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Evaluation reports

For consideration

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Sri Lanka (2018–2022)

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Sri Lanka for 2018–2022.
2. The evaluation served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informed the preparation of a new CSP for Sri Lanka.
3. The evaluation was conducted between August 2021 and May 2022 and covered WFP's strategy, interventions and systems.
4. The evaluation made five recommendations, of which two are strategic and three are operational. Sub-recommendations elaborate on how each of those recommendations can be implemented.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SRI LANKA (2018–2022)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2023 1. Develop the next country strategic plan for Sri Lanka building on WFP's core mandate and its comparative advantages that align with government priority needs.</p>	Country office (regional bureau, Government, headquarters)	Agreed.			
<p>1.1 Continue the transition from humanitarian to development work introduced in the country strategic plan for 2018–2022 and reduce the prominence of crisis response as a strategic outcome in the next country strategic plan, reflecting Sri Lanka's own capacity for emergency response. Priority: High (November 2022)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters)	Partially agreed. Since the time when evaluation data were collected, in late 2021, Sri Lanka has undergone unprecedented changes, experiencing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence in 1948. Depleted foreign exchange reserves have triggered shortages, rising prices for food, fuel and fertilizer, power cuts and reduced income earning opportunities, leading to a sharp increase in food insecurity. Against this backdrop, the country office has launched an emergency response to support vulnerable populations with	WFP will respond to emergencies through CSP outcome 1 and based on an appeal from the Government of Sri Lanka for humanitarian assistance.	Country office	December 2022

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		food assistance. At an informal consultation in August 2022 the Executive Board requested the country office to review the budget and targeting of beneficiaries for the new CSP to ensure an appropriate response to humanitarian needs.			
1.2 Focus WFP's future crisis response work on supporting Sri Lanka's emergency preparedness and response and response to climate change, including at the subnational level, and seek to strengthen programming links between community resilience building work and Sri Lanka's shock-sensitive social protection system. Priority: High (November 2022)	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters)	Agreed.	The new CSP includes two outcomes that support the country office in implementing this recommendation: CSP outcome 3 – By 2027, communities in Sri Lanka have strengthened resilience and reduced vulnerability to natural hazards, climate change and other risks with improved sustainability of livelihoods; and CSP outcome 4 – By 2027, national and subnational institutions and stakeholders in Sri Lanka have enhanced capacity to enable adaptive and resilient food systems to improve food security and nutrition. The two outcomes call for reinforced emergency preparedness and response activities aimed at preparing for extreme weather events and other stressors at the policy and	Country office	November 2022

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			subnational community levels. The country office has created links between resilience building and shock-responsive social protection programming under output 3.4.		
1.3 Strengthen WFP's strategic commitment to improving social protection, advocating with government partners a nutrition- and gender-sensitive, transparently targeted and efficiently run social protection system as a key building block for Sri Lanka's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Priority: High (November 2022)	Country office (regional bureau, Government)	Agreed.	WFP is working with other members of the United Nations country team to generate evidence on social protection that can influence policy dialogue. It is also providing technical expertise to strengthen delivery mechanisms such as digitally cash-based transfer systems that integrate components such as nutrition promotion and cash management into the national social protection system.	Country office	December 2022

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1.4 Develop a more focused gender-informed strategy for nutrition in the next country strategic plan and strive to develop and support community-based integrated packages that link health, nutrition, food security and agriculture. Priority: High (December 2023)	Country office (regional bureau, Nutrition Division, Gender Office)	Agreed. In developing the new CSP the country office has employed strategies that are gender-informed and that integrate school health, nutrition and food security and support for smallholder farmers with regard to nutrition-sensitive agriculture.	Re-establish partnerships – with the Foundation for Health Promotion, for example – on the scale-up of the gender-responsive, community-based social and behaviour change communication initiative based on International Food Policy Research Institute research so that community-based integrated packages that link health, nutrition and food security can be delivered.	Country office	December 2023
Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2027 2. Maximize the long-term impact of WFP programming and enhance coherence among strategic outcomes and activities as well as their gender and nutrition sensitivity.	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.			

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<p>2.1 To ensure sustainability, and in keeping with global best practice, work more explicitly with community-based organizations for farmers, independent civil society actors and the private sector at the district level to supplement and support government efforts.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (December 2027)</p>	Country office (regional bureau)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Farmer organizations are legislated by the Government, and WFP has been engaging them through the appropriate ministries. WFP will continue to work with civil society and the private sector on many activities.</p>	Scale up work on the development of value chains and resilience building activities with farmer organizations, civil society and the private sector.	Country office programme team	December 2027
<p>2.2 Acknowledging that integrated development work takes time, design a third phase of the resilience building project that layers various types of support (including nutrition-related support) and runs for the full period of the next country strategic plan, seeking government and donor support for this as a potentially replicable community-based climate-resilient model.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (December 2027)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, government donors)	<p>Agreed.</p>	Submit to institutional donors multi-year resilience building proposals that build on the results and lessons learned from resilience building activities and include plans for South–South and triangular cooperation.	Country office	December 2027

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2.3 Ensure that gender and nutrition are taken into account in the design and implementation of all activities to enhance nutrition outcomes. Priority: Medium (December 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	WFP works in accordance with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) and through the United Nations results groups at the policy level, including on joint action for disability inclusion, social protection and gender equality. Plan adequate gender and nutrition analysis for all programmes and ensure appropriate budgets for implementing gender- and nutrition-sensitive programming.	Country office programme team	Completed in September 2022
2.4 Revisit the links between home-grown school feeding design and rice fortification plans aimed at school feeding so that initiatives in the two areas do not conflict. Priority: High (March 2023)	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	In the new CSP WFP will provide strategic support to the Government with regard to the local fortification of rice.	Country office programme team	March 2023

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<p>2.5 Revisit the design of the home-grown school feeding pilot together with the Government to ensure that targeted women caterers are adequately compensated for their work in the face of economic downturn and reduced national school meals programme budget and that expectations related to farm production are realistic and balanced given the time available.</p> <p>Priority: High (June 2023)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters School-based Programmes, Government)	Agreed.	<p>Output 2.3 of the new CSP focuses on the empowerment of women caterers, including by ensuring adequate compensation for their work.</p> <p>Training modules on women's economic well-being are being developed and training of trainers events will be held targeting the government women's development officers who will be responsible for working directly with women caterers.</p> <p>Conduct gender- and nutrition-sensitive analysis and monitoring to deepen understanding of the impact of women's participation on the programme. The country office will use the available gender analysis and context-specific gender and nutrition analysis to advocate programme changes that better facilitate women's empowerment.</p>	Country office programme team	June 2023

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2026 3. Strengthen WFP's strategic and operational partnership with the Government at the national and subnational levels in alignment with other United Nations entities.</p>	Country office (Government, other United Nations entities)	Agreed.			
<p>3.1 <i>Partnership with the Government</i>: Revisit and update WFP's memorandum of understanding with the Government. This process should include engaging with the Project Management Unit and the National Project Steering Committee to plan the transition of WFP programming to the Government over the coming years.</p> <p>Priority: High (December 2026)</p>	Country office (Government, other United Nations entities)	Agreed.	<p>As part of preparation for implementation of the new CSP, the current letter of understanding with the Government is under review, and endorsement of a revised version is expected by early 2023 when the new CSP starts.</p> <p>It is currently planned that transition and handover to the Government will take place towards the end of the period covered by the CSP.</p>	Country office management	June 2023

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<p>3.2 <i>Partnership within the United Nations</i>: Increase collaboration and alignment with other key United Nations entities such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to advocate global best practices related to food security, nutrition, social protection and climate-sensitive community-based resilience through a single united voice.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (December 2024)</p>	Country office (Government, other United Nations entities)	Agreed.	<p>Update the partnership action plan to include the mapping of existing and potential partnerships and revise it regularly to ensure continued alignment and collaboration with other United Nations entities.</p> <p>Engage in the UNSDCF process.</p> <p>Pursue partnership opportunities with other United Nations entities such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme.</p> <p>In 2022 the country office is implementing joint projects with UNICEF, FAO and UNFPA through United Nations-to-United Nations agreements.</p>	Country office	December 2024

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<p>3.3 <i>Partnerships related to funding:</i> Collaborate with United Nations partners for flexible multi-year donor funding that enables WFP and its government partners to target the most vulnerable groups with appropriate transfer modalities, develop funding proposals for nutrition-specific interventions that are based on evidence.</p> <p>Priority: Medium (December 2023)</p>	Country office (Government, other United Nations entities)	Agreed.	Advocate increased flexibility in the multi-partner trust fund by providing feedback on the operational guidelines. The trust fund has provided opportunities for obtaining multi-year funding, targeting the most vulnerable groups through appropriate transfer modalities, and incorporating evidence generation and nutrition-sensitivity into the design of programmes.	Country office	December 2023
<p>Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2024</p> <p>4. Continue with country capacity strengthening initiatives, focusing on government-prioritized sectoral gaps.</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters divisions)	Partially agreed.			

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<p>4.1 Review and refocus the country capacity strengthening approach used in the country strategic plan to reduce dependence on repeated training. For example, look for opportunities to support in-service competencies training and human resource systems within government institutions.</p> <p>Priority: Medium Deadline: March 2024</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Nutrition Division)	Agreed.	<p>Conduct gender-responsive household cash management training through, for example, training of trainers for women development officers, thereby creating a resource pool within the district and divisional government structures.</p> <p>Undertake a capacity needs assessment to determine the appropriate approach to capacity strengthening for three ministries.</p>	Country office programme team	March 2024
<p>4.2 Continue country capacity strengthening support for nutrition by expanding the evidence base through monitoring, evaluation and research directly applied to the Sri Lankan context. For example, support government monitoring of the production of the new Thripasha formula and the impact of this on nutrition status.</p> <p>Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2024</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division and Nutrition Division, Government)	Agreed.	<p>Engage in national- and provincial-level action planning to address the gaps in the monitoring and evaluation system based on the monitoring and evaluation capacity assessments for the national school meals programme already under way. Such actions, particularly at the national level, will be supported under the next CSP.</p> <p>Strengthen implementation and monitoring of Thripasha, which will be piloted through the Ministry of Health's district nutrition monitoring system. WFP will support the pilot and its eventual scale-up.</p>	Country office programme team	December 2024

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<p>4.3 For the next country strategic plan, continue the envisioned transition from direct food and cash support to the national school meals programme by investing only in technical assistance (for example, for policy, targeting, gender equality and women's empowerment and monitoring and evaluation) supporting the Government in targeting limited resources in order to deliver a national school meals programme that meets the needs of the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2023</p>	<p>Country office (regional bureau, headquarters School-based Programmes, Government)</p>	<p>Not agreed.</p> <p>The plan was for the country office to move away from the direct provision of food and cash-based support for the national school meals programme to the provision of technical support. However, the country's situation has changed dramatically since the evaluation. During the planning of the new CSP, it was foreseen that the economic crisis would affect the government-owned national school meals programme, so some margin was left for the provision of in-kind assistance. During the implementation of the CSP, it will be revised as needed to provide for additional food assistance or cash-based support while avoiding the development of beneficiary dependency on WFP and working towards a full transition to government ownership by 2025.</p>			

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2024 5. Review targeting to ensure alignment with the latest evidence and country strategic plan goals and make the country strategic plan commitment to the most vulnerable more explicit.</p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters divisions, United Nations partners)	Agreed.			
<p>5.1 In partnership with the Government and other key United Nations entities, leverage WFP's strengths in vulnerability analysis and mapping and coordination to support gender-sensitive nutrition and food security surveillance systems and thus improve the availability of up-to-date evidence for vulnerability targeting and evaluation for programmes.</p> <p>Priority: High (December 2024)</p>	Country office (regional bureau, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, Nutrition Division, United Nations partners)	Agreed.	<p>Develop the new CSP with a particular focus on strengthening capacity for evidence generation and food security monitoring.</p> <p>With the Government's Department of Census and Statistics, conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a national food security surveillance system.</p> <p>Review and update vulnerability targeting criteria based on the latest evidence.</p>	Country office programme team	December 2024

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5.2 Under strategic outcome 3, ensure that nutrition advocacy efforts are targeted at the most vulnerable groups (pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls and children under 2). Priority: High (December 2023)	Country office (regional bureau, Nutrition Division, UNICEF)	Agreed.	Ensure that nutrition efforts under the new CSP target the most vulnerable. Under CSP outcome 4 (systems strengthening) in the new CSP, output 4.3 focuses on key advocacy and capacity strengthening initiatives that address key nutrition vulnerabilities of the target groups mentioned.	Country office programme team	Completed in September 2022
5.3 Continue with rice fortification advocacy, including planning and completing an impact study and broadening the scope to identify social safety nets outside the national school meals programme that can target people with high levels of nutritional deficiency. Priority: High (December 2023)	Country office (regional bureau, Nutrition Division, Government)	Agreed.	Incorporate rice fortification advocacy into the new CSP and continue to seek funding for the rice fortification impact study. Under CSP outcome 4 (systems strengthening) in the new CSP, output 4.3 includes rice fortification advocacy and an impact study (provided that the country office can raise the necessary funding). The rice fortification costing study already looks at fortification beyond the national school meals and social safety net programmes. Key advocacy work will include considering the use of fortified rice in the meals provided to private sector staff in the apparel industry.	Country office programme team	December 2023