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Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Jordan (2020–2022)

Executive summary

An evaluation of the country strategic plan for Jordan for 2020–2022 was conducted between May 2021 and March 2022. It assessed WFP's strategic positioning and contribution to outcomes, the efficiency with which the plan was implemented, and the factors explaining WFP's performance. Taking a utilization-focused, consultative approach, the evaluation served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informed the preparation of a new country strategic plan for Jordan.

Jordan is an upper-middle-income country hosting more than 1.36 million Syrian refugees. The impact of the 2019 coronavirus disease pandemic has increased pressure on food security in rural and urban areas for both Jordanians and refugees. The Government has several frameworks that guide the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and a framework for addressing the Syrian crisis.

The country strategic plan articulates a shift towards the building of resilience and livelihoods, the development of common delivery platforms and the expansion of capacity strengthening support for the Government in addressing food security and social protection challenges. It is coherent with national priorities and strategies and the implementation approach reflected priorities as they evolved in response to a protracted refugee crisis and deepening national vulnerabilities, thereby strengthening the relevance of WFP's operations.

During the period evaluated WFP systematically exceeded its targets for both refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, including throughout the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. It also maintained gender parity. A major adaptation was the expansion of general food assistance in 2020–2021 in response to new needs resulting from the pandemic.

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 strongest element of WFP operations was general food assistance for refugees, which was a vital source of life-saving support for the most vulnerable refugees and prevented further deterioration in refugees' food security in the face of increasing shocks, including inflation and the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019. Capacity support for the Government brought positive results in the strengthening of national social safety nets for vulnerable Jordanians, but less solid progress was made in support for a pathway towards sustainable livelihoods owing to funding shortfalls and an insufficiently rigorous strategy. Accountability to affected populations, protection and gender issues were addressed but would benefit from further consideration.

Targeting and validation based on vulnerability criteria ensured that the most vulnerable groups were reached even when only reduced resources were available. The use of appropriate technologies supported the efficiency, equity and effectiveness of assistance. Active resource mobilization strategies and the development of innovative partnerships are a strength of the WFP country office in Jordan.

The evaluation concludes that WFP maintained an essential humanitarian response that provided a buffer during the protracted refugee crisis as the vulnerabilities of Jordanians and Syrian refugees deepened. However, there were shortcomings in ensuring that beneficiaries understood the targeting methodology. To bridge the humanitarian–development divide, WFP provided capacity strengthening for national public institutions and worked to harmonize its approach with national systems.

WFP has evolved further in the transition from the use of unconditional assistance to building resilience, livelihoods, self-reliance and more predictable social safety nets for vulnerable refugee and Jordanian households in partnership with the Government and other entities. WFP took steps to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of its operations.

The evaluation makes six recommendations, three strategic and three operational. The strategic recommendations concern the development and monitoring of the next country strategic plan, based on a more integrated framework with a clearer and more realistic focus on selected transformative dimensions; ensuring the necessary in-country expertise to match WFP's ambitions; using the existing platform for a coherent strategy that addresses external barriers to harmonization and transitions that strengthen the relevance of the next country strategic plan to beneficiary needs. Operational recommendations call for the enhancement of accountability to affected populations; capacity strengthening support for a national social protection system for vulnerable population groups in Jordan; and the development of a dual livelihoods approach that facilitates work on the food security–water–climate change nexus and the transition of refugees from unconditional assistance to self-reliance.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Jordan (2020–2022) (WFP/EB.2/2022/6-E) and management response (WFP/EB.2/2022/6-E/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. An evaluation of the Jordan country strategic plan (CSP) for 2020–2022 was conducted between May 2021 and March 2022. Combining accountability and learning objectives, it was timed to inform the design of the next CSP for Jordan, with fieldwork conducted in August and September 2021. The main users of the evaluation are the WFP country office, the Regional Bureau for the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe, headquarters divisions and other stakeholders.
2. The evaluation covers WFP activities implemented under the transitional interim CSP for 2018–2019 and under the CSP between 2020 and mid-2021, assessing WFP's strategic positioning and the extent to which WFP made the shift expected under the CSP, WFP's effectiveness in contributing to the CSP strategic outcomes, the efficiency with which the CSP was implemented, and factors explaining WFP's performance.
3. An independent external team undertook the evaluation using mixed methods, drawing on monitoring data, document review, an e-survey, semi-structured interviews with 128 individuals representing a range of stakeholders at the national and local levels and focus group discussions with 70 people from the communities targeted for assistance under the CSP. The evaluation paid particular attention to addressing social protection and sustainable livelihoods for Jordanians and refugees in order to inform future opportunities and the way forward in these areas. Equality and women's empowerment, inclusion, accountability to affected populations and ethical issues were duly considered.
4. The evaluation methodology and schedule were developed taking into consideration possible limitations related to evaluability, travel challenges and ongoing events in Jordan. To validate the findings, information was triangulated with various sources.

Context

5. Jordan is an upper-middle-income country directly affected by the Syrian refugee crisis and hosting the second highest number of refugees per capita globally. While the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) counts 675,433 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan,¹ the Government of Jordan estimates that the country has hosted more than 1.36 million Syrians since 2011.²

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2021. [Operational Data Portal – Refugee Situations: Jordan](#).

² Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. 2020. [Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2020–2022](#).

TABLE 1: JORDAN SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS		
Indicator	Value	Year
Total population (1)	10 million	2020
Non-Jordanian residents (2)	3 million	2017
Life expectancy (1)	75 years	2020
Gross domestic product growth (1)	-1.6 %	2020
Human Development Index score (4)	0.729	2020
Gini coefficient (3)	33.7	2017
Gender inequality index score (4)	0.450	2019
Prevalence of stunting in children under 5 (1)	7.3%	2020
Global Hunger Index score (5)	8.3 (low)	2021

Sources: (1) World Bank. 2020. [Data: Jordan](#). (2) United Nations. 2017. [United Nations sustainable development framework in Jordan 2018–2022](#). (3) United Nations Development Programme. 2018. [Human Development Indices and Indicators. 2018 Statistical Update](#). (4) United Nations Development Programme. 2020. [Human Development Report 2020. The next frontier: Human development and the Anthropocene](#). (5) Welt hunger hilfe and Concern Worldwide. 2021. [2021 Global Hunger Index: Hunger and food systems in conflict settings](#).

6. The absolute poverty rate for Jordanians stood at 15.7 percent in 2019, meaning that more than 1 million Jordanians were living below the poverty line.³ Owing to the economic downturn from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the poverty rate is expected to increase by 11 percentage points.⁴ High rates of unemployment persist, especially among young people and women, and COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on women. The agriculture sector, which has been affected by climate change, provides a critical source of sustenance and income, particularly for the poorest households.
7. The prevalence of food insecurity varies among refugees and Jordanians (table 2). Despite the Government's efforts to ensure food availability and access, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the pressure on food security in both rural and urban areas, including for refugees in camps and host communities. In 2020, the National Aid Fund (NAF), the main implementer of the national safety net, provided cash-based assistance to 270,000 vulnerable Jordanian households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵

³ World Bank. 2021. [Macro Poverty Outlook: Country-by-country Analysis and Projections for the Developing World. Spring meetings 2021: Jordan](#).

⁴ World Bank. 2020. [Jordan's Economic Update](#).

⁵ Government of Jordan National Aid Fund. 2020. [Jordan Emergency Cash Transfer Project Rapid Social Assessment](#).

TABLE 1: FOOD CONSUMPTION ADEQUACY, BY POPULATION GROUP			
Population group	Percentage of households in each population group with acceptable, borderline and poor consumption		
	Acceptable	Borderline	Poor
Syrian refugees in host communities	73.5	20.8	5.6
All refugees in host communities	74.4	20.9	4.6
All refugees in camps	86	11	3
Vulnerable Jordanians	89.6	8.3	2.1

Sources: WFP. 2021. *Jordan: WFP Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Dashboard: June and March 2021*; and *Food Security Outcome Monitoring (Camps)*.

8. Jordan achieved universal primary education for boys and girls in 2005.⁶ Of the children enrolled in government educational institutions, 78 percent are Jordanians and 22 percent are non-Jordanians.⁷ While Jordanian girls are more likely to complete grades 7–12 than Jordanian boys, the opposite is the case for Syrian refugees.⁸
9. The Government has outlined its strategy for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in several documents, including Jordan 2025, executive development programmes and the Jordan economic growth plan for 2018–2022. The Jordan response plan for the Syrian crisis⁹ provides a framework for the provision of humanitarian and resilience support to Syrian refugees and Jordanians.

WFP country strategic plan

10. The CSP continued the shift towards the building of resilience and livelihoods and the development of common delivery platforms with other actors that started under the transitional interim CSP, introducing technological innovations to increase the efficiency, equity and effectiveness of assistance. The CSP expanded capacity strengthening support for the Government in addressing food security and social protection challenges and provided large-scale humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees and other population groups (figure 1).¹⁰

⁶ Government of Jordan. 2017. *Jordan's Way to Sustainable Development: First National Voluntary Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*.

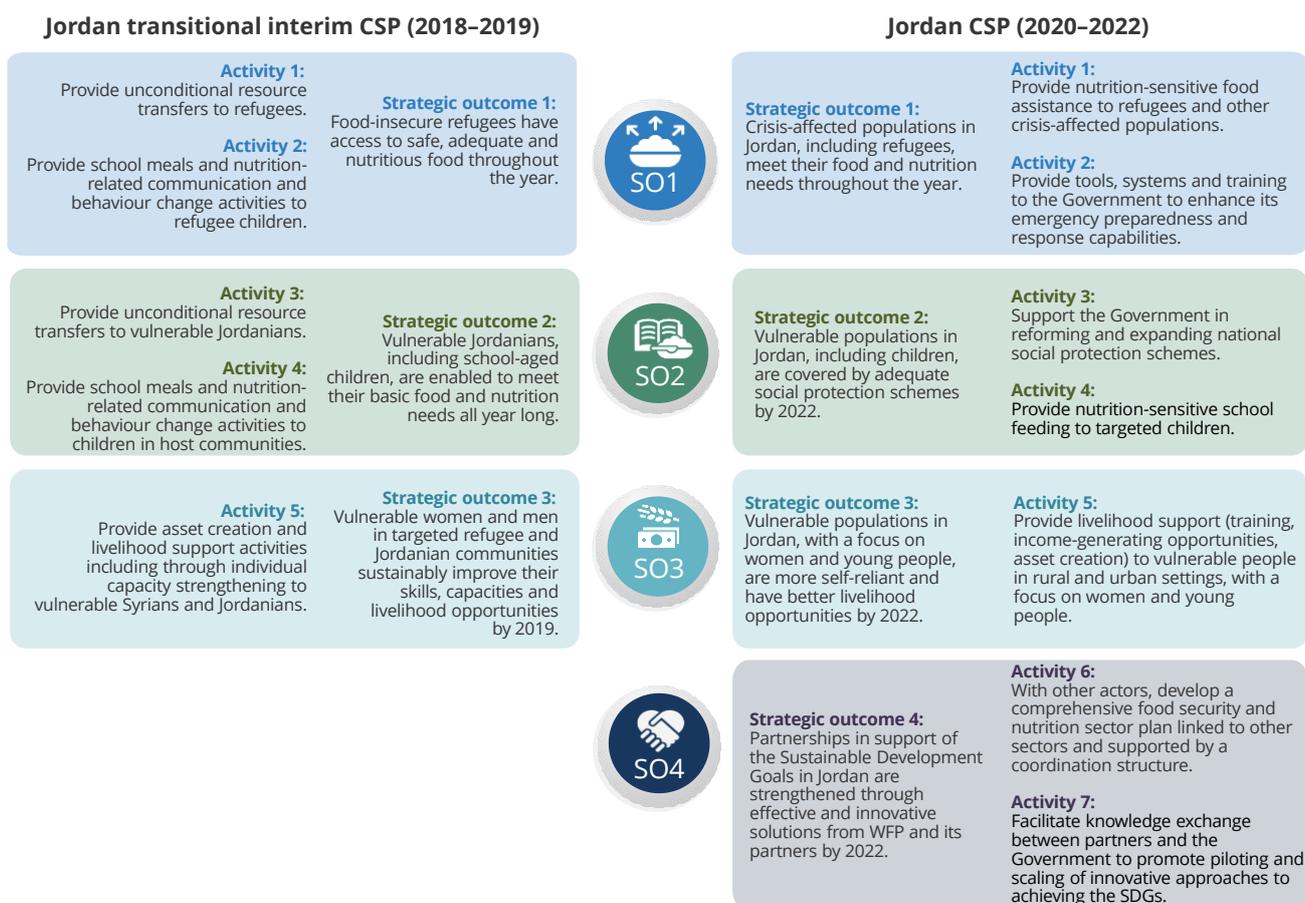
⁷ Government of Jordan Department of Statistics. 2015. *Jordan General Population and Housing Census 2015: Main results*.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. 2020. *Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2020–2022*.

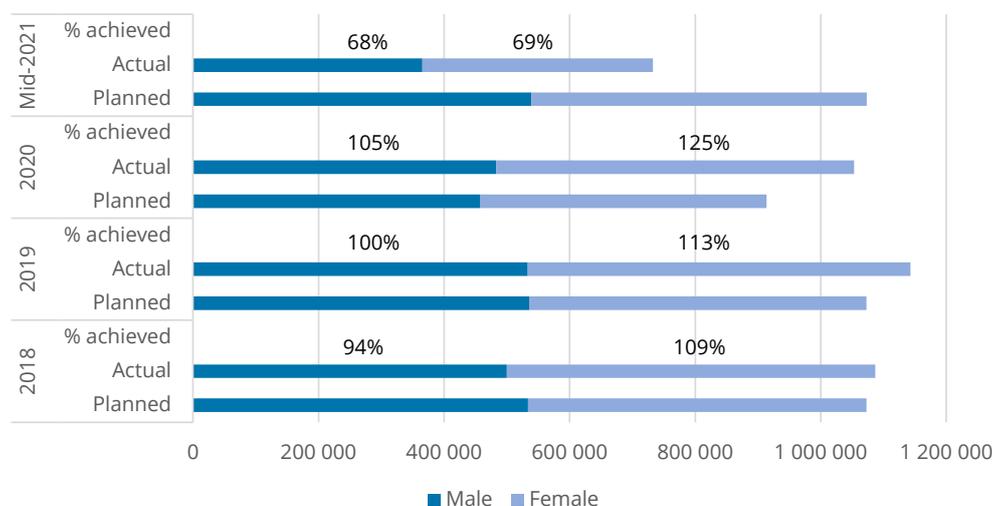
¹⁰ CSP revision 2, which was approved after the evaluation report had been drafted in November 2021, includes an activity 8, "Provide on-demand cash-based transfer services to partners".

Figure 1: Overview of transitional interim country strategic plan and country strategic plan strategic outcomes and related activities



11. WFP has consistently supported women, men, girls and boys. Between 2018 and mid-2021, the proportion of female beneficiaries remained relatively constant at about 53–54 percent (figure 2).

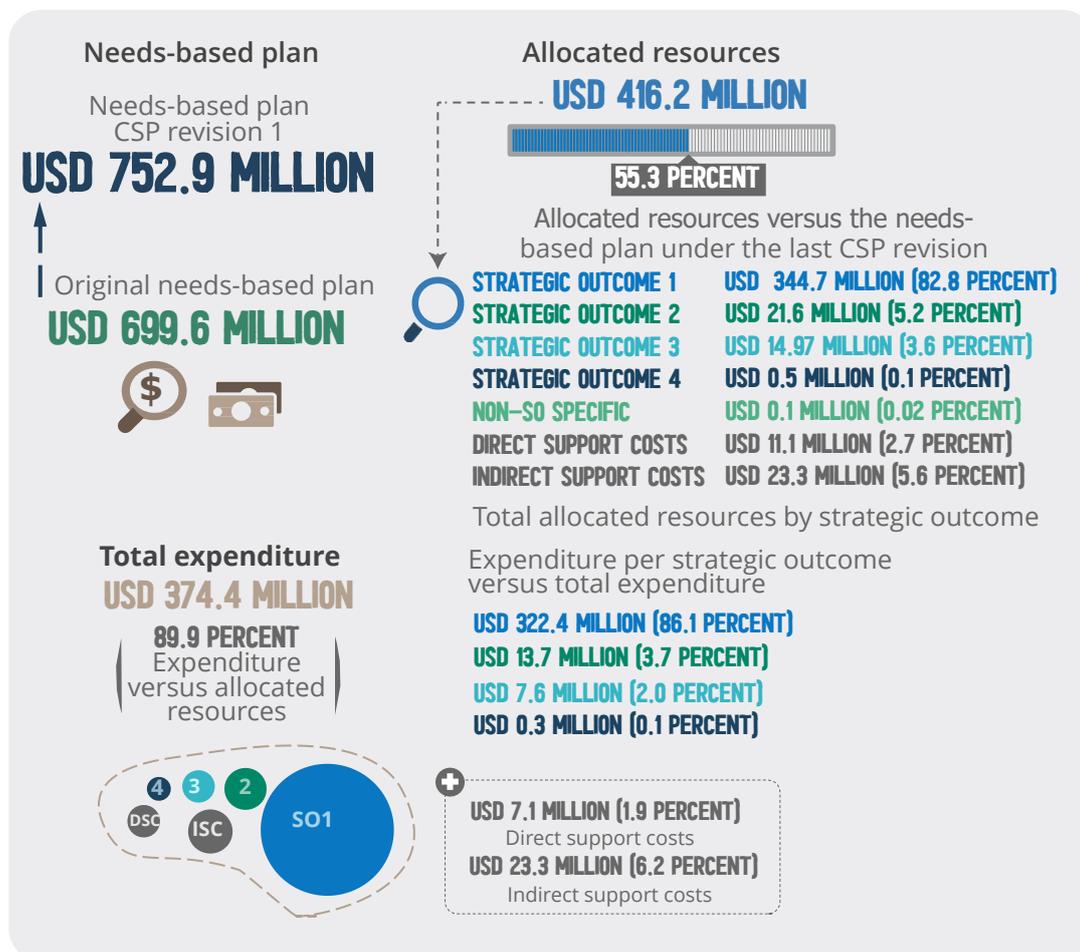
Figure 2: Actual versus planned beneficiaries by gender, 2018-mid-2021



Sources: Jordan annual country reports for 2018-2020. Jordan country office data for January-June 2021 at 28 October 2021.

12. By October 2021 WFP had been able to mobilize 55 percent of the funding it needed to implement the CSP, which was set at USD 753 million under the first CSP revision (figure 3).¹¹

Figure 3: Jordan country strategic plan resource overview for 2020–2022



Source: Standard country report cumulative for CSP, integrated road map analytics at 18 October 2021.

Abbreviations: DSC = direct support costs; ISC = indirect support costs; SO = strategic outcome.

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?

Relevance to national policies, plans and strategies

13. The CSP facilitated a rebalancing of WFP's portfolio towards the provision of capacity strengthening support for Jordan, which was coherent with national priorities and strategies including the Government's integrated economic and social framework, Jordan 2025.¹² In addition to supporting the achievement of SDG 2 (zero hunger), the CSP also supported education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), climate change adaptation (SDG 13) and partnerships (SDG 17) and was aligned with the Government's commitments to strengthening the agriculture sector in accordance with the national strategy for agricultural development and to developing a social protection system in accordance with the national social protection strategy. WFP also supported the objectives of the Jordan response plan

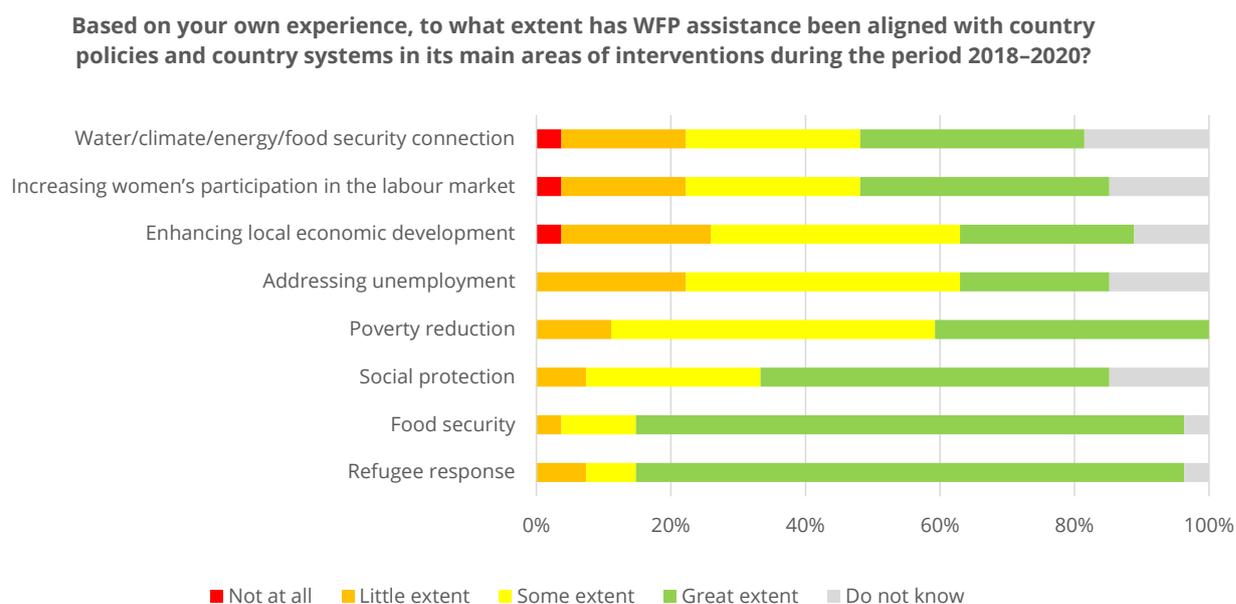
¹¹ The total budget for the CSP budget revision 2 approved in November 2021 is USD 766.8 million.

¹² Government of Jordan. 2015. *Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy*.

through the provision of food assistance targeting vulnerable Jordanian and refugee families, the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and the strengthening of national capacity in social protection and services.

14. While those alignments were recognized by external stakeholders, respondents to an e-survey saw WFP's relevance most clearly in the context of humanitarian response (figure 4). In addition, some donors indicated that the CSP did not sufficiently lay out WFP's overall strategic vision for its refugee response and its support for national capacity strengthening and that the implementation of CSP activities was siloed and thus limited their relevance and effectiveness.

Figure 4: Alignment of WFP assistance with country policies and systems, 2018–2020



Source: Evaluation team 2021 e-survey of WFP partners (results based on answers provided by 27 individuals, out of 63 contacted).

Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people and communities

15. To inform its activities WFP made systematic efforts to collect data on the needs of vulnerable Jordanian and refugee families. Multiple stakeholders commented on the high quality of WFP's data collection and analysis. In collaboration with UNHCR, WFP used a bottom up econometric approach to identify and target the most vulnerable refugees for general food assistance (GFA) under strategic outcome 1 but was unable to support all severely vulnerable households owing to funding limitations, especially from 2021 onwards. The appropriateness of the targeting of the most vulnerable households for social protection (strategic outcome 2) and livelihoods activities (strategic outcome 3) was mixed.
16. While the differing needs of vulnerable populations, including those related to gender and protection issues, were considered to some degree, the overall design of the CSP was based on a "one size fits all" approach. The CSP recognized gender inequality but was less clear on the operationalization of effective strategies for addressing it. A major intended change under the CSP was for WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund and UNHCR to work with the Government to establish a comprehensive vulnerability assessment framework. This was a positive step, but further engagement with the Government will be required.

Adaptation

17. WFP demonstrated a clear ability to adapt to evolving needs, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. A major adaptation was the expansion of GFA in 2020–2021 in response to new needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. WFP also seized the opportunity to engage further with the NAF through the provision of technical assistance for the NAF's COVID-19 cash assistance programme.

United Nations partnerships

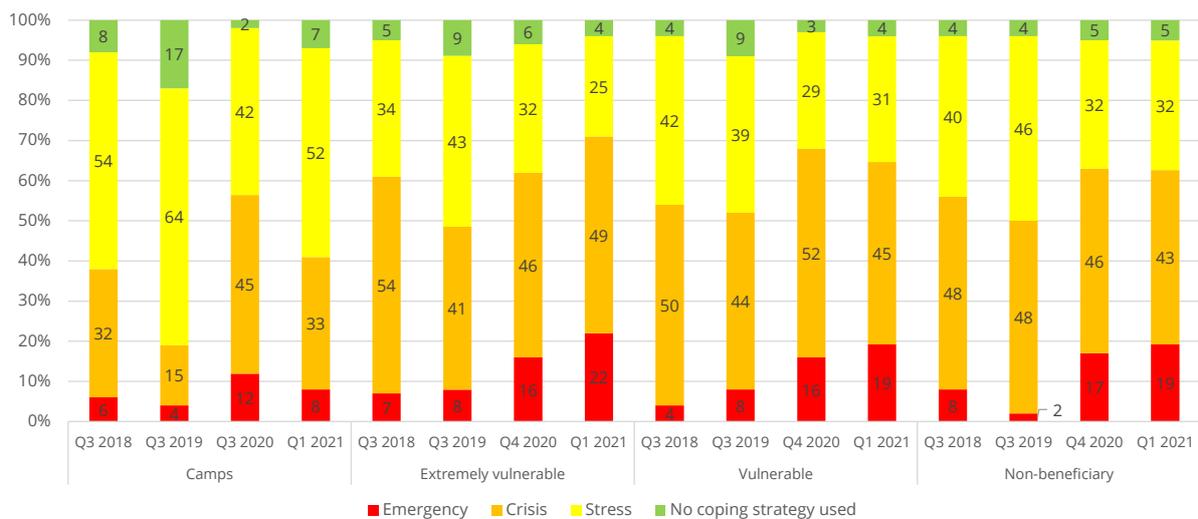
18. WFP is among the leading members of the United Nations country team and sectoral working groups. There was a high degree of coherence between the CSP and the United Nations sustainable development framework for Jordan for 2018–2022.¹³ Key external stakeholders consider WFP to be an important player in the humanitarian response. WFP's engagement with other United Nations entities, including UNHCR, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme, provided positive examples of collective efforts to support vulnerable Syrian refugees. Drawing on its comparative advantage in supporting the NAF's operational systems and processes, WFP collaborated with the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund and other partners to provide technical assistance to the NAF with a view to enhancing the efficiency, equity and effectiveness of social protection systems.

What are the extent and quality of WFP's specific contribution to country strategic plan outcomes in Jordan?

Delivery of outputs and contribution to outcomes

19. WFP systematically exceeded the planned number of beneficiaries for both refugees and vulnerable Jordanians, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also maintained gender parity.
20. **Strategic outcome 1:** GFA was a vital source of life-saving support for the most vulnerable refugees, preventing a steeper deterioration of their food security and minimizing the increase in their adoption of negative coping strategies in the face of increasing shocks including inflation and the impact of COVID-19 (figure 5). Rigorous programme processes and systems refined over the years led to high-quality implementation of cash-based transfer programmes, although the planned transition from vouchers to cash distributions in camps was not achieved. While not ideal, that failure helped WFP to secure funding earmarked for vouchers to meet escalating needs in a difficult funding environment. Achievements at the outcome level were undermined by the various stressors affecting food security as well as the limited availability of funding and donor conditions that constrained the value of transfers and the choice of transfer modality. In late 2021, WFP started to support the strengthening of the disaster preparedness and response capacity of the Government.

¹³ United Nations. 2017. *United Nations sustainable development framework in Jordan 2018–2022*.

Figure 5: Trends in the livelihood coping strategy index, 2018–mid-2021

Source: Country office food security outcome monitoring 2018–2021.

Abbreviations: Q1 = first quarter; Q3 = third quarter; Q4 = fourth quarter.

21. **Strategic outcome 2:** Social protection is a small but significant area of work under the CSP. WFP leveraged its expertise in beneficiary data management, complaint management and payment delivery to provide capacity strengthening support to the NAF. Early indications suggest that the support contributed to the enhancement of NAF systems and staff capacity, improving the quality of social protection for vulnerable Jordanians. Although external stakeholders indicated that WFP's support enabled a systemic transformation in the NAF in a short period, evidence demonstrating results and changes achieved was not collected in a systematic manner. Beyond the NAF, WFP entered into a new partnership with the Ministry of Social Development in 2021 following a capacity needs mapping exercise. The partnership was found to be valuable but will require a cohesive approach involving other agencies and the exploration of potential synergies between the strengthening of government capacity in social protection and wider activities under the CSP.
22. Under strategic outcome 2, WFP distributed fortified date bars to schoolchildren, which according to parents contributed to improved concentration and participation in class. As part of a pilot project with the World Bank, WFP plans to generate evidence on the effects of healthy snacks on school retention and attendance and nutrition. WFP expanded its partnership with the Ministry of Education by providing technical assistance for the development of a national school feeding strategy, which was published in 2021. The work included, among other things, the designing of new school feeding models.
23. **Strategic outcome 3:** WFP provided livelihood support to vulnerable people in rural and urban settings through food assistance for assets and food assistance for training activities. WFP provided infrastructure subsidies and start-up equipment for self-employment in activities that included afforestation and rangeland management, water harvesting and land rehabilitation as well as employment support. Owing to significant funding shortfalls and the COVID-19 pandemic, however, WFP reached only 30 percent of the targeted beneficiaries. Overall, contributions to self-reliance and livelihood opportunities and to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable populations, including through building their resilience to climate change, were limited in scale. Results were strongest for wage employment and self-employment activities. It was found that the pursuit of a community-based food assistance for assets approach is challenging in Jordan.

24. **Strategic outcome 4:** In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, WFP co-led the development of a national food security strategy. The strategy defines a multidimensional vision of food security that integrates food production, availability, access and use. Through this work, WFP has positioned itself as a partner of choice for the promotion of food security in Jordan. Moving forward, governance modalities for the strategy's implementation will require greater clarity and the implementation capacity of Jordanian actors will need to be strengthened. WFP laid a good foundation for the introduction of innovative approaches throughout its operations by, for example, supporting the local start-up Decapolis – an innovative blockchain-based platform for work on food safety and quality assurance.

Gender, humanitarian principles, protection and accountability to affected populations

25. WFP contributed to food security in a complex protracted crisis while respecting humanitarian principles. Beneficiaries were targeted based on need. Progress was made in the mainstreaming of protection and accountability to affected populations. The country office acted on previous evaluation recommendations by, for example, strengthening partners' protection capacity and enhancing complaint and feedback mechanisms. However, there is scope for further improvement. WFP's field presence was found to be insufficient for direct communication with communities.
26. The CSP monitoring system complies with WFP corporate requirements for gender equality and women's empowerment. The number of women beneficiaries reached through each of the activities under the CSP was equal to or greater than the number of men. However, the reported indicators provide limited information on how women's empowerment and progress in moving from a gender-sensitive to a gender-transformative approach varied across activities. Action is being taken to tackle barriers to women's empowerment, notably by participating in WFP's gender transformation programme and a digital financial inclusion initiative with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Sustainability

27. National capacity strengthening through technical assistance and the building of delivery systems will leave a legacy of national capacity to independently operate an effective national social protection system. Capacity strengthening support for the development of the national food security and school feeding strategies has resulted in two strong national frameworks that provide future direction for the Government, WFP and other actors. As there are gaps in the capacity of the Government to sustain certain country capacity strengthening outputs, WFP is renewing its focus on sustainability with a view to making up for the delays caused by COVID-19.
28. The sustainability of food assistance is not viable in a setting where the regulatory environment, which is beyond WFP's control, curtails refugees' ability to meet food and other basic needs by their own means.

Linkages between humanitarian, development and peace work

29. Bridging the humanitarian-development divide to focus on self-reliance and resilience is becoming increasingly important because of the protracted nature of the Syrian refugee crisis and the increased poverty and vulnerability among Jordanian nationals. WFP's resilience agenda in Jordan has been strengthened by the reinforcement of the livelihoods portfolio under the CSP and the development of a more coherent vision and the necessary expertise. The targeting of both vulnerable Jordanian and refugee households under strategic outcomes 2 and 3 has contributed to social cohesion.

30. There is increased cooperation among humanitarian actors on the implementation of a sustainable refugee response plan, as exemplified by the collaboration between WFP and UNHCR in 2021 on coordinated action to balance the meeting of immediate needs with the development of a long-term action strategy.

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

Timeliness of delivery

31. WFP's contingency measures minimized disruption during the COVID-19 crisis. However, some activities, including school feeding and livelihood activities, had to be suspended because of national COVID-19 prevention measures. Through GFA, WFP was able to respond quickly to the increased needs of refugees caused by the pandemic. The use of appropriate technology, such as EyePay phones and expanded networks of automated teller machines, maintained access to services. WFP continued to provide technical support that improved the NAF's COVID-19 emergency assistance through the full digitization of the cash delivery management information system.

Coverage

32. Full coverage of vulnerable households was hampered by funding limitations. Over the years WFP refined its targeting methods for GFA and harmonized them with those of other actors. The latest targeting exercise, based on economic vulnerability, was found to be rigorous in identifying and prioritizing vulnerable and severely vulnerable refugees, and informed the first retargeting exercise in several years. However, the timing of the re-targeting exercise coincided with the formulation of a prioritization plan responding to funding shortfalls in a setting of deteriorating food security in 2021, contributing to dissatisfaction and distress among refugees. Where poverty is widespread, with little discernible difference between eligible and ineligible households, refugees sometimes fail to understand why some are included in assistance programmes and others excluded. The retargeting exercise was not supported by sufficient consultation or communication with refugees, partly owing to national COVID-19 restrictions.
33. Targeting of livelihood activities was less rigorous, and was undertaken by WFP cooperating partners, some of which were more successful than others in selecting vulnerable households owing to having closer contact with beneficiaries and greater access to robust vulnerability data.

Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness

34. In 2020, the Jordan country office set up a resource management committee to foster sound fund management and financial efficiency. Based on a cost-efficiency analysis that it conducted, the country office took action that included reviewing its "healthy kitchens" approach to school feeding. Smallholder farmer activities, and some food assistance for assets or training activities for creating jobs and promoting small businesses, were not always cost-effective owing to differences in their designs and strategies and a choice of partners that did not lead to the most efficient implementation. The country office was aware of these challenges and is already taking the necessary steps to address them.
35. Cost to transfer ratios, especially for activity 1, were kept at a reasonable level, in line with typical ratios observed for other large-scale refugee responses (table 3).

TABLE 3: CSP COST BREAKDOWN BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, UNDER THE FIRST CSP REVISION (USD)					
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Strategic outcome 4	Total
Focus area	Crisis response	Resilience building			
Transfer cost	527 783 102	45 484 035	89 819 343	4 740 334	667 826 815
Implementation cost	12 473 804	4 113 437	2 846 918	193 200	19 627 359
Total	591 674 512	54 318 288	101 494 146	5 402 830	752 889 775
Transfer to total cost ratio (percentage)	89.2	83.7	88.5	87.7	88.7

Source: First CSP revision.

36. WFP's investment in technology innovation and digital solutions contributed greatly to increased cost-efficiency, and the switch from voucher to cash distributions in host communities facilitated timely and efficient delivery. The use of blockchain technology in camps brought benefits and limitations that influenced cost-effectiveness. Other innovations that WFP plans to introduce, such as mobile money, offer more options to beneficiaries while potentially contributing to cost efficiency and effectiveness.

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

Use of existing evidence

37. The CSP is based on an analysis and understanding of the needs of Jordanians and Syrian refugees in Jordan, drawing from the comprehensive country strategic review and other studies, including a 2019 integrated context analysis, a WFP/Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment and the Jordan response plan.

Resource mobilization

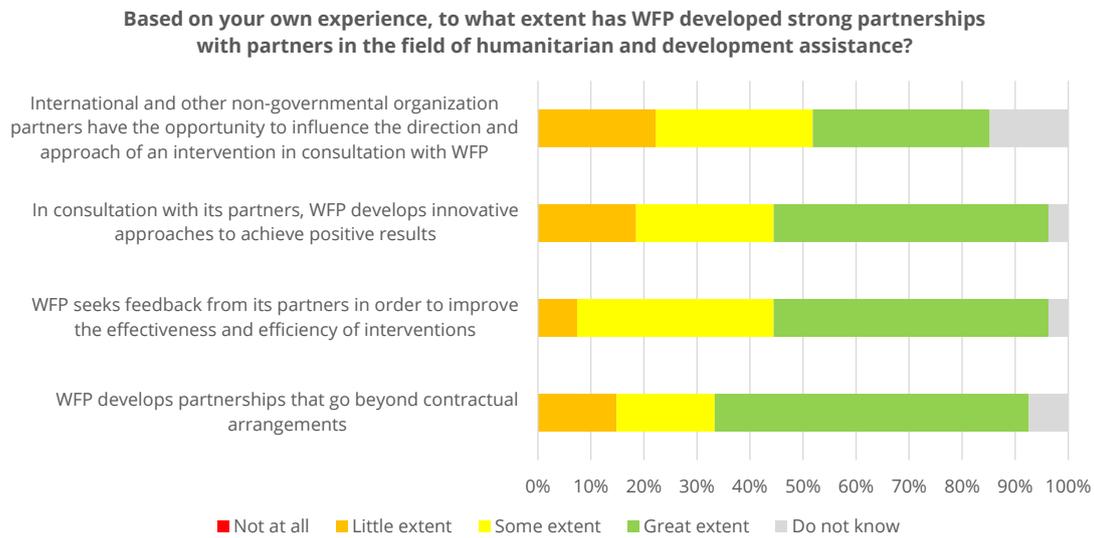
38. Domestic pressures resulting from COVID-19, combined with increased demands on humanitarian donors, resulted in significant financial pressure on WFP's operations in Jordan in 2021, which hindered WFP's ability to operate at full capacity. Responding to the growing risks of unstable funding, the country office implemented a fundraising strategy, maintaining regular virtual engagement with donors and other stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic, mobilizing existing donors and engaging new ones. Donors highlighted WFP's responsiveness and flexibility in addressing the Syrian refugee crisis, particularly the growing vulnerability of Jordanians. As a result, WFP attracted additional funding, thus minimizing the impact of unstable funding on refugee beneficiaries.
39. Most funding at the CSP activity level is earmarked for GFA, including by modality (vouchers versus cash). Another challenge is that most donors consider WFP to be a humanitarian agency, with only a few donors recently providing development funding. The current lack of multi-year funding hinders the achievement of tangible results in areas requiring long-term support in response to the changing needs of Jordanians and Jordan-based refugees.

Partnerships

40. WFP directed significant attention to partnerships with the Government, donors, other United Nations entities, the World Bank, civil society and innovative parts of the private sector, which have strong potential.

41. WFP has also developed partnerships with several cooperating partners, primarily for GFA and livelihoods activities. Partner non-governmental organizations highlighted that their relationships with WFP go beyond contractual arrangements (figure 6), but there are still areas for further improvement, including in leveraging the expertise of non-governmental organization partners, particularly in livelihood activities.

Figure 6: Extent to which WFP developed strong partnerships, 2018–2020



Source: Evaluation team 2021 e-survey.

Flexibility of the country strategic plan

42. The CSP was revised in response to the deteriorating food security caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to promote financial inclusion. Key informants did not find that the revision approval process became more efficient than it was before the CSP. In the light of funding constraints, WFP developed a prioritization strategy that could be flexibly implemented in response to various funding scenarios.

The other factors that explain WFP’s performance and strategic shift

Use of technology

43. WFP’s use of technology in Jordan strengthened its ability to respond to the needs of beneficiaries in a timely and efficient manner. Technology provided beneficiaries with choice, dignity and autonomy. However, some beneficiaries expressed grievances regarding hotlines and helpdesks, despite efforts to improve complaint and feedback mechanisms.

Results-based management

44. Internal and external stakeholders recognized the high quality of WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping, monitoring and evaluation data, surveys and reports. However, the data generated did not always support evidence-based programming, other than for GFA, partly because of limited staffing in the vulnerability analysis and mapping, and monitoring and evaluation units and a limited sense of ownership of monitoring and evaluation processes in other units. Limited analysis was made at the outcome level for certain activities such as capacity strengthening and resilience and livelihood support, reflecting gaps at the corporate level.

Human resources management

45. The Jordan country office volunteered to pilot strategic workforce planning in 2021 with a view to understanding the workforce capacity and capability required to support the implementation of the next CSP. The country office aims to refine and integrate its programming work to reflect the changing situations of refugees and Jordanians, and has taken steps to make such a transition.

Conclusions

46. Under the CSP, WFP maintained an essential humanitarian response during the protracted Syrian refugee crisis as the vulnerabilities of both refugee and Jordanian communities deepened. WFP provided capacity strengthening for national institutions and worked to harmonize its approach with national systems in order to bridge the humanitarian-development divide.
47. WFP responded to the challenges associated with the protracted refugee crisis by making a strategic shift in the CSP, increasing the focus on resilience, climate issues, livelihoods and capacity strengthening while maintaining a strong humanitarian response for refugees. WFP's strategic shift was gradual and challenging owing to obstacles such as staffing and partnership issues and the availability of long-term funding. The country office took steps to increase its in-house expertise in several areas.
48. During the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP adapted its delivery processes to ensure the continuation of assistance despite reduced direct contact with beneficiaries.
49. The key strength of WFP's humanitarian operations was its sustained provision of general food assistance at scale and its success in reaching the most vulnerable refugee households. Such assistance provided a buffer against declining food security in a worsening economic situation with increasing vulnerability. However, there were shortcomings in communicating with beneficiaries regarding the targeting methodology used.
50. Overall, WFP's GFA proved to be effective. WFP's position as the largest provider of cash-based transfers for refugees is relevant to efforts to address refugees' immediate food security needs. The implementation of GFA as a stand-alone programme mitigated some dimensions of food insecurity.
51. However, the introduction of cash assistance to replace vouchers in refugee camps has not been achieved because of administrative hurdles. The financial resources for maintaining unconditional assistance for large numbers of refugees are not sustainable, and GFA's contribution to improved nutrition is not sustainable.
52. WFP reviewed its targeting system regularly. However, there were shortcomings in that some beneficiaries did not understand the targeting criteria. While refugees used the hotlines and helpdesks, areas for improvement remain. The use of cooperating partners to implement CSP activities does not always increase efficiency and effectiveness and requires more quality control, engagement and capacity strengthening. The country office has taken steps to assess the added value of that approach.
53. Gender and protection considerations were mainstreamed in GFA activities and, to a lesser degree, in livelihoods programmes. Moving forward, the country office has the capacity to strengthen gender-transformative approaches.
54. Under the CSP, WFP evolved further in the transition from the use of unconditional assistance to resilience, livelihoods and self-reliance activities and the development of more predictable social safety nets for vulnerable refugee and Jordanian households in partnership with the Government and other actors.

55. The building of self-reliance and financial inclusion is critical to the transition from unconditional assistance. However, the absence of a systematic link between WFP GFA and livelihoods support limited the opportunities for households to develop pathways to self-reliance. WFP is engaging across the humanitarian–development nexus to find ways to strategically link GFA beneficiaries with activities and services that improve their ability to become self-reliant.
56. WFP developed a good strategy for supporting national social protection systems. While challenges remain, stakeholders acknowledge that there is a need to work towards some form of harmonization between systems and support for a nationally-driven approach to self-reliance. Emerging evidence suggests that WFP’s capacity strengthening work with the NAF is making a significant contribution to social protection for vulnerable Jordanians. Within the United Nations, WFP has shown a comparative advantage in leading capacity strengthening in the operational aspects of social transfer delivery systems. While WFP quickly developed its social protection expertise, there is room for further strengthening of the skills of WFP staff.
57. WFP did not perform strongly in livelihoods programming in support of resilience. The design of activities and the targeting of beneficiaries did not reflect a comprehensive understanding of livelihoods strategies. The absence of a well-researched long-term coherent strategy for the humanitarian–development nexus covering food security, water and climate change issues limited WFP’s capacity to develop a strong livelihoods portfolio.
58. WFP took steps to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of its operations, but monitoring and learning were not carried out systematically during CSP implementation.
59. The country office had a strong focus on improving operational efficiency through the introduction of technology throughout its operations. Supporting innovative approaches and establishing new partnerships with private sector actors provided WFP with a good platform for further engagement.
60. Comprehensive monitoring data were promptly generated as a tool for results-based management. While the data was of good quality it did not seem to inform programming systematically. To assess the CSP’s contributions to strategic objectives, greater analysis at the outcome level will be needed.
61. Overall, WFP is recognized as a humanitarian organization that has adjusted its programmes in a timely manner in response to deepening vulnerability in Jordanian and refugee communities. WFP carried out the organizational adjustments required to strengthen its nexus implementation and took steps to assess the necessary expertise to respond to Jordan’s development objectives. In all of this, WFP needs to stay true to its core humanitarian mandate centred on humanity, protection and accountability

Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
1	<p>Develop the next country strategic plan and monitor its performance based on a more integrated framework with a clearer and more realistic focus on selected transformative dimensions. Building on the foundation that has been established:</p> <p>1.1 develop a theory of change with realistic pathways and mutually reinforcing strategic outcomes;</p> <p>1.2 ensure that the new line of sight is based on clearly identified added value and comparative advantages;</p> <p>1.3 identify meaningful and realistic strategies for supporting gender transformation across the strategic outcomes, especially for livelihood interventions;</p> <p>1.4 develop and measure performance indicators covering all strategic outcomes;</p> <p>1.5 assess the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of various modalities and approaches;</p> <p>1.6 strengthen existing monitoring and evaluation and reporting activities further by clearly defining responsibilities and ensuring that all units have a role in performance measurement;</p> <p>1.7 ensure that the monitoring and evaluation, and vulnerability analysis and mapping units have the necessary capacity and resources to provide capacity support; and</p> <p>1.8 enhance the country office's knowledge management approach, basing it on the generation of evidence that facilitates learning within the country office, effective transitions and better presentation of results to stakeholders.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau; headquarters (Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Corporate Planning and Performance Division Government of Jordan Other United Nations entities	High	Third quarter 2022

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
2	<p>Ensure that WFP has the necessary in-country expertise to match the ambitions of its planned transition and in growth areas.</p> <p>2.1 Identify the additional key capabilities and skills required for strategy execution and the workforce required to implement the new country strategic plan and line of sight.</p> <p>2.2 Employ staff with experience working on the humanitarian–development nexus, climate change issues, livelihoods and capacity strengthening and build expertise in those growth areas.</p> <p>2.3 Provide the mentoring, orientation and professional development necessary for staff to respond to changes in direction.</p> <p>2.4 Ensure the necessary expertise to support further the development and use of innovative technology in areas of growth.</p> <p>2.5 Identify gaps in expertise to be filled through partnerships with national or international agencies, with the selection of partners based on a thorough assessment and agreement on performance targets and reviews and partners engaged strategically rather than simply as implementers.</p> <p>2.6 Ensure that the management of change in the country office is based on an inclusive internal communication strategy.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau; headquarters (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division: Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Unit, Food Systems and Smallholder Support Unit, Country Capacity Strengthening Unit; Human Resources Division)	High	First quarter 2023
3	<p>Use the platform that has been built to develop a coherent strategy for addressing, in partnership with other entities, the external barriers to harmonization and transition and thus to strengthen the relevance of the country strategic plan to beneficiary needs and achieve greater effectiveness.</p> <p>3.1 Initiate and engage in joint advocacy at senior government levels to address the restrictive regulatory environment for refugees seeking access to the labour market and the ownership of productive assets.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau; headquarters (Partnerships and Advocacy Department; Emergencies and Transitions Service)	High	First quarter 2023

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
	<p>3.2 Shift from the use of blockchain technology to allow the use of e-wallets in refugee camps (while maintaining the flexibility to provide assistance in the form of vouchers to maximize funding opportunities at times of critical need). Use a common message to engage donors and United Nations entities in advocating such a shift with senior actors in the Government.</p> <p>3.3 Continue to strengthen the resource mobilization strategy to facilitate access to diversified, flexible and multi-year financing that supports changes in strategic direction.</p> <p>3.4 Continue to work with donors to raise awareness of the funding required to support both the humanitarian response and the transition strategy, sharing evidence that increases donor awareness of the cost-effectiveness of cash versus vouchers.</p>					
4	<p>Enhance accountability to affected populations <i>Inclusive community engagement</i></p> <p>4.1 Continue to strengthen the presence of WFP staff and their direct interaction with people and communities assisted.</p> <p>4.2 Build on and expand new initiatives, using social media.</p> <p>4.3 Enhance communication on selection criteria and targeting methodology for refugees, particularly by clarifying messaging and communication channels.</p> <p>4.4 Further strengthen the inclusion of women, older persons and persons with disabilities, gender equality and women's empowerment in technology development.</p> <p>4.5 Provide cooperating partners with capacity strengthening in humanitarian principles, gender, accountability to affected populations and protection.</p>	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau; headquarters (Emergencies and Transitions Service; Nutrition Division; School-based Programmes Division; Gender Office; Cash-based Transfers Division	High	First quarter 2023

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
	<p><i>Complaint and feedback mechanisms</i></p> <p>4.6 Adjust mechanisms for accountability to affected populations based on direct consultation between WFP and refugees and ensure that feedback from targeted communities is used to enhance programme design and implementation modalities.</p> <p>4.7 Enhance the capacity of staff working on hotlines and helpdesks.</p> <p>4.8 Assess whether the helpdesks provided by cooperating partners apply the most cost-effective format for supporting refugees seeking assistance.</p>					
5	<p>Support increased capacity strengthening for a national social protection system for vulnerable population groups in Jordan. Work further to harmonize general food assistance and the services of the National Aid Fund.</p> <p>5.1 Consolidate the progress made on capacity strengthening of the National Aid Fund and ensure the sustainability of outcomes.</p> <p>5.2 Refine and strengthen WFP's broader work on capacity strengthening in social protection and, where possible, explore opportunities to harmonize the building blocks of the various existing social safety nets.</p> <p>5.3 Continue to review and update school feeding interventions in line with the Government's school feeding strategy developed jointly by the Ministry of Education and WFP.</p> <p>5.4 Develop specific performance targets and indicators for WFP's country capacity strengthening work in support of the four domains.</p>	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau; headquarters (Social Protection Unit; School-based Programmes Division); social protection/social safety nets Government entities, including the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education	High	Ongoing – country strategic plan duration

#	Recommendation	Level/nature	Responsibility	Other contributing entities	Priority	Action deadline
6	<p>Building on learning from earlier phases of livelihoods support activities, continue the development of a dual livelihoods approach that works across the food security–water–climate change nexus and supports the transition of refugees from unconditional assistance to self-reliance.</p> <p><i>With regard to the food security–water–climate change nexus:</i></p> <p>6.1 Identify the areas in the national food security strategy action plan where WFP has the greatest comparative advantage.</p> <p>6.2 Identify the most suitable and experienced national actors in respect of the food security–water–climate change nexus.</p> <p>6.3 Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation strategy for assessing long-term sustainable results.</p> <p><i>With regard to the transition from unconditional assistance to self-reliance:</i></p> <p>6.4 Implement the joint Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-WFP action plan and move towards a sector-wide strategy for building refugee self-reliance and more sustainable funding options and develop a joint strategy with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in which cash assistance is designed to support basic needs while refugees are engaged in skills development and livelihood opportunities.</p> <p>6.5 Clarify WFP's strategic positioning and comparative advantage on the humanitarian–development nexus and work towards more integrated programming and implementation.</p> <p>6.6 Be a knowledge and learning hub for the transition of refugees to self-reliance.</p>	Operational	Country office	<p>Regional bureau; headquarters (Livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience Unit; Emergencies and Transitions Service; Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Unit, Food Systems and Smallholder Support Unit)</p> <p>Government and other United Nations entities</p> <p>Other national and international stakeholders.</p>	High	Ongoing – country strategic plan duration

Acronyms

CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GFA	general food assistance
NAF	National Aid Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund