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## Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Philippines (2018–2023)

### Executive summary

The evaluation of the country strategic plan for the Philippines for 2018–2023 examined the strategy, interventions and systems implemented by WFP under the plan. Taking a utilization-focused approach, the evaluation served the dual purpose of meeting accountability requirements and identifying learning that could inform the design of the next country strategic plan.

The country strategic plan envisioned a shift in the focus of WFP, from implementing interventions to enabling them by providing technical assistance and strengthening government capacities in emergency preparedness and response and food security and nutrition. The first half of the plan's implementation period, from 2018 to 2020, was characterized by resource constraints, vacant management positions, limited strategic dialogue with partners, high staff turnover, and disruption related to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, leading to limited results in WFP's country capacity strengthening work, except for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. From 2021 onwards the financial and human resource situation improved, which led to a re-expansion of the scope of the country strategic plan, the re-establishment of strategic relationships with the Government and other partners, and important outcomes in WFP's humanitarian response, country capacity strengthening in emergency preparedness and response and engagement in peacebuilding.

The evaluation found that the plan was coherent with national policies and the United Nations system, but internal programme coherence suffered from a "siloed" approach to implementation

*In line with WFP evaluation policy (2022) (WFP/EB.1/2022/4-C), to respect the integrity and independence of evaluation findings the editing of this report has been limited and as a result some of the language in it may not be fully consistent with the World Food Programme's standard terminology or editorial practices. Please direct any requests for clarification to the Director of Evaluation.*

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because of the limited links between strategic outcomes. This occurred in particular under country capacity strengthening activities in the areas of nutrition and social protection, where opportunities for the mainstreaming of nutrition were not explored and social protection interventions were dispersed across three strategic outcomes without a coherent strategy, resulting in limited effectiveness.

Internal coherence was stronger in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, where the approach to food and nutrition security was multisectoral and contributed to country capacity strengthening outcomes at the local government level through strengthened policies, frameworks, plans and capacities. WFP's work in that region has contributed to increased coordination and collaboration among government ministries and to peacebuilding, although those contributions are not well captured in WFP's reporting, and the use of food security and nutrition as an entry point for its work in the Philippines has limited WFP's recognition as a strategic partner in the areas of social protection and peacebuilding.

The evaluation concluded that WFP is strategically positioned at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, particularly through its emergency preparedness and response capacity. However, the implementation of emergency response and preparedness under two separate strategic outcomes, and the lack of synergies between those outcomes, slowed the initial response to Typhoon Rai in December 2021, although the swift provision of logistics support and assessments complemented the Government's own response capacity.

The evaluation makes six recommendations for WFP: use the corporate country capacity strengthening and corporate results frameworks to develop a country-specific strategy, approach, road map and monitoring framework for country capacity strengthening; ensure a coherent strategy for social protection and continue to expand WFP's strategic positioning in that area, including in nutrition-sensitive social protection; maintain the country office's internal capacity to scale up operations in the event of an emergency response; explore the expansion of WFP's subnational engagement in country capacity strengthening, particularly in emergency preparedness and response; refine and diversify the financial and human resources available for implementing WFP's saving lives and changing lives agenda; and invest further in knowledge management so as to contribute to programme-related decision-making and strengthen institutional memory.

## **Draft decision\***

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Philippines (2018–2023) (WFP/EB.1/2024/5-A/3) and management response (WFP/EB.1/2024/5-A/3/Add.1) and encourages further action on the recommendations set out in the report, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

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\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

## Introduction

### Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) was timed to provide evidence and lessons to inform the development of the next WFP CSP for the Philippines. It covered the CSP design phase in 2017 and all the activities implemented under the CSP from January 2018<sup>1</sup> to October 2022. Its main users are the WFP Philippines country office and internal and external stakeholders, including the Government of the Philippines and beneficiaries.
2. A mixed-methods approach was used for the evaluation, combining document review, quantitative data analysis, key informant interviews, project site visits that included interviews with stakeholders, observations and focus group discussions with beneficiaries. Data was collected between September and October 2022. Gender analysis was fully integrated into the evaluation's methodological approach, with data disaggregated where relevant. Ethical standards were applied to protect the dignity and confidentiality of the people involved in the evaluation.

### Context

3. The Philippines is divided into three main groups of islands – Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao – and organized into 17 administrative regions and one autonomous region – the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). In 2021, the population was 111 million people, with equal numbers of men and women.
4. The Philippines is a middle-income country with an estimated gross national income per capita of USD 3,555 in 2020. The employment rate reached 95 percent at the end of 2022.<sup>2</sup> Socioeconomic indicators have been improving, with the Gini Index declining from 44.6 in 2015 to 42.3 in 2018 and the national poverty rate dropping from 22.3 percent to 16.3 percent over the same period.
5. In terms of food security, the 2022 Global Hunger Index classified the Philippines as having a “moderate” level of hunger, ranking it 69th of 121 countries. BARMM reports the highest rates of malnutrition in the country,<sup>3</sup> with stunting affecting 45.2 percent of children under 5 years of age and wasting affecting 8.2 percent, according to the latest available data. Those figures are much higher than the national levels of 27 percent for stunting and 5.5 percent for wasting.<sup>4</sup>
6. The Philippines is particularly sensitive to natural disasters, ranking as the country most at risk of natural hazards and climate change in the world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The country office operated under an interim CSP from January 2018 until the finalization of the CSP in June 2018. This report refers to “the CSP” even when the data presented includes that from the period between January and June 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority. 2023. [Unemployment rate](#) (Release date 6 January 2023).

<sup>3</sup> WFP. 2022. [The Philippines Food Security Monitoring: Remote Household Food Security Survey Brief](#).

<sup>4</sup> Food and Nutrition Research Institute. 2022. [Expanded National Nutrition Survey 2021](#).

<sup>5</sup> Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft. 2022. [WorldRiskReport 2022 – Focus: Digitalization](#).

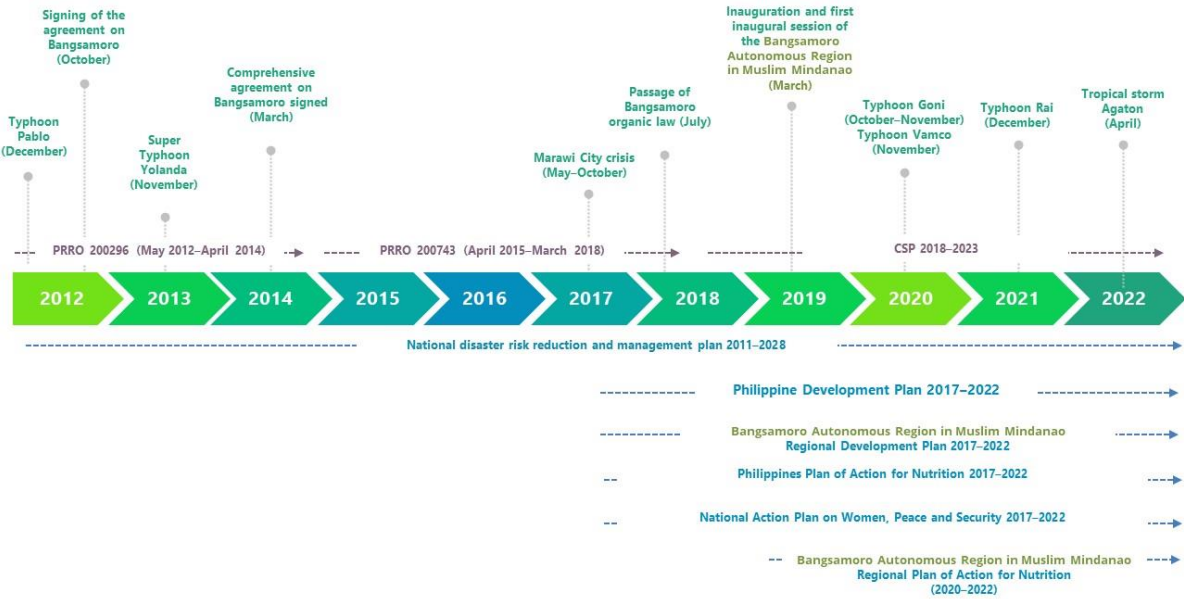
TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Total population (million) (1)	113.8	2021
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing, value-added (% of gross domestic product) (1)	10	2021
	Human Development Index (rank) (2)	116 of 191	2021/2022
	Population in severe multidimensional poverty (% of total population) (2)	1.3	2020
	Global Hunger Index (score and rank) (3)	14.8 69 of 121	2022
	Prevalence of moderate and severe stunting (% of children under 5) (4)	27	2021
	Gender Gap Index (5)	19 of 146	2022
	Literacy rate (% of people age 15 and above) (6)	98.4	2019

Sources: (1) World Bank. 2022. [Population, total – Philippines](#); (2) United Nations Development Programme. [Human Development Data](#); (3) [Global Hunger Index – Philippines](#); (4) [Philippine Statistics Authority](#); (5) World Economic Forum. 2022. [Global Gender Gap Report 2022](#); and (6) [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Institute for Statistics](#).

### Country strategic plan

7. The CSP was approved by the Executive Board in May 2018 for a period of six years. It envisioned a shift in WFP's role, from the implementation of interventions to the enabling of those interventions through the provision of technical assistance and the strengthening of government capacities in emergency preparedness and response and in food security and nutrition.
8. The CSP was informed by the 2017 strategic review of food and nutrition security and emphasized collaboration with the Government under the four strategic outcomes visualized in figure 2. Figure 1 illustrates the major events affecting the country, the United Nations development assistance framework and WFP's long engagement in the Philippines.

Figure 1: Country context and WFP operational overview, 2012–2022

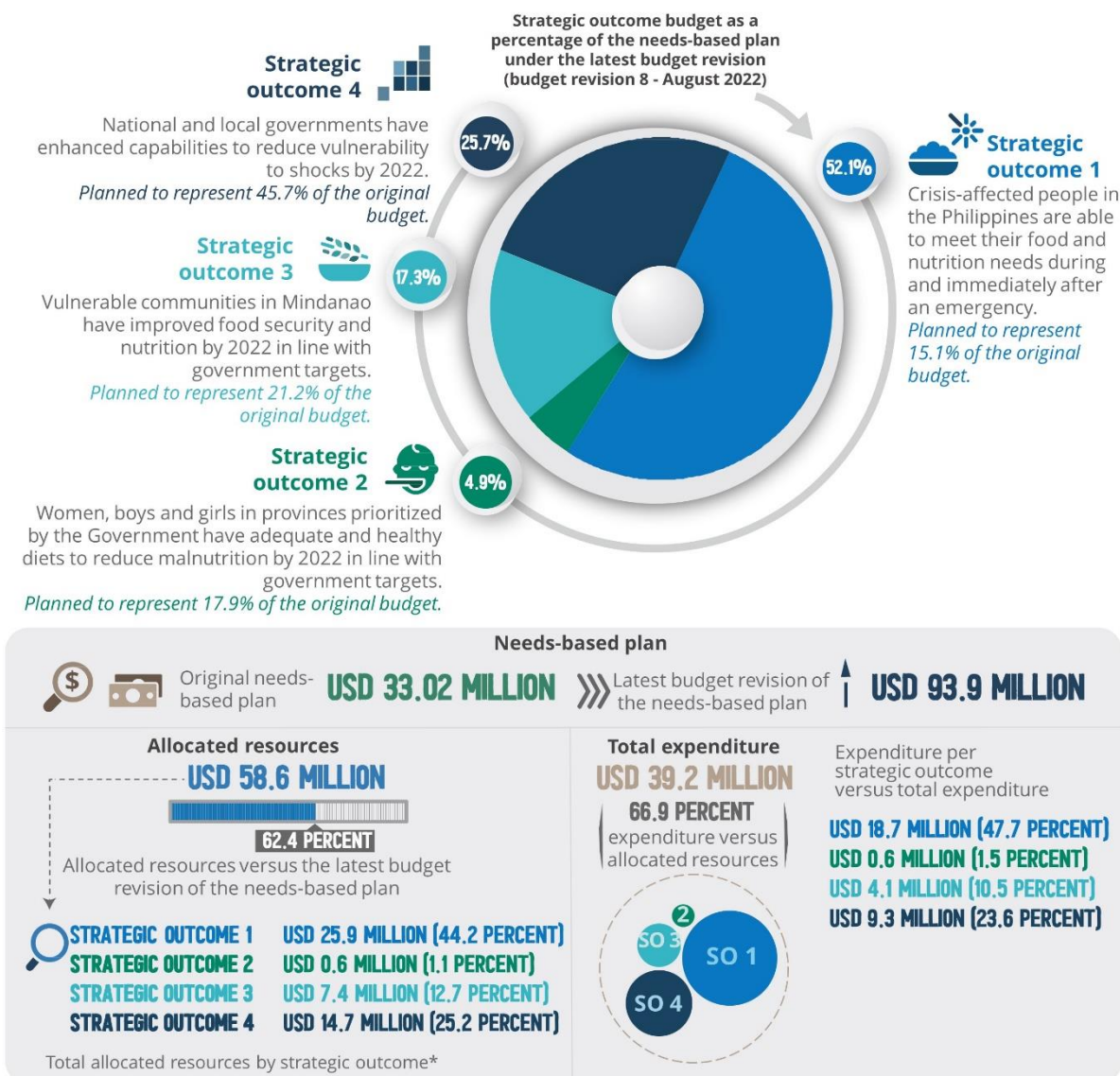


Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team with support from the Office of Evaluation.

Abbreviation: PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation.

- Through the CSP, WFP intended to provide technical advice, evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy aimed at enhancing country capacity at the national and regional levels. However, challenges arising from the protracted humanitarian crisis in Lanao del Sur, natural disasters such as Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018 and Typhoon Rai in December 2021, and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic led to an increase in the budget for crisis response. This brought the CSP needs-based plan from its original total of USD 33 million in 2018 to a total of USD 94 million at the end of 2022. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of that funding across the CSP.

**Figure 2: Philippines country strategic plan (2018–2023) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures**



\* Percentages of allocated resources and expenditures by strategic outcome were calculated at the grand total level and therefore do not add up to 100 because they also include funding or expenses for costs not related to strategic outcomes and for direct support and indirect support costs.

Source: Philippines annual country reports 2018–2022; Philippines country portfolio budget. Data as of December 2022, before data from the ninth budget revision was available.

- Under the CSP, WFP planned to use a combination of transfer modalities – cash, food and capacity strengthening. During implementation, the country office shifted away from in-kind food transfers towards the use of cash transfers, and by 2020 all food transfers had been halted. However, food transfers resumed in 2022 as part of the emergency response to Typhoon Rai.

## Evaluation findings

**To what extent are WFP's strategic position, role and specific contributions based on country priorities, people's needs and WFP's strengths?**

### ***Relevance to needs and alignment with national priorities***

11. The CSP was evidence-based and designed to address the gaps in food security and nutrition policy and implementation that had been identified in various assessments, particularly the 2017 strategic review of food and nutrition security<sup>6</sup> conducted in consultation with the Government, the United Nations, civil society and the private sector. The CSP design was predicated on the national agendas and strategies in place in 2017, including the Philippine Development Plan for 2017–2022.<sup>7</sup> The plan supported work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and had a strong focus on SDGs 1, 2 and 17, which positioned WFP as a strategic partner of the Government. The CSP's focus on peacebuilding in BARMM reflected a crucial government priority.

### ***Coherence with partners***

12. The CSP was aligned with the United Nations partnership framework for sustainable development (and the subsequent socioeconomic partnership framework), which is in turn aligned with the Philippine Development Plan. The focus on Mindanao is coherent with the shift in the focus of the United Nations country team towards peacebuilding following the establishment of BARMM in 2018. WFP's partnerships are based on its comparative advantages, for example its subnational presence, particularly in BARMM; its proven capacities in logistics, assessments and technical assistance in emergency response; its expertise in supply chain and food security policy analysis; and its convening and coordination power.

### ***Programme logic and internal coherence***

13. Although no theory of change was developed when the CSP was designed, a coherent programme logic is clearly visible within the plan. The country office was not always able to create synergy among strategic outcomes, however, which reduced internal coherence and, in some cases, potentially impeded effectiveness. For example, WFP's engagement in social protection was spread over three strategic outcomes and lacked a coherent implementation strategy. Emergency response, preparedness and supply chain activities were also spread over several strategic outcomes with separate implementation plans – a choice that hampered the scale-up of the response to Typhoon Rai in December 2021. In addition, the formulation of work related to nutrition under strategic outcome 2 reflected WFP's commitment to that issue but inhibited the degree to which nutrition sensitivity could be integrated into other strategic outcomes as a cross-cutting theme.

### ***Strategic positioning and adaptability to context***

14. WFP's strategic positioning-responded to changes in circumstances and national needs, such as those that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and following climate-related shocks. WFP's strategic contributions to country capacity strengthening (CCS) were somewhat affected by the absence of an overarching strategic framework and the lack of application of corporate frameworks and tools for CCS. Although social protection became a corporate priority during the course of the CSP, the lack of emphasis on social protection in the CSP design limited WFP's leverage at the national level. Currently, there is increasing opportunity for WFP to become more engaged in CCS, and stakeholders identified clear potential entry

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<sup>6</sup> Brain Trust Inc. 2017. *Strategic review on food security and nutrition in the Philippines*.

<sup>7</sup> The CSP is aligned with the Philippines Plan of Action for Nutrition for 2017–2022 and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan for 2011–2028.

points for WFP to support two of the four pillars in the social protection programme of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

15. The decentralized governance structure in the Philippines, combined with WFP's experience of working at the subnational level, put WFP in a strong position to focus on subnational capacity strengthening. Two approaches were followed: region-specific multisectoral interventions that apply a similar approach to that implemented in BARMM; and the strengthening of local capacities through national systems, which was more common under the previous protracted relief and recovery operations but is also used in the anticipatory action pilot project under strategic outcome 4. Both approaches are highly valued by stakeholders, who expressed interest in WFP expanding its subnational engagement.

### **What are the extent and quality of WFP's contributions to country strategic plan strategic outcomes in the Philippines?**

16. Food distributions and cash transfers under strategic outcome 1 contributed to food security outcomes, as evidenced by improved food consumption scores in WFP-assisted areas<sup>8</sup> compared with national scores,<sup>9</sup> and confirmed by post-distribution monitoring results, which highlight a significant 8 percent increase in the number of people with acceptable food consumption scores in 2020 and similar positive results in 2021 and 2022. In addition, WFP strengthened the Government's emergency response capacity by introducing data collection methodologies and mapping.
17. The implementation of ambitious plans to support government policy and programming to improve health and nutrition by enhancing diets under strategic outcome 2 was curtailed in scope by funding shortfalls, except in BARMM, where important results were achieved at the institutional level.
18. The multisectoral interventions implemented in BARMM under strategic outcome 3 contributed to peacebuilding and to capacity strengthening for the local government in the areas of policymaking, institutional effectiveness and programme design and delivery. For instance, WFP supported the formulation of a food security and nutrition road map and a regional plan of action for nutrition and co-developed guidelines on the school-based feeding programme for BARMM, with the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education. WFP also supported the piloting of a home-grown school feeding programme adopted in four municipalities in BARMM and the purchase of food from local farmers.
19. Through the convergence framework,<sup>10</sup> which was a result of WFP's efforts to convene the main food and nutrition security actors, WFP successfully contributed to increased coordination and collaboration among government ministries and to peacebuilding and social cohesion. However, as WFP's reporting formats do not include peacebuilding outcomes or indicators, those results are not fully reflected in WFP reporting.
20. WFP also supported the Government's emergency response by providing logistics and supply chain management services under strategic outcome 4 and strengthened communications in emergency preparedness and response systems and information management. However, the scale of those results was limited by funding shortfalls, and the CSP architecture – which separated emergency preparedness from emergency response – presented challenges for WFP when a direct response was needed.

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<sup>8</sup> WFP. [Annual country reports 2018–2022](#).

<sup>9</sup> WFP. 2022. [HungerMap LIVE](#).

<sup>10</sup> The framework is a set of agreements that guide inter-agency coordination in the Government.



**Contributions to cross-cutting aims**

**Gender**

21. Gender-responsiveness in WFP programming in the Philippines complies with corporate requirements and has improved during CSP implementation since 2018. The country office is generally reaching its targets as measured through corporate indicators, such as those for women’s participation in project committees and household decision-making, and women’s receipt of food or cash transfers. Gender and age marker scores have improved over time. However, in BARMM, fewer women participated in committees during the pandemic, when they were forced to take on the home-schooling of their children, which reduced the time available to them.

TABLE 2: REPORTED GENDER AND AGE MARKER SCORES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND YEAR, 2018–2022					
Strategic outcome	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
1: Humanitarian response	n.a.	1	1	4	3
2: Nutrition	n.a.	1	4	4	3
3: BARMM	n.a.	1	4	4	0
4: Emergency preparedness and response	n.a.	0	0	4	0

\* The calculation of the gender and age marker score was changed in 2022 to include implementation as well as design.

Sources: WFP. [Annual country reports 2018–2022](#).

**Protection, accountability to affected populations and environmental concerns**

22. WFP has been compliant with protection guidelines apart from during the response to Typhoon Rai, when it had insufficient in-house capacity; however, there was no evidence of negative consequences. During CSP implementation, WFP improved and revitalized community feedback mechanisms, which enhanced accountability to affected populations during the Typhoon Rai response. Environmental considerations were prominently integrated into strategic outcomes 3 and 4, but there was limited integration of environmental risk assessments into strategic outcome 1 activities.

**Humanitarian–development–peace nexus**

23. WFP’s historic engagement in facilitating strategic linkages among the three elements of the triple (humanitarian–development–peace) nexus has continued during CSP implementation. WFP has contributed positively at the nexus, including in peacebuilding, under the umbrella of its work in food security and nutrition in BARMM. WFP’s corporate terminology sometimes led to misconceptions on the part of external stakeholders, including donors, regarding the relevance of WFP’s actions to development or peacebuilding priorities, and their potential contribution to peacebuilding objectives. In addition, the lack of corporate indicators for peacebuilding and social cohesion results minimizes the potential visibility of WFP’s contributions in sectors other than food security and nutrition. To change this perception, WFP had explicitly adopted a humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach in BARMM by the end of 2021 and rolled out associated tools, such as conflict-sensitivity assessments. Despite the limited corporate indicators for measuring WFP’s contributions to peacebuilding, qualitative data suggest that positive contributions are being made in BARMM.

### ***Prospects for the sustainability of country strategic plan achievements***

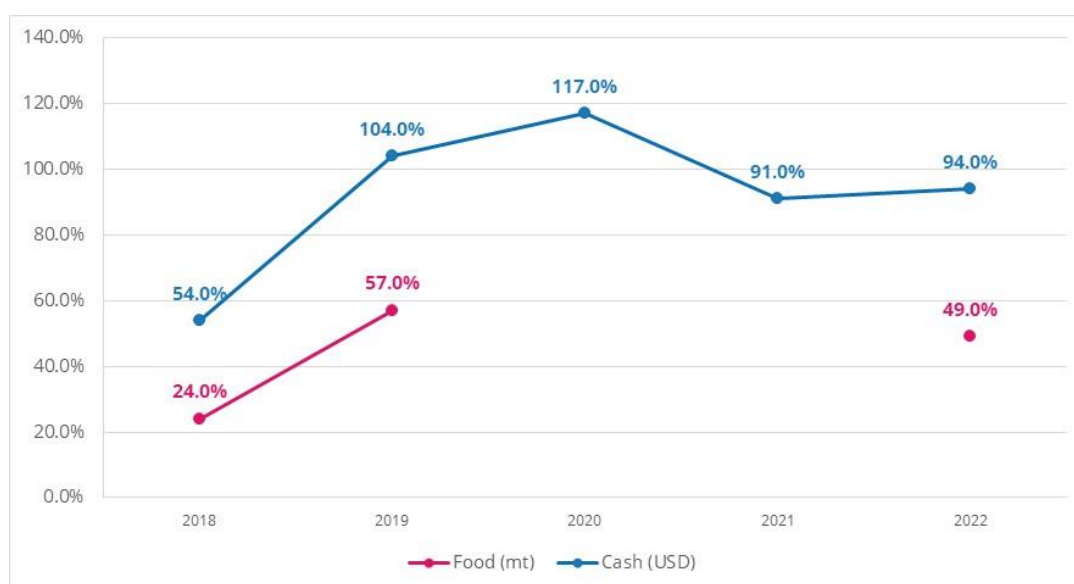
24. The prospects for the sustainability of achievements varied among strategic outcomes. Primary concerns were a lack of resources and technical capacity at the subnational level. Although strategic outcome 1 included the direct provision of humanitarian assistance, the response to Typhoon Rai was instead complementary to national efforts and therefore strengthened the sustainability of the Government's own response capacity. Under strategic outcome 2, the shift from nutrition-specific direct assistance to nutrition-sensitive approaches helped to improve the potential sustainability of investments. The sustainability of outcomes achieved under strategic outcome 3 in BARMM is supported through the convergence model. Under strategic outcome 4, emergency preparedness and response outcomes appear more likely to be sustained than those in disaster risk reduction management owing to their higher resourcing levels and the extent of their integration into existing government structures.

### **To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?**

#### ***Timeliness and responsiveness***

25. The timeliness of interventions (expressed in terms of annual achievement rates against the implementation plan, as shown in figure 3) varied over the CSP period, but cash transfers were generally more timely than in-kind food distributions and capacity strengthening was the timeliest transfer modality because it is not affected by supply chain challenges. Some inefficiencies arose in the scale-up of the response to Typhoon Rai in December 2021, when it took almost four months to start distributions owing to a lack of experienced staff and tested systems and difficulty in matching in-kind food distributions with government cash programmes. However, WFP's provision of trucks, needs assessment capacity and other data support was timely, thereby strengthening the Government's response.

**Figure 3: Implementation plan and achievement rates for food and cash transfers, 2018–2022**

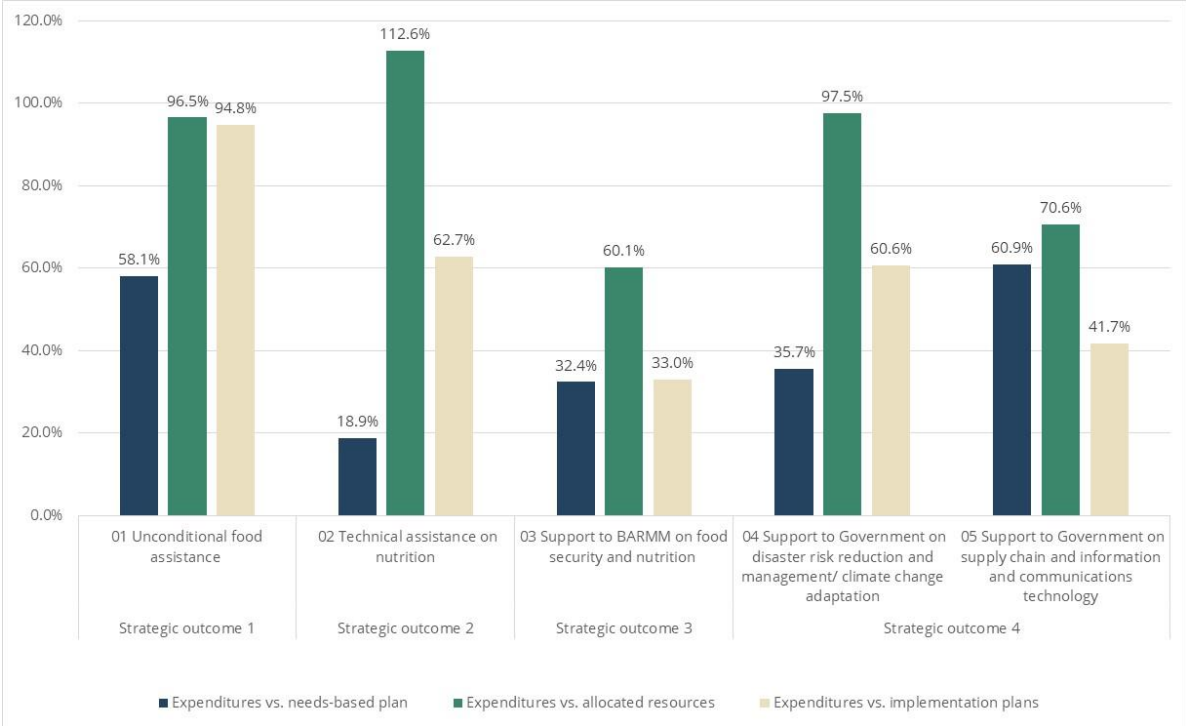


Source: Country portfolio budget plans vs. actuals report. Data extracted for December 2022.

**Cumulative expenditure rates**

26. Cumulative and annual expenditure rates indicate structural barriers rather than operational inefficiencies because expenditure is high against allocated resources (see figure 4). The low expenditure rates against the needs-based plan suggest that the timing and availability of resources were the most important factors in the implementation rate, particularly under strategic outcome 2.

**Figure 4: Cumulative expenditure rates against the needs-based and implementation plans and the allocated resources, by strategic outcome and transfer modality, 2018–2022\***



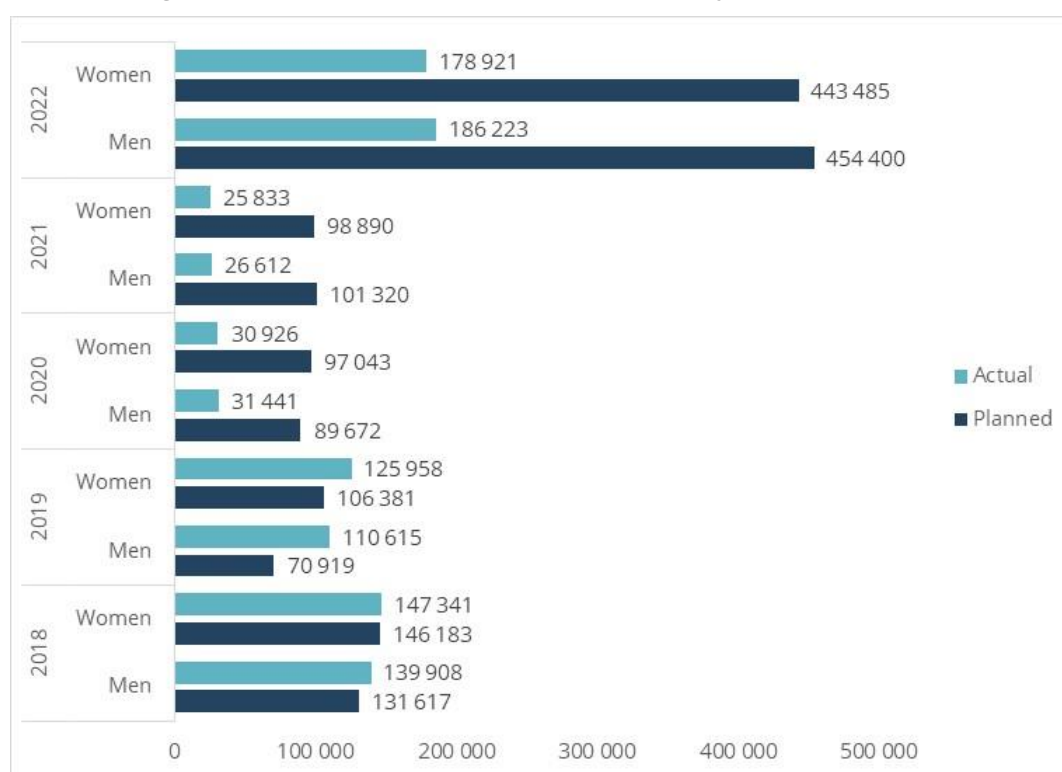
\* Comparison of expenditure rates against implementation plans provides another proxy measure of timeliness reflecting the effectiveness and ability of the country office in translating resourcing and plans into implementation. Direct and indirect support costs are not included in this figure.

Source: Country portfolio budget plan vs. actuals report. Data extracted for December 2022.

**Coverage and complementarity**

27. The Government undertakes its own emergency responses and WFP’s support is mainly complementary, taking the form of technical assistance for mapping, assessments and beneficiary registration, apart from during large-scale emergencies such as Typhoon Rai in 2022. During CSP implementation, WFP also assisted by validating the Government’s beneficiary lists and highlighting exclusion and inclusion errors.

28. WFP came closer to achieving its target numbers of beneficiaries in the early years of CSP implementation. Underachievement in 2022 arose largely from funding challenges, with earmarked in-kind food contributions unable to be used to complement the largely cash-based government response, and the earmarking of contributions for immediate response preventing their use for CCS.

**Figure 5: Planned and actual beneficiaries by sex, 2018–2022**

Sources: WFP. [Annual country reports 2018–2022](#).

### Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness

29. The CSP was implemented within the expected cost parameters, and the country office does not appear to have internal operational inefficiencies, according to analysis of planned versus actual direct support costs (see table 2). The underachievement in terms of output indicators was therefore influenced by factors other than inefficiency, including gaps in financial and human resources. Increases in food transfer costs due to transport and logistics requirements had largely ceased by 2020, when WFP stopped all in-kind food distributions. In-kind distributions were reintroduced during the Typhoon Rai response, partly as a result of specific donor requirements but also owing to concerns about disrupted markets and high inflation rates.

TABLE 3: DIRECT SUPPORT COST EXPENDITURES AS PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL DIRECT COSTS, 2018–2022					
Cost category	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Direct support costs (USD)	555 804	1 175 304	528 337	791 526	1 995 752
Total direct costs (USD)	5 481 457	9 842 842	4 308 575	4 505 748	22 168 500
<b>Direct support costs as a percentage of total direct costs</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>9.0</b>

Sources: WFP. [Annual country reports 2018–2022](#).

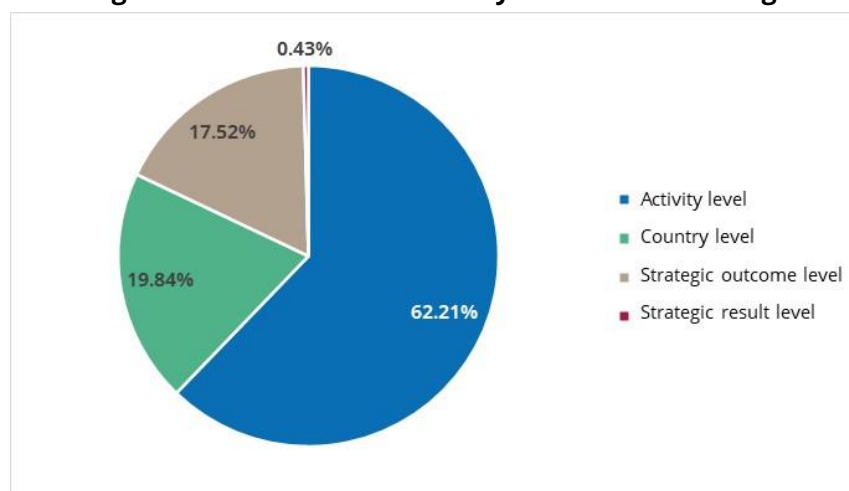
30. One factor delaying food distributions was the need to merge many donor requirements into a single, coherent response. Cash transfers would have been more in line with the national emergency response; they would also have been timelier and had greater potential for cost-efficiency and effectiveness. WFP made efforts to adopt cost-effective measures within its operating parameters by, for example, changing from a food provider with a global long-term agreement to a cheaper, national provider and sourcing less costly storage options.

**What are the factors that explain WFP's performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected under the country strategic plan?**

**Funding**

31. The CSP was under-resourced from 2018 to 2021, but the 2021–2022 period saw a more positive funding situation. Nonetheless, high levels of contribution earmarking, excessive reliance on small donations, short project cycles and the large number of donors involved presented challenges for coherence and the achievement of synergies between interventions. The intention underlying the CSP architecture was to provide opportunities for flexible, multi-year funding commitments that would increase WFP's capacity to adapt its operations to emerging opportunities and align its programming with government priorities, but this did not occur in the Philippines, where more than 62 percent of funding was earmarked at the activity level and only 20 percent at the country level, restricting flexibility. The distribution of resources affected CSP performance, with strategic outcomes 2 and 4 receiving very limited funding, forcing changes in their scope from the original CSP design.

**Figure 6: Allocated resources by level of earmarking**



Source: WFP. Country strategic plan, Philippines Resource Situation Report (2018–2022), FACTory. (Extracted December 2022.)

**Monitoring**

32. The monitoring of output and outcome indicators complies with the requirements of the corporate results framework, and there are examples of country office monitoring data informing management decisions, although usually for individual interventions. The gaps in CCS outcome indicators limit the opportunities to identify long-term, high-level CCS results. There is evidence of the country office's development of improved monitoring that demonstrates progress towards outcomes, but knowledge management limitations present challenges for the maintenance of institutional memory and strategic coherence.

### **Partnerships**

33. For CCS results, the quality and continuity of relationships were important factors supporting positive outcomes. WFP facilitated good coordination within the United Nations country team. Under the CSP, WFP and the national government have had generally weak strategic relationships owing to vacant management positions in the country office; however, their technical partnerships have been stronger. At the operational level, the country office has had effective partnerships with counterparts in humanitarian response, especially in logistics and supply chain operations. At the subnational level, there are strong strategic, technical and operational partnerships in BARMM, which could serve as models for replication in other regions. The quality of partnerships in other regions is currently weaker owing to the sporadic nature of WFP's subnational engagement. Private sector partnerships are a priority and have high potential value for CSP implementation, but there are challenges to coherent and strategic coordination.

### **Human resources**

34. The period from 2018 to 2020 was characterized by limited staff numbers, high staff turnover, fixed-term contracts and significant staffing gaps. During the period 2021–2022, staff numbers and contract opportunities increased and gaps in staffing were filled. This has improved the country office's human resources capacity to implement the CSP.

### **Factors affecting performance**

35. As mentioned, the primary factors affecting WFP's performance included the CSP architecture, the limited financial and human resources until 2021, the impact of the pandemic on activity implementation and government priorities, and the lack of alignment between CCS activities and existing corporate frameworks and tools. The decentralized government structure presented both limitations and opportunities for WFP engagement; for example, the "cascading" of national policies, processes and capacity to the subnational level took time but also presented opportunities for WFP to provide support.

### **Conclusions**

36. The evaluation concluded that the CSP is well aligned with government priorities and WFP is well positioned in all dimensions of the triple nexus, particularly in humanitarian assistance, emergency preparedness and response and peacebuilding. The results from CCS reflect the two phases of CSP implementation. An initial period, characterized by vacant senior management positions, resource constraints, high staff turnover and pandemic disruption, saw limited results, particularly for CCS, but from 2021, the CSP moved into a period of improved resourcing and staffing which led to a re-expansion of its scope, the re-establishment of strategic relationships with the Government and improved results. Cost-efficiency was generally high throughout the period under review.
37. WFP has contributed significantly to outcomes in humanitarian response and emergency preparedness and response under strategic outcomes 1 and 4, and in peacebuilding engagement under strategic outcome 3. The intended improvement of diets and reduction of malnutrition under strategic outcome 2 were hampered by severe funding shortfalls, apart from in BARMM, where significant results were achieved. However, gaps in WFP's outcome indicators for CCS and peacebuilding limited the learning from, and visibility of, WFP's contributions to strategic outcomes in those areas. In addition, the use of food security and nutrition as an entry point for its engagement in the Philippines limited WFP's inclusion in conversations on peacebuilding and social protection with external stakeholders. The CSP did not attract as much flexible funding as envisioned at the corporate level, and donors' continued perception of WFP as primarily an emergency response agency in the Philippines impeded their provision of funding for a CCS-focused CSP.

38. The CSP appropriately anticipated a crisis response option under strategic outcome 1. However, although small-scale interventions based on the direct distribution of assistance occurred throughout the CSP period, there were challenges to the scale-up of operations during the large-scale Typhoon Rai emergency response. This was partly owing to the fact that the country office's response plan had not been annually updated and staff lacked the requisite humanitarian response experience to manage the large-scale response.
39. Under-resourcing, particularly during the first three years of CSP implementation, had effects on both project performance and staffing profiles, which delayed the achievement of CSP results. This created challenges for the building of strategic partnerships and resulted in a reliance on many, disconnected small-scale grants, with a disproportionate degree of earmarking at the activity level, which limited flexibility. Partnerships with humanitarian donors were strong, but those with peacebuilding or social protection donors, including foundations and the private sector, were limited. Short project cycles hampered the continuity of relationships with targeted stakeholders, and the high staff turnover contributed to weak institutional memory, exacerbated by limited knowledge management. Resourcing has improved markedly since 2021, allowing the country office to adjust staffing positions and strengthen partnerships and performance at the strategic and technical levels.
40. Gender considerations were integrated into the CSP design and implementation and included ensuring the adequate representation and participation of women in assistance programmes. The country office has steadily improved its gender and age marker scores during the CSP period. Environmental risk assessments are part of project implementation under strategic outcomes 3 and 4, but less so under strategic outcome 1. Although the country office is compliant with corporate standards on protection, capacity in that area is insufficient during emergencies.
41. Contributions to social protection were made under the CSP but were dispersed among strategic outcomes and lacked a systematic conceptual framework for strategically positioning WFP in social protection, including shock-responsive social protection. Stakeholders perceive WFP as having a valid role in social protection and identified potential entry points for that role in the national social protection framework. They also perceive WFP's comparative advantages in data, analysis and mapping as potential entry points for refining the Government's targeting and coverage criteria.
42. Through its experience and comparative advantages, WFP is well positioned to expand its subnational presence. WFP is recognized as a major actor in emergency preparedness and response and humanitarian assistance and has a strong field presence and reputation for practical, proactive and flexible responsiveness. The two models applied for CCS provide opportunities for long-term engagement and continuity with a set of subnational actors in BARMM and for the widespread diffusion of work on specific sectoral themes or technical expertise through collaboration with relevant local actors.

## **Recommendations**

43. Since 2021, the country office has had four major review and evaluation exercises: a Typhoon Rai after-action review, a CSP mid-term review, a decentralized evaluation of capacity strengthening, and a social protection scoping study. The results of those reviews have informed this evaluation, and the following recommendations – three operational and three strategic – affirm and build on their recommendations. The following recommendations are directed mainly to the country office, but also call for contributions from headquarters divisions and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

## Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	<p><b>Systematic use of the country capacity strengthening framework:</b></p> <p><b>When developing the next country strategic plan, WFP should strengthen the utilization of the corporate country capacity strengthening and corporate results frameworks to develop a country-specific country capacity strengthening strategy, approach, road map and monitoring framework to guide country office interventions. (This recommendation reaffirms the recommendations from the decentralized evaluation on capacity strengthening.)</b></p>	Strategic				
1.1	Based on the theory of change developed for the next country strategic plan, map the country capacity strengthening-related needs of different stakeholders to identify approaches for its engagement in country capacity strengthening at the national and subnational levels.			Regional bureau CCS adviser and research, assessment and monitoring unit	High	December 2023
1.2	In consultation with government partners, develop a strategy to guide the implementation of and learning from country capacity strengthening. Relevant national government partners could include the National Economic and Development Authority. Alternatively, in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, form an intergovernmental steering committee that is based on a partnership model, builds on the 2019 capacity needs mapping exercise and can guide the country office's country capacity strengthening activities at the national and subnational levels.		Country office	Regional bureau CCS adviser	High	January 2024



#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2	<p><b>Social protection strategic positioning:</b>  <b>WFP should ensure that the new country strategic plan includes a coherent strategy for social protection, while continuing to expand its social protection strategic positioning, including in nutrition-sensitive social protection. WFP's strategic position should be not only in shock-responsive social protection but also within the larger social protection sphere, and its strategy should include the identification of appropriate pillars and technical approaches for providing support within the Government's social protection strategy and programming framework. In particular, WFP should identify its potential role in supporting subnational government social protection systems. (This recommendation reaffirms the recommendations from the social protection scoping study.)</b></p>	Strategic				
2.1	<p>Articulate WFP's social protection positioning, with the Government and within the United Nations country team, in relation to national social protection systems, possibly through a disaster risk reduction and mitigation perspective that fosters people's ability to meet their food security, nutrition and other essential needs, including in response to shocks and other stressors.</p>		Country office	Regional bureau	High	December 2023
2.2	<p>Identify areas in the national social protection framework and system where the next country strategic plan can contribute to the strengthening and development of a country strategic plan-level social protection strategy and monitoring framework, including for nutrition-sensitive social protection. This work should include the articulation of avenues for providing technical support, such as information management systems, monitoring and evaluation systems or contributions to policies and guidelines.</p>			Regional bureau; headquarters Social Protection Unit	Medium	June 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2.3	With a view to contributing to social protection, build a larger overarching programming approach to resilience that can serve as a conceptual framework for broadening WFP's engagement in resilience building, geographically and thematically.			Regional bureau; headquarters Social Protection Unit	Medium	June 2024
<b>3</b>	<b>Internal capacity for humanitarian response: In the next country strategic plan, WFP should build on lessons learned from the Typhoon Rai response so as to sustain the country office's internal capacity to scale up and mobilize an emergency response. (This recommendation reaffirms the recommendations from the Typhoon Rai after-action review.)</b>	Operational				
3.1	Retain and strengthen in-house emergency preparedness and response capacity and prioritize capacity strengthening activities, including by articulating roles and responsibilities in a direct response.		Country office	Regional bureau; headquarters Human Resources Division (HRM) and Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch	High	January 2024
3.2	Develop rosters of external entities and pre-formulated comprehensive field-level agreements with cooperating partners.			Regional bureau; headquarters HRM and Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch	High	January 2024
3.3	Develop a response strategy or plan and review its implementation annually.			Regional bureau; headquarters HRM and Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch	High	June 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.4	Advocate with potential donors for flexible unearmarked funding that will allow WFP to implement efficient emergency and early recovery responses based on evolving needs, including by providing flexibility regarding the transfer modalities used and the geographic areas covered.			Regional bureau; headquarters HRM and Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch	High	December 2023
<b>4</b>	<b>Subnational engagement in country capacity strengthening:</b> <b>Consistent with the Government's decentralization efforts, and drawing on the best practices from available studies such as the mid-term review of the country strategic plan, the decentralized capacity strengthening evaluation and the social protection scoping study, under the next country strategic plan, WFP should seek to expand its engagement in country capacity strengthening at the subnational level.</b>	Strategic				
4.1	Identify two or three localities in which to consider replicating the multisectoral model developed for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The sites could be identified from a combination of relevant vulnerability data (from vulnerability analysis and mapping on climate change and food security, and the Government's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program modelling) or a capacity needs mapping exercise carried out in collaboration with the Government.			Regional bureau and headquarters Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division (RAM) and Country Capacity Strengthening Unit (PROTC)	High	June 2024
4.2	For subnational country capacity strengthening in emergency preparedness and response under the next country strategic plan, initiate partnerships with relevant national government agencies that can provide country capacity strengthening at the local level. Such agencies may include, but are not limited to, local governance units, mayors' associations and associated government ministries and structures.			Regional bureau and headquarters RAM and PROTC	High	January 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5	<p><b>Resource management:</b></p> <p><b>Under the next country strategic plan, WFP should continue to refine and diversify its financial and human resources capacities, building on the recently completed workforce review and implementing the recommendations from the country strategic plan mid-term review, decentralized capacity strengthening evaluation and social protection scoping study regarding the need to continue to expand staff capacities and develop an organizational culture consistent with WFP's agenda of saving lives and changing lives, while expanding the partnership and resourcing base.</b></p>	Operational				
	<b>Section 1: Resource diversification</b>					
5.1	Develop a strategy for diversifying the current donor base, with a particular focus on private sector bodies and international financial institutions, such as those in the social protection sphere, and prioritizing flexible, multi-year funding.		Country office	Regional bureau; headquarters Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division and Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division	Medium	December 2023
5.2	Develop a clear strategy for supporting advocacy and communication regarding WFP's technical expertise in the three dimensions of the triple nexus – development, crisis response and peacebuilding. Apply specific examples from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao to support the strategy.			Regional bureau; headquarters Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division, Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division and Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Service	Medium	February 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
	<b>Section 2: Workforce management</b>					
5.3	Conduct a corporate workforce planning exercise aligned with the needs of the next country strategic plan, including those regarding in-house expertise in social protection, resilience building, and support for cross-cutting themes such as protection.			Regional bureau; headquarters HRM	High	December 2023
5.4	Ensure that there are adequate human resources and skills available within the country office workforce for a timely scale-up in the event of a large-scale humanitarian response.			Regional bureau; headquarters HRM	High	December 2023
<b>6</b>	<b>Evidence base and knowledge management: Under the next country strategic plan, WFP should invest further in knowledge management for informing programme decision-making and should strengthen the conceptual linkages between strategic outcomes, track long-term progress under the country strategic plan against country capacity strengthening indicators and strengthen institutional memory.</b>	Operational	Country office			
6.1	Carry out an exercise to identify common indicators across the strategic outcomes in order to increase the internal coherence of the country strategic plan and strengthen the conceptual linkages between the overarching strategic objectives in the new country strategic plan structure.			Regional bureau and headquarters RAM and PROTC	Medium	March 2024
6.2	Review the findings of the 2017 zero hunger strategic review to identify progress in capacity strengthening since 2017 and inform the implementation of the next country strategic plan.			Regional bureau and headquarters RAM and PROTC; United Nations country team representatives	Medium	March 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
6.3	Where possible, adapt the corporate country capacity strengthening framework, the 2022 policy update and the corporate results frameworks to the country setting. This work may include identifying country-specific country capacity strengthening indicators for measuring and reporting on the country capacity strengthening process, capturing results over the long term and possibly including indicators for measuring government- and community-based social cohesion and the strengthening of training modalities for country capacity strengthening.			Regional bureau and headquarters RAM and PROTC	High	January 2024
6.4	Consider investing financial and human resources in strengthening the internal knowledge management systems that support institutional memory, for learning and advocacy.			Regional bureau and headquarters RAM and PROTC	High	March 2024

**Acronyms**

BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
CCS	country capacity strengthening
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
HRM	Human Resources Division
PROTC	Country Capacity Strengthening Unit
RAM	Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal