



**WFP EVALUATION**

# Evaluation of WFP's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic



World Food Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

February 2022

Round Table

# Rationale & Approach

**Rationale:** requirement for OEV to evaluate all corporate emergency responses

## Retrospective developmental evaluation

- Based on complexity theory and systems thinking; acknowledges that life is messy and non-linear
- Breaks away from formative-summative evaluative options that focus on “a model” – e.g. project, intervention, policy
- Not asking “did it work” but “how did it change? what was developed? what were the obstacles?”



# Stakeholder consultation

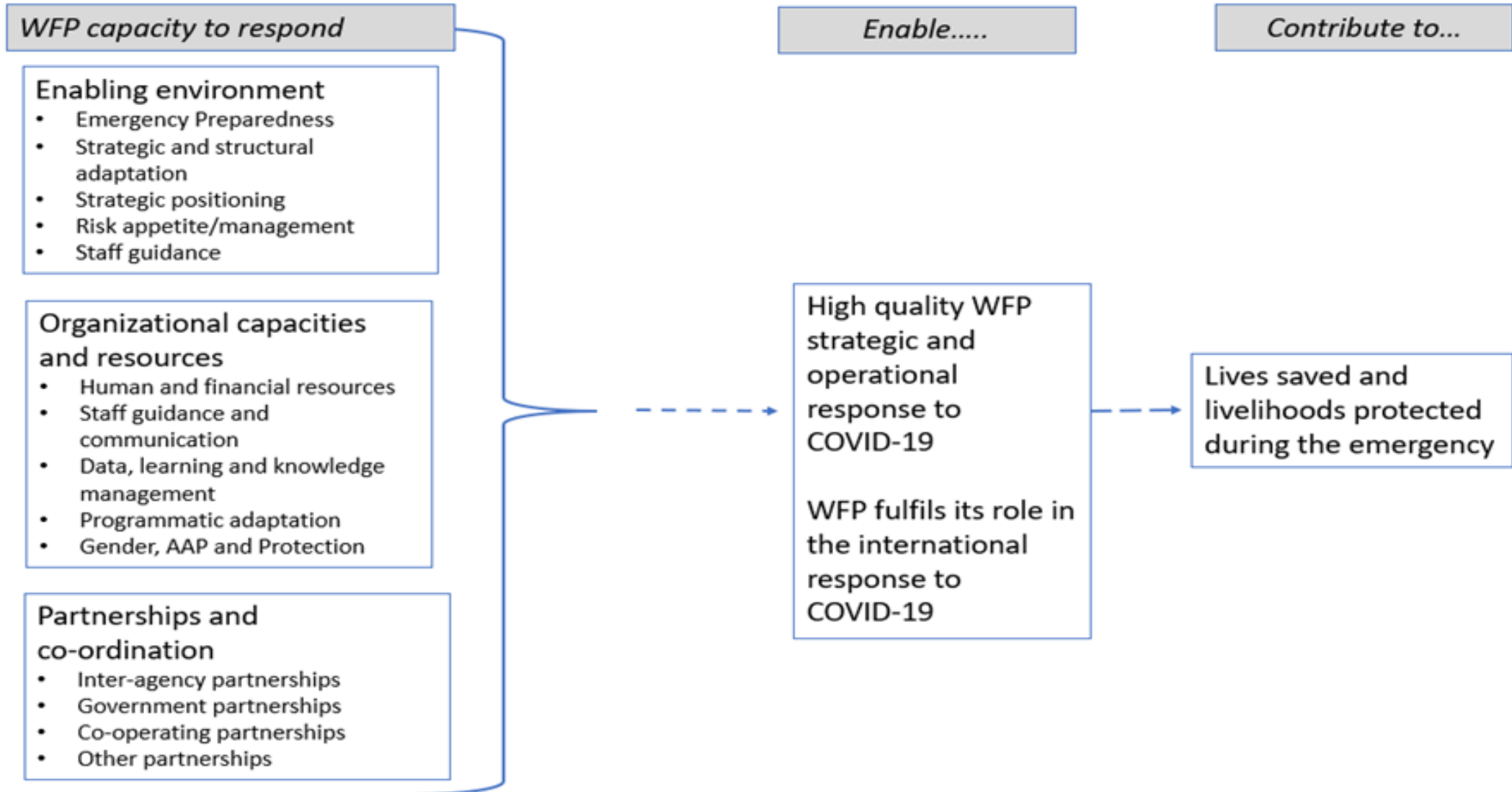
2020



2022

- **June – October 2020:** Concept Note/Approach Paper informed consultation with senior leadership and development of TORs
- **December 2020 – June 2021:**
  - 10 Evidence Summaries - interviews at HQ/RB/CO level
  - 8 consultative group discussions on draft Summaries
  - 340 interviews: 74/85 Country Offices, external partners (UN, cooperating partners)
- **September 2021:** presentation to EME retreat
- **Oct/Nov 2021:** consultation on draft evaluation report
- **November 2021:** summary evaluation report discussed with the OPC
- **February 2022:** consideration by the EB (Roundtable, EB session)

# Analytical Framework

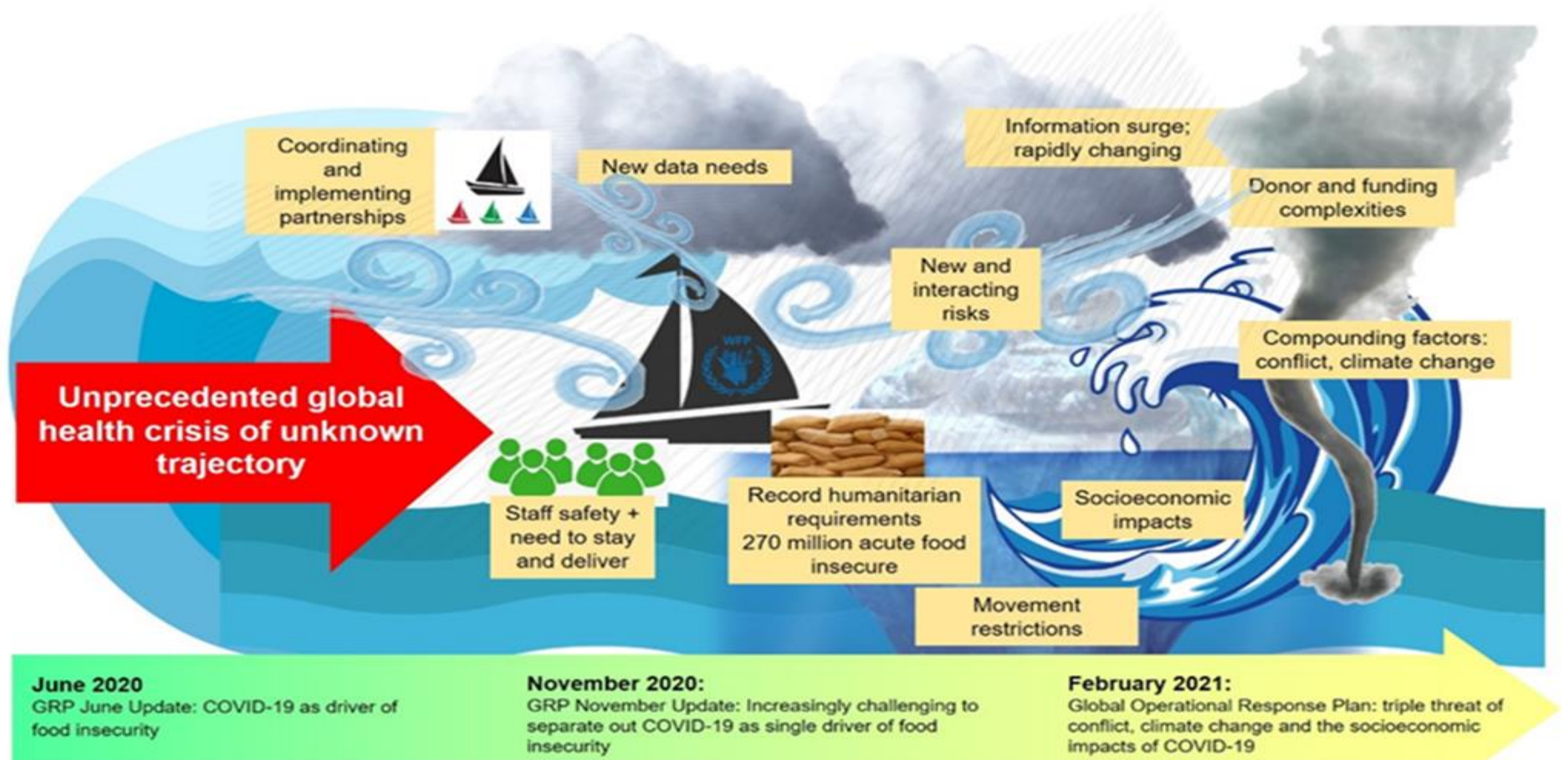


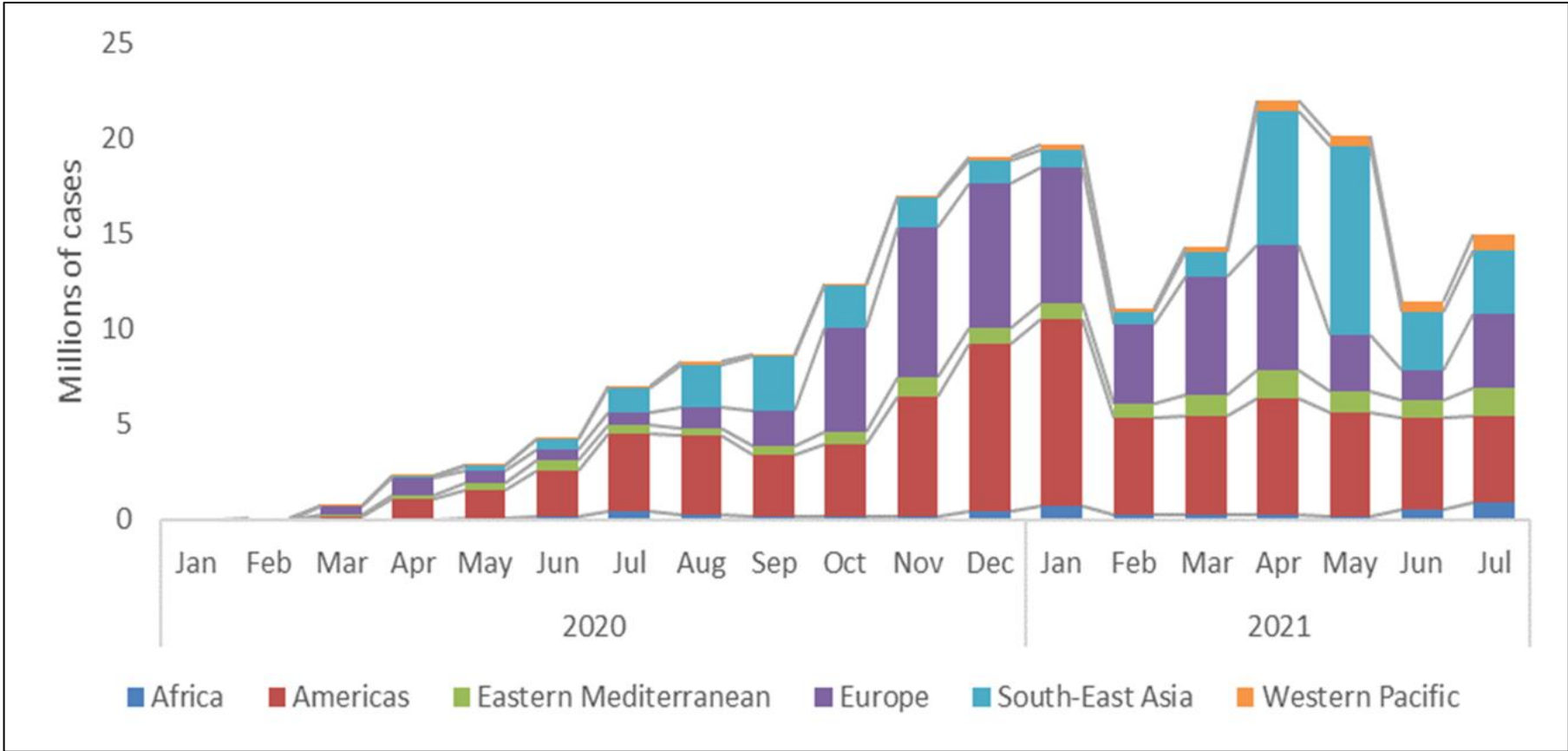
# Evaluation Questions



- i. How well did the enabling environment and organizational assets of WFP adapt to respond to the demands of the COVID-19 crisis?
- ii. How well did WFP fulfil its role as a partner in the collective humanitarian response?
- iii. What was achieved, and what was learned?

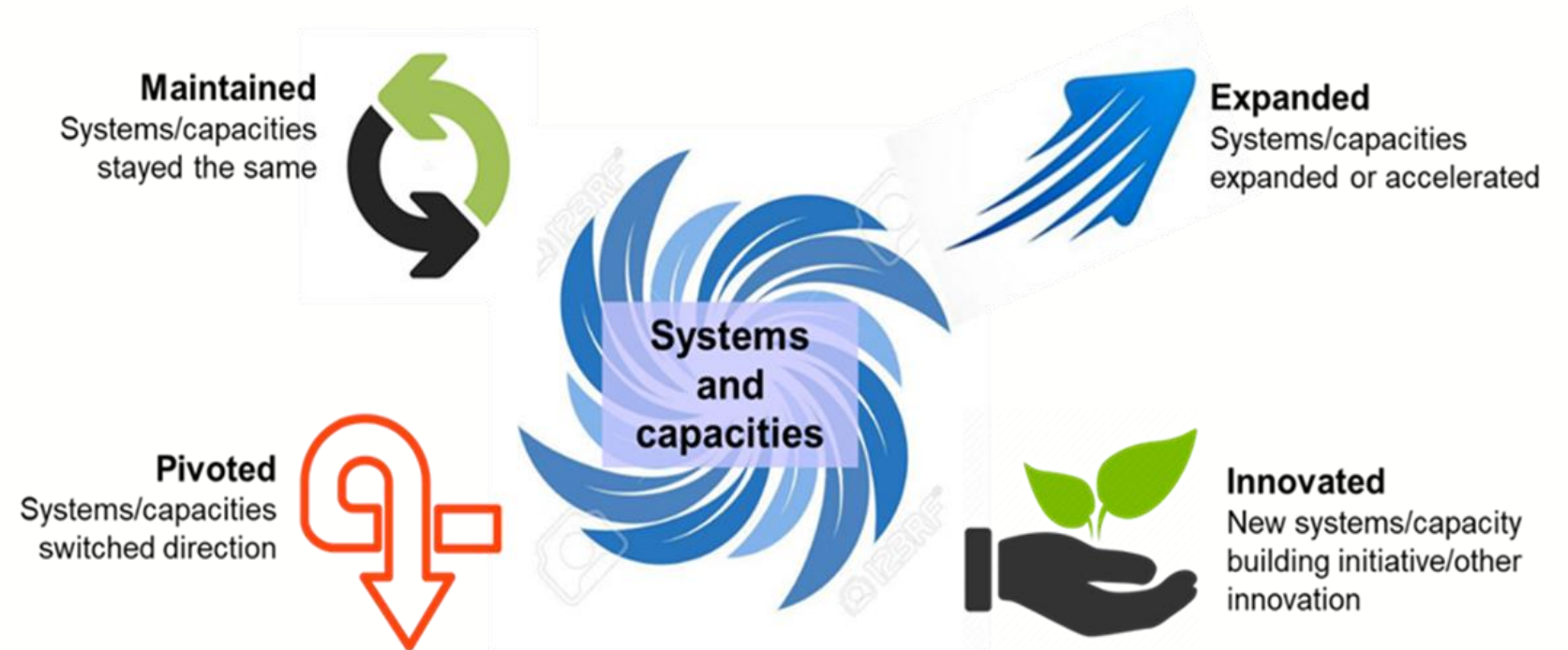
# Complexity & Uncertainty





**Pandemic  
in waves**

# Systems & capacities





# How 'ready' was WFP before COVID-19?



Long experience/expertise in emergency response

But

- No **global emergency response** framework/preparedness systems still being built
- **Human capacity** limitations
- **Advance financing** mechanisms developing
- **Risk systems** maturing
- **Partnerships** enhanced

And

- Weak **knowledge management**
- Gaps in **gender equality & AAP**
- Debate re: **balance humanitarian-development** activity



# How well did systems & capacities adapt?

## Overall, swiftly & well



- **L3** not expeditious – but attention, financing & flexibility
- **Strategic frameworks** swift
- **Data & analysis** - global public good
- **Fundraising** novel & responsive (but country variance/late contributions/earmarked)
- **'No regrets'/risk management** balanced
- **HR/wellness** systems adapted but immense strains faced by workforce

## Challenges (but mostly navigated)



- **HQ** in emergency mode; **Regional Bureaux** as interface HQ-CO
- Diverse global experience = no **shared understanding**
- Strains on **response decision-making/unclear accountabilities**
- **Global surge** coped but challenging start
- **Remote working** at first
- **Knowledge transfer** experiential

# How well did partnerships and strategic positioning adapt?

## Overall – partnerships expanded, positioning changed

- Scale up **Common Services** = learning curve, but international respect
- Praise for **Logistics & ETC clusters**
- Some tensions in **UN partnerships** in the early stages of the response
- Overall aligned behind **government responses** - though testing at times
- **CPs** praised WFP shift
- Expanded **private sector** partnerships
- Expanded **global/national advocacy**



# How did programming adapt to meet needs?



## Overall – Stayed to deliver; agile & flexible

- **Biosecurity measures implemented**
- **CSPs adapted**
  - Emergency shift
  - Adapting targeting incl. urban
  - Cash/social protection expansion
  - Increased capacity strengthening/technical advice
  - Supply chain & logistics to governments
- **Supply chain sustained**
- **AAP – communications kept open**



## But

- Challenges in CSPs with **no emergency outcome**
- **Budget Revision** slow
- **Timeliness** mixed
- No increased corporate investment in **gender/social protection**

# What did the response achieve (1)?

## Big expansion in beneficiary numbers

Region	WFP Regional Bureau	Planned (m)	Actual	% Annual Performance
Asia Pacific	RBB	20	17.5	88
Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe	RBC	28	28.1	100
Western and Northern Africa	RBD	20	18.2	91
Southern Africa	RBJ	23	19.3	84
Eastern and Central Africa	RBN	27	26.5	98
Central and South America and Caribbean	RBP	6	6.0	100
	Total	124	115.6	93

- **Common services response** underpinned global humanitarian response
- **Repositioned** WFP globally

WFP assistance helped **prevent any significant deterioration** in food security & nutrition status

# What did the response achieve (2)?

## Maintained

- Knowledge management
- Corporate investment in gender and social protection
- Roles of HQ, RB, COs in structures of response



## Expanded

- Global surge system
- Generating data & analytics
- Social protection activity
- Capacity strengthening support
- Supply chain & logistics services
- Common services
- Partnerships – UN, govt, private sector
- Staff wellbeing



## New initiatives/innovation

- Strategic frameworks
- Financing requests and internal arrangements
- Remote working
- Urban targeting
- Communications modalities



## Pivoted

- Remote working
- Emergency focus within CSPs
- Management arrangements
- Estimating needs
- Human capacities to respond
- Risk management system
- Supply chain
- Gender at country level
- Cooperating partner relationships



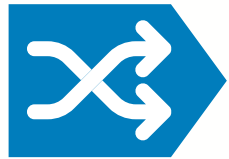
**Institutional systems and capacities**



# Conclusions



WFP Stayed to deliver – but high human cost



Agile, adaptive & effective overall



Enhanced profile – WFP as systems enabler



Lack of formal knowledge management systems a constraint



Lack of shared understanding impeded organisational coherence/decision-making



Limited central investment in gender/social protection restricted transformational change

# Issues for consideration



## Reposition WFP in post-COVID-19 recovery

- Articulate WFP's role in medium-term responses
- Clarify intersections in WFP's response to structural vulnerabilities and emergencies



## WFP as a “systems enabler”

- Expand ‘service offer’ to other humanitarian actors
- Define capacity needs
- Provide consistent external communications

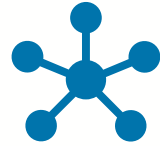


## Upscale advocacy

- Food security and nutrition aspects of socio-economic recovery
- Skills training for staff
- Leverage partnerships



# Issues for consideration



## Shared overview/review management arrangements

- Common understanding of diverse emergency contexts
- “Empowered decentralisation”



## Resilient but adaptive systems

- Stress test of/contingency planning
- Enhanced KM systems



## Ethos of staff care

- Workplace culture/management skills
- Contractual basis
- Debriefing/harnessing experience