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## **Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for India (2019–2023)**

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for India for 2019–2022.<sup>1</sup>
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to inform the preparation of a new CSP.
3. The evaluation was conducted between August 2021 and April 2022 and covered the design of the current CSP, its implementation from January 2019 to November 2021 and WFP activities at the national level and in the states of Kerala, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.
4. The evaluation made three strategic recommendations and three operational recommendations; sub-recommendations describe how each recommendation can be implemented.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> The duration of the CSP was originally from 2019 to 2023 but was reduced by one year through a CSP revision that brought it into line with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) cycle for India. As a result of the reduction there was no mid-term review of the CSP.

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### **Focal points:**

Mr B. Parajuli  
Country Director  
email: [bishow.parajuli@wfp.org](mailto:bishow.parajuli@wfp.org)

Mr J. Aylieff  
Regional Director  
Asia and the Pacific  
email: [john.aylieff@wfp.org](mailto:john.aylieff@wfp.org)

### **Additional country office context**

6. The India CSP for 2019–2022 is focused on enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of government food-based safety nets and supporting national and state level policy and decision making. As recognized by the evaluation, it features WFP in an enabling role built around a comprehensive approach to country capacity strengthening. It is management's understanding that, in that context, the Government plays a leading role. WFP cannot commit on its own to the implementation of some of the evaluation recommendations because they do not recognize the partnership that characterizes WFP's country capacity strengthening approach. For this reason, management agrees only partially with the wording of some of the recommendations and proposes actions based on full recognition of national ownership and leadership.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR INDIA (2019–2023)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<p><b>Priority: High</b></p> <p><b>Deadline: second quarter of 2023</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 1: Consolidate, build on successes and develop medium-term strategies and approaches based on capacity needs assessments for each country strategic plan outcome in the new country strategic plan, integrating innovation and South-South and triangular cooperation into all country strategic plan outcomes.</b></p>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service (PRO-T))	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>No new capacity needs assessments will be conducted for the new CSP.</p>	<p>In the new CSP, innovation and South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) are included in all four CSP outcomes.</p> <p>The country office will continue to explore and scale up technical innovations and SSTC under all CSP outcomes, based on their success in pilots.</p>		
1.1 Remain focused on the three food-based safety nets (Targeted Public Distribution System, the midday meals programme and Integrated Child Development Services).	Country office	Agreed.	Engagement in the three safety nets forms the main pillar of WFP's work in India, so it is ongoing and has been embedded in the new CSP.	Country office management	Completed
1.2 Explore further engagement in the new thematic areas initiated under the country strategic plan by responding to emerging needs for country capacity strengthening in climate change adaptation and resilience building.	Country office (PRO-T)	Agreed.	Develop a detailed strategy and engagement framework for WFP's support for the Government at the system and programme levels in the areas of climate change adaptation, resilience building and disaster risk management.	CSP outcome 4 team (regional bureau, PRO-T)	February 2023

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1.3 Undertake a more systematic exploration and prioritization of technology-based innovations to strengthen government systems.	Country office	Agreed.	Develop a five-year vision of WFP's innovation-based support for government systems.	Country office management	April 2023
1.4 Continue to explore South–South and triangular cooperation as a modality for country capacity strengthening in India and help expand country capacity strengthening and technical assistance to the Government.	Country office	Agreed.	Review and update the existing SSTC framework, which supports the integration of SSTC into all four outcomes in the new CSP.	Country office management (regional bureau and headquarters country capacity strengthening (CCS) and SSTC teams)	January 2023
<b>Priority: High</b> <b>Deadline: fourth quarter of 2023</b> <b>Recommendation 2: Expand country capacity strengthening initiatives across India for greater impact on the Sustainable Development Goal 2 agenda.</b>	Country office	Partially agreed.			

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2.1 Explore and expand WFP engagement in a comprehensive manner in states confronted with food security and nutrition challenges in order to promote government replication and scale-up of successful best practices and innovative models for achieving food security and nutrition.	Country office	Partially agreed. Owing to its understanding of the context, the Government is the lead for CCS efforts. Such work requires engagement with ministries and departments and relies on co-funding from state governments. The comprehensive expansion of CCS efforts depends on the willingness of all state departments to engage and the availability of adequate unearmarked resources for WFP.	Initiate conversations on the expansion of WFP's CCS work to additional states, proceeding only if there is demand from state governments and adequate resources for doing so. a) Based on the vision developed in response to sub-recommendation 1.3, develop a five-year vision of comprehensive state-level engagement in the new CSP, in consultation with the governments of priority states. b) Document best practices for sharing among states.	a) country office management and unit heads  b) Unit heads	September 2023
2.2 Capture the experience and lessons learned from states such as Odisha and Kerala and share them through inter-regional exchanges within India and with international partners through South–South and triangular cooperation.	Country office	Partially agreed. The documentation of experiences with engagement in specific thematic areas (supply chain optimization, rice fortification, etc.) would be more appealing to the central Government than to state governments because the central Government funds schemes in those areas.	Document experiences and lessons learned by subject – rice fortification, the production of take-home rations, optimization of the public distribution system, the development of national evaluation capacity and the mainstreaming of millets. WFP will work with the Government to explore dissemination opportunities.	CSP outcome and activity managers	June 2023

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2.3 Identify a small set of core activities backed up by resources and advocacy that can be replicated across other states.	Country office	Agreed. The activities will depend on state government acceptance. Rice fortification and supply chain optimization activities are already being replicated in additional states.	In the annual performance planning exercise, the country office will identify priority activities for expansion to other states and possible sources of funding for the expansion (the private sector, state co-funding, etc.).	CSP outcome 1, 2 and 3 managers	March 2023
<b>Priority: High</b> <b>Deadline: fourth quarter of 2022</b> <b>Recommendation 3: Step up efforts to integrate and strengthen gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusive approaches.</b>	Country office (regional bureau gender advisor, disability and inclusion advisor, headquarters Gender Office)	Agreed.	WFP's approach to gender and inclusion involves working directly through government programmes and systems and not only through WFP interventions, most of which take the form of technical support and capacity strengthening. However, while management agrees with the main recommendation, the sub-recommendations seem to be focused on WFP as a delivering agency and not an enabling partner to the Government. WFP's actions in response to the sub-recommendations will therefore be modified to reflect the approach that WFP follows in the country.		Fourth quarter of 2023  (Please note that the suggested deadline does not allow for a comprehensive approach to the mainstreaming of gender and inclusion into development work.)

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3.1 Conduct a systematic analysis through all phases of the intervention cycle to identify and anticipate gender and inclusion issues and measures for mitigating them.	Country office	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>Noting the positive evaluation finding that “gender- and inclusion-sensitive approaches and gender analysis informed WFP research and analysis [...] [with a strong] commitment to institutionalizing a gender-transformative agenda” (paragraph 32), management will continue to support the Government in this area.</p> <p>Unlike other WFP operations, there is no specific intervention cycle for CCS work in India. WFP supports and strengthens government programmes, so its main entry points are the conduct of assessments that highlight the specific challenges faced by women, tribal populations and disabled persons and their families in obtaining access to government programmes, because such assessments contribute to the building of an evidence base for policy advocacy.</p>	<p>a) The gender unit will develop and launch training modules on gender and women’s financial inclusion for use by non-governmental organizations, women’s self-help groups and government partners under CSP outcome 3.</p> <p>b) The country office will conduct a tribal study and a disability and inclusion pilot study in Odisha.</p>	<p>a) Gender and inclusion team (country office nutrition team)</p> <p>b) Gender and inclusion team</p>	<p>a ) January 2023</p> <p>b) March 2023 for the tribal study and December 2022 for the pilot study</p>

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3.2 Develop a plan to ensure the systematic involvement of the gender unit in all country strategic plan outcome activity planning, design and implementation as well as in the production of social and behaviour change communication and communication materials.	Country office	Partially agreed. For some technical work, such as supply chain optimization and the introduction of alternative storage facilities for government programmes, the target beneficiaries are government systems and not people, so gender components are not relevant.	Gender considerations are being integrated into work on supply chain strengthening, information, education and communication and data analysis, nutrition, school feeding, women's empowerment, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.  The gender unit will continue to work with the SBCC team to ensure the integration of gender into all materials.	Gender officer (country office nutrition team, CCS team)	N/A
3.3 Fully integrate and communicate gender and inclusion considerations throughout engagement with government entities at all levels and other partners in order to identify and advocate ways to support the inclusion of eligible marginalized and vulnerable groups in food-based government safety net programmes.	Country office	Partially agreed. In principle all vulnerable groups are eligible to benefit from government programmes. However, issues can arise with access to those programmes, which are managed at the state rather than the national level.	Actions in response to this sub-recommendation are ongoing. Please also see the response to sub-recommendation 3.1 on the development and launch of online training modules for government and other partners.	Gender officer (CSP outcome 1 and 2 teams)	January 2023 for training modules



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3.4 Strengthen capacity to design, implement and monitor gender equality and social inclusion and ensure marginalized groups benefit so that no one is left behind.	Country office	Partially agreed. As WFP does not design or implement programmes but instead focuses on strengthening national programmes and systems, the response to this sub-recommendation is linked to the response to sub-recommendation 3.1, through which WFP can raise the awareness of government counterparts and other partners.	Please see the response to sub-recommendation 3.1. WFP will expand its current work on pilots with organizations of persons with disabilities, which is aimed at engaging with the Government to identify and address the barriers faced by persons with disabilities in access to government programmes. WFP will continue its research on tribal groups with a view to supporting the Government in addressing the unique vulnerabilities of those groups.	Gender officer (country office nutrition team)	February 2023 for finalization of the disability pilot June 2023 for completion of the tribal study
<b>Priority: Medium</b> <b>Deadline: First quarter of 2023</b> <b>Recommendation 4: Develop long-term strategic collaboration with stakeholders to support efforts to address food security and nutrition challenges and “leave no one behind”.</b>	Country office	Agreed.	WFP signs state-level memoranda of understanding with the governments of all the states where it has multiple activities. Letters of understanding are signed with state government departments prior to the commencement of any work in states. The agreements called for in the recommendation therefore already exist.		

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			Strategies are useful until WFP's government counterparts change. WFP's work is included in the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF), which provides the necessary strategic alignment with stakeholders.		
4.1 Strengthen collaboration with the central and state governments. In particular, develop a long-term cooperation plan with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, which serves as the lead ministry for the implementation of the country strategic plan; explore and expand direct cooperation with ministries at the national level, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Education; and finalize with state governments state-specific partnership strategies for the new country strategic plan.	Country office	Partially agreed.  In the memorandum of understanding that WFP will sign on approval of the new CSP, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is the lead agency, with convening authority over all other partner ministries, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Ministry of Education. Separate agreements with those ministries are therefore not necessary and would be redundant.	WFP will develop a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.  WFP will conduct state reviews in Rajasthan, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh to inform the development of strategic frameworks for engagement under the new CSP.	Country office management (government partnerships unit, CSP outcome teams)	February 2023 for memorandum of understanding  March 2023 for state reviews and frameworks

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4.2 Strengthen and expand strategic partnerships with non-governmental stakeholders.	Country office	Agreed. Most of WFP's work is with national and state government partners; WFP does not use cooperating partners to implement its work. The country office has a number of strategic and technical partnerships that can be expanded, including with the organizations of persons with disabilities mentioned in the response to sub-recommendation 3.4.	WFP's existing technical partnerships with academic and research organizations (the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, Kurukshetra University and others) will be maintained. The country office will develop new partnerships for work on food fortification and climate change adaptation, tribal studies and disability inclusion, through memoranda of understanding.	Country office heads of units, government partnerships unit	March 2023
4.3 Engage more proactively with other United Nations entities to promote more integrated strategies, enhanced complementary programming and joint fundraising for advancing the Sustainable Development Goal 2 agenda.	Country office	Partially agreed. WFP's work in India is already aligned with that of other United Nations entities under the UNSDCF. WFP led the development of two multi-partner trust fund proposals for the response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in 2020 with the United Nations Development Programme and other entities, but there are few opportunities for joint fundraising in India because there are no pooled funds and no bilateral donors supporting United Nations activities in the	a) During the formulation of the UNSDCF for 2023–2027, WFP is leading the development of outcome 2 (on food and nutrition) and participating in the development of outcomes 4 (prosperity) and 5 (planet). b) WFP will contribute to the integrated support that the United Nations provides to the Government in preparation for India's presidency of the Group of 20.	Country office management	a) Completed  b) December 2023

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		country. WFP participates with other United Nations entities in numerous multi-agency groups on nutrition activities.			
4.4 Build on experience to expand alliances for advocacy and sustained action to better address food insecurity and malnutrition, drawing on WFP-generated evidence, best practices and global experiences.	Country office	Agreed. This sub-recommendation will be addressed through response b) to sub-recommendation 2.1, on the documentation of best practices.	This action is covered by response b) to sub-recommendation 2.1.	Country office management	September 2023
<b>Priority: High</b> <b>Deadline: second quarter of 2023</b> <b>Recommendation 5: Actively pursue existing strategies for mobilizing additional resources to further WFP's work in other geographic and thematic areas.</b>	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division, Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division, Corporate Planning and Performance Division, Corporate Finance Division)	Agreed.			

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5.1 Pursue further opportunities to mobilize additional funding from central government ministries other than the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and to negotiate cost-sharing modalities with state governments.		Partially agreed. Central government ministries will not allocate funds directly to WFP but will instead direct them to state governments, which will use them for cost-sharing with WFP. WFP already works continually on the negotiation of cost-sharing agreements with state government departments. The current CSP is already more than 100 percent funded.	WFP will develop a vision of how it can increase its access to government funds at the state level for each of the four CSP outcomes in the new CSP.	Management, CSP outcome teams	March 2023
5.2 Continue to expand work with the private sector to gain access to corporate social responsibility funds and increase work to obtain grants from international foundations and funds such as the Adaptation Fund, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.	Country office	Agreed. It is unlikely that the country office will enter into financial partnerships with international financial institutions. However, WFP has been successful in obtaining money from certain foundations.	Action on this sub-recommendation is already being taken: the country office is negotiating corporate social responsibility funding and has submitted a joint proposal for funding from the Adaptation Fund with WFP's country office in Sri Lanka.	Country office management, partnerships unit (WFP's Asian Development Bank colleagues)	December 2022

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5.3 If possible, under the next country strategic plan use matching grants from the new fund replacing the Emerging Donor Matching Fund, as has been the practice under the Emerging Donor Matching Fund and the current country strategic plan and explore the possibility of opening new windows to extend financial support from the new fund to lower-middle-income countries like India.	Country office	Agreed. The country office has initiated internal discussions on how best to apply for a matching grant.	WFP plans to seek access to funds from the new fund once it has been launched and the new CSP has been approved.	Country office management, government partnerships	To be decided
5.4 The country office and headquarters should collaborate to adapt the country office financial system to the specific circumstances of WFP operations in India and to ensure that the country office uses resources more efficiently. The circumstances include that most of the funds allocated are obtained through multi-year contributions; the existence of a revolving fund used by the country office to fund its activities subject to replenishment upon the receipt of contributions; the practice of charging a service fee for global support services, which affects the reliability of reported expenditures; and the fact that headquarters, regional bureau and programme	Corporate Finance Division, country office	Agreed. Such an action would be very beneficial.	The country office will discuss the financial system with the Corporate Finance Division and the regional bureau and adapt it accordingly.	Country office management, finance unit (regional bureau, headquarters Corporate Finance Division)	June 2023

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support and administrative funds allocated to the country office are currently reflected in the accounting systems of headquarters and the regional bureau.					
<b>Priority: High</b> <b>Deadline: second quarter of 2023</b> <b>Recommendation 6: The country office, in collaboration with the regional bureau and headquarters, should support the development of immediate and intermediate country capacity strengthening outcome-level indicators for assessing WFP's contribution to country capacity strengthening.</b>	Country office (regional bureau, PRO-T)	Agreed.			
6.1 Develop country-specific immediate and intermediate outcome indicators that better fit the needs of the country office's unique country capacity strengthening portfolio (including South–South and triangular cooperation), with normative guidelines and systems led by headquarters, and remain abreast of the country capacity strengthening indicators that will be developed and piloted as part of the new corporate results framework.	Country office, PRO-T, Office of Evaluation, country office	Agreed. The country office is also interested in working with the Office of Evaluation on adapting the approach to CSP evaluations for CCS operations.	Contribute to the development of new CCS indicators with support and collaboration from the regional bureau and headquarters teams.	Country office management, monitoring and evaluation team (regional bureau, PRO-T)	June 2023

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			The country office is interested in working in a similar way with the Office of Evaluation to adapt their quality assurance system for CSP evaluations of CCS portfolios.	Country office management, monitoring and evaluation team (regional bureau evaluation unit, Office of Evaluation)	June 2023