strengthening interventions to support the Government in terms of fiscal planning in targeted sectors, building upon the currently ongoing school feeding public financing analysis.</p> <p>As school feeding demands the inclusion of and collaboration with various sectors (education, social protection, finance, etc.) and entities (national and regional planning entities), WFP should assist the Government in reinforcing and optimizing national institutional structures to ensure that results (particularly policy and institutional mechanisms and models) are implemented for the benefit of the most in need populations in Tajikistan. Such support could be operationalized through the provision of expertise and international best practices in the</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>In 2021, the country office initiated research on the development of a public finance mechanism for determining the per capita cost of school meals, which was presented to the national parliament and approved in April 2022.</p> <p>In addition, in 2017 the country office supported the establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination council on school feeding, which is under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population and includes several other ministries and agencies. The council is fully functional, and WFP is currently prioritizing the establishment of similar structures at the subnational level.</p>	Work will be continued and expanded under the new CSP through the addition of a review of the supply chains for school feeding. The review will also consider resilience building because an integral new component of WFP's school feeding portfolio in Tajikistan will be a home-grown school feeding programme. To ensure the necessary expertise and international best practices, the country office will continue to engage closely with technical experts in the regional bureau and at headquarters and will consider South-South and triangular cooperation and other cooperation opportunities.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, school feeding team)	December 2023, (ongoing with regard to expertise and best practices)

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optimization of fiscal planning, organization and implementation of school feeding and disaster risk reduction activities.					
<p><b>Priority: High</b>  <b>Deadline: June 2023</b>  <b>Recommendation 4: Develop, in close consultation with the Government and other key stakeholders, a school feeding transition and handover plan for gradual transfer of direct implementation and oversight responsibility to national and subnational authorities and parent-teacher associations. The plan should include priority objectives, time-bound targets, activities and responsibilities and should clearly define the scope of and modalities for WFP assistance throughout the transition process and after handover.</b></p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Steps already taken towards the development of a plan include the hosting of a technical mission of subject matter experts who have mapped handover scenarios based on a review of all relevant documents and data; the facilitation of a Systems Approach for Better Education Results – School Feeding (SABER-SF) exercise, which provided information on Tajikistan's progress along five integrated pathways to nationalization, including recognition that effective school feeding programmes have a national policy framework, stable and predictable funding, sufficient institutional capacity for implementation and coordination, sound design and implementation</p>	<p>The groundwork for a long-term transition strategy has been under way since 2021 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education and Science. The memorandum also lays the groundwork for the establishment of a dedicated school feeding centre within the ministry to ensure the sustained management and ownership of school feeding activities. The country office has begun to prepare the physical space for the centre and is recruiting a coordinator; the ministry will recruit support staff.</p> <p>The country office has supported the finalization and approval of a state school feeding programme for 2022–2027, which is in line with the results of the 2021 SABER-SF exercise. The country office has been consolidating evidence</p>	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, school feeding team)	December 2023

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		and community participation. The country office has also completed an assessment of the school feeding facilities and programmes at all WFP-supported schools, which is aimed at determining the appropriate prioritization of support and eventual handover of the WFP programme to the Government.	relevant to school feeding with a view to facilitating further government ownership of the programme and determining what WFP's role should be at various stages of the handover process. The work is being undertaken within the structure of the five policy pathways. A SABER-SF action plan is being developed to ensure the tracking of progress.  The collective results of the actions already taken, along with any new evidence generated, will be incorporated into the overall transition and handover plan.  Given the multiple components required for strategy development, the recommended timeframe for completion of this action will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to December 2023.		

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<p>4.1 <i>Phase 1</i>: Assist the Government in finalizing the national school feeding policy and plan of action, ensuring that it meets the five Systems Approach for Better Education Results goal standards in terms of a stable funding mechanism; oversight, management and coordination; adoption of a contextually relevant school feeding model or models based on well-defined criteria; establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system; and institutionalization of the role and contribution of communities and other stakeholders.</p> <p>(March 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The groundwork for a long-term transition strategy has been under way since 2021. The country office has supported the finalization and approval of a state school feeding programme for 2022–2027, which is in line with the results from the 2021 SABER-SF exercise. The country office has been consolidating evidence for school feeding with a view to facilitating further government ownership of the programme and determining what WFP's role at various stages of the handover process should be.</p>	<p>A SABER-SF action plan is being developed based on the results of the 2021 SABER-SF exercise. The action plan will include the tracking of progress and the conduct of regular workshops to ensure that relevant stakeholders are able to provide updates on progress and receive feedback. The frequency of the workshops will be agreed during the development of the action plan. Ongoing pilots and their review will inform the determination of contextually relevant school feeding models for which monitoring and evaluation systems may be developed.</p> <p>Given the multiple components of this action, the recommended timeframe will not be sufficient for its completion, so the deadline has been adjusted to August 2023.</p>	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, school feeding team)	August 2023

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4.2 <i>Phase 2</i> : Conduct an assessment of capacity gaps (see recommendation 2.1) and develop a capacity strengthening strategy geared towards building national and subnational management, resourcing and monitoring and evaluation for the school feeding programme based on the Systems Approach for Better Education Results goals pathways and continue to strengthen and systematize the role of parent-teacher associations to ensure full and coherent empowerment of community members enabling them to contribute to local decision making. (June 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed. Through a technical partner, the country office is conducting a study on how to increase the role and empowerment of parent-teacher associations in WFP-supported schools.	The country office will conduct an assessment of capacity gaps and link its findings to the results of the SABER-SF exercise and the study on empowering parent-teacher associations. Given the prior phases of this action, the recommended timeframe will not be sufficient for its completion. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to December 2023.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, school feeding team)	December 2023

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<p><b>Priority: High</b> <b>Deadline: December 2022</b> <b>Recommendation 5: Continue to reorganize the country office structure to optimize delivery of stronger, integrated results.</b></p> <p>WFP should consider further reorganizing the country office to ensure that the key cross-sectoral priority areas are adequately integrated and thus ensure stronger synergies, leverage and the catalytic potential of results, particularly in the light of the cross-cutting nature of food security and country capacity strengthening interventions.</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The country office recruits as necessary to fill staffing gaps, including in cross-cutting areas.</p>	A staffing review and organizational alignment exercise will commence in early 2023 with a view to ensuring that the right country office structure is in place as the new CSP is launched. However, the recommended timeframe for this action may be difficult to meet and the deadline has therefore been adjusted to December 2023.	Country office (regional bureau, all units, coordinated by management and human resources units)	December 2023 (overall)
<p>5.1 Enhance country capacity strengthening expertise in the country office by including specific country capacity strengthening positions that will ensure that WFP's corporate perspective is incorporated into programme design and implementation. Consider providing further learning opportunities to existing staff and/or bringing in (or outsourcing) such expertise for the short, medium and long term.</p> <p>(December 2022)</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>The country office will review needs and resources to determine the best staffing structure for CCS based on the CCS strategy developed in response to recommendation 2.</p>	The country office will work with the technical focal points in the regional bureau and headquarters to develop a strategy and key milestones, in accordance with other recommendations from the CSP evaluation. Based on the priorities that emerge from that exercise, and on the available resources, the country office will determine the best staffing structure for supporting implementation of the strategy.	Country office (regional bureau, programme unit, supply chain unit, human resources unit)	July 2024

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			The recommended timeframe for this action will not be sufficient. The deadline has therefore been adjusted to July 2024 in line with the finalization of the CCS strategy.		
5.2 Reinforce the country office structure to enable synergies and more coherent and holistic delivery of the programme. Apply further efforts to seek synergies and enhance coherence across thematic interventions and thus ensure that the programme maximizes its results within resource limitations and that the entire team is on-board with changing WFP's corporate focus (including country capacity strengthening). (December 2022)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	The country office ensures active collaboration among all programme teams and actively encourages the merging of efforts for a holistic approach. In the new CSP, nutrition and school feeding activities are under a single CSP outcome and an outcome manager will be sought to ensure coordination. In addition, a nutrition integration workshop will be held with all programme teams. Home-grown school feeding activities will be managed by the resilience team. Wherever potential synergies are identified, connections will be made and enhanced.	Country office (regional bureau, programme unit)	December 2022



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<p><b>Priority: Medium</b>  <b>Deadline: June 2023</b>  <b>Recommendation 6: Continue strengthening strategic and operational partnerships and efforts to diversify the donor base.</b></p>	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	The country office has engaged multiple potential donors at the senior and technical levels. The partnership action plan is continuously updated, and advocacy materials and improved reporting have also been prioritized.	Country office (regional bureau all units, coordinated by management and partnerships unit)	June 2023
<p>6.1 <i>School feeding</i>: Undertake with various government bodies (e.g., the Ministry of Agriculture) and United Nations entities joint assessments to identify needs and design joint and complementary activities for safeguarding and promoting healthy school environments and access to nutritious, safe and affordable diets in schools.  (June 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	Links to specialized agencies such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development and UN-Women have been strengthened. The engagement of those organizations in joint programming, where relevant, is currently under discussion.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit coordinated by school feeding team)	June 2023

<b>MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TAJIKISTAN (2019–2024)</b>					
<b>Recommendations and sub-recommendations</b>	<b>Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)</b>	<b>Management response</b>	<b>Actions to be taken</b>	<b>Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)</b>	<b>Action deadline</b>
6.2. <i>Nutrition</i> : Establish partnerships with other United Nations entities, cooperating and development partners and private sector entities in order to scale up malnutrition prevention and moderate acute malnutrition treatment in line with relevant national strategies (e.g., “First 1,000 days of a child’s life” and the multisectoral plan of action for nutrition for 2021–2025) and the 2021 United Nations strategic framework for nutrition. (June 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	Partnerships with other United Nations entities are already established and will be enhanced. A protocol for the integrated management of acute malnutrition has been implemented in collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, and the expansion of moderate acute malnutrition treatment and prevention is included in the new CSP. In addition, an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification assessment and a micronutrient study carried out in collaboration with UNICEF will provide the main evidence base for nutrition activities. The micronutrient study will also provide baseline data for the fortification initiatives currently under way. An action plan will be developed based on the 2021 United Nations strategic framework for nutrition, to which the World Health Organization, UNICEF and FAO are signatories, along with WFP.	Country office (regional bureau programme unit, nutrition team)	June 2023