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## **Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Armenia (2019–2025)**

### **Executive summary**

The evaluation of the country strategic plan for Armenia for 2019–2025 was conducted between March 2024 and February 2025 to serve accountability and learning purposes and to inform the preparation of the next country strategic plan.

The evaluation found that the country strategic plan is aligned with national priorities and needs and based on extensive assessments and consultations. WFP is well positioned to provide support through country capacity strengthening and is considered one of the Government of Armenia's preferred partners in responding to priority policy needs and developing approaches, models and tools in the areas of school feeding, food security and social protection. There is a need for additional technical assistance for decentralized government entities, particularly in the areas of social protection and emergency response.

The original CSP had a clear logical structure, but this was blurred over time as five budget revisions led to a series of expansions that lacked a clear underlying theory of change connecting the various interventions and result pathways. WFP's monitoring indicators, aligned with the corporate results framework, are focused more on the results of providing direct assistance to targeted population groups than on WFP's capacity-strengthening work.

*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.*

#### **Focal points:**

Ms A.-C. Luzot  
Director of Evaluation  
email: [anneclaire.luzot@wfp.org](mailto:anneclaire.luzot@wfp.org)

Ms S. Ashraf  
Evaluation Officer  
Email: [sameera.ashraf@wfp.org](mailto:sameera.ashraf@wfp.org)

The transfer of the school feeding programme to the Government, with accompanying contributions to the national policy framework, is WFP's most noteworthy success in Armenia. The transformative model for school feeding includes various innovations and already serves as a reference for other countries. To ensure the sustainability of the programme, continued technical assistance is required for the management of the school feeding programme at the central and provincial levels.

Technical assistance for national food systems at the policy and strategy levels contributed to the formulation of the national food security strategy for 2023–2026 and the related action plan. WFP's support for food value chains has enhanced agricultural productivity for participating farmers and created opportunities for local economic growth, but the scale of the economic activities created has, in most cases, remained small. While the groundwork for resilient food systems has been laid, additional efforts are needed in the development of agricultural markets, governance structures and partnerships for business development.

WFP's investments in strengthening the national social protection system at the institutional and policy levels are contributing to progress, but additional support is needed to make the system more robust, responsive to shocks, and effective in addressing food insecurity, poverty and emergency needs. Food- and cash-based emergency assistance for vulnerable people has in general improved food security.

Good progress has been made in integrating gender considerations into WFP's programming and reporting, with women, girls, refugees and persons with disabilities included in the selection criteria for vulnerable target groups, but there is room for improvement in ensuring that actions are tailored to needs. Systematic efforts to foster community participation and establish effective community feedback mechanisms have supported WFP's commitments to providing accountability to affected people. WFP has made significant progress in strengthening environmental sustainability in its interventions, particularly by investing in solar energy and ecological agricultural production. The country strategic plan has an explicit focus on integrating nutrition considerations into behaviour change efforts, but greater attention to addressing challenges related to the quality of nutrition – such as obesity and diabetes – is needed. The humanitarian–development nexus featured occasionally in planning, but received limited attention during implementation.

The evaluation made five recommendations encouraging WFP to develop a clearer structure for the country strategic plan, with adequate monitoring systems and staffing; continue to focus on capacity strengthening at the national level, accompanied by adequate implementation at the subnational level; strengthen the mainstreaming of cross-cutting priorities; further develop the humanitarian–development nexus approach; and strengthen strategic and operational partnerships.

## **Draft decision\***

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Armenia (2019–2025), (WFP/EB.1/2026/6-D/1) and the management response (WFP/EB.1/2026/6-D/1/Add.1).

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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

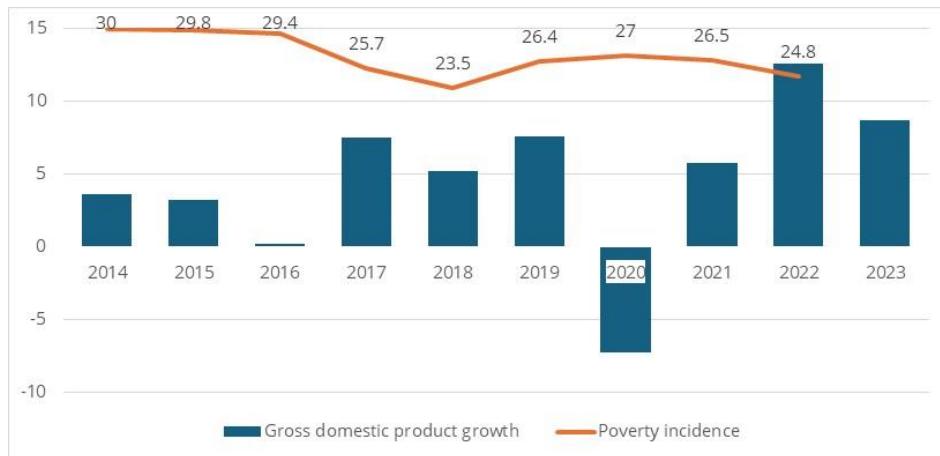
### Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Armenia for 2019–2025 was commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation. The evaluation serves both accountability and learning purposes and will inform the design of the next CSP.
2. This evaluation was conducted between March 2024 and February 2025 and covers a five-year period of CSP implementation, from July 2019 to July 2024. The evaluation also considered the transitional interim CSP for 2018–2019 in terms of its contribution to the design of and preparation for the CSP. The evaluation was conducted by an external independent team using a theory-based, mixed-methods approach.
3. The intended users of the evaluation are the WFP country office in Armenia, the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe Regional Office, technical divisions at headquarters in Rome, the WFP Executive Board, the Government of Armenia, partner United Nations entities, and donors. Other users include civil society and non-governmental organizations in Armenia, South–South and triangular cooperation partners, and WFP's beneficiaries.

### Context

4. Armenia graduated to upper-middle-income country status in 2018. Despite economic growth, however, the country has experienced multiple economic shocks in recent years, including those resulting from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the escalation of conflict in border regions, and global and regional instability, resulting in a volatile trend in the gross domestic product growth rate.

**Figure 1: Rates of gross domestic product growth and poverty, 2014–2023**



Source: National Statistical Services, data extracted on 8 August 2024.

5. Border conflict and reported instability in the Karabakh region escalated between September and November 2020 and deteriorated further in 2022. This led to significant levels of internal population displacement in border settlements, followed by the arrival of more than 100,000 refugees from Karabakh in other areas of Armenia in the autumn of 2023, with an average of 15,000 people arriving every day between 24 September and 4 October 2023.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2022. [Armenia Population Movement 2022 – DREF Application](#).

6. Public spending on education declined from 3.3 percent of gross domestic product in 2010 to 2.8 percent in 2020<sup>2</sup> and was 2.4 percent in 2023.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, school enrolment has continued to be high, and the adult literacy rate was 100 percent in 2023.<sup>4</sup>
7. Armenia's agricultural sector is characterized by small-scale farms, which account for approximately 95 percent of all farms and produce 97 percent of the country's gross agricultural product. Agriculture is the primary source of economic activity in rural areas, employing about 36.6 percent of the working population; 56 percent of famers are women.<sup>5</sup>
8. In addition to the shocks mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 5, food security conditions have been negatively affected by trade restrictions related to the conflict in Ukraine, which have caused market volatility.<sup>6</sup> Inflation rates, particularly in the price of food, are unstable, and dependency on food imports remains high.<sup>7</sup> In the period from December 2022 to January 2023, 30 percent of Armenian households were food insecure, with higher rates in rural areas.<sup>8</sup>
9. Nutrition indicators have improved in recent years: in 2022, wasting affected 4.4 percent of children under 5, and stunting 9.4 percent – both rates are well below the regional averages of 8.9 percent for wasting and 21.8 percent for stunting.<sup>9</sup> However, among women, the levels of anaemia, at 17.3 percent, and obesity, at 25.6 percent, were both higher than the regional averages of 10.3 percent for anaemia and 7.5 percent for obesity.
10. In 2024, Armenia ranked 64th of the 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index.<sup>10</sup> Despite constitutional and legislative commitments to gender equality, challenges persist, including negative gender stereotypes and gender-based violence.

### **WFP country strategic plan**

11. The CSP, approved by the Executive Board in June 2019, was intended to continue WFP's ongoing shift from the direct implementation of school feeding activities to the strengthening of the national capacities of the Government and national partners. The CSP was originally designed for the period from July 2019 to June 2024 and had two strategic outcomes: strategic outcome 1 involved assistance for schools in the form of food and cash-based transfers and infrastructure support; and strategic outcome 2 focused on country capacity strengthening in the areas of school feeding, food and nutrition security and emergency preparedness. The CSP was subsequently expanded in both scope and budget through a series of revisions.
12. The original needs-based plan for the CSP totalled USD 27.9 million. Over time, the budget was gradually increased to USD 84.2 million through five budget revisions:

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2022. [Education Sector Analysis for Armenia](#).

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. [Government expenditure on education, total \(% of GDP\) – Armenia](#)

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. [2023 data for Armenia](#).

<sup>5</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). [Armenia at a glance](#).

<sup>6</sup> FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, WFP, World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and World Meteorological Organization. 2023. [Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2022. Repurposing policies and incentives to make healthy diets more affordable and agrifood systems more environmentally sustainable](#).

<sup>7</sup> World Bank. 2025. [Macro Poverty Outlook. Country-by-country Analysis and Projections for the Developing World: Europe and Central Asia](#).

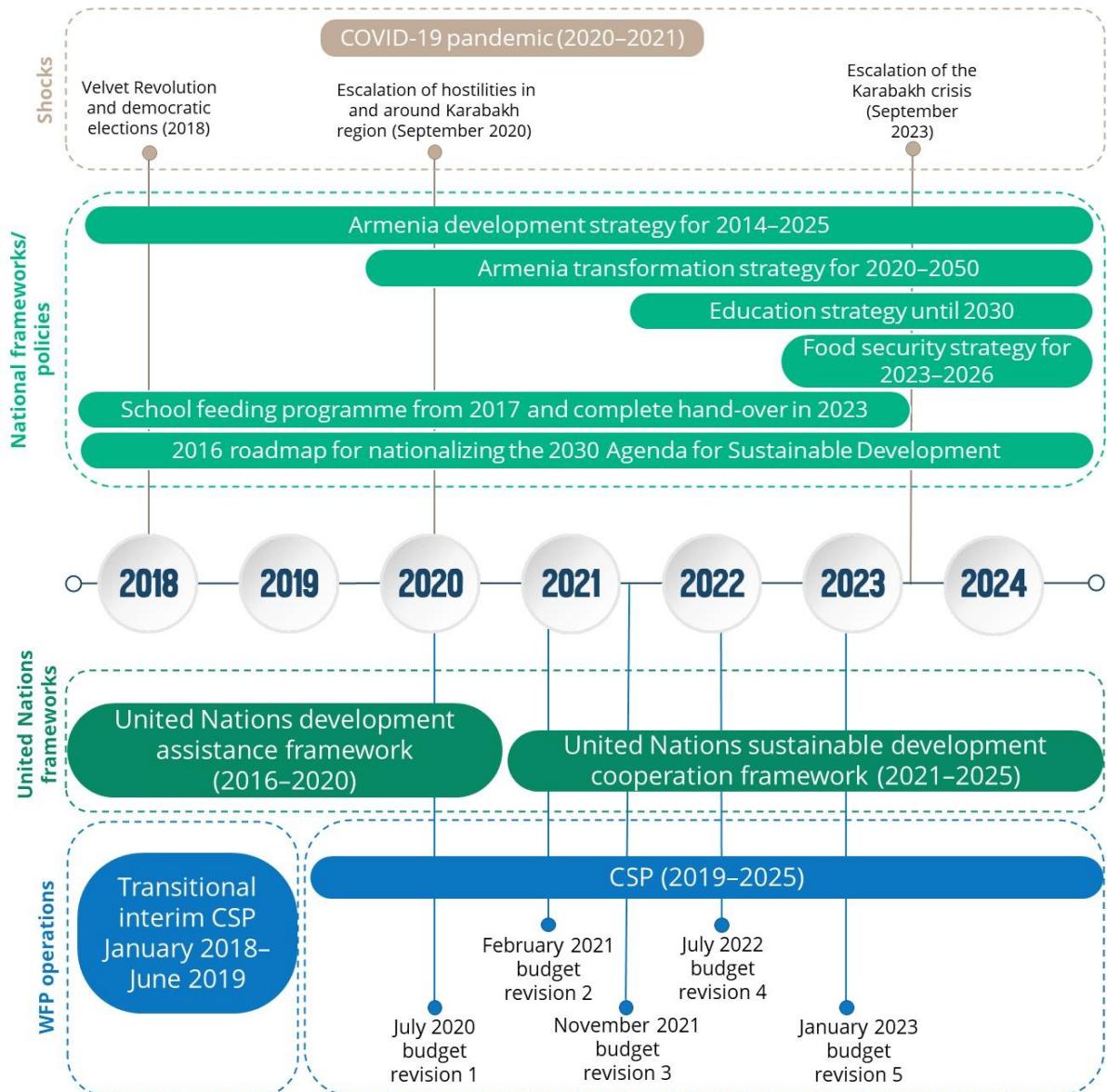
<sup>8</sup> WFP. 2023. [Fifth Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment in Armenia, December 2022–January 2023](#).

<sup>9</sup> Global Nutrition Report. [Country Nutrition Profiles - Armenia](#).

<sup>10</sup> World Economic Forum. 2022. [Global Gender Gap Report 2022](#).

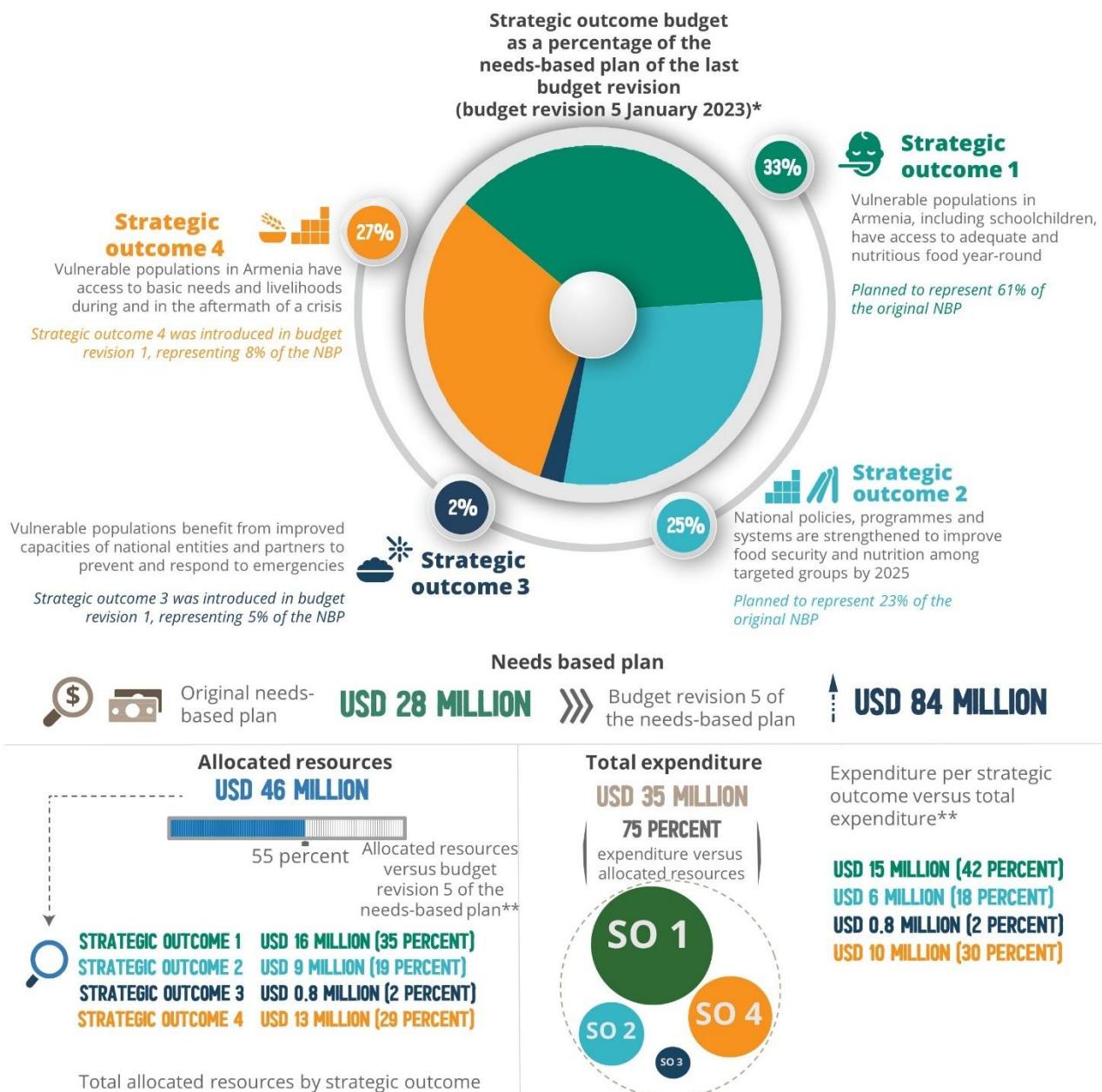
- Revision 1, in July 2020, expanded the strategic focus of the CSP with the addition of two strategic outcomes: strategic outcome 3 on providing on-demand services; and strategic outcome 4 on supporting the Government in crisis response through the provision of food assistance.
- Revision 2 increased the scale of crisis response activities with the addition of another 74,000 planned beneficiaries.
- Revision 3 introduced the nexus approach under strategic outcome 4 with the addition of livelihood recovery activities for crisis-affected people.
- Revision 4 added two new activities to support the development of national food systems, food value chains and the national social protection system.
- Revision 5, in January 2023, extended the duration of the CSP by 18 months, to end in 2025 in line with the timeline of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework.

**Figure 2: Country context and operational overview, 2019–2025**



13. As of July 2024, 54.6 percent of the needs-based plan was funded, and 75 percent of the allocated resources were spent. The Russian Federation was the largest funding source, followed by flexible funding, the European Commission, the United States of America and France.

**Figure 3: Armenia country strategic plan for 2019–2025 strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditure**

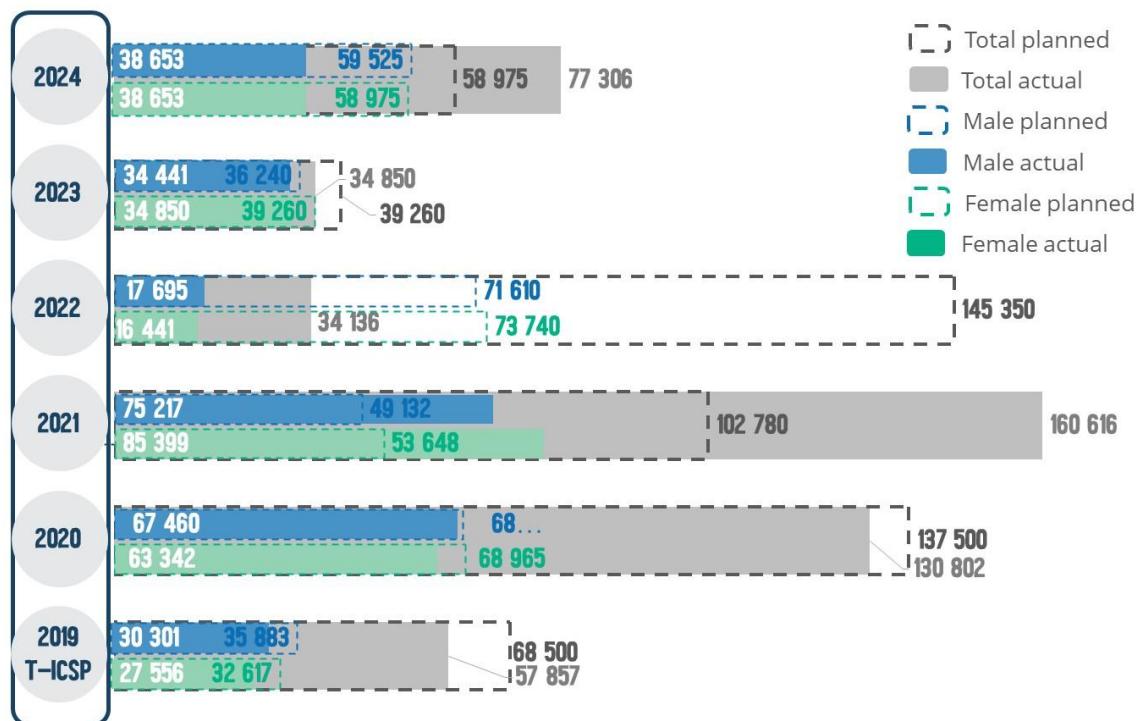


\* The strategic outcome percentages are calculated at grand total level. The direct support costs and indirect support costs also constitute the total original and revised needs-based plan (budget revision 5).

\*\* Percentages of allocated resources and expenditures by strategic outcome do not add up to 100 percent because resources were also allocated and spent to non-strategic outcome purposes (including direct support costs and indirect support costs).

14. The CSP has wide geographical coverage with activities implemented in 224 communities across all ten of the country's provinces. In more than half of these locations, several CSP interventions in up to five activity areas have been implemented in parallel. Since the start of the CSP, the total number of beneficiaries has oscillated between 34,000 and 160,000 per year, with a balance between male and female beneficiaries. Between 2018 and 2023, an average of 91 percent of planned beneficiaries were reached every year.

**Figure 4: Planned and actual beneficiaries by sex and year, 2019–2025**



## Key evaluation messages

### Relevance and strategic positioning

*The design and implementation of the CSP are well aligned with the needs of vulnerable people in Armenia and with the Government's priorities. Its focus is appropriate, with an emphasis on supporting the handover of the school feeding programme and providing broader country capacity strengthening support for the Government on strategies, policies and programmes related to food security, malnutrition and emergency preparedness. WFP's support remains relevant given current geopolitical circumstances, including in the South Caucasus region, and in relation to South-South and triangular cooperation.*

15. The design and implementation of the CSP are well aligned with the Government's priorities, and WFP has remained a relevant partner to the Government, including through its response to the Government's evolving needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Karabakh crisis. Issues related to obesity and diabetes continue to require attention, as WFP's efforts to support social and behaviour change promoting healthier diets have been limited.
16. The CSP and its budget revisions were based on extensive context and needs assessments and on regular vulnerability assessments conducted by WFP, the Government and other development partners. Overall, the planned annual output targets for the CSP have been realistic for the infrastructure elements under the regular and transformative school feeding programme. However, as these investments are relatively recent, most of the reported benefits from established renewable energy infrastructure are based on assumptions and

economic projections. A lack of evidence to support the design of value chain activities, including data on market demand and access, affected the long-term sustainability of the intended economic benefits for smallholders and cooperatives.

17. WFP is well positioned to deliver its country capacity strengthening support and is one of the Government's preferred partners at the central, provincial and local levels in responding to priority policy-related needs and developing relevant approaches, models and tools in the areas of school feeding, food security and social protection. The design and implementation of the CSP were characterized by a number of notable innovations, which were introduced as pilot projects that demonstrated their viability and have since been taken over by the Government for scale-up. Lessons learned from innovations in the transformative school feeding programme were shared with international partners in Brazil, Iraq and the Kyrgyz Republic through South-South and triangular cooperation exchanges. Challenges exist, however, as WFP provides most of its technical assistance at the national level, and additional efforts are needed at the decentralized levels – particularly in the areas of social protection and emergency response – in accordance with the ongoing decentralization process.

### **Internal coherence and programme integration**

*The incremental expansion of the CSP without an underlying theory of change complicated the structure of the plan, leading to disconnections and misalignment between interventions. The structure does not reflect the interlinkages between strategic outcomes, even when activities are implemented in an integrated manner, as is sometimes the case.*

18. The original CSP had a clear logical structure, but this became blurred over time as five budget revisions led to a series of expansions, first in response to internal and external shocks in Armenia and later in order to increase support for shock-responsive social protection programmes, food systems and value chains. A clear theory of change that explains the programmatic relations between interventions is lacking. Notably, there are insufficient details about the pathways of change through which country capacity strengthening leads to improved food security and nutrition via the strengthened capacity of key national partners. While aligned with the corporate results framework, monitoring indicators are primarily focused on measuring the results of direct assistance provision, and do not capture the more indirect benefits of work related to capacity strengthening.
19. The evaluation notes examples of programme integration in implementation, with WFP and its cooperating partners layering multiple actions within the same communities – actions that appeared to be "siloed" under different strategic outcomes in the CSP structure. While the effects of this layered approach are not formally assessed as part of CSP monitoring, the evaluation found the approach to have been effective in establishing a community development mechanism that had positive socioeconomic benefits. In addition, by leveraging additional support, some communities were able to complement and expand the benefits of WFP-supported interventions, by either increasing the scale of those interventions or providing follow-up support to beneficiaries and communities.

### **Effectiveness and sustainability**

*Most activities under the CSP show high levels of achievement. The most notable achievement of the CSP is the transfer of the school feeding programme to the Government, with an accompanying national policy framework to be endorsed as the national school feeding strategy in 2025. The transformative school feeding model includes various innovations that serve as a reference point for other countries. However, further investments are needed to ensure sustainability (strategic outcome 1, activity 1; strategic outcome 2, activity 2).*

20. The long-term cooperation between WFP and the Government, and the alignment of WFP's proactive support with the Government's priorities have resulted in effective capacity strengthening and – more importantly – a clear commitment from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports to funding and implementing the national school feeding programme and rolling it out to national coverage. The evaluation notes the nationwide reach of WFP's support for the Government under the school feeding programme, which serves more than 100,000 students in all 10 provinces (although not in Yerevan), but monitoring frameworks are focused on direct beneficiary numbers and do not capture information about the people who benefit indirectly from WFP's portfolio of country capacity strengthening operations.
21. WFP's support for the establishment of the semi-autonomous school feeding and child welfare agency under the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports includes the provision of strategic and operational guidance, staff training programmes and the monitoring of programme implementation. It has made an important contribution towards the effective handover of school feeding operations. However, the evaluation identified a need for additional technical assistance and training to ensure the sustainability of the programme.
22. The country office's transformative model for school feeding introduced an innovative approach through components such as school-based agriculture and horticulture, the installation of solar panels and other energy-saving measures, and the provision of kitchen equipment. The Government is strongly committed to continuing the roll-out of the model, which was initially piloted in five schools and then expanded to 100 schools. The evaluation found that the transformative model has enhanced the quality of school meals, promoted community engagement and helped to enrich educational curricula. The innovations have been showcased through various South-South and triangular cooperation exchanges, but there is no structured learning and knowledge management mechanism for documenting the country office's insights into, and experiences of, these innovative approaches, and disseminating them more widely.
23. The evaluation notes some challenges in relation to the economic management and sustainability of the transformative model, including a need to clarify how the savings and potential revenue generated from solar panels and the sale of produce from school-based agriculture will flow back into the education budget. The Government's plans for school renovation and relocation may affect the sustainability of the transformative infrastructure established in certain schools, although the timeline for implementing those plans is still unclear.

***The strengthening of national food systems has been high on WFP's agenda, with technical assistance provided at the strategic level. The scale of implementation of food value chain development activities was small, however, and less attention was directed to improving the corresponding market systems, which limited the sustainability of results (strategic outcome 2, activity 5).***

24. WFP's important contributions to national food systems resulted in the formulation of the national food security strategy for 2023–2026 and the related action plan. More recently, WFP's support for food value chains, agriculture and renewable energy has enhanced agricultural productivity for participating farmers and created opportunities for local economic growth. For example, WFP's support for the establishment of a value chain for wholegrains led to the supply of wheat products for schools in three provinces, improving the nutritional value of school meals, supporting local farmers' livelihoods, and promoting the establishment of supporting institutions. The integration of renewable energy from solar panels, the empowerment of farmer groups, and targeted investments in value chains have

demonstrated the potential for economic transformation. However, in most cases, the scale of economic activities has remained small. Further work is needed to advance agricultural market development, governance structures and partnerships for business development in order to sustain the gains achieved so far and expand their effectiveness.

***WFP's support for social protection systems is having positive results, with plans to expand the innovative food card modality nationwide, but further consolidation of capacity is needed, especially at the decentralized level (strategic outcome 2, activity 6).***

25. WFP's investments in strengthening the national social protection system at the institutional and policy levels have led to positive outcomes, notably paving the way for the development of a national strategy of labour and social protection, which was at an advanced stage at the time of the evaluation. WFP supported the successful pilot testing and further development of the innovative food card modality, which was accompanied by standard operating procedures. The Government has recognized the food cards as a cost-effective tool for strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households, with a positive effect on the local economy and intends to roll the card out, not only for the provision of emergency assistance but also to broaden the coverage of social protection programmes. WFP has also provided country capacity strengthening interventions for the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and for unified social services, supporting the design of a more shock-responsive and food security-oriented social protection system, but further support is needed to strengthen capacity, legal frameworks and coordination mechanisms for social workers at the national and community levels.

***On-demand service delivery for national partners was important during emergency response even though it was of limited duration and generated limited demand (strategic outcome 3, activity 3).***

26. Services were provided only occasionally under the on-demand service delivery model because of the limited demand from stakeholders. WFP provided specific logistics services for the delivery of life-saving medical equipment and food during the COVID-19 crisis and in response to the conflict in Karabakh. WFP supported the coordination of supply chain and food security interventions among partners in 2021. Since then, however, no specific demand for these services has arisen.

***Emergency assistance provided under the CSP met urgent food and nutrition needs and WFP's focus is currently moving towards livelihood recovery (strategic outcome 4, activity 4).***

27. Emergency assistance under the CSP has generally shown positive outcomes in terms of food consumption. Support for refugees from Karabakh and internally displaced persons comprised mainly humanitarian assistance, with some cash for work activities, and was largely effective in improving food security and creating short-term employment opportunities. Support for agricultural and economic development was deemed unfeasible for refugees and internally displaced persons owing to their lack of access to land and other necessary assets, and because their mobility was seen as limiting the potential for longer-term interventions.
28. In addition to the provision of food and cash, WFP supported border communities with productive investments in livelihood recovery, including by restoring irrigation systems, providing productive assets such as solar panels, and training farmers and small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, which helped to improve access to irrigation water, and agricultural production. Some interventions included the provision of social protection through WFP's food cards and psychosocial assistance delivered by relevant cooperating partners.

## Contributions to cross-cutting priorities and the strengthening of the humanitarian-development nexus approach

*Cross-cutting priorities, including gender issues, accountability to affected people, and the environment, have been well integrated into WFP's programming and reporting. There is room for improving the inclusion of women and persons with disabilities in economic development activities, and the monitoring of the differential effects of interventions on these specific groups of people. Nutrition integration was demonstrated in programming, but more attention is needed to address long-term nutrition challenges in Armenia. Support for the humanitarian-development nexus approach was weak.*

29. WFP made good progress in integrating gender considerations into its programming. Women and men are equally represented as beneficiaries, and results at the output and outcome levels do not show major differences. However, while women, girls, refugees and persons with disabilities are included in the selection criteria for vulnerable target groups, the monitoring system does not capture the differential effects of interventions on women and persons with disabilities, who are not the focus of targeted actions aimed at enhancing participation and results. Resilience and livelihood development activities are not specifically tailored to achieving results in relation to women's economic empowerment.
30. Systematic efforts to enhance community participation in all interventions and establish effective complaints and feedback mechanisms supported delivery on WFP's commitments to providing accountability to affected people. WFP adhered to the humanitarian principles; for example, it ensured the neutrality and humanity of its work by prioritizing its response to humanitarian needs, including in sensitive border regions.
31. WFP has advanced significantly in terms of strengthening the environmental sustainability of its interventions, particularly by investing in solar energy systems for schools, community buildings and small and medium-sized enterprises. While the scale of interventions in agricultural development is still small, systematic attention and support are directed to ecological production methods and tools.
32. While the CSP has an explicit focus on the integration of nutrition into WFP's activities, such as the school feeding programme and interventions in agriculture and value chains, insufficient attention was directed to addressing challenges related to the quality of nutrition – such as obesity and diabetes – through long-term messaging and stakeholder engagement.
33. While the humanitarian-development nexus featured occasionally in CSP planning and design, it did not receive sufficient attention during implementation. WFP has engaged partners with more development expertise in efforts to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus approach, but has not yet established a sufficiently consistent transition from the provision of humanitarian support to a development-oriented approach for population groups with the potential to graduate from assistance. The shorter duration of funding for humanitarian interventions is another factor that hinders the establishment of links between humanitarian and development actions. In some communities in the border region, livelihood activities overlapped with the provision of food and cash assistance; this practice had the features of an integrated community development approach, but it was not systematically applied. Technical assistance for the Government in the design of a shock-responsive social protection system linked to emergency response was noted as a positive element related to the nexus, but additional efforts are needed in this area.

### **Funding and efficiency in CSP implementation**

***WFP did not experience major funding gaps for the CSP in most programme areas except food value chain activities, where resources were constrained. While funding was acquired from additional donors during the expansion of the CSP, funding from a single donor still sustains a large part of the portfolio, posing continuity risks. CSP implementation has been timely, with satisfactory levels of budget execution. The direct support costs are relatively high, which may be because of the complexity of the CSP and its relatively small total budget.***

34. WFP did not face major funding gaps for the implementation of the CSP. While WFP has been successful in mobilizing resources and diversifying its funding sources, the Russian Federation still sustains a large part of the portfolio, indicating reliance on a single donor, with risks for the continuation of the CSP.
35. With the expansion of the CSP, the country office was particularly successful in attracting resources for humanitarian support, including from WFP's flexible funding for immediate responses, and also secured support for interventions related to the national social protection system. It has been more challenging for the country office to obtain sufficient financing for the development of food systems and value chains, which received an average of 40 to 50 percent of their needs-based plan allocation, because WFP's competency in this area is less recognized than that of other organizations present in Armenia.
36. CSP implementation has been timely, with interventions following their intended timeframes, and swift responses to newly emerging needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the crises in Karabakh and at the border. Capacity strengthening for the Government on policy development and national systems is more long-term in nature, but progress in these areas is generally on course.
37. Overall, satisfactory levels of CSP budget execution have been achieved, with 75.4 percent of the allocated resources spent by July 2024. Direct support costs (7.8 percent) are in line with planning figures, but relatively high compared with the WFP global average of 3.9 percent. This may be attributed to the complexity of the CSP, with a variety of activities under four strategic outcomes receiving a relatively small total allocated budget, and the considerable number of funding contracts of various sizes, with 20 donors, creating a management and administrative burden for country office staff.

### **Organizational capacity, United Nations coordination and partnerships**

***The quality and commitment of WFP employees is widely recognized, although competency gaps hamper the provision of effective support for food value chain development, social and behaviour change, monitoring and evaluation, and the humanitarian-development nexus approach. WFP's well-developed partnerships with the Government at the national and subnational levels, a strong network of cooperating partners, and adequate coordination in United Nations working groups facilitated implementation, with wide coverage on the ground. However, there is room for more joint work with other United Nations entities, and more strategic engagement with cooperating partners.***

38. The technical expertise of country office employees, including their access to international resources, is well recognized by partners in the areas of school feeding, nutrition, food security, emergency response and social protection, but less so in the development of food value chains and marketing systems, social and behaviour change, monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management, and the strengthening of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, in terms of both competency and staffing levels.

39. WFP has well-developed, long-term partnerships with various government ministries and institutions at the national level, and there is effective collaboration with provincial and community governments. WFP participates in various United Nations working groups and meetings and regularly coordinates with other resident United Nations entities. WFP is seen as a proactive agency leading actions on the ground, including during the arrival of large numbers of refugees in 2023. Joint project implementation is very limited, however, with a few examples of collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on social protection, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF on social and behaviour change, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on agriculture support. Integrated "One UN" approaches are not common in Armenia.
40. WFP's wide network of cooperating partners facilitates the implementation of transformative school feeding programmes, food value chain development, social protection and emergency responses in all ten provinces. While cooperating partners appreciate WFP's capacity strengthening support, the cooperation arrangements they have are primarily of a subcontracting nature, with limited space for partners to co-create and co-manage activities as joint interventions. This results in missed opportunities for WFP to benefit from the complementary competencies of these partners in areas where WFP has limited expertise. In addition, the possibilities for partnerships with specialized organizations, such as those for value chain and market development activities, were not sufficiently explored.

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p><b>Recommendation 1: Develop a clearer CSP structure that articulates the interconnectedness of country capacity strengthening and direct assistance and is accompanied by an adequate logical framework and monitoring system, with the necessary staff capacity and competency for effective implementation.</b></p>	Strategic	Armenia country office	Global headquarters – the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe Regional Office and headquarters in Rome – for support and oversight	High	July 2025 (submission of draft CSP to headquarters in Rome)
<p>1.1. Develop a clear theory of change that emphasizes the programmatic relations between interventions and specifies how various activities under different pathways of change – for country capacity strengthening and direct assistance – are expected to contribute to results. During CSP implementation, the theory of change, and its specific pathways and generic and specific assumptions, should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure its use as a programme management tool.</p>					
<p>1.2. Develop indicators for monitoring country capacity strengthening activities that ensure the periodic overview of progress. Tailor specific output and outcome indicators for emergency support, social protection and economic development activities, and their differential effects on women, men, young people, and persons with disabilities. Include food security outcome indicators for all relevant activities in the portfolio, in addition to the more intervention-specific ones, so as to ensure that the overall focus of the CSP is on the improvement of food security and nutrition.</p>					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.3. Develop a clear workforce planning strategy based on an assessment of existing capacity. Expand technical capacity in relation to food value chain work, social and behaviour change, and learning and knowledge management, including on monitoring and evaluation for capacity strengthening aligned with the CSP focus.	Operational		The Government, other United Nations entities and cooperating partners need to be consulted in this process		December 2026
<b>Recommendation 2: Continue to focus on capacity strengthening aimed at facilitating a smooth hand-over of WFP's interventions to the Government at the national level, with adequate implementation at the provincial and community levels; and on capacity strengthening support for the non-governmental entities that receive WFP investments under this and subsequent CSPs.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Supported by global headquarters	High	December 2026
2.1. Address the remaining institutional challenges to the effective hand-over of the school feeding programme, including those related to the economic and financial management of investments; and support the potential expansion of school feeding operations to schools in Yerevan, to higher grades of primary schools, and to secondary schools. Repeat the cost-benefit analysis for school agriculture interventions, including energy efficiency measures. Expand South-South and triangular cooperation efforts to share lessons learned from innovative school feeding approaches successfully used in Armenia with other countries.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2.2. Step up the country capacity strengthening support in shock-responsive social protection and emergency preparedness, focusing on improved legislation and policy support at the national level and strengthened capacity and synergies in unified social services at the decentralized level.					
<b>Recommendation 3: Strengthen the mainstreaming of cross-cutting priorities in the CSP while increasing tailored actions for the inclusion of women and other vulnerable people and increased investments in social and behaviour change approaches.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Supported by global headquarters	Medium	December 2027
3.1. Tailor livelihood and resilience-building activities so as to enhance the economic empowerment of women and persons with disabilities. This can be achieved by applying special financial support and credit facilities for women, and selecting specific crops and economic activities that are appropriate for women.					
3.2. In close coordination with the Government, other United Nations entities, private sector bodies and communities, engage in a strong social and behaviour change component aimed at supporting policy measures and other interventions that address long-term challenges associated with the quality of nutrition, such as obesity and diabetes, and other cross-cutting priorities where behaviour change is required, such as food security, climate change and environmental health.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<b>Recommendation 4: Building on WFP's comparative advantage in humanitarian assistance, further develop a humanitarian-development nexus approach for interventions designed for individuals and communities, with the goal of integrating this approach into government systems.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Supported by global headquarters	High	December 2027
4.1. At the community level, work with partners to create explicit interlinkages between humanitarian support, livelihood recovery and economic development activities that create clear pathways for graduation from assistance.					
4.2. Engage with the Government and other relief and development partners to ensure complementarity between interventions in the same geographic region(s) and, in particular, to seek integration with national programmes where possible.					
<b>Recommendation 5: Strengthen existing – and develop new – strategic and operational partnerships, including joint United Nations coordination and programming, and an effective network of cooperating partners at the field level.</b>	Operational	Country office	Supported by global headquarters	High	December 2026
5.1. Expand the partner network with a view to leveraging complementarities in areas where WFP has limited in-house competency, including the humanitarian-development nexus approach, the provision of business development services and finance for small and medium-sized enterprises in relevant food value chains, and social and behaviour change.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2. Invest in strengthening United Nations coordination mechanisms for humanitarian response, for which WFP is well positioned, and explore the opportunities for new joint projects, such as value chain development and improvement of the quality of nutrition in Armenia.					

## **Acronyms**

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund