World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

Executive Board
Second regular session
Rome, 16–18 November 2026

Distribution: General
Date: 8 September 2026
Original: English

Agenda item 6
WFP/EB.2/2026/6-B/3
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 Tajikistan (2023–2026)

Executive summary

The evaluation of the country strategic plan for Tajikistan for 2023–2026, covering the period from January 2022 to September 2025, was conducted between April 2025 and February 2026. The evaluation served both accountability and learning purposes and has informed the preparation of the next country strategic plan.

Despite its 2021 transition to lower-middle-income status, Tajikistan remains highly exposed to external and climate shocks. Food insecurity is widespread: 2.6 million people cannot afford a healthy diet, and stunting affects 13.1 percent of children under 5. Structural agricultural constraints, recurrent natural hazards and pervasive poverty continue to erode household resilience. WFP's country strategic plan is aligned effectively with national priorities through four outcomes related to food security, nutrition, resilience and emergency preparedness.

The evaluation concluded that WFP's strategic positioning in Tajikistan was adequately underpinned by strong analytical foundations and regular food security monitoring. The country strategic plan was well aligned with national priorities and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2023–2026. Its shift towards system strengthening, particularly in school feeding, nutrition, climate services and emergency preparedness, reflected WFP's comparative advantages and contributed to increased national ownership. However, engagement in social protection and food systems remains at an early stage, largely constrained by resource limitations and project-based funding.

This is a summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Tajikistan. The full evaluation report and related documents are available on WFP's website at https://www.wfp.org/publications/evaluation-tajikistan-wfp-country-strategic-plan-2023-2026.

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

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The school meal programme continued to serve as one of the country's largest social safety nets, reaching nearly half a million children annually in food-insecure districts, although pipeline and procurement delays reduced the number of feeding days and led to reliance on community contributions. Nutrition programming delivered high rates of recovery from moderate acute malnutrition, but its geographic coverage remained limited owing to funding constraints.

Resilience-building interventions generated positive outcomes in remote, climate-affected areas. Institutional capacity strengthening at the national and district levels improved climate information services and contributed to integrating climate risks into local development plans. However, scale remained below expectations on account of delays in cash-based transfer systems, limited access to financial services and inconsistent funding flows.

Efficiency varied across programmatic areas. Programmes with predictable, multi-year funding, particularly those focused on school feeding and emergency response, performed well. By contrast, resilience, nutrition and social protection activities faced delays stemming from procurement challenges, staffing gaps and donor-driven project-based implementation. Cross-cutting areas showed uneven progress. Equality between women and men was consistently mainstreamed, and disability inclusion improved, but the systematic inclusion of persons with disabilities, accountability to affected people and environmental considerations remained limited.

The evaluation made four recommendations for WFP's next country strategic plan: position WFP as a systems enabler in Tajikistan's evolving social protection framework by operationalizing its value proposition through a systems lens; strengthen WFP's internal organizational arrangements, including mapping and identifying bottlenecks, streamlining internal decision-making processes and empowering national staff; consolidate and contextualize WFP's climate portfolio; and promote and advocate the integration of home-grown school feeding approaches into the national school feeding programme, supporting its scalability and sustainability.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Tajikistan (2023–2026) (WFP/EB.2/2026/6-B/3) and the management response (WFP/EB.2/2026/6-B/3/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. The WFP Office of Evaluation completed an evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Tajikistan for 2023–2026. The evaluation also considered the final year of the previous CSP (covering 2019–2022) to assess strategic shifts and continuity, analyse trends in results and examine contextual developments and the design process of the current CSP. Covering the period from January 2022 to September 2025, the evaluation aimed to provide evidence for learning and accountability purposes and to inform the design of the next CSP.

2. The evaluation was conducted between April 2025 and February 2026. Fieldwork took place in September 2025 and was followed by debriefing sessions. In January 2026, an evaluation stakeholder workshop was held in Dushanbe to review the key insights of the evaluation and refine the draft recommendations.

3. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the Tajikistan country office and field offices, WFP global headquarters and the WFP Executive Board. External users include the United Nations country team, the Government of Tajikistan, donors, cooperating partners and affected people.

Context

4. Despite Tajikistan's significant progress over the years and its status as a lower-middle-income country since 2021,[1] the country remains highly vulnerable to external shocks. Hunger levels have declined in the last two decades, moving from "alarming" to "moderate". [2] However, food insecurity persists, particularly in the District of Republican Subordination and the Khatlon region, where around 19 percent of the population is food insecure.[3] Malnutrition remains a significant public health issue. In 2024, an estimated 2.6 million people were unable to afford a healthy diet.[4] Despite progress since 2000, stunting among children under 5 remains high, at 13.1 percent in 2025, while wasting stands at 6.4 percent, and the prevalence of undernourishment in the total population is 8.4 percent.[5]

[1] "Tajikistan country strategic plan (2023–2026)" (WFP/EB.2/2022/7-A/13).

[2] Concern Worldwide and others. 2025. Global Hunger Index – 2025: Tajikistan. Accessed on 29 October 2025.

[3] WFP Tajikistan. 2025. Food security monitoring system results.

[4] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others. 2025. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025 – Addressing high food price inflation for food security and nutrition.*

[5] Concern Worldwide and others. 2025. Global Hunger Index – 2025: Tajikistan. Accessed on 29 October 2025.

5. The country is highly vulnerable to natural hazards and climate-related shocks, including landslides, earthquakes, floods, droughts and avalanches,[6] and it is projected to experience temperature increases significantly above the global average, of up to 5.8°C by the 2090s, which intensifies its vulnerabilities and disaster risks.[7] During the CSP implementation period, the country experienced flash floods in May 2023 and an earthquake in April 2025, to which the Government and WFP jointly responded.

6. Agriculture employs 43 percent of the population and contributes 22 percent of gross domestic product,[8] yet it is constrained by the fact that 93 percent of the territory is mountainous, leaving limited arable land that consists mostly of smallholder and family farms[9] with poor infrastructure and inadequate machinery and equipment.[10]

7. According to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*, Tajikistan ranked 129th of 148 countries in terms of equality between men and women, highlighting persistent challenges related to economic and political empowerment.[11] As at 2023, Tajikistan had registered over 159,000 persons with disabilities, including 32,000 children, who face barriers in access to education, healthcare and social welfare services.[12]

8. Tajikistan hosts the largest number of refugees in Central Asia, most of whom originate from Afghanistan.[13] It is estimated that around 500,000 working-age people, mostly men (85.5 percent), leave the country every year to work abroad as seasonal labourers.

9. Figure 1 gives an overview of developments in Tajikistan and WFP's operations since 2020.

[6] World Bank Group and Asian Development Bank. 2021. *Climate Risk Country Profile: Tajikistan*.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] World Bank Group. Country page: Tajikistan. Accessed on 29 October 2025.

[9] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2020. *Smallholders and family farms in Tajikistan: Country study report 2019*.

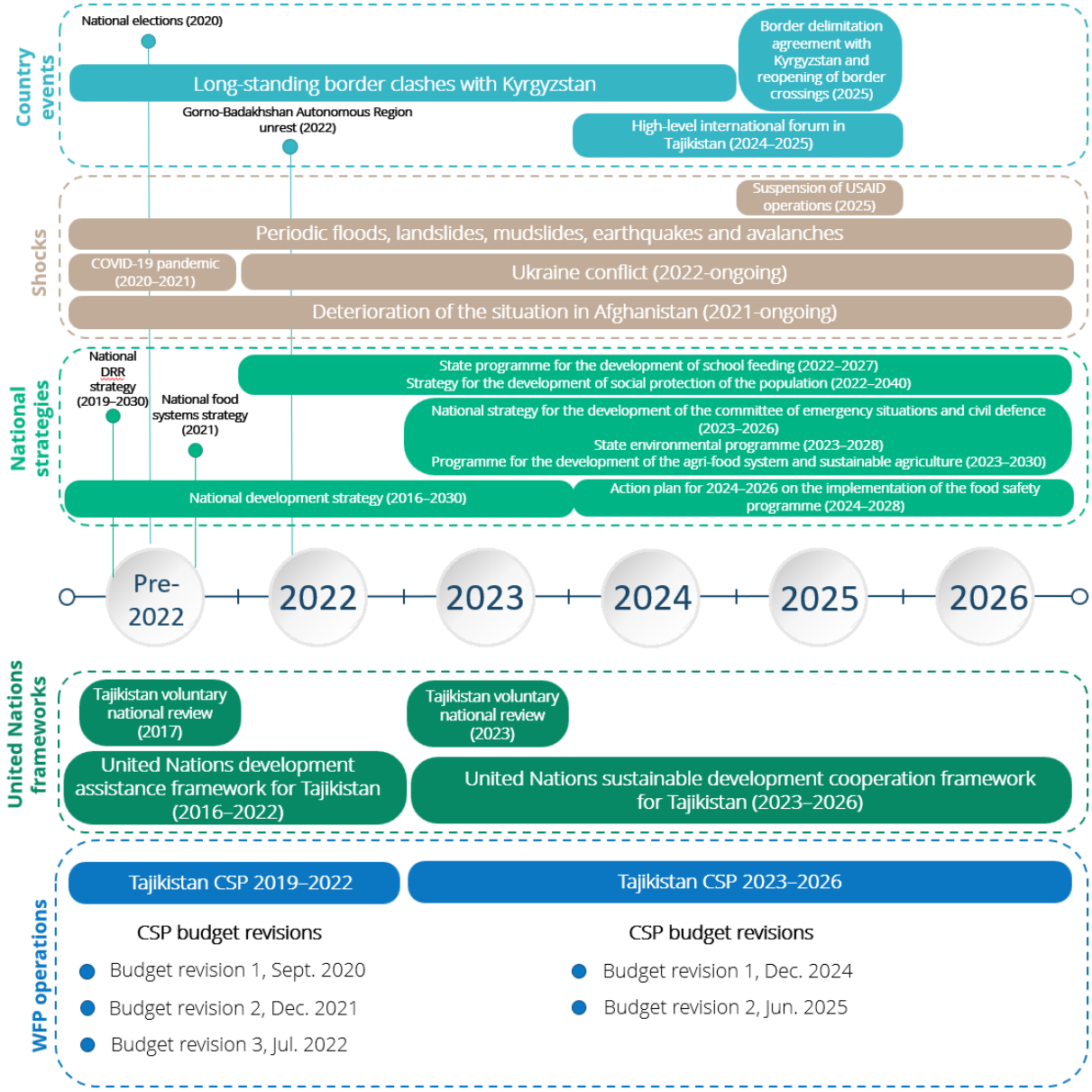
[10] International Fund for Agricultural Development. Country page: Tajikistan. Accessed on 29 October 2025.

[11] World Economic Forum. 2025. *Global Gender Gap Report 2025: Insight Report*.

[12] United Nations Children's Fund. Tajikistan: Child Protection and Inclusion. Accessed on 29 October 2025.

[13] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Country page: Tajikistan.

Figure 1: Country context and WFP operational overview



Abbreviations: DRR = disaster risk reduction; COVID-19 = coronavirus disease 2019; CSP = country strategic plan; and USAID = former United States Agency for International Development.

WFP interventions in Tajikistan

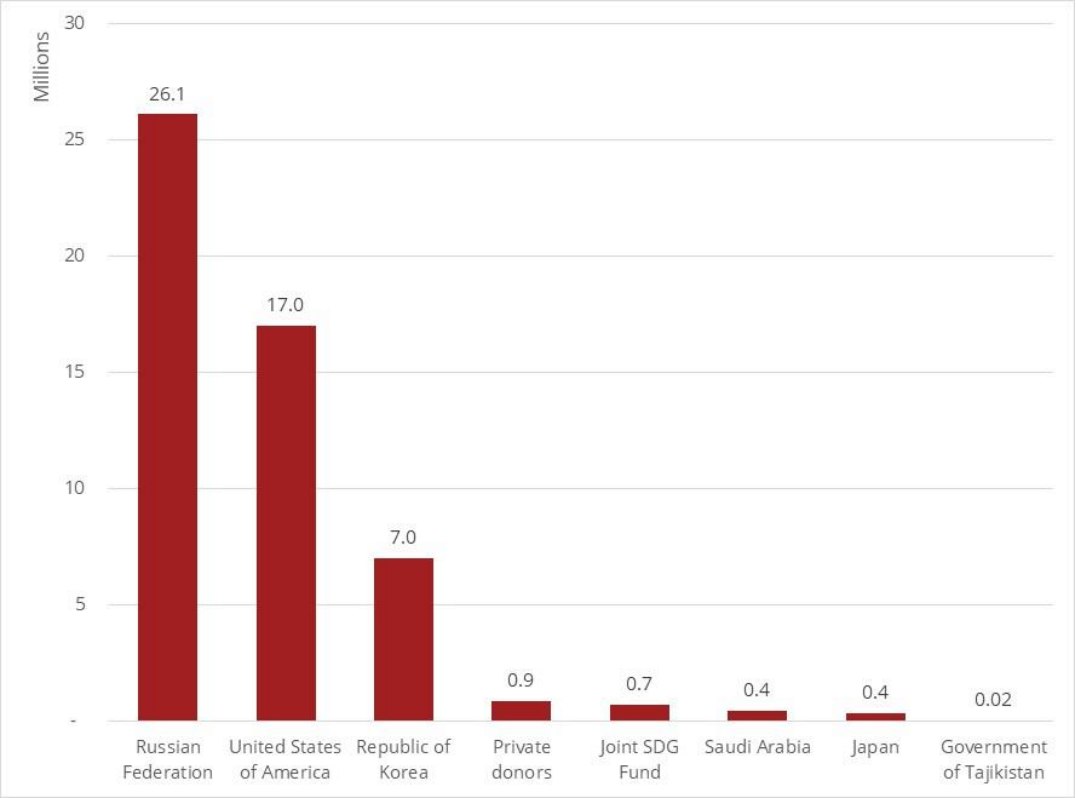
10. WFP Tajikistan progressed from the transitional interim CSP for 2018–2019 to its first CSP (2019–2022) and then the current CSP (2023–2026). The focus of these plans gradually shifted from direct implementation to supporting and strengthening government-led systems for food security, nutrition, resilience-building and emergency preparedness and response.

11. The CSP for 2023–2026 includes four outcomes, in pursuit of which the country office provides support in thematic areas including climate adaptation (under outcome 1), school meal programmes (outcome 2), nutrition (outcomes 2 and 3), food assistance, emergency preparedness and response and on-demand services (outcome 3). The CSP integrates country capacity-strengthening under all outcomes but places specific focus on it under outcome 4, under investments in social protection (see figure 3).

12. The CSP was approved with original country portfolio needs of USD 91.9 million. The total needs subsequently increased to USD 95.3 million through two budget revisions and one technical revision. These revisions included an adjustment to the direct support cost to reflect updated cost estimates following a staffing review conducted in November 2022 and the expansion of human resources at the country office. For the period 2023–2025, cumulative needs amounted to USD 72.5 million. As at September 2025, allocated resources totalled USD 62.7 million, representing 86 percent of the needs-based plan.

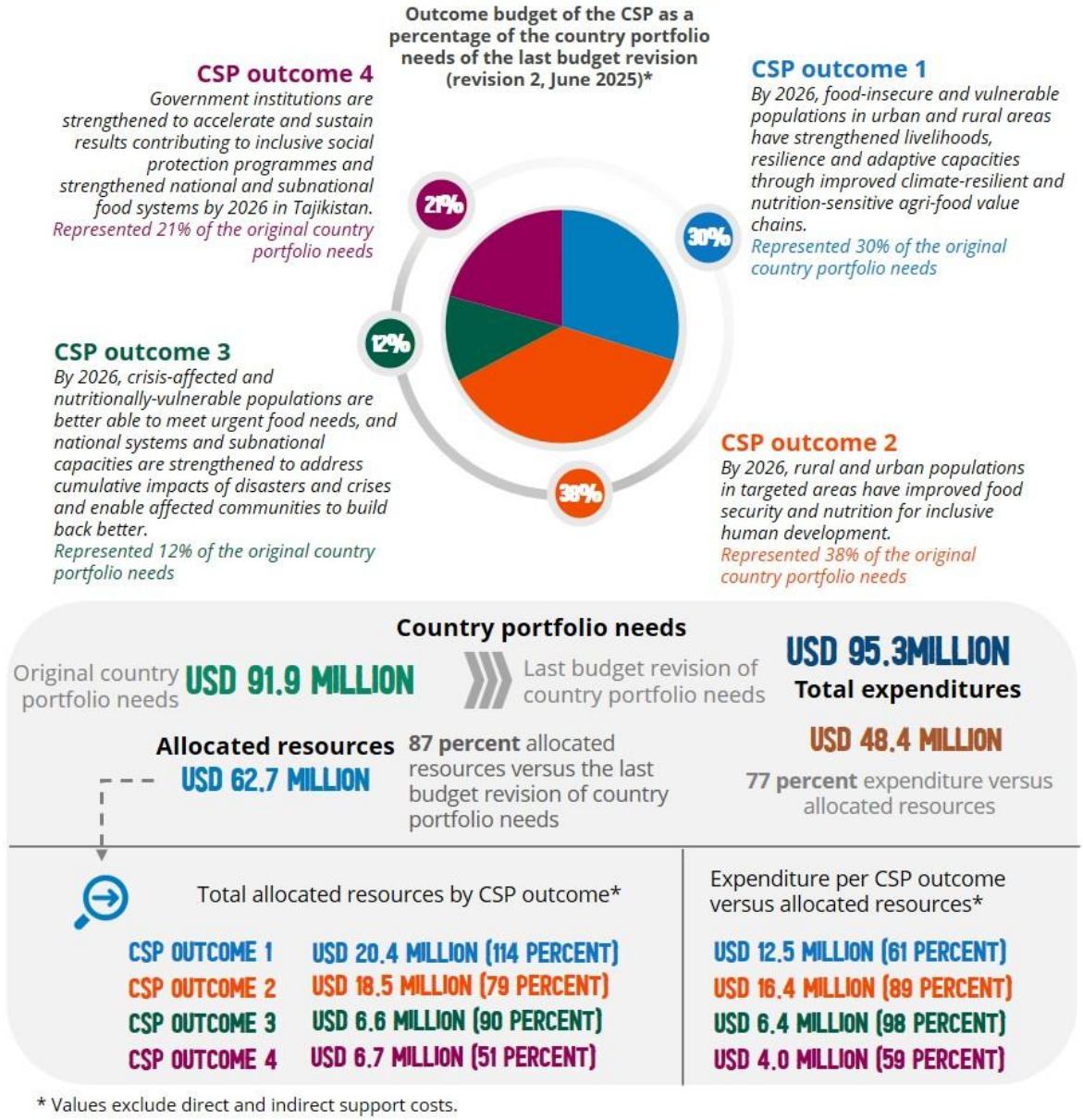
13. During the implementation period, the Russian Federation was the largest donor to WFP Tajikistan, with a focus on providing resources for the school meal programme. The United States of America, the Republic of Korea, private donors, the Joint SDG Fund, Saudi Arabia, Japan and the Government of Tajikistan (see figure 2) also provided substantial funding for the CSP.

Figure 2: Donor contributions to WFP Tajikistan country strategic plans (2022–2025)



Source: FACTory, distribution, contribution and forecast stats, 2025-11-10.

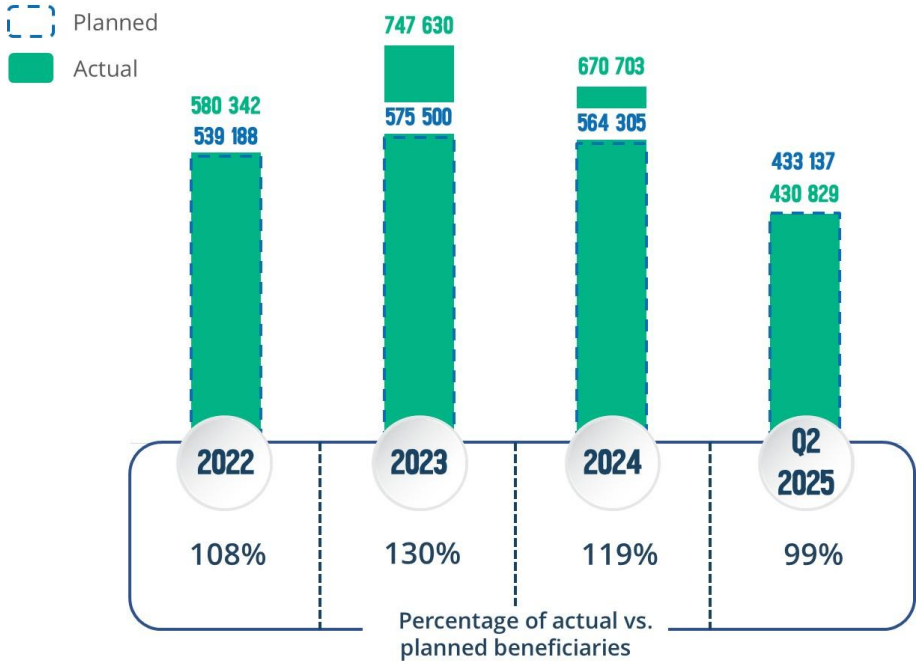
Figure 3: Tajikistan country strategic plan (2023–2026) outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures



* Values exclude direct and indirect support costs.

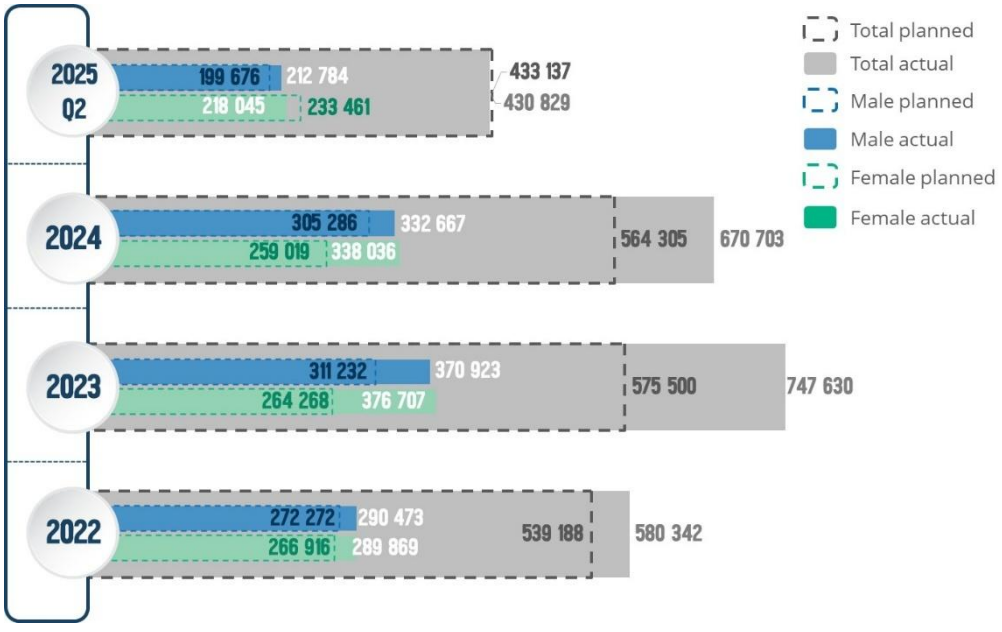
14. Most activities reached more beneficiaries than planned, particularly smallholder support under outcome 1 and school feeding under outcomes 2 and 4. In contrast, fewer beneficiaries than planned were reached in nutrition activities under outcome 2 owing to limited funding, and under outcome 3, which was the least-funded component following the deprioritization of refugee assistance and a shift towards responding to local emergencies such as floods and mudslides.

Figure 4: Planned and actual beneficiaries by year, 2022–2025



15. The vast majority of beneficiaries under the CSP were reached through in-kind food assistance, while cash-based modalities were used only for a small fraction of beneficiaries. The number of beneficiaries receiving cash-based transfers was highest in 2024, at 59,808, representing less than 10 percent of the total beneficiaries that year.

Figure 5: Planned and actual beneficiaries by sex and year, 2022–2025



Summary of key insights from the evaluation

Relevance and strategic alignment

WFP has been strategically well-positioned in Tajikistan, leveraging its mandate, technical expertise, field presence and partnerships to respond to urgent needs and national priorities in food security, nutrition, social protection, climate resilience and emergency preparedness.

16. **The CSP was aligned with Tajikistan's national development strategy and filled gaps not fully covered by other actors.** The CSP was aligned with the country's national development strategy for the period up to 2030 and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2023–2026. WFP's contribution focused on areas where the organization has a comparative advantage, including school feeding, food security monitoring, logistics coordination, nutrition, climate-related shocks and resilience. These efforts helped to address gaps not fully covered by government or other partners, and both government and United Nations partners valued WFP's technical expertise and operational support, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. Engagement in social protection and food systems remained limited to pilot initiatives and policy dialogue, with WFP's role recognized but not yet clearly defined.

17. **The CSP drew on a broad evidence base and a consultative design process** that strengthened its relevance and guided capacity-strengthening priorities. Capacity strengthening was mainstreamed across the CSP, which helped to enhance the relevance of interventions, although capacity needs assessments were mostly ad hoc and project-specific, which limited the extent to which the broader country capacity-strengthening objectives identified in consultation with stakeholders could be operationalized.

18. **On paper, the WFP country office has advanced a systematic partnership approach aligned with the CSP**, supported by strong collaboration frameworks and a partnership action plan. The plan articulates a shift from fragmented, project-based engagement to longer-term, strategic partnerships, and it presents efforts to leverage WFP's comparative advantages, including technical expertise in emergency preparedness, school feeding, adaptation to climate shocks and resilience, a strong field presence, logistics infrastructure and implementation capacity. However, this shift is still in the process of being fully realized in practice.

19. **Collaboration with government entities at the national level has been strong**, with formalized roles in key sectors and joint implementation in areas such as school feeding and disaster preparedness. WFP collaborates extensively with other United Nations entities, including the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, through joint programming, assessments and thematic coordination platforms. Communication efforts supported donor visibility and public recognition of WFP's activities, particularly through success stories and operational reporting. At a decentralized level, however, participation of local authorities varied between CSP components and projects.

20. **The CSP remained responsive and adaptive to the needs of the most vulnerable population groups**, supported by strong vulnerability assessment systems, which monitored food security through regular and rapid assessments. Evidence generated through these exercises supported operational adjustments, such as the retargeting of assistance or adjustments to delivery schedules. However, the systematic use of such tools in formal planning, decision-making and adaptive management remains uneven.

21. The available evidence helped WFP to tailor its assistance to food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable groups in underserved areas prone to shocks. The country office's targeting and prioritization strategy provided guidance for vulnerability-based geographic and community-based targeting and was implemented in coordination with partners. This enabled school meals and resilience interventions to cover food-insecure populations in remote and mountainous areas. Blanket targeting for school feeding, targeted interventions for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, asset creation activities and emergency response operations ensured equitable access within selected locations.

Coherence and integration

The CSP aimed to bring about a strategic shift from project-based programming towards more integrated, systems-oriented support. WFP made progress in this shift, supported by sustained government partnerships, access to multi-source funding, innovation and enhanced digital systems. However, progress is not yet consolidated across the CSP, and it occurred incrementally, constrained by persistent project-based approaches, human resource limitations, slow administrative and decision-making processes and recurrent socioeconomic and climate shocks.

22. **The CSP aimed to move beyond project-based approaches by embedding capacity strengthening across sectors** and aligning school feeding, nutrition, resilience and social protection activities with national priorities. However, the absence of an explicit theory of change with defined causal pathways, assumptions and contextual factors limited the clarity of the CSP's internal logic and WFP's strategic positioning. As a result, the logical layering and sequencing of interventions and the conditions required for achieving CSP-level outcomes were not clearly articulated, which weakened the robustness and evaluability of the CSP's internal logic.

23. **WFP mobilized relatively strong, multi-year and diversified, but highly project-based funding** that enabled the continuation of core activities in school feeding and resilience despite broader funding volatility. In contrast, in malnutrition prevention and social protection, the primary constraint was limited funding, which restricted the scale, continuity and geographic coverage of activities. The largely project-based and earmarked nature of the funding also constrained WFP's ability to scale up interventions, deepen cross-sector integration and adjust activities beyond approved project scopes.

24. Similarly, despite a well-articulated partnerships strategy, **WFP's operational partnerships remained largely project-specific** and uneven, focused on specific national institutions rather than systems. There was limited integration of partners into programme design, review and learning processes, which in turn constrained shared ownership and coherence. Engagement with cooperating partners has remained largely transactional, focused on contract delivery rather than longer-term partnership development.

25. **Internal factors, such as staff turnover and siloed implementation** shaped by donor priorities, also contributed to inconsistencies in the alignment of different activities and undermined integrated planning throughout CSP implementation.

26. **Some synergies did emerge, particularly between school feeding, asset creation and local agriculture**, through support for farmers, home-grown school feeding and the Funds Transfer Pilot.[14] Additional linkages between school feeding and nutrition were strengthened through social and behaviour change communication, whereby nutrition messages were incorporated into school-based and public health institution activities.

[14] Through the Funds Transfer Pilot, schools receive funds to procure food directly from local markets to diversify meals and improve nutrition.

However, these linkages remained limited in scope and were not fully institutionalized across the portfolio of CSP activities.

27. **Looking ahead, the country office is in a better position to strengthen integration** as part of the next CSP, thanks to a more diversified funding portfolio, a recent workforce stabilization exercise in the country office and a clearer articulation of WFP's value proposition in social protection and resilience. WFP's ability to achieve sustained system-level gains in Tajikistan remains dependent on stronger internal coherence, a clearer articulation of its strategic role and a more consistent integration of activities across programme areas.

Contribution to results

WFP successfully contributed to the achievement of operational and community-level results, with significant improvements recorded in food security, nutrition and resilience. However, progress towards sustained system-level change remains incremental, reflecting challenges in government engagement, limited fiscal space and the current absence of an enabling policy framework for scaling up national programmes. Progress in strengthening sustainability through national ownership and long-term institutionalization remains dependent on further integration of WFP's support within national systems and financing structures.

28. **Under outcome 1** of the CSP for 2023–2026, WFP supported progress towards **resilience** objectives through a dual focus on **institutional capacity strengthening and community-level empowerment**. The intervention upgraded infrastructure, trained staff and digitized historical data, which increased the share of digital climate records. WFP's institutional capacity strengthening under outcome 1 achieved concrete technical results through investments in climate forecasting and planning tools. However, the consolidation of these approaches within national coordination and planning systems is still in its early stages owing to weak institutional uptake and the absence of sustained mechanisms for linking technical advances with planning processes.

29. The results of WFP's community resilience activities were most visible in remote and climate-shock affected districts where government systems had limited reach and households faced the greatest exposure to climate risks and food insecurity. At the community level, over three quarters of WFP's beneficiaries reported benefits from an enhanced livelihood asset base and greater protection from climate risks provided thanks to WFP's large-scale asset creation activities, conditional cash transfers, agricultural support and climate adaptation initiatives, particularly in hard-to-reach mountain districts. Despite constraints related to funding predictability and geographic coverage, food consumption indicators in targeted communities improved during the implementation period. For example, the percentage of households with acceptable food consumption scores increased from 80 percent in 2022 to 97 percent in 2023. Overall progress on resilience outcomes was unevenly distributed, and target populations remained vulnerable to external shocks.

30. The **school feeding activities under outcome 2** was the central component of WFP's portfolio throughout the CSP implementation period, combining large-scale service delivery with institutional capacity strengthening. Targeting almost half of the country's schools and over half a million children, **school feeding remained a reliable safety net** predominantly in rural areas, where food insecurity is most prevalent, and where school feeding can deliver the greatest benefits. The programme improved school enrolment and retention and contributed to strong educational outcomes, even though school meals were provided on fewer days per week than planned due to resource constraints, which required parents and schools to supplement the meals.

31. WFP advanced the **transition towards a nationally owned school feeding programme** through pilot initiatives linked to institutional capacity strengthening. These included the Funds Transfer Pilot, the home-grown school feeding model and school-level income-generating activities. The pilot projects strengthened school and community ownership and provided practical transition models. However, their overall scale and financial viability remained limited. In addition, opportunities for learning across the pilot approaches were not fully utilized, leading to geographically uneven progress towards a nationally owned school feeding programme. The evaluation found that beneficiaries generally preferred cash assistance, which allowed schools to diversify menus and add nutritional value, although WFP's provision of fortified flour remained a vital element in making meals more nutritious.

32. Alongside school feeding, **WFP's nutrition interventions achieved strong results in treating and reducing moderate acute malnutrition**. Despite high demand, interventions were constrained by limited funding and weak national prioritization. Consequently, treatment was targeted at five districts with limited public health services and high prevalence of moderate acute malnutrition, mainly in the Khatlon region. Programme quality remained high, with recovery rates consistently above Sphere Standards, and the strongest outcomes were observed in facilities where WFP supported both the supply of specialized nutritious foods and the training of health workers.

33. Malnutrition prevention through social and behaviour change communication initiatives increased knowledge and awareness of malnutrition, infant and young child feeding practices, and hygiene. Capacity strengthening of health professionals and the provision of specialized fortified food helped to achieve results. These interventions helped to fill critical gaps in service delivery where government provision was limited. However, results remained constrained by limited funding availability and fiscal constraints on the part of the Government, despite formal recognition of nutrition challenges at the policy level. The potential linkages between a nutrition-sensitive home-grown school feeding programme and early childhood nutrition remained limited and fragmented on account of resource and design constraints. The absence of a coherent life-cycle approach limits opportunities to align nutrition support across stages of child development and address malnutrition more systematically.

34. **Emergency assistance under outcome 3** aimed to enhance national emergency preparedness and provide timely food and nutrition assistance to both refugee and domestic populations affected by shocks. Despite funding constraints, **WFP delivered large-scale emergency assistance in response to floods and earthquakes**, which improved food consumption indicators in affected populations. WFP's support for emergency preparedness was effective. Implemented with national partners, it enhanced national systems by supporting registration, targeting and field monitoring capacities. Targeting was transparent and inclusive of persons with disabilities, reinforcing WFP's credibility in emergency response. Despite assistance, affected people remain highly vulnerable to recurrent shocks.

35. Complementing direct food assistance, WFP's **on-demand services** supported national and regional **crisis preparedness and humanitarian access**. WFP supported United Nations Humanitarian Air Service flights between Dushanbe and Kabul, including customs clearance of humanitarian cargo shipments by securing government authorization to use all major border crossing points. These interventions were effective, strengthening Tajikistan's role as a regional humanitarian logistics hub and reinforcing WFP's comparative advantage in emergency preparedness, logistics and the facilitation of humanitarian access.

36. WFP contributed to **strengthening national capacities in social protection**, **food systems** and **emergency preparedness under outcome 4,** with the most significant progress in school feeding, where WFP's technical and operational support enabled the establishment and full functioning of a national school feeding unit in 2023. The establishment of the unit, the development of menu and procurement standards and the training of school staff form the basis for school meals becoming a sustainable national safety net in the future. However, national financing remained limited, slowing the transition of the school meal programme towards full government ownership and long-term sustainability.

37. **WFP also supported government capacity in nutrition and food fortification** and strengthened technical and regulatory capacity by providing technical guidance and inputs to regulatory frameworks, and by establishing support systems, which covered more than 580,000 people in 2024. However, operational implementation and scale remained constrained by limited domestic financing, continued reliance on external support and the uneven absorption capacity of relevant institutions.

38. WFP contributed to improvements in **institutional emergency preparedness and coordination capacity** by updating guidelines, enhancing digital monitoring tools and improving early warning functions, such as forecasting tools in early warning systems, and a humanitarian stock pre-positioning database. These contributions improved the reliability and timeliness of preparedness efforts, enabling national actors to make decisions based on more consistent and evidence-driven analysis. They also strengthened coordination among stakeholders, supporting more efficient and predictable emergency response planning. However, progress was stronger at the technical level than at the strategic level. Fragmented institutional mandates, limited data interoperability, constrained domestic financing and the small scale of pilot initiatives hindered broader, system-wide integration and impeded progress towards a more coherent, shock-responsive social protection system.

39. The **sustainability of results achieved under the CSP varies across components**. While the prospects for social and environmental sustainability are strong at the community level, institutional and financial sustainability remain uneven. WFP achieved notable progress in strengthening institutional and technical systems, particularly in school feeding, nutrition, food fortification and climate resilience. However, sustainability is constrained by limited government financing, weak institutional uptake, the absence of formal transition strategies and an overly ambitious handover plan for school feeding. It also remains dependent on WFP's ability to clearly articulate and consolidate its role within national social protection and climate resilience structures, which is necessary to ensure that this role remains understood and recognized by government and development partners.

Progress on cross-cutting priorities

WFP adhered to humanitarian principles, but cross-cutting priorities were unevenly integrated across the CSP. Equality between women and men was consistently mainstreamed in operations, while broader equity, including disability concerns, accountability to affected people, and environmental and nutrition-sensitive approaches, remained largely project-based and not yet embedded at the system level.

40. **WFP adhered to humanitarian principles**, delivering assistance based on assessed needs, without discrimination and with respect for humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence. For instance, WFP's flood response was provided on the basis of rapid needs assessments conducted jointly with local authorities and United Nations partners, which led to an impartial targeting and prioritization of the most affected households, regardless of geographic location or ethnic background. Operational independence was maintained through direct management of beneficiary selection and monitoring, ensuring that distribution decisions were not influenced by local political or institutional pressures.

41. **WFP upheld its commitment to protection** through the integration of protection risk assessments into programme design and the implementation of context-specific mitigation measures aimed at ensuring the safety and dignity of all beneficiaries and their meaningful access to assistance. In emergency response, protection considerations were reflected in targeting processes, ensuring safe access to distribution points using crowd management practices. Field monitoring confirmed that WFP's activities took place in a highly protective environment.

42. **Equality considerations** were relatively strong and consistently operationalized across major programme areas, including nutrition, school feeding and resilience, supporting women's participation, access to services and livelihood opportunities at the community level. The evaluation found that WFP efforts supported participation and benefits for women, but persistent structural barriers continued to limit progress towards broader women's empowerment. The evaluation also found that monitoring frameworks included sex-disaggregated indicators but lacked the ability to track results achieved in relation to women's empowerment, meaning that any gains could not be identified or analysed.

43. WFP strengthened its systems for **accountability to affected people** by formalizing its community feedback mechanism, expanding channels and access points for affected populations and using the corporate platform for case management. However, WFP encountered practical difficulties in its efforts to close cases, and structured two-way communication (help desk, helpline number, feedback boxes), feedback loops and systematic community engagement proved challenging to implement, particularly outside emergency settings. The anonymity of feedback and incomplete demographic data constrained WFP's efforts to analyse inclusivity.

44. WFP's integration of **disability** analysis in Tajikistan reflects its emerging institutional commitment, although efforts have not yet translated into systematic application or routine use in service delivery. WFP introduced analytical tools and built the capacity of public health centres to assess and address the needs of children with disabilities, raising awareness among partners. It also conducted awareness-raising seminars and supported community engagement activities involving organizations representing persons with disabilities. Internally, the absence of portfolio-wide disability indicators, systematic data disaggregation and operational guidance limited consistent application of disability-related commitments. Externally, reliance on medical-based disability certification systems, weak national referral mechanisms and societal barriers to disclosure constrained the identification of and reach to persons with disabilities.

45. **Nutrition** was integrated as a cross-cutting priority in WFP interventions through malnutrition treatment and social and behaviour change communication under outcome 2, nutrition-sensitive school feeding and complementary resilience, food fortification and capacity-strengthening initiatives. These interventions contributed to improved dietary quality, nutrition awareness and access to nutrient-rich foods in targeted areas. However, the absence of a coherent approach connecting early childhood nutrition with school feeding limited continuity and the cumulative effects of interventions, reducing the overall effectiveness of WFP's cross-cutting nutrition strategy.

46. In Tajikistan, WFP integrated **environmental and social safeguards** and promoted low-emission technologies such as solar-powered irrigation and clean energy technologies, contributing to more sustainable livelihoods. However, environmental screening was uneven across outcomes, often driven by project requirements rather than a fully mainstreamed institutional practice. WFP strengthened its positioning in the climate domain, although the absence of a defined institutional role and systematic engagement in national climate

coordination and financing mechanisms limited its strategic influence and access to adaptation funding.

Resourcing and efficiency

WFP maintained programme continuity but could not ensure fully timely, balanced and optimal use of resources across the CSP. While school-based and emergency response programmes were largely delivered on time, resilience and social protection activities encountered delays due to funding volatility and operational constraints.

47. **WFP maintained operational continuity, but timeliness varied**. Where funding was predictable and delivery models were established, particularly in school feeding and emergency food assistance, WFP delivered its assistance in a timely and reliable way. Timeliness in these areas was supported by strong logistics capacity, monitoring processes, increased use of digital systems and an extensive field presence. In particular, the proximity to implementation sites afforded by WFP's field offices facilitated engagement with local authorities and communities, supported coordination with partners and enabled timely monitoring and adaptive management.

48. **However, timeliness weakened substantially under less stable conditions**, particularly in nutrition, resilience and social protection. Funding volatility, limited flexibility to reallocate resources, protracted start-up processes and organizational bottlenecks – such as centralized decision-making, unclear delegation of authority between the country and field offices and insufficient empowerment of national staff – constrained WFP's ability to absorb delays, rebalance workloads and optimize CSP resources. In the field, efficiency gains were constrained by the distribution of workloads across field offices, despite substantial differences in operational burden.

49. **Resilience activities faced delays** due to late confirmation of donor contributions, procurement bottlenecks, staffing gaps and complex approval processes. Although these delays compressed implementation timelines, WFP still managed to reach the planned number of beneficiaries. Recurrent funding constraints and donor delays limited the scope of nutrition treatment interventions to five districts, contributed to unmet commitments in social protection activities and slowed progress towards planned results. Mitigation mechanisms, such as contingency planning for delayed disbursements, were not systematically implemented.

50. **To enhance cost efficiency, WFP introduced several targeted measures**, including expanded use of digital tools, optimization of cash-based transfer workflows and pilot models for the delivery of assistance. These contributed to faster registration, digitalization and verification of beneficiary data, increased processing speed, estimated annual savings, and reduced staffing needs. However, portfolio-wide cost-efficiency gains were constrained by project-based budgeting, uneven workload distribution across field offices and partner management practices that lacked systematic performance and value-for-money assessments. Efficiency gains were also constrained by uneven workload distribution across field offices, combined with largely uniform allocation of staffing and vehicle resources across field offices.

51. Similarly, **the country office strengthened its internal monitoring and reporting systems** and adhered to corporate monitoring and reporting standards. However, fragmented implementation, limited verification mechanisms and activity-based reporting continue to constrain the timely use of evidence for programme adaptation and strategic decision-making.

52. **Portfolio-wide efficiency** was further hindered by the absence of systematic performance or value-for-money assessments of cooperating partners and by food procurement obligations tied to donor conditions, which reduced WFP's ability to select the most cost-effective options.

53. **WFP has made progress in addressing human resource challenges**, with greater stability in staffing structures and more strategic workforce planning. Gaps remain in national staff retention and empowerment, timely recruitment, and career and leadership development. Field-level capacity constraints persisted, as staffing and resource allocations did not reflect the workload and demands for field offices, which carry the operational burden of implementing and monitoring activities.

Recommendations

54. The evaluation makes one strategic and three operational recommendations to support accountability and learning and inform the design of the next CSP for Tajikistan.

Recommendations

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
Recommendation 1: Position WFP as a systems enabler in Tajikistan's evolving social protection framework by operationalizing its value proposition using a system lens in the next CSP. ***Rationale:*** WFP's value proposition in Tajikistan sets out a vision of supporting government efforts to build an integrated, shock-responsive social protection system that links food security, nutrition and climate resilience. Turning this vision into practice is complicated by the project-based nature of funding, yet this does not prevent WFP from using individual projects as entry points for broader systems strengthening.	Strategic				
1.1 Use projects as entry points for broader systems strengthening, clearly demonstrating how projects support WFP's overall strategic vision rather than operating as standalone interventions.		Country office senior management	Office of the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer	High	Fourth quarter 2026
1.2 Strengthen internal cross-learning and joint reviews in order to enhance coherence across activities, reflecting this in the theory of change and obtaining more holistic results.		Country office senior management	Office of the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer	High	Fourth quarter 2026
1.3 Clarify and communicate WFP's vision, results and contributions to ensure a shared understanding with the Government and partners, and to reinforce WFP's role as a thought leader in social protection, disaster risk reduction and food systems.		Country office senior management	Office of the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer	High	Fourth quarter 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
Recommendation 2: Strengthen WFP's internal organizational arrangements, while investing in a culture shift and growth mindset among staff. ***Rationale:*** To promote its intended shift towards more integrated, system-oriented support, WFP should strengthen its organizational arrangements to ensure that its programme can be operationalized in a coherent, timely and scalable manner.	Operational				
2.1 Map and identify bottlenecks in WFP's country operations and streamline internal decision-making processes by clarifying the delegation of authority to technical units and field offices. This will help to reduce reliance on centralized approvals and ensure faster operational adjustments in response to changing circumstances.		Country office senior management		High	Fourth quarter 2026
2.2 Empower national staff through clear mandates, delegated responsibility and targeted capacity development, tapping into their country-specific expertise and strategic role in sustaining long-term processes that require consistent engagement over extended periods.		Country office senior management		High	Third quarter 2026
2.3 Realign personnel structures and allocation to ensure that offices and teams with higher demands in terms of programme and support services and monitoring are adequately resourced to sustain high-quality and context-responsive programme delivery.		Country office senior management	Workforce Planning and Strategy Branch	High	Third quarter 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
Recommendation 3: Consolidate and contextualize WFP's resilience building and climate portfolio with a view to increased sustainability by linking it to national systems. ***Rationale:*** WFP should build on its existing climate and resilience strategy by deepening internal coherence within the CSP portfolio and ensuring linkages with and contributions to national social protection, food systems, adaptation and disaster risk reduction mechanisms.	Operational				
3.1 Link asset creation and livelihood interventions more explicitly to climate resilience by applying an integrated approach that connects these activities with anticipatory action and climate services, in order to clearly demonstrate how WFP's community investments contribute to national adaptation capacities, disaster risk reduction and environmental sustainability, while reinforcing institutional ownership.		Country office climate change adaptation and resilience building unit	Climate and Resilience Service (global headquarters)	Medium	First quarter 2027
3.2 Ensure that activities related to community-based resilience building and adaptation to climate-related shocks have a clear strategy for sustainability linked to national social protection, food systems, adaptation and disaster risk reduction systems.		Country office climate change adaptation and resilience building unit	Climate and Resilience Service (global headquarters)	Medium	First quarter 2027

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
Recommendation 4: Promote and advocate for the integration of school feeding activities into a scalable and sustainable national school feeding programme. ***Rationale:*** To enhance the national school feeding programme and support government ownership, WFP can play a key role as an innovator and evidence generator.	Operational			Medium	Fourth quarter 2026
4.1 Generate evidence and learning on the potential scalability and long-term sustainability of the cash-based school feeding programme, income-generating activities and home-grown school feeding as a basis for promoting their transition to national ownership.		Country office school feeding unit	Nutrition, School Meals and Social Protection Service (global headquarters)	Medium	Third quarter 2026
4.2 Provide technical assistance to the Government and schools to further scale up school-based initiatives using integrated approaches that promote local production and expand procurement opportunities.		Country office school feeding unit	Nutrition, School Meals and Social Protection Service (global headquarters)	Medium	Fourth quarter 2026