



Distribution: General

Agenda item 6

Date: 12 January 2026

WFP/EB.1/2026/6-D/4

Original: English

Oversight functions

For decision

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Somalia (2022–2025)

Executive summary

This evaluation, conducted from June 2024 to March 2025, assessed WFP's country strategic plan for Somalia for 2022–2025, including WFP's 2022–2023 famine prevention response, and the interim country strategic plan for 2019–2021. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide accountability and learning to inform the development of the next country strategic plan for Somalia.

Somalia faces a complex humanitarian situation due to ongoing conflict, recurrent disasters and climate shocks. Despite a federal governance system established in 2012, institutions remain nascent and fragmented, complicated by clan influence on governance structures. Humanitarian access is severely constrained by military operations, hostilities and armed groups.

Despite gains, Somalia experiences high levels of poverty and food insecurity and is highly vulnerable to global shocks. The 2021–2023 drought pushed 6.5 million people into crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity.

Protection challenges are significant in Somalia and gender inequality is severe, contributing to widespread violence and disparities, particularly in rural areas.

The country strategic plan prioritized humanitarian response while aiming for resilience building, livelihoods and government capacity strengthening in line with national and United Nations frameworks.

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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WFP's role in famine prevention during the 2021–2023 drought, when it swiftly scaled up food and cash assistance, exceeding targets and stabilizing food insecurity, was its primary achievement under the CSP.

Under strategic outcome 1, WFP significantly scaled up integrated food and cash assistance for famine prevention. Under strategic outcome 2, WFP delivered conditional and unconditional assistance, notably through a shock responsive safety net project funded by the World Bank, which was handed over to the Government in 2024. Funding gaps constrained school feeding and nutrition programming. Under strategic outcome 3, WFP aimed to build resilient food systems and enhance farmers' market access, but limited funding and logistical challenges constrained programme achievements. WFP bolstered government capacity under strategic outcome 4 but took a broad approach that spread resources thinly, hindering the strategic focus and sustainability of initiatives.

WFP adapted its targeting to prioritize the most vulnerable, guided by needs assessments and vulnerability criteria. Despite outdated population data and mobile populations, targeting accuracy was optimized using various data sources, including data from Integrated Food Security Phase Classification assessments.

While efforts were made to integrate gender, conflict sensitivity and disability inclusion, cultural barriers limited women's participation, and success in reaching persons with disabilities was limited. Community involvement in beneficiary selection was high, although local power dynamics and data quality issues sometimes impeded accuracy; WFP is piloting vulnerability-based targeting to improve this. Navigating an intricate political landscape, WFP adhered to humanitarian principles during implementation of the country strategic plan.

WFP focused on cost-efficiency, implementing measures to reduce operating and transaction costs (for example, expanding cash-based transfers, consolidating warehousing, refining internal processes and optimizing collaboration with partners). WFP enhanced operational effectiveness by relocating its country office to Mogadishu, decentralizing functions to area offices and recruiting more national staff. It developed robust risk management, including through the adoption in 2024 of an enhanced assurance plan to manage risks, in particular related to post-distribution aid diversion.

Cooperating partners were vital for reaching inaccessible areas, especially given access restrictions, enhancing community ownership, handling registration and distribution and mainstreaming protection and gender. WFP also forged partnerships with the Government, other United Nations entities and the private sector. Work with the Government enhanced planning, coordination and joint monitoring. Private sector engagement, although limited, boosted financial inclusion and market links for farmers. WFP effectively coordinated with other United Nations entities, but resource competition and differing operational paces hindered full joint programming.

The evaluation makes five recommendations for the next country strategic plan and its implementation. The recommendations focus on strengthening programme integration; improving programme design based upon realistic resource assumptions; improving data use to enhance programme design; clarifying the strategic purpose of partnerships; and enhancing the strategic focus of and rationale for government capacity strengthening.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Somalia (2022–2025), (WFP/EB.1/2026/6-D/4) and the management response (WFP/EB.1/2026/6-D/4/Add.1).

* 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. This evaluation was conducted between June 2024 and March 2025. It covers the WFP country strategic plan (CSP) for Somalia for 2022–2025, including the emergency response to prevent famine between June 2022 and May 2023, along with the interim country strategic plan (ICSP) for 2019–2021. The evaluation aimed to provide evidence to support accountability for CSP results as well as learning to inform the development of the next CSP for Somalia.
2. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning and contribution to strategic outcomes, efficiency in implementation, the sustainability of CSP results and the factors explaining CSP performance, using a mixed-methods and theory-based approach, drawing on both primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection methods comprised document review and consultations with over 500 key informants and focus group participants.
3. Workshops and discussions were held with internal and external stakeholders to ensure ownership and deep understanding of the evaluation's findings, conclusions and recommendations.
4. The intended users of the evaluation include WFP's Somalia country office, the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, technical divisions at headquarters in Rome and the Executive Board, as well as the Federal and State Governments of Somalia, donors, cooperating partners and WFP beneficiaries.

Context

5. Somalia has a complex humanitarian landscape shaped by continuing conflict, recurrent disasters and climate change. Despite the establishment of a federal governance system, ongoing insurgency means that state institutions are still nascent and fragmented.¹ Somalia's governance structure is shaped by a clan-based constitution, which can increase clan influence on government structures.
6. Somalia ranks last on the 2023 Human Development Index.² Despite gains, poverty rates and income disparity remain high.³ Life expectancy, while improved, remains low.⁴ Somalia has some of the lowest education indicators in the world, with low government spending (3 percent of total government spending), and low school enrolment (37 percent of school-age children were enrolled in 2023).⁵
7. With the last census conducted in 1975, Somalia's population data are outdated.⁶ Current estimates show a young, rapidly urbanizing population of 18.1 million people.⁷ Governance issues, conflict and climate shocks have displaced 3.86 million people, disproportionately affecting minority groups. Most of Somalia's internally displaced persons have moved to

¹ European Asylum Support Office. 2021. [Somalia Actors: Country of Origin Information Report](#).

² United Nations Development Programme. 2023. [Human Development Report 2023/2024. Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world](#).

³ Somalia National Bureau of Statistics. 2024. [Somalia Poverty Report: 2023](#). The share of the population living below the national poverty line fell from 69 percent in 2017 to 54 percent in 2022. The Gini index for Somalia was 35.2 in 2022.

⁴ Life expectancy rose from 49.9 years in 2000 to 54 years in 2021. World Health Organization. 2023. [Health Emergency Programme Update - Somalia](#).

⁵ United Nations Children's Fund. 2024. [Somalia End of Year Results 2023](#).

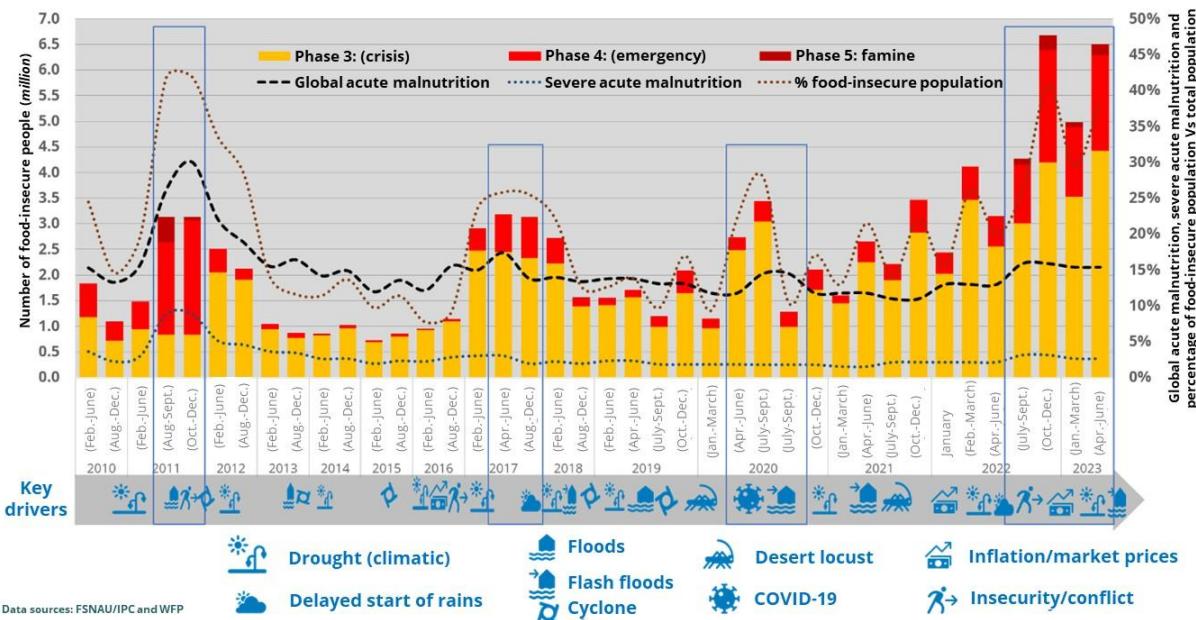
⁶ Somalia National Bureau of Statistics. 2024. ["Somalia Population and Housing Census"](#).

⁷ An estimated 70 percent of the population is aged under 30, and 45 percent of people live in urban areas.

urban areas, where they often experience precarious conditions alongside thousands of returnees, refugees and asylum seekers.^{8, 9}

- Although agriculture and livestock generating 75 percent of its gross domestic product, Somalia produces only 30 percent of the food it needs, rendering it highly vulnerable to global shocks. It ranks 181st of 185 countries in terms of vulnerability to climate change,¹⁰ having experienced severe climatic events including a record-breaking drought in 2021–2023 that pushed 6.5 million people into crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity in 2023 (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Major humanitarian disasters in Somalia from 2010 to 2023



- Somalia has a gender inequality index score of 0.674, placing it the fourth lowest globally.¹¹ Restrictive social norms contribute to widespread sexual and gender-based violence and health, economic and nutritional inequality, particularly for rural, nomadic and internally displaced women and girls.^{12, 13} Persons with disabilities, comprising 11.7 percent of adults, also face significant marginalization, experiencing lower literacy and higher unemployment rates.
- Humanitarian access is severely constrained by military operations, clan hostilities and attacks on aid personnel. Armed groups such as Al-Shabaab control parts of the country, obstructing access to services and impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As a result, 23 of 74 districts were classified as hard to reach in 2024.¹⁴

⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2024. *Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: Somalia 2024*.

⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2024. *Annual results report: Somalia 2024*.

¹⁰ University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative. 2023. *ND GAIN Country Index 2023*

¹¹ United Nations Development Programme. 2024. *Human Development Report 2023/2024. Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world*.

¹² World Health Organization. 2024. "International Women's Day 2024: advancing gender equality in Somalia's health workforce".

¹³ United Nations. 2018. *UN Somalia Gender Equality Strategy 2018–2020*.

¹⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2024. *Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: Somalia 2024*.

Overview of WFP Somalia country strategic plans

11. The ICSP and the CSP were designed to prioritize humanitarian emergency response while aiming to consolidate, scale up and improve the link between relief and resilience, including livelihoods support, and capacity strengthening for government institutions. The ICSP had six strategic outcomes and the CSP has five (table 1).

Table 1: Overall focus, ICSP and CSP strategic outcome alignment and transfer modalities

Focus area	ICSP strategic outcomes	CSP strategic outcomes	Cash	Food	Capacity building	Service delivery
Crisis response	1: Food-insecure and nutrition-insecure people, in disaster-affected areas, have access to adequate and nutritious food and specialized nutritious foods that meet their basic food and nutritional needs, during and in the aftermath of shocks.					
Resilience building	2: Food-insecure people in targeted areas are better able to withstand shocks and stresses throughout the year.	2: Vulnerable people in targeted areas have improved nutrition and resilience, and benefit from inclusive access to integrated basic social services, shock-responsive safety nets, and enhanced national capacity to build human capital, all year round.				
	3: Malnourished and food-insecure children, adolescent girls, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls and clients receiving antiretroviral treatment or directly observed treatment for tuberculosis in areas with persistently high rates of acute malnutrition have improved nutritional status throughout the year.					
Resilience building	4: ICSP strategic outcome 4 became CSP strategic outcome 3.	3: National institutions, private sector, smallholder farmers, and food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations in Somalia benefit from climate-smart, productive, resilient, inclusive, and nutritious food systems by 2030				

Focus area	ICSP strategic outcomes	CSP strategic outcomes	Cash	Food	Capacity building	Service delivery
Resilience building	5: National institutions have strengthened policies, capacities and systems for supporting food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations by 2021.	4: National institutions and government agencies in Somalia benefit from strengthened capacities, policies, and systems by 2025.				
Crisis response	6: ICSP strategic outcome 6 became CSP strategic outcome 5.	5: The humanitarian community in Somalia is better able to reach vulnerable people and respond to needs throughout the year.				

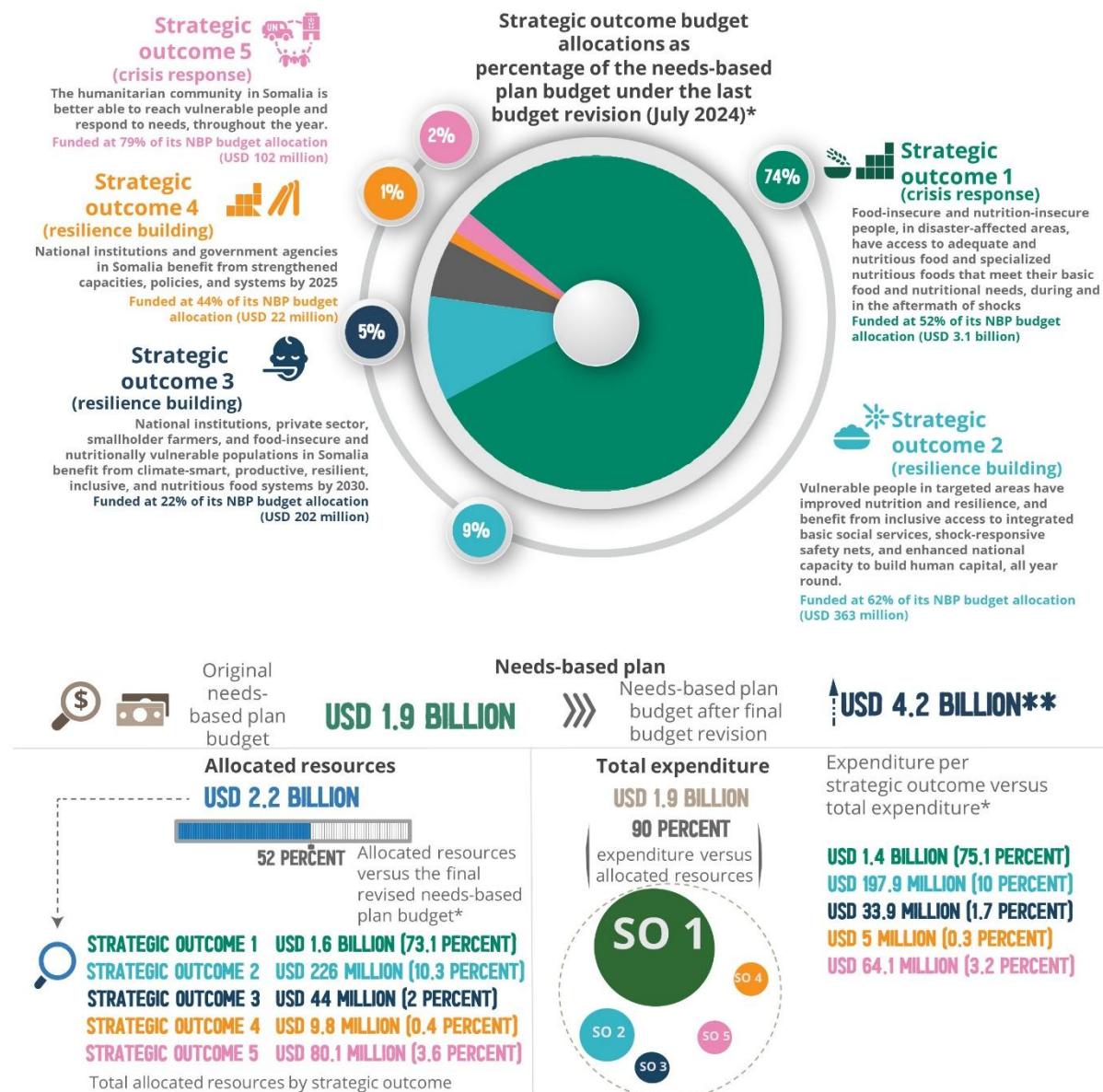
ICSP and CSP budget and funding

12. The original ICSP needs-based plan (NBP) budget was USD 961 million at the design stage; this almost doubled to USD 1.98 billion following five revisions of the ICSP and its budget during implementation. The revisions sought to support an increased number of crisis-affected people, including by increasing support through the safety net programme.¹⁵ The ICSP NBP was 89.2 percent funded.
13. The CSP had an NBP budget of USD 1.9 billion at the design stage. It went through three revisions, increasing the NBP budget to 4.2 billion by the end of 2024.¹⁶ The CSP NBP was 52 percent funded, with the majority of funding allocated and spent under strategic outcome 1.
14. As shown in figure 2, strategic outcome 1 was allocated 73 percent of the NBP budget to address the food and nutrition needs of vulnerable people experiencing shocks; it received 52 percent of that allocation. Strategic outcomes 2 (10 percent of the NBP budget) and 5 (4 percent of the NBP budget), were relatively well funded, receiving 62 percent and 79 percent of their NBP budget allocations respectively; strategic outcomes 3 and 4, which made up the smallest part of the CSP, were comparatively underfunded. Strategic outcome 3, allocated 2 percent of the NBP budget, received only 22 percent of that allocation, and strategic outcome 4, with less than 1 percent of the NBP budget, received 44 percent of that allocation.

¹⁵ ICSP revisions, available on the [WFP website](#).

¹⁶ Significant budget revisions were made in 2022 (increasing the budget by USD 2.8 billion) and 2024 (decreasing the budget by USD 532 million). Another budget revision was made in September 2025, which falls outside the period covered by this evaluation. That revision decreased the budget by USD 222 million, from USD 4.2 billion to USD 3.9 billion.

Figure 2: Somalia country strategic plan (2022–2025) strategic outcome budget, funding and expenditure



* Percentages of strategic outcomes exclude direct and indirect support costs

** Percentages of allocated resources and expenditures by strategic outcome do not add up to 100 percent because resources were also allocated to and spent on non-strategic outcome purposes.

Sources: Revision 3 of the Somalia CSP (2022–2025) and country portfolio budget resources overview.

Abbreviation: SO = strategic outcome.

15. At the time of the evaluation the United States of America was the primary donor to the CSP, followed by the World Bank, which provided funding through the Federal Government of Somalia for national safety net projects. Donor funding was sustained between USD 300 million and USD 450 million between 2019 and 2024, with a surge in 2022 for famine prevention.

Key conclusions and evaluation findings

Strategic relevance and coherence

Building on multiple studies, the CSP was designed to leverage WFP's expertise in humanitarian assistance, support government priorities and complement the work of other entities in Somalia. The CSP successfully positioned WFP to address both food security and nutrition needs, introducing links between relief, early recovery and work at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Operationalizing the CSP was challenging given the high level of need, insufficient donor funding and limited capacity for implementation.

16. **The ICSP and CSP drew on an extensive evidence base to inform WFP's choice of modalities and overall positioning in Somalia.** Building on Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) data¹⁷ and a range of lessons drawn from studies and evaluations, the CSP sought to build on the ICSP by integrating humanitarian response with resilience, social protection and early recovery programming and emphasizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Table 2 sets out the differences in design between the CSP and ICSP.

Table 2: Summary of design adaptations of the interim country strategic plan and country strategic plan

Interim country strategic plan	Country strategic plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening early warning systems and developing a food security strategy Introducing social protection support Integrating nutrition messages Enhancing resilience activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking food assistance to resilience and livelihoods interventions Scaling up rural safety nets and shifting school meals to a cash-based home-grown school feeding model (strategic outcome 2) Continuing value chain support with climate-smart practices and digital solutions Balancing support for capacity strengthening for the federal and state governments

17. **Both the ICSP and CSP were designed to leverage WFP's capacity and experience in Somalia and align with humanitarian, national and United Nations strategic priorities.** WFP's contribution in Somalia built on its comparative advantages in the country, especially with regard to social safety nets and institutional capacity building. The ICSP and CSP were designed to support the priorities set out in the annual humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans, outlining support for relief assistance for food-insecure populations and transport and logistics support for humanitarian actors. They were also designed to support government priorities, as described in the country's eighth and ninth national development plans, covering 2017–2019 and 2020–2024, and to contribute to the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework, complementing the work of other United Nations entities in Somalia. The CSP included a capacity strengthening component, although this was not supported by systematic analysis of the capacities of government ministries.

¹⁷ Based on IPC data for 2019–2024 analysed by WFP's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit.

18. **Despite challenges and significant changes in the operating environment, the ICSP and CSP remained largely relevant over time.** The ICSP and CSP were internally coherent, designed to provide integrated programming that connected immediate relief to long-term resilience and livelihoods programming, facilitating a progression for beneficiaries from emergency support to long-term safety net and nutrition support and/or sustainable solutions under strategic outcome 3. The CSP design assumed that donor funding would be available under the various strategic outcomes, that political stability would improve and that the authorities would take ownership of the strategic outcomes. The underlying assumptions of the CSP proved largely appropriate, but the strategic outcomes were unevenly funded and WFP had to expend considerable effort to navigate political complexities and respond to emerging challenges during implementation. The CSP's relevance and continuity were also facilitated by the inclusion of crisis response in its design (box 1).

Box 1: Key dimensions of crisis response in country strategic plan design

- Ongoing use of vulnerability analysis and mapping assessments and IPC analysis, e.g. to predict the drought emergency
- Activation of surge capacity when needed
- Procurement procedures to support early response
- Retention of the well-established supply chain infrastructure for food assistance
- Pre-positioning of nutritious foods purchased through the Global Commodity Management Facility
- Anticipatory action to reduce the impact of flooding on affected people

Targeting and prioritization

WFP adapted the targeting of humanitarian food and nutrition assistance to its work in Somalia in order to reach the most food-insecure people. WFP took extensive measures and applied diverse methods to ensure that food and cash assistance reached the most vulnerable, taking appropriate action to mitigate access challenges, data gaps, power dynamics and resource constraints.

19. **Data challenges and population movements impeded fully accurate beneficiary targeting, but generally high community involvement and extensive measures to optimize accuracy contributed to overall satisfaction with targeting choices.** WFP appropriately targeted districts at elevated risk of food insecurity, triangulating IPC data from market, climate, nutrition and displacement surveys and its own vulnerability assessments to better understand needs and respond to requests from state governments to include areas not identified through the IPC analysis. Beneficiary selection, while largely appropriate, was affected by local power dynamics, data quality issues (e.g., gaps in household data, inadequate screening) and technical challenges with WFP's digital beneficiary information and transfer management platform (SCOPE). The limited accuracy of population data in Somalia was exacerbated by frequent population movements and displacement. To mitigate these challenges WFP is piloting an improved methodology with household vulnerability assessments and objective scorecards, aiming to ensure that eligibility decisions are data-driven and independent. The effectiveness of this new approach hinges on improved data quality and sufficient resources.

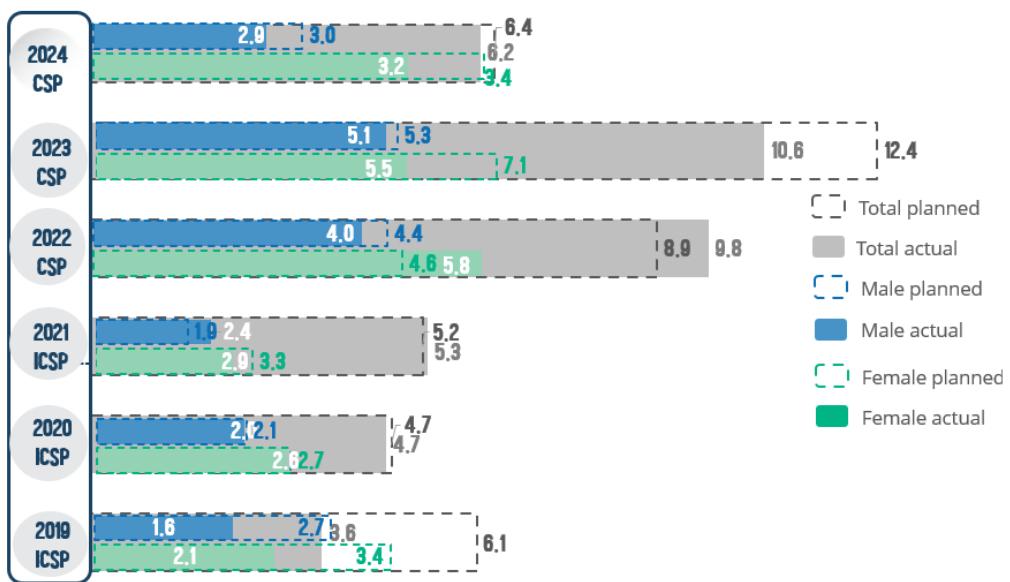
20. **Overall, prioritization decisions appropriately focused on areas and people with the highest levels of food insecurity, although implementation faced challenges.** In 2023, in the face of inadequate funding, WFP decided to increase the number of beneficiaries it reached and to reduce the duration of assistance to three months. However, the selection of vulnerable households for the three-month rotation proved difficult due to high levels of food insecurity among the population. The approach also made it more difficult to measure trends over time. WFP made progress in accessing hard-to-reach areas, engaging cooperating partners to identify beneficiaries using targeting and prioritization guidelines. However, prioritization was complicated by access and security constraints and the continuing lack of up-to-date population data. To prioritize beneficiaries for strategic outcome 3, it was challenging to balance resilience needs, increasingly hostile climatic conditions, and geographic earmarking, which meant that resilience programming and humanitarian assistance were implemented in different locations.

Overall performance and key contributions to strategic outcomes

Despite a challenging operating environment in Somalia and uneven funding of strategic outcomes, WFP provided vital emergency assistance in response to the 2021–2023 droughts, supported key nutrition, livelihood and social protection programmes and strengthened government capacity at different levels. Amid conflict and climate shocks, WFP's support helped to mitigate the effects of the droughts and contributed to averting famine, although Somalia's overall food security situation improved only slightly.

21. **Overall, the CSP positioned WFP to provide relief and support resilience, but WFP's most significant contribution during the CSP period was in scaling up its efforts to prevent famine during the drought from 2021 to 2023.** WFP significantly increased food and cash assistance, surpassing planned 2022 targets by an additional 1 million people (figure 3), to respond to the drought and the threat of famine.

22. **WFP also made significant contributions to Somalia's social protection programming by strengthening government systems.** However, school feeding, nutrition and resilience programmes, although beneficial, were limited in coverage due to the concentration of funding on emergency scale-up and response. Consequently, WFP's achievements in building resilience and supporting livelihoods did not match its ambitions.

Figure 3: Actual versus planned direct beneficiaries by sex, 2019–2024 (millions of people)

Source: WFP annual country reports for Somalia for 2019–2024.

Strategic outcome 1: Meeting basic food and nutrition needs for crisis-affected people

23. **WFP contributed to preventing famine and averting further deterioration of the food security situation in Somalia.** WFP significantly scaled up emergency support over the course of the CSP, providing in-kind, nutrition and cash assistance to 9.7 million people in 2022 and 10.2 million people in 2023. Populations served included internally displaced persons and those suffering the effects of the multi-year drought and localized flooding. WFP's agility was facilitated by the CSP's crisis response components and preparedness measures (see box 1 above). The extensive delivery infrastructure in place, including the supply chain for both food and cash, worked through networks of retailers and cooperating partners, and the preregistration of beneficiaries in SCOPE and decentralized planning and implementation by area and field offices also played a key role.
24. Despite a significant scale-up of assistance, food security indicators only showed minimal improvement, with targets largely unmet. This can be attributed to the massive impact of the drought on livelihoods and food security, the relatively short timeframe of assistance and the scale-down of assistance after the drought in 2023 and 2024.
25. **Cash transfers exceeded food transfers during CSP implementation and proved crucial for timely response, cost-efficiency, beneficiary flexibility and the stimulation of local economies.** The greater volume of cash-based transfers (CBTs) was in line with the gradual shift envisaged in the CSP. The choice of transfer modality was largely driven by market functionality, conflict-related considerations, beneficiary preference and regional variations in the minimum expenditure basket that were not reflected in initial planning (figure 4).
26. **Use of mobile cash transfers enabled people to purchase food locally, bypassing logistical and security risks and providing beneficiaries with the flexibility to prioritize their most urgent needs.** Beneficiaries receiving cash displayed significantly less asset depletion than those who received in-kind assistance or vouchers. Cash assistance also stimulated local economies by increasing local demand for goods and services.
27. Emergency school feeding under strategic outcome 1 was not implemented because insufficient funding was received for that activity.

Figure 4: Planned vs actual CBTs and food distributed to strategic outcome 1 beneficiaries

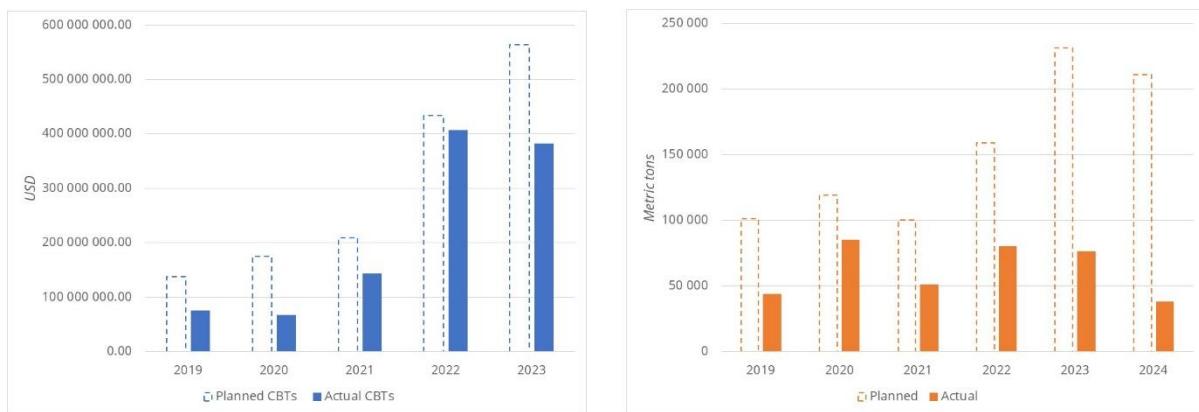
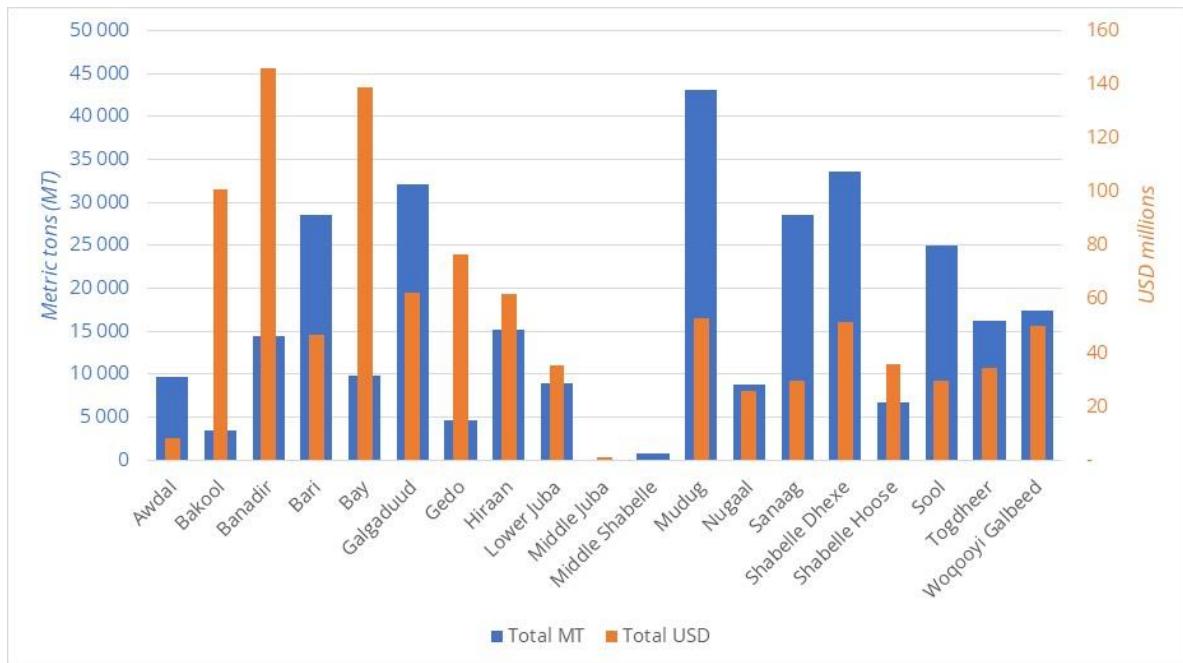


Figure 5: Distribution of food and CBTs by region, strategic outcome 1 CSP (2022–2025)



Source: Annual country reports for food and cash planned and distributed, 2024.

Strategic outcome 2: Supporting improved nutrition and resilience through integrated social services and safety nets, and enhanced national capacities

28. WFP successfully positioned itself as the partner of choice for the Federal Government of Somalia in the implementation of a national social protection system that successfully reached vulnerable households with shock-responsive cash transfers.

WFP was instrumental in supporting government efforts to build a social protection system in Somalia, developing the targeting methodology, facilitating cash transfers and strengthening government capacity for the World Bank funded "Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project", supporting direct transfers and digital literacy training for women in vulnerable households. The programme was successfully handed over to the Federal Government in 2024. Despite these achievements, inflation, shocks and the relatively limited amount of cash transferred to beneficiaries hindered improvements in food security status.

29. **The school feeding programme reached only a small proportion of eligible children due to funding constraints and delivery challenges.** Although the school feeding programme achieved most of its planned output targets in 2022 and 2023 and approached retention rate targets in 2022 and 2023, the relative scale of the programme was small compared to the overall need – equivalent to just 6 percent of the estimated number of out-of-school children. Resources covered only 3 percent of the targeted children. Implementation was complicated by fluctuating funding, inconsistent food procurement practices and varying approaches to programme implementation in participating schools.
30. **The success of WFP programmes for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition fluctuated annually because of funding and access constraints.** When funding and access were available (notably in 2022), WFP's malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes under strategic outcome 2 achieved most planned outcomes, including in relation to recovery and reduced mortality, and non-response and default rates, although dietary diversity did not improve among those assisted. WFP demonstrated adaptability in implementation, including in its targeting of vulnerable groups in high-risk areas, where cooperating partners in nutrition education played an important role. However, programme effectiveness was limited by significant coverage gaps, particularly during years of limited funding.

Strategic outcome 3: Strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers and communities

31. **WFP's resilience programming had limited success, constrained by lack of funding, logistical challenges and insufficient post-harvest support for farmers from WFP and others.** Farmers participating in WFP food assistance for assets and food assistance for training programming reported positive changes, such as enhanced collective bargaining power and more consistent access to stable markets, including through the school feeding programme. However, funding shortages limited the number of households involved, and implementation challenges included inadequate transportation for participants, limited market access, and insufficient availability of credit for financing farming requirements. Forced population displacement driven by drought, and donor requirements that resilience programming be implemented where humanitarian programming was taking place, were also complicating factors.

Strategic outcome 4: Strengthening national programmes and systems

32. **Under the CSP, WFP bolstered the capacity of national institutions and government agencies, adopting a more strategic, sector-specific approach compared to that taken under the ICSP.** WFP worked to strengthen state and federal capacity and systems by filling human and financial resource gaps at the federal and state levels, providing technical expertise, and supporting data-driven planning. This included helping ministries to develop strategic plans, establishing new units and coordination mechanisms, deploying technical experts, and training staff through workshops and mentorship. A key achievement through WFP's support was the development of a unified social registry, which serves as the backbone of the Government's social protection system. WFP also aided evidence-based planning through surveys and assessments conducted to inform policy and planning. Although WFP sought to focus its capacity strengthening efforts in specific sectors, in practice initiatives did not benefit from clear capacity assessments and often lacked clear strategies for ensuring sustainability independent of WFP support. WFP also spread its resources thinly, across multiple initiatives, hindering sustainable outcomes.

Cross-cutting issues

Despite dedicated mechanisms and programming to integrate WFP's cross-cutting concerns related to protection, accountability to affected people, gender equality and women's empowerment, and disability inclusion, contextual risks and social and cultural barriers constrained the effectiveness of WFP's efforts. Notwithstanding these challenges, WFP adhered to humanitarian principles in CSP implementation.

33. **WFP took steps to consider gender, conflict sensitivity and disability in its programming by prioritizing households headed by women and consulting with communities to ensure transparency and promote a "do no harm" approach.** While WFP endeavoured to achieve gender balance in relief assistance and sought to mitigate potential conflicts through community engagement, social and cultural barriers limited women's participation in committees. Despite efforts, the inclusion of persons with disabilities was not optimal. In addition, challenges in data collection hindered the effective targeting of displaced populations and measures taken to ensure non-discrimination across various groups.
34. **In a context of major protection challenges, the country office demonstrated commitment to addressing, mitigating and preventing protection risks.** Protection risks in Somalia persist due to conflict and climate shocks. WFP developed a country-specific protection framework, adapted from the corporate protection and accountability policy, in order to mainstream protection throughout its activities. This included training for staff and partners and working in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to roll out protection guidance, conduct protection risk assessments, improve food distribution points and ensure regular monitoring. Despite these efforts, however, instances of insecurity during food distribution were reported, particularly in internally displaced persons settings.
35. **Measures to enhance accountability to affected people were implemented but underutilized.** WFP efforts included strengthening community feedback mechanisms and expanding call centres and helpdesks to encourage feedback. However, the utilization of community feedback mechanisms was limited, and it was challenging to use feedback data to inform programme decisions.
36. **The country office enhanced capacity and reporting infrastructure in relation to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and sought to mitigate PSEA risks in programme design.** The country office established a senior-level PSEA task force and supported training for community health workers and partners to strengthen referral pathways. WFP actively participated in inter-agency work through the United Nations Somalia PSEA network, UNHCR-led protection clusters and gender-based violence clusters led by the United Nations Population Fund and the Ministry of Women for service referrals. Through its programming WFP made efforts to reduce PSEA risks (e.g., through mobile money transfers and secure distribution sites) with varying effectiveness. Despite such efforts, threats of sexual violence were reported.
37. **Although gender equality and women's empowerment strategies were successfully integrated in programming, more time was needed to yield results.** Efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and disability in programming included increasing gender analysis, ensuring that nutrition programmes were gender-responsive, prioritizing women in assistance, enhancing women's financial and digital inclusion and encouraging women's decision-making. WFP also implemented disability-inclusive practices through data collection, assessments and partnerships with disability and minority-led organizations to ensure that assistance was disability-inclusive. However, given societal

dynamics and cultural barriers, particularly related to women's roles, it will take time for these efforts to bear fruit.

38. **Amid complex political dynamics and operating conditions, WFP adhered to the humanitarian principles.** The evaluation found that WFP remained committed to delivering assistance in a principled manner despite the complex operating environment by prioritizing vulnerable populations, strengthening accountability and collaborating with key stakeholders. Box 2 sets out how the humanitarian principles were addressed.

Box 2: Consideration of humanitarian principles in the implementation of the Somalia CSP

Humanity: Prioritization of the most vulnerable (women, children, persons with disabilities and minorities) using targeting strategies with strong community engagement; leveraging of partners to reach hard-to-access locations; application of security assessments and safe distribution practices to ensure protection.

Impartiality: Distribution of assistance based on comprehensive needs assessments and vulnerability criteria; recognition and navigation of clan dynamics and local power and influence.

Neutrality: In the face of challenges stemming from changes in government and working in politically contested areas and in Al-Shabaab controlled areas, the avoidance of taking sides and engagement with diverse local partners in order to avoid perceptions of bias.

Independence: Transparent communication of cooperating partner selection criteria and process, and openness to discussing the process; clear communication of rationale for decision-making with the authorities, acting in solidarity with other partners such as the cash consortium partners; focus on the most vulnerable, guided by assessments; staff and cooperating partner training to uphold principles and apply selection criteria.

39. **Humanitarian-development linkages were constrained.** While the humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus was articulated in the CSP design, related activities and approaches during implementation were few in number and small in scale due to inadequate funding and, in particular, the earmarking of funding for specific groups and geographic locations. WFP's integrated anticipatory action in relation to resilience building and government capacity strengthening may support long-term solutions to food crises.

Efficiency and risk

WFP prioritized cost-efficiency, and the response was largely timely. WFP demonstrated an intensified approach to risk over the CSP implementation period, including through measures under its global assurance project.

40. **The country office implemented several measures to enhance cost-consciousness and improve the cost-efficiency of its operations.** These included increasing the use of CBTs, which reduced food transport expenses, and optimizing warehouse utilization, which resulted in the closure of the Bossaso field office. WFP also consolidated the number of cooperating partners (from 100 in 2022 to 54 in 2024) and supported cooperating partner efforts to implement multiple activities and share indirect costs. Other measures included reviewing staff mission protocols and procurement practices.

41. **The response was largely timely despite pipeline challenges.** WFP strategies for preventing food assistance pipeline breaks included the use of advance funding mechanisms, globally pre-positioned goods and flexible delivery modalities. These were largely successful, with minimal reports of delays in relief assistance, although harsh

weather resulted in some commodity transport delays and beneficiaries who were not pre-registered in SCOPE experienced less timely support. Nutrition and school feeding activities were mostly delivered within intended timeframes where funding was available.

42. **Amid ongoing and well-documented risks, including persistent allegations of fraud and confirmed cases of aid diversion in Somalia,¹⁸ WFP strengthened existing risk management protocols and maintained a dynamic approach to anticipating and mitigating risks.** Risks related to Somalia's challenging operating environment included security and access challenges; challenges related to post-distribution aid diversion owing to fraud and corruption; and limited capacity of cooperating partners and logistical hurdles because of poor infrastructure. Due to a combination of these risks, and instances of post-distribution aid diversion in particular, WFP's operation in Somalia was identified as one of 31 high-risk WFP operations globally.
43. **WFP adopted a systematic approach to risk management for both staff and operations and adjusted to emerging issues over the course of the CSP.** Measures included creating a dedicated risk management unit and conducting extensive vetting and training of cooperating partners. In 2024, as part of WFP's global assurance project, a dedicated assurance plan to combat post-distribution aid diversion included enhanced mechanisms for unbiased household identification, increased monitoring and feedback, stronger partner management, and enhanced risk unit capacity. These measures, alongside policy engagement with the authorities to prohibit aid resale, helped to maintain donor trust and sustain funding despite ongoing challenges.

Partnerships

WFP's strategic and operational partnerships established during the CSP were appropriate, well aligned with mandates and roles, and critical for the achievement of CSP results. However, opportunities for joint programming with other United Nations and private sector entities were not fully exploited.

44. **Partnerships with cooperating partners, predominantly local NGOs, were critical in the achievement of CSP results.** Cooperating partners enabled WFP to reach communities inaccessible to WFP staff due to United Nations security protocols. They supported beneficiary registration, aid distribution and the mainstreaming of protection and gender measures. Efficiency was facilitated by selecting partners that had existing arrangements with other key United Nations delivery partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). However, security protocols limiting WFP staff time in the field meant that WFP technical expertise was not exploited fully.
45. **WFP's partnership with federal and state ministries was strategic, aligning with CSP outcomes.** WFP's work with government entities in strategic planning, institutional strengthening and analysis and evidence generation contributed to policy reforms. It also helped to improve humanitarian coordination, supporting interministerial participation in disaster management and response. Coordination with the authorities to establish guidance, raise community awareness and conduct monitoring helped to combat aid diversion.

¹⁸ United Nations Security Council. 2023. *Situation in Somalia: Report to the Secretary-General*.

46. **Private sector engagement, although limited, led to successful initiatives.** Partnerships with retailers and financial service providers leveraged mobile technology and market development, boosting financial inclusion and creating market links for farmers. Collaboration with local retailers also expanded access, offering beneficiaries greater choice and fostering local economic benefits.

47. **There remains scope to maximize opportunities for joint programming with other United Nations entities.** Partnerships with UNICEF and FAO supported an integrated resilience programme, and WFP worked with the International Organization for Migration and UNHCR to deliver assistance to newly displaced persons and refugees. Despite these efforts, competition for resources and varying decision-making processes, planning cycles and implementation schedules prevented United Nations entities from fully leveraging joint programming opportunities.

Human and financial resources

WFP's structure and human resource capacity were appropriate, well aligned with the CSP and adapted to the circumstances in Somalia. WFP mobilized adequate resources for relief and nutrition activities but fewer resources for school feeding, resilience and livelihood and capacity strengthening activities, impeding results.

48. **The adequacy of financial resources was one of the main factors determining programme performance.** Overall, adequate financial resources were mobilized for relief and air transport and logistics activities to respond to humanitarian priorities. This success stemmed from effective strategies, such as collaborating with other United Nations entities and the authorities on crisis alerts and donor advocacy, and leveraging longstanding relationships with humanitarian donors. For the safety net programme WFP was chosen as a partner for CBTs, utilizing World Bank funding secured by the Federal Government rather than raising additional funds itself. The adequacy of funding for humanitarian and safety net initiatives directly contributed to their strong performance.

49. **For school feeding, food systems and capacity strengthening initiatives, humanitarian donors, who are WFP's primary funders in Somalia, were reluctant to enter into the long-term commitments required.** Resource mobilization strategies, such as showcasing results and joint programming for these areas, proved inadequate. This funding weakness significantly affected CSP implementation, hindering links between activities, impeding programme integration and making it difficult to implement a triple nexus approach, ultimately showing that some of the initial funding assumptions for the CSP were unrealistic.

50. The country office underwent significant staffing and structural changes in an effort to enhance its operational effectiveness. Its relocation from Nairobi to Mogadishu brought senior management closer to operations and stakeholders, improving oversight and communication, and was complemented by decentralizing functions to area offices and recruiting more Somali national staff. The latter deepened cultural understanding and fostered better collaboration with local authorities.

Monitoring systems

WFP's monitoring systems enabled it to track CSP implementation and results, and to some extent they informed decision-making, but gaps persist in some areas of performance tracking and data management and use.

51. **While designed to work on various levels to provide complementary data, the utility of WFP monitoring systems in Somalia is limited.** The evaluation found evidence of process monitoring by field staff frequently informing operational decisions on matters such as improving distribution points or addressing CBT delays. However, its use for broader problem solving remains limited. At the output and outcome levels, data gaps in critical areas (e.g., capacity strengthening, food systems, nutrition and gender); the use of project-specific indicators; and variable detail on the level of assistance, combined with factors arising from Somalia's complex circumstances such as beneficiary rotation and varying nutrition cohorts, make it hard to establish trends or precisely determine WFP's long-term contributions in Somalia. Overall, the system struggles with data management and consistent data use, particularly for high-level strategic adjustments.

Recommendations

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen linkages in the implementation of relief to resilience and livelihood building and capacity strengthening to establish building blocks for a sustainable response to food crises in Somalia in line with the federal and state governments' goal of transitioning from ad hoc humanitarian response to more long-term programming.</p>	Strategic	Country office management	Programme teams; Regional office	High	June 2026
1.1 Enhance integrated programming backed by geographic analysis of which integrated service packages can be provided in which geographic areas.					
1.2 Develop a comprehensive strategy to guide the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus informed by a realistic resilience and livelihood needs assessment considering ecological zones and capacity and resource needs to effectively translate the triple nexus into practical action and ensure potential integration with relief activities.					
1.3 Further refine the links to and role of social protection under all CSP outcomes.					
<p>Recommendation 2: Ensure that the needs-based plan for resilience, school feeding and nutrition programming is informed by realistic resourcing assumptions, based on scenario planning and backed by a realistic resource mobilization strategy.</p>	Strategic	Country office management	Country office partnerships	High	June 2026
2.1 Develop innovative resource mobilization strategies for the CSP, leveraging opportunities such as joint programming and partnerships with development-oriented actors.					
2.2 Develop a school feeding programme strategy that includes a long-term scenario-based investment plan that shows donors and the authorities where investments are needed, which resources are required and for how long.					
<p>Recommendation 3: Improve programme design and adaptation based on better integrated analysis and use of monitoring data, building on progress made in gender mainstreaming. In addition, disseminate good practices in the implementation of WFP's assurance plan and risk management.</p>	Operational	Country office programme team	Monitoring and evaluation teams	Medium	June 2026
3.1 Enhance gender mainstreaming by building on progress in capacity building, operationalizing the tools in place, reporting on gender indicators and using gender-disaggregated data.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.2 Improve the use of monitoring data through regular dissemination of internal reporting and triangulation of monitoring data from various types of monitoring (process, output, outcome, community feedback mechanisms).					
3.3 Collaborate with WFP global headquarters to share good practices in the implementation of WFP's assurance plan and risk management.					
Recommendation 4: Align partnerships with the requirements of the next CSP to make clear how each partnership will influence or contribute to achievement of CSP results. This may be achieved through the following steps:	Strategic	Country office programme team	Partnerships team; Regional office	High	June 2026
4.1 Develop a robust partnership strategy aligning and expanding strategic and operational partnerships within the strategic direction of the next CSP and changing circumstances in Somalia.					
4.2 Establish a systematic approach to building partnerships with the authorities, other United Nations entities, other development actors and private sector entities at the country office and area office levels in line with the partnership strategy.	Strategic	Country office programme team		High	June 2026
Recommendation 5: Ensure that the government capacity-strengthening approach is based on clearly articulated objectives and defined targets and that the overall scope of capacity strengthening is informed by funding expectations and WFP technical capacity at the country office and field levels.					
5.1 Enhance the use of capacity assessments to better tailor capacity strengthening initiatives.					
5.2 Focus, where relevant, on regional and state-based approaches to capacity strengthening while maintaining support and aligning at both the federal and state levels.					
5.3 Strengthen coordination of government capacity strengthening with other partners supporting similar efforts.					

Acronyms

CBT	cash-based transfer
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NBP	needs-based plan
PSEA	protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
SCOPE	WFP's digital beneficiary information and transfer management platform
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund