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Operational matters – Projects approved by correspondence
For information

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Revision of Iraq transitional interim country strategic plan

	Current	Change	Revised
Duration	1 January– 31 December 2018	1 January–30 June 2019	1 January 2018– 30 June 2019
Beneficiaries	845 824	-90 811	755 013
<i>(USD)</i>			
Total cost	216 825 661	53 411 613	270 237 274
Transfer	175 696 373	49 466 630	225 163 003
Implementation	15 722 102	-1 506 142	14 215 960
Adjusted direct support costs	12 173 695	2 191 261	14 364 956
Subtotal	203 592 170	50 151 749	253 743 919
Indirect support costs (6.5 %)	13 233 491	3 259 864	16 493 355

Gender and age marker* 2A

* <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-in-programming/gender-and-age-marker/>

Decision

The Board approved by correspondence the revision of the Iraq transitional interim country strategic plan and corresponding budget increase of USD 53,411,613 outlined in the present document.

8 November 2018

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Rationale

1. WFP's current transitional interim country strategic plan (T-ICSP) for Iraq was approved in 2017 to cover activities from January to December 2018. During this time the Government undertook a national strategic food security review, which will inform the country strategic plan due to be launched in mid-2019. Initial findings of the review indicate some progress has been made in addressing food insecurity and alleviating poverty, and five areas have been identified for further action: improving safety net instruments; enhancing sustainable agricultural production; addressing the double burden of malnutrition; increasing employment especially among young people and women; and reforming marketing, trade and pricing policies.
2. In view of these findings, this revision of the T-ICSP will adjust WFP's engagement in Iraq to facilitate a smooth transition to a long-term country strategy.
3. This six-month extension of the T-ICSP end date from January to June 2019 also provides the opportunity to reconsider the original planning figures calculated in late 2017. When the T-ICSP was approved, it was thought that internally displaced persons (IDPs) would return to their places of origin in large numbers during the first half of 2018 in advance of the May 2018 elections. Actual trends show a slower pace of return. Nationwide, 40 percent of people displaced by the conflict have yet to return to their places of origin.¹ Following the elections on 12 May 2018, the process for selecting a government is still under way and may be protracted. This stagnant political environment could also exacerbate the security situation as elements of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) remain present in the country. In this context, this revision also clarifies WFP activities under the recently adopted United Nations recovery and resilience plan for Iraq for 2018 and 2019 (RRP), focusing on areas where violent extremism may emerge.
4. This revision, therefore, seeks to extend the end date of WFP activities under the T-ICSP from January to June 2019 and to adjust planning figures for several activities in the light of the fluid political and humanitarian situation. These changes may be summarized as follows:
 - *Activity 1:* Extension to June 2019 and revised planning to reflect the slower-than-expected rates of return of IDPs in 2018 and 2019, with a revised activity budget of USD 153,719,657;
 - *Activity 2:* Continuation of the emergency school meals programme for the 2018/19 school year starting in September 2018, with a revised activity budget of USD 35,296,641;
 - *Activity 3:* Extension of the activity into 2019 accompanied by reduction in the number of planned beneficiaries for the remainder of 2018 onwards to reflect the results of a joint vulnerability assessment conducted with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with a revised activity budget of USD 21,437,733;
 - *Activity 4:* Reduction of the activities, focusing on the Tech for Food programme, with a revised activity budget of USD 5,267,508;
 - *Activity 5:* Extension into 2019 and reduction of caseload to more accurately reflect the scope of current resilience activities, with a revised activity budget of USD 45,719,369;
 - *Activity 6:* Extension into 2019 without change in the activity budget of USD 1,220,390; and

¹ Data from the first quarter of 2018. Source: *Return Trends Overview*, Returns Working Group, April 2018.

- *Activities 7-10*: Extension into 2019 with minor changes as highlighted in the following sections, with revised activity budgets of USD 3,658,679; USD 2,318,343; USD 686,802 and USD 912,154, respectively.

Changes

5. WFP's level of support under activity 1 was based on the initial assumption that large numbers of IDPs would return to their places of origin ahead of the 2018 May election. In the lead-up to and after the election, however, overall camp populations were largely static, with some families returning but others taking their places in the camps. The planned caseload for 2018 has therefore been reduced from 780,000 beneficiaries per month to 585,000, while for January-June 2019 the number of planned beneficiaries is 442,000.
6. To oversee camp closure and consolidation in the long term, the Government has established governorate return committees in five governorates. The committees are led by local authorities and include members from the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and are intended to facilitate a principled return process. The effectiveness of such committees, however, may be limited if a central government is not formed soon, and this in turn may limit the potential for a robust return process. Current estimates indicate that camp populations will decrease ahead of the new school year. WFP also expects that as the security situation continues to improve, IDPs may increasingly return to their home areas after the winter. During this time, emergency preparedness and response planning will remain essential because the potential for volatility remains high as indicated above. IDP return rates are influenced by factors such as damaged houses, community tensions and lack of services in their areas of origin. WFP sees the need for more sustainable solutions to support IDPs in their places of displacement. Such solutions could be realized through WFP's resilience-building work.
7. In the first quarter of 2018, under activity 2, WFP implemented an emergency school meals programme in Mosul, reaching 87,000 schoolchildren. Based on the success of this pilot, WFP will support the Ministry of Education in expanding the programme to the most conflict-affected and vulnerable areas in Iraq, including areas where WFP is not currently present. Specific activity modalities, locations and the food basket will be finalized with the Ministry of Education before the school year starts in September 2018. Inaccurate government data on schoolchildren in Mosul limited the reach of the programme in the first quarter; WFP, however, plans to increase the number of beneficiary schoolchildren by expanding the programme to new schools in the 2018/2019 academic year. For January-June 2019, the total number of planned programme beneficiaries is 110,000.
8. WFP will continue to support the most vulnerable Syrian refugees in camps with general food assistance under activity 3. From July 2018, WFP will conduct a targeting exercise with UNHCR in all nine refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This exercise will include a monitoring component for collecting and verifying information related to protection and food security. An initial study – a joint vulnerability assessment (JVA) conducted by WFP and UNHCR in 2017 – found that 13 percent of in-camp refugees were food insecure. The JVA highlighted that refugee households headed by men tended to be more food secure than those headed by women, and that households with a pregnant or lactating woman were more likely to be food insecure. An inter-agency targeting exercise by WFP, UNHCR and NGO partners began in July 2018 with the aim of ensuring that assistance is targeted to those most in need. As the JVA found that only a small number of refugee families were food insecure, food assistance will be scaled back from the current caseload to target those most in need. The planning figures have been adjusted based on this targeting exercise.

9. Activity 4 has been scaled back to focus on just one programme, Tech for Food, given the complexity of this programme and the large number of other actors involved in resilience activities for Syrian refugees. This change has led to a significant reduction in the number of planned beneficiaries. For January–June 2019, the total number of planned beneficiaries is 1,050. Building on the success of the Tech for Food pilot launched in 2017 in Sulaymaniyah, however, WFP is expanding this programme modestly in 2018 to Erbil, Duhok and Mosul and will consider expanding it to other areas of the country to include IDPs and host communities. This approach is intended to promote social cohesion in targeted areas. The programme is aimed at building digital skills among women and men participants to improve their opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. Participants will also receive cash stipends. In the first nine months of the programme, 60 percent of participants were women.
10. The scope of resilience programmes under activity 5 will be reduced because the programmes have been implemented on a smaller scale than planned due to a shortage of partners, continued access issues and the slower-than-expected pace of IDP returns. For January–June 2019, the total number of planned beneficiaries is 86,970. WFP activities have focused on areas to which IDPs are expected to return. WFP's aim to increase its focus on reconstruction efforts in post-conflict areas will be aligned with the RRP, launched at the beginning of 2018. As with activity 4, projects under activity 5 will seek to foster greater social cohesion and gender equality. Gender and protection considerations and consultations with women and men participants will help inform the choice of activities, and WFP will monitor changes in indicators related to time use and participation in activities and decision making of women participants. The RRP has nine components, three of which will be implemented in high-priority communities where violent extremism could re-emerge. WFP's resilience activities focus on pillars 3 and 9 of the RRP (restoring agriculture and water systems and promoting community reconciliation).
11. Under this activity, WFP will also expand its support for social protection efforts. WFP is working with the Ministry of Trade to assist in the modernization of the technology platform for Iraq's public distribution system (PDS) in order to strengthen internal processes and ensure that the right assistance reaches the most vulnerable. The PDS is the largest social safety net in Iraq, and a modernized inter-operable technology platform will ensure that improved food assistance coordination between the PDS, WFP and other partners contributes to achieving a unified social protection registry in line with PDS reform objectives as outlined in the poverty reduction strategy for 2018–2022.
12. For activity 6, WFP will adopt a cross-cutting approach to nutrition-sensitive programming and capacity building for government systems. All WFP activities will incorporate nutrition-sensitive programming into their transfer modalities.
13. The 2018 budgets for the logistics, emergency telecommunications and food security clusters (corresponding to activities 7–9) were adjusted through the first revision of the T-ICSP, in early 2018. In 2019, the food security cluster budget will be reduced again because the cluster coordinator position will be nationalized and because emergency needs have decreased. For the logistics cluster, WFP expects that activities will be reduced based on partner demand, with a special focus on continued coordination, information sharing, capacity building, emergency preparedness and, to a lesser extent than has been the case, the provision of common storage services. The emergency telecommunications cluster will shift away from its traditional activities of providing secure telecommunications and data connectivity to focus on service for communities.

14. Finally, under activity 10, WFP will continue to support the humanitarian community in 2019 by providing SCOPE platform services, helping humanitarian actors to exchange and use information collaboratively and fostering links between the humanitarian sector and government social protection and safety net schemes.

Beneficiary analysis

TABLE 1: FOOD AND CASH TRANSFER BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY										
Strategic outcome	Activity	Current			Increase/decrease			Revised		
		Boys/ men	Girls/ women	Total	Boys/ men	Girls/ women	Total	Boys/ men	Girls/ women	Total
1	1. Provision of general food assistance in the form of regular cash-based transfers or in-kind monthly food entitlements and ready-to-eat rations in the initial phase of displacement	382 604	398 220	780 000	-95 984	-99 901	-195 885	286 620	298 319	584 115
	2. Provision of assistance in schools newly reclaimed and rehabilitated	61 200	58 800	120 000	-5 000	-5 000	-10 000	56 200	53 800	110 000
2	3. Provision of general food assistance to vulnerable refugees	33 670	31 330	65 000	-4 715	-211	-4 926	28 955	31 119	60 074
3	4. Provision of support for resilience and livelihood activities for Syrian refugees	5 180	4 820	10 000	-4 637	-4 313	-8 950	543	507	1 050
	5. Resilience-building through livelihood activities and social protection to support the food-insecure	76 500	73 500	150 000	-31 824	-31 206	-63 030	44 676	42 294	86 970
Total		416 274	429 550	845 824				371 775	383 238	755 013

Transfers

15. The overall strategy for transfers under activity 1 is unchanged from the original T-ICSP. WFP was initially providing relief assistance to 781,000 IDPs residing in camps through in-kind food assistance (530,000) and cash-based transfers (251,000). Beneficiaries of cash-based transfers (CBTs) receive their monthly entitlements through mobile money transfer and SCOPE cards. To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme, WFP will scale up the use of CBTs wherever appropriate. Starting from July 2018, an additional 50,000 people in Anbar, Duhok, Sulaymaniyah and Diyala camps will be moved from in-kind assistance to CBTs. This means that from January to June 2019 the number of beneficiaries receiving assistance will fall to 442,000, of whom 240,000 will receive in-kind assistance and 202,000 CBTs. Transfers under activity 2 are likely to continue in the form of school meals consisting of bread, fruit, cheese and water, and potentially a date bar following the success of the Mosul pilot. Transfers under activities 3–5 will continue to be CBTs. The Government has indicated that in the new school year it would like transfers for school meals to be expanded to new areas and to be discontinued in Mosul.

	Strategic outcome 1			Strategic outcome 2		Strategic outcome 3	
	Activity 1		Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5	
Beneficiary type	IDPs			School-children	Syrian refugees	Syrian refugees	Returnees
Modality	In-kind (FFR)	In-kind (IRR)	CBTs	CBTs	CBTs	CBTs	CBTs
Cereals	333						
Pulses	66						
Oil	30						
Salt	5						
Sugar	33						
Canned chicken		80					
Canned beans		80					
Canned chickpeas		80					
Biscuits		107					
Dates		80					
Cash (<i>USD/person/day</i>)			0.57	1.07	0.63	0.63	0.57
Number of feeding days	30	3	30	20	30	30	30

Abbreviation: FFR = family food ration; IRR = immediate response ration

Food type/cash-based transfers	Total (<i>mt</i>)	Total (<i>USD</i>)
Cereals	50 952	20 410 344
Pulses	10 102	10 000 899
Oil and fats	4 592	4 683 791
Other	6 722	3 993 608
Total (food)	72 368	39 088 642
Cash-based transfer	-	110 008 310
Total (food and cash-based transfer value)	72 368	149 096 952

Supply chain

16. No significant changes to supply chain modalities are expected under this revision. Under the current arrangements, commodities for family food rations are procured from Turkey on FCA (free carrier) terms and transported by the WFP country office to the main hub established in Erbil. They are then transferred as needed around the country as overland and to Baghdad as inland. The immediate response rations (IRRs) are locally procured with DAP (delivered at place) delivery to Erbil and Baghdad. This set-up has proven to be the most viable and cost-efficient. The country office will, however, continue to maintain alternative corridors through Iran and Jordan as a contingency. One possible challenge is the implementation of a new customs clearance procedure at the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing, given changes in the authorities at the crossing.

Other considerations

17. The country office has encountered some challenges in mobilizing resources in 2018, especially for the IDP response, given competing emergencies in the region and elsewhere, Iraq's perceived emergence from conflict, uncertainty over the formation of a new government and challenges in determining how many IDPs are returning. Funding for the T-ICSP stands at 74 percent of the budget, thanks in large part to a significant carryover from 2017. With estimated projections, overall funding for the country office will be in line with the average of 72 percent of resources mobilized between 2014 and 2017.

Cost breakdown

	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 2/ SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 2/ SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 8/ SDG Target 17.16	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Strategic outcome 4	Strategic outcome 5	
Focus area	Crisis response	Crisis response	Resilience-building	Resilience-building	Crisis response	
Transfer	60 070 972	-1 885 476	-7 675 185	328 325	-1 372 007	49 466 630
Implementation	3 027 283	-328 230	-4 224 447	32 500	-13 249	-1 506 142
Adjusted direct support costs						2 191 261
Subtotal						50 151 749
Indirect support costs (6.5%)						3 259 864
Total						53 411 613

	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 2/ SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 2/ SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 8/ SDG Target 17.16	Total
	Strategic outcome 1	Strategic outcome 2	Strategic outcome 3	Strategic outcome 4	Strategic outcome 5	
Focus area	Crisis response	Crisis response	Resilience-building	Resilience-building	Crisis response	
Transfer	158 864 345	20 872 651	38 372 809	983 536	6 069 662	225 163 003
Implementation	8 571 101	2 783 982	2 121 795	97 500	641 581	14 215 960
Adjusted direct support costs	10 044 645	1 418 709	2 434 381	64 870	402 351	14 364 956
Subtotal	177 480 092	25 075 343	42 928 985	1 145 906	7 113 593	253 743 919
Indirect support costs (6.5%)	11 536 206	1 629 897	2 790 384	74 484	462 384	16 493 355
Total	189 016 298	26 705 240	45 719 369	1 220 390	7 575 977	270 237 274

Acronyms used in the document

CBT	cash-based transfer
IDP	internally displaced person
IRR	immediate response ration
JVA	joint vulnerability assessment
NGO	non-governmental organization
PDS	public distribution system
RRP	United Nations recovery and resilience plan for Iraq for 2018 and 2019
T-ICSP	transitional interim country strategic plan
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees