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

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for the State of Palestine for 2018–2022.
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess WFP's strategic positioning, the extent to which WFP made the shifts expected under the CSP, WFP's effectiveness in contributing to strategic outcomes, the efficiency with which the CSP was implemented, the appropriateness of the operational modalities used to respond to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic and the factors explaining WFP's performance.
3. Taking a utilization-focused and consultative approach, the evaluation served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informed the preparation of a new CSP for the State of Palestine.
4. The evaluation made five recommendations, each with several related sub-recommendations, addressing key issues for the next CSP for the State of Palestine. Two of the recommendations are strategic and three are operational.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations. In some instances, the country office has agreed to recommendations but has adjusted the proposed timelines for their completion.

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**MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION
OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE STATE OF PALESTINE (2018–2022)**

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and units in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and units in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2022 Recommendation 1: Ensure that the new country strategic plan and all of its outcomes are appropriate to the various possible scenarios facing the State of Palestine, which range from the status quo to a sharp deterioration in conditions.</p> <p>1.1 Use political economy analysis and scenario planning to inform the design of the country strategic plan.</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	Draw on political and economic analyses during the formulation of the new CSP so as to ensure that the CSP is adaptive and applicable to various possible scenarios.	Country office programme and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) units	Action completed December 2022
			Incorporate analysis and inputs from the regional conflict and emergency analyst and the regional political and security analyst into CSP scenario planning and design.	Country office programme and VAM units	Action completed December 2022
<p>1.2 Plan for the retention of WFP capacity to scale up crisis response support for food-insecure households in the event of an interruption in the State's capability, or renewed hostilities.</p>		<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The country office has already taken the necessary measures to address the improvements identified. As the recommendations call for continuous action, their implementation deadline is 2028, spanning the period of the new CSP.</p>	Recruit WFP staff dedicated to reinforcing and updating emergency preparedness planning.	Country office human resources and programme units	Action completed December 2022
			Maintain the in-kind food pipeline in the Gaza Strip as part of the emergency response plan.	Country office programme and supply chain units	February 2028
			Maintain the infrastructure for, and enhance the scalability of, the WFP cash-based transfer platform in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with a view to expanding the service to additional partners for greater outreach.	Country office programme unit	February 2028

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			Maintain updated concept of operations in case of a further escalation of hostilities.	Country office programme unit	February 2028
			Maintain and strengthen relations with strategic partners and stakeholders with a view to ensuring reliable access to the Gaza Strip.	Country office management	February 2028
<p>1.3 Factor in the implications of reduced funding on social protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that plans for providing cash-based transfers to people on the Ministry of Social Development's lists take into account the possibility that cash-based transfers will not be distributed for extended periods. ➤ Consider the implications for WFP of a reduction in social protection support for refugees. 		<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>The WFP country office and regional bureau are in close coordination and discussion with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on various topics, such as the deduplication of beneficiary lists, advocacy regarding the food security situation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and funding gaps and their potential implications for the local situation. However, the CSP document cannot reflect in-depth elements of those discussions. If the social</p>	Maintain and strengthen WFP's monitoring system so that it continuously assesses the needs on the ground, and ensure appropriate assistance based on needs.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit	February 2028
			With donors, advocate additional funding in the event of a reduction in the Government's social protection support.	Country office management, partnerships and donor relations unit	February 2028
			Maintain continuous dialogue and meetings between the country office and UNRWA with a view to ensuring more conflict-sensitive programming.	Country office management	February 2028

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		protection support for refugees is not maintained, or if it is decided that WFP will support additional refugees, the CSP will be subject to a revision.			
1.4 When defining the new country strategic plan's institutional capacity strengthening objectives, factor in the likelihood that the fiscal crisis will be extended, and focus on strengthening functions that the Government can realistically deploy with its constrained resources.		Agreed.	Plan for and implement annual strategic discussions (to start in the first and second quarters of 2023) with the Ministry of Social Development with a view to defining capacity strengthening requirements based on circumstances, resources and priorities for the year.	Country office VAM unit	February 2028
			Sign an annual memorandum of understanding outlining capacity strengthening objectives relevant to the year ahead based on the priorities and capacity requirements of the Ministry of Social Development.	Country office VAM unit	February 2023

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<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2022 Recommendation 2: In designing the new country strategic plan, set out the following range of issues, at the strategic and operational levels, some of which were not comprehensively addressed in the current country strategic plan.</p> <p>2.1 Define WFP's core mandate and comparative advantage in the State of Palestine.</p>	Country office (regional bureau; headquarters Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division (PRO) and Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division (RAM))	Agreed.	Define and clearly articulate in the CSP narrative WFP's comparative advantage in the State of Palestine.	Country office programme unit	Action completed December 2022
			Build on WFP's comparative advantage in the design of the new CSP, clearly outlining strengths and the areas where further improvement is needed for the fulfilment of the objectives of the CSP.	Country office programme unit	Action completed December 2022
2.2 Analyse the sustainability issues related to future activities and outcomes, and identify actions that will help to make the impact of investments sustainable.		Agreed.	Ensure that capacity strengthening components are embedded in each activity and that linkages and synergies are forged among activities in order to strengthen the longevity and sustainability of WFP's actions.	Country office programme and VAM units	Action completed December 2022
			In partnership with government ministries, explore the opportunities for linking the participants of WFP programmes to government schemes with a view to enabling sustainable transition pathways from humanitarian	Country office programme and VAM units	December 2024

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			interventions to development initiatives.		
			Conduct a decentralized evaluation of CSP activity 2 (livelihoods and resilience), with a clear focus on the sustainability of livelihoods activities.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit and external consultants	June 2025
2.3 Set out a strategic approach to addressing environmental issues and climate change.		Agreed.	Formulate the Green Climate Fund project document so that it serves as a blueprint for the country office's approach to the environment and climate change.	Country office VAM unit	June 2023
2.4 Advocate the joint development of a coherent framework for the humanitarian–development–peace nexus with other humanitarian and development actors in the State of Palestine, and within that framework identify how WFP will facilitate strategic linkages at the nexus.		Agreed.	Recruit a dedicated lead to facilitate the country office's strategic positioning at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.	Country office programme unit	Action completed December 2022
			Identify joint programmes, strategies and workplans and facilitate strategic linkages at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.	Country office programme unit	September 2023

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2.5 Ensure that the future results framework is comprehensive and reflects all of WFP's activities, including service delivery.		Agreed.	Develop a comprehensive results framework based on the WFP corporate results framework and fully reflecting all of WFP's activities under the CSP, including service delivery.	Country office monitoring and evaluation and programme units	Action completed December 2022
2.6 Strengthen the integration of beneficiary feedback into programme design and revision.		Agreed.	Recruit a dedicated staff member to lead the development and implementation of WFP's community feedback mechanism, including by enhancing and integrating the feedback loop into programme design and project cycles.	Country office programme and VAM units	June 2023
			Continue working with agencies, partners and sector leads to explore the full capacities of an inter-agency community feedback platform, thereby providing the scope to incorporate feedback from non-WFP programmes into the future design and revision of CSPs.	Country office programme unit	June 2023

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<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2023 Recommendation 3: Enhance the effectiveness and targeting of unconditional resource transfers in line with, but not limited to, commitments made in the management response to the 2020 decentralized evaluation.</p> <p>3.1 The present evaluation highlights two of the decentralized evaluation's recommendations that would enhance food security for the most vulnerable people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ recommendation 2 "Explore tiered and targeted assistance using varied voucher values based on need"; and ➤ recommendation 3 "Consider increasing the voucher value for households composed of below-average members". <p>WFP agreed to both of these recommendations and to the action deadline of September 2022, and will need to reflect any change in approach</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The country office will conduct an in-depth assessment to explore the opportunities for further refinement of the tiered targeting approach. Essential needs and complementarity with livelihoods programmes will be analysed and weighted in order to define multi-tiered target groups and incremental assistance values.</p>	Starting in March 2023, shift all of the cash-based transfer assistance provided under CSP activity 1 to the tiered targeting approach, based on the poverty levels and consumption gaps identified during the design of the CSP.	Country office programme and VAM units	March 2023 onwards
			Explore the opportunities for further refinement of the tiered targeting approach in terms of assistance values and target groups; where relevant, include potential linkages with WFP or other livelihoods programmes.	Country office VAM and programme units	December 2023

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in its future programming. Other agreed recommendations are also important.					
3.2 Based on the findings of the ongoing evaluation of WFP's multi-purpose cash assistance pilot, define WFP's future approach to the use of multi-purpose cash in the new country strategic plan, in consultation with key partners.		<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The country office confirms that it will implement various transfer modalities (including in-kind food, e-vouchers and unrestricted cash assistance) according to local conditions, and has allocated USD 7 million to projects under the multi-purpose cash assistance chapter of the humanitarian response plan. WFP will continue to advocate funding for multi-purpose cash assistance from donors, wherever and whenever required for the State of Palestine operation.</p>	<p>Develop a position paper on the use and applicability of the various transfer modalities, outlining the country office's future approach to multi-purpose cash assistance following the completion and analysis of a pilot project on the use of unrestricted cash versus e-vouchers.</p>	<p>Country office VAM and programme units</p>	<p>March 2023</p>
			<p>Conduct a review and strategic discussions with key stakeholders aimed at sharing lessons learned and discussing WFP's future approach (based on the previous action).</p>	<p>Country office programme and VAM units</p>	<p>May 2023</p>

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3.3 Based on a careful study of the feasibility and potential impact (especially on gender relations), consider offering households a choice of modality for the support that they receive (multi-purpose cash, food vouchers or in-kind food) and advocate with donors for greater flexibility in funding.		<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>The country office uses multiple criteria to determine the most suitable modality of support. Beneficiary choice is one of the elements taken into account, but cannot be the sole criterion.</p> <p>It is important to emphasize that the tying of funding to a particular modality limits the modality options available to the country office.</p> <p>In 2022, in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the country office commissioned a study that explores gender dynamics and power relations in WFP beneficiary households. The study is instrumental in shaping WFP's support for households, taking into consideration</p>	Maintain the approach of using multiple criteria for the determination of support modality.	Country Office programme and VAM units	March 2023
			Draw on the findings of the WFP/UN-Women gender dynamics study in leveraging WFP's gender-transformative humanitarian programming (including by exploring modalities) to deliver sustainable results.	Country office programme, VAM and monitoring and evaluation units	December 2023

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		intra-household gender dynamics, under the new CSP.			
<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2023 Recommendation 4: Enhance the social protection system with stronger coordination, and support the development of the Government's referral system.</p> <p>4.1 To reduce duplication and promote equity, continue to promote coordination with other agencies providing social protection services; explore opportunities for improving data sharing.</p>	Country office (regional bureau; headquarters PRO)	Agreed.	<p>Recruit a dedicated social protection staff member to oversee the social protection portfolio.</p> <p>Develop a social protection plan that promotes coordination with other agencies that provide social protection services, including the Ministry of Social Development, and that clearly articulates the ways in which agencies will increase data sharing.</p>	Country office human resources unit	Action completed December 2022
4.2 To address the non-food social protection needs of WFP beneficiaries, support the development of the Government's referral system, with other partners.		Partially agreed. While WFP recognizes that holistic social protection approaches are essential to the eradication of poverty, WFP's mandate is specifically centred on food security and the creation of an enabling environment for food security. When social protection	Support the Ministry of Social Development in fulfilling its responsibility towards the Palestinian people through efforts to address non-food needs, including those of WFP beneficiaries, through increased knowledge sharing and relevant capacity strengthening (based on the first action in the response to sub-recommendation 1.4). As part	Country office programme and VAM units	December 2023

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		services are not related directly to food or cash-based transfers to meet basic needs, the country office engages with other stakeholders that provide such services under their mandates.	of its humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach, WFP will coordinate with partners that have non-food mandates (such as the United Nations Children’s Fund and the International Labour Organization) with a view to informing the development of collective social protection approaches that provide more holistic support to people in need.		
			Leverage WFP’s accountability to affected populations through the WFP community referral system, ensuring linkages to a wide range of actors, including non-food actors.	Country office programme unit	June 2023
<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2023 Recommendation 5: Enhance WFP’s approach to supporting resilience and livelihoods. 5.1 Develop a strategy and theory of change for WFP’s resilience and livelihoods programming.</p>	Country office (regional bureau; headquarters PRO and Gender Office)	Agreed.	Develop a theory of change for resilience and livelihoods interventions that articulates the transition pathways of participants in WFP agricultural and skills learning activities as they move from unconditional food assistance to asset-based livelihood programmes.	Country office VAM, programme, and monitoring and evaluation units	December 2023

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5.2 Adopt an adaptive and iterative approach to resilience and livelihoods programming, and commission periodic external reviews of WFP's interventions for informing significant next steps.		Agreed. The country office is active on various platforms, highlighting the importance of livelihoods and resilience programming as a means of giving people opportunities for economic self-reliance and reducing aid dependency. This work includes strong advocacy on important panels and platforms, such as the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Expo 2020 Food for Future summit and the annual World Food Day, among others, and through donor field visits that showcase the country office's work in the field.	Conduct a decentralized evaluation of CSP activity 2 (resilience and livelihoods) that will inform the final two years of livelihoods programming under the current CSP.	Country office monitoring and evaluation, VAM and programme units, and external consultant	June 2025
			Use regional bureau missions to the country office, workshops and periodic dialogue to draw on the regional bureau's expertise in ensuring that livelihoods and resilience interventions are pertinent and adaptive and reflect WFP corporate approaches.	Country office (regional bureau)	December 2023

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5.3 Seek to enhance the degree of choice that beneficiaries have in the resilience and livelihoods support that they receive, and enhance WFP's monitoring systems so they assess the extent to which programming is responsive to beneficiaries' preferences.		Agreed.	Articulate and document the criteria for beneficiary inclusion in livelihoods support programming, ensuring that beneficiary preference for the support provided is one of the criteria, along with others (human, financial, physical, natural and social capitals).	Country office programme and VAM units	December 2024
			Communicate the inclusion criteria to the beneficiaries.	Country office programme and VAM units	December 2024
5.4 Continue to experiment with gender-transformative interventions for resilience and livelihoods, ensuring that they are based on strong gender analysis.		Agreed.	Build on the WFP/UN-Women gender dynamics study conducted in 2022 (see sub-recommendation 3.3) by conducting a follow-up gender and protection study in year 1 of the new CSP period, focusing on the impact of WFP programmes on gender transformation.	Country office programme, monitoring and evaluation and VAM units	December 2023
			Expand qualitative and quantitative data collection in all programmes, especially livelihoods programmes, with the aim of identifying the overall impact of WFP programmes on gender transformation. Explore opportunities to collaborate with		February 2028

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			UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund in order to enrich data generation.		
5.5 Consider piloting a way of linking other providers of resilience and livelihood interventions to WFP beneficiaries who could benefit from support for resilience and livelihoods development.		Agreed.	Initiate dialogue, mapping and planning exercises with members of the food security sector with a view to identifying potential linkages to and providers of resilience and livelihoods interventions that complement those of WFP. Continue to collaborate with the private sector (including through the ongoing financial inclusion workshops for beneficiaries) and expand joint projects for more harmonized and synchronized approaches.	Country office programme and VAM units	December 2023
5.6 Consider enhancing WFP's capacity with specialist livelihoods and resilience expertise.		Agreed.	Reinforce the country office's capacity in livelihoods and resilience interventions by recruiting dedicated staff to manage the office's resilience and livelihoods portfolio and activities at the field level.	Country office human resources and VAM units	December 2023