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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT – TIMOR-LESTE COUNTRY PORTFOLIO (2008–2012)

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Director, RMP*:	Mr C. Kaye	066513-2197
Senior Programme Adviser, OM**:	Mr G.C. Cirri	066513-3677
Programme Adviser, RMP:	Ms K. Oppusunggu	066513-3068

Should you have any questions regarding availability of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645/2558).

* Performance Management and Monitoring Division

** Operations Management Department

BACKGROUND

1. After decades of political upheaval and a conflict in 1999 that displaced 75 percent of the population and destroyed 70 percent of the infrastructure, Timor-Leste has made significant social and economic advances including policy reforms that contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment; and legislation, institutional mechanisms and public awareness campaigns that promote development. WFP has helped the Government address nutrition deficits – particularly among vulnerable women and children – and develop a sustainable approach to food security.
2. The Secretariat appreciates the recommendations, which come at a time when it is assessing the future of WFP operations in Timor-Leste in light of limited resources and challenges to attaining sustainable outcomes. The findings have stimulated reflection on WFP's work in Timor-Leste and on the feasibility of maintaining sufficient capacity to complete the recommendations.
3. The actions planned and the implementation timelines are presented in the attached matrix.

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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
On the Immediate Transition Strategy for Timor-Leste (WFP Headquarters, Regional Bureau and Country Office)			
<p>Recommendation 1: WFP should extend the CP so as to enable the country office to follow up on the transition strategy set out in the Concept Note of November 2012. A systematic approach to hand-over of mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) responsibilities, based on joint WFP-Ministry of Health assessments of financial and capacity requirements, was only recently put forward. Satisfactory hand-over will require engagement by the Ministry and other main stakeholders. The present CP was itself intended to allow a hand-over period, but the necessary planning has only recently begun, and a responsible exit – or a properly planned continuation of WFP support – therefore requires more time. An orderly exit that minimizes reputational damage to WFP will require an extension of the CP by at least a year beyond the current end date of December 2013; a more effective transition will require more time (see recommendation 2).</p>	<p>Policy, Programme and Innovation Division (OSZ) in collaboration with the regional bureau Bangkok (Asia) (OMB) and country office</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>In 2013, the Ministry of Health requested the extension of WFP's presence in Timor-Leste until at least the end of 2014, to coincide with the ending of the Millennium Development Goals framework in 2015. The Government has pledged an additional US\$1.2 million to WFP, bringing to US\$2.9 million its total contribution to the country programme – a clear indication of its commitment to hand-over. Further funding will be required beyond 2013 to maintain the country office, but prospects are dim. The situation will be reviewed and a decision made following a regional bureau mission in mid-2013.</p>	<p>June 2013</p>
On Hand-Over/Exit Strategies in General (WFP Headquarters)			
<p>Recommendation 2: WFP should ensure that hand-over strategies are developed in a timely fashion, recognizing that effective hand-over requires a timeframe of at least two to three years. Hand-over strategies should include relevant benchmarks and milestones against which progress will be measured, and WFP Headquarters must engage the country office in a realistic assessment of the internal capacity required to ensure that a responsible and sustainable hand-over process is implemented and, where necessary, should develop a strategy for building the internal capacity required for this.</p> <p>WFP will face similar hand-over situations in other countries in the future. Ideally, therefore, WFP Headquarters should use Timor-Leste as a pilot for the development of a credible exit strategy. To do this satisfactorily would imply securing predictable and flexible non-food-based funding to support an extension of the CP for at least two years, with associated commitment from the regional bureau and Headquarters to ensure that the country office has the internal capacity required for a credible transition/exit. The transition process should involve increased engagement with other development partners supporting the Ministry of Health and should build in lesson learning for wider consumption.</p>	<p>Operations Management and Operations Services Departments (NGO Partnerships Office, Strategic Planning Office, OSZ) in consultation with Resource Management and Accountability Department (Budget and Programming Division) and Human Resources Division (HRM)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>WFP's commitment to Strategic Objective 5 will continue to be a priority under the next Strategic Plan (2014–2017).</p> <p>WFP has made significant progress in enhancing national capacity, for example by handing over school feeding programmes to the Government and facilitating South–South cooperation through the WFP Brazil Centre of Excellence Against Hunger (CEAH).</p> <p>As outlined in “Action Plan for the Implementation of the Capacity Development and Hand-Over Components of the WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2013),” (WFP/EB.2/2010/4-D). WFP has developed materials to support the transition to government management of food and technical assistance. However, resource constraints have limited opportunities for training and staffing.</p>	<p>June 2013</p>



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		<p>Under WFP's new organizational design, OMB has delegated authority to support country offices to increase effectiveness. The 2013 Management Plan authorizes Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) budget funding for small country offices to improve internal control mechanisms. Pending approval of the proposed Strategic Plan (2014-2017), WFP will define the role of smaller country offices such as that in Timor-Leste.</p> <p>OSZ has also established a stand-alone unit for enhancing country office capacity and providing technical support for policy, programme and innovation issues.</p> <p>A review of WFP's presence beyond 2013 will be undertaken jointly with OMB. Timor-Leste may be used as a pilot for developing exit strategies.</p>	June 2013
On strategy for MCHN in Timor-Leste (Ministry of Health and other Health and Nutrition Stakeholders including WFP)			
<p>Recommendation 3a: There is urgent need for a joint review of SISCa's role in health service delivery and its corresponding requirements for support. Health stakeholders should jointly draw up plans to tackle the issues facing the Integrated Health Services at the Community Level (SISCa) in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>Recommendation 3b: The Ministry of Health and WFP should discontinue targeted supplementary feeding for children aged 24–59 months and provide targeted supplementary feeding for children aged 6–23 months and pregnant and lactating women. This is linked to the SISCa review and echoes earlier recommendations, such as those of the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) evaluation based on current understanding of effective practice in such nutrition interventions. If supplementary feeding is to continue and be effective, it must be on a scale that the Ministry of Health can sustain, both financially and in terms of organizational demands on scarce capacity. Sustainability on both criteria is more likely if the programme is able to rely – wholly or predominantly – on the domestic production of fortified blended food (FBF) (see recommendation 4) and if the programme design is as straightforward as possible.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health and other health and nutrition stakeholders</p> <p>Country office in coordination with Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL), as well as in consultation with OMB and OSZ and Performance Management and Monitoring Division</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>WFP and the Ministry of Health will revise the MCHN programme, formulating a hand-over process and finalizing guidelines for the management of moderate acute malnutrition, including improved geographical and beneficiary targeting, with the aim of scaling down the programme by mid-2013. The challenges of using SISCa for distributing supplementary food are also being considered.</p>	September 2013



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<p>Recommendation 3c: Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation, both of programme delivery and of its results, to meet the minimum standards required for assessing programme delivery and results. The evaluation has provided detailed comments on gaps in existing data collection, but there must be resolve at all levels of WFP to ensure that basic monitoring – including post-distribution monitoring – is treated as essential, even when capacity gaps make this more difficult.</p> <p>Recommendation 3d: There is need to support longer-term, country-specific nutrition research such as a nutrition causality study and analysis; this is a joint responsibility of all stakeholders and should be adequately reflected in the forthcoming (revised) national nutrition strategy.</p>		<p>Management acknowledges gaps and weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity, owing primarily to limited staff capacity. The challenges are further compounded by financial resource constraints to recruiting and retaining qualified staff. An international M&E expert was recruited in September 2012 to support learning and programming.</p> <p>WFP helped the Ministry of Health hire, train and deploy 29 nutrition assistants to enhance M&E. Monitoring cards, forms, checklists, manuals and other tools have been revised in consultation with stakeholders; a first report on post-distribution monitoring was prepared.</p> <p>The national nutrition strategy is under review; it includes a section on nutrition information and research. A national survey is being conducted to determine the risk factors for undernutrition. WFP has supported it with questionnaires and provision of food security indicators.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>August 2013</p> <p>May 2013</p>
On local Production of Fortified Blended Food (WFP, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance)			
<p>Recommendation 4: WFP and the Government should jointly undertake a rigorous strategic review of the future role for <i>Timor Vita</i>. At present, the country office plays a crucial role in supervising production of <i>Timor Vita</i> on behalf of the Government. The review should include analysis of the medium- and long-term viability of the factory, and the cost and logistics implications if more targeted supplementary feeding is linked to provision of <i>Timor Vita</i>. It should include attention to future responsibilities for the monitoring and technical support currently provided by WFP, as well as the independent audit of performance.</p>	<p>Country office with Nutrition Advisory Office and OSZ/OMB including Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>WFP acknowledges the need to conduct a review in collaboration with the Government. The following are planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An international supply-chain manager will review the <i>Timor Vita</i> process from procurement to delivery. ➤ An international procurement officer will assess prices and procurement processes for raw materials. ➤ A food technologist will work in the factory to ensure that best practices in quality control are maintained. <p>WFP will work with the Government to seek support from local authorities and the private sector for implementing the review recommendations.</p>	<p>June 2013</p> <p>April 2013</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



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On Timor-Leste's School Feeding Strategy (Timor-Leste Government with its Partners in Social Protection and Education)			
<p>Recommendation 5: A comprehensive strategic review of the school feeding programme should be undertaken to map out a sustainable approach. It would be appropriate for the Government to lead this review, in collaboration with partners who support the education and social protection sector strategies of Timor-Leste. It is not appropriate for WFP to lead such a review because WFP is not seen as a disinterested party, but it is important to adopt an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach so as to map out a sustainable approach that partners can buy into.</p>	Government of Timor-Leste with its partners in social protection and education	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Although the WFP school feeding programme has been phased out in view of limited funding, the country office, with support from CEAH, is participating in the Ministry of Education review of the programme.</p> <p>Following a 2011 visit to CEAH, the Government held a workshop with the participation of relevant stakeholders to discuss school feeding as an option for fighting hunger.</p> <p>The country office will continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Education and other partners on the review.</p>	December 2013
On capacity Development (WFP Headquarters)			
<p>Recommendation 6: WFP Headquarters needs to do further work on developing indicators and practical guidance to assist country offices in designing and implementing effective capacity development strategies. WFP Headquarters needs to consider how it can also provide more hands-on support to country offices' design and implementation of capacity development strategies. As part of this focus, WFP Headquarters must engage country offices in a realistic assessment of the internal capacity required for effective capacity development initiatives and, where necessary, should develop a strategy for building the internal capacity required for this.</p>	OSZ and HRM	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>A capacity development toolkit has been made available recently to improve planning and provide practical guidance for designing and implementing capacity-development activities.</p> <p>The toolkit supports assessment of internal capacities for implementation of capacity-development initiatives. OSZ is refining the Strategic Results Framework in view of the new Strategic Plan. Capacity development will be mainstreamed for all Strategic Objectives.</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>2013–2014</p>
On gender (WFP Headquarters)			
<p>Recommendation 7: WFP Headquarters needs to do further work on developing indicators and practical guidance to country offices for implementing effective gender mainstreaming strategies. WFP Headquarters also needs to consider how it can provide more hands-on support to country offices to enhance gender analysis and implement gender mainstreaming. WFP Headquarters should focus, in particular, on the needs of country offices without dedicated gender staff.</p>	Gender Office and OSZ	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The Gender Office will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) contribute to the development of the 2014–2017 Strategic Results Framework, to ensure the inclusion of sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive outcome and output indicators; ii) update corporate gender programme guidance, in collaboration with OSZ; and iii) facilitate regional training (including Timor-Leste) on use of the gender marker. 	<p>November 2013</p> <p>December 2013</p> <p>December 2013</p>



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CEAH	WFP Brazil Centre of Excellence Against Hunger
CP	country programme
HRM	Human Resources Division
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCHN	mother-and-child health and nutrition
OMB	Regional Bureau Bangkok (Asia)
OSZ	Policy, Programme and Innovation Division
SISCa	Integrated Health Services at the Community Level