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## **Management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for the Gambia (2019–2021)**

### **Background**

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for the Gambia.
2. The evaluation assessed implementation of the transitional interim CSP for 2018 and the CSP for 2019–2021 and covered the period up to September 2020.
3. Taking a utilization-focused and consultative approach, the evaluation served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and is expected to inform the preparation of the next CSP for the Gambia.
4. The evaluation team made five recommendations, three strategic in nature and two operational. Sub-recommendations describe how each overall recommendation can be implemented.
5. This response sets out whether WFP management agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with each recommendation and sub-recommendation. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines.

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Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<p><b>Priority: N/A</b></p> <p><b>Overall deadline: December 2023</b></p> <p><b>1. Continue to support the thematic areas in the CSP for 2019–2021, with a strong focus on strengthening national capacity and systems, introducing some adjustments to increase their alignment with national priorities and needs.</b></p>	Country office (Regional Bureau for Western Africa (RBD))				
1.1 Expand the strategic outcome related to crisis response to cover a higher caseload than provided for in the original country portfolio budget in order to ensure that appropriate country office structures are in place to respond to shocks and simultaneously implement activities that improve resilience and address root causes. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD)	Agreed.	1. Conduct food security and vulnerability assessments and use trend analyses of the data collected to forecast a realistic caseload for the strategic outcome related to crisis response. (Crisis response has already been increased under the second CSP revision.)	Country office crisis response unit (country office vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit, RBD research, assessment and monitoring (RAM) unit and RBD emergency preparedness and response (EPR) unit)	February 2022
			2. Ensure adequate staffing for the management of shock response and the provision of temporary support to complement national capacity in the coordination and implementation of response interventions.	Country office management	June 2022
			3. Conduct hazard mapping.	Head of programme (country office VAM unit, RBD RAM unit)	March 2022

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			4. Support the development of district and national multi-hazard contingency plans.	Head of programme (country office VAM unit, RBD EPR unit)	May 2022
1.2 Continue to support the handover of the school feeding programme, with an emphasis on consolidating the HGFSF programme with CBTs and national resource mobilization. Assess capacity gaps with the Government in order to strengthen the technical skills required to support Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education structures, systems and procedures related to management, planning, finance, human resources, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization. Engage with other partners who have been on the periphery such as the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. Engage in policy dialogue with sectors involved in the school feeding programme on the appropriate and realistic coverage of the programme and targeting criteria. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD)	Agreed.	5. Conduct a national dialogue on the handover process and develop a road map for successful handover.	Country office school feeding unit (RBD school feeding unit)	February 2022
			6. Complete the capacity gap analysis of the home-grown school feeding (HGFSF) programme.	Country office school feeding unit (RBD school feeding unit)	February 2022
			7. Follow up on the policy dialogue in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).	Country office school feeding unit (country office livelihoods unit, RBD school feeding unit, RBD smallholder agriculture market support (SAMS) unit)	March 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
1.3 Integrate the challenge of overweight and obesity into the nutrition package and across the CSP and promote collaboration with actors working on the issue. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD, headquarters Nutrition Division (NUT))	Agreed.	8. Hold meetings of UN Nutrition and the national nutrition technical advisory committee with the aim of identifying areas of collaboration to address the triple burden of malnutrition and planning joint activities.	Country office nutrition unit (RBD nutrition unit, NUT)	April 2022
			9. In collaboration with the RBD nutrition unit and NUT, assess needs and define interventions for addressing the triple burden of malnutrition under the next CSP.	Country office nutrition unit (RBD nutrition unit, NUT)	April 2022
			10. Include overweight and obesity as a topic in social and behaviour change communication programmes by engaging national stakeholders, the national nutrition agency, the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Children's Fund in the incorporation of overweight and obesity into the social and behaviour change communication manual and strategy.	Country office nutrition unit (RBD nutrition unit, NUT)	April 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>1.4 Integrate food processing as a key potential element of value chains in which women can play an important role. Continue to support the local production of nutritious food products and mainstream nutrition into agriculture and food systems. (December 2022)</p>	Country office	Agreed.	<p>11. Use meetings of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network as a platform for the identification and operationalization of support for nutrition-sensitive food processing in value chains.</p>	Country office nutrition unit (RBD nutrition unit, NUT)	March 2022
			<p>12. Train members of the SUN Business Network in food processing and quality control.</p>	Country office nutrition unit	May 2022
			<p>13. In collaboration with UN Nutrition and Government and United Nations counterparts, draw up a food fortification project as an integral part of efforts to reduce micronutrient deficiencies under the next CSP.</p>	Country office nutrition unit (RBD nutrition unit, RBD food safety and quality unit, NUT)	April 2022
			<p>14. Pilot the local production of fortified blended foods and fortified rice for use in nutrition and school feeding programmes, with robust safety and quality checks carried out by WFP.</p>	Country office nutrition unit (RBD food safety and quality unit, RBD nutrition unit, NUT)	August 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
1.5 Continue to support the social protection agenda as a broad framework for integrating WFP activities and promote the construction of national systems for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition. (December 2023)	Country office (RBD social protection unit, headquarters Social Protection Unit (PROS))	Agreed.	15. Facilitate the establishment of a national social protection forum aimed at raising the profile of the social protection agenda and mobilizing stakeholders in order to enhance coordination.	Country office head of programme	February 2022
			16. Develop a national social registry data protection and sharing protocol.	Country office head of programme (country office VAM and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) units, RBD social protection unit, headquarters Social Protection Unit)	February 2022
			17. Incorporate social protection into country capacity strengthening (CCS) efforts under the next CSP.	Country office head of programme (RBD social protection unit, PROS)	April 2022
			18. Support the revision of the national social protection policy and implementation plan as a means of promoting the construction of national systems for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition while ensuring that WFP activities are integrated into the national social protection system.	Country office head of programme (RBD social protection unit, PROS)	November 2023

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
1.6 Promote a lesson-learning exercise on the response to COVID-19 in order to strengthen relations and coordinated programming with key actors. (December 2021)	Country office (RBD EPR unit)	Partially agreed. Management agrees with recommendation 1.6, but its timeline (with completion by December 2021) is too short given that the country is still facing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (as of September 2021)	19. Arrange a debriefing session on the COVID-19 humanitarian response and logistics intervention for local government authorities.	Country office crisis response unit (RBD EPR unit)	February 2022
			20. Organize a lessons-learned session for national stakeholders.	Country office crisis response unit (RBD EPR unit)	February 2022
			21. Include a thematic session on the COVID-19 humanitarian response at a meeting of the national social protection forum.	Country office programme unit (RBD EPR unit)	February 2022
<p><b>Priority: N/A</b></p> <p><b>Overall deadline: December 2023</b></p> <p><b>2. Draw up a capacity strengthening strategy for the next CSP.</b></p>	Country office (RBD, headquarters Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service (PROT))				
2.1 Devise theories of change and identify long-term objectives and pathways for the national systems supported by WFP: disaster risk management, nutrition systems and social protection, in particular school feeding programmes. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD, PROT)	Agreed.	1. Organize a meeting of the zero hunger strategic working group and develop theories of change for the food security and nutrition policies and programming of participating national institutions.	Country office head of programme	March 2022
			2. Develop a theory of change for the next CSP.	Country office head of programme (RBD project cycle unit, headquarters Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division)	March 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
			3. Support the national disaster management authority in the development of a disaster risk financing strategy.	Country office crisis response unit (RBD EPR unit)	March 2022
2.2 Carry out capacity assessments rooted in the theories of change in order to identify capacity gaps that need to be addressed in the short, medium and long term. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD, PROT)	Agreed.	4. Assess the gaps in the capacity of relevant national and local institutions for each strategic outcome thematic area.	Country office head of programme (VAM unit, RBD programme unit)	March 2022
2.3 Draw up a capacity strengthening strategy that includes a coherent combination of resources, partners and methods. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD, PROT)	Agreed.	5. Develop a capacity strengthening strategy.	Country office head of programme (country office partnerships unit, RBD programme unit)	December 2022
			6. Develop terms of reference for, and recruit, a consultant to lead the strategy development process and consultations with stakeholders.	Country office head of programme	March 2022
			7. Request support from RBD in the form of a temporary duty assignment to provide guidance and technical advice on the development and finalization of the capacity strengthening strategy.	Country office head of programme (RBD programme unit)	March 2022



Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
2.4 Improve the coherence and clarity of the structure of the CSP: consider fully mainstreaming CCS into thematic strategic outcomes in order to integrate capacity strengthening with direct implementation and increase reporting clarity. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD CCS unit)	Partially agreed. The country office will adapt the structure of the CSP in order to enhance coherence and clarity and facilitate clear reporting, but full integration of CCS into the thematic areas of the strategic outcomes will depend on the updated WFP CCS policy and consultations with headquarters, RBD and stakeholders.	8. Indicate clearly the thematic strategic outcome to which each capacity strengthening activity is related.	Country office head of programme (RBD CCS unit)	June 2022
			9. Include standalone CCS indicators in the logical framework for the next CSP and relevant monitoring tools.	Country office M&E unit (RBD RAM unit)	May 2022
			10. Carry out a mapping of CCS strategy stakeholders, informed by findings from the capacity gap assessment conducted under recommendation 2.2.	Country office head of programme (country office partnerships unit, RBD CCS unit)	September 2022
			11. Engage RBD on elements of CCS to ensure that the enhanced clarity and coherence of the CSP is coherent with the global capacity strengthening strategy currently being developed.	Country office head of programme (RBD and headquarters CCS units)	February 2022
			12. Consider whether CCS should be fully mainstreamed or – as a standalone outcome – its mainstreaming should be contingent on the findings of the capacity gap analysis carried out under recommendation 2.2 and the updated WFP CCS strategy.	Country office head of programme (country director, RBD and headquarters CCS units)	February 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
2.5 Strengthen country office CCS expertise by creating a position for an experienced CCS specialist and with continued support from the regional bureau and headquarters. (December 2023)	Country office (RBD, PROT)	Partially agreed. Given the resourcing challenges of the country office, which faces chronic funding issues and is small in size, the recruitment of a CCS specialist is not feasible.	13. Deploy an expert from RBD or headquarters to initiate implementation of the CCS under the next CSP and build the country office's capacity, depending on the funding situation. RBD and headquarters will continue to support the country office by filling gaps in the capacity needed for preparation of the next CSP.	Country office head of programme (RBD and headquarters CCS units)	January 2023
<p><b>Priority: N/A</b></p> <p><b>Overall deadline: December 2023</b></p> <p><b>3. Continue to strengthen the gender approach used in the CSP in order to make progress towards its gender-transformative objectives.</b></p>	Country office (RBD, NUT, Gender Office (GEN))				
3.1 Continue to develop country office capacity in gender programming; include dedicated budgeting for gender equality activities and consider making the gender officer a full-time role. Reinforce gender mainstreaming as being "everyone's business", such as by emphasizing management commitment to GEWE and through the active engagement of CSP activity managers.	Country office	Partially agreed. Given the resourcing challenges of the country office, which faces chronic funding issues and is small in size, the recruitment of a gender specialist is not feasible.	1. Recruitment of a gender specialist for the country office, supported by the RBD gender unit and GEN and depending on the funding situation	Country office head of programme (RBD gender unit)	March 2022
			2. Conduct gender capacity strengthening activities for all partners and WFP staff and ensure that gender experts and focal points play a central role in the design of the new CSP.	Country office head of programme (RBD gender unit)	March 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
3.2 Conduct a gender assessment focused on nutrition and household and community practices and norms that affect nutrition outcomes. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD, GEN, NUT)	Agreed.	3. Conduct a gender analysis to assess the effects of gender inequality, household and community practices and social norms in achieving nutrition outcomes and use the results to inform the design of gender-sensitive (or, ideally, gender-transformative) nutrition interventions.	Country office gender focal point (country office nutrition and VAM units, RBD gender and nutrition units)	December 2022
			4. Review country office data collection tools and reports to ensure that they are gender-sensitive and adhere to requirements for reporting on the gender and age marker.	Country office gender focal point (country office M&E and nutrition units, RBD gender and nutrition units)	February 2022
3.3 Assess the participation of women in value chains, particularly in processing activities, in order to identify potential that can be developed under strategic outcome 4 and possible links with the HGSP programme. Based on the results, develop an activity that supports the participation of groups of women involved in value chains by giving them the opportunity to supply produce for the HGSP programme. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD SAMS unit)	Agreed.	5. Assess the participation of women's groups in value chains, particularly in processing activities.	Country office livelihoods unit (country office VAM unit, RBD SAMS unit)	September 2022
			6. Provide women's groups with training in public procurement, food quality and aggregation.	Country office livelihoods unit (RBD SAMS unit)	December 2022
			7. Raise the awareness of women's groups with regard to HGSP as a market for their produce.	Country office livelihoods unit (RBD SAMS unit)	December 2022
			8. Advertise tenders widely in public spaces such as community gardens, the regional offices of the	Country office school feeding unit	December 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
			Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and marketplaces and through local leaders such as <i>alkalos</i> and chiefs.		
<p><b>Priority: N/A</b></p> <p><b>Overall deadline: December 2023</b></p> <p><b>4. Strengthen the CSP monitoring and evaluation system to ensure appropriate analysis and reporting of the CSP outputs and outcomes.</b></p>	Country office (RBD, headquarters Corporate Planning and Performance Division (CPP), PROT)				
4.1 Ensure continuity in the measurement of all output and income indicators by maintaining the same indicators throughout the CSP implementation period and through appropriate planning and resources. (December 2023)	Country office (RBD, CPP)	Agreed.	1. Conduct annual outcome monitoring or measure progress against indicators.	Country office M&E unit (RBD RAM unit)	December 2023
			2. Develop and put in place a platform for daily reporting of attendance at the school level.	Country office M&E unit (country office school feeding unit, RBD RAM unit)	April 2023
			3. Include indicators for the school feeding programme in the education management information system, and disaggregate existing school feeding indicators according to whether they apply to WFP-assisted schools, government-assisted schools or non-beneficiary schools.	Country office M&E unit (country office school feeding unit, RBD RAM unit)	June 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
			4. Conduct a study to assess the impact of school feeding on nutrition outcomes.	Country office M&E and VAM units (country office nutrition and school feeding units, RBD)	July 2022
4.2 Create a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system for CCS aimed at measuring progress based on the theories of change recommended above. (December 2022)	Country office (RBD, CPP, PROT)	Agreed.	5. Engage with the RBD RAM unit on any new WFP corporate tools or outcome indicators for capacity strengthening in preparation for the next CSP.	Country office M&E unit (country office programme unit, RBD RAM unit, headquarters Monitoring and Evaluation Liaison Unit (CPPM))	Apr 2022
			6. Develop country-specific indicators for measuring capacity strengthening objectives that are unique to the country.	Country office M&E unit (country office programme unit, RBD RAM unit, CPPM)	Apr 2022
<p><b>Priority: N/A</b></p> <p><b>Overall deadline: December 2023</b></p> <p><b>5. Improve the approach and processes related to local purchases in the HGSF programme in order to increase the opportunities for smallholder farmers to participate in the programme.</b></p>	Country office				
5.1 In collaboration with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, develop the approach for supporting value chains and smallholder farmers by conducting value chain analyses in order to identify bottlenecks that hamper farmer	Country office (RBD SAMS unit)	Agreed.	1. Use FAO's value chain analysis to address bottlenecks for farmers.	Country office SAMS unit (country office supply chain unit, RBD SAMS unit)	February 2022
			2. Conduct value chain analysis for commodities of interest that are not covered by FAO.	Country office SAMS unit (country office supply chain unit, RBD SAMS unit)	November 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
participation in supplying the HGSP programme and take action to address those bottlenecks. (December 2022)			3. Raise community awareness of the concept, benefits and opportunities provided by HGSP.	Country office SAMS unit (country office supply chain unit, RBD SAMS unit)	February 2022
			4. Work with the Government to support the development and organization of institutional markets for smallholder farmers.	Country office SAMS unit (country office supply chain unit, RBD SAMS unit)	December 2022
5.2 In collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, carry out a cash flow assessment in respect of payment mechanisms with the Government and identify bottlenecks affecting the frequency and timeliness of payments. (December 2022)	Country office	Agreed.	5. Carry out an assessment of payment mechanisms, including their feasibility, and the capability of financial service providers, especially in rural areas where ease of payment is at times an issue.	Country office school feeding unit (country office supply chain unit, RBD CBT unit)	March 2022
			6. Work with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to identify bottlenecks that affect payments and develop sustainable solutions to them.	Country office school feeding unit (country office supply chain unit, RBD CBT unit)	June 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
5.3 In collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Agriculture, review and simplify the administrative requirements for suppliers. (December 2022)	Country office	Agreed.	7. Carry out a sensitization campaign in preparation for the transfer of responsibility for key decisions to communities. The campaign will focus on increasing the role of mothers' clubs in the management of resources.	Country office school feeding unit (country office supply chain unit)	February 2022
			8. Review current tendering requirements for suppliers and advise on ways to simplify them.	Country office supply chain unit (country office school feeding unit)	December 2021
			9. Train suppliers on current tendering and administrative requirements.	Country office school feeding unit (country office supply chain unit)	March 2022
5.4 In collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Agriculture, review the contracting and pricing system and consider adopting a farming contract approach that includes the negotiation of a fair price for farmers. (December 2022)	Country office	Agreed.	10. The cash working group will review contracting, commodity pricing, contract management and reconciliation processes.	Country office school feeding unit (country office supply chain unit)	February 2022
			11. Set up or restructure a smallholder farmer cooperative that can be linked to schools and help cooperative members to negotiate pricing.	Country office livelihoods unit (country office supply chain and school feeding units)	March 2022
			12. Continue to support the institutional development of smallholder farmers with a view to improving their access to fair, open and equitable tendering processes.	Country office livelihoods unit (country office supply chain and school feeding units, RBD SAMS unit)	March 2022

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
5.5 Engage with key specialized institutions, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO, and promote their participation in agriculture-related activities under strategic outcome 4. Involve the Ministry of Agriculture regional directorates in field activities and monitoring. (December 2023)	Country office	Partially agreed. The country office is already working with the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO on the implementation of all agriculture-related activities.	13. Review and renew the memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture with a view to enhancing its participation in the implementation of all agriculture-related activities including collaboration on field activities and monitoring.	Country office partnerships unit (country office livelihoods unit)	June 2022
		(Collaboration with FAO and the ministry is also included in actions under sub-recommendation 1.2.)	14. Finalize a cooperation partnership agreement with FAO for the implementation of agriculture-related activities.	Country office partnerships unit (country office livelihoods unit)	June 2022
			15. Initiate collaboration on joint programmes with the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO.	Country office head of programme (country director)	March 2022



**Acronyms**

CCS	country capacity strengthening
CPP	Corporate Planning and Performance Division
CPPM	Monitoring and Evaluation Liaison Unit
CSP	country strategic plan
EPR	emergency preparedness and response
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEN	Gender Office
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
HGSF	home-grown school feeding
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NUT	Nutrition Division
PROS	Social Protection Unit
PROT	Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service
RAM	research, assessment and monitoring
RBD	Regional Bureau for Western Africa
SAMS	smallholder agriculture market support
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping