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Management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Zimbabwe (2017–2021)

Background

1. This document presents the management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Zimbabwe (2017–2021).
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, the efficiency with which the CSP was implemented and the factors explaining WFP's performance.
3. The evaluation was conducted through a mixed-method process, drawing on multiple sources of evidence and taking a utilization-focused and consultative approach. It served the dual purpose of accountability and learning.
4. The evaluation team made five recommendations: two strategic and three operational in nature. There are also 20 sub-recommendations, which elaborate on how each overall recommendation can be implemented.
5. The response sets out whether WFP management agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with each evaluation recommendation and sub-recommendation. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ZIMBABWE (2017–2021)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation or sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Overall deadline: June 2024</p> <p>1. Refine WFP’s strategic focus on the core areas of its comparative advantages in Zimbabwe and improve and simplify the organization of the strategic outcomes and activities of the new country strategic plan around those focal areas.</p>	Country Director	Agreed			
1.1 While continuing to focus on crisis response and resilience building, carefully and periodically (during country strategic plan formulation) reassess the case for continued support for addressing root causes, such as increasing overall agricultural production and improving long-term nutrition. (June 2022)	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	Agreed	1. WFP will integrate crisis response and resilience into the new CSP by June 2022 and will reassess the case for continuing to address root causes during the CSP mid-term review in 2024.	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	June 2022 (with reassessment by June 2024)
1.2 Maintain responsibility for complementing the Government’s provision of humanitarian food assistance and emergency nutrition to crisis-affected rural and urban populations and refugees, including by strengthening the capacity of national institutions and programmes to address food crises. Continue to provide common logistics services to support partners on a cost recovery basis. (June 2022)	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	Agreed	2. The new CSP will incorporate effective actions for coordination, development and complementarity with national and subnational institutions and will continue to provide for supply chain services at cost. Capacity strengthening activities will enhance the ability of the Government to respond to food crises.	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	June 2022

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1.3 Consolidate activities that contribute to resilience building under a unified strategic outcome with the aim of understanding the most effective and context-specific mix of interventions for building resilience, including food assistance for assets activities and the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative. (June 2022)	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	Agreed	3. WFP proposes to consolidate nutrition-sensitive rural resilience building activities into one strategic outcome in the new CSP.	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	June 2022
1.4 Review the objectives and activities related to supporting nutrition, assessments (including the three-pronged approach) and local procurement. Where these primarily support the implementation of other country strategic plan activities, reclassify them as services – rather than as stand-alone activities – in order to simplify management and financing. (June 2022)	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	Agreed.	4. WFP has identified key areas of action, including nutrition, to be mainstreamed throughout the new CSP. Assessments will be integrated into a capacity strengthening activity focused on informed national and subnational zero hunger decision making, planning and budgeting. Selected assessments will be integrated into activities when relevant to the specific focus of each activity. Local procurement will be an integral part of food transfer activities when relevant.	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	June 2022

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<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Overall deadline: December 2022</p> <p>2. Develop an enhanced strategy for reducing reliance on humanitarian assistance through supporting the Government in delivering on its responsibility to provide social assistance and increase community resilience.</p>	Country Director	Partially agreed			
2.1 Review national food insecurity needs assessments to identify overlaps and challenges in current assessment methods and use the results of the review to persuade the Government and other partners to adopt a unified and strengthened approach. (February 2022)	Country office head of programme (regional bureau research, assessment and monitoring and vulnerability assessment and mapping staff)	Partially agreed. The country office does not recognize overlap as a challenge; there is complementarity among analytical frameworks. Management therefore only partially agrees with the recommendation.	1. WFP will review the protocols for the national rural and urban needs assessments carried out by the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee and will identify challenges and areas for improvement in implementation and related analytical frameworks. It will raise these issues with the Government and other member organizations of the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, and will offer and advocate specific solutions and improvements for further strengthening of assessment approaches.	Country office head of vulnerability analysis and mapping	December 2022

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			2. WFP will continue to advocate the adoption of Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis in Zimbabwe and will provide technical and financial support for IPC analysis if and when implemented in Zimbabwe.	Country office head of vulnerability analysis and mapping	December 2022
2.2 Building on current efforts, identify opportunities to provide enhanced technical assistance to the national social assistance systems in areas such as registration, targeting and beneficiary selection, determination of levels of assistance, selection of transfer modalities and mechanisms and monitoring. (June 2022)	Country office head of programme (regional bureau social protection lead)	Agreed	3. WFP will develop a country strategy for identifying opportunities to enhance the technical assistance it provides to the Government in areas such as registration, beneficiary selection and payment platforms. New areas of technical assistance, such as case management, monitoring and evaluation, support for a central registry, and transfer modalities, will be added to the new CSP, which will include a dedicated activity aimed at building capacities for national, nutrition-sensitive shock-responsive social protection and emergency preparedness planning.	Country office head of programme	June 2022

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2.3 Examine the feasibility of establishing a joint safety net programme in partnership with the Government and its development partners, including donors and the World Bank, drawing inspiration from similar programmes elsewhere in Africa, to channel and coordinate government, humanitarian and developmental assistance to crisis-affected populations at scale. (December 2022)	Country Director (regional bureau social protection lead)	Partially agreed. Relations between the Government of Zimbabwe and its development partners and international financial institutions currently face challenges. Direct funding and support for the Government are limited owing to existing sanctions and restrictions on international financing and loans. The opportunities to draw from experience in similar countries are therefore limited. However, WFP will work with the Government, development partners, international financial institutions to strengthen national programmes where possible. The country office therefore only partially agrees with the recommendation.	4. WFP will continue to work in close coordination with the Government and development partners on aligning its humanitarian programmes with the nascent social protection portfolio of the Government in order to avoid duplication of efforts and promote a consistent approach to targeting, delivery and measurement of results. WFP will continue to contribute to the strengthening of national safety net programmes.	Country office head of programme	December 2022

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2.4 Explore increased inter-agency coordination in the programming of resilience building activities, including with the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund. Specific objectives should include to increase the scale of synergies with, and potential graduation from, the food and cash assistance provided by WFP and, in the longer term, to establish the foundations for the coordinated incorporation of resilience activities into a potential joint safety net programme. (June 2022)	Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme (regional bureau resilience lead)	Agreed	5. WFP will explore avenues for increased engagement with other United Nations bodies – including the United Nations Children’s Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme – in the implementation of programmes that link humanitarian and resilience building activities, and will focus on a layered approach that facilitates the graduation of beneficiaries from assistance.	Country office head of programme	Integration into the new CSP by June 2022, with coordinated implementation during the next CSP cycle (2022–2026)
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Overall deadline: June 2023</p> <p>3. Invest in building the necessary capacities, skills and attitudes to create, access, retain and share knowledge generated under the country strategic plan to achieve zero hunger. Use this knowledge both internally, to improve performance, and externally, to persuade partners (including the Government and its development partners) to replicate and scale up successful innovations.</p>	Country Director	Agreed			

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3.1 Invest further in the capacity of the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa to support knowledge management processes. Appoint a knowledge management focal point at a sufficiently senior level in the country office. (December 2022)	Regional Director and Country Director	Agreed	1. Through a recent organizational alignment exercise, the country office has identified knowledge management as a critical area requiring increased capacity. Efforts are under way to integrate vulnerability analysis and mapping and monitoring and evaluation capacities into an adjusted research, assessment and monitoring approach that includes knowledge management. When implementation of the new organizational structure starts, a focal point will be assigned to ensure that these efforts continue under the new CSP.	Country Director	December 2022

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3.2 Develop a knowledge management plan and system for capturing, storing and disseminating relevant information internally and externally. Include evidence to support internal decision-making in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency and evidence for the purpose of advocacy with external stakeholders. Pay specific attention to the gathering of robust evidence on the effectiveness and economic returns of resilience building interventions and strengthened conflict and gender analysis. (December 2022)	Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme (regional bureau resilience, gender and humanitarian staff and protection officer)	Agreed	2. The country office will develop a knowledge management plan for the new CSP that is consistent with the knowledge management priorities of headquarters and the regional bureau and with emerging national and local interests.	Country office head of vulnerability analysis and mapping and head of monitoring and evaluation	December 2022
			3. The country office will develop a knowledge management system for capturing, storing and disseminating relevant information internally and externally.	Country office head of vulnerability analysis and mapping and head of monitoring and evaluation	December 2022
3.3 Explore how the evaluation function could enhance its contribution to learning and knowledge management. Include a costed multi-year strategic evaluation agenda, to be defined within the first six months of the country strategic plan cycle, that clearly identifies learning needs and a rational sequencing of different types of evaluations, including centralized and decentralized evaluations. Explicitly design the evaluation agenda to complement programme monitoring and ensure a regular flow of information for decision making throughout the country strategic	Deputy Country Director (regional bureau evaluation officer, headquarters Office of Evaluation)	Agreed	4. In collaboration with stakeholders, WFP will identify learning and knowledge management needs with a view to optimizing synergies with external evaluation and monitoring activities.	Country office head of monitoring and evaluation	December 2022
			5. WFP will define a costed strategic evaluation plan that complements the flow of monitoring information for decision making.	Country office head of monitoring and evaluation	December 2022
			6. WFP will commission two decentralized evaluations during implementation of the new CSP.	Country office head of monitoring and evaluation	June 2025

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plan cycle and prepare it in dialogue with key stakeholders, including national counterparts, the United Nations country team and donors, in order to optimize synergies with external evaluation and monitoring activities. (June 2022)			7. The regional bureau evaluation unit will prepare summaries of relevant evaluation evidence to inform the implementation of CSP interventions.	Regional bureau evaluation unit (country office head of monitoring and evaluation)	December 2022
3.4 Conduct stakeholder mapping and analysis, to be completed by the time the next country strategic plan is adopted, in order to identify partnerships with relevant actors – including academic institutions – that can contribute to the implementation of the knowledge-management plan. (June 2022)	Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme	Agreed	8. WFP will conduct a stakeholder mapping and analysis exercise to identify new partners that can contribute to strengthening of the country office's knowledge management approach and that is aligned with the goals of the CSP.	Country office head of vulnerability analysis and mapping and head of monitoring and evaluation (country office head of programme)	December 2022
3.5 Include explicit strategies, timelines and monitoring and evaluation frameworks in all pilot activities to support taking pilots to scale, with explicit arrangements for sharing knowledge with the Government of Zimbabwe and other partners, and put monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management plans in place by the middle of the next country strategic plan cycle. (June 2023)	Country office head of programme	Agreed	9. WFP will ensure that all pilot activities are planned with a clear learning strategy for informing future scale-up. The country office will promote a sector-wide knowledge management approach with the involvement of the Government, other United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and academia.	Country office head of programme (country office head of vulnerability analysis and mapping and head of monitoring and evaluation)	June 2024

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Priority: Medium Overall deadline: June 2023 4. Deepen WFP’s strategic and operational partnerships with a range of actors for planning and delivery of the country strategic plan.	Country Director	Agreed			
4.1 Include partnership arrangements in the new country strategic plan, within the first year of country strategic plan implementation. Deepen and strengthen WFP’s partnerships with other United Nations entities and the World Bank, in areas of complementary expertise, including social protection, resilience building and nutrition. (June 2022)	Country Director and Deputy Country Director	Agreed	1. WFP will integrate partnership arrangements into the new CSP and will implement them in the first year of CSP implementation. The new partnership action plan outlines the key actions for strategic partnerships envisaged under the new CSP.	Country office head of programme	December 2022
4.2 Explore the use of multi-year strategic agreements with partners. Agreements should outline long-term objectives and proposed activities while being complemented by annual budget negotiations, subject to the availability of funds. In addition, continue to campaign for multi-year funding from donors to facilitate multi-year agreements with partners. (December 2022)	Deputy Country Director and country office head of programme	Agreed	2. WFP will formulate multi-year strategic agreements with partners where appropriate, while maintaining field-level agreements for operational cooperation.	Country office head of programme (Legal Office, Contractual and Constitutional Law Branch)	December 2022 (this is a continuing process)
			3. WFP will continue to work with donors to secure multi-year funding.	Country office head of external relations	December 2022 (this is a continuing process)

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4.3 Deepen partnerships with other United Nations entities under the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and with the World Bank to assess gaps in the capacity of national institutions and contribute to coordinated capacity strengthening plans. (June 2023)	Country office head of programme and country office management	Agreed	4. WFP will collaborate closely with other United Nations bodies and the World Bank under the strategic direction of the new United Nations sustainable development corporation framework, its four pillars and cross-cutting priorities, and within the United Nations country team, the performance management tool and other associated platforms with a view to identifying national capacity gaps and addressing them through coordinated action.	Deputy country director and country office head of programme	June 2023
Priority: Medium Overall deadline: December 2022 5. Support and encourage results-based management with improved monitoring, evaluation and accountability in order to improve internal management and enhance transparency and accountability to donors	Country office head of programme	Agreed			

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5.1 Define, track and analyse a comprehensive set of indicators across all country strategic plan activities, including improved indicators for monitoring capacity strengthening, gender-transformative actions and resilience building. Draw on the updated corporate results framework and define and improve supplementary country-specific indicators to ensure full monitoring coverage. (June 2022)	Country office head of programme and regional bureau monitoring officer	Agreed	1. The country office will review its monitoring framework once the new corporate results framework is in place. Stronger emphasis will be placed on the measurement of areas of strategic shift in the new CSP: capacity strengthening, food systems, and gender transformation. As part of this effort, the country office has already engaged in the resilience measurement initiative launched by headquarters.	Country office head of monitoring and evaluation	June 2022
5.2 Review the management structure and responsibilities of the country office programme unit and introduce revised management responsibilities for the start of the new country strategic plan cycle to ensure integrated responsibility for the monitoring of outputs and contribution to outcomes by the relevant managers. (June 2022)	Country office head of programme	Agreed	2. As part of the organizational alignment exercise, and in accordance with the new CSP for 2022–2026, the country office programme unit is reviewing its structure and focusing on increasing the coherence between technical and strategic areas of engagement. The country office will establish within the programme team a dedicated programme support team that will carry out oversight of all output-level results (together with technical teams) and will liaise closely with the monitoring and evaluation unit with	Country office head of programme	December 2022

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			a view to avoiding the duplication of reporting lines and ensuring clear connections between outputs and outcomes. Under the new structure, programme teams will be accountable for outcomes rather than activities. Linkages between the programme and monitoring and evaluation units will be strengthened to ensure integrated planning, sharing of data and utilization of evidence.		
5.3 Strengthen management of cost efficiency through the development of appropriate cost-efficiency metrics, clarification of managerial responsibilities for the regular analysis of cost efficiency and training of country office staff. (December 2022)	Country office head of programme and regional bureau monitoring officer	Agreed	3. The country office is already integrating some elements of cost-efficiency into decision making, such as the use of the import parity form for food procurement. It will increase its use of cost-efficiency analysis for the associated expenses and costs of various transfer modalities to ensure that the most appropriate modality is used. The analysis will be strengthened and updated in accordance with recent corporate guidance and findings related to the transfer modality selection process.	Country office head of budget and programming (country office resource management committee)	December 2022 (this is a continuing process)