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Management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Egypt (2018–2023)

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 Egypt for 2018–2023.
2. The evaluation covered all activities implemented under the transitional interim CSP and the CSP from January 2018 to March 2022 and assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementing CSP activities, the appropriateness of operational modalities in responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and 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 Egypt.
4. The evaluation team made five recommendations, of which three are strategic and two are operational.
5. The response sets out whether WFP management agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with each evaluation recommendation and sub-recommendation. It presents the actions taken or to be taken and the related responsibilities and timelines for their implementation. In some instances, the country office has agreed to a recommendation while proposing a different timeline so as to ensure consistency among actions and to facilitate implementation.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EGYPT (2018–2023)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations (including their priority: high/medium)	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (supporting offices/ units in brackets)	Management response (agreed, partially agreed, not agreed)	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (supporting offices/units in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Recommendation 1: WFP should review the interventions it engages in, including capacity strengthening activities, from strategic and operational perspectives with a view to streamlining and consolidating the number of interventions that are included in the next country strategic plan while ensuring alignment with government needs and priorities.</p> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Deadline: 2023</p>					
<p>1.1: WFP should engage in capacity strengthening activities that are based on a solid capacity gap assessment and that have clearly identified outputs, outcomes and progress indicators. Such activities should be clearly coordinated with other activities and be aligned with the following sub-recommendations.</p>	<p>Country office (regional bureau; headquarters divisions, including the Programme and Policy Development Department, the Gender Equality Office and the Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service (PROT))</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>The new CSP was developed based on WFP's shift towards an "enabling" role with the Government of Egypt focusing on streamlining the food security and nutrition-related elements of national programmes.</p> <p>The country office will place increased emphasis on undertaking capacity gap assessments to guide the design and implementation of its capacity strengthening activities and will align those activities with the capacity strengthening priorities and needs identified by the Government with regard to the new CSP.</p> <p>In designing its country capacity strengthening activities, the country office will undertake consultations with national partners at the central and local levels, civil society and affected populations. It will also take into account the lessons learned from previous interventions and knowledge exchange with development partners.</p>	<p>Country office programme unit</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

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1.2: WFP should identify the interventions where it has a unique capacity (comparative advantage) in the Egypt context. Within this set of interventions, WFP should identify and prioritize those for which there is a conducive enabling environment and that can realistically be implemented within the timeframe of the next country strategic plan.	Country office (regional bureau; headquarters divisions, including the Programme and Policy Development Department, the Gender Equality Office and PROT)	Agreed	<p>Since the evaluation, the country office has designed a new CSP that makes clear contributions to national priorities and programmes, including <i>Takaful</i>, <i>Karama</i>, <i>Haya Karima</i>, Egypt's Vision 2030, the national food security and nutrition strategy and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF), among others.</p> <p>As a strategic partner of the Government, the country office will focus on the areas where it has a comparative advantage when designing its capacity strengthening interventions. Those areas include school feeding, nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programmes, social protection transitioning and active labour markets, shock-responsiveness, climate adaptation, and digitization and knowledge management. Capacity strengthening activities in those areas will be identified and designed in partnership with the Government with a view to enabling the Government to enhance its institutional systems and service provision.</p>	Country office programme unit	December 2023

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1.3: WFP should articulate a clear and comprehensive theory of change that lays out how the various interventions collectively are able to contribute to the attainment of the country strategic plan outcomes.	Country office (regional bureau; headquarters divisions, including the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Programme and Policy Development Department, Gender Equality Office and PROT)	Agreed	The clear theory of change developed for the new CSP is sufficiently flexible to allow adaptation to evolving circumstances, needs, priorities and emerging issues in Egypt. This theory of change will be revisited periodically throughout the implementation of the new CSP to ensure that it remains consistent with the attainment of the CSP outcomes.	Country office programme unit	June 2023
<p>Recommendation 2: WFP should support the Government in the continued refinement of its beneficiary identification mechanisms and consult the Government where gaps are identified, including with regard to known vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Deadline: 2023–2028</p>					
2.1: Actions to implement this recommendation could include a periodic review of a sample of the beneficiaries of individual activities, and a review of the mechanisms for transferring data between government offices with a view to ensuring accurate and complete data transfer. The tools for each assessment would depend on the government tool used, but WFP should endeavour to explore whether the beneficiaries targeted meet the basic eligibility criteria and whether all beneficiaries are equally included in programmes. This type of process could	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed	Where feasible, based on consideration of national data security, the country office will enter into dialogue with various government partners with a view to supporting targeting and beneficiary assessment and monitoring tools and data and information management for informing national programmes and policy priorities. Government partners will include, for example, the ministries responsible for social solidarity, the labour force, health and population, planning, education, and agriculture and land reclamation, and the information and decision support centre.	Country office programme unit (country office vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation units)	June 2028

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serve to strengthen existing systems if gaps are identified. It will also serve to ensure that WFP can achieve its objective of targeting the most vulnerable,			<p>The country office will support the enhancement of data management and information systems through digitization and technical assistance.</p> <p>The country office will foster links with national specialized councils – such as the national councils for childhood and motherhood and for persons with disabilities – to ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable population groups, leaving no one behind.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 3: WFP should review its partnerships (including with other United Nations entities and private sector entities) for their strategic potential under the new country strategic plan, seeking to expand engagement with a view to the collective achievement of expected results.</p> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Deadline: 2023</p>					
3.1: WFP should engage more closely with other United Nations entities, and with a more strategic intent, identifying at the design stage those areas where joint programming could serve mutual benefit. Such areas in the new country strategic plan could include gender programming with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, climate change, agriculture, food security and alternative income-generating activities with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization, and improved education and nutrition with the United Nations Children’s Fund.	Country office (Partnerships and Advocacy Department)	Agreed	The country office will strengthen dialogue with development partners, in particular other United Nations entities, and will develop coordination plans for joint programming, the generation of evidence of complementarity and information sharing, including with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Bank. WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will collaborate through their joint programme excellence and targeting hub to carry out a comprehensive vulnerability	Country office programme unit (country office management and partnerships unit)	December 2023

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			assessment and agree on targeting criteria and assistance modalities. The country office will remain actively engaged in UNSDCF coordination mechanisms, planning and reporting and in various thematic groups.		
3.2: WFP should foster engagement with the private sector for technical partnerships in selected programmes, with a particular focus on food fortification and the building of resilience with regard to climate change. The overall aim should be to secure flexible multi-year donor funding.	Country office (Partnerships and Advocacy Department)	Agreed	The country office will strengthen and expand its partnerships with the private sector in order to utilise the latter's technical capacity in various areas. This collaboration will be articulated with clear action points in the partnerships action plan. Beyond financial partnerships, the country office will pursue public-private partnerships and collaboration with private sector partners to promote human capital development and livelihoods opportunities for the target assisted groups through the deployment of specialized technical expertise, apprenticeships and job opportunities and the provision of technical assistance for government stakeholders at the national and local levels.	Country office partnerships unit (country office programme unit)	December 2023

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3.3: The country office should assess its fundraising and advocacy plan with a view to expanding funding sources and further leveraging domestic financing. This may entail identifying new financing mechanisms with support from headquarters and engaging with the Government to expand the use of tools that have proved valuable, such as debt swaps.	Country office (Partnerships and Advocacy Department)	Agreed	<p>The country office will develop a partnerships action plan that serves as a roadmap for the establishment and strengthening of key WFP partnerships with donor governments, private sector entities and other entities that can facilitate WFP's achievement of the expected results.</p> <p>The country office will follow a three-pillar approach to fundraising that is built on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) leveraging its strong relationship with the Government as a strategic partner and a supporter in resource mobilization, with particular focus on innovative financing mechanisms such as debt swaps; ii) maintaining and further cultivating relationships and links with existing and consistent donors and expanding the donor base by reaching out to new and non-traditional donors; and iii) nurturing partnerships with the private sector, benefiting from the work done so far and from the enabling environment for the private sector in Egypt. 	Country office partnerships unit	December 2023

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3.4: WFP should contribute to and inform the engagement between the Government and its other partners by leveraging data, analysis and other tools, convening dialogue and subsequently, where appropriate, assisting in the implementation of government-led projects financed by donors.	Country office (Partnerships and Advocacy Department)	Agreed	<p>The country office will provide increasing support for the Government under the new CSP through integrated and evidence-based technical assistance and capacity strengthening that enable the Government to more effectively address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. WFP will engage in national policy development platforms where it can bring its experience and the results of the knowledge generated, engage in national and international events jointly with relevant ministries and provide technical assistance at the institutional level through systems strengthening and capacity building for staff.</p> <p>The country office will strengthen WFP's alignment with and contribution to national policies, including Egypt's Vision 2030, the UNSDCF for 2023–2027 and the regional refugee and resilience plan; as well as the priorities of social protection, nutrition and food security, gender equality and inclusion; and national programmes such as <i>Haya Karima</i>, <i>Takaful</i>, <i>Karama</i> and programmes for nutrition, economic empowerment and resilience building for smallholder farmers.</p>	Country office programme unit (country office management and vulnerability analysis and mapping, monitoring and evaluation and supply chain units)	December 2023

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<p>Recommendation 4: For the new country strategic plan WFP should ensure that it has capacity to monitor and follow up on WFP-supported interventions effectively, including through the consistent measurement of progress in its support for country capacity strengthening</p> <p>Priority: High</p> <p>Deadline: 2023</p>					
4.1: Based on interventions to be undertaken under the new country strategic plan, WFP should ensure the appropriate level of in-house monitoring capacity. This will also ensure that it has the capacity to undertake recommendation 2.	Country office	Agreed	The country office will increase the number of staff in its monitoring and evaluation function in 2023.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (country office management and human resources unit)	December 2023
4.2: Where possible, specific indicators for monitoring progress under the country strategic plan should be developed, including in areas such as policy engagement, gender and capacity strengthening.	Country office (Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division)	Agreed	Since the evaluation, the logical framework of the new CSP has been designed to incorporate a wide range of indicators that will be used to monitor progress, including in areas such as policy engagement, gender and capacity strengthening.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit	June 2023
4.3: WFP should ensure that feedback loops are in place to ensure that monitoring data is fed back into programmatic decision-making and that programming adjustments are evidence-based.	Country office	Agreed	In alignment with the WFP community engagement strategy for accountability to affected populations, the country office will develop an accountability to affected populations action plan and identify entry points for improved mainstreaming of accountability to affected populations and inclusion efforts into programmes. The country office will strengthen its community feedback mechanisms and response and information management, including by revising the standard operating	Country office accountability to affected populations focal point (country office monitoring and evaluation and hotline units)	December 2023

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			<p>procedures for hotlines, in compliance with the WFP community feedback mechanism guidance manual, providing technical customer service training for staff and addressing technical problems.</p> <p>The country office will develop an internal response mechanism through coordination between the monitoring and evaluation and programme units. The mechanism will identify possible response measures to address monitoring and evaluation findings, clarifying the necessary programme adjustments to be made, documenting successes and lessons learned and ensuring that follow-up plans are put in place.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 5: WFP must ensure that it has the capacity and ability to mainstream gender into WFP-supported interventions</p> <p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Deadline: 2023</p>					
5.1: WFP should assess the level of gender capacity required for the effective mainstreaming of gender into interventions in a way that supports gender-transformative results. WFP must ensure that it has at all levels the capacity to undertake robust gender analysis and design.	Country office (Gender Equality Office)	Agreed	<p>The country office will develop and implement a long-term capacity building plan for all country office staff, in coordination with the regional bureau and headquarters, as well as with UN-Women country office and national partners.</p> <p>The country office will extend capacity building to non-governmental organization implementing partners and local stakeholders.</p> <p>The country office will strengthen the capacity of its gender team</p>	The country office Gender Coordinator and country office gender results network team.	December 2025

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			The country office will review internal tools and procedures in order to strengthen capacity in hiring processes, monitoring, procurement, finance, partnerships and other areas.		
5.2: WFP should ensure that the design of the new country strategic plan is informed by a sound analysis of the gender-relevant aspects of the Egypt context and that programme designs include appropriate gender-related aims and objectives.	Country office (Gender Equality Office; regional bureau gender unit)	Agreed	<p>The country office will conduct a gender analysis at the national level to inform the design and implementation of the new CSP, following the corporate gender analysis guidance and toolkit and in coordination with field staff, local non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. Support will be provided by the regional bureau.</p> <p>The country office will ensure that the CSP outcomes and activities address gender inequality and promote women's empowerment and food and nutrition security through gender-targeted activities and mainstreaming.</p> <p>The country office will allocate adequate funding to gender activities, meeting – or exceeding – the corporate requirement that 10 percent of the CSP budget be dedicated to gender activities. In addition, the country office will develop gender budget tracking tools through collaboration among the regional bureau and the country office finance and budget and programming units.</p>	Country office Gender Coordinator and gender results network team	December 2023