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Evaluation reports

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Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Nigeria (2019–2022)

Executive summary

An evaluation of the country strategic plan for Nigeria for 2019–2022 was conducted between May 2021 and April 2022. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, the efficiency with which the plan has been 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 Nigeria.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. National efforts to reduce poverty have been set back owing to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. Multidimensional security challenges, particularly in the northeast of the country, have increased pressure on food and nutrition security.

The country strategic plan takes a multidimensional approach, providing life-saving assistance while aiming to strengthen the capacities of the Government and other partners.

The plan is aligned with wider United Nations and humanitarian plans for Nigeria. WFP performed well in adapting to changing circumstances, including the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

WFP achieved many of the country strategic plan output and outcome targets, with a doubling of beneficiary numbers, however performance varied by activity. Adherence to humanitarian principles and efforts to achieve better protection, accountability to affected populations and gender equality have fallen short of high ambitions, including the opening of humanitarian space and access.

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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In terms of sustainability, the shift to a development approach has been outstripped by contextual realities. Several capacity strengthening and livelihood activities show a likelihood of sustainability.

WFP's deliveries were timely, and attention was paid to alternative and more cost-effective measures at important junctures during implementation of the plan. The targeting of interventions was generally appropriate, but there is a large gap between identified numbers of people in need and those who actually received food assistance.

Overall, the strategic outlook of the plan, based on stability and incremental improvements, was overly optimistic. WFP has made strong partnerships at the federal and state levels of the Nigerian Government and with the private sector. However, the country strategic plan could have provided greater flexibility for WFP's efforts to respond to the protracted crisis in the northeast and the deteriorating situation in the northwest. The reduction and high turnover of staff resulted in a decreased field presence and affected systematic knowledge management at the strategic level.

The evaluation concludes that the country strategic plan was strategically positioned, aligned with national priorities and based on strong partnerships with various stakeholders. WFP has demonstrated the capacity to scale up in response to increased needs in challenging settings, while the intention of shifting to a development focus under the country strategic plan was premature. The degree to which the plan should leave space for further deterioration in the situation on the ground is an issue for reflection. Likewise, the strengthening of institutional knowledge on strategic decisions at the country level deserves attention.

The evaluation made five recommendations; two are strategic and three are operational. The strategic recommendations include focusing on humanitarian challenges in emergencies, including those in the northeast and northwest and developing a clear plan for promoting full adherence to humanitarian principles.

The operational recommendations include incorporating a broader and more proactive approach to addressing protection and accountability to affected populations, further developing actionable measures for gender equality and improving targeting and monitoring mechanisms with a view to further increasing coverage and inclusion.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Nigeria (2019–2022) (WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/5) and management response (WFP/EB.1/2023/5-D/5/Add.1) and encourages further action on the recommendations set out in the report, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

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

Introduction

Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of the Nigeria country strategic plan (CSP) for 2019–2022 was conducted between May 2021 and April 2022. Combining accountability and learning objectives, it was timed to inform the design of the next CSP for Nigeria. The main users of the evaluation are the WFP country office in Nigeria, the Regional Bureau for Western Africa, headquarters divisions and other stakeholders, including United Nations and operational partners.
2. The evaluation scope covered WFP activities implemented under the CSP from 2019 to 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 evaluation team undertook the evaluation using mixed methods, drawing on monitoring data, document review, semi-structured interviews with more than 100 stakeholders at the national and local levels and focus group discussions with more than 500 people in the communities covered by the CSP. Partnerships, the humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus and intervention areas in Nigeria were used as strategic lenses to inform the assessment. Gender equality and women's empowerment, the humanitarian principles and access, accountability to affected populations, protection and ethical issues were duly considered.
4. Reduced institutional memory and limitations in the access to some data were experienced during the field data collection, which was conducted in a hybrid mode owing to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)-related travel restrictions.

Context

5. The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a lower-middle-income country with one of the fastest growing economies in Africa (table 1). The Government has established institutional frameworks at the national and sub-national levels aimed at the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The top national priority is to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty, but progress towards that goal has been set back owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS		
Indicator	Value	Year
Total population (million) (1)	200	2020
Population under 14 years old (%) (1)	43	2020
Life expectancy (1)	54.7 years	2020
Gross domestic product per capita (1)	USD 5 186.7	2020
Adult literacy rate (%) (1)	62	2018
Gini coefficient (1)	35.1	2018
Global gender gap index (rank) (2)	139 of 153	2021
Prevalence of under 5 stunting (%) (3)	31.5	2021
Global hunger index (rank) (4)	103 of 116	2021

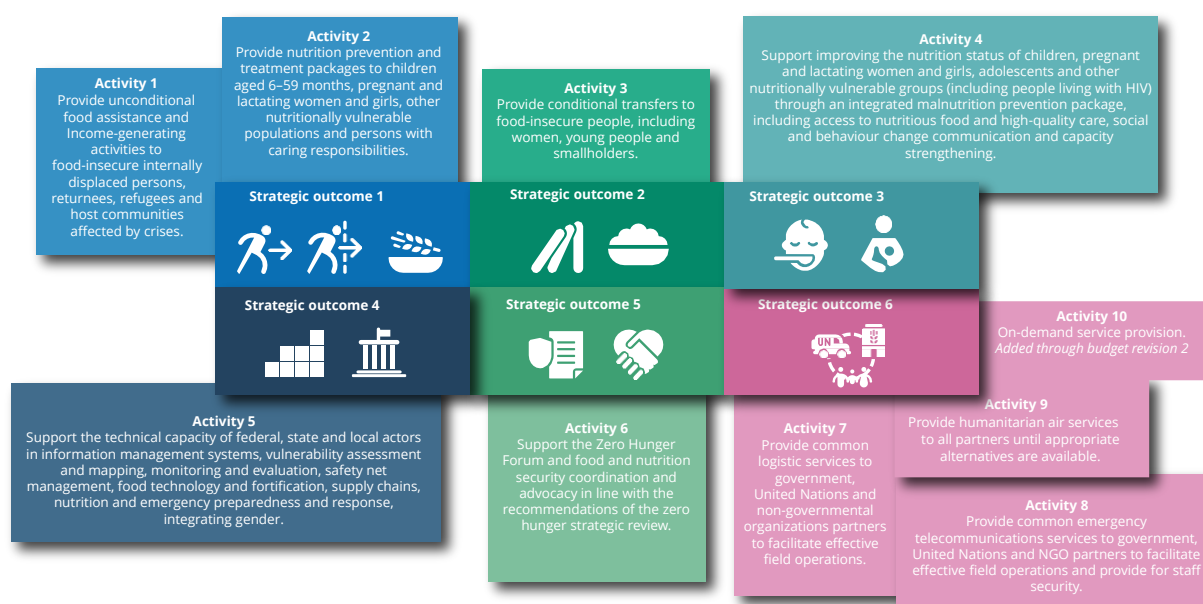
Sources: (1) [World Bank data: Nigeria](#); (2) World Economic Forum. 2022. [Global Gender Gap Report 2022](#); (3) [2021 Global Nutrition Report](#); (4) Welt Hunger Hilfe and Concern Worldwide. 2021. [2021 Global Hunger Index: Hunger and food systems in conflict settings](#).

6. Resources and capacities vary from one state to another and roughly 40 percent of the population lives in poverty, with disparities by income, gender and location. Despite the significant reduction of hunger in past decades, nearly 24.6 million Nigerians still suffer from hunger.
7. Nigeria faces multidimensional security challenges. Insurgency in the northeast has added pressure to food and nutrition security, particularly for vulnerable women and children. In Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states, 8.7 million people need humanitarian assistance¹ and more than 2 million people are internally displaced.² The ongoing conflict has resulted in human rights violations and protection risks.
8. The number of women heads of households adopting negative coping strategies and facing gender-based violence has significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, 43 percent of girls in Nigeria are married before their 18th birthday.

WFP country strategic plan

9. The CSP is focused on the provision of medium- and long-term support through a multidimensional approach of providing life-saving assistance while helping to strengthen the capacities of the Government and other partners in early warning, preparedness and response management through work under six strategic outcomes and ten activities (figure 1). Given the intensification of the armed conflict in the northeast of the country in 2019, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP revised that approach through two CSP revisions (figure 2).³

Figure 1: Nigeria country strategic plan (2019–2022) strategic outcomes and related activities



Source: Evaluation team.

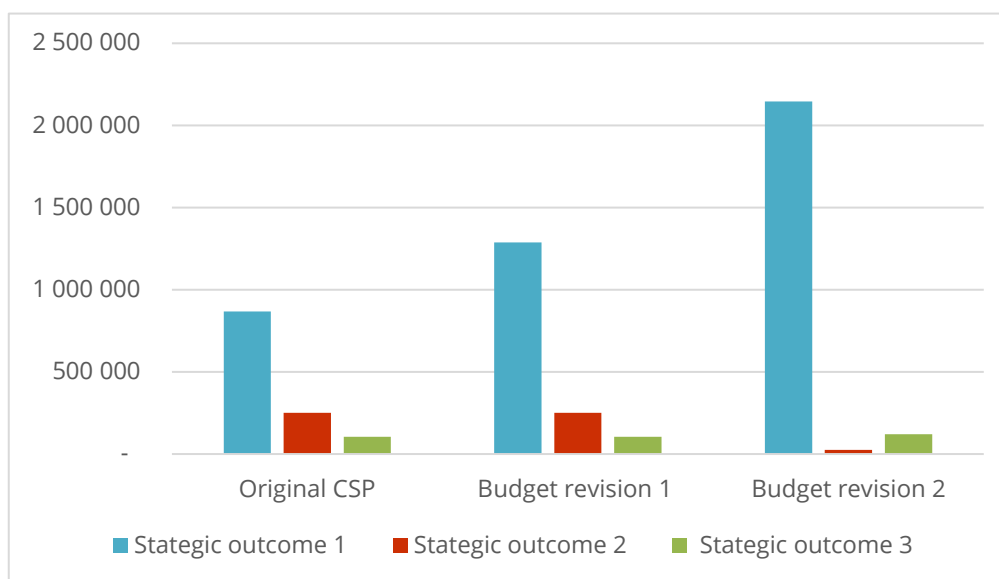
¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2021. [OCHA Nigeria](#).

² International Organization for Migration. 2021. [IOM Nigeria – Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\) Displacement Report 37](#).

³ A third CSP revision was ongoing at the time of the evaluation and completed by October 2022.

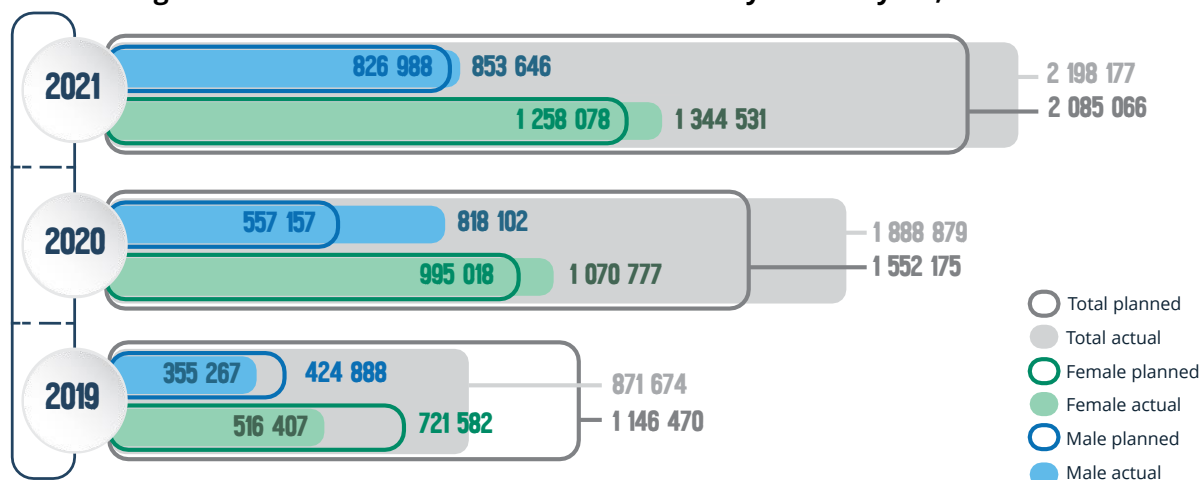
10. The number of annual planned beneficiaries increased from 1.1 million in 2019 to 2.2 million in 2021 (figure 2) with 872,000 beneficiaries actually assisted in 2019 and 2.2 million in 2021.

Figure 2: Evolution of targeted beneficiary numbers by strategic outcome



Source: Evaluation team.

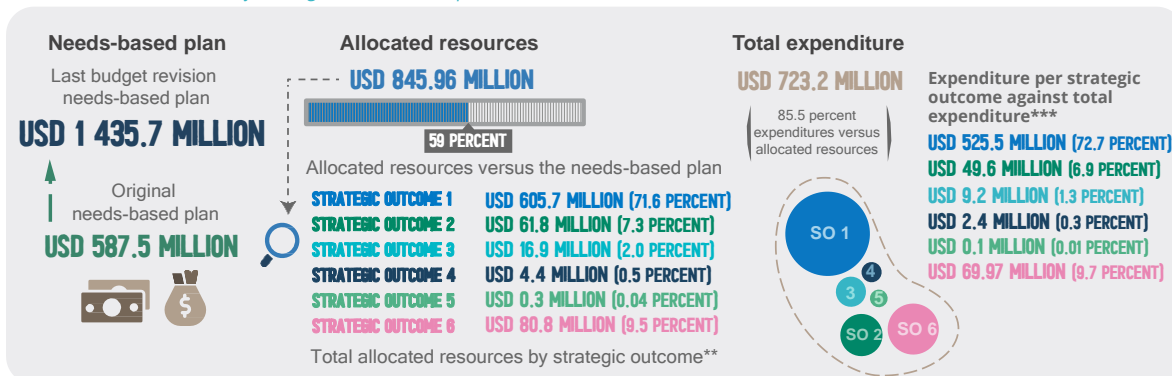
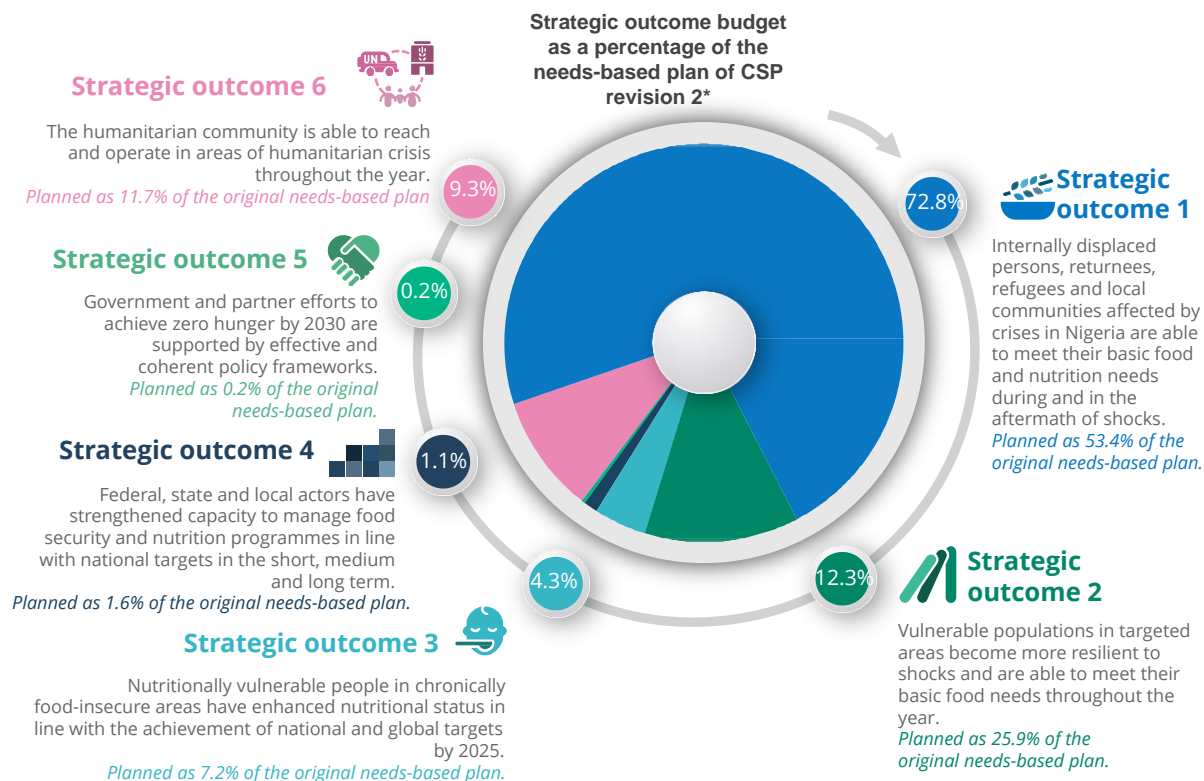
Figure 3: Planned versus actual beneficiaries by sex and year, 2019–2021



Source: Office of Evaluation based on the full report on the evaluation of the Nigeria CSP for 2019–2022.

11. The two CSP revisions increased the required budget from the original USD 587 million in 2019 to USD 1.43 billion in 2021. Figure 4 shows the variation in funding among strategic outcomes as of November 2021.

Figure 4: Nigeria country strategic plan (2019–2022) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures



* The needs-based plan budget percentages by strategic outcome have been calculated at the grand total level (USD 1,435.7 million), including direct support costs (USD 33.3 million) and indirect support costs (USD 47.1 million). This data refers to the budget revision 2, approved in May 2021.

** The allocated resources by strategic outcome do not add up to USD 845.96 million as resources were also allocated to non-strategic outcomes purposes (USD 1.2 million), direct support costs (USD 33.2 million) and indirect support costs (USD 41.7 million). The allocated resources percentages by strategic outcome have been calculated at the grand total cost level (USD 845.96 million).

*** The expenditures by strategic outcome have been calculated at the grand total cost level (USD 723.2 million), including direct support costs (USD 24.8 million) and indirect support costs (USD 41.7 million).

Source: Office of Evaluation based on the full report on the evaluation of the Nigeria CSP for 2019–2022.

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

12. The CSP is consistent with national priorities related to the achievement of the SDGs. The federal government authorities praised WFP for its role, effectiveness, willingness to collaborate on reaching zero hunger and work in the northeast of the country in particular. The zero hunger round table that WFP created with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development in 2020 brings together leaders from various entities, including the Government, the private sector and other United Nations entities, to advocate long-term hunger solutions in Nigeria.
13. The CSP is fully aligned with the key strategies and priorities of the Government, such as the zero hunger strategy, the national policy on food and nutrition security, Nigeria's economic recovery and growth plan and the Buhari Plan. Linkages to several other strategies and priorities, including safe drinking water and the national action plan on women, peace and security, are more nuanced.

Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable people and communities

14. WFP's active engagement in the cadre harmonisé framework provided WFP with evidence of vulnerabilities and needs in the northeast and northwest. WFP conducted community-based targeting to identify the most vulnerable people, including those living in camps, and other data, such as those collected from community consultations, also fed into operational decisions on targeting.
15. While the CSP generally paid attention to vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and women, further use could be made of protection, gender and conflict analyses to more fully identify the food security needs of all vulnerable groups. Data reliability in areas with limited humanitarian presence is a challenge.

Adaptation

16. WFP performed well in adapting to changing circumstances over the course of CSP implementation. As part of the COVID-19 response, WFP helped the Government to establish a model for the provision of take-home rations as part of the modified national home-grown school feeding programme. WFP also strategically supported the Government in addressing the economic impact of COVID-19, undertaking a cash-based and in-kind food assistance programme in the three urban COVID-19 hotspots.
17. In response to the unforeseen crisis in the northwest region, WFP worked hard to mobilize resources and attention from donor governments.

United Nations partnerships

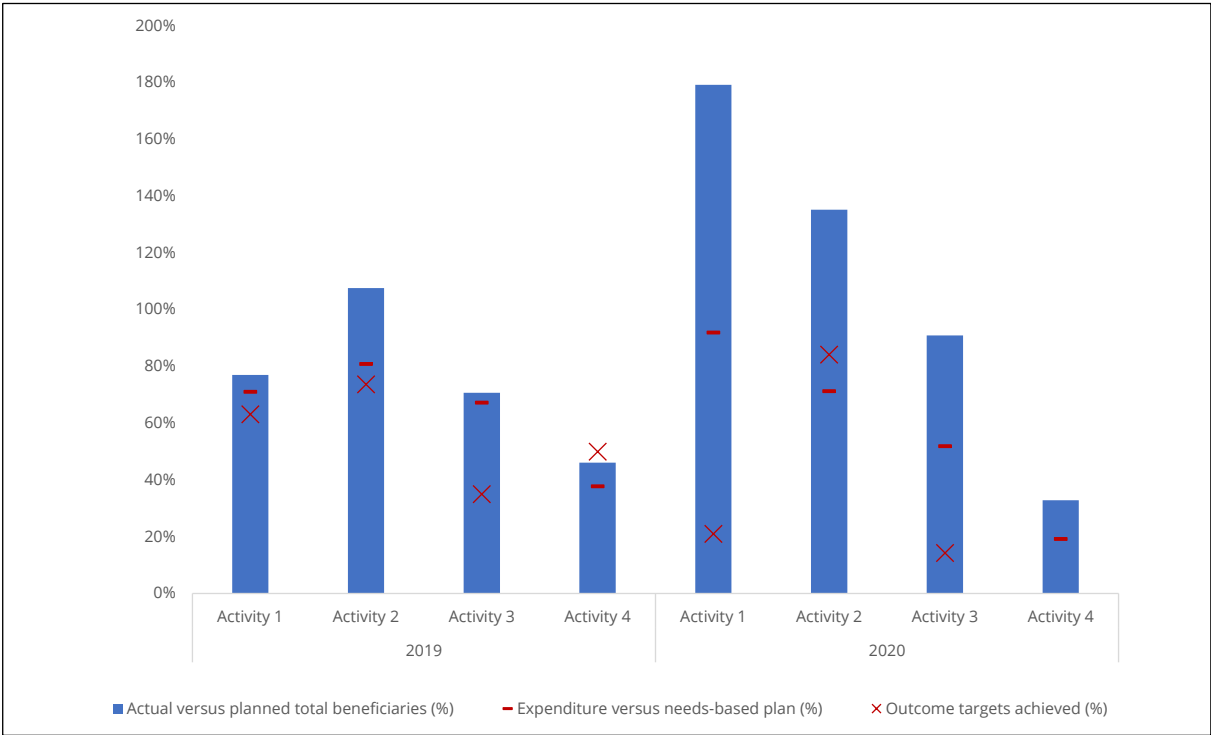
18. The CSP is well aligned with the United Nations sustainable development partnership framework and humanitarian response plan for Nigeria. Key informants acknowledged WFP's active engagement in inter-agency processes and coordination mechanisms involving the humanitarian country team, the food security sector, the nutrition sector, the cash working group, humanitarian common services and the cadre harmonisé framework. WFP has developed appropriate partnerships based on its comparative advantage in Nigeria. While it works closely with partners such as the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, some of the relationships seem less consistent than others.

What are the extent and quality of WFP’s contribution to country strategic plan strategic outcomes in Nigeria?

Delivery of outputs and contribution to outcomes

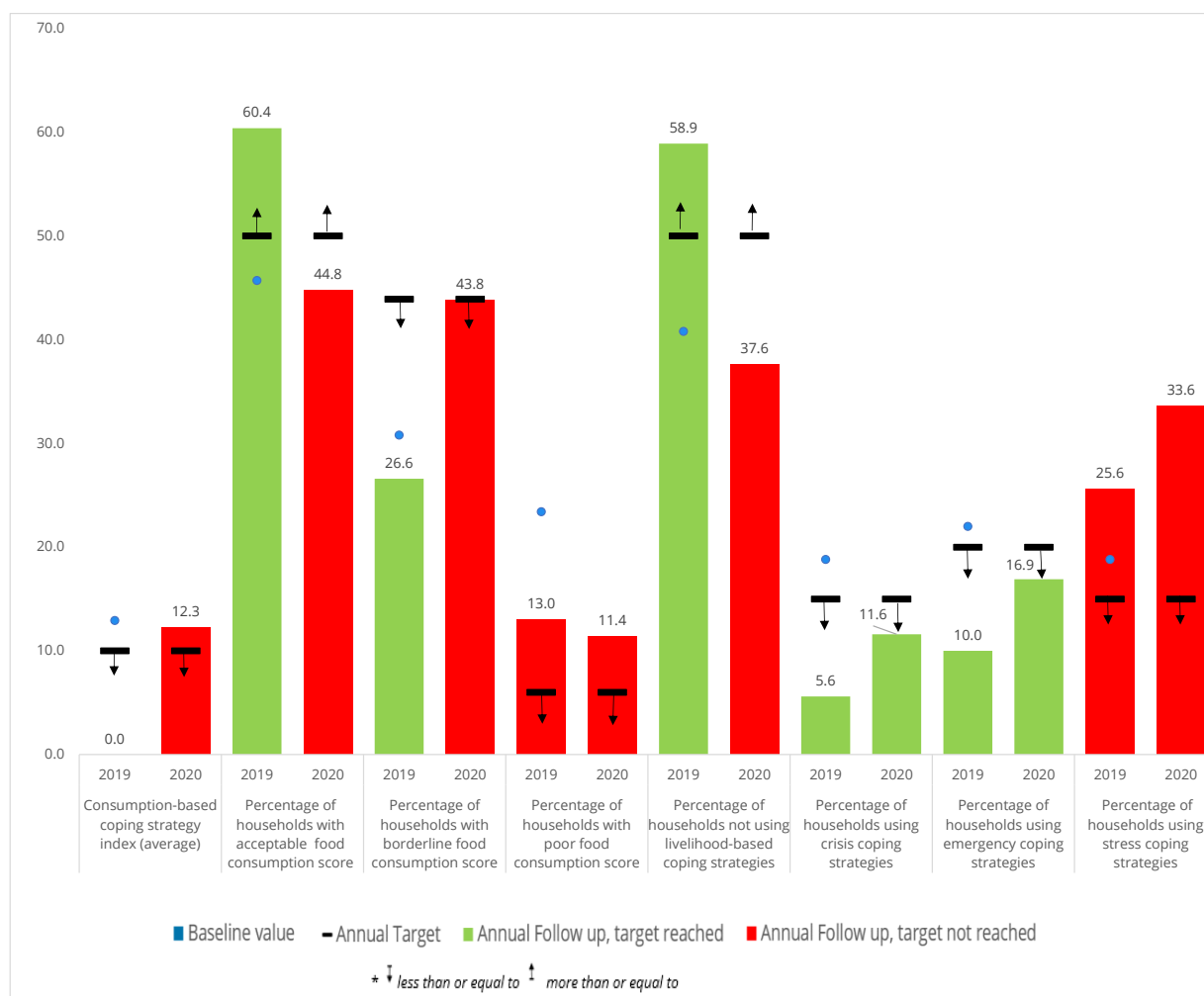
19. Overall, many of the output targets set by WFP were achieved or exceeded, with increased numbers of beneficiaries receiving cash-based and in-kind food assistance in 2019 and 2020 (figure 5). This is a significant achievement in the context of the deteriorating security situation and the impact of COVID-19. However, performance has been somewhat uneven across activities and did not always keep pace with needs, owing to underfunding. Rations were cut to 70 percent in October 2021 so as to reach more beneficiaries with the available resources.

Figure 5: Percentage of planned beneficiaries reached versus percentage of needs-based planned utilized (expenditure) and outcome targets achieved, 2019 and 2020



Source: Annual country reports, 2019 and 2020.

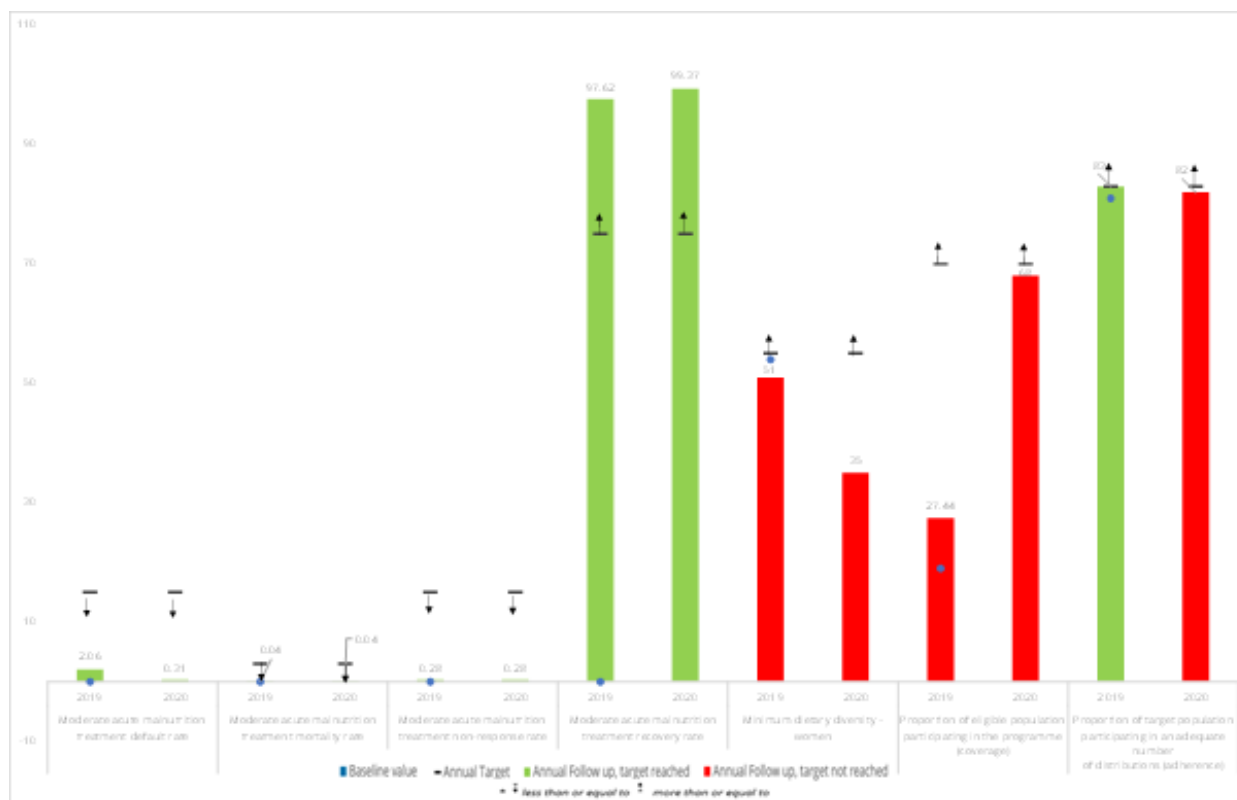
20. **Strategic outcome 1:** Despite the strong output achievement of the general food assistance for food-insecure communities affected by crisis (*activity 1*), outcome indicators generally deteriorated. This may reflect the worsening situation in terms of security, food security, COVID-19 and inflation (figure 6). WFP also provided an allowance for cooking fuel, which contributed to the protection of women and girls in particular. Beneficiaries noted that WFP assistance was vital to addressing their current needs but that cash assistance was not sufficient to cover all their needs. Most beneficiaries were satisfied with WFP-provided food packages. WFP’s regular market monitoring suggests an overall preference for cash among beneficiaries, but this was not unanimous.

Figure 6: Progress towards outcome targets for activity 1, 2019 and 2020

Source: Annual country reports, 2019 and 2020.

21. *Activity 2* responded to emergency nutrition needs, including both a preventive approach and the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition. The moderate acute malnutrition treatment indicators showed improvement from baseline figures, but some targets were not met (figure 7). Focus group discussion participants repeatedly mentioned their appreciation that lactating women and girls received fortified corn-soya blend and fortified and enhanced corn-soya blend for added nutrition. Social and behaviour change communication covered subjects that included breastfeeding and age-appropriate complementary feeding.

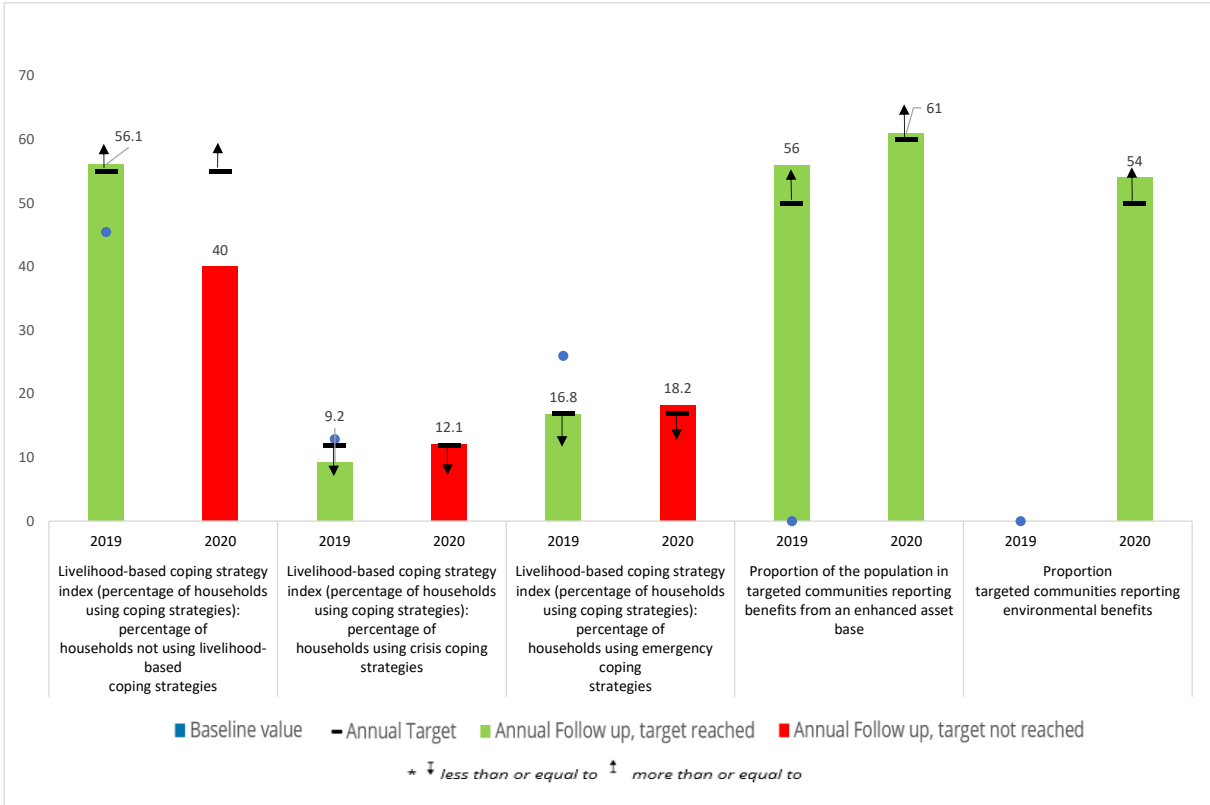
Figure 7: Progress towards outcome targets for activity 2, 2019 and 2020



Source: Annual country reports, 2019 and 2020.

22. **Strategic outcome 2:** Outputs from the livelihood activities under *activity 3* included the distribution of livestock, tree saplings and harvest storage to assist beneficiaries in establishing income-generating enterprises and the establishment of a financial literacy scheme for women. Originally WFP planned that beneficiaries would shift progressively from general food assistance under activity 1 to livelihood activities, but the process for that transition was not entirely clear.
23. In 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reduced income-generating opportunities. WFP paused 39 of its 56 planned communal asset creation interventions and switched to unconditional food assistance. Despite this challenge, WFP reported positive progress under the asset benefit indicator, while other indicator values declined in 2020 (figure 8). In 2021, 88,205 beneficiaries under the livelihoods activity were temporarily included in activity 1, mainly because of funding constraints.

Figure 8: Progress towards outcome targets for activity 3, 2019 and 2020



Source: Annual country reports, 2019 and 2020.

- 24. **Strategic outcome 3:** The social and behaviour change communication activities under *activity 4* focused on exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding and were implemented in coordination with the United Nations Children’s Fund and the Borno State primary health care development agency. The WFP-assisted activities related to the establishment of village savings and loan associations were suspended from March 2020 until the end of the year owing to funding shortfalls. A Fill the Nutrient Gap assessment and analysis was started in 2021. The inclusion of nutrition-related activities under two strategic outcomes, (strategic outcomes 1 and 3) may not be optimal for the mainstreaming of nutrition into all programmes. Consolidation under a single outcome would make it easier to identify beneficiaries and, in particular, for women with children to fully participate in the livelihood programme with strong links to nutrition outcomes.
- 25. **Strategic outcome 4:** The various capacity strengthening efforts supported by WFP at the federal and state levels under *activity 5* contributed to enhanced public knowledge and policy development, including the production of actual data and analysis of food security, the sharing of vulnerability assessment methodology, strengthening of the emergency response capacity of the authorities and the rigorous definition of targeting procedures as part of the cadre harmonisé process. WFP supported a joint life-saving food assistance intervention for Cameroonian refugees with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and played a leading role in an inter-agency scoping mission to the northwestern states in 2019 and an in-depth essential needs and nutrition assessment in 2021.
- 26. **Strategic outcome 5:** WFP supported food and nutrition security coordination and advocacy through zero hunger forums and initiated the zero hunger round table under *activity 6*. WFP also facilitated private sector engagement through the zero hunger sprint initiative, and paid attention to the role of financial service providers in the context of cash-based transfer (CBT) programmes.

27. Government officials commended WFP's role in incorporating shock-responsiveness into the review of the national social protection policy. WFP also supported the inclusion of food and nutrition priorities in the national development plan for poverty eradication and social protection and provided assistance to the development of the Government's long-term vision on national dialogues on food systems.
28. **Strategic outcome 6:** WFP support in providing common humanitarian services under *activities 7, 8 and 9*, including logistics, emergency telecommunications and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, was appreciated by the humanitarian community and other stakeholders in Nigeria. The logistics sector supported the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in facilitating civil-military coordination and negotiating humanitarian access. Reliable internet connectivity and secure communications technology were provided by the emergency telecommunications sector. All key informants agreed that the operations in the northeast would not have been possible without the services of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, which enabled the humanitarian community at large to "stay and deliver" more effectively.

Contribution to cross-cutting results

Humanitarian principles

29. The evaluation observed evidence of steps taken to operationalize humanitarian principles and undertake related activities, including the provision of training on humanitarian principles through the International Committee of the Red Cross in 2019, and peer learning among front-line humanitarian negotiators, which was welcomed by key informants. However, humanitarian actors in Nigeria, including WFP, have struggled to open the space for principled humanitarian action and access, partially owing to the limited opportunities for holistic negotiation with all parties to the conflict. WFP's close partnerships with various government authorities and the military facilitated access and logistics. On the other hand, a number of stakeholders indicated concerns that those partnerships may create negative perceptions of the operational independence of WFP.

Protection

30. WFP has addressed protection in the context of food assistance and made specific efforts to reduce protection risks through, for example, the shift to CBT modalities and the distribution of fuel-efficient stoves. Many beneficiaries felt safe during food assistance distributions. Nevertheless, in partnership with other agencies, WFP needs to further address broader protection concerns, especially the high prevalence of gender-based violence in the camps and the premature return of internally displaced persons due to camp closures.

Accountability to affected populations

31. WFP's attention to feedback mechanisms improved its engagement with affected people, but stakeholders perceived the response to feedback as having been slow. Limited in-person presence, especially since the onset of COVID-19-related travel restrictions, restricted direct contact with beneficiaries. Engagement with people in highly insecure areas remains challenging.

Gender

32. Progress was made in the mainstreaming of gender equality, including the development of a gender improvement plan and training for partners, especially since the deployment of a gender officer in early 2021. Through collaboration with the Development Partners Group on Gender, WFP contributed to the review, validation and finalization of the national gender policy. The CSP set ambitious goals for gender, but to meet the commitment to gender transformation in conflict settings, gender sensitivity assessments and community-based project planning need to be further strengthened.

Sustainability

33. Certain elements of WFP activities appear sustainable, such as WFP's support for strengthening the capacity of federal, state and local authorities through data management, training on disaster preparedness and technical assistance for the government school feeding programme. A number of livelihood activities, including asset creation and ecologically friendly agricultural practices, also show a significant likelihood of sustainability. However, insufficient attention to access to land, particularly for women, limits that potential. The deterioration of the security situation limited the transition from humanitarian assistance to capacity strengthening envisaged in the CSP. Privacy and protection considerations also need to be addressed in order to facilitate effective data sharing so that WFP data collection activities and mapping exercises can contribute to long-term planning and response by the Government and other agencies.

Linkages between humanitarian, development and peace work

34. WFP has delivered valuable work in implementing the triple humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach, including conflict-sensitive activities. WFP worked closely with relevant government institutions, especially the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development. WFP engaged in some parallel livelihood activities that bridged the gap between humanitarian and development activities. United Nations partners credited WFP for leading the dialogue on the implementation of the triple nexus in the United Nations country team and the humanitarian country team.
35. Such efforts could be strengthened by greater reflection of contextual realities underpinned by conflict-sensitive assessments and analysis. WFP has recognized such needs but has not realized the full potential of the nexus approach in the locations where resilience and livelihood activities are implemented. There is also scope for increasing the role of women in peacebuilding activities.

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

36. Most deliveries occurred within the intended timeframe. This was largely owing to the use of the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF), which also supported local procurement as about 70 percent of food commodities for WFP in Nigeria were sourced in-country (table 2). During the term of the CSP there were also year-on-year improvements in the lead times for purchases for Nigeria through the GCMF (table 3).

TABLE 2: PURCHASES FOR NIGERIA THROUGH THE GLOBAL COMMODITY MANAGEMENT FACILITY (FOOD AND ASSOCIATED COSTS), JANUARY 2019–OCTOBER 2021

Commodity	2019		2020		January–October 2021		Cumulative 2019–October 2021	
	Volume (mt)	Value (USD million)	Volume (mt)	Value (USD million)	Volume (mt)	Value (USD million)	Volume (mt)	Value (USD million)
Sorghum	27 300	6.2	47 000	21.3	73 000	45.7	147 400	73.2
Beans	10 600	5.3	14 000	7.8	18 000	24.1	42 700	37.2
Super Cereal	3 600	2.1	2 600	1.9	5 600	4.7	11 800	8.7
Vegetable oil	2 000	1.7	2 000	4.4	4 600	13.4	8 700	19.5
Super Cereal Plus	5 500	5.9	2 700	3.0			8 200	8.9
LNS-MQ			<1000	0.8	1 000	2.5	1 300	3.3
LNS-LQ	<1 000	0.5					<1 000	0.5
Total	49 100	21.8	68 600	39.1	102 400	90.4	220 100	151.3

Source: Corporate Planning and Performance Division, Strategic Financing Branch, November 2021.

Abbreviations: LNS-MQ = lipid-based nutrient supplement-medium quantity; LNS-LQ: = lipid-based nutrient supplement - large quantity.

TABLE 3: GLOBAL COMMODITY MANAGEMENT FACILITY LEAD TIME VERSUS AVERAGE LEAD TIME OF DIRECT PURCHASES FROM SUPPLIERS, JANUARY 2019–OCTOBER 2021

Year	Average lead time (day)	Sum of strategic outcome total quantity (mt)	GCMF lead-time (from internal purchase order to hand-over location) (day)	GCMF lead-time gain (day)	GCMF lead-time gain (%)
2019	90	49 100	47	43	48
2020	81	68 600	24	57	71
2021	84	102 400	22	62	73
Total	84	220 100	28	56	66

Source: Corporate Planning and Performance Division, Strategic Financing Branch, October 2021.

37. At times, beneficiaries experienced long queues, particularly when COVID-19-related social distancing measures were in place and because the number of retailers did not keep pace with the increase in the number of beneficiaries (table 4).

Locations	2019	2020	2021
Maiduguri (MMC)	41	38	37
Ngala	22	22	22
Monguno	21	20	19
Bama	-	23	19
Damaturu (Kukareta)	6	10	10
Gujba	19	19	19
Yunusari	21	21	21
Yusufari	14	14	14
Geidam	21	21	21
Totals	165	188	182

Source: Evaluation team using data from the country office CBT team.

Coverage

38. The CSP's intended coverage was generally appropriate. However, about half the people in need identified by the cadre harmonisé did not receive food assistance, partially owing to resource shortfalls (table 5). This is a concern for the entire food security sector, including WFP, and is in part a result of a shortfall in the available resources. The tracking of beneficiaries moving between locations, and the verification of targeted beneficiaries were not carried out systematically. There was also some lack of clarity regarding the division of responsibilities for food assistance among WFP and other agencies and the number of people WFP planned to assist in relation to the total numbers as identified by the cadre harmonisé.

State	August 2019			August 2020			August 2021		
	People in need	People assisted	%	People in need	People assisted	%	People in need	People assisted	%
Adamawa	278 606	52 262	19	908 825	10 748	1	886 825	109 789	12
Borno	1 750 143	1 192 859	68	2 104 761	1 323 818	63	1 867 955	1 378 227	74
Yobe	945 474	234 996	25	1 287 103	148 502	12	1 452 962	844 048	58
Total	2 974 223	1 480 117	50	4 300 689	1 483 068	34	4 207 742	2 332 064	55

Source: Evaluation team using data from the food security sector dashboard, August 2019–August 2021.

Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness

39. The activities supported by WFP were cost-efficient. For instance, overall post-delivery losses of commodities handled were less than 1 percent. This achievement resulted from several important steps taken, including the introduction of biometric identification to eliminate

duplication and the use of the corporate DOTS visual data platform to ensure that stocks were used by their best-before dates and replenished in a timely fashion (figure 9).

40. Comprehensive assessments of alternative, more cost-effective measures were conducted at important points during CSP implementation, such as when changes were made in the geographical targeting or when modality selection assessments were being carried out. There is scope for further improving market assessments and the updating of vendor lists. In general, the food assistance provided would have benefited from further analysis of the economic impact of bulk local procurement, CBTs and in-kind distributions on vulnerable population groups.

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

41. During the process of developing the CSP, WFP conducted extensive consultations with various government, United Nations and other stakeholders to examine the evidence on food security in Nigeria. At the time of CSP design in 2018, there were predictions that the security and food security situation in the northeast – on which the CSP is based – would improve. However, that strategic outlook was overly optimistic. Continued conflict has prevented WFP from moving beyond its emergency phase into the development phase anticipated in the CSP.

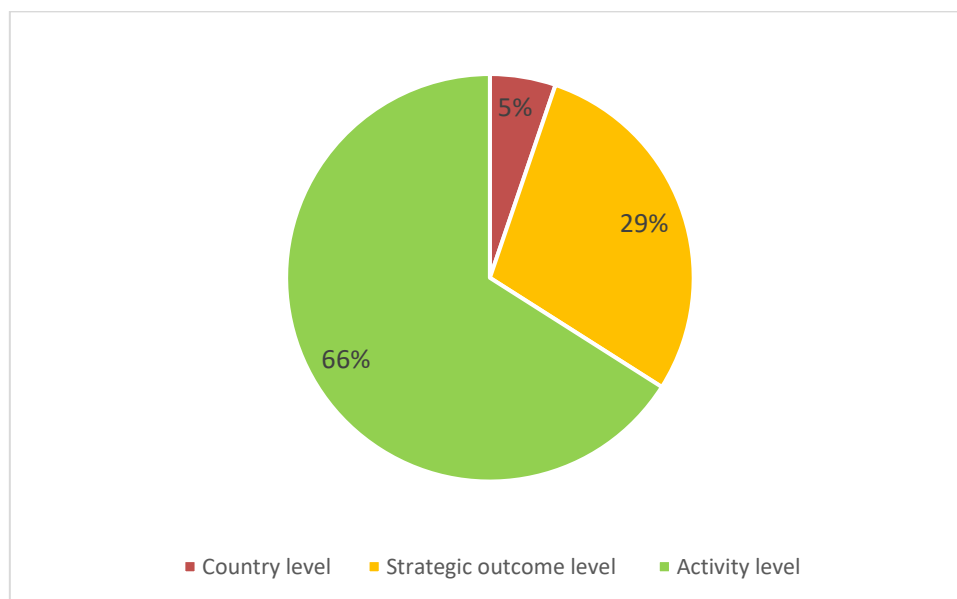
Resource mobilization

42. Significant donor funds were generally available for WFP in the first years of CSP implementation. While WFP succeeded in mobilizing increased financial resources, for addressing increased food assistance needs, particularly in 2019–2020, the recent decline in financial commitments is concerning.
43. Donors see the main strength of WFP as the provision of large-scale food assistance in humanitarian settings. WFP was widely praised for its logistics capacity and several donors also noted WFP's capacity in data collection. Those perceptions are reflected in the funding trend (table 6). There has been no change in funding or earmarking trends directly attributable to the shift from project-based planning to country strategic planning (figure 9).

Strategic outcome	Allocated contributions 2019	Allocated contributions 2020	Allocated contributions 2021
1	70.26%	78.65%	80.66%
2	13.82%	10.66%	5.76%
3	3.22%	0.93%	1.15%
4	0.49%	0.78%	0.94%
5	0.01%	0.01%	0.10%
6	12.20%	8.98%	11.39%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Country portfolio budget resources overview report, Information Systems and Reporting Branch, November 2021.

Figure 9: Directed multilateral contributions for the Nigeria country strategic plan by level of earmarking, 2021



Source: WFP, FACTory donor contribution database, November 2021.

Partnerships

44. WFP's partnerships with other United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in Nigeria are seen as very constructive and collaborative. WFP has made strong partnerships at the federal and state levels of the Government and with communities. This had a positive impact on implementation performance and on the monitoring of protection issues. A considerable number of key informants in various entities expressed strong appreciation of the way they worked with WFP, especially in the humanitarian sphere. Nonetheless, WFP acknowledges the need to work more closely with non-governmental organization partners so as to achieve further complementarity.

Flexibility of the country strategic plan

45. While the CSP's reference to WFP intervention areas leaves room for manoeuvre, it provides little direction with regard to the priority regions in Nigeria for WFP's attention. The CSP could have provided greater flexibility for subsequent efforts by WFP to operate at scale, specifically in the northwest, where the situation has deteriorated. WFP has been active in leading several assessment missions, but the follow-up actions to those missions on the part of the humanitarian community have not always been clear.

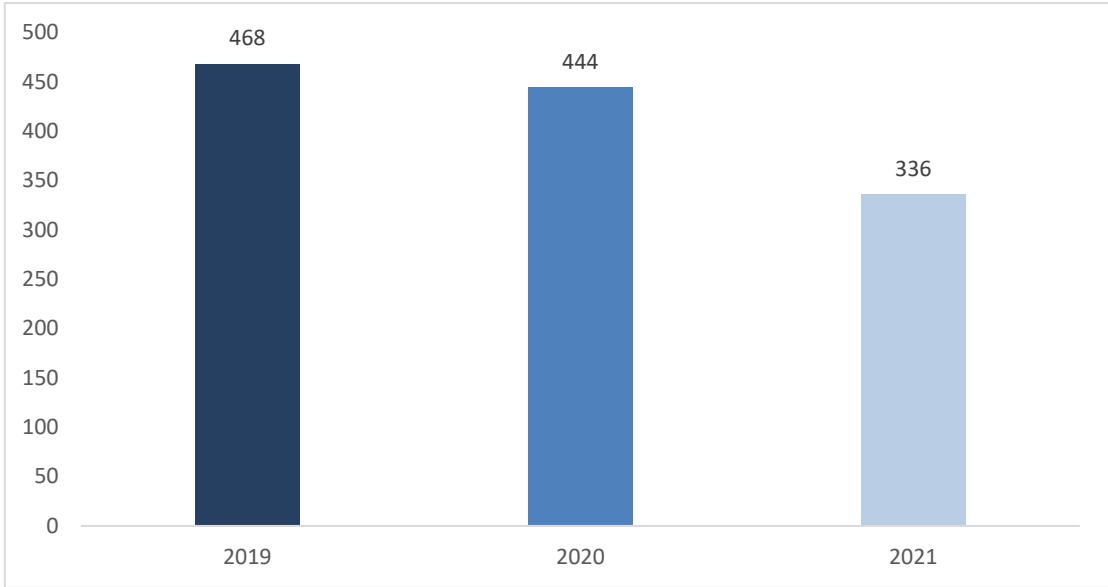
Other factors that explain WFP's performance and strategic shift

46. The CSP consolidates a range of activities in one document in a streamlined manner, yielding many advantages. However, the strategy was framed around a single scenario of stabilization. The CSP did not include proposals for sufficiently robust mitigating strategies in the event of a deterioration of the crisis.
47. A contributing factor that may have adversely affected CSP implementation was high staff turnover, including at senior levels, and the resulting loss in institutional memory with regard to strategic decisions (table 7 and figure 10).

TABLE 7: COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN STAFFING LEVEL BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, 2019-2021			
	2019	2020	2021
Direct support staff	73	69	53
Strategic outcome 1	244	234	98
Strategic outcome 2	101	97	146
Strategic outcome 3	13	14	11
Strategic outcome 4	7	7	8
Strategic outcome 5	-	-	2
Strategic outcome 6	30	23	18

Source: WFP CSP staffing overview, 2019-2021.

Figure 10: Overall number of staff in the Nigeria country office, 2019-2021



Source: Evaluation team using data from the WFP CSP staffing overview, 2019-2021.

Conclusions

- 48. **Conclusion 1: WFP has managed to position itself strategically in Nigeria because of its good relations with the Government at all levels and through ensuring the alignment of the CSP with key government priorities. WFP has demonstrated the capacity to scale up in response to increased needs following the deterioration of the situation in the northeast, the COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of conflict in the northwest.**
- 49. WFP delivered essential work in support of the Government’s objective of reaching zero hunger. Facing increased needs in the northeast with the escalation of the conflict, WFP’s decision to focus on delivering general food assistance was entirely relevant to the context and to the comparative advantages that partners see in WFP: delivering assistance at scale and providing support through common humanitarian services. WFP also adapted well to the COVID-19 pandemic. The creation of flexible partnerships became a significant factor in strong implementation performance. WFP also responded to increased needs resulting from the escalation of the conflict in the northwest.

50. **Conclusion 2: WFP achieved or exceeded many of the CSP outcome targets, although variations in performance are noted. The provision of services did not always keep pace with increased needs and, at times, difficult decisions were required.**
51. Performance was particularly good in the provision of in-kind food and CBTs. The meeting or exceeding of output targets was a major achievement considering the deteriorating security situation combined with the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the general increase in the total number of beneficiaries in the CSP's first years of implementation, there was variability in beneficiary numbers by modality, which resulted in uneven output results partly attributable to sudden changes in the situation. Spreading nutrition-related activities over two strategic outcomes is an example of how some CSP activities were compartmentalized.
52. **Conclusion 3: The significant commitments made in the CSP with regard to humanitarian principles, protection, accountability to affected populations and gender have been partially fulfilled and require further action in order to achieve full implementation.**
53. WFP has taken steps to fulfil its commitment to operationalizing the humanitarian principles. Given the restrictions placed on humanitarian access, WFP, in consultation with the wider humanitarian community, could have been more robust in leveraging its positive relationship with the Government in order to ensure that the humanitarian needs of all conflict-affected populations were fully known and addressed.
54. WFP has sought to ensure that beneficiaries feel safe in the context of food distributions, including through the monitoring of protection risks by experienced partners. Improvements in accountability to affected populations were observed but were offset by the slow response in making operational adjustments based on feedback from beneficiaries.
55. The country office has made progress in mainstreaming gender equality. However, there is a need for WFP to work further with other agencies to address the remaining gaps. Women continue to be underrepresented in some WFP programmes, and further attention to addressing the increased risks of gender-based violence due to the COVID-19 impact is needed.
56. **Conclusion 4: Medium- and long-term sustainability of programme achievements has been achieved only in part, largely owing to the unstable circumstances.**
57. Certain elements of the programme appear sustainable, including WFP's capacity strengthening support for policy discourse, data management, disaster preparedness and the school feeding programme. Several livelihood activities also show a significant likelihood of sustainability. However, issues such as continued insecurity, insufficient attention to the root causes of conflict and the risks related to the reintegration of returnees have limited the contribution of livelihood and resilience initiatives to the durable and safe return of displaced people.
58. The capacity of WFP to sustain the momentum gained through CSP implementation is somewhat at risk owing to the reductions in WFP staff numbers and its field presence. Turnover in senior staff positions also posed challenges in terms of institutional memory at the strategic level for supporting the sustainability of programme outcomes. Continuous investment in knowledge sharing and management is critical.

59. **Conclusion 5: The assessment of needs followed agreed protocols in coordination with the food security sector and using the cadre harmonisé. However, significant numbers of people in need remain without assistance, which is a concern to the entire humanitarian community. Despite the generally effective targeting procedures for food assistance, more robust follow-up could have increased the share of people actually assisted.**
60. Targeting in the northeast was responsive to the needs identified based on the cadre harmonisé, but overall coverage was inadequate. Challenges that fell beyond the immediate control of WFP included funding shortfalls, especially towards the end of 2021. A lack of clarity in the division of responsibility between WFP and other agencies was one of the possible factors in creating some gaps in coverage, while beneficiary tracking and validation mechanisms, including of beneficiaries changing location, have been not systematic.
61. **Conclusion 6: Effective operational management supported by a series of key procedural decisions was responsible for cost-efficient implementation, with streamlined processes and effective oversight and decision making. WFP-supported activities were characterized by timely deliveries and very few post-delivery losses of commodities.**
62. The country office used tools, such as the Global Commodity Management Facility and the DOTS platform, and put in place processes to minimize delays in deliveries and ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Such steps generally produced good results, especially in light of the increased demand on procurement and supply given the increased caseloads.
63. **Conclusion 7: Strong partnerships, including with government authorities, created opportunities to meet important implementation targets.**
64. Partnerships with various government institutions at all levels, donors, other United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector facilitated programme implementation and overall policy dialogue. WFP's efforts to strengthen the capacity of government authorities at all levels were highly appreciated.
65. **Conclusion 8: The CSP's intended shift to a development focus was premature, as reflected in the earmarking of funds primarily for humanitarian purposes. The degree to which the CSP, as a tool, should leave space for a further deterioration of the situation is an issue for reflection. The planned move towards resilience, recovery and stabilization should have been the subject of more in-depth background analysis to guide the setting of realistic goals that fit the context.**
66. WFP based the development of the CSP on an overly optimistic scenario in which food security and nutrition would continue to improve. Continued instability in Nigeria prevented WFP from moving beyond its emergency phase into the development phase and from fully implementing several commitments, including with regard to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Overall, the decision to follow the nexus approach is in line with broader United Nations thinking, but it was overambitious in the evolving context in Nigeria. The triple nexus work that WFP undertook through several livelihood activities has the potential to support peacebuilding elements such as social cohesion at the community level, but the livelihood activities would have benefited from deeper contextual and conflict-sensitive analyses.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Supporting entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 1: In the design of Nigeria’s next country strategic plan, focus on humanitarian challenges, looking at food needs in emergencies, including those in the northeast and northwest, while continuing to pave the way for the transition to a more developmental approach. The next country strategic plan should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ set out a long-term vision based on a thorough conflict analysis and different scenarios, so as to guarantee a higher degree of adaptability to evolving situations; ➤ build on the comparative advantage of WFP in managing large-scale emergency responses and work closely with other humanitarian actors to develop a consolidated advocacy position ensuring sustained attention to the situation in the northeast and northwest, including from donors; ➤ be based on various scenarios with contingency plans, that include ambitious but feasible strategic objectives, especially with regard to following a nexus approach; ➤ give careful consideration to the design of resilience interventions, building on conflict analysis and defining possible steps in promoting peace through food security; ➤ explore the adaptation of the livelihoods strengthening intervention undertaken in the northeast for replication in the northwest, thus contributing to stability; 	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau WFP headquarters: Emergency Operations Division; Nutrition Division; Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Emergencies and Transitions Unit; Livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience Unit Search for Common Ground; other conflict research organizations Cooperating partners United Nations country team Humanitarian country team	High	At start of next CSP preparation process First quarter of 2023

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Supporting entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ensure the consolidation of various activities in order to strengthen the linkages between nutrition and livelihood activities, which will support the improvement of nutrition outcomes; and ➤ ensure that experience and institutional knowledge at the strategic level are maintained in the country office. 					
<p>Recommendation 2: Develop a clear plan aimed at promoting full adherence to humanitarian norms and principles.</p> <p>2.1 Outline in concrete terms how the underlying humanitarian principles will be supported, including through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore the possibility of including reference to the humanitarian principles in agreements with the Government and partners. ➤ Deliver regular and specific training to WFP country office staff, especially as part of the induction process for new staff. <p>2.2. In collaboration with other United Nations and humanitarian entities, continue direct engagement with the Government to advocate and contribute to the negotiation of humanitarian access and conflict-sensitive food security and livelihood programmes that assist social cohesion.</p>	Strategic	Country office	Regional bureau WFP headquarters: Emergency Operations Division; Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Emergencies and Transitions Unit United Nations and humanitarian country teams Government at the federal and state levels Cooperating partners	High	Fourth quarter of 2023

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Supporting entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 3: Incorporate a broader and more proactive approach to addressing protection and accountability to affected populations issues beyond the food distribution process.</p> <p>3.1. Review the areas where WFP can contribute to reducing protection risks and exploring effective partnership with other agencies in order to address the issues identified, including gender-based violence.</p> <p>3.2. Explore what actions WFP can take, in collaboration with other agencies, to enhance access to land, focusing on vulnerable population groups such as women returnees.</p> <p>3.3. Strengthen accountability mechanisms such as timely follow-up on hotline complaints and in-person contact with beneficiaries.</p>	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau WFP headquarters: Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Emergencies and Transitions Service; Gender Office	High/medium	Second quarter of 2024
<p>Recommendation 4: Building on current progress, further develop a set of concrete, actionable measures for addressing gender inequality in the next country strategic plan.</p> <p>4.1. Continue and, where needed, strengthen gender training for cooperating partners.</p> <p>4.2. Building on the country office's gender improvement plan, update the action plan for the gender transformation programme, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ increasing the attention paid to addressing gender-based violence, including specific training for WFP staff; 	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau WFP headquarters: Gender Office United Nations and humanitarian country teams; gender-focused organizations	High/medium	Third quarter of 2023

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Supporting entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ in partnership with other agencies, contributing to advocacy at the state level for the prevention of gender-based violence, leveraging WFP's direct engagement with state authorities; ➤ reinforcing customized gender training for cooperating partners; ➤ reinforcing the gender focal points network with wider and cross-functional participation; and ➤ considering specific training on women's empowerment. <p>4.3. Reflect and follow up on the outcomes of studies of the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic on gender equality.</p>					
<p>Recommendation 5: Improve targeting and monitoring mechanisms in order to further increase their coverage and inclusion of vulnerable population groups.</p> <p>5.1. Work with other agencies and the food security sector on eliminating the gap between the people identified as needing food assistance and those receiving it.</p> <p>5.2. Further clarify and enhance the overall coverage of people in need of food assistance, in cooperation with other agencies and in coordination with the food security sector.</p> <p>5.3. Update the tracking mechanism for beneficiaries who change locations so as to ensure the timely inclusion of eligible beneficiaries in distribution lists.</p>	Operational	Country office	Regional bureau WFP headquarters: Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division	High/medium	Second quarter of 2023

Acronyms

CBT	cash-based transfer
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
GCMF	Global Commodity Management Facility
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal