

**Mid-term review of the
WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021)**



Informal consultation

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**World Food Programme
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Methodology of the mid-term review

1. The review has been conducted under the guidance of the Assistant Executive Director for Programme and Policy Development and in close collaboration with relevant WFP divisions. A review of literature issued during the implementation of the WFP strategic plan formed the core of the exercise, which focused on three things:
 - WFP-centred assessment: The review sought to offer high-level observations regarding the performance of WFP in operationalizing the strategic plan, particularly through the various instruments and internal reforms brought about by the Integrated Road Map (IRM). This aspect of the review drew data and information from an internal review of the first-generation country strategic plans (CSPs) and interim country strategic plans carried out by the Programme — Humanitarian and Development Division as well as audit reports, evaluations of the pilot CSPs and an evaluation of five first generation CSPs.¹ In addition, data from the annual performance reports of 2018 and 2019 were used to gauge the contribution made by country offices to the achievement of the WFP strategic objectives.
 - United Nations-centred assessment: In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on the repositioning of the United Nations development system (UNDS) to bring it in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With just 10 years to go to achieve the 2030 Agenda, in September 2019 the United Nations [Secretary-General](#) called on all sectors of society to embark upon a decade of action. The mid-term review examined the coherence between the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021) (hereinafter referred to as the Strategic Plan) and the overarching goals of United Nations reform and the strategic direction of the Rome-based and other United Nations agencies, seeking to assess whether the Strategic Plan created the cross-sectoral synergies needed to deliver transformative results.
 - Global trends: The world is changing rapidly, and several challenges threaten the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The absolute number of undernourished people has slowly increased over the past few years as a result of several interconnected trends. The review assessed how these challenges have affected WFP’s strategic direction and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
2. Inputs from the literature review referred to in paragraph one above were contextualized and expanded upon through interviews with WFP senior staff in country offices, regional bureaux and headquarters. The review team also held discussions with external partners including cooperating partners, United Nations agencies, donors and the Executive Board electoral lists to understand their perspectives on the three aspects of the review.
3. Throughout the review, an ad hoc internal reference group provided strategic and technical inputs to the mid-term review team.

¹ The CSPs for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste, Cameroon, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

Current global context

4. In 2015, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda with the aim of securing a better future for all and the promise to leave no one behind. Four years on, although progress has been made in several areas, the speed and scale of change remains insufficient to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. The United Nations Secretary-General has called on all sectors of society to embark upon a decade of action to accelerate efforts to find sustainable solutions to the world's biggest challenges and generate the transformation required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.
5. While the global prevalence of undernourishment has stabilized at around 11 percent, the absolute number of undernourished people grew from 811.7 million in 2017 to 821.6 million in 2018, showing the immense challenge of achieving zero hunger by 2030. According to a 2019 report on *food insecurity and nutrition around the World*,² undernourishment has been increasing as a result of trends such as population growth, economic slowdown, conflict and extreme climate events.
6. The world population is increasing by 83 million people annually, with the fastest growing populations in Africa and Asia. The number of young people is expected to rise to 1.3 billion by 2030, with a disproportionate concentration in sub-Saharan countries.
7. Today 55 percent of the world's population lives in cities, a proportion that is expected to increase to 60 percent by 2030. Around 1.5 million people are added to the global urban population every week. It is estimated that almost 90 percent of urban population growth will take place in African and Asian countries, placing huge demands on infrastructure, services, job creation, the climate and the environment.
8. Migration is a major component of population change in some countries. In 2019, around 3.5 percent of the world's people were international migrants, compared with 2.8 percent in 2000. The number of international migrants worldwide was nearly 272 million in 2019, up from 221 million in 2010 and 174 million in 2000.³
9. The burden of malnutrition across the world remains unacceptably high and progress in reducing it unacceptably slow. Malnutrition has a very high economic cost. It is estimated that in Africa and Asia undernutrition reduces gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 11 percent.
10. Poor economic performance is undermining efforts to end hunger and malnutrition in many countries. More than 80 percent of countries that experienced a rise in undernourishment between 2011 and 2017 also suffered an economic slowdown – many of them middle-income countries.⁴ Around 96 percent of people facing acute food insecurity live in countries highly dependent on commodity exports.

²Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and World Health Organization. 2019. *The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/55921/file/SOFI-2019-full-report.pdf>.

³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019. *Trends in International Migration Stock 2019*. <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>.

⁴Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and World Health Organization. 2019. *The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/55921/file/SOFI-2019-full-report.pdf>.

11. Economic shocks cause unemployment to rise and income to decline, making it more difficult for poor people to access food and other essential services. In 2018, economic shocks affected 33 of the 53 countries that suffered from food crises. Most of these countries are net food importers.
12. Urgent action is required to develop economic and social policies that protect people from the effects of economic shocks. Unsustainable debt levels in already fragile situations threaten countries' ability to move out of crisis.⁵ Although debt levels are lower in emerging markets than in more advanced economies they have risen rapidly in recent years. In 2019, the global debt-to-GDP ratio reached a record high of 322 percent. The World Bank has warned that such huge worldwide debt poses risks for the global economy.
13. In recent years, the global risks reports issued by the World Economic Forum have also warned that macroeconomic fragility and financial inequality could increase the risk of economic stagnation. The latest report⁶ indicates that the global economy is facing a greater risk of stagnation and that climate change is "striking harder and more rapidly than expected". In late 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General also warned that a "point of no-return" on climate change was "in sight and hurtling toward us".
14. Over the past five years, we have witnessed record high temperatures, unprecedented extreme weather across all continents and more intense and more frequent natural disasters. Environmental concerns⁷ dominated the top risks identified by members of the World Economic Forum's multistakeholder community in 2020, reflecting the impact climate change can have on social, political, economic and human dimensions.
15. Climate change is a global phenomenon. However, its adverse impacts are unevenly distributed across countries and social groups. Drivers of climate change are related to global population growth; higher demand for food, water and energy; and agricultural practices.⁸ Climate change is threatening livelihoods, increasing vulnerability and resulting in displacement. Recent estimates suggest that climate-change-related disasters affect an average of 350 million people every year.⁹ Around 17.2 million people were newly displaced in 2018 as a result of natural disasters.¹⁰
16. The impact of climate change on agriculture and food security in developing countries is expected to worsen. In 2017 food crises attributed to climate shocks affected 124 million people in 51 countries. Two thirds of these countries were in Africa. As climate change is eroding the resilience of rural people and alternative rural livelihoods are not available, rural to urban migration is becoming one of the main drivers of urbanization.

⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2020. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2020*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2020-enarfrzh>.

⁶ World Economic Forum. 2020. *Global Risks Report 2020*. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf.

⁷ Failure of climate change mitigation and adaption; loss of biodiversity; and extreme weather.

⁸ United Nations Secretariat. 2019. *Long-term impact of current trends in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Report of the Secretary-General*. <https://undocs.org/E/2019/66>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019.

17. By 2030, the world is projected to have 43 megacities, most of them in developing regions. Provision of and access to essential services as well as employment opportunities will be critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Failure to achieve the SDGs will have a significant human, economic, political and environmental cost, with implications for peace and human rights.¹¹
18. World hunger is directly correlated with conflict and violence. In 2018, conflict continued to be the one of the biggest driver of food crises, affecting around 74 million people, two thirds of whom faced acute food insecurity.¹² The ability of countries to chart their own economic and social development is increasingly challenged by external and internal shocks and high levels of uncertainty and volatility. Countries in conflict face ever greater challenges in finding a path to peace and development.¹³
19. Highly violent conflicts are causing immense suffering and a huge need for humanitarian assistance. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that in 2019 the number of highly violent conflicts had risen for the first time in four years. In early 2019, more than 70 million people were in situations of forced displacement. More than 41 million were internally displaced, prompting the United Nations Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel on internal displacement in order to draw international attention to the phenomenon and discuss durable solutions.
20. The 2019 Global Peace Index report¹⁴ observes that although some progress has been made in resolving older conflicts¹⁵ the underlying causes of those conflicts in many cases remain unaddressed, while in the meantime new tensions have emerged. It also reports that “climate change can indirectly increase the likelihood of violent conflict through its impacts on resource availability, livelihood[s], security and migration”. The report concludes that highly peaceful countries are better able to manage climate-induced shocks than are countries affected by conflict and violence.
21. Peace and stability are also correlated with economic development. Violence has an economic impact, estimated at 11.2 percent of the gross world product or USD 1,853 per person.¹⁶ The economic cost of violence is as high as 67 percent of GDP in Afghanistan, 47 percent in the Syrian Arab Republic and 42 percent in the Central African Republic.

¹¹ CEB Background paper Nov 2019: A Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs. (Not available online.)

¹² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP and World Health Organization. 2019. *The State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns.* <https://www.unicef.org/media/55921/file/SOFI-2019-full-report.pdf>.

¹³ United Nations. 2019. *Foundational Primer on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* <https://unsdg.un.org/SDGPrimer>.

¹⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. 2019. *Global Peace Index 2019: Measuring Peace in a Complex World.* <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/06/GPI-2019-web003.pdf>.

¹⁵ Those that emerged in the past decade.

¹⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace. 2019. *Global Peace Index 2019: Measuring Peace in a Complex World.* <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/06/GPI-2019-web003.pdf>.

22. According to the *2019 Global Report on Food Crises*,¹⁷ over the past 10 years expenditure on humanitarian assistance has grown by 127 percent, with 40 percent dedicated to meeting needs in the food and agriculture sectors. The report concludes that the way forward lies in “[e]nding conflicts, empowering women, nourishing and educating children, improving rural infrastructure and reinforcing safety nets... .”
23. These challenges cannot be tackled using standard approaches and programmes. The 2030 Agenda requires leapfrogging strategies that integrate humanitarian, development, peace and stability objectives. Innovation and a process of systemic transformation are essential and consequently at the heart of the repositioning agenda of the United Nations.
24. As a result of technological advances, populations living in remote areas are now able to access mobile financial services and electricity. Drones are being used to deliver supplies and to facilitate smart agriculture. Mobile devices are connecting 5 billion people, and social media has become a platform that facilitates the exchange of ideas and inspiration-related to global issues.
25. Financial and digital inclusion are key to reducing poverty, creating job opportunities and increasing productivity. In this regard, the “fourth industrial revolution” – the fusion of technologies across the physical, digital and biological spheres – offers great promise through avenues such as artificial intelligence.¹⁸
26. Digital technologies also have a significant potential for facilitating SDG “localization”, including through projects such as smart grids for transport and electricity, risk-adaptive infrastructure management and monitoring systems that connect healthcare providers with patients.
27. To leverage the positive impact of digital and technological development and leave no one behind, countries require policy frameworks that support economic and social inclusion, investment in human capital and infrastructure, and governments that act with foresight and boldness.
28. With the beginning of the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 and in recognition of the challenges in mobilizing sufficient resources for sustainable development, the 2020 session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council¹⁹ will focus on financing.

¹⁷ Food Security Information Network. *2019 Global Report on Food Crises: Joint Analysis for Better Decisions*. http://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC_2019-Full_Report.pdf.

¹⁸ United Nations. 2019. *Foundational Primer on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://unsdg.un.org/SDGPrimer>.

¹⁹ The theme for the 2020 session is “Accelerated actions and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

29. Official development assistance (ODA) is the main source of financing for development assistance. Significant funding is required if the commitment of the international community to achieve the 17 SDGs by 2030 is to be fulfilled. Current international investment levels are still below the commitment of 0.7 percent of gross national income.²⁰ Although the net ODA of countries on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) doubled between 2000 and 2017, ODA levels have stalled²¹ since 2016. Furthermore, the share of ODA directed to least developed countries has decreased by 2.7 percent and the share directed to African countries has dropped by 4 percent.
30. The World Bank's approach to maximizing financing for development is to bring together all possible sources of financing, expertise and solutions to support the sustainable growth of developing countries. This requires better coordination between the public and private sides of development.

External institutional engagement

31. The United Nations General Assembly resolution on repositioning the UNDS²² promotes a whole-of-system approach to achieving transformative outcomes that end needs.
32. WFP's IRM, featured in the 2018 *Financing the UN Development System* report²³ as an example of good practice because of the agency's systematic approach to linking the strategic plans and its corporate results frameworks to the SDGs. The report stated that the IRM enabled WFP to combine country-level performance management and budgeting processes with the Strategic Plan.
33. The new United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) is set to be the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of United Nations development activities. National SDG targets and indicators are the default monitoring framework. The outcomes of the UNSDCF will need to be coherent and mutually reinforcing across the United Nations' planning frameworks including the humanitarian response plan.
34. At a February 2019, senior level meeting the DAC adopted recommendations on the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. Strengthening the coherence between the three sectors was identified as central to reducing people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities, and more complementary humanitarian, development and peace actions were required, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected situations.
35. The 2018 OECD States of Fragility report²⁴ estimates that without action more than 80 percent of the world's poorest will be living in fragile contexts by 2030. Even today, those living in fragile contexts are the furthest behind.

²⁰ The percentage of gross national income spent on ODA by DAC members remained at about 0.31 percent in 2018.

²¹ According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in USD billions at 2017 constant prices, using the cash-flow methodology. <http://www.afmeurope.org/analysis-oda-trends-2018/>.

²² Resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 (A/Res/72/279).

²³ United Nations. 2018. *Financing the UN Development System: Opening Doors*. https://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/financial-instr-report-2018-interactive-pdf_pj.pdf.

²⁴ https://www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/OECD%20Highlights%20documents_web.pdf.

36. Even though donors provided a record USD 16 billion for inter-agency appeals in 2019, funding for humanitarian action is being outstripped by need, and close to 90 percent of humanitarian aid is going towards mitigating the effects of protracted crises. This requires approaches that “prioritize prevention always, development whenever possible, humanitarian action when necessary”.²⁵ Efforts to meet immediate humanitarian needs should be accompanied by investment in development.
37. WFP is well placed to implement this integrated approach. Saving lives in emergencies is the organization’s core work, but its comparative advantage, where it has demonstrated capacity and expertise, goes beyond the provision of short-term solutions. CSPs encompass humanitarian, resilience and development activities, demonstrating WFP’s approach to contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
38. The rollout of the UNSDCF coincides with the conclusion of the first generation of CSPs. Ongoing evaluations and reviews of these CSPs are providing useful inputs to country offices and regional bureaux for the design of the new CSPs and their alignment with the UNSDCF.
39. The joint actions and programming initiatives rolled out as part of the ways of working agreed in the Common Chapter will be evaluated in January 2021. The complementarity, common goals and implementation, and strategic partnerships of the agencies are important features of the United Nations reform, being pursued at the country level through the Resident Coordinator function and the elevated role of the UNSDCF.
40. WFP has systematically sought to strengthen collaboration, coherence and complementarity across the respective mandates and across the humanitarian and development sectors.
41. A 2019 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) case study on field-level collaboration between the Rome-based agencies (RBAs)²⁶ concluded that there was a significant amount of country-level collaboration with great potential for further expansion. Looking ahead, the study suggested it would be useful to specify how RBA collaboration should evolve. The RBAs could consider how to further align their respective country strategic planning within the context of the 2030 Agenda.
42. At the headquarters level, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in June 2018 committed the three agencies to working towards collective outcomes aligned with SDG 2 national priorities. This led to several joint action plans at the country level. The MOPAN study pointed out that the agencies and donors could facilitate collaboration by better aligning business processes and planning cycles.
43. The joint RBA action plan for 2019–2020 supports the operationalization of the main commitments of the MOU. At the country level the RBAs are working to strengthen joint strategic planning in selected countries, which will include joint analyses of hunger gaps and solutions to support the localization of SDG 2 and the 2030 Agenda. The MOU recognizes that no single model fits all cases and that it may be difficult for the RBAs to work together in certain contexts.
44. The RBA partnership on resilience building has grown steadily in recent years. In 2017, there were 50 projects in 33 countries. Collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP increased by 26 percent; that between the International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP grew by 89 percent. Trilaterally, the RBAs increased their work together by 92 percent. In 2019 the RBAs had

²⁵ OECD. 2020. *DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*. OECD/LEGAL/5019. <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf>.

²⁶ The case study reviewed programmes in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan and Madagascar.

collaboration arrangements in over 70 countries. Three countries were selected in which to pilot joint strategic planning and programming²⁷ with the aim of establishing coherent and effective collaboration in the context of their UNSDCFs. The increased collaboration prompted some challenges and opportunities. Regular, frequent communication and a focus on shared goals will help to overcome challenges.

45. The collaboration between WFP and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has evolved significantly. In 2019 the two agencies agreed on several actions to enhance operational efficiencies and facilitate research initiatives and evidence-based learning across several areas of collaboration.²⁸ To increase the potential to save lives, time and money, both agencies are committed to working together to enhance programme efficiency, quality and impact.
46. Agreed actions include promoting the use of a single pipeline for nutrition programmes; implementing proof-of-concept programmes encompassing malnutrition prevention and treatment in order to build evidence on cost-effectiveness and impact; and redefining the roles and responsibilities of each agency. Concrete partnership actions to support the achievement of education, health and nutrition-related outcomes have also been identified. In the area of humanitarian cash transfers, WFP and UNICEF committed to working together as part of the broader commitment with OCHA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Similarly, on social protection the two agencies agreed to work together to strengthen shock-responsive safety net systems, provide coordinated support to governments and jointly offer solutions to communities. All these actions will require more effective data sharing mechanisms, including the use of common data sets to target resources.
47. In support of the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit, the Global Compact on Refugees, and the 2030 Agenda, UNHCR and WFP have committed to increased collaboration. To achieve greater efficiencies and effectiveness, areas identified for greater collaboration include the targeting of assistance to refugee populations, cash-based transfers, data sharing and systems interoperability.
48. WFP’s collaborative work with UNHCR builds on joint policy documents and agreements such as the joint strategy on self-reliance, the joint principles for targeting assistance and the global WFP/UNHCR MOU.²⁹
49. In 2019, the two organizations agreed to launch a Joint Targeting and Programme Excellence Hub to capitalize on their respective expertise in support of self-reliance approaches in protracted refugee situations, particularly for the most vulnerable. The hub was launched by the leaders of both organizations at the start of 2020. Areas of focus include context analysis, targeting and strategies, community self-reliance, engagement and feedback mechanisms, and learning and knowledge sharing.
50. In 2018, the United Nations Security Council recognized the clear links between food insecurity and conflict and the importance of food security as a fundamental building block for the sustainable development of any nation.³⁰

²⁷ Colombia for the Latin America and the Caribbean region, Indonesia for the Asia/Pacific region and Niger for the Africa region.

²⁸ Namely the prevention and treatment of child wasting; school-based programmes; social protection and humanitarian cash transfers; and data sharing.

²⁹ In particular, a statement by the principals of OCHA, UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF on cash assistance” and an associated addendum on cash and data sharing. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/statement-principals-ocha-unhcr-wfp-and-unicef-cash-assistance>.

³⁰ Resolution 2417 of 24 May 2018. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1627380>.

51. WFP has established a partnership with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in order to assess whether WFP's programming has any positive or unwanted effects on the prospects for peace. Considering WFP's presence in countries affected by conflict, fragility and violence, any opportunities to contribute to peace should be systematically pursued.
52. The SIPRI study highlighted that WFP should explicitly consider conflict-sensitivity risks and peacebuilding opportunities throughout the project cycle and offer programming solutions that can help address the causes of inequality.
53. WFP continues to co-chair the Business Innovations Group with UNHCR and to work with others, including the other RBAs, on the various components of UNDS reform.³¹ Examples of this work include WFP's engagement in the Operational Steering Committee of the United Nations Joint SDG Fund and in providing technical and coordination support to United Nations country teams. WFP continues to participate in discussions related to SDG financing.

WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021): Conceptual framework

54. WFP is the first agency to have aligned its strategic plans with the 2030 Agenda. The Strategic Plan focuses on ending hunger (SDG2) and partnering to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG17), providing a coherent vision for WFP until 2030.
55. The Strategic Plan is not just aligned with the 2030 Agenda, it has embedded components of the SDG 2 and SDG 17. These components were selected in line with WFP mandate and comparative advantage. The Strategic Plan therefore articulates WFP's role based on doing what is needed and what the organization can offer to support the achievement of SDG 2 in countries with significant levels of food insecurity.
56. The achievement of SDG 2 is the primary focus of the Strategic Plan, which “channels WFP's support to countries' work to end hunger among the poorest and most food-insecure people”. SDG 17 is the second Strategic Goal, with the plan aiming to “guide WFP's participation in a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development”.
57. The Strategic Plan shows how WFP's work will contribute to the achievement of several other SDGs, noting that the achievement of SDG 2 “is also dependent on progress made in other SDGs”.
58. MOPAN assessments of WFP undertaken in 2017 and 2018³² recognized that WFP had made significant efforts to align its activities with the 2030 Agenda, noting that WFP had articulated a clear and cohesive long-term vision solidly anchored in SDGs 2 and 17. The assessments also described WFP's single framework for strategic and management results as a strength and praised WFP's commitment to delivering results at the country level.
59. Acknowledging that the underlying causes of food insecurity are very different from country to country and that government capacities and priorities are also diverse, WFP defines its strategic outcomes at the country level. This is an important and positive change in the architecture of the Strategic Plan's conceptual framework. WFP country offices are now responsible for producing outputs that will contribute to the achievement of these

³¹ Namely the mutual recognition principle; common and shared premises; a global facility for transport services; and the online humanitarian booking hub.

³² <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/45a77ae8719b4b29bbb5660d2c4a6328/download/>;
<http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/wfp2017-18/index.htm>.

strategic outcomes. The aggregation of country-level results is WFP's direct contribution to the achievement of SDGs 2 and 17.

60. By selecting SDG 17 as one of its strategic goals, WFP highlights the critical role of partnerships in achieving the country strategic outcomes and contributing to the 2030 Agenda. It has been largely recognized that WFP has much to offer, particularly in emergency and protracted crisis contexts. WFP Strategic Goal 2 has allowed the organization to profile its important work on common services and platforms. Partnership, as a way of working to address challenging trends, has enabled WFP to pursue new, more strategic partnerships, not only transactional ones.
61. Strategic partnership is also recognized as inherent in the mandates of the RBAs and should be used as a means for greater synergy, efficiency and effectiveness. It should be driven by the United Nations reform, national development priorities and a proactive approach to learning through the experience of partnering.
62. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan has identified several promising examples of strategic partnership in areas including innovation, real-time hunger data, human development and food systems.

Box 1 - Partnership for human capital development

Investing in the development of children's human capital is one of the most effective and productive uses of resources countries can make. The Human Capital Index ranks Africa as achieving just 40 percent of its potential. GDP in Africa could be 2.5 times higher if the benchmarks for health and education were achieved.

WFP's school feeding strategy for 2020–2030 is founded on a partnership approach to building human capital.

In January 2020, at the World Economic Forum, the Executive Directors of WFP and UNICEF launched a partnership aimed at ensuring that 35 million children in 30 of the poorest countries receive a health and nutrition package through schools.

WFP is also reviewing its partnerships with other agencies including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, FAO, the Global Partnership for Education, the World Bank and Education Cannot Wait in order to broaden the expertise and inputs for the multi-partnership approach to deliver results by 2030.

63. In the past few years, WFP has been leveraging opportunities for public–private partnerships to enhance its contribution to the achievement of SDG 2. These partnerships have focused on recognized areas of expertise in WFP such as supply chain, food security analysis and information and digital technologies.

Box 2 - Partnership to enhance food systems

The Farm to Market Alliance (FTMA) is a public–private sector consortium of six agri-businesses and agri-focused organizations, including WFP, that came together to make markets work better for smallholder farmers. FTMA helps farmers receive relevant information, investment and support for activities from crop planting to selling the harvest. The members of the alliance contribute industry experience and knowledge that combine to offer a package of solutions to the farmers.

In the 2018/19 agricultural season, FTMA successfully engaged with almost 90,000 farmers in Kenya, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. It developed a network of farmer service centres that serve as one-stop shops through which farmers can interact with service providers.

Since 2015, FTMA has catalysed over USD 30 million in smallholder crop sales to commercial buyers. These transactions involved over 65 local private-sector players and represented a major increase in sales by smallholders in formal commercial markets.

Box 3 - Partnership on real-time hunger data

In late 2018, WFP and the Alibaba Group forged a strategic partnership on the use of innovative technology to contribute to sustainable development and achieving zero hunger. Since 2019, WFP has been working with Alibaba Cloud to develop a new global hunger monitoring system that predicts the status of hunger in near real-time across countries and continents.

Alibaba Cloud, a global industry leader in cloud computing and data analytics, provides technical knowledge and expertise in artificial intelligence, data management and technology infrastructure. WFP contributes over 50 years of specialized knowledge on food security and nutrition analyses.

The result of the collaboration is an interactive map called *HungerMapLIVE*, which provides key metrics based on publicly available food security data from different sources including WFP. Machine learning models are used to predict food security in areas with limited information. Data are displayed on an interactive and user-friendly map. The map has become WFP's new global hunger monitoring system, supporting informed and timely humanitarian decision making, thus improving the use of humanitarian resources.

64. The Strategic Plan provides a planning and operational framework for showcasing WFP's primary strengths and capacities in crisis response and recovery. Partnership is strategically pursued to facilitate and amplify WFP's contribution across the humanitarian and development space.
65. UNDS entities recognize that their primary focus should be on achieving interlinked and transformative results at the country level and promoting national ownership. These priorities are reflected in the vision set out in the Strategic Plan and the CSP approach, confirming WFP's position as a key player within the UNDS.
66. CSPs cover five years in stable countries and a maximum of three years in fragile contexts. This new approach enables WFP to develop a long-term vision and to fully reflect its role in supporting national priorities to achieve zero hunger and to monitor progress towards country-specific strategic outcomes.
67. A strategic evaluation of the pilot country strategic plans³³ described the CSP approach as a significant step forward with the potential to strengthen long-term efforts to build resilience and tackle the root causes of vulnerability. CSPs are strongly grounded in national zero hunger strategic reviews; this approach offers opportunities to support and strengthen national capacities to develop and own national food assistance systems, as well as delivering food assistance whenever needed.
68. The Strategic Plan conceptual framework's line of sight aggregates indicators from country offices for reporting on WFP's contribution to achieving its strategic objectives and goals. The conceptual framework consists of two Strategic Goals, five Strategic Objectives and eight Strategic Results coupled with 19 outcome categories, three focus areas, 14 output categories and 13 activity categories.

³³ WFP. 2018. Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/evaluation-country-strategic-plan-pilots-terms-reference>.

69. The WFP policy on CSPs³⁴ states that “[g]uided by the WFP Strategic Results, and taking into account local context and priorities and its own strengths, WFP will contribute to relevant national SDG targets through a set of strategic outcomes related to each WFP Strategic Result.” Strategic outcomes are identified at the country level and each has a direct relationship with one Strategic Result. Strategic outcomes that belong to different focus areas must be separated, even if they contribute to the same Strategic Result.
70. WFP has been improving the measurement of its programmes. In 2018, the WFP Executive Board approved a revised corporate results framework (CRF).³⁵ The revised CRF is supported by a performance measurement system with indicators and metrics developed to measure WFP programmes’ contribution to the 2030 Agenda.
71. The alignment of strategic outcomes, outputs and activity categories presented in the CRF is straightforward. Through the linear results chain for CSPs, WFP aims to be able to aggregate data across different countries and demonstrate performance regionally and globally. However, senior managers who have had direct experience in operationalizing the CRF perceive the framework³⁶ as complex, creating significant workload for country offices and adding very limited value. This perception seems to be corroborated by the limited evidence on WFP’s contribution to the 2030 Agenda available in its annual performance reports of 2017 and 2018 (see section V: Implementation, resources and results).
72. With the rollout of UNSDCF and with national SDG targets and indicators being the default monitoring framework, WFP’s monitoring and performance indicators will need to be better aligned with the UNDS’s specifications. This implies that also WFP’s monitoring tools and systems will have to be revisited.
73. Several WFP countries have been early adopters of the UNSDCF template. The mid-term review team interviewed several country offices³⁷ to gain a preliminary understanding of the linkages between UNSDCF and the CSP process. WFP has contributed to the strategic UNSDCF design process in those countries through active participation in technical UNSDCF workshops, in consultations with governments and civil society, and by supporting studies such as zero hunger strategic reviews, the cost of hunger and the cost of diet studies and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification system.
74. WFP country offices have access to country-level situation analyses, known as common country assessments, and can therefore align their CSPs more closely with the country strategies of other United Nations agencies. Together with FAO, WFP plays a major role in the food security, nutrition, agriculture and climate change outcome groups; WFP and UNICEF work in the same capacity in the social protection outcome group. These UNSDCF processes represent an opportunity for WFP to strengthen its strategic position.

³⁴ WFP. 2016. Policy on Country Strategic Plans. WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000037168/download/>.

³⁵ WFP/EB.2/2018/5-B/Rev.1.

³⁶ Number of objectives, results, categories, dimensions and focus areas.

³⁷ The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Eswatini.

Implementation, resources and results

75. In 2018, WFP drew attention to challenging new trends as the number of hungry people increased for the second consecutive year. Saving lives in emergencies is WFP's core work. However, WFP assistance is meant to be provided in a way that reduces and ideally ends the need for humanitarian assistance. SDG 2 will not be achieved unless WFP and its partners collectively address humanitarian and development issues.

Programme offer

76. As stated in the Strategic Plan, “[r]esponding to emergencies and saving lives and livelihoods will continue to constitute the major part of WFP's operations”. In line with this, 76 percent of WFP's work³⁸ in 2020 and 70 percent in 2019 was designed to achieve Strategic Result 1 (support countries to achieve zero hunger). The Strategic Plan also states that WFP's operations “will focus on aspects of development where food-based interventions are most appropriate”. In 2020, 5 percent of WFP's plan of work consists of operations to address the root causes of food insecurity and 21 percent operations that build the resilience of households and communities.
77. The first generation CSPs were guided by the Strategic Objectives in the Strategic Plan (2017–2021) and have a three- to five-year duration. As the Strategic Plan is fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and CSPs reflect national priorities, country portfolios were expected to be transformative in nature. However, if transformation is defined as interventions that support significant, sustainable change that contributes to national priorities, country documents show that most country offices have opted for relatively unambitious results.
78. The review found that the body of work under Strategic Goal 2 (partner to support implementation of the SDGs) falls short of what it could be. Few country offices have articulated roles beyond service provision, cluster activities and institutional capacity development in areas such as nutrition, school feeding and emergency preparedness. These activities are certainly important and needed but both the role of WFP and the articulation of the expected results in the CSPs are less ambitious than the vision under Strategic Goal 2. Interviewed WFP senior managers suggested that country offices may not have fully understood the potential of partnership to deliver on Strategic Goal 2.
79. A comparison of the 2019 and 2020 management plans revealed a 37 percent reduction in the share of WFP's programme of work dedicated to Strategic Goal 2. While capacity strengthening (WFP Strategic Result 5) has risen by 62 percent, funds dedicated to Strategic Result 8 dropped from USD 1.244 billion to USD 666 million. Three operations³⁹ account for the bulk of WFP's programme of work under Strategic Result 8, clearly showing that country offices are largely pursuing this result through emergency-related service delivery activities. However, the Strategic Plan is much broader: WFP should “share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, including through South-South and triangular cooperation”.

³⁸ Management Plan 2020 (<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000108558/download/>).

³⁹ Operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Turkey and South Sudan.

80. Given the very difficult contexts in which WFP operates, it is sometimes not possible or even appropriate to be transformational. However, the CSPs that did clearly articulate a transformation covered a range of diverse countries in terms of income level, stability and emergency situation. The countries did share important common elements such as functioning governments, institutional capabilities and clear road maps for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Resources

81. WFP has witnessed a significant increase in funding over the course of the last two decades. In 2019, the organization received more than USD 8 billion. Although this was a record amount it represented only 82 percent of the amount needed to meet identified needs. During the same year, WFP responded to eight Level 3 and ten Level 2 emergencies – again an all-time high for the organization. Increases in funding have been predominantly driven by contributions for responses to large-scale, high profile emergencies.
82. In 2019, 65 percent⁴⁰ of the requirements under Strategic Goal 1 and 55 percent of the requirements under Strategic Goal 2 were funded. An analysis of the planned requirements and actual revenue showed that only two Strategic Results⁴¹ directly linked with SDG 17 received directed contributions. That said, the requirements for the other two Strategic Results were minimal, as few country offices prioritized them.
83. The regional distribution of WFP's funding has changed over time, reflecting the direct correlation between growth in revenue and large-scale humanitarian crises. Humanitarian funding is by nature highly insecure because of the volatility of the overall funding environment. Furthermore, WFP's resources come from a relatively small pool of government donors. In 2018, ten donors accounted for 87 percent of total funding. WFP's funding from private sources accounts for only a small proportion of its overall funding.
84. The 2017 and 2018 MOPAN assessments noted that it was not yet proven that donors would provide more flexible funding as a result of the increased link between WFP's budget and its results. Indeed, in 2019 around 80 percent of contributions were earmarked. Close to 78 percent of the earmarked contributions were to fund crisis response. Strategic Result 1 received 77 percent of the earmarked contributions.
85. Flexible funding is critical if WFP is to retain its ability to allocate resources based on an assessment of needs and to timely respond to situations of acute need. Funding restrictions can prevent country offices from performing their work flexibly, thus from being more efficient and achieving better results. Funding restrictions and predictability are also said by senior WFP managers to impede country office capacity to pursue strategic partnerships.
86. An internal audit of the IRM pilot phase⁴² revealed that high levels of earmarking and the complexity and reduced flexibility of pilot budget structures constrained WFP's efforts to maximize operational effectiveness. The audit also showed that a lack of seed funding for newly designed activities resulted in some pilot country offices taking a conservative approach when formulating their CSPs, thereby reducing WFP's ability to implement the expected programmatic shifts.

⁴⁰ The rate does not take into account USD 1.9 billion in flexible contributions received in 2019.

⁴¹ Strategic Result 5: Capacity Strengthening and Strategic Result 8: Enhance Global Partnerships.

⁴² <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000070797/download/>.

87. As shown in table 1, funds are predominately earmarked at the activity level. Interviewed senior WFP managers indicated a preference for soft earmarking at the CSP or at strategic outcome level. Both options would provide country offices with the flexibility to use resources efficiently and effectively.

Table 1 - Earmarking of directed multilateral contributions to CSPs		
Earmarking level of funds	Earmarked funds (USD millions)	Funds earmarked as a percentage of total directed multilateral contributions to CSPs
Activity level	5 228	70.8
Country level	1 200	16.2
Strategic outcome level	921	12.5
Strategic Result level	35	0.5
Total directed multilateral contributions to CSPs	7 384	100

Source of data: WINGS

88. Many factors contribute to this situation, from pressure from taxpayers for greater accountability to an increased focus on value for money. However, WFP's own systems and tools (such as the programme pipeline) encourage the earmarking of funding, as do practices by WFP staff and managers in putting forward funding proposals for specific underfunded components of CSP activities.
89. With the adoption of the CSP approach and multi-year planning, WFP seeks to attract more predictable, longer-term funding. Multi-year funding is particularly effective for WFP's work in building resilience and tackling root causes. In humanitarian work, long-term and/or predictable funding can also improve efficiency and the diversity of programming, especially in protracted and recurrent crisis situations.
90. As shown in table 2, only 17 percent of 2019 contributions were multi-year. Close to one third of the contributions were received during the last quarter of 2019. Despite advance financing mechanisms, the timely provision of funds continues to pose a major challenge as country offices too often lack the money needed to buy and pre-position food, facilitate logistical arrangements and expand activities to achieve economies of scale.⁴³

⁴³ Source: WFP. 2018. Annual performance report for 2018. WFP/EB.A/2019/4-A/Rev.2. <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000104617/download/>.

Table 2 – Characteristics of funds received in 2019		
Fund characteristics	Contribution revenue (USD millions)	Percentage of total contribution revenue
Total multi-year donations received in 2019	1 373	17
Donations that had a short life span (terminal disbursement date less than six months)	353	4
Donations provided during the last quarter of 2019, to be used in 2019	2 435	30
Total contribution revenue	8 073	100

Source of data: WINGS

91. Preliminary findings from an evaluation of the funding for WFP's work due to be released in June 2020 indicate that the prioritization of resources for large-scale emergencies has reduced WFP's ability to sustain the flow of resources for other activities, especially with regard to resilience building and malnutrition. That said, WFP has been experimenting with innovative financing, particularly in the area of climate risk financing. Furthermore, with support from the WFP innovation accelerator, several country offices have invested in innovative ways of working with beneficiaries such as the EMPACT initiative, which in partnership with leading tech firms aims to build the digital skills of refugees and host communities, particularly women and young people, and link them with online microwork.

Results

92. Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan and despite a yearly resource gap of around 30 percent, WFP's overall performance was strong under Strategic Objective 1, End hunger by protecting access to food. Performance under Strategic Objective 2, Improve nutrition, has been mixed, while the performance of WFP's work with smallholders, food systems and climate adaptation under Strategic Objective 3, Achieve food security, has been strong but only for outcomes directly tied to WFP activities. In other words, WFP has made progress but is not fully meeting the targets. In 2017 and 2018, resilience-building activities were often interrupted to respond to acute needs or due to lack of funding.
93. In 2017 and 2018, although it was acknowledged that WFP carried out important work under Strategic Objective 4, Support SDG implementation, and Strategic Objective 5, Partner for SDG results, data were insufficient to assess performance.
94. A 2018 internal audit report on WFP monitoring recognized that significant efforts had been made to provide comprehensive normative guidance in line with the Strategic Plan and with the priorities of the WFP Corporate Monitoring Strategy 2018–2021.⁴⁴ The audit noted that the risk of "demonstrating impact without adequate evidence" had been acknowledged and reported in the corporate risk register since 2016. The report also pointed out that there was a need to reassess the criticality and functionalities of corporate monitoring systems and their suitability in facilitating monitoring activities at the country office level and preventing the use of locally acquired ad-hoc tools.
95. Insufficient programmatic guidance and the absence of a methodology for estimating and reporting on indirect beneficiaries were cited by senior WFP managers as important obstacles to defining WFP's contribution to the 2030 Agenda. To better understand this

⁴⁴ <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000074366/download/>.

issue, the mid-term review team examined eight CSPs⁴⁵ through which WFP had played a significant enabling role. It emerged that even when WFP's contribution to establishing and running effective government-owned food security and safety net programmes was crucial, country offices did not provide estimates of the number of people indirectly benefitting from WFP support, e.g. children receiving school meals or vulnerable households receiving cash transfers. In the few instances when indirect beneficiary numbers were estimated, they were significantly higher than the number of beneficiaries directly assisted by WFP.

96. An evaluation of the Ethiopia country portfolio highlighted the challenges of measuring WFP's contribution when the role of the organization is largely technical support and capacity development for national systems, due to the integration of WFP's work with wider programmes led by the national government and supported by several other partners. This challenge was also identified in 2019 by a review of methodologies for linking resources to results.⁴⁶
97. In September 2019 WFP issued a guidance note on estimating and counting beneficiaries, setting a corporate approach to counting and estimating direct beneficiaries of the three main transfer modalities.⁴⁷ While this is an important step forward, it is insufficient to fulfil the ambition of linking resources to results and reporting on WFP's achievements as a partner and not only as a service provider.
98. The lack of a user-friendly monitoring system, an overengineered results chain framework, insufficient guidance and misalignment between WFP outcome indicators and SDG indicators are issues raised by senior WFP managers. Their perception appears to be substantiated.
99. The inadequacy of the corporate result framework for capturing progress towards the SDGs and the potential for improvement might be illustrated by the findings of a joint evaluation by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNICEF, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation and the World Bank on equality and inclusion in education. The evaluation concluded that school feeding programmes have strong positive effects on primary school enrolment and that data from WFP's school feeding programmes coupled with UNICEF data on education outcomes provided the strongest result evidence on SDG 4, Target 5.⁴⁸ While from a programme and evidence-based point of view this is very encouraging, it confirms the perception of senior managers that WFP's monitoring and reporting systems do not fully capture the organization's contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

⁴⁵ Burundi, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, Peru, Rwanda and Tanzania.

⁴⁶ TANGO International: Review of methodologies for linking resources to results, July 2019.

⁴⁷ In-kind assistance, cash transfers and capacity strengthening work.

⁴⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2019. Making Evaluation Work for the Achievement of SDG 4 Target 5: Equality and inclusion in Education. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370558>.

100. CSP evaluations were introduced by the CSP policy approved in 2016. They aim to provide evidence and learning with regard to WFP's strategic decision making and performance at the country level, in particular regarding the design of subsequent CSPs, and to provide accountability to WFP stakeholders.
101. A review of the preliminary findings of four CSP evaluations⁴⁹ concluded that the country strategies reviewed were aligned with national policies and priorities and with their respective United Nations development assistance frameworks (UNDAFs). While governments appreciated WFP's partnership and would welcome additional resources to support the development of national capacities, the evaluations found that WFP needed to improve how it assessed government capacities and ownership.
102. In terms of funding, resources were largely directed towards emergency interventions, while resilience work received less, thus limiting WFP's ability to play a significant role in this area. The evaluation of the pilot CSPs also found that funding constraints prevented country offices from making programmatic shifts and attempting more ambitious programmes. Interviews with WFP senior managers highlighted similar issues. The managers pointed out that although CSPs were aligned with national priorities, designed through inclusive consultative processes and focused on achieving outcomes, the way funds came to the organization had remained largely unchanged.

Internal reform

103. The IRM – particularly its CSP policy and the new financial framework components – are among the major internal reforms that WFP has adopted to support the operationalization of the Strategic Plan. A review of the IRM is beyond the scope of this review, which instead makes use of the findings from the audit of the pilot phase of the IRM, focused on four countries.⁵⁰
104. The audit concluded that the pilot countries played a critical role in drawing lessons, establishing new procedure and tools and identifying risks. It also highlighted that the new financial framework had improved country budget transparency. The IRM introduced a “line of sight” approach, a cornerstone in the commitment to transparency as it aims at directly linking resources to results (R2R). According to the audit findings, the line of sight also helped capture activities with other United Nations agencies, providing opportunities for improved complementarity.
105. An R2R position paper prepared by WFP's Resource Management Department defines the approach as “the ability to clearly and transparently (i) support managers in their efforts to define priorities and manage operational performance; (ii) demonstrate the results that WFP achieves with available funds; and (iii) demonstrate accountability”. Putting in place an R2R plan remains a top priority for WFP and is a core deliverable with a deadline of 2021.
106. On programme design, the audit concluded that the zero hunger strategic reviews and CSPs enabled WFP to reassess its strategic interventions and to better engage with national counterparts. However, senior WFP managers said that the IRM transition timeframe was a major challenge. At the corporate level, there was insufficient time to test and validate new processes. Corrections were issued when some country offices were midway through the design of their CSPs and country portfolio budgets. These challenges diverted country office focus from strategy to process.

⁴⁹ Draft CSP evaluation reports for Bangladesh, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Indonesia, to be presented at the 2020 annual session of the Board.

⁵⁰ Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia and the Sudan.

107. The IRM offered an opportunity to revisit pre-existing organizational issues including the misalignment of workforce structures and strategies. Following the approval of their CSPs, most country offices undertook organizational alignment exercises to ensure their human resources structures, skills and competencies matched the requirements of their CSPs.
108. WFP's funded programme of work grew by 31 percent between 2017 and 2019, while its workforce increased by 17 percent. Traditionally, more than 80 percent of WFP's workforce has been in country offices. However, since 2010 the share of staff working in headquarters, WFP global offices and in regional bureaux has been rising, reaching 19 percent in 2019.
109. Overall, only 39 percent of WFP staff, national and international, hold long-term contracts. However, the share of long-term nationally recruited staff increased between 2016 and 2019. Conversely, long-term international staff have decreased from 43 percent to 37 percent during the same period. Half of WFP's international staff members work under consultancy contracts. However, compared to other United Nations agencies with a similar sized workforce, the share of consultants in WFP is much smaller, 12 percent compared with 22 percent at UNICEF and 21 percent at UNHCR.
110. Much progress has been made since 2018 towards achieving national employee gender targets. However, the recruitment of female staff remains a major challenge in several of the countries where WFP operates.

Cross-cutting issues

111. The review examined the cross-cutting issues identified in the CRF: gender, protection, accountability to affected populations and partnerships.
112. The 2017 and 2018 MOPAN reports note that WFP needs to implement its work on cross-cutting issues more systematically. While there has been progress on policies and tools, gaps in human and financial resources have limited the achievement of transformative changes in gender equality. The MOPAN reports point out that there is scope for improvement in the areas of protection, climate change and environmental sustainability.

Gender

113. A key priority of the 2030 Agenda is to support efforts to address gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). The Strategic Plan makes direct reference to "WFP's integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into all of its work".
114. An evaluation of the WFP Gender Policy (2015–2020) notes that the policy has been appropriately informed and designed in relation to WFP's mandate on ending hunger and saving lives and in terms of the 2030 Agenda and United Nations reform. GEWE continues to be a priority for WFP's leadership. WFP's Gender Action Plan provides a robust framework for gender mainstreaming, but there is a need to promote it more widely and better support the integration of GEWE into WFP programming.
115. While WFP has worked hard to establish the necessary level of resources for work to achieve GEWE, insufficient resourcing and accountability weaknesses have in some instances undermined the organization's ability to fully operationalize its gender policy in its regional bureaux and country offices.

116. An evaluation of the Cameroon CSP concluded that mainstreaming of gender and protection has been increasingly considered in WFP activities since 2017. Work to reinforce a gender-transformative approach and improve accountability to affected populations and protection mechanisms is ongoing. While there is a complaint mechanism in place, the process of handling complaints raised concerns due to the lack of a focal person trained on gender-based violence.
117. In countries where WFP is implementing corporate L3 emergency responses, the gender policy evaluation reported mixed results. For example, the design of the Nigeria CSP resulted in greater investments in gender and human resources, which however require greater ownership and integration with operations to be effective. In the Syrian Arab Republic insufficient human and financial resources and limited management attention prevented the country office from adequately reflecting the ambitions of the gender policy and action plan. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo WFP has been struggling with gender-parity challenges. However, in the more stable pockets of the country, the country office was able to implement an innovative resilience programme in collaboration with FAO that includes a strong women's empowerment element within the humanitarian-development-peace space.

Humanitarian protection

118. WFP's 2012 humanitarian protection policy⁵¹ commits WFP to designing and implementing food and livelihood assistance activities that do not increase the protection risks faced by targeted crisis-affected populations. Taking a proactive stance on this commitment, WFP is one of the first United Nations humanitarian entities to formalize its protection responsibilities by adopting an explicit policy. The policy upholds the principle of mainstreaming protection throughout the programming cycle.
119. An evaluation of the humanitarian protection policy pointed out that WFP demonstrated a strong institutional awareness of the importance of avoiding discrimination and providing support in a manner that respects the dignity of recipients. By differentiating targeting by gender, age, disability status and diversity, WFP programmes were well tailored to specific needs and capacities.
120. The evaluation concluded that positive outcomes had been achieved in several areas, including reduced safety risks and heightened respect for beneficiaries. Furthermore, significant advancements had been made in internal capacity development.
121. There is a need, however, for renewed commitment from senior management, reengagement with WFP's core partners and a deeper understanding of the connections between cross-cutting results and the IRM, the Strategic Plan and the CRF.
122. The evaluation recommended the development of a new protection policy along with a new strategy for engagement with affected populations and vulnerable groups. It also recommended the strategic use of partnerships to achieve protection goals and the integration of protection considerations into corporate risk management. The new protection policy is scheduled for review by the Executive Board in November 2020.

Accountability to affected populations

123. WFP's 2017 strategy on accountability to affected populations⁵² commits the organization to "ensuring that programme design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes and decisions are informed by and reflect the views of affected people".

⁵¹ "WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2012/5-B/Rev.1).

⁵² <https://docustore.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp289878.pdf>.

124. To operationalize these commitments, WFP will provide accurate, timely and accessible information to affected people about its assistance; seek the views of all segments of affected populations and invite feedback throughout each stage of project cycles; and provide means for affected people to voice complaints and give feedback on areas relevant to operations in a safe and dignified manner.
125. In the absence of an evaluation in this area, the mid-term review drew information from evaluations of large-scale emergencies in the Syrian Arab Republic, northern Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The common element emerging from the three evaluations was the difficulty of balancing the availability of human and financial resources with a focus on these important cross-cutting issues.
126. In the Syrian operation, mechanisms for accountability to affected populations did not fully meet beneficiary concerns, needs or expectations, particularly in terms of communication with affected populations. While assistance was provided in accordance with international humanitarian principles, the massive scale of the response sometimes challenged WFP's ability to ensure full neutrality and operational independence in all localities and reduced the line of sight for beneficiaries.
127. In northern Nigeria, although multiple complaint and feedback mechanisms were established and protection risks were identified from the early stages of the operation, important risks were not addressed in a timely way. The evaluation noted that WFP struggled to comply with the humanitarian principles but also noted that trade-offs were inevitable and that decision making among humanitarian actors therefore needed to be more strategic and coherent.
128. The evaluation of operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo commended WFP for making solid progress in protection but indicated low levels of accountability to affected populations.

Humanitarian principles

129. WFP's statement on humanitarian principles and access is consistent with WFP policies on gender and humanitarian protection. However, the level of understanding of the humanitarian principles varies greatly across the organization and not all staff may know how to put them into practice.
130. Most of WFP staff and external respondents affirmed that WFP has a positive reputation because it delivers assistance in a way that respects the dignity of affected people.
131. WFP staff and partners have a clear understanding of what impartiality means and demonstrated a high level of buy-in to the principle. However, weaknesses related to impartiality were identified because of uneven coverage of food needs. Earmarked, inflexible and unpredictable funding continues to hamper WFP's ability to adjust its work, especially in vulnerable and volatile contexts. Furthermore, dependence on inflexible funding and often on a small number of donors undermines operational independence.
132. The close relationship with governments and the use of armed escorts is in some circumstances seen by external stakeholders as a weakness in terms of the neutrality of WFP. On the other hand, cordial relationships with governments often facilitate access to people living in restricted areas. Similarly, having access to operational areas is frequently used as a key criterion for selecting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and commercial suppliers. Field-level agreements with NGOs do include references to impartiality and neutrality, but contracts with commercial suppliers do not.

133. The majority of affected people surveyed reported that community members were asked and were able to offer suggestions and opinions on WFP's programmes. They also reported that mechanisms for making complaints and suggesting changes were in place.
134. Partners praised WFP's strong needs assessment capacity and use of technological solutions for monitoring. They also stressed the important role of WFP in facilitating access through its leadership role in the global logistics cluster.

Partnerships

135. WFP's commitment to partnerships and its central role in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is clearly set out in the Strategic Plan. The WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017)⁵³ provides a framework for interaction with major partners.
136. The evaluation of the pilot CSPs and inputs from interviews with WFP senior managers reiterated the importance of the consultative process that informs the design of CSPs, particularly WFP's partnerships with national governments and the other RBAS to facilitate zero hunger strategic reviews. Similarly, the UNDSCF (and previously the UNDAF) processes also provide good opportunities to expand strategic partnerships.
137. This enabling environment, the MOU signed between the RBAs and the evolving collaboration with agencies such as UNICEF and UNHCR demonstrate WFP's progress towards addressing the recommendations from the evaluation of the partnership strategy.
138. Evaluations of the CSPs for Cameroon and Indonesia noted that the CSP process facilitated WFP engagement with other United Nations agencies and local NGOs. WFP's involvement in the UNDAF process also prompted operational coordination and was leveraged to mobilize resources. The CSP approach offered opportunities to develop extensive and diverse relationships with government counterparts. Nonetheless, the evaluations found that WFP could do more to exercise the full potential of this network and its comparative advantages for coordination.
139. The CSP evaluations indicated that the CSP approach stimulates partnerships with the private sector, which in some countries provided significant proportions of CSP funding. This partially responds to the need for WFP to address the short-term nature of its funding as a limiting element in long-term partnerships.⁵⁴ The recently approved private-sector partnerships and fundraising strategy⁵⁵ aims to transform how WFP works with businesses and other actors – particularly at the local level – to save and change more lives.
140. WFP partners with more than 1,000 NGOs and civil society organizations, the majority of which are community-based. However, the predominantly contractual relationship between WFP and its partners was identified as limiting opportunities for synergies. Annual partnership consultations have in recent years become more strategic. During the 2019 annual partnership consultation, leaders of NGO partners and WFP discussed pressing global challenges and opportunities that the humanitarian and development community is facing, with the aim of determining common strategic interests and priorities.

⁵³ <https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/communications/wfp282072.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Finding from an evaluation of the partnership strategy (<https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/eb/wfp291655.pdf>).

⁵⁵WFP/EB.2/2019/4-A.

141. A discussion of the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan was also held with partners to gather their views on actions where WFP's and NGO's complementary strengths could be leveraged to change people's lives and thus to reduce humanitarian needs. Most of the participants mentioned the need for more inclusive intervention design processes, better predictability of resources and multi-pronged approaches to bridging humanitarian and development interventions.

Environmental sustainability

142. Although environmental sustainability is not a cross-cutting issue, the review analysed WFP's environmental policy to gauge the extent to which environmental concerns are mainstreamed in WFP's work.
143. WFP's 2017 environmental policy⁵⁶ outlines ways in which WFP's facilities, operations and programmes can affect the natural environment. It commits WFP to minimizing negative impacts and promoting positive effects.
144. Over the last decade, WFP's annual budget has doubled, and the number of staff has risen by one third. In line with its policy commitments, WFP has managed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles by 14 percent and from buildings by 13 percent through energy and fuel efficiency measures. WFP's global emissions were the highest in South Sudan, reflecting the significant operational challenges there. Since mid-2018, better planning for the pre-positioning of food and investments to improve road conditions have reduced the use of aircraft to transport food in South Sudan, resulting in a 22 percent decrease in emissions.
145. WFP has emerged as a leader in United Nations system-wide action to systematically manage environmental impacts. WFP co-chairs the Business Innovation Group, which is coordinating management reform to ensure that United Nations environmental work achieves cost-effective resource management and is appropriately aligned with United Nations commitments.
146. WFP is implementing an environmental management system based on ISO 14001 in five countries. Processes are in place to screen projects for environmental and social sustainability in more than 20 countries. Since June 2018, a WFP energy efficiency programme has supported 47 projects in 20 countries, with an estimated annual cost saving of over USD 700,000 and reductions in CO₂ emissions of more than 2,000 tons through the use of solar power systems and energy-efficient lighting.
147. The environmental policy complements WFP's 2017 policy on climate change,⁵⁷ which provides a framework for activities that save lives and protect livelihoods in the context of climate change.

Consolidated findings and recommendations

[to be inserted]

⁵⁶ "Environmental Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-B/Rev.1).

⁵⁷ "Climate Change Policy" (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-A/Rev.1).

Acronyms

CRF	corporate results framework
CSP	country strategic plans
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FTMA	Farm to Market Alliance
GDP	gross domestic product
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
IRM	Integrated Road Map
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBA	Rome-based agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UNDAF	United Nations development assistance frameworks
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework