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Policy issues

**For consideration**

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## **Update on the implementation plan of the nutrition policy**

### **Executive summary**

At its 2017 first regular session, in February 2017, the Board approved the 2017–2021 nutrition policy, which reaffirms WFP's commitment to addressing malnutrition with a view to achieving zero hunger. The policy places the promotion of healthy diets that meet nutrient needs at its core and aims to contribute to the elimination of all forms of malnutrition – including overweight and obesity. Ensuring that nutrition needs are addressed in emergencies remains paramount.

At its 2017 annual session, in June 2017, the Board approved the implementation plan for the 2017–2021 nutrition policy. The implementation plan describes how each regional bureau will implement the nutrition policy through activities (referred to in the plan as “archetypes”) that address the priority nutrition needs in its region; the plan also outlines activities that headquarters will undertake to support the regional bureaux and offer global leadership in nutrition. Based on regional priorities and the ongoing development of country strategic plans, the implementation plan identifies four priorities: improving the management of acute malnutrition, preventing stunting, aligning WFP actions with national plans for nutrition and working on nutrition in partnership, from the field to the global level.

This update on the nutrition policy provides the Executive Board with an estimate of the projected funding required to implement the nutrition policy. The estimate does not include the costs of implementing nutrition programming in the field, because such programming is implemented through country strategic plans rather than the policy's implementation plan. Thus the estimate includes only the additional cost of building the evidence, capacity, operational models and support required to implement activities stemming from the 2017–2021 nutrition policy. For example, the estimate takes into account the expertise and systems required to ensure that all programmes are nutrition sensitive, but it does not include the costs of implementing an ongoing stunting prevention programme.

Given the primacy of field work, the cost estimate is built up from the regional level and includes investments (from highest to lowest) in staffing, partnership and capacity strengthening, programmatic development and analysis. These categories reflect the funding required to support the programme archetypes that each region has defined as priorities for delivering on the objectives of the nutrition policy. Risk management and mitigation have also been considered in arriving at the estimate to ensure

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that experienced staff and capacities in knowledge management, analysis and monitoring and evaluation are available to optimize programming and mitigate associated risks.

The total cost of implementing the 2017–2021 policy is approximately USD 92 million, with 76 percent of the funding requirements needed at regional and country level and the remaining 24 percent required at headquarters for the development and dissemination of guidance, the provision of technical support, the strengthening of analytical tools for nutrition, the enhancement of support for nutrition in emergencies and the mitigation of risks at the central level. This allocation reflects a greater focus on the field than was the case under the previous nutrition policy.

The USD 22 million for headquarters is split among five thematic priorities concerned with nutrition sensitive approaches to all WFP programmes, nutrition specific programmes, nutrition in emergency situations, knowledge management and “fill the nutrient gap” analysis. The costs for headquarters assume that the creation and dissemination of guidance will peak in the early years of the policy, while support in emergencies is expected to diminish over time as nutrition is increasingly integrated into WFP’s corporate approach to emergency response. Analysis, partnership and facilitation of lesson learning and technical inputs are expected to remain constant throughout the period of the policy.

Mobilizing resources to fund the implementation of the nutrition policy is a key priority for WFP; this update, however, does not address resource mobilization. Financing will be an ongoing process that will be closely linked with advocacy efforts through country strategic plans and informed by resource mobilization strategies at the country, regional and global levels. Funds will be sought from various sources to enable a diversified and stable resource portfolio.

### **Draft decision\***

The Board takes note of the “Update on the implementation plan of the nutrition policy” (WFP/EB.2/2017/4-D).

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

1. At its 2017 first regular session, in February 2017, the Board approved the 2017–2021 nutrition policy,<sup>1</sup> which reaffirms WFP’s commitment to addressing malnutrition with a view to achieving zero hunger. The new nutrition policy focuses on ensuring adequate and healthy diets and aims to contribute to the elimination of all forms of malnutrition – including overweight and obesity. As in the previous 2012 nutrition policy,<sup>2</sup> ensuring that nutrition needs are addressed in emergencies remains paramount.
2. At its 2017 annual session, in June 2017, the Board approved an implementation plan for the 2017–2021 nutrition policy,<sup>3</sup> which describes the priorities and programme activities (referred to in the plan as “archetypes”) adopted by each regional bureau and outlines the activities that headquarters will undertake to support the regional bureaux and offer global leadership in nutrition. Building evidence and strengthening the capacities of WFP and its partners are integral to implementing the nutrition policy.
3. Given the importance of the new country strategic plan (CSP) programming structure, the implementation plan was designed to align with, complement and draw on CSPs. The first CSPs, for example, informed the identification of regional archetypes. As other CSPs are developed, the implementation plan will provide guidance on nutrition priorities and programme archetypes to be considered. The nutrition policy also reflects many ongoing activities that will feature in forthcoming CSPs.
4. Based on the archetypes, the implementation plan identifies four priorities:
  - i) improving the management of acute malnutrition;
  - ii) preventing stunting;
  - iii) aligning WFP actions with national plans for nutrition; and
  - iv) working on nutrition in partnership at all levels, from the field to the global level.

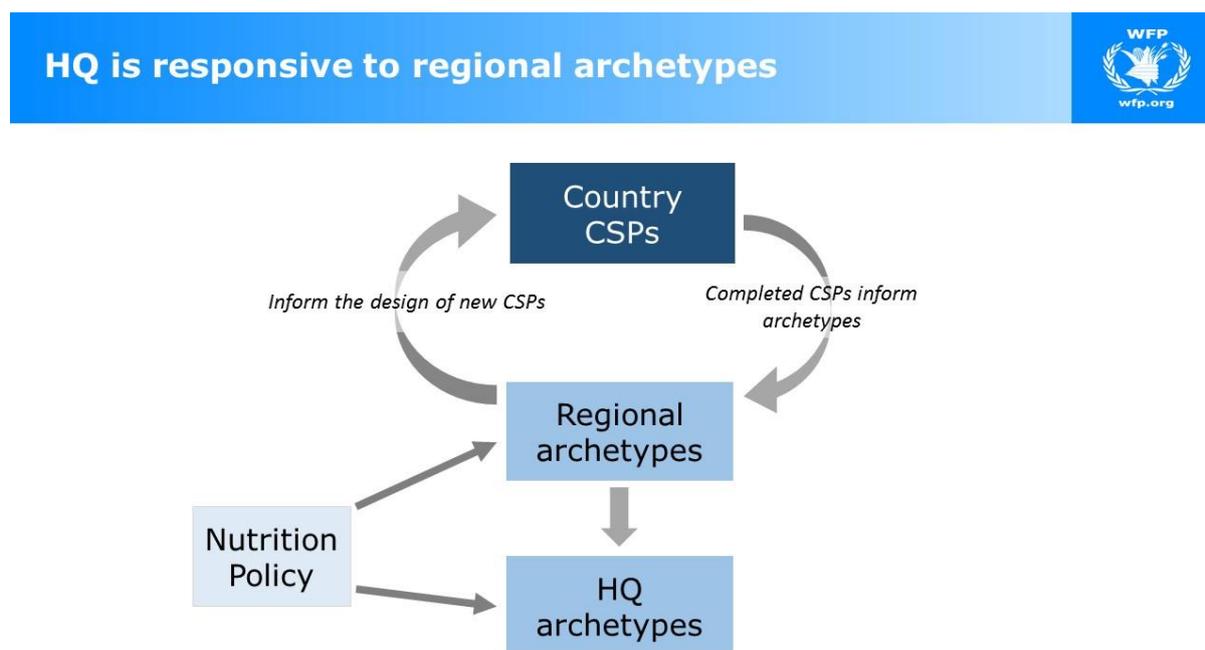
As programmes to address stunting and acute malnutrition were also implemented under the previous policy, the 2017–2021 policy seeks to improve and in certain cases expand nutrition programming, for example by integrating social and behaviour change communications into it.

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<sup>1</sup> WFP/EB.1/2017/4-C.

<sup>2</sup> WFP/EB.1/2012/5-A.

<sup>3</sup> WFP/EB.A/2017/5-C.

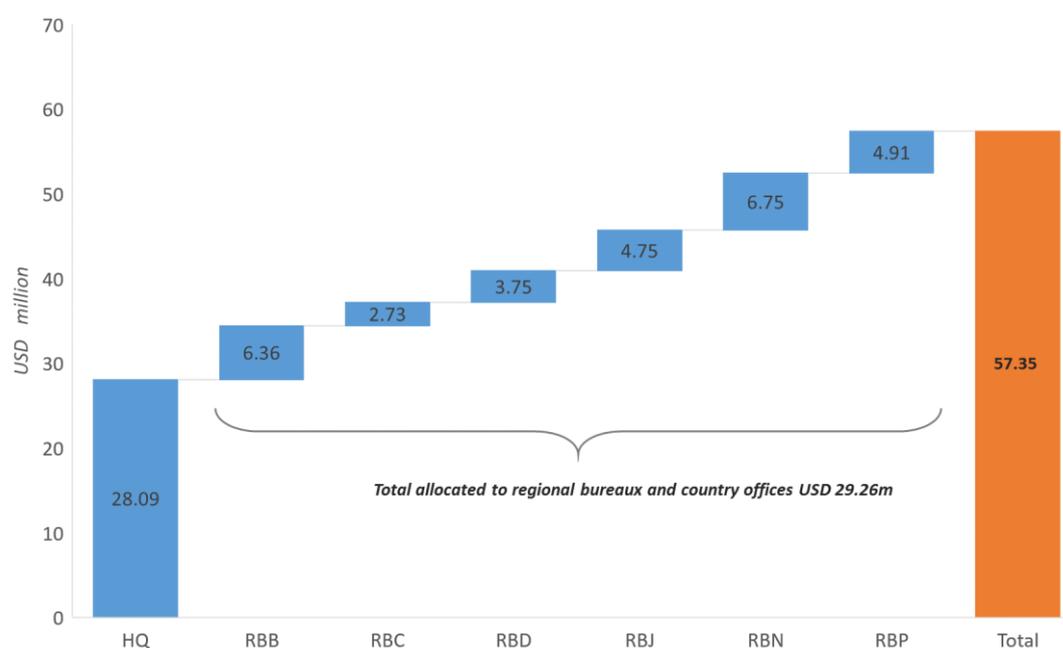
**Figure 1: Relationship between archetypes, CSPs and the nutrition policy**

### Scope of this update

5. This update provides the estimated cost of implementing the nutrition policy. In arriving at the cost estimate, several factors were considered, including the resources required for the implementation of the previous policy, the recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the previous policy and the mitigation and management of potential risks.
6. Ultimately, the workforce and support activities required for the priorities and programme archetypes outlined in the nutrition policy's implementation plan define the cost estimate. The cost estimate focuses on capacity building for WFP and its partners to strengthen nutrition programmes and initiatives across the four priorities of the implementation plan.
7. This document does not address financing. The funds required to implement the policy may be raised at the country, regional or global level from various sources. To some extent cost sharing has been factored in, but this approach has generally been avoided to prevent underestimation of costs. At the country level, many items will be covered by funds raised through CSPs.

### Implementation of the previous policy

8. The previous nutrition policy (2012–2017) used a similar strategy to increase implementation capacities at the field level, focusing on the resources required to develop systems for undertaking nutrition activities. The new policy builds on this work, for example by continuing to strengthen nutrition action in emergencies, while responding to and highlighting recent developments in the field of nutrition and its role in WFP. Under the previous policy WFP raised USD 57.6 million from donors with a view to building capacities and evidence. Those funds did not cover the implementation of nutrition programming, which was conducted at the country office or regional bureau level. Figure 2 shows that 49 percent of the funds were spent in headquarters on guidance and support and 51 percent were allocated to the regional bureaux and country offices.

**Figure 2: Allocation of funds raised under the 2012–2017 nutrition policy**

### Evaluation of the previous nutrition policy

9. The Nutrition Division welcomed the recommendations resulting from a summary evaluation of the nutrition policy for the period 2012–2014.<sup>4</sup> The recommendations, which related to investing in monitoring and evaluation, enhancing operational research and knowledge management, developing capacities and establishing and working in partnerships, have been addressed in the development of the 2017–2021 policy and implementation plan and will also be reflected in forthcoming CSPs.
10. The evaluation noted the difficulty of finding funds sufficient for the implementation of the previous policy, the scale of which was ambitious. To mitigate resource constraints, it recommended that the Nutrition Division be involved in the WFP financial framework review and associated actions aimed at increasing funding flexibility, improving financial monitoring and increasing advocacy for long-term funding. The Nutrition Division is responding to those recommendations, for example by increasing the time that nutrition staff devote to WFP's Integrated Road Map (IRM) processes, monitoring finances proactively and working in greater partnership with donors.

### Approach to developing the cost estimate

11. Given the centrality of work in the field, the estimated cost of implementing the nutrition policy is based on nutritional needs across the regions. Although it does not represent detailed spending plans for the regional bureaux, the cost estimate in this document provides the Board with a realistic figure for the implementation plan as a whole. The cost estimate does not include the cost of implementing nutrition programming in the field, because such implementation is effected through country strategic plans rather than the policy's implementation plan. Thus the estimate includes only the additional cost of building the evidence, capacity, operational models and support required to implement activities stemming from the 2017–2021 nutrition policy. It therefore includes the cost of enhancing, for example through technical innovations, the monitoring of a programme for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition but not the cost of the treatment programme itself.

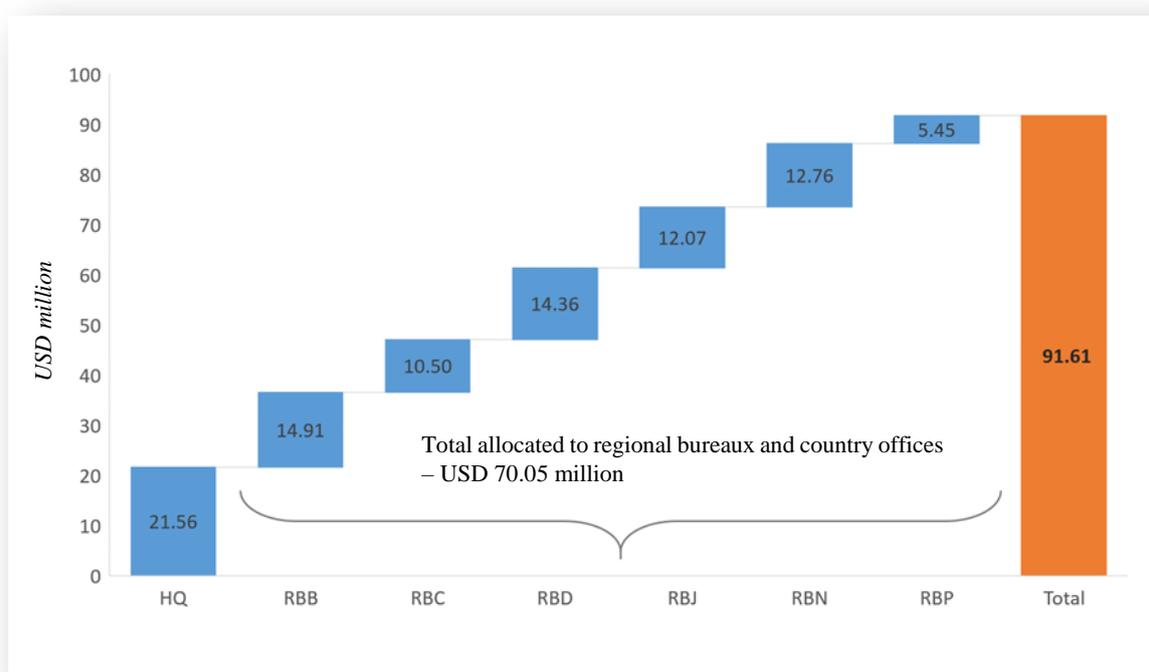
<sup>4</sup> See WFP/EB.2/2015/6-A.

12. The cost estimate assumes that existing allocations from the programme support and administrative (PSA) budget for headquarters and the regional bureaux will continue and that nutrition posts in country offices will be funded from direct support costs. The estimate does not include the cost of existing fixed-term national staff. The details of country-level spending on nutrition programming may be found in CSPs.
13. The cost estimate takes into account the expertise and systems required to make all WFP programmes nutrition sensitive. The costs of additional commodities, staff, materials and other priorities, such as analysis and research, is being developed at WFP with partners such as the International Food Policy Research Institute. The costs of mainstreaming nutrition sensitivity will be covered by all WFP offices and units and will vary considerably. The extra cost of adding nutrition messaging to existing programmes, for example, will be minimal, while other costs, such as those for adding vouchers for fresh nutritious foods to cash-based transfers (CBTs), will require greater investment.

### Estimated cost of implementing the nutrition policy

14. Figure 3 summarizes the estimated cost of implementing the 2017–2021 nutrition policy, of which 76 percent is expected to be incurred by the regional bureaux and country offices. As indicated in paragraph 7, the required funding may come from various sources.

**Figure 3: Estimated cost of implementing the nutrition policy, 2017–2021**



### Mitigation of risk

15. As part of effective corporate governance and good management practice, the Nutrition Division is prioritizing the management and mitigation of risks and is investing in the skills and capacities required to manage risk proactively.
16. Between 2013 and 2017, for example, there has been a 75 percent increase in the value and quantity of specialized nutritious foods distributed to beneficiaries. Investment is accordingly needed in oversight and monitoring with regard to these distributions to ensure that the products provide the intended benefits for the intended people, maximizing results.
17. Risk mitigation actions may include the digitization of beneficiary data for improved distribution monitoring, enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems and improved management of the

pipeline for specialized nutritious foods. Operational research will be pursued as well, with a view to improving programme quality in the long term.

18. In addition, the Nutrition Division welcomes the move to CBTs and is actively pursuing strategies to assure that any risk of negative nutrition outcomes is minimized. These strategies include strengthened analysis and operational research aimed at understanding the use of CBTs to improve dietary intake, expansion of social and behaviour change communications, knowledge enhancement and training for staff in nutrition sensitive programming and assistance to governments in designing cash-based safety nets that reflect nutrition needs.
19. In the light of these risks, mitigation actions were considered in the calculation of the cost estimate; the estimate thus reflects the need for experienced staff and strengthened capacities in knowledge management, analysis and monitoring and evaluation to optimize programming and mitigate risks.

### **Nutrition workforce planning**

20. If WFP is successfully to implement the 2017–2021 policy and mitigate risks, additional nutrition staff with more diverse skills will be required. To ensure that nutritionists with specialized emergency skills are available to deploy in sudden-onset emergencies, for example, WFP needs a cadre of experienced emergency nutrition professionals.
21. Recruitment of fixed-term nutritionists enables WFP to invest in their training and professional development and to benefit from their knowledge and experience over the long term. Short-term surge staff are vital in emergencies, but the normal operating model is based on prevention; this requires nutritionists who can draw on their knowledge and experience in both humanitarian and development spheres to help increase WFP's contribution to sustainable nutrition outcomes. As with the rest of WFP, clear succession planning is key to mitigating the costs associated with high turnover of staff.
22. With the Human Resources Division, the Nutrition Division is developing a planning model for the nutrition workforce, bearing in mind resource limitations. The model will include a recruitment strategy for the hiring of more junior staff in order to build internal expertise and capacity while in the meantime creating more senior career pathways in nutrition so that WFP retains the capacities of these staff members in the future.
23. In addition to direct programme implementation, WFP staff will need to cultivate long-term relationships to facilitate effective partnerships. Staff members must be experienced and skilled in facilitating policy development and building capacity within governments and coordinating effectively with United Nations bodies and other actors. In certain contexts national staff members will be the best option; in others international staff are required.
24. Bearing in mind the resource constraints affecting previous policies, this paper presents a cost estimate that is achievable and realistic in reflecting needs. As explained in paragraphs 11 and 12, the estimate does not cover existing staff or full programming costs, but rather the requirements for building the evidence, analysis, partnerships and training needed to implement the 2017–2021 nutrition policy.
25. The staff proposed for recruitment in Table 1 are to be deployed in posts in the regional bureaux and country offices. Recruitment of staff to fill some of these posts has been planned for some time; other posts are included in the table as a suggestion of what will be additionally needed to implement the policy. It is noteworthy that the proposal in Table 1 calls for an average of less than one new staff member in each country where WFP operates.

	<b>National</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Total</b>
RBB	12	4	<b>16</b>
RBC	4	4	<b>8</b>
RBD	2	8	<b>10</b>
RBJ	13	4	<b>17</b>
RBN	8	6	<b>14</b>
RBP	4	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>69</b>

26. Table 2 shows the grades of the international staff that have been included in the cost estimate. As per the recruitment strategy referred to in paragraphs 20–22, the Nutrition Division proposes to recruit mostly P-3 and P-2 staff so that they can be trained and mentored to take on more senior nutrition positions in the future. In addition some P-4 posts are proposed where greater experience is required immediately.

	<b>P-2/JPO</b>	<b>P-3</b>	<b>P-4</b>	<b>Total</b>
RBB	0	3	1	<b>4</b>
RBC	0	4	0	<b>4</b>
RBD	0	6	2	<b>8</b>
RBJ	2	1	1	<b>4</b>
RBN	0	6	0	<b>6</b>
RBP	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26</b>

JPO = junior professional officer.

### **Cost estimate per region**

27. In addition to the nutrition workforce required to operationalize the regional programme archetypes, additional support activities are needed to achieve the aims of the nutrition policy.
28. While acknowledging the diversity of the regions, some patterns emerge from the archetypes (Table 3). Stunting is an issue everywhere, requiring the adoption of nutrition sensitive approaches, food fortification and social behaviour change communication activities in most regions. Regional bureaux in crisis-prone regions, such as the regional bureaux in Cairo (RBC), Dakar (RBD) and Nairobi (RBN), focus on meeting nutrition needs in emergencies, including the management of moderate acute malnutrition. The regional bureaux in Bangkok (RBB) and Panama (RBP), where WFP provides technical assistance, emphasize partnerships; in middle-income regions such as those of RBB, RBC and particularly RBP, WFP is developing approaches to new challenges such as needs in urban settings and the double burden of malnutrition, which are emerging in all regions. The regional bureau in Johannesburg (RBJ) includes addressing HIV among its nutrition priorities.

**TABLE 3: ARCHETYPES BY REGION**

<b>RBB</b>	<b>RBC</b>	<b>RBD</b>	<b>RBJ</b>	<b>RBN</b>	<b>RBP</b>
Evidence building for policy and advocacy	Expanded prevention of MAM programming	Improving WFP nutrition response in crises	Programming and policy support to prevent stunting	Treatment of MAM and prevention of stunting in refugee settings	Building partnerships through South–South cooperation and with academic and private entities
Improved engagement with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative	Expanded nutrition sensitive programming	Expanding resilience building to reduce undernutrition sustainably	Enhanced analysis	Partnerships to address nutrition in emergencies	Advocacy with national governments
Enhanced human resources	Monitoring and evaluation and evidence building	Developing nutrition sensitive social protection systems	Addressing micronutrient deficiencies	Multi-sector programming to reduce undernutrition	Capacity enhancement and technical assistance
Support for scaling up food fortification	Sensitivity to the double burden of malnutrition	Promoting local fortification of food	Improving MAM treatment, especially in emergencies	Strengthening of government capacities	Innovation and evidence generation, particularly for the double burden of malnutrition and urban needs
Developing prevention tools	Support for scaling up food fortification	Improving nutrition knowledge and information management	Nutrition sensitive programming for people living with HIV and tuberculosis		

MAM = moderate acute malnutrition.

### **Cost of analysis, evidence building, partnerships and capacity strengthening**

29. As demonstrated by the archetypes, the implementation of the policy will require a wide range of activities. These activities include operational research, facilitation of SUN business networks and strengthened monitoring and evaluation to build the knowledge base, develop the required partnerships and capacities and support risk mitigation. For the purpose of cost projection, these activities are grouped into three broad cost categories: analysis, programmatic evidence gathering, and partnerships and capacity strengthening.
30. The categories are not mutually exclusive and include various activities and skills: “Fill the Nutrient Gap” analysis, for example, also supports capacity strengthening. They are used here to provide a consistent point of comparison between regions.

### **Analysis**

31. Examples of analysis may include carrying out “Fill the Nutrient Gap”, “Cost of Hunger” and “Cost of the Double Burden of Malnutrition” analyses and improving expertise in monitoring and evaluation. Analysis is essential for the design of effective programmes and can help address gaps in evidence for cost-effectiveness, as recommended in the evaluation of the previous policy.

### **Programmatic evidence gathering**

32. Examples of programmatic evidence gathering may include building evidence of the link between the prevention and the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, identifying cost-effective strategies for improving rice fortification and undertaking research on the impact of nutrition sensitive programming. These areas require further evidence of what works so that WFP can deploy the right tools and methods to address all forms of malnutrition.

## Partnerships and capacity strengthening

33. Examples of partnerships and capacity strengthening activities may include SUN coordination, South–South cooperation workshops, regional training on nutrition sensitive programming for non-nutrition staff and technical support for country policies. Partnerships and the strengthening of national capacities are central to WFP’s approach to addressing malnutrition: the proposed costs reflect the need to invest resources in these areas, particularly through the UN Network for SUN and the SUN Business Network. Training and capacity building are required to mainstream nutrition knowledge. Training of non-nutrition staff is a cost-effective approach to mainstreaming and will prevent nutrition staff from working in silos.

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
RBB	1.43	3.54	3.54	3.54	2.85	<b>14.91</b>
RBC	0.64	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	<b>10.50</b>
RBD	0.00	3.85	3.85	3.50	3.16	<b>14.36</b>
RBJ	1.77	3.66	2.02	2.80	1.82	<b>12.07</b>
RBN	0.90	2.69	3.42	2.99	2.76	<b>12.76</b>
RBP	0.56	1.59	1.55	0.93	0.82	<b>5.45</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.31</b>	<b>17.80</b>	<b>16.85</b>	<b>16.23</b>	<b>13.88</b>	<b>70.05</b>

	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Programmatic</b>	<b>Partnership and capacity</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Total</b>
RBB	2.78	0.33	2.50	9.30	14.91
RBC	1.19	0.88	2.66	5.77	10.50
RBD	2.07	2.45	2.80	7.04	14.36
RBJ	1.99	2.03	2.23	5.81	12.07
RBN	0.85	2.15	1.76	8.00	12.76
RBP	0.20	2.86	1.60	0.79	5.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.08</b>	<b>10.70</b>	<b>13.54</b>	<b>36.73</b>	<b>70.05</b>

## The role of headquarters

34. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, significant investment is being proposed for the regional bureaux and country offices to maximize the positive effects of programmes and partnerships. Nonetheless, support from headquarters is essential to optimize the use of resources, ensure that best practices are adopted and mitigate risks at the central level. Table 6 outlines the main elements of headquarters support for regional bureaux and country offices.

<b>Headquarters activities</b>	<b>In-country effects</b>
Create and disseminate standards and guidelines	Country office staff have the knowledge, skills and resources to implement relevant and effective nutrition programmes
Build experience, disseminate lessons learned and provide technical assistance	
Support countries with improved nutrition analysis and monitoring and evaluation capacities	
Enhance support for nutrition in emergencies	Surge capacity is available; support for developing operational protocols and partnerships is provided
Enable enhanced partnerships at all levels	Regions and countries are supported by protocols and guidelines and are supported in rolling out partnership models

35. Table 7 shows the costs borne by headquarters by thematic area. The costs shown do not take into account current programme support and administrative funding, which is expected to continue. The figures are based on forecasts: although the Nutrition Division has added technical support positions in the last two years, further significant growth is not expected. The cost areas incorporate the teams at headquarters concerned with nutrition sensitive approaches to all WFP programmes, nutrition specific programmes, nutrition in emergency situations, knowledge management and “Fill the Nutrient Gap” analysis.
36. The creation and dissemination of guidance is expected to peak in the early years of the policy as new guidance is completed for core areas. Support in emergencies is expected to diminish over time as nutrition becomes more integrated into WFP’s corporate approach to emergency response. Analysis, partnership and facilitation of lesson learning and technical assistance are expected to remain constant throughout the period of the policy.

	<b>2017 (6 months)</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
Core support	0.25	0.51	0.50	0.48	0.46	<b>2.19</b>
Creating and disseminating guidance	0.39	0.79	0.61	0.53	0.35	<b>2.68</b>
Partnerships	0.37	0.74	0.72	0.69	0.66	<b>3.19</b>
Analysis	0.58	1.16	1.13	1.08	1.03	<b>4.98</b>
Documenting lessons learned, operational research and providing technical inputs	0.69	1.39	1.36	1.30	1.24	<b>5.98</b>
Enhanced support for emergencies	0.35	0.69	0.68	0.45	0.37	<b>2.55</b>
<b>Total for 4.5 years</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>5.27</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>21.56</b>

## Conclusion

37. Adoption of the 2017–2021 nutrition policy is an opportunity for WFP to help governments meet commitments under Sustainable Development Goal target 2.2, thereby improving the lives of millions of people. This paper estimates that the resources required will amount to USD 92 million, approximately USD 20 million per year. The investments will have long-term benefits as WFP builds its capacities, supports partnerships and optimizes programming in all regions.

**Acronyms used in the document**

CBT	cash-based transfer
CSP	country strategic plan
MAM	moderate acute malnutrition
RBB	Bangkok Regional Bureau
RBC	Cairo Regional Bureau
RBD	Dakar Regional Bureau
RBJ	Johannesburg Regional Bureau
RBN	Nairobi Regional Bureau
RBP	Panama Regional Bureau
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition initiative