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Draft Iraq country strategic plan (2020–2024)

Duration	1 January 2020–31 December 2024
Total cost to WFP	USD 460,514,522
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* <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-in-programming/gender-and-age-marker/>.

Executive summary

Iraq is an upper-middle-income country whose economic situation is gradually improving following the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant and the resumption of oil exports. Food insecurity has persisted, however, particularly among internally displaced persons, returnees and rural people in the south of the country. The challenges of rebuilding infrastructure, providing basic services, promoting social cohesion, demobilizing militias, creating jobs and progressing towards gender equality while maintaining security have impeded the country's efforts to make progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 2 on zero hunger.

WFP's country strategic plan for Iraq is informed by findings and recommendations derived from a zero hunger strategic review carried out in 2018 with the participation of core government partners and other stakeholders. It has the overall goal of supporting the Government in accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while shifting WFP's role from the direct implementation of activities to the enabling of national programmes. This shift is critical in a context that calls for a transition from immediate crisis response to the building of resilience and long-term peace and development. With gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming mainstreamed throughout all activities, the country strategic plan focuses on three interrelated strategic outcomes that contribute to Sustainable Development

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Goals 2 and 17 by focusing on crisis response (strategic outcome 1), resilient livelihoods (strategic outcome 2) and capacity strengthening (strategic outcome 3).

Under strategic outcome 1, WFP will continue to provide immediate support for people affected by crises, while supporting livelihoods and resilient food systems, including in farming communities, in order to improve agricultural development. Under strategic outcome 2, work on resilience building and adaptation to climate change will be geographically expanded to cover not only the areas to which internally displaced persons are returning but also targeted areas in southern Iraq where vulnerability and food insecurity indicators are high. In its resilience activities, WFP will prioritize and promote the participation of women and young people in order to enhance the equity and equality that help to enable food security and nutrition. Under strategic outcome 3, WFP will make strategic investments in government capacity strengthening, enhancing capacities in national and subnational institutions involved in social protection, emergency preparedness and early warning systems, food security and nutrition, gender equality and value chain development, and promoting triangular cooperation.

This approach is directly aligned with the Government's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and with the national development plan for 2018–2022, which sets out sectoral priorities for development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on reconstruction and recovery following years of conflict.

WFP's country strategic plan is also aligned with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for 2020–2024. Together with strong partnerships with the Government, United Nations agencies, the World Bank, non-governmental organizations and civil society, these efforts will allow WFP to help Iraq achieve zero hunger, support the country's development and contribute to improving prospects for peace.

Draft decision*

The Board approves the Iraq country strategic plan (2020–2024) (WFP/EB.2/2019/8-A/3) at a total cost to WFP of USD 460,514,522.

* 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. Country analysis

1.1 Country context

1. Iraq is classified as an upper middle-income country, ranking 120th of 189 countries on the 2018 Human Development Index. Systemic and socio-cultural gender inequalities have resulted in Iraq being ranked 123rd of 160 countries on the 2018 Gender Inequality Index. Gender inequalities have been exacerbated over the years by economic sanctions and armed conflicts. Iraqi women today suffer from insufficient educational opportunities and health care, limited access to the labour market and high levels of violence and discrimination.
2. As the Government retakes control over territories previously held by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), internally displaced persons (IDPs) have begun to return to their places of origin. In April 2019, there were still more than 1.7 million displaced Iraqis throughout the country, with approximately equal numbers of women, men, girls and boys.¹ Some households report secondary displacement as they are forced to return to camps because of security conditions and a lack of jobs and livelihood opportunities in their areas of origin. The unemployment rate of the workforce is 21.6 percent in the governorates most affected by ISIL compared with 11.2 percent in the rest of the country.² An estimated 13 percent of all internally displaced and returnee households are headed by women.³ Households that cannot return because of insecurity, destroyed houses and infrastructure or economic hardship continue to rely on assistance from the humanitarian community to meet their basic needs. Damage and loss assessments conducted by the Ministry of Planning and analysed by the World Bank estimate that reconstruction will take at least ten years and will cost more than USD 88 billion.⁴
3. Despite the challenging conditions, Iraq has made significant progress in national reconstruction and peacebuilding. The first parliamentary elections since 2014 took place in May 2018. After months of negotiations, in September 2018 a grand coalition made possible the election of a speaker of the Council of Representatives, the appointment of a new President and the nomination of a Prime Minister.⁵ The new Government has prioritized the improvement of essential public services and economic development, outlining its programme for 2018–2022 with practical plans for shifting from crisis response to sustainable development in all sectors. The political transition does not guarantee the

¹ International Organization for Migration. 2019. *Iraq Mission: Displacement Tracking Matrix* (April 2019). <http://iraqdtm.iom.int/>. No disaggregated data are available but the percentage was calculated based on WFP's census of internally displaced persons in camps.

² World Bank. 2018. *Iraq's Economic Outlook – April 2018*.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/publication/economic-outlook-april-2018>. No disaggregated data are available but gender inequality in employment is evident in a labour force participation rate of just 18 percent for women and girls over 15 years, compared with 74 percent for men and boys (World Bank Gender Data Portal for Iraq, 2016 data. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/iraq>).

³ WFP. 2016. *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis – Iraq 2016*. <https://www.wfp.org/content/iraq-comprehensive-food-security-vulnerability-analysis-2016>.

⁴ World Bank. 2018. *Iraq – Reconstruction and Investment: Volume 2 – Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Volume-Two-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates>.

⁵ The Iraqi constitution establishes a 25 percent quota for women in parliament, and 84 women currently serve in the 329-member parliament. Serving in parliament does not necessarily translate into wielding political influence however, and women remain underrepresented in local and national government.

Wilson Center. 2019. Women MPs in the Iraqi Parliament. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/women-mps-the-iraqi-parliament>.

end of conflict, however, and the possibility remains that the slow transition creates a security vacuum that could be exploited by non-state actors.

4. Iraq has been affected by climate change, manifested in increasing temperatures, declining precipitation rates, extreme weather events and droughts. Climate change is a major threat to Iraq's future food security. The frequency of droughts in particular has increased and threatens the livelihoods of 23 percent of the population who depend on agriculture for their living. This figure reaches about 40 percent in southern governorates.⁶

1.2 Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 2

Targets

5. The Government has endorsed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has committed to ensuring that Iraq successfully achieves them by 2030. The Government prioritizes actions that accelerate progress towards improving food security and enhancing nutrition in line with SDG 2 targets, but progress has been uneven given the challenges the country is facing.
6. *Access to food.* Iraq has been largely self-sufficient in the production of vegetables, fruit and meat and has been able to meet cereal requirements mainly through imports.⁷ However, the demand for imported food continues to grow as local agricultural production is failing to keep pace with population growth, currently at 2.7 percent per year.⁸ Import dependency is high for most of the country's strategic food commodities. For example, in 2015, import dependency reached 99.8 percent for sugar, 82.9 percent for oils, 15.6 percent for rice and 50.3 percent for dairy products, indicating that investments are needed in order to enhance domestic production.
7. The availability of adequate food at the national level does not necessarily ensure access to food at the household and individual levels. An analysis of macroeconomic and socio-economic trends in recent years indicates significant risks to poor households and their food security.⁹ Lower performance of gross domestic product (GDP), rising consumer food prices, increases in the number of people living in poverty and large-scale population displacements all reflect the knock-on effects of macro- and socio-economic shocks on food security.¹⁰ In addition, according to the 2016 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis (CFSVA), although food-insecure households represented only 3 percent of residents and 6 percent of IDPs, large proportions of households were vulnerable to food insecurity (56 percent of residents and 66 percent of displaced persons).¹¹ Notwithstanding the lack of sex- and age-disaggregated data, gender and age-related differences in employment, livelihood options and freedom of movement suggest that women have less access to adequate food than men have both within and outside their households.

⁶ Ministry of Planning. 2018. *Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty in Iraq 2018–2022. Executive Summary.*

<https://mop.gov.iq/en/static/uploads/1/pdf/15192838546d2344468c97dc099300d987509ebf27--Summary.pdf>.

⁷ WFP. 2016. *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis – Iraq 2016.* <https://www.wfp.org/content/iraq-comprehensive-food-security-vulnerability-analysis-2016>.

⁸ The fertility rate (births per woman) in Iraq reported at 4.37 in 2016 according to World Bank development indicators. <https://tradingeconomics.com/iraq/fertility-rate-total-births-per-woman-wb-data.html>.

⁹ WFP. 2016. *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis – Iraq 2016.* <https://www.wfp.org/content/iraq-comprehensive-food-security-vulnerability-analysis-2016>.

¹⁰ Full arguments developed in a World Bank white paper by Krishnan, N. and Olivieri, S. 2016. *Losing the Gains of the Past: the Welfare and Distributional Impacts of the Twin Crises in Iraq 2014.* <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/217401467995379476/pdf/WPS7567.pdf>.

¹¹ Sex- and age-disaggregated data are not available in the CFSVA, which is conducted at the household level.

8. Iraq's main social safety net is the public distribution system (PDS), which is meant to provide basic food to the entire population although its actual coverage is limited.¹² According to Iraq's 2018 zero hunger strategic review (ZHSR),¹³ the PDS does not address food insecurity and its implementation costs are very high because of a lack of prioritization and inefficiencies and leaks in supply and delivery mechanisms. Reforming the social protection system, especially the PDS, has been a national priority for some time. Recent efforts to modernize information systems for the PDS, led by the Ministry of Trade in partnership with WFP and other entities, have stimulated support for overall PDS reform efforts.
9. *End malnutrition.* Malnutrition rates are fairly low in Iraq. According to the 2018 multiple-indicator cluster survey, 2.9 percent of children under 5 are moderately underweight, while 2.5 percent suffer from moderate or severe wasting, 9.9 percent suffer from moderate or severe stunting and 6.6 percent are overweight.¹⁴ Despite these low rates, Iraq faces a burden of hidden hunger. The 2012 micronutrient assessment and response survey found that 19 percent of non-pregnant women and girls aged 15–49 years were anaemic and 74.5 percent suffered from vitamin D deficiency. The prevalence of anaemia in children aged 6–59 months was 22.9 percent, with prevalence as high as 67 percent in children aged 6–11 months.¹⁵ According to the 2015 STEP-wise approach to surveillance (STEPS) survey of the World Health Organization, the prevalence of overweight and obesity was also high among adults, especially women. An estimated 33.5 percent of the population (42.6 percent of women and 25.6 percent of men) was obese and an additional 31.9 percent (30.6 percent of women and 33.1 percent of men) was overweight. Infant and young child feeding practices were found to be inadequate with only 26 percent of infants aged 0–5 months being exclusively breastfed.¹⁶
10. *Smallholder productivity and incomes.* Agriculture accounted for only 6 percent of annual GDP from 2007 to 2016, but it currently provides about 20 percent of employment. Thirty percent of the population lives in rural areas where agriculture is the main economic activity and poverty rates can reach 50 percent.¹⁷ The agriculture sector, the main employer of women¹⁸ and rural Iraqis, suffered greatly from the conflict with ISIL. It is estimated that the conflict resulted in total damage to the sector of Iraqi dinar (IQD) 2.4 trillion (USD 2.1 billion),¹⁹ with the cost of damaged agricultural machinery, which is critical for future production, at IQD 689 billion (USD 590.9 million).²⁰ The conflict also depleted farmers' working capital, greenhouses, livestock assets and irrigation systems.²¹

¹² The PDS budget was reduced from USD 5.9 billion in 2008 to USD 3.6 billion in 2009, increased to USD 4 billion in 2011 and finally reduced to USD 1.6 billion in 2017. The budgetary restrictions on the PDS have led to an inability to meet commitments (WFP. 2018. *National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Iraq* (ZHSR). <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/iraq-zero-hunger-strategic-review>).

¹³ <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/iraq-zero-hunger-strategic-review>.

¹⁴ Figures are similar for girls and boys.

¹⁵ Figures are similar for girls and boys.

¹⁶ UNICEF. 2018. *2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Briefing*. <https://www.unicef.org/iraq/media/481/file>.

¹⁷ WFP. 2018. *National Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Iraq* (ZHSR). <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/iraq-zero-hunger-strategic-review>.

¹⁸ 43.7 percent of people employed in the agriculture sector are women or girls (World Bank Gender Data Portal for Iraq, 2016 data. <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/country/iraq>).

¹⁹ World Bank. 2018. *Iraq – Reconstruction and Investment: Volume 2 – Damage and Needs Assessment of Affected Governorates*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/600181520000498420/Iraq-Reconstruction-and-Investment-Volume-Two-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment-of-Affected-Governorates>.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

11. Agricultural productivity levels are extremely low (at just over 2 mt per hectare for cereals), leading to low income levels in agricultural communities. The lack of local processing, transport and storage activities limits off-farm employment, with climate change and the diversion of upstream river flows presenting emerging threats.²²
12. *Sustainable food systems.* Agricultural land²³ is becoming scarcer in Iraq, with only 7 percent of total land considered fertile and arable in 2012, compared with 12 percent in 2005. Agricultural land decreased from 21 percent of the total area of Iraq in 2005 to only 17.6 percent in 2012. Climate change is expected to increase Iraq's mean annual temperature by 2° C and decrease its mean annual average rainfall by 9 percent by 2050, leading to frequent heatwaves and droughts. Long-term climate change analysis with respect to growing season rainfall has detected a shift in the onset of the growing season in southern and central areas and a 17 percent reduction in rainfall, which has resulted in less vegetation cover and lower productivity.²⁴ In addition, a significant decline in rainfall supplying the Euphrates and Tigris basins is expected, which would result in reductions in water resources of 30–70 percent compared with the last three decades and would be likely to have severe implications for irrigated agriculture.²⁵

Macroeconomic environment

13. The economy is dominated by the oil sector, which accounts for more than 65 percent of GDP and 92 percent of government revenue.²⁶ According to the World Bank,²⁷ Iraq made progress in its fight against poverty until 2012, when the poverty rate stood at 18.9 percent, compared with 22.4 percent in 2007. However, the poverty rate rose to 22.5 percent in 2014 because of a protracted reduction in oil prices and the war against ISIL. Women have been particularly affected by the conflict, which resulted in restrictions on movement that affected access to education, health services, jobs and other public spaces. In 2018, overall GDP growth was estimated to return positive at 1.9 percent thanks to a notable improvement in security conditions, higher oil prices and expected increases in public and private investment. The economic rebound in 2018 was also expected to improve per capita GDP from USD 4,952 in 2017 to an estimated USD 5,597 in 2018, although this is still lower

²² ZHSR 2018. <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/iraq-zero-hunger-strategic-review>.

²³ According to a 2017 report by the United States Agency for International Development the distribution of land by gender in Iraq is skewed, with 26.2 percent of land owned by women and 73.8 percent by men. Land and property rights for women remain a challenge in Iraq, particularly for women heads of households following the death or disappearance of a spouse. United States Agency for International Development. 2018. *Country Profile Property Rights and Resource Governance*. https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/USAID_Land_Tenure_Country_Profile_Iraq.pdf.

²⁴ International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). 2012. *Development of Salinity Models by Remote Sensing in Central and Southern Iraq*. Technical report. https://apps.icarda.org/wsInternet/wsInternet.aspx/DownloadFileToLocal?filePath=/Iraq_Projects/Iraq_Salinity/01_CompA_Remote_Sensing_Salinity_models_for_Mesopotamian_Region.pdf&fileName=01_CompA_Remote_Sensing_Salinity_models_for_Mesopotamian_Region.pdf.

²⁵ Adamo, N. et al. 2018. The Future of the Tigris and Euphrates Water Resources in view of Climate Change. *Journal of Earth Sciences and Geotechnical Engineering*, 8(3): 59–74. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324680990_The_Future_of_the_Tigris_and_Euphrates_Water_Resources_in_view_of_Climate_Change.

²⁶ World Bank. 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/Iraq-Economic-Monitor-Toward-Reconstruction-Economic-Recovery-and-Fostering-Social-Cohesion>.

²⁷ World Bank. 2018. *Iraq's Economic Outlook - April 2018*. No disaggregated data are available. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iraq/publication/economic-outlook-april-2018>.

than it was in 2013.²⁸ However, economic growth remains unevenly distributed across the country and among men, women, boys and girls of varying age groups. The increased participation of women in the labour force will be key to revitalizing the economy and lowering poverty rates.

Key cross-sectoral linkages

14. The ZHSR identified several closely interrelated issues that have an impact on food insecurity and undernutrition in Iraq.
15. *No poverty (SDG 1)*. About 22.5 percent of Iraqis live below the national poverty line – estimated at IQD 105,000 or USD 84 per month – with proportions reaching over 30 percent in the south and areas formerly held by ISIL and poverty being experienced differently by men, women, boys and girls of different ages and abilities.²⁹ An additional 30 percent of the population is extremely vulnerable and at high risk of falling into poverty and food insecurity.³⁰
16. *Gender equality (SDG 5)*. Gender inequalities and inequities are critical issues. The denial of equal learning opportunities, particularly in secondary education, affects the ability of girls and women to maintain independent and sustainable livelihoods.³¹ Low literacy levels,³² lack of equal opportunities and the unpaid care and domestic work done by girls and women, particularly in rural areas, contribute to gender disparities in poverty and food insecurity. Gender-based violence, limited access to justice, high population growth, women's limited presence in the public sphere and their economic dependency further hinder the access of women and girls to resources that ensure their food security.³³
17. *Decent work and economic growth (SDG 8)*. The unemployment rate is 11 percent at the national level (7 percent of men and boys of employable age and 13 percent of women and girls), but 23 percent among young people in both rural and urban areas.³⁴ Unemployment drives not only food insecurity and malnutrition, but also chronic poverty among IDPs, and disparities in income distribution. Actual rates of unemployment according to the 2016 CFSVA were almost 11 percent in residents, which is near the national rate, and about 16 percent among internally displaced persons. Unemployment rates among women and girls were more than twice those among men and boys in both resident and internally displaced populations.³⁵ In addition, a failure to create employment for demobilized non-state actors, predominantly young men, poses a serious risk to peace and stability, and

²⁸ World Bank. 2018. *Iraq Economic Monitor: Toward Reconstruction, Economic Recovery and Fostering Social Cohesion*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/980021539372476570/Iraq-Economic-Monitor-Toward-Reconstruction-Economic-Recovery-and-Fostering-Social-Cohesion>.

²⁹ CFSVA 2016. <https://www.wfp.org/content/iraq-comprehensive-food-security-vulnerability-analysis-2016>.

³⁰ ZHSR 2018. <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/iraq-zero-hunger-strategic-review>.

³¹ In 2015–2016 in central Iraq, dropout rates were higher among girls than boys, especially at the lower secondary level where 4.7 percent of girls dropped out compared with 3.6 percent of boys. UNICEF. 2017. *The Cost and Benefits of Education in Iraq*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/cost-and-benefits-education-iraq-analysis-education-sector-and-strategies-maximize>.

³² "Fewer than 50 percent of rural women and girls aged 15–24 are literate, compared with 72–80 percent of women in urban areas. Statista. 2018. *Iraq – Statistics & Facts*. <https://www.statista.com/topics/2375/iraq/>.

³³ Of the 54.5 percent of girls and women aged 15–19 years who had had a live birth, 10.4 percent had had a live birth before the age of 15. Hossain, S.M.M. *et al.* 2017. *Maternal and Neonatal Health in Select Districts of Iraq: Findings from a Recent Household Survey 2017*. <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/maternal-and-neonatal-health-in-select-districts-of-iraq-findings-from-a-recent-household-survey-2376-127X-1000395-105470.html>.

³⁴ United Nations Iraq Country Profile 2015. No disaggregated data on young people are available. http://www.uniraq.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=941&Itemid=4&lang=en.

³⁵ CFSVA 2016. <https://www.wfp.org/content/iraq-comprehensive-food-security-vulnerability-analysis-2016>.

there is a need to create durable solutions for IDPs who will not be able to return to their areas of origin.

18. *Climate action (SDG 13)*. Land degradation and salinity have been substantial in the last two decades and are expected to increase as a result of climate change and increasing aridity, leading to further losses in agricultural livelihoods affecting women and men equally. Salinity levels are responsible for an estimated USD 300 million in agricultural losses per year. Such losses are enormous, particularly in dry areas affected by irrigation-induced salinization.³⁶ Increasing temperatures and decreasing rainfall have led to more frequent heat waves and longer runs of consecutive hot days, which will increase the length and severity of droughts substantially, consequently decreasing agricultural production.³⁷
19. These problems are aggravated, particularly in rural areas, by low agricultural productivity caused by conflicts and exacerbated by gender inequalities, which undermine food security and nutrition and bind men and boys to rigid gender roles that hinder progress towards SDG 2. Unemployment and poverty also contribute to tension and conflict, which can further deteriorate agriculture production and livelihoods. The ZHSR revealed that despite the many policies and programmes being implemented, the food security and nutrition objectives of the country are yet to be achieved as a result of the fragmented nature of the approach followed, insufficient coordination among institutions and the absence of a central theme.

1.3 Hunger gaps and challenges

20. The ZHSR identified gaps and set out recommendations as priorities for achieving zero hunger in harmony with the national development plan (NDP) and the poverty reduction strategy (PRS). These recommendations include the following:
 - *Improving safety net instruments*. The PDS has played a crucial role by making transfers to households and injecting food into local markets. Alongside the PDS, the Social Protection Network (SPN) provides income support to 401,000 households. However, although some poor households benefit from the PDS, its universal nature renders it too costly and inefficient and the sheer size of the programme creates obstacles for the agriculture and trading sectors. The ZHSR suggested linking the SPN and the PDS, providing an entry point to a comprehensive reform of social protection in Iraq and the creation of an effective monitoring and evaluation system with clear targets and quantifiable performance indicators.
 - *Enhancing sustainable agricultural production*. The ZHSR highlighted that there is wide scope for improving food security through investments in agricultural productivity and recommended that priority be given to implementation of the national climate adaptation plan, land and irrigation development (including drainage), inclusive community-based resilience building and emergency preparedness, together with livelihood diversification initiatives that target and benefit women and men equally and enable communities to better withstand recurrent droughts and the impact of climate change.
 - *Addressing the triple burden of poor nutrition*. A sustainable approach to solving the problem of hidden hunger and poor infant and young child feeding practices requires multisectoral interventions at the national level, starting with evidence-based targeting and the collection and analysis of sex- and age-disaggregated data.

³⁶ International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). 2012. *Development of Salinity Models by Remote Sensing in Central and Southern Iraq*. Technical report. https://apps.icarda.org/wsInternet/wsInternet.aspx/DownloadFileToLocal?filePath=/Iraq_Projects/Iraq_Salinity/01_CompA_Remote_Sensing_Salinity_models_for_Mesopotamian_Region.pdf&fileName=01_CompA_Remote_Sensing_Salinity_models_for_Mesopotamian_Region.pdf.

³⁷ Climate Change Profile, Iraq 2019. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Iraq_3.pdf.

- *Increasing employment, especially among women and young people over 18.* The ZHSR found that Iraqi girls and women, especially those from disadvantaged rural communities in remote areas, continue to suffer from limited access to quality education and decent work opportunities. Their employment and entrepreneurship opportunities are also limited to a range of occupations that are considered socially suitable for them, reinforcing gender stereotypes that are detrimental to sustainable development.
- *Reforming marketing, trade and pricing policies.* The Ministry of Trade is the main importer of major strategic foods such as wheat, rice, vegetable oil and pulses. The ZHSR recommended reforming the PDS by structuring domestic prices in ways that offer more opportunities for engaging the private sector.

1.4 Key country priorities

Government

21. The NDP for 2018–2022 sets out sectoral priorities for development and the achievement of the SDGs over the next five years, with a focus on reconstruction and recovery following years of conflict. The NDP is complemented by the PRS for 2018–2022, which identifies six key outcomes for the Government and its partners: higher and sustainable incomes; improved health; improved education; suitable housing; social protection; and emergency response. The Government has also engaged in developing a “Vision 2030” that is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs and identifies and addresses medium- and long-term strategic development priorities.
22. Although the Government of Iraq does not report to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the national strategy on combatting violence against women (2013–2017) and the national strategy for the advancement of the status of Iraqi women (2014–2018) have been endorsed by the Government. However, neither strategy has been adequately implemented because of the political, economic and insecurity conditions prevailing in Iraq; the influence of discriminatory gender norms; a lack of programmes aimed at promoting women’s economic and social empowerment and integration; and the weak financial support provided by government institutions.

United Nations and other partners

23. United Nations agencies active in Iraq are working with the Government on the formulation of a United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) for 2020–2024, which will be fully aligned with the Government’s national priorities. In accordance with the cooperation framework guidance, WFP’s CSP will be aligned with the UNSDCF. Whereas humanitarian response plans (HRPs) for Iraq in recent years have been focused on the immediate life-saving needs of people fleeing ISIL, the 2019 HRP differentiates among the needs of people in protracted displacement with no immediate prospects of returning home; those who have returned home but found a lack of security or services; and those who want to return home but are unable to do so for various reasons. Efforts under the HRP are complemented by the Government’s humanitarian response work and the recovery and resilience programme of the United Nations country team, which is consistent with the Government’s commitment to multi-dimensional reconstruction. Taken together, the UNSDCF and the HRP will provide the basis for the United Nations’ contribution to the achievement of SDG 2 in Iraq.
24. WFP recently signed a country-level memorandum of understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) aimed at ensuring closer collaboration and strengthened coordination at the strategic and operational levels for joint programming of resilience and livelihood activities. WFP and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are jointly preparing capacity-building initiatives for the Government and WFP is developing

a similar country-level partnership with the World Bank on a wide range of topics including social protection, needs analysis and targeting, risk management, crisis response, resilience building and gender mainstreaming. WFP is co-chair of the social protection working group with the World Bank and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

2. Strategic implications for WFP

2.1 WFP's experience and lessons learned

25. The 2016 country portfolio evaluation concluded that WFP activities were well aligned with emergency humanitarian needs and with the policies and objectives of the Government and donors in addressing development needs. Performance was nevertheless found to be mixed. WFP used its comparative advantage and logistics expertise to support a significant number of IDPs in a broad geographical area, and it positioned itself strategically alongside United Nations counterparts, both responding to immediate humanitarian needs and promoting and introducing more flexible support modalities in a challenging operational setting. On the other hand, a major recommendation was for WFP to reorient its capacity development interventions for targeted safety net programmes in food-insecure areas. WFP has implemented school feeding activities intermittently in Iraq for several years, particularly in post-conflict areas at the request of the Government. In 2018 WFP provided school meals to 85,000 schoolchildren in 145 primary schools in post-conflict west Mosul. The schools served as platforms for powerful safety nets, enhancing social cohesion and stability, breaking barriers to education and nutrition, particularly for girls, and helping to rebuild communities in the part of the city that was the last to be retaken by the Iraqi Government forces and in the greatest need of support.
26. WFP's efforts in 2019 continue to focus on the provision of life-saving assistance to displaced households. Despite the Government's efforts to encourage people to return to their places of origin, protracted and secondary displacements remain an issue. More than 1 million IDPs have returned home since January 2018, but the lack of livelihood opportunities and support for returnees that are responsive to needs by gender and age hampers the stabilization of communities and prevents the recovery of local economies. There is an urgent need to restore agricultural infrastructure and use it to help create equitable employment opportunities for women and men of different ages in areas with returnees in order to foster food self-sufficiency and gradually improve the value chains that will allow people to generate incomes while improving the country's food systems.

2.2 Opportunities for WFP

27. The country strategic plan (CSP) provides opportunities for broader engagement with the Government and the United Nations country team, through which WFP can contribute to long-term planning mechanisms such as the NDP and the PRS and strengthen capacities related to social protection. WFP is involved in planning the UNSDCF for 2020–2024, which will align United Nations' efforts with the SDGs and government priorities.
28. With changing conditions in the country and in line with government strategy, there is an opportunity for WFP to go beyond humanitarian response towards resilience building and climate adaptation – with a focus on women and young people, especially in areas of returnees, areas with higher vulnerability to food insecurity and areas where natural shocks are frequent. Working with major development actors such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO and the World Bank, WFP is better able to adapt its programming towards supporting returnees and other communities vulnerable to food security in the country. Agricultural activities such as repairing canals have also allowed WFP to restore vast areas of arable land that support a more sustainable food system while providing much needed employment opportunities in communities vulnerable to shocks.

29. The Government's interest in modernizing the PDS provides a major opportunity for launching and expanding capacity strengthening. WFP has already started an initiative with the Ministry of Trade related to the modernization of the PDS, which will serve as the main social safety net in the future and will form part of an exit strategy for WFP's humanitarian assistance. An inter-operability initiative on planning and data sharing that will help to unify information among different ministries has also begun. WFP's experience with school feeding positions it as a core actor in supporting the Ministry of Education in transforming the national school feeding programme into a more gender-equitable and nutrition-sensitive safety net that has the potential to improve social cohesion in conflict-affected areas. The Ministry of Education has requested WFP's support for a one-time emergency school feeding project during the 2019/20 school year, through which WFP will provide school meals in targeted areas while building the capacity of the Government to resume full ownership of the programme from the following school year.

2.3 Strategic changes

30. The current transitional interim CSP marks a turning point for WFP's engagement in Iraq, with a distinct shift from emergency humanitarian response to longer-term recovery and livelihood-based activities. The CSP for 2020–2024 continues this shift, mapping out a transition for WFP from implementer to enabler, progressively phasing out the direct provision of assistance while building the resilience of individuals and institutions, enabling them to meet their own needs in the future. WFP's work rests on the assumption that development and peace are intrinsically interlinked and that humanitarian interventions can contribute to lasting solutions. WFP will also seek to promote gender equality and women's empowerment while ensuring that gender and age analyses are used to inform programming and targeted action plans.

3. WFP strategic orientation

3.1 Direction, focus and intended impacts

31. In response to findings from an analysis of gaps and challenges, country priorities, lessons learned and opportunities, and based on the recommendations of the ZHSR, the country office will focus on three closely interrelated strategic outcomes for supporting the Government in achieving SDG 2 and SDG 17 targets in Iraq.
32. Under strategic outcome 1, WFP will continue to provide immediate support for people affected by crises, while work under strategic outcome 2 will focus on supporting livelihoods and resilient food systems in ways that are inclusive and equitable, including among farming communities in order to improve agricultural development. Work on resilience building and adaptation to climate change will be geographically expanded to cover not only the areas of return for IDPs, but also areas where food insecurity, poverty and inequality indicators are particularly high, such as the south.³⁸ WFP will ensure the equitable engagement of women and men of different ages in order to foster inclusive and participatory programming that meets their particular needs and contributes to the elimination of discriminatory gender norms. Under strategic outcome 3, WFP will make strategic investments in government capacity strengthening, enhancing capacities in national and subnational institutions involved in social protection, emergency preparedness and early warning

³⁸ According to the 2016 CFSVA, the highest estimated poverty rates were found in areas affected by the ISIL conflict (41.2 percent) and in the south (31.5 percent). Using the consolidated approach for reporting indicators, the CSFVA found that among resident households, those in southern governorates were the most food-insecure. In Iraqi households in particular, food insecurity is most strongly connected to household size and the age, employment status and wealth of the household head. Women-headed households are more food-insecure than men-headed households and women are vastly underrepresented in the labour force.

systems, food security and nutrition, gender equality and value chain development, and promoting triangular cooperation.

3.2 Strategic outcomes, focus areas, expected outputs and key activities

Strategic outcome 1: Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including internally displaced persons and refugees, are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year

33. In order to ensure access to food and nutrition, and thereby to achieve SDG 2 target 1, WFP will continue to provide immediate support for people affected by crises. There are three principal groups of people who require WFP support: IDPs, Syrian refugees and other crisis-affected people. This outcome contributes to Iraq's UNSDCF outcome 1.3 on social cohesion, protection and inclusive services to people in Iraq.³⁹

Focus area

34. This strategic outcome focuses on crisis response.

Expected outputs

35. This strategic outcome will be achieved through the following outputs:

- Vulnerable IDPs and other crisis-affected people receive food assistance that enables them to meet their basic food and nutrition needs.
- Vulnerable refugees receive food assistance that enables them to meet their basic food and nutrition needs.

Key activity

Activity 1: Provide unconditional food assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees and other crisis-affected people

36. The main activity is to provide unconditional cash-based transfers (CBTs) to IDPs, refugees and other crisis-affected people. Assistance will be provided in compliance with Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidance on gender equality, protection and accountability to affected populations, and will be adapted to the particular needs of women, men, girls and boys, with consideration of persons with disabilities.
37. In line with the Government's plans for the consolidation and closure of camps and the ongoing targeting exercise, the country office foresees a continuing need to assist the IDPs who are most vulnerable to food insecurity in 2020 and 2021, with 250,000 requiring assistance in 2020 and 125,000 in 2021.⁴⁰ WFP will progressively hand over responsibility for assisting IDPs to the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
38. Within the UNSDCF, WFP will work with other United Nations agencies with a view to influencing policy on durable and equitable solutions that enable IDPs in protracted situations to live in dignity and progressively attain greater self-reliance in food security and nutrition.

³⁹ Outcome 1.3: People in Iraq participate in and benefit fully from effective mechanisms - at national, subnational and community levels - that prevent, mitigate and manage conflict, and contribute to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, with particular focus on women and youth leadership in decision making, peacebuilding and reconciliation processes. (Strategic Priority 1: Achieving Social Cohesion, Protection and Inclusion).

⁴⁰ The humanitarian country team recently decided that there will be an HRP in 2020 given the low number of IDPs returning to their places of origin in 2019 so far. The Government plan is that all IDPs will return to their places of origin in the next two years.

Strategic outcome 2: Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024

39. In order to help the country achieve SDG 2 target 4 on sustainable food production systems, WFP will support the development of livelihoods for and human capital among women and men of all ages, including smallholder farmers in order to improve agricultural production
40. Although more than 4 million people have returned home – of whom 1 million have returned home since January 2018 – a lack of livelihood opportunities and support for returnees at their places of origin hinders the sustainability and dignity of return, hampering the stabilization of communities and preventing the recovery of local economies. There is an urgent need to improve the agricultural production of smallholder farmers in areas of return in order to guarantee food self-sufficiency and gradually improve the value chains that enable people to generate incomes through the marketing of their surpluses and revitalize local economies.
41. From 2022 onwards, activities will be focused on the enhancement of food systems and the expansion of resilience-building activities from post-conflict areas into areas that are highly vulnerable to food insecurity, such as the south, through the scale-up of climate adaptation interventions. This outcome contributes to UNSDCF outcomes 2.2 and 4.1, promoting inclusive economic growth and resilience to climate change.^{41, 42}

Focus area

42. This strategic outcome focuses on resilience.

Expected outputs

43. This strategic outcome will be achieved through the following outputs:
- Targeted communities benefit from new or rehabilitated assets that improve their agricultural productivity, adaptation to climate change (SDG 13) and social cohesion (SDG 16).
 - Targeted farmers benefit from strengthened technical capacities and marketable skills that increase agricultural incomes and improve livelihoods.
 - Targeted farmers and food-insecure people, especially women and young people, receive conditional assistance in exchange for participating in livelihoods and asset creation activities that enhance their self-reliance.

Key activity

Activity 2: Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening, to targeted farmers and communities

44. Targeted groups, including farmers, women and young people, will receive conditional transfers for participation in livelihood activities and will benefit equitably from the assets built or restored to enhance their self-reliance. Women's participation will be prioritized with a view to reducing the economic inequalities that are associated with food insecurity and malnutrition.

⁴¹ Outcome 2.2: People in Iraq have strengthened capacity, enabling inclusive access to and engagement in economic activities, particularly beyond SMEs, to increase resilience to economic shocks. (Strategic Priority 2: Growing the economy for all).

⁴² Outcome 4.1: Strengthened and resourced policies and frameworks implemented for managing natural resources (including trans-boundary issues), developing renewable resources, and increasing resilience to climate change, environmental stress and natural hazards, and man-made and natural disasters. (Strategic Priority 4: Promoting Natural Resource and Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Change Resilience).

45. Innovative programmes that have been designed in a participatory and inclusive manner will equip young women and men who are vulnerable to food insecurity with essential job skills including English language, digital and computer skills that enable them to generate income remotely and compete for local job opportunities.
46. Targeted farmers will benefit from strengthened technical capacities and marketable skills that increase agricultural incomes and improve livelihoods. Engagement with government agricultural extension services will ensure that programme outcomes are sustainable in the medium term. All activities are designed to strengthen capacities to adapt to and absorb shocks and to reduce the risk of reliance on humanitarian and other support networks. Efforts will be made to develop sustainable, multi-year, gender-transformative projects based on routine gender and age analyses, long-term planning, strategic partnerships and alignment with the NDP and the PRS.
47. To deepen the impact of resilience activities, WFP will expand the use of its three-pronged approach by introducing seasonal livelihoods programming and community-based participatory planning to engage diverse community members, especially women, in the definition of needs and the identification of preferred activities for improving food security for everyone. In continued collaboration with FAO, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), women's involvement in the design and implementation of equitable and empowering activities will be strengthened.
48. With the help of the Stockholm International Peace Institute, the country office will work on expanding resilience activities into communities where mediation processes that facilitate the return of IDPs are being developed. WFP will also seek to implement activities that bridge divisions within communities by building shared assets that are accessible to and controlled by both women and men.

Strategic outcome 3: National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024

49. This outcome represents WFP's long-term contribution to government capacity and planning mechanisms, with capacity strengthening in several sectors. Planned results include more functional, efficient, equitable and inclusive government social safety nets, increased government capacity to manage food security information systems, enhanced ability of the Ministry of Education to implement a more gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive national school feeding programme, enhanced nutrition awareness among Iraqi citizens and improved capacities of national and governorate-level government to respond to future crises. This outcome will contribute to UNSDCF outcome 3.1, strengthening institutions and systems in Iraq.⁴³ These outputs contribute to SDG 16 by making institutions more effective, accountable and transparent, benefitting all the women, men, girls and boys in Iraq.

Focus area

50. This strategic outcome focuses on resilience building.

⁴³ Outcome 3.1: Strengthened institutions and systems deliver people centred evidence and needs-based equitable and inclusive gender- and age-responsive services, especially for the most vulnerable populations, with particular focus on advocating for women's leadership in decision-making processes. (Strategic Priority 3: Strengthening Institutions and Services).

Expected outputs

51. This strategic outcome will be achieved through the following five outputs:
- Vulnerable people benefit from improvements to the public distribution system and safety nets that result in improved food security and nutrition.
 - Vulnerable people benefit from better information systems, capacity and coordination mechanisms for food security, nutrition and agriculture interventions.
 - School-age children benefit from the increased capacities of the national Government to manage a national school feeding programme that promotes access to nutritious food, equitable education and equal opportunities (SDG 4).
 - Vulnerable people and communities benefit from appropriate social and behaviour change communication and nutrition awareness and advocacy that seek to address poor nutrition.
 - Vulnerable people benefit from improved emergency preparedness and early warning systems.

Key activities*Activity 3: Provide institutional capacity strengthening to government officials and partners*

52. WFP will provide technical support for the Iraq household socio-economic survey by adding a food security component to the analysis and ensuring that data on gender and age are systematically included. A gender- and age-responsive food security monitoring system will be implemented in collaboration with the Central Statistics Organization. WFP will also support the Government in enhancing its emergency preparedness and early warning capabilities.
53. Shifting from its role as implementer of school feeding activities, WFP will support the Government as it takes full ownership of the school feeding programme from the 2020/21 school year. Technical support will be provided to the Ministry of Education for the establishment of a more nutrition-sensitive and gender-transformative school feeding programme, promoting home-grown approaches where possible and aimed at keeping girls in secondary school longer, strengthening educational outcomes and enhancing women's economic empowerment.
54. WFP will introduce community-based interventions that follow a gender-transformative approach to nutrition using social and behaviour change communication methods tailored to the diverse needs of women, men, girls and boys in the different communities, with special attention to the triple burden of malnutrition.

Activity 4: Provide support to government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the government social protection system

55. The PDS and the SPN will be reviewed and strengthened to ensure inclusive, efficient and equitable provision of social support to Iraqi citizens in need. WFP will lead the United Nations in supporting the Government's reform of the PDS, focusing on stronger information technology for managing the system; better prioritization, including of poor people; a move from blanket subsidies to targeted CBTs where appropriate; and better, gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation.
56. WFP will provide technical support to the Ministry of Trade for putting in place an effective beneficiary and operational management system and will advise on targeting of the PDS so that it can become a gender-responsive social safety net programme within the wider social protection sector in Iraq.

57. With a view to fostering a better coordinated, integrated, gender- and age-responsive national social protection system, WFP has been engaging with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and the World Bank on the establishment of a technical working group that will include United Nations agencies and NGOs and will develop a governance structure, a framework for and guidelines on data sharing and a technology platform that enables interoperability. This will provide a strong foundation for the creation of a unified social protection registry in line with reform aspirations in Iraq's second poverty reduction strategy (2018–2022) and its strategic framework for social protection.
58. The World Bank has a strong relationship with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs while WFP has a strong partnership with the Ministry of Trade. WFP's "value added" will be in bringing all of the partners together. In order to scale up government social protection schemes efficiently and effectively, while ensuring equitable coverage, WFP will focus on creating the foundations for an integrated government safety net system.

3.3 Transition and exit strategies

59. In implementing the CSP, WFP will concentrate on the achievement of SDGs 2 and 17 through activities that are based on social protection and capacity strengthening. Ongoing interministerial discussions have the aim of increasing coordination among WFP, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, all of which are supporting internally displaced persons. Such coordination is expected to yield efficiency gains and avoid duplication of effort. The scale up of government social protection schemes while ensuring that they are gender- and age-responsiveness will form part of an exit strategy for WFP's humanitarian assistance. The CSP will be focused on capacity strengthening that enables the Government to manage humanitarian and development activities directly. Advancing gender equality will be a strategic focus, as zero hunger is predicated on gender equality.

4. Implementation arrangements

4.1 Beneficiary analysis

60. Over the course of CSP implementation, WFP will reach more than 1 million direct beneficiaries, of whom 27.8 percent will be women, 27.2 percent men, 21.5 percent girls and 23.5 percent boys. Specific targeting criteria will vary by activity, but will take into consideration characteristics that can affect vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition, including gender, age and disability.
61. Under strategic outcome 1, in 2020 WFP will target 250,000 IDPs and have contingency plans for reaching 30,000 crisis-affected people who are affected by new or emerging risks such as political instability, insecurity, armed conflict and disasters within Iraq or across national borders. WFP will progressively hand over the assistance of IDPs to the Government through government social safety net programmes, aiming to scale down its own activities to assist an estimated 125,000 direct beneficiaries in 2021 and completing the handover by 2022.
62. In light of protracted displacement, many IDPs, both women and men, have established livelihoods in their places of displacement and displaced households have been reconnected to government salary schemes and other safety nets, such as the PDS and the SPN. In response to this situation and the decrease in funding for the Iraq crisis response, WFP conducted a targeting exercise to ensure that only food-insecure IDPs continue to receive its assistance. The exercise was completed in June 2019 and initial results have informed the calculation of CSP beneficiary planning figures.

63. UNHCR records show that 252,451 Syrian refugees – 26.3 percent women, 30.4 percent men, 21.0 percent girls and 22.3 percent boys – still resided in Iraq in January 2019. The joint vulnerability assessment conducted by WFP and UNHCR in 2017 and the recent targeting exercise indicated that 35,000 of these refugees face moderate levels of food insecurity and will need WFP assistance to meet their basic food and nutrition needs. However, Syrian refugees are well integrated into host communities and are allowed to work outside camps.
64. Under strategic outcome 2, over the course of the CSP, 446,000 vulnerable people including farmers will receive CBTs in exchange for participation in food assistance for assets or training activities. In order to target the most appropriate geographical areas for resilience activities, integrated context analysis will be used in addition to WFP's CFSVA, FAO's damage and loss assessments and the multi-cluster needs assessments of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. An additional 43,500 farmers (more than 50 percent of whom are women) will benefit from increased adaptive capacities through the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices and national institutions' strengthened technical capacities to support climate-resilient agricultural development.
65. Under strategic outcome 3, WFP will work with the Ministry of Education in the first half of 2020 on delivering a short-term school feeding intervention for 300,000 schoolchildren (49.3 percent girls and 50.7 percent boys) in targeted areas. The intervention will be fully funded by the Government and will be part of the previously agreed capacity strengthening and handover strategy.

TABLE 1: BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY (ALL YEARS)

Strategic outcome	Activity	Girls	Boys	Women	Men	Total
1	1. Unconditional humanitarian assistance for internally displaced persons, refugees and crisis-affected people	67 410	74 025	87 885	85 680	315 000
2	2. Conditional livelihood support	95 444	104 810	124 434	121 312	446 000
3	3. Capacity strengthening – school feeding	147 900	152 100	0	0	300 000
Total (without overlap)*		310 277	330 411	211 697	206 385	1 058 770

* 0.5 percent of activity 2 beneficiaries will also benefit from other activities.

4.2 Transfers

Food and cash-based transfers

66. The CSP will utilize CBTs as the mechanism for delivering assistance to all beneficiaries. This choice of transfer modality is appropriate because Iraq is an upper-middle-income country with a population that is approximately 70 percent urbanized and functional and integrated markets.⁴⁴ The use of mobile telecommunications is expanding, with mobile money transfers slowly becoming more common and the introduction of financial services

⁴⁴ ZHSR 2018. <https://www1.wfp.org/publications/iraq-zero-hunger-strategic-review>.

for people who were previously excluded from the financial system.⁴⁵ Iraqi households' primary source of food are markets, which are supplied from local producers and imports. Monitoring of market prices shows that food prices have remained stable since January 2019.

67. The country office will use mainly mobile money transfers to deliver food assistance to beneficiaries under strategic outcomes 1 and 2; where this is not feasible, electronic vouchers will be distributed through WFP's beneficiary and transfer management platform, SCOPE. Outcome monitoring in December 2018 showed that 80 percent of beneficiaries prefer receiving assistance as cash⁴⁶ and that cash beneficiaries had better scores on food security indicators such as the food consumption score, the household dietary diversity score and the coping strategy index. In Iraq, cash has currently been shown to be cost-inefficient compared with in-kind food assistance, mainly because most food items are imported from neighbouring countries, with retailers and their suppliers incurring additional costs along the supply chain such as taxes and duties that WFP does not face. However, by providing beneficiaries with a wider selection of foods from Iraq's well supplied markets, the use of cash results in better food security indicators as shown in outcome monitoring.

	Strategic outcome 1			Strategic outcome 2		Strategic outcome 3
	Activity 1			Activity 2		Activity 3
Beneficiary type	Internally displaced persons	Refugees	Crisis-affected people	Cash for assets participants	Cash for training participants	School-children
Modality	Cash-based transfers	Cash-based transfers	Cash-based transfers	Cash-based transfers	Cash-based transfers	Cash-based transfers
CBTs (USD/person/day)	0.484	0.627	0.627	3.333	1.71	0.55
Number of feeding days per month	30	30	15	22	22	20

Food type/cash-based transfer	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Total (food)	-	-
CBTs		195 239 728
Total (food and cash-based transfer value)		195 239 728

⁴⁵ There is a limited gender gap of 6 percent (with women having less access than men) with regard to mobile phones in Iraq according to the Groupe spéciale mobile association report, *Bridging the gender gap: Mobile access and usage in low and middle-income countries, 2015* (https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/GSMA_Bridging-the-gender-gap_Methodology3.2015.pdf).

⁴⁶ Equal percentages of women and men expressed a preference for receiving cash.

Capacity strengthening, including South–South cooperation

68. Throughout the CSP, the country office will promote opportunities for South-South cooperation with other countries in the region – such as Egypt and India – that could help strengthen social protection programmes through technical assistance and exchanges. Opportunities for South–South cooperation in school feeding will be explored with Kenya, Mali and Tunisia.

4.3 Supply chain

69. The country office shifted the majority of its activities from in-kind food transfers to CBT modalities in 2018–2019 and expects to rely fully on CBT modalities by 2020. Through its procurement unit and the use of e-vouchers in camps, where local markets are not well-established, markets will be made more accessible to the beneficiaries, who will receive in-kind food at contracted retail shops in the camps.

4.4 Country office capacity and profile

70. To support implementation of the CSP, an organizational alignment mission from headquarters and the regional bureau visited the country office in May 2019 and provided specialized advice and guidance for ensuring that the structure of the Iraq country office was in line with the needs of the CSP. In order to shift its operations to the areas in greatest need, WFP also plans gradually to establish a field presence in Basrah for managing projects in the south of Iraq while downsizing its field offices in the north.

4.5 Partnerships

71. In Iraq, WFP works with national institutions, United Nations agencies, NGOs and other partners. All CSP activities involve partnerships, as described in the following paragraphs.
72. Under strategic outcome 1, WFP will align its efforts with government plans and priorities, especially those of the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Centre and the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre. WFP will design and implement activity 1 in close collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF, civil society organizations and national and international NGOs. Activities 1 and 2 will be implemented through robust and long-term direct and stand-by partnerships with relevant international and national NGOs, financial service providers and other service providers.
73. Under strategic outcome 2, WFP will implement activities in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Water Resources, the State Ministry for Women’s Affairs and the High Council of Women’s Affairs and in close coordination with authorities at the governorate level. WFP will also engage with major development actors such as the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, FAO, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme, other United Nations agencies such as UN-Women, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Mine Action Service, together with national and international NGOs and civil society organizations.
74. Under strategic outcome 3, WFP’s capacity strengthening activities will support the Government, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Planning, the Central Statistical Organization, the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the State Ministry for Women’s Affairs, the High Council of Women’s Affairs and the Office of the Prime Minister, and will be implemented in coordination with the World Bank, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund.

5. Performance management and evaluation

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

75. WFP will continue to work on enhancing its monitoring and evaluation system by improving data quality, ensuring that it is gender- and age-responsive and developing harmonized monitoring and evaluation technology solutions and tools. WFP will conduct baseline surveys and follow-up assessments to measure progress in the use of indicators linked to its new strategic outcomes, outputs and cross-cutting indicators. Third-party entities will monitor the implementation of activities on behalf of WFP in areas that are inaccessible or hard to reach for WFP or other United Nations staff. Monitoring activities will be based on the monitoring and evaluation corporate toolkit in line with the corporate results framework and the minimum monitoring requirements for process, output and outcome indicators. Adequate resources for monitoring and evaluation activities will be allocated in the country portfolio budget. The country office will develop a robust gender-responsive monitoring, review and evaluation strategy for the CSP and will conduct a mid-term review in 2022 consistent with corporate monitoring guidelines.
76. WFP will develop and implement a gender-responsive monitoring, review and evaluation strategy. In compliance with WFP corporate policies and good practices, gender perspectives will be emphasized in the monitoring and analytical phases in order to ensure a balance of inputs from both women and men. The country office will ensure sufficient gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation capacities, including through recruitment of additional national employees (women and men).
77. The zero hunger strategic review highlighted a lack of an effective monitoring and evaluation system with clear indicators for monitoring and assessing progress in government programmes. WFP will help strengthen existing and planned government monitoring mechanisms and will work with United Nations agencies and other partners to support the Government in ensuring the effective monitoring of progress towards all outcomes specified in SDG 2 indicators.
78. The country office will set aside funds for decentralized evaluations, which are planned for 2021 to evaluate WFP's support to the Government under strategic outcome 3 and for 2022 to evaluate resilience activities under strategic outcome 2. The country office will also budget USD 250,000 for a CSP evaluation before the end of CSP implementation in order to guide the development of the subsequent plan, and USD 50,000 for a UNSDCF evaluation.

5.2 Risk management

Strategic risks

79. Persistent sectarian and ethnic tensions create a risk of renewed fighting, which could lead to an increase in humanitarian needs. WFP will address this risk by monitoring the security situation, coordinating and sharing information with local authorities and other humanitarian players and putting contingency plans in place.
80. Gender inequalities and inequities remain critical issues for WFP in delivering on its strategic outcomes and supporting government priorities in food security and nutrition. The ongoing gender and age analysis will provide a basis for gender-transformative programming and assist in mainstreaming gender in all CSP activities.
81. Another risk is the possibility that WFP will not receive sufficient resources to fund the CSP. To mitigate this risk, WFP will continue to engage with donors and stakeholders and develop a partnership action plan to support its resource mobilization efforts.

Operational risks

82. As the CSP foresees a shift from in-kind food assistance to CBTs, the main operational risk is that food will not be available if markets are affected by renewed conflict or access issues. WFP will continue to carefully monitor markets and the security situation, and will position SCOPE to serve as a contingency resource should mobile money transfers become impractical.

Fiduciary risks

83. Iraq ranked 168th of 180 countries on the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2018. Programming large-scale capacity strengthening resources to government entities increases the risk of fraud, aid diversion, political interference and corruption. To mitigate such risks, the country office has strengthened oversight functions and increased its regular spot check missions for reviewing the risks incurred by partners. With the support of the regional bureau, workshops on anti-fraud and anti-corruption awareness will take place in Baghdad and Erbil in late 2019. WFP has been undertaking periodic compliance reviews to ensure that its guidance and regulations are properly applied in all units, offices, cooperating partners and third-party monitors. In order to strengthen these efforts, two international and two national staff members of the country office attended an anti-fraud and anti-corruption certificate course in Amman.

6. Resources for results**6.1 Country portfolio budget**

Strategic outcome	Year 1 2020	Year 2 2021	Year 3 2022	Year 4 2023	Year 5 2024	Total
1	70 480 066	45 511 305	16 399 442	16 218 553	16 228 139	164 837 505
2	40 433 634	42 608 047	44 325 577	44 092 286	43 085 784	214 545 328
3	54 084 532	7 940 913	6 628 700	6 409 092	6 068 453	81 131 690
Total	164 998 232	96 060 265	67 353 719	66 719 930	65 382 376	460 514 522

6.2 Resourcing outlook

84. The CSP demonstrates how WFP is shifting to more sustainable solutions, emphasizing not only emergency response for IDPs but also resilient livelihoods that improve self-reliance and prevent returnees and host communities from depending on humanitarian assistance in the future, and ultimately improving social cohesion. Success is only possible through strong partnerships. WFP will continue to forge links among humanitarian, development and peace efforts, partnering with key stakeholders including government authorities, local communities and humanitarian and development agencies.
85. Based on forecasts and confirmed contributions from existing and new donors, WFP has a strong resourcing outlook for its activities in Iraq. During formulation of the CSP, WFP held consultations with the donor community and partners, who signalled strong support for the direction of the CSP and signalled their interest in continuing to fund the country office over the coming years. WFP will allocate sufficient funds for activities that contribute to gender equality outcomes.

6.3 Resource mobilization strategy

86. WFP has developed a partnership action plan that links partners' priorities to CSP strategic outcomes and activities, identifying opportunities to enhance partnerships with traditional and non-traditional donors, the Government of Iraq, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, civil society, academia, think tanks and the private sector. Informed by this analysis, WFP has engaged in discussions with several donors with a view to promoting multi-year grants in support of WFP's resilience and capacity development activities in Iraq, in close collaboration with the Government. WFP expects these discussions to result in sufficient funding to meet the needs for each of its activities. In addition to regular engagement with the Government and donors, the country office will sign partnership agreements with the World Bank and civil society organizations and will explore opportunities for the private sector to provide complementary support for the Iraq CSP through funding, expertise and advocacy.

ANNEX I**LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR IRAQ COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN (2020–2024)**

Strategic Goal 1: Support countries to achieve zero hunger

Strategic Objective 1: End hunger by protecting access to food

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic outcome 1: Crisis-affected people in Iraq, including internally displaced persons and refugees, are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises throughout the year.

Outcome category: maintained/enhanced individual and household access to adequate food

Focus area: crisis response

Assumptions

Beneficiaries will use resources to buy other complementary, nutritious food items to supplement their diet; the local production and economy guarantee the availability of complementary food in the market; there is stable access to both food assistance and complementary food from markets or via production (security).

Outcome indicators

Consumption-based coping strategy index (average)

Food consumption score

Food expenditure share

Livelihood-based coping strategies (average)

Activities and outputs**1. Provide unconditional food assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees and other crisis-affected people.
(URT: Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food)**

Vulnerable internally displaced persons and other crisis-affected people receive food assistance that enables them to meet their basic food and nutrition needs. (A: Resources transferred)

Vulnerable refugees receive food assistance that enables them to meet their basic food and nutrition needs. (A: Resources transferred)

Strategic Objective 3: Achieve food security**Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable**

Strategic outcome 2: Targeted communities, including farmers, have enhanced livelihoods and increased resilience to shocks by 2024. Outcome category: improved household adaptation and resilience to climate and other shocks

Focus area: resilience building

Assumptions

The provision of readily available income through conditional cash transfers is a strong enough incentive for work to be conducted/completed; there is a secure pipeline; CPs are able to distribute; beneficiaries consume food assistance; the farmers adapt climate-resilient agricultural practices.

Outcome indicators

Consumption-based coping strategy index (average)

Food consumption score

Food expenditure share

Livelihood-based coping strategies

Proportion of targeted communities where there is evidence of improved capacity to manage climate shocks and risks

Proportion of the population in targeted communities reporting benefits from an enhanced livelihood asset base

Activities and outputs

2. Provide livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities, including capacity strengthening, to targeted farmers and communities. (ACL: Asset creation and livelihood support activities)

Targeted communities benefit from new or rehabilitated assets that improve their agricultural productivity, adaptation to climate change (SDG 13) and social cohesion (SDG 16) (D: Assets created)

Targeted farmers and food-insecure people, especially women and young people, receive conditional assistance in exchange for participating in livelihoods and asset creation activities that enhance their self-reliance. (A: Resources transferred)

Targeted farmers benefit from strengthened technical capacities and marketable skills that increase agricultural incomes and improve livelihoods. (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Strategic Goal 2: Partner to support implementation of the SDGs

Strategic Objective 4: Support SDG implementation

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic outcome 3: National and subnational institutions have strengthened capacities and systems for targeting and assisting food-insecure vulnerable people by 2024.

Outcome category: enhanced capacities of public- and private-sector institutions and systems, including local responders, to identify, target and assist food-insecure and nutritionally vulnerable populations

Focus area: resilience building

Assumptions

National and subnational institutions develop a targeting system.

Outcome indicators

Emergency preparedness capacity index

Number of national food security and nutrition policies, programmes and system components enhanced as a result of WFP capacity strengthening

Number of national programmes enhanced as a result of WFP-facilitated South–South and triangular cooperation support

Resources mobilized (USD value) for national food security and nutrition systems as a result of WFP capacity strengthening

Retention rate/drop-out rate

SABER school feeding national capacity

Activities and outputs

3. Provide institutional capacity strengthening to government officials and partners. (CSI: Institutional capacity strengthening activities)

School-age children benefit from the increased capacities of the national Government to manage a national school feeding programme that promotes access to nutritious food, equitable education and equal opportunities (SDG 4). (A: Resources transferred)

School-age children benefit from the increased capacities of the national Government to manage a national school feeding programme that promotes access to nutritious food, equitable education and equal opportunities (SDG 4). (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

School-age children benefit from the increased capacities of the national Government to manage a national school feeding programme that promotes access to nutritious food, equitable education and equal opportunities (SDG 4). (N*: School feeding provided)

Vulnerable people and communities benefit from appropriate social and behaviour change communication and nutrition awareness and advocacy that seek to address poor nutrition. (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Vulnerable people benefit from better information systems, capacity and coordination mechanisms for food security, nutrition and agriculture interventions. (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Vulnerable people benefit from improved emergency preparedness and early warning systems. (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

4. Provide support to government officials and partners in enhancing information technology for managing PDS modernization and in strengthening the safety net component of the government social protection system. (CSI: Institutional capacity strengthening activities)

Vulnerable people benefit from improvements to the public distribution system and safety nets that result in improved food security and nutrition. (C: Capacity development and technical support provided)

Strategic Goal 1: Support countries to achieve zero hunger**C.1. Affected populations are able to hold WFP and partners accountable for meeting their hunger needs in a manner that reflects their views and preferences****Cross-cutting indicators**

C.1.1: Proportion of assisted people informed about the programme (who is included, what people will receive, length of assistance)

C.1.2: Proportion of project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analysed and integrated into programme improvements

C.2. Affected populations are able to benefit from WFP programmes in a manner that ensures and promotes their safety, dignity and integrity**Cross-cutting indicators**

C.2.2: Proportion of targeted people receiving assistance without safety challenges

C.2.3: Proportion of targeted people who report that WFP programmes are dignified

C.2.4: Proportion of targeted people having unhindered access to WFP programmes (ne

C.3. Improved gender equality and women's empowerment among WFP-assisted population**Cross-cutting indicators**

C.3.1: Proportion of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers, disaggregated by transfer modality

C.3.2: Proportion of food assistance decision-making entity – committees, boards, teams, etc. – members who are women

C.4. Targeted communities benefit from WFP programmes in a manner that does not harm the environment**Cross-cutting indicators**

C.4.1: Proportion of activities for which environmental risks have been screened and, as required, mitigation actions identified

ANNEX II

INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME (USD)				
	Strategic Result 1	Strategic Result 4	Strategic Result 5	
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Total
Transfers	133 919 741	166 259 059	63 782 406	363 961 205
Implementation	6 822 476	12 733 051	6 409 382	25 964 908
Adjusted direct support costs	14 034 783	22 458 903	5 988 202	42 481 888
Subtotal	154 777 000	201 451 012	76 179 990	432 408 002
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	10 060 505	13 094 316	4 951 699	28 106 520
Total	164 837 505	214 545 328	81 131 690	460 514 522

Acronyms used in the document

CBT	cash-based transfer
CFSVA	comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	gross domestic product
HRP	humanitarian response plan
IDP	internally displaced person
IQD	Iraqi dinar
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
IHP	international humanitarian principles
NDP	national development plan
NGO	non-governmental organization
PDS	public distribution system
PRS	poverty reduction strategy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPN	Social Protection Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework
ZHSR	zero hunger strategic review