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Programme Alimentaire Mondial  
Programa Mundial de Alimentos  
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

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## Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for the Central African Republic (2018–2022)

### Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan (CSP) for the Central African Republic for 2018–2022.
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementation and the factors explaining its performance.
3. The evaluation was conducted between April 2021 and March 2022, taking a utilization-focused and consultative approach. It served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informed the preparation of a new CSP for the Central African Republic.
4. The evaluation made five strategic recommendations addressing key issues for the new CSP.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the actions planned (or taken), responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations.

### Focal points:

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| MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (2018–2022)  |   |                     |   |  |                          |
|--|---|---------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
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| <p><b>Priority: High</b><br/> <b>Deadline: February 2023</b><br/> <b>Recommendation 1: Reduce the number - but not the scope - of activities in the next country strategic plan and strengthen advocacy of a more flexible strategic framework, allowing context-specific adjustments and transition-focused approaches.</b></p> | Country office (regional bureau, headquarters, donors)  | Agreed              |   | Country office (regional bureau and headquarters)                  | October 2022 (completed) |
| <p><b>1.1 Consider making certain activities cross-cutting under two or more strategic outcomes and areas of action</b> while avoiding overly strict classification and establishing an enabling framework for shifting funding among activities in the context of the current protracted crisis.</p>                            |   | Agreed              | <p>1.1 Nutrition and school feeding activities have been made cross-cutting.</p> <p>Nutrition features in strategic outcomes 1, 2 and 3 and school feeding in strategic outcomes 2 and 3, thus allowing flexibility in fund allocation and integration of activities.</p> |  |                          |

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| <p><b>1.2 Reduce the number of activities in order to facilitate more flexible use of funds:</b> for example, by mainstreaming capacity strengthening at the national and local levels; retaining two common services support activities – logistics services and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service; integrating emergency school feeding with general distributions, and home-grown school feeding with food assistance for assets; and reducing the number of nutrition activities.</p> |   | Agreed              | 1.2 The number of activities has been reduced from 15 to 10 but the scope of activities has remained the same.  |  |                 |
| <p><b>1.3 Promote integrated cross-sectoral approaches</b> for home-grown school feeding, purchase for progress, asset creation and local procurement, involving several activities for one joint outcome.</p>  |   | Agreed              | <p>1.3 Home-grown school feeding, smallholder agriculture market support/purchase for progress and asset creation have been reflected under outcome 3.</p> <p>Activities have been designed to strengthen nutrition-sensitive value chains, focusing on enhancing the ability to maintain adequate nutrition status and healthy diets. Also, smallholder producers will be linked to local retailers and the home-grown school feeding programme.</p> |  |                 |

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| <p><b>Priority: High</b><br/> <b>Deadline: October 2022</b><br/> <b>Recommendation 2: Reposition upstream crisis response interventions to focus on prevention and the development of resilience mechanisms with more precise targeting that enhances impact and sustainability.</b></p>  | Country office (cooperating partners, donors)   | Agreed              |   | Country office (regional bureau)                                   | February 2023   |
| <p><b>2.1 Strengthen investment in conditional assistance</b>, including by extending food assistance for assets to target additional geographic areas (including stabilized rural and peri-urban areas), long-term displaced persons (with a view to facilitating their transition to return and resilience building) and returnees.</p> |   | Agreed              | 2.1 An operational strategy for CSP activity implementation will be developed before implementation begins. The strategy will consider “strengthening investment in conditional assistance”.  |  |                 |
| <p><b>2.2 Strengthen local procurement (purchase for progress) and producers’ access to markets</b> so as to boost productive capacity (focusing on the effects on beneficiaries rather than on efficiency) and strengthen the link between home-grown school feeding and resilience activities.</p>                                      |   | Agreed              | 2.2 A local procurement strategy was developed in September 2022. It will strengthen smallholder farmers’ access to markets, aggregated sales and price negotiation skill building.<br><br>The capacity of farmers’ organizations will be evaluated in February 2023 to identify their needs. |  |                 |

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|  |   |                     | A strategy for linking smallholder agriculture market support and home-grown school feeding has been drafted to strengthen community capacity for active participation.  |  |                 |
| <b>2.3 Increase the use of cash-based transfers in resilience activities, when relevant.</b>   |   | Agreed              | 2.3 The use of cash-based transfers in resilience activities is ongoing and will be reinforced in areas where it can be implemented.   |  |                 |
| <b>2.4 Invest in approaches aimed at the prevention of chronic malnutrition and support the review and approval of a simplified acute malnutrition management protocol, while focusing nutrition activities on smaller geographic areas and increasing the scope of the activities in those areas.</b> |   | Agreed              | 2.4 Operational research on a simplified protocol (the use of one nutrition product: ready to use therapeutic foods for the treatment of both severe and moderate acute malnutrition) is under way in two prefectures (Kémo and Ouaka) and the results are expected in December 2023.<br><br>Nutrition treatment has focused solely on prefectures with global acute malnutrition rates between 5 and 10 percent).<br><br>Prevention activities will be coupled with general food distribution activities in areas in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 4. |  |                 |

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| <p><b>2.5 Promote the consideration of context-specific factors in the protracted crisis</b>, such as integrating forest products into the analysis of, and potentially the responses to, food crises, and taking into account food security and protection issues related to natural resources and associated with population movements and decreased agricultural production, such as those arising from mining.</p> |  | Agreed                     | <p>2.5. Discussions have been initiated with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to investigate the weight of forest products in the food security analysis. Under the early recovery strategy, the increasing diversion of agriculture workers to mining activities and its impact on agricultural production and food security will also be the subject of in-depth study to refine the response of WFP and its partners under the CSP.</p>  |   |                        |
| <p><b>2.6 Fine-tune the geographical targeting of potentially effective interventions</b>, with due regard to the difficulties in ensuring frequent and regular access to specific sites. Strengthen the monitoring of targeting approaches at the individual and household levels and the consistency and coordination of beneficiary lists, and update the lists more frequently.</p>                                |  | Agreed                     | <p>2.6 As of 2023, specific cooperating partners will be recruited for targeting only.</p> <p>Based on the standard operating procedures for targeting, geographic targeting will not end at the subprefecture level in IPC phase 4 and borderline subprefectures; prioritization will be extended down to the community and village levels. Borderline subprefectures are those in IPC phase 3 with fewer than 20 percent of the population in IPC phase 4.</p> <p>A third party will be recruited to evaluate the targeting exercise before distribution begins, to reduce exclusion and inclusion errors.</p> |   |                        |

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|  |   |                     | Beneficiaries list will be updated regularly.  |  |                 |
| <p><b>Priority: High</b><br/> <b>Deadline: October 2022</b><br/> <b>Recommendation 3: Support a revision of internal processes aimed at addressing the challenges faced by the current and future country strategic plans.</b></p>   | Country office (regional bureau, headquarters, donors, other United Nations entities)                 | Agreed              |  | Country office (regional bureau)                                   | January 2023    |
| <p><b>A. Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of interventions with a view to improving their quality and, in the long term, facilitating advocacy with donors by providing evidence of the effect of interventions and bolstering the interim country strategic plan narrative.</b></p> <p><b>3.A.1 Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of activities so as to gauge their transformative impact,</b> covering integrated multisectoral approaches, potentially focusing on key indicators and including country-specific indicators, with the aim of demonstrating impact and producing qualitative analyses. Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of underfunded resilience-oriented activities to show their effectiveness and provide inputs for results-based</p> |   | Agreed              | <p>3.A.1 The country office research, assessment and monitoring unit, in collaboration with the regional bureau, will develop and implement the monitoring and evaluation strategy for the new CSP, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– evidence generation based on key indicators, including country-specific indicators; and</li> <li>– the incorporation of specific resilience-oriented indicators.</li> </ul> <p>The country office is an active member of the United Nations monitoring and evaluation working group. This platform allows United Nations entities to share information and data.</p> |  |                 |

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| advocacy. Foster synergies with partners' monitoring and evaluation systems and joint data collection in remote areas through increased involvement with the United Nations development assistance framework monitoring and evaluation group. |   |                     |  |  |                 |
| <b>3.A.2 Strengthen mechanisms for ensuring the reliability of key data and context-specific indicators</b> , such as enhanced triangulation and other verification mechanisms, including through capacity strengthening, if necessary.       |   | Agreed              | <p>3.A.2 The monitoring and evaluation capacity of partners and staff is being strengthened to ensure the reliability of key data and indicators.</p> <p>All data collection tools are digitized and posted on WFP's Mobile Operational Data Acquisition platform to ensure timely dashboard updates. New approaches such as School Connect, a tool for improving the quality of school meals programme monitoring, will be implemented. In due time, the rollout of a survey design tool will also allow the quality of monitoring data to be improved.</p> <p>Third-party monitoring services will be used to ensure monitoring and evaluation in areas with limited access. Post-distribution monitoring is to be conducted on regular basis.</p> |  |                 |



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| <b>3.A.3 Utilize monitoring and evaluation data to steer strategy and programming</b> , including the fine-tuning of interventions through periodic reviews.   |  | Agreed                     | 3.A.3 Periodic reviews are conducted and monitoring and evaluation results are used to inform the review of the strategy and decision making.  |   |                          |
| <b>B. Human resources</b><br><b>3.B.1 Enhance the retention of international staff</b> , including through a reappraisal of the use of consultants (procedures, specific benefits that increase with country experience), and strengthen the means of capitalizing on experience, including with support from the regional bureau. |  | Agreed                     | 3.B.1 The country office will ensure organizational alignment with the new CSP requirements.<br><br>The position of head of the country office research, assessment and monitoring unit has been filled by a fixed-term staff member (October 2022). |   |                          |
| <b>Priority: Medium</b><br><b>Deadline: December 2022</b><br><b>Recommendation 4: Sustain the ripple effect related to geographical and programmatic coverage by strengthening joint actions and partnerships in the various sectors of intervention.</b>  | Country office (other United Nations entities, government services, cooperating partners)                    | Partially agreed           |  | Country office (regional bureau)  | October 2022 (completed) |

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| <p><b>4.1 Continue to support the design of national strategic frameworks</b> focused on the enhancement of social protection, food security and school feeding.</p>  |   | Agreed              | <p>4.1 Under the new CSP WFP will continue to support the design of national social protection systems and programmes, focusing on food security, school feeding and other safety net activities.</p> <p>The school feeding strategy is already at the validation stage.</p>   |  |                 |
| <p><b>4.2 Support capacity strengthening with an operational focus</b>, taking into account the sectoral priorities of public services and the decentralization process, ensuring community involvement and integrating interventions into local structures (decentralized government services and community-based organizations), with the strengthening of community structures linked to various sectors and an improved articulation of field-level agreements.</p> |   | Agreed              | <p>4.2 Sectoral capacity strengthening has been planned under each outcome of the new CSP. The country office has conducted a gap and needs capacity assessment for key partners, including line ministries. The assessment findings have informed the country capacity strengthening strategy and road map.</p> <p>Community-based participatory planning will be undertaken to ensure community involvement in the design of food security and nutrition plans and programmes.</p> |  |                 |

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| <p><b>4.3 Promote synergies with the complementary interventions of other organizations</b>, such as resilience activities (with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme), complementary support and protection interventions during distributions (with the United Nations Population Fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and specialized non-governmental organizations), logistics support for interrelated actions (with the United Nations Children's Fund for school feeding and moderate acute malnutrition prevention and treatment, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for food assistance for assets and seed monitoring under purchase for progress) and greater involvement in the sustainable solutions and protection clusters.</p> |   | Agreed              | <p>4.3 WFP will continue to work with other United Nations entities on resilience (FAO, United Nations Development Programme), protection (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Population Fund) and logistical support (all entities) and greater involvement in the sustainable solutions and protection clusters.</p> <p>Joint workplans for these resilience, protection and social protection activities will be developed with these entities.</p> |  |                 |

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| <p><b>4.4 Capitalize on and strengthen the capacity of private sector actors within the partnerships framework,</b> including purchase for progress producers and financial service providers in and outside Bangui, while facilitating their links to local traders, especially those participating in the voucher programme.</p>  |   | Partially agreed    | <p>4.4 The country office is already working with private sector actors in the context of activities relating to smallholder agriculture market support, local procurement, cash-based transfers, financial service providers and traders. With regard to the Central African Republic, however, aspects of this recommendation are not achievable in the near future. For example, the level of digital banking services, including mobile banking, is weak or non-existent outside Bangui. This situation limits the use of financial services by the population, particularly in rural areas.</p> |  |                 |
| <p><b>4.5 Support the efficiency of interventions by stepping up negotiations with retailers</b> with a view to bringing voucher values into line with market prices, and by <b>improving the management of contracts with cooperating partners</b> so as to reduce lead times and respect the terms of field-level agreements.</p> |   | Agreed              | <p>4.5 The country office will pursue negotiations with retailers as this is an ongoing process. The country office plans to develop a standard operating procedure for setting market prices and to enhance distribution monitoring. In addition, the country office is recruiting an international staff member to manage the field-level agreement process.</p>   |  |                 |

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| <p><b>Priority: High</b><br/> <b>Deadline: July 2022</b><br/> <b>Recommendation 5: Strengthen the integration of gender and protection considerations into programming.</b></p>   | Country office (cooperating partners, government partners)  | Agreed              |   | Country office (regional bureau)                                   | March 2023      |
| <p><b>5.1 Strengthen the human resources in charge of gender and protection issues</b> by appointing a gender, protection and accountability officer to manage the complaints and feedback mechanism and be independent of the programme.</p> |   | Agreed              | 5.1 This position has been reflected in the new organization chart and the recruiting process is under way.   |  |                 |
| <p><b>5.2 Strengthen the integration of protection considerations into programming</b>, taking into account gender issues and the risks of domestic violence, awareness raising for men and awareness raising on theft and pilferage.</p>     |   | Agreed              | 5.2 The country office will conduct a decentralized evaluation on gender, protection, disability, inclusion and conflict sensitivity.<br><br>Training and awareness-raising for cooperating partners, WFP staff and communities are also on the agenda for 2023.                                  |  |                 |
| <p><b>5.3 Operationalize accountability to affected population mechanisms</b>, including representative complaint committees and regular community interaction through monitoring focus groups.</p>   |   | Agreed              | 5.3 The country office is starting to implement a new strategy on accountability to affected populations based on digitization of the community feedback mechanism in the field through the SugarCRM platform and in collaboration with the accountability to affected populations working group. |  |                 |

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|  |  |                     | This new strategy will cover all WFP operational areas (Bangassou, Bambari, Alindao, Bria, Kaga Bandoro, Ndélé, Berbérati and Bouar). Two cooperating partners will be in charge of community feedback mechanism activities and will also carry out awareness raising and community dialogue activities before and after assistance activities. |  |                       |
| <p><b>Priority: High</b><br/> <b>Deadline: July 2022</b><br/> <b>Recommendation 6: Within the framework of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach, support the links to conflict and stabilization dynamics.</b></p>                                      | Country office (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, cooperating partners, regional bureau, headquarters, donors) | Partially agreed    |   | Country office (regional bureau)                                   | July 2022 (completed) |
| <p><b>6.1 Ensure the integration of conflict analyses into strategy formulation for the country strategic plan</b>, with links to discussions among the various national actors and agencies at the programme level and to approaches for sustainable solutions.</p> |  | Agreed              | 6.1 Consultations with various national actors and agencies took place in July 2022 in preparation for the development of the new CSP. Conflict analysis has been integrated into the CSP and has informed WFP’s strategic and programmatic approaches.   |  |                       |

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| <p><b>6.2 Identify potential synergies in the prioritization and design of approaches,</b> using analysis of needs and priorities, including synergies with programmes on community violence reduction, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and considering key geographic areas and beneficiary groups, <b>and during implementation,</b> including localization with the consideration of specific complementary activities for cases of intercommunal conflict and the presence of demobilized combatants or armed groups strongly linked to the community.</p> |   | Agreed              | 6.2 The CSP is designed to permit programme flexibility and complementarity with other actors in order to ensure sustainable change through early recovery and resilience activities that support internally displaced persons, persons affected by intercommunal conflict, demobilized combatants and returnees, particularly in stabilized rural areas. |  | July 2022 (completed) |

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| <p><b>6.3 Establish the means to monitor the effects of WFP interventions on conflict dynamics</b>, with an enhanced risk management system that makes it possible to track the funding sources of armed groups that derive from humanitarian actions and the transportation of goods.</p> |   | <p>Not agreed</p> <p>If the country office is to put such an enhanced risk management system in place, it should derive from a corporate initiative. The country office does not have the capacity to put such a system in place on its own. Country office efforts are concentrated on tracking WFP transfers to ensure that they are directed to beneficiaries and that cooperating partners, retailers and suppliers are not subject to international sanctions.</p> |                     |  |                 |