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Summary report on the evaluation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia country strategic plan (2018–2022)

Executive summary

The evaluation of the country strategic plan for the Plurinational State of Bolivia was conducted between March 2021 and February 2022. Taking a utilization-focused, consultative approach, the evaluation served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and will inform the preparation of the next country strategic plan for the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, the efficiency with which the plan was implemented and factors explaining WFP's performance.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is a lower-middle-income country. Despite economic growth in recent years, high levels of poverty and inequality limit access to food, especially in rural areas and among women, and malnutrition rates are on the rise. The country is severely exposed to climate risks, including from frequent floods and droughts.

The country strategic plan proposed a strategic shift in WFP's support, from providing direct food assistance to playing an enabling role, mainly focusing on institutional capacity strengthening, technical support for the Government, advocacy and communication.

The evaluation found the country strategic plan to be aligned with national priorities as expressed in policies, plans and strategies on food security, nutrition, risk management, gender and social protection. While WFP is recognized by the Government and the international community as an effective leading partner in the area of crisis response, it is not yet seen as a principal player in resilience strengthening or livelihood development. Several collaboration agreements with local administrations and humanitarian and development actors have been developed; they are limited to one-off actions, however, and do not currently reflect a long-term strategic vision or WFP's positioning vis-à-vis its partners.

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

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The main results of the country strategic plan include improved access to available fresh food among assisted populations, increased productivity and income opportunities for smallholder farmers as a result of livelihood support and strengthened capacity of local institutions in the domains of food security and emergency response. The impact of the nutrition communication campaigns was less clear and less monitored.

While the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for WFP operations, the country strategic plan provided sufficient flexibility for WFP to respond to the related immediate needs by adapting its programming to new types of activities and modalities. Gender mainstreaming was effective, and protection-specific actions increased in response to the pandemic. The sustainability of the interventions and strengthening the links between humanitarian and development interventions remain challenges, as the required complementarity with development actors was constrained by their limited presence in the areas where WFP intervenes.

The evaluation concludes that funding challenges, staff rotation in national institutions at the political and technical levels and the coronavirus disease 2019 crisis significantly affected the country office's ability to implement a clear long-term strategy. The focus on immediate response to individual government requests often resulted in one-off activities, although flexibility in addressing unforeseen emergencies was observed. The scope and quality of WFP's contribution to the strategic outcomes of the country strategic plan was significantly greater in emergency response and national capacity strengthening than in resilience, nutrition or cross-cutting objectives.

Synergies with other United Nations entities were limited, although the response to the pandemic opened the way to new opportunities in that regard. Resource mobilization efforts were not fully successful, in part because of the lack of fully-fledged funding and communication strategies to attract government and donor attention. Efficiency in the use of available resources contributed to success, although limited coverage and the geographic scattering of activities limited economies of scale and the sustainability of WFP actions. While community participation was sought throughout the implementation of most interventions, community ownership was constrained by the short-term nature of WFP's interventions, which did not facilitate strategic linkages between humanitarian and development actions.

The evaluation makes four strategic recommendations, focusing on strategic positioning, the structure of the future country strategic plan, strategic partnerships, and funding and communication, and two operational recommendations, focusing on human resources and internal capacity, participatory vulnerability analysis and beneficiary selection.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia country strategic plan (2018–2022) (WFP/EB.2/2022/6-B) and management response (WFP/EB.2/2022/6-B/Add.1) and encourages further action on the recommendations set out in the report, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

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

Introduction

Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for the Plurinational State of Bolivia for 2018–2022 was conducted between March 2021 and February 2022 to provide evidence and lessons to inform the development of the country's next CSP.
2. The evaluation assessed the implementation of the CSP and covered the earlier transitional interim CSP implemented in the first half of 2018. It assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to strategic outcomes, the efficiency with which the plan was implemented and factors explaining WFP's performance. The evaluation looked at the extent to which WFP was able to respond to emergencies, including the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.
3. An independent external evaluation team conducted the evaluation using a theory-based mixed-methods approach, drawing on monitoring data, document review, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with around 150 stakeholders. Both primary and secondary data were carefully triangulated to ensure the validity of findings. Gender, protection and humanitarian principles were fully integrated into the evaluation's methodological approach. Ethical standards were applied to ensure the dignity of those involved in the evaluation and the confidentiality of the information shared. Findings, conclusions and recommendations were discussed with stakeholders during two online workshops in November 2021.
4. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the team did not encounter any major constraints that compromised the overall credibility of the evaluation. Some challenges were encountered related to the availability of some interviewees, late access to documents and connectivity in the case of remote interviews.

Context

5. With a population of 11.6 million,¹ the Plurinational State of Bolivia is classified as a lower-middle-income country, ranking 107th of 189 countries in the 2020 Human Development Index.² Although the last 15 years have seen an average annual economic growth of 2.2 percent³ and a significant reduction in poverty, the country remains the second poorest in South America, with high levels of inequality. Poverty rates are comparatively high among indigenous women and in rural areas.⁴
6. The Plurinational State of Bolivia has experienced political change and staff turnover in national institutions in recent years but in 2020 a new president was elected and secured a majority in both chambers of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly.










¹ World Bank DataBank. 2020. [Population, total – Bolivia](#).

² United Nations Development Programme. 2020. [Human Development Report 2020. The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene](#).

³ World Bank DataBank. 2019. [GDP growth \(annual %\) – Bolivia](#).

⁴ National Institute of Statistics. 2020. [Encuesta de hogares 2019 – Sección 6: Pobreza y desigualdad](#) (Household survey 2019 – Section 6: Poverty and inequality).

7. The number of malnourished people increased from 1.4 million in 2015–2017 to 1.6 million in 2019–2021, while the prevalence of undernourishment was at 13.9 percent for 2019–2021.⁵ Thirty-four percent of the country's municipalities are in the high and very high food security vulnerability categories.⁶ The country's nutrition situation is polarized, including the two extremes of child malnutrition and adult overweight and obesity.
8. The Plurinational State of Bolivia has a high exposure to climate hazards, including frequent droughts and floods, forest fires and hail, which are detrimental to agricultural production.⁷ At present, about 100,000 families are affected by natural hazards every year, and the problem is increasing in magnitude and frequency due to climate change.⁸
9. The Plurinational State of Bolivia has been strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to the loss of income-generating opportunities, thus increasing the risk of insecurity among vulnerable Bolivians. The education sector was particularly affected, with schools closed for almost a year starting in March 2020.





TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Total population (1)	11.6 million	2020
	Human Development Index (rank) (2)	107 of 189	2020
	Gross domestic product (current USD) (3)	40.41 billion	2021
	Population living in poverty (percentage) (4)	37.2	2019
	Population living in extreme poverty (percentage) (4)	12.9	2019
	Gini coefficient in urban areas (5)	0.38	2018
	Gini coefficient in rural areas (5)	0.49	2018
	Global Hunger Index (score and rank) (6)	14 (62 out of 107)	2020
	Prevalence of chronic malnutrition in children under 5 (7)	16	2013–2018
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing, value added (percentage of gross domestic product) (8)	12.9	2021

⁵ FAOSTAT. 2019. *Selected indicators – Bolivia (Plurinational State of)*.

⁶ WFP. 2020. *Análisis integrado de contexto de la seguridad alimentaria en Bolivia – “ICA Bolivia”* (Integrated context analysis of food security in Bolivia).

⁷ Eckstein, D., Künzel, V. and Schäfer, L. 2021. *Global Climate Risk Index 2021*.

⁸ WFP. 2019. *Plurinational State of Bolivia annual country report 2018*.

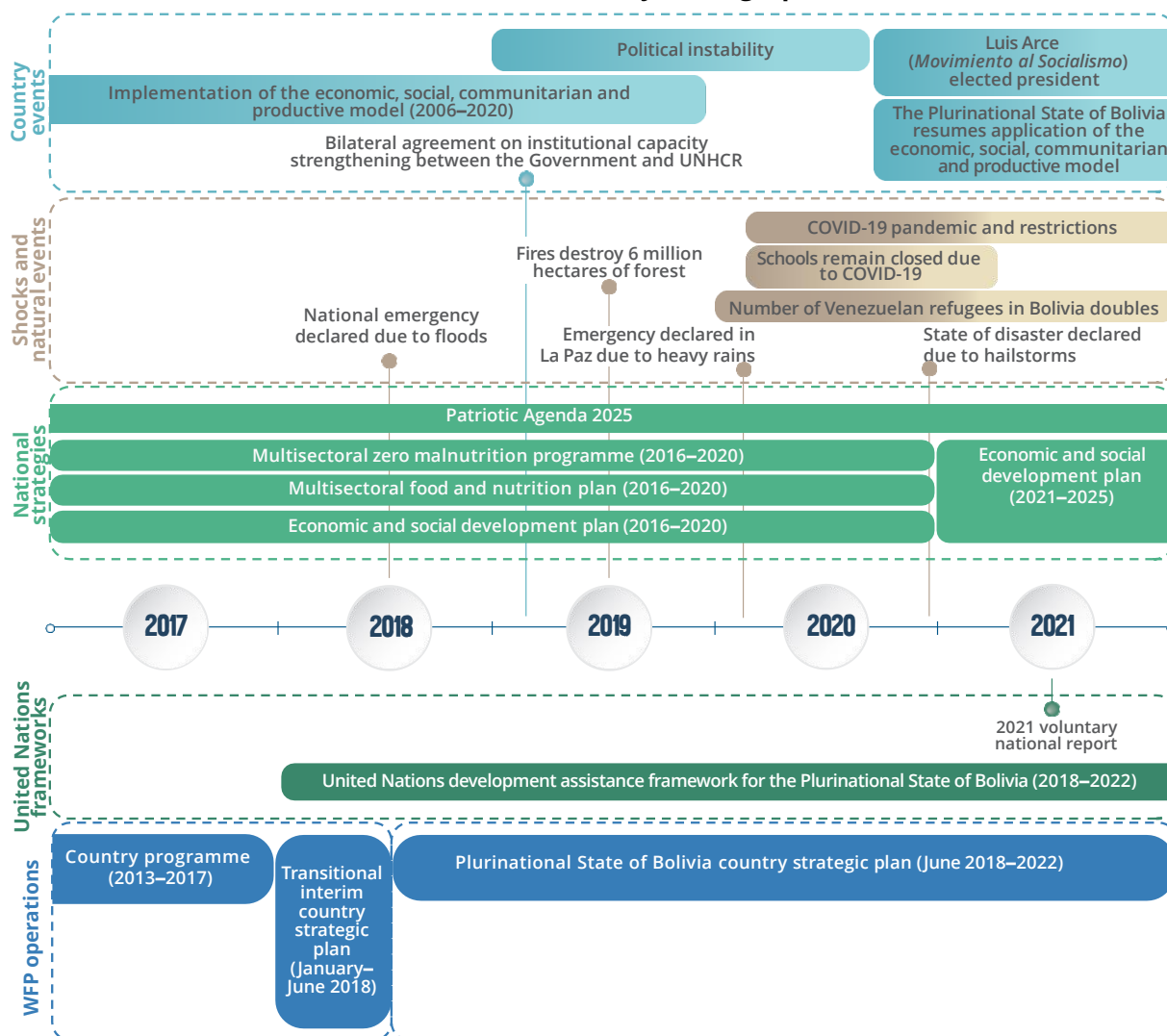
TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Employment in agriculture (percentage of total employment) (9)	22.2	2019
	Global Climate Risk Index (rank) (10)	10 out of 181	2019
	Gender Inequality Index (score and rank) (2)	0.471 (98 out of 162)	2019
	Percentage of women who have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime (11)	74.7	2016

Sources: (1) World Bank DataBank. 2020. [Population, total – Bolivia](#); (2) United Nations Development Programme. 2020. [Human Development Report 2020. The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene](#); (3) World Bank DataBank. 2021. [GDP \(current USD\) – Bolivia](#); (4) National Institute of Statistics. 2020. [Encuesta de hogares 2019 – Sección 6: Pobreza y desigualdad](#) (Household survey 2019 – Section 6: Poverty and inequality); (5) National Institute of Statistics. 2019. [Encuesta de Hogares 2016–2018](#) (Household survey 2016–2018); (6) [Global Hunger Index 2020: Bolivia](#); (7) United Nations Children's Fund. 2019. [The State of the World's Children 2019. Children, Food and Nutrition: Growing well in a changing world](#); (8) World Bank DataBank. 2021. [Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added \(% of GDP\) – Bolivia](#); (9) National Institute of Statistics. 2020. [Anuario Estadístico 2019](#) (2019 Statistical Annual); (10) Eckstein, D., Künzel, V. and Schäfer, L. 2021. [Global Climate Risk Index 2021](#); (11) National Institute of Statistics. 2017. [Encuesta de Prevalencia y características de la Violencia contra las mujeres 2016: Resultados](#) (Survey of prevalence and characteristics of gender-based violence 2016: Results).

WFP country strategic plan

10. The CSP for 2018–2022 was aligned with the Patriotic Agenda 2025 and the economic and social development plan for 2016–2020 (figure 1). The intended approach was to move from direct food assistance to indirect assistance provision, with WFP playing an enabler role, mainly focusing on institutional capacity strengthening, technical support for the Government, advocacy and communication.
11. Before the start of the CSP, WFP operated in the Plurinational State of Bolivia through a transitional interim CSP covering the period from January to June 2018, conceived as an extension of the country programme for 2013–2017 to lay the foundation for the CSP (figure 1).

Figure 1: Country timeline and overview of the Plurinational State of Bolivia country strategic plan (2018–2022)

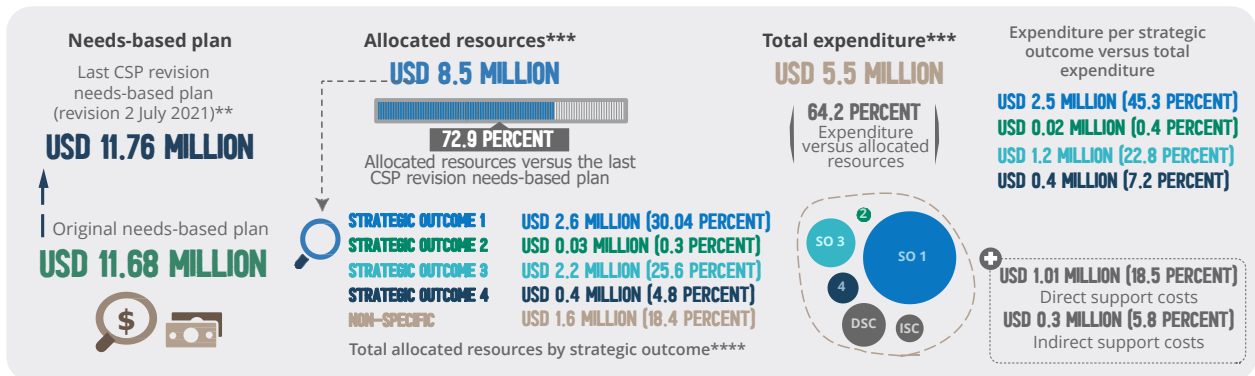
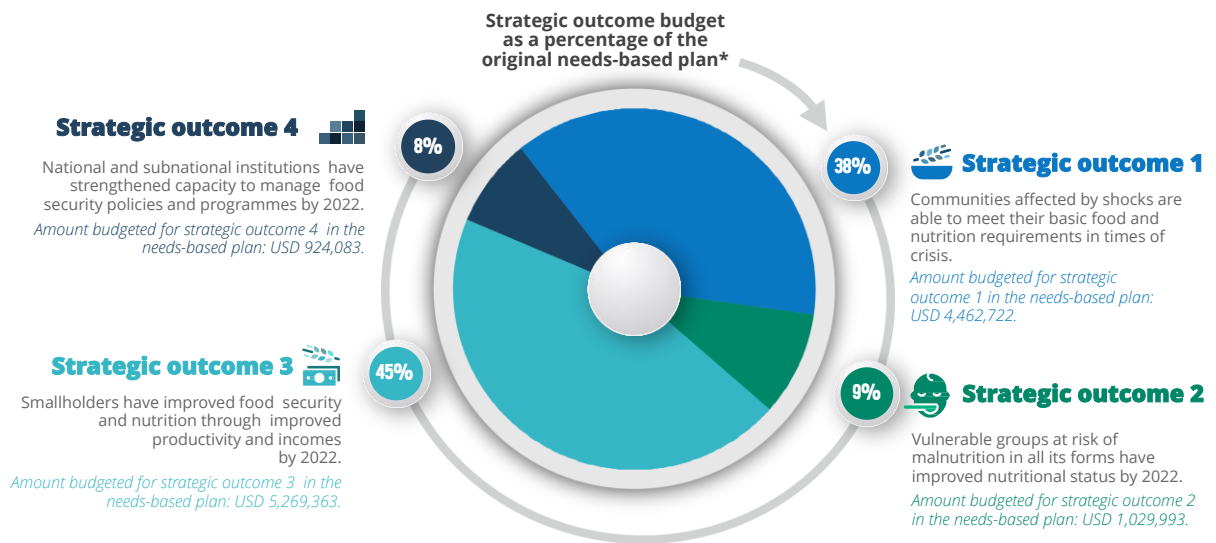


Sources: Various sources, including the CSP document, the United Nations development assistance framework for the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the official website of the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and, for shocks and key political events data, the full report on the evaluation of the CSP (and the external sources referenced therein).

12. The main objectives of the CSP were to strengthen the national capacity for emergency preparedness and response and provide food assistance for assets (FFA) to households affected by crises (strategic outcome 1); to promote adequate food consumption and nutrition education through nutrition campaigns (strategic outcome 2); to support smallholder farmers in producing surpluses and generating income through training and FFA, linking surpluses with the demand generated by the school feeding programme (strategic outcome 3); and to support food security and nutrition information systems (strategic outcome 4). In addition, the CSP had a cross-cutting approach to gender transformation, protection and accountability to affected populations (figure 2).

- The original country portfolio budget was USD 11.68 million over 4.5 years (July 2018–December 2022) to cover 137,000 beneficiaries. After two CSP revisions the total budget and number of planned beneficiaries as of July 2021 were slightly higher, at USD 11.76 million and 145,550 people. As of September 2021, 72.9 percent of the budget was funded, the main contributors to the CSP – including to cover administrative costs – being the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the European Commission, China and private donors. Funding levels varied significantly across strategic outcomes, with strategic outcomes 2 and 3 funded at 7 percent and 54 percent, respectively, as of September 2021 (figure 2).

Figure 2: Plurinational State of Bolivia country strategic plan (2018–2022) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures



* The needs-based plan budget percentages by strategic outcome have been calculated at the grand total costs level of the original needs-based plan, including direct (USD 2.1 million) and indirect support costs (USD 0.7 million).
 ** The evaluation did not cover CSP revision 2 because it occurred during the data collection stage (July–August 2021). Strategic outcome budgets as a percentage of the needs-based plan have been calculated based on the original needs-based plan of USD 11.68 million.
 *** Allocated resources and total expenditures figures are cumulative, covering the period 2018–September 2021.
 **** Allocated resources by strategic outcome do not add up to USD 8.5 million because resources were also allocated to direct (USD 1.46 million) and indirect support costs (US 0.3 million).

Evaluation findings

To what extent are WFP’s strategic position, role and specific contributions based on country priorities, people’s needs and WFP’s strengths?

Alignment and relevance to needs

- The evaluation found that the CSP was aligned with national priorities as expressed in policies, plans and strategies on food security, nutrition, risk management, gender and social protection. Both WFP and national objectives and strategies are largely based on shared frameworks, in particular the Patriotic Agenda 2025 and the economic and social

development plan for 2016–2020. The CSP is also aligned with the Government's commitments and priorities for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and specifically with those relevant to Sustainable Development Goals 2 (zero hunger), 5 (gender equality) and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

15. The design of the CSP addressed the needs of the most vulnerable people under the various strategic outcomes and was informed by vulnerability studies and needs assessments. Compared to the pre-CSP period, the evaluation found that the CSP achieved significant improvement in the quality of needs assessments, including enhanced understanding of the underlying causes of food insecurity, malnutrition and resilience challenges and improved identification of beneficiary groups.
16. The identification of needs and risks was generally conducted in a participatory manner, but while the participation of local authorities was consistent and widespread that of local communities was more uneven.
17. The irregular availability of financial resources during the first years of the CSP forced WFP to progressively reorient its actions and to prioritize assistance to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable.

Strategic positioning

18. Overall, WFP's strategic positioning in the Plurinational State of Bolivia remained relevant in principle throughout the CSP period but the evolving national situation and the global COVID-19 crisis did not favour full implementation of the strategic orientation and posed challenges to WFP's response capacity. WFP is valued by national authorities for its role in emergency response but has not yet managed to position itself as a principal player in the country with regard to resilience strengthening or livelihood development. The high turnover of personnel in public institutions challenged continuity in WFP's collaboration with the Government.

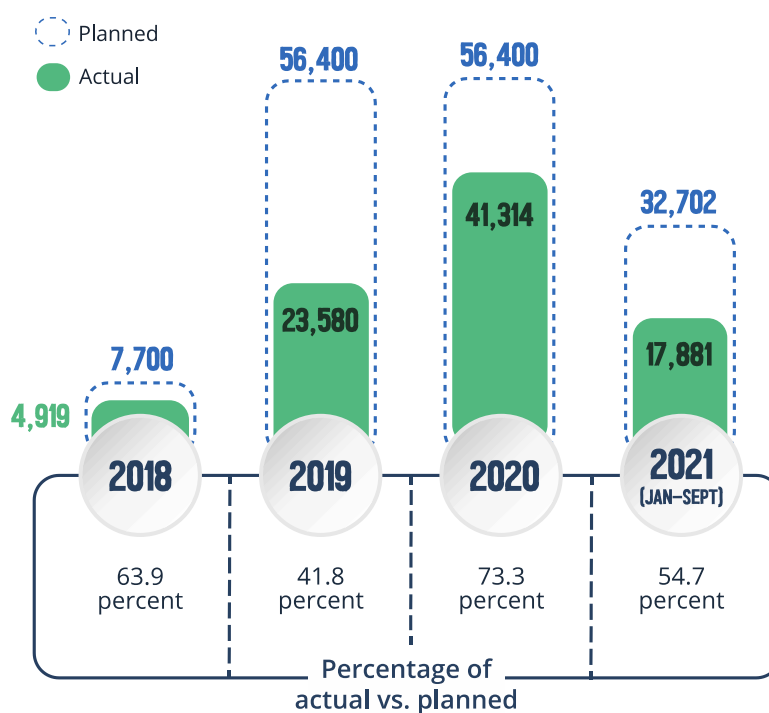
Coherence with other actors

19. WFP's interventions between 2018 and 2021 were generally aligned and coherent with the United Nations development assistance framework for 2018–2022. WFP is recognized by the Government and the international community as a responsive, effective and flexible actor and is valued as a leading partner in emergency response, vulnerability assessment and beneficiary identification, particularly in relation to the comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis and the integrated context analysis.
20. WFP has developed several collaboration agreements with local administrations, civil society organizations and other humanitarian and development actors; however, those agreements are limited to one-off actions and do not currently reflect a long-term strategic vision or WFP's positioning vis-à-vis its partners.

What are the extent and quality of WFP's contribution to country strategic plan outcomes in the Plurinational State of Bolivia?

Overview of output and outcome results

21. While the total number of beneficiaries reached yearly remained lower than planned in an overall analysis by year, the number of actual beneficiaries increased over time between 2018 and 2020, as shown in figure 3. To a large extent, the difference between the number of planned beneficiaries and those reached can be explained by decreases in programming in response to funding shortfalls.

Figure 3: Planned and actual beneficiaries, 2018–2021

Sources: [Annual country reports for the period 2018–2020](#) and the country office tool for managing effectively (COMET) for 2021 (January–September) data.

22. In terms of reported outcome-level indicators, the country office achieved significant progress under each of the four strategic outcomes; however, progress was not homogeneous owing to financial constraints, which led to differences in resource allocation at the activity level. As shown in table 2, 80 percent of indicators had an achievement rate at or above 90 percent, and 20 percent were not followed up on.

TABLE 2: OUTCOME INDICATOR TARGET ACHIEVEMENT RATE FOR OUTCOME INDICATORS BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND YEAR (2018–2021)				
Strategic outcome	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	5	3	3	1
		2	2	4
2	1	1	1	1
3	2	1	2	1
	2	1	2	3
4	1	1	1	1

Legend

 = Achievement rate at 90 percent or above	 = Achievement rate between 50 and 89 percent	 = Achievement rate below 50 percent	 = No data
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Source: [Annual country reports for the period 2018–2021](#).

23. With regard to outcome level results, under strategic outcome 1 significant changes in the consumption patterns of affected communities were observed as access to available fresh food improved and the quantity and quality of protein products consumed increased. Beneficiaries interviewed reported that WFP's support was very important during emergency responses in that it enabled access to a food basket that lasted up to three months. This support was deemed particularly relevant in a context of a lack of job opportunities and movement restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
24. For strategic outcome 2 the evaluation could not quantify the extent to which the communication campaign improved food and nutrition habits owing to the short timeframe of the activity and the lack of personalized follow-up with the targeted population; however, the evidence suggests general participant satisfaction with the knowledge acquired through the campaign. National stakeholders confirmed that there was a need for communication materials to be disseminated over a longer period than the initial three-month pilot to achieve significant and lasting behavioural changes.
25. Under strategic outcome 3 WFP food assistance through the various transfer modalities enabled food-insecure households in several municipalities to obtain a basic food basket and meet their basic food needs. As a result of FFA interventions, beneficiaries were able to restore assets – including degraded land, gardens, irrigation canals and wells – which allowed them to increase production and hence income from produce sales. The sustainability of the resilience achievements among the poorest households is limited, however, owing to a lack of long-term strategies and limited financial resources in most municipalities.
26. Under strategic outcome 4 national and subnational institutions supported by WFP strengthened their capacity to manage food security and emergency programmes and systems; however, that capacity has not yet been institutionalized due to several factors, including high staff turnover in government institutions that challenges continuity, WFP's lack of long-term vision and strategy and the COVID-19 pandemic. Key results observed include improved management of the national beneficiary registration system; the introduction of an innovative early warning system building on ancestral and indigenous knowledge to support weather predictions; development of an integrated context analysis to support vulnerability mapping; and the introduction of drones to support emergency responses.

Cross-cutting themes

27. WFP's activities generally respected humanitarian principles in that they promoted human rights protection and solidarity awareness while avoiding the exclusion of vulnerable groups. Although they increased in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP's protection-specific actions were limited, and the evaluation revealed the need for more comprehensive risk assessment.
28. WFP made a significant effort to integrate gender and equity issues into the CSP structure and interventions. Gender-related accountability systems are in place and functional under the framework of the CSP gender action plan, and gender equality results are included in the human resource performance assessment tool. Although the CSP logical framework lacked specific gender indicators, WFP mainstreamed gender in all its interventions and analyses: data are disaggregated by sex and qualitative information related to the differing experiences of women and men is gathered and used in assessment and monitoring reports as well as in donor reports and proposals.

Sustainability

29. Although some variations are observed across strategic outcomes, sustainability of the achievements remains a challenge overall. In particular, nutrition activities were mainly focused on a behaviour change nutrition campaign at one point in time, which did not allow for sustainable results. In connection with resilience activities, there was limited development or strengthening of institutional structures or processes to enable the sustainability of WFP interventions. In addition, capacity strengthening activities for national and subnational entities have not yet been institutionalized, which also constrains their sustainability over time.
30. WFP support is generally very well perceived by beneficiaries, who say that it has helped them to overcome very difficult periods of crisis; however, activity ownership at the community level is only found in the context of resilience-focused interventions. Community participation was limited by the fact that interventions were often very brief.
31. In contrast, the involvement of local authorities was significant across all interventions. Links between local producer organizations and municipalities in relation to school breakfasts have not yet been established, mainly due to a lack of resources and difficulty in maintaining an operational presence during the COVID-19 crisis.

Humanitarian-development nexus

32. WFP's efforts to balance its humanitarian approaches with development interventions had limited success. In its resilience approach to FFA interventions, WFP shows a clear intention to facilitate links between humanitarian and development work; however, to build a long-term vision, complementarity with development actors is deemed necessary, and that was constrained by the limited presence of other development organizations in the areas where WFP operates.

To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?

Timeliness

33. Overall, the implementation of the CSP was timely within its operating parameters. Responsiveness was adequate and generally viewed positively by stakeholders; however, scheduling of WFP processes to align with the needs of various actors, including at the government level, was a challenge.

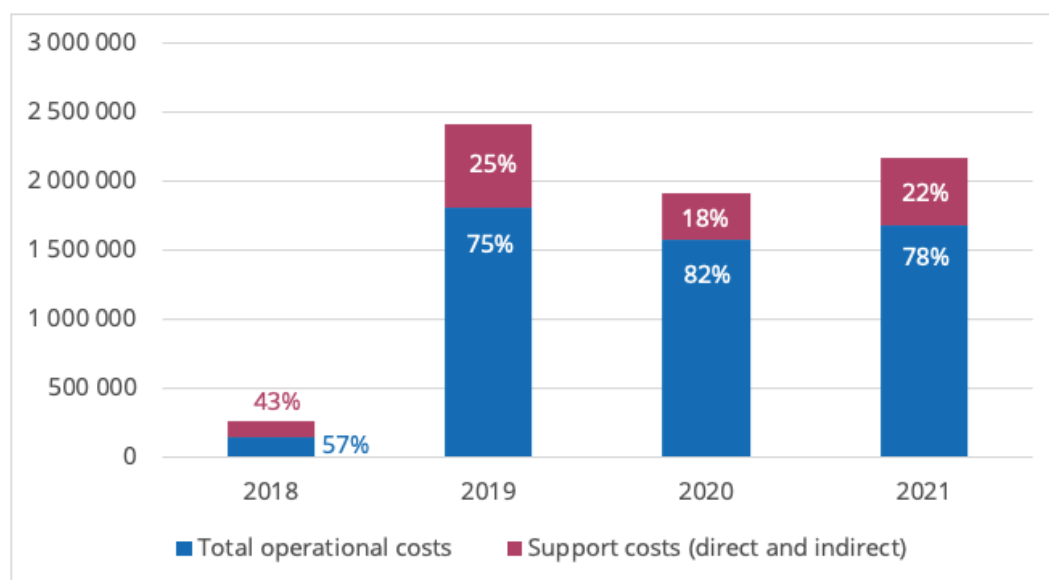
Coverage and targeting

34. The coverage and targeting of WFP's activities responded to the various emergencies that arose in the country during the period covered by the evaluation and to the Bolivian authorities' requests for support; however, this was not the result of a strategic reflection aimed at maximizing synergies and enabling longer-term action that would allow the implementation of resilience and livelihood strengthening activities with greater impact and sustainability.
35. Overall, WFP's interventions were highly dispersed. Nevertheless, although spread across all departments of the country, interventions did not cover large geographic areas and rarely focused on the municipal or even the community level. This constrained opportunities for synergies and economies of scale and made it difficult to define institutional exit strategies.
36. The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for WFP operations. WFP rapidly developed capacity and procedures for operating in urban settings where it had not previously worked. In early 2020, a lack of funding for operations was identified as a major risk but was mitigated by the redirection of available funds allocated to the COVID-19 emergency response and resilience building activities.

Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness

37. The needs-based plan budget of the CSP and actual expenditures were largely oriented towards emergency response and resilience. As resources were insufficient, WFP made efforts to optimize them, seeking to reduce the ratio of support costs to operational costs (figure 4) and costs associated with transfers to beneficiaries (distribution, management and implementing partners) as a proportion of total transfer spending.

Figure 4: Evolution of the ratio of support costs to operational costs (2018–2021)



Sources: Integrated Road Map analytics, annual country report 5 (annual financial overview), 2018–2021.

38. Motivated by scarce resources, WFP sought the comparative advantages of various transfer modalities and, in general, implementation measures that could increase cost effectiveness.

What factors explain WFP's performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected under the country strategic plan?

Resource mobilization and partnerships

39. Mobilizing predictable and flexible funding was a major challenge. The fact that resources were limited from the outset – particularly in 2018 and 2019 – led to reactive rather than strategic interventions based on available funding and donor interests.
40. Although the structure of the CSP was intended to strengthen integrated programming and coordination, several factors created a tendency for activities to be implemented in isolation, including varied levels of funding for activities; geographic dispersion of interventions, influenced by the need to respond to climate and other emergencies; limited coordination; and financial and human resource capacity constraints.
41. Through the CSP, WFP established a wide range of diverse partnerships with governmental (national and local), private, civil society and United Nations system entities, at both the strategic and the technical levels. Although WFP entered into a wide range of collaborative arrangements to implement its activities, they cannot be considered fully-fledged strategic partnerships due to their operational and ad-hoc nature. The absence of a clear partnership strategy was a critical factor hindering progress towards the strategic outcomes of the CSP.

Flexibility during the coronavirus disease 2019 crisis

42. The CSP provided sufficient flexibility to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. The pandemic generated immediate needs to be met in the short term while at the same time sparking a need for joint efforts to work towards the socioeconomic recovery of the country. WFP's

response was to adapt its programming to new types of activities and modalities. Under strategic outcome 3 WFP began distributing take-home rations to children who had dropped out of school and made FFA conditional capacity strengthening unconditional. Cash transfers could not be implemented through banks due to movement restrictions but WFP continued to deliver vouchers, adapting the modality to the urban context, where it had not worked before, and focusing support on a particularly vulnerable subgroup, SARS-CoV-2-positive people living with HIV/AIDS, in the light of the limited funding available and the resulting need to prioritize.

Strategic shifts

43. Internal resources and capacity were not sufficient to achieve the expected strategic shifts. WFP did not take sufficient action to strengthen the capacity of its staff in the areas of resilience, food security or livelihood support. Securing long-term funding sources more suited to the new strategic directions and developing strategic partnerships also presented significant challenges.
44. The focus of WFP's action was emergency response, which is widely perceived by the CSP stakeholders as being its main area of competence (including logistical capacity, speed of response, concrete interventions) and where it provides the greatest added value compared to other actors.
45. In addition, the CSP was not based on a defined theory of change that clearly positioned emergency response work in relation to resilience support and livelihood strengthening. This lack of strategic orientation may have contributed to the loss of focus on the innovative dimension of the CSP, embodied in work to support the resilience of Bolivian smallholder farmers.

Conclusions

46. The evaluation revealed specific contributions to each of the intended strategic outcomes throughout the CSP period; however, while the emergency response component was prioritized, absorbing a significant portion of available resources, nutrition, resilience and capacity strengthening were not addressed to the extent necessary to ensure the sustainability of achievements.

Strategic positioning

47. Significant and continuing obstacles to the operationalization of the CSP – limited resources, socio-political and health crises – constrained WFP's ability to develop and implement a clear long-term strategy underpinned by a comprehensive package of activities. The unpredictability of many of these external factors and responsiveness to individual government requests often resulted in one-off activities. The CSP was designed to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable in terms of food insecurity, malnutrition and climate change through emergency response and community resilience building activities; however, the lack of a robust resource mobilization strategy meant that WFP faced challenges in securing sufficient resources to implement the CSP. Nevertheless, WFP showed flexibility in addressing unforeseen challenges such as the political turnover in 2019–2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting its response to the Government's requests.

Maximization of opportunities and country strategic plan structure and focus

48. The scope and quality of WFP's contribution to the CSP strategic outcomes were significantly greater in respect of emergency response and, secondly, national capacity strengthening than resilience, nutrition or cross-cutting objectives. Progress in reducing the food insecurity of affected populations was observed, particularly in one-off crises and emergencies including the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP interventions addressed resilience

challenges to some extent through support for smallholder farmers, although results were limited by difficulties in securing funding and the dispersion of small-scale interventions. Areas that would deserve further attention in the next CSP include malnutrition, owing to the deteriorating indicators across the country, and stronger collaboration with the Government on cross-cutting themes, including humanitarian protection.

Strengthening of strategic partnerships

49. WFP's contribution to strategic outcomes in increasingly complex and challenging circumstances will depend in large part on building stronger and more enduring partnerships. Joining forces with strategic partners in the country for joint actions to provide comprehensive support is particularly necessary in a lower-middle-income country surrounded by regional crises that increasingly attract funding. Turnover in Government necessitated significant advocacy efforts, both bilaterally by WFP with ministries and governorates and jointly with other members of the humanitarian country team. The current level of joint effort with other United Nations entities is not deemed sufficient for the achievement of long-term intersectoral results. The COVID-19 pandemic has opened the way to new opportunities by highlighting the urgent importance of generating inter-agency efforts to address humanitarian needs as much as root causes of food insecurity.

Funding strategy, communication and visibility

50. Resource mobilization efforts were not fully successful in part because there was a lack of fully-fledged funding and communication strategies to attract the attention of the Government and donors. The numerous unforeseeable contingencies forced WFP to constantly reprioritize its activities, resulting in short, scattered interventions. In particular, the role played by WFP as a facilitator vis-à-vis the Government required great negotiation capacity and sensitivity to government processes, beyond the mere provision of technical expertise.

Human resources and internal capacity

51. WFP made good use of limited capacity (in terms of quantity) and resources insofar as WFP implemented CSP activities in a timely manner; however, the limited coverage and scattering of small-scale activities throughout the country did not favour synergies or economies of scale: managing multiple small-scale grants had an impact on precisely the advocacy and communication efforts needed to influence multisectoral policies and programmes.

Participatory work on (geographic) vulnerability definition and targeting

52. Monitoring and evaluation systems did not have a sufficiently qualitative or ex-post dimension to adequately assess the effects and sustainability of WFP interventions on the resilience of beneficiary households or to draw specific lessons for the design of future actions based on beneficiary perspectives. It is clear, however, that the short-term interventions aimed at meeting immediate needs have not yet led to community ownership or facilitated strategic links between humanitarian and development work.

Recommendations

53. The evaluation makes four strategic recommendations and two operational recommendations.

#	Recommendation	Level/ nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline ^a
1	<p>Strategic positioning and structure of the new country strategic plan</p> <p>To better define its positioning in the country, it is recommended that WFP, in line with the One United Nations initiative, develop a package of assistance that better reflects its specific added value and develop, in collaboration with the Government, a balanced approach to assistance for each strategic outcome.</p> <p>As the basis for the structure of the new country strategic plan, it is suggested that WFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) maintain the focus on strategic outcome 1 relating to emergency response with a view to strengthening the Government's capacity; ii) concentrate resilience building work (strategic outcome 3 and activity 3) on the most vulnerable peri-urban and rural areas; iii) establish dialogue mechanisms at the technical and political levels with the national and departmental governments to encourage them to continue to fulfil their responsibility for school feeding and, to that end, to identify the most vulnerable municipalities based on an integrated context analysis; and iv) develop a clear strategy for building institutional capacity at the national and subnational levels (strategic outcome 4) in relation to food security and nutrition education, with a clear focus on gender. 	Strategic	Country office	<p>Technical support and general strategic guidance from the regional bureau</p> <p>Government (consultations, particularly on points iii) and iv))</p> <p>United Nations entities/One United Nations initiative (prior consultations)</p>	High	November 2022

#	Recommendation	Level/ nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline ^a
2	<p>Maximization of opportunities to consolidate WFP's strategic positioning</p> <p>As a means of implementing recommendation 1, it is recommended that WFP strengthen its strategic positioning through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Provide technical support for implementation of the community component of the integrated context analysis to identify areas vulnerable to food insecurity at the local level, strengthening WFP's contribution within the framework of the new post-COVID-19 national economic recovery plan. ii) Support the effective enforcement of Law 602 on risk management, which will make it possible to strengthen capacities in relation to contingency plans and early warning systems at the national level, transfer such capacities from the national to the local level and carry out simulation exercises at the municipal level. iii) Promote synergies between WFP and other development actors to link strategies and programmes in the areas of resilience building, food security, nutrition and social protection; to that end, the regional bureau should support capacity building for the country office based on experience in other countries (e.g., social protection activities that incorporate nutrition and gender). iv) Ensure that gender/women's empowerment are much more visible cross-cutting themes, both by allocating resources (not only funds) to associated activities and by incorporating specific objectives and indicators into the logical framework. (It is suggested, for example, that data be collected at the individual level to enable more robust analyses, especially of intra-family dynamics.) 	Strategic	Country office	<p>Government (points i)–iv))</p> <p>United Nations entities and other relevant partners from civil society (non-governmental organizations) and the resilience, food security, nutrition and social protection sectors (point iii))</p> <p>Support from the regional bureau (point iii))</p>	High	January 2023

#	Recommendation	Level/ nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline ^a
3	<p>Strengthening of strategic partnerships</p> <p>With a view to fostering joint intersectoral work that creates opportunities at the humanitarian–development nexus, it is recommended that WFP prepare a partnership strategy that clearly defines the responsibilities, areas of action and added value of each stakeholder, as well as the necessary coordination and synchronization of work plans.</p> <p>It is suggested that WFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) strengthen political advocacy and negotiation capacity; ii) identify and map interest groups and representatives of ministries, governorships, municipalities, cooperating partners and United Nations entities; iii) strengthen the One United Nations initiative through strategic partnerships; and iv) strengthen relations with government authorities and technical staff through memoranda of understanding and letters of agreement to lay the foundation for a future handover strategy that is sustainable in the long term. 	Strategic	Country office	Ministries, governorships, municipalities, cooperating partners, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, <i>Coordinadora de la Mujer and Pro Mujer</i>	High	First quarter of 2023
4	<p>Funding, communication and visibility strategy</p> <p>It is recommended that WFP develop more precise and interconnected funding and communication strategies to generate empirical data and improve the visibility of its strategic positioning and performance.</p> <p>It is suggested that WFP propose, in the context of the United Nations development assistance framework and the preparation of joint proposals with development actors, guidelines to be defined with the Government (with the objectives and scope of action of the actors based on a thorough analysis of their experience in various spheres and geographical areas to create links between them); and strengthen existing audio-visual products (life stories, reports, etc.) with an explicit focus on gender and women’s empowerment.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Technical support and strategic guidance from the regional bureau for designing strategies	High	November 2022

#	Recommendation	Level/ nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline ^a
5	<p>Human resources and internal capacity</p> <p>It is recommended that WFP develop a strategy for human resource needs and internal capacity building to achieve the expected strategic changes.</p> <p>It is suggested that WFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) study the possibility of hiring a social protection expert and building monitoring and evaluation capacity; ii) develop training on advocacy and mobilizing funds from new public and private donors for senior WFP staff; iii) foster the commitment to gender issues of WFP staff, beneficiaries, cooperating partners and government officials and raise their awareness of such issues (through training and incentive mechanisms); and iv) consider reopening at least one local office (or, if possible, sharing premises with one or more development partners) where WFP will operate during the period of the next country strategic plan, which would help to maintain the close collaboration established with the communities and continue to strengthen the social-community and gender approaches. 	Operational	Country office	<p>Technical support from the regional bureau for the development of internal training processes (points i)–iv))</p> <p>Development partners (point iv))</p>	High	First quarter of 2023

#	Recommendation	Level/ nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline ^a
6	<p>Participatory work on defining (geographic) vulnerability and selecting beneficiaries</p> <p>It is recommended that WFP capitalize on its recognized expertise in the selection of geographic areas and vulnerable households in the context of emergency response, risk management, school feeding and asset rehabilitation. This task encompasses several dimensions:</p> <p>i) Take advantage of ownership of the integrated context analysis and the comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis by governments at the national and departmental levels to strengthen the institutionalization of these tools and combine these methods of selecting vulnerable households and areas with more participatory consultation processes that allow for the involvement of local authorities (municipal, community and indigenous) and beneficiary communities.</p> <p>ii) In order to better articulate support according to changes in the vulnerability level of beneficiary families (and, eventually, to be able to clearly define the processes for transferring inter-institutional responsibilities), define indicators and mechanisms for categorizing beneficiaries in emergency situations or in the phases of asset rehabilitation, livelihood strengthening and resilience building.</p> <p>iii) Develop, with a gender approach, processes for identifying, differentiating and classifying the life strategies of the populations of affected territories, in parallel with the work of implementing emergency interventions, preparing asset rehabilitation activities and strengthening resilience following emergencies.</p>	Operational	Country office	Technical support from the regional bureau on strengthening the generation of empirical data (points i)–iii)) Government	High	First quarter of 2023

^a The deadlines refer to the incorporation of the recommended strategies and actions into the design of the new country strategic plan to be presented in November 2022. The strategies should therefore have been developed and the actions defined by the stated deadlines but will be applied throughout the implementation period of the new country strategic plan.

Acronyms

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
FFA	food assistance for assets