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Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

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

Background

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 Mauritania for 2019–2023.
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementation and the factors explaining its performance.
3. The evaluation was conducted between April 2021 and April 2022, taking a utilization-focused and consultative approach. It served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informed the preparation of a new CSP for Mauritania.
4. 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. In some instances the country office has agreed to recommendations but has adjusted the proposed timelines for the completion of the related actions. This is largely because at the time the evaluation was being conducted and finalized the CSP was expected to end at the close of 2022. Since then, however, the WFP country office in Mauritania has sought to align the term of the next CSP with the cycle of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) for Mauritania, which starts in 2023, by extending the current CSP by 14 months to cover the period from January 2023 through 28 February 2024.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MAURITANIA (2019–2023)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and units in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and units in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen the combined strategy of adaptive social protection and integrated resilience.</p> <p>1.1 Expand WFP's strategic engagement in social protection to strengthen the Government's vision and leadership and expand the coverage of social protection programmes with a view to strengthening their contribution to shock-response plans and the population's resilience and nutrition. (December 2023)</p>	Country office management and programme unit (Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family; Taazour (national social protection agency))	Agreed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family on the formulation of a new national social protection policy, ensuring that the strategy has clear links to shock-responsive social protection. 2. Work with the Government on the piloting of a digital payment platform for the 2023 lean season response aimed at strengthening government social protection systems, feeding information into those systems and allowing for the real-time tracking of payments to beneficiaries. 3. Expand the track 1 (government-led) implementation of the lean season response, with WFP serving as the technical adviser. 	Country office programme, institutional support and nutrition units, and CSP activity 2 team. (Government agencies, including Taazour, Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family and the food security commission (<i>Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire</i> , or CSA); country office cash-based transfer (CBT), research, assessment and monitoring (RAM), information and communications technology, and procurement units; regional bureau social protection and nutrition units)	December 2023

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			<p>4. Explore the feasibility of providing a cash top-up for nutrition during the 2023 lean season response, working with the Government.</p> <p>5. Work with the Government on the leadership and eventual hand-over of community-based participatory planning activities through capacity building and training and joint community-based participatory planning processes.</p>		
<p>1.2 Support the institutionalization and strategic anchoring of the integrated resilience approach (non-sectoral, territory-based) at the level of national strategic frameworks and the next United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (formerly the United Nations sustainable development partnership framework). (December 2023)</p>	<p>Country office management and programme and partnerships units</p>	<p>Partially agreed. While the country office agrees with this recommendation, its implementation will require time and a “building block” process in collaboration with many other actors. Implementation will</p>	<p>6. Ensure that there is a clear link between integrated resilience building and social protection in the UNSDCF currently being formulated by the Government and United Nations entities.</p> <p>7. Conduct field missions, advocacy visits, regular meetings and learning exchanges with the Ministry of Agriculture and other key</p>	<p>Country office programme unit, resilience and institutional capacity building teams (government agencies including the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Livestock, Taazour, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family, the National Agency of the Great Green Wall and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development;</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

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		be susceptible to interruption and lack of buy-in the event of a shift in government or strategy. Actions will be taken within the deadline and before the start of the new CSP, but will probably extend into the new CSP period and be referred to as part of WFP's programme strategy for the 2024–2028 CSP.	<p>stakeholders as part of efforts to link their work to the national social registry and wider social protection system.</p> <p>8. Engage with other stakeholders (government entities, non-governmental organizations) on strengthening the integrated resilience approach at the <i>wilaya</i> (regional) level.</p> <p>9. Continue to advocate the establishment of a national steering committee for resilience building, anchored in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors.</p>	country office donor relations and RAM units; regional bureau social protection and resilience units)	

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<p>1.3 Maintain a balance between public policy engagement and the capacity to respond to immediate needs in order to put in place sustainable solutions and ensure greater visibility of WFP's actions at the central level. (December 2022)</p>	Country office programme unit (national social registry; regional bureau)	Agreed.	<p>10. In the lean season response continue to follow a twin-track approach that allows for government systems strengthening while also enabling timely humanitarian response.</p> <p>11. Continue to engage with CSA, seconding staff members and providing technical support for data collection and analysis and humanitarian response for the lean season.</p> <p>12. Draft a country office social protection strategy that is focused on overall systems strengthening while emphasizing shock-responsive social protection.</p>	Country office programme unit, lean season CBT team (CSP activity 2), institutional capacity strengthening team (government agencies including Taazour, CSA and the national food and nutrition crisis prevention and response mechanism (<i>Dispositif national de prévention et de réponse aux crises alimentaires et nutritionnelles</i> or DCAN); country office procurement and RAM units; regional bureau social protection and emergency preparedness and response units)	June 2023

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1.4 Continue WFP's commitment to capacity strengthening at the central and decentralized levels. (December 2022)	Country office programme unit (national social registry; regional bureau)	Agreed. This is an ongoing activity in all implementation areas.	<p>13. <i>CSP activity 2</i>: Collaborate with the Government on a twin-track approach to lean season response and continue capacity strengthening for DCAN via secondments, learning visits and training.</p> <p>14. <i>CSP activity 3</i>: Conduct a Systems Approach for Better Education Results exercise with the Ministry of National Education and Reform of the Education System and the Department of Nutrition and Health Education; conduct regional monitoring missions with the Department of Nutrition and Health Education; and formulate a school feeding strategy for the new CSP, with a focus on transferring responsibilities to the Government over the next five years.</p> <p>15. <i>CSP activity 4</i>: Conduct training on nutrition</p>	Country office programme unit, including the institutional capacity strengthening, resilience and CBT (activity 2) teams (government agencies including Taazour, CSA, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the National Agency of the Great Green Wall; country office RAM and finance units; regional bureau social protection, resilience and RAM units)	December 2023

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			<p>screening with the Government and for government workers; cultivate stronger links between severe and moderate acute malnutrition treatment programmes via capacity strengthening with the Government; develop a nutrition treatment and prevention strategy for the country office, focusing on social and behaviour change communication and taking the new CSP into consideration. Explore ways of investing in the local production of specialized nutritious foods.</p> <p>16. <i>CSP activity 5</i>: Continue to conduct community-based participatory planning at the regional and local levels, working with the Government; establish clearer linkages between food assistance for assets and social protection; host</p>		

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			<p>“bootcamps” and other training events (for example, on the use of drones and satellite imagery) with regional and national counterparts.</p> <p>17. <i>CSP activity 6</i>: Develop an overall social protection policy for the country office that integrates capacity strengthening and training with a host of ministries involved in social protection (e.g., environment, health, family affairs).</p> <p>18. Evaluate, and develop a roadmap for ways of strengthening national and regional food security analysis and early warning skills, supply chain and commodity management, digitization and the overall market system.</p>		

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2022 Recommendation 2: Ensure greater consideration of cross-cutting issues. 2.1 <i>Gender</i>: operationalize the shift from an integrative to a transformative approach.</p>	Country office gender officer (national crisis prevention and management system; regional bureau)	Agreed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a gender analysis of all CSP programme activities as part of the new CSP formulation process. Aim to identify specific programmes and interventions that actively challenge gender norms, promote women's occupation of positions of influence and address power inequities between individuals of different genders. 2. Seek opportunities to include gender-transformative activities in food assistance, particularly in assets and nutrition activities. 	Country office gender officer and programme unit (deputy country director; regional bureau gender unit)	December 2023
<p>2.2 <i>Accountability</i>: strengthen accountability and feedback to stakeholders to increase buy-in.</p>	Country office gender officer (regional bureau)	Agreed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Strengthen the toll-free telephone hotline by incorporating a mechanism for real-time feedback and strengthening the follow-up and tracking mechanisms (including data visualizations to allow for easier tracking 	Country office RAM unit with support from the programme unit and the service provider for the community feedback mechanism call centre (country office information and communications technology team and programme unit; global SugarCRM team)	December 2023

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			<p>of the status of feedback provided).</p> <p>4. Ensure that the system for community feedback and response mechanisms allows the closure of feedback loops (through channels that include group presentations and personal calls).</p> <p>5. Evaluate whether other community feedback and response mechanisms require strengthening and make programmatic adjustments accordingly.</p> <p>6. Strengthen process, output and outcome monitoring systems as part of the overall beneficiary monitoring system.</p>		
2.3 <i>Environment</i> : ensure greater consideration of environmental issues in the implementation of WFP interventions.	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed.	7. Work with the regional bureau to explore the feasibility of carrying out environmental assessments (or a light version of environmental assessment), particularly with regard to	Country office programme unit/head of programmes and resilience team; headquarters environmental team; regional bureau resilience unit	December 2023

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			<p>food assistance for assets activities.</p> <p>8. Consider relaxing conditions for lean season responses, focusing on green and climate-smart initiatives (such as tree planting).</p>		
<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2022 Recommendation 3: Review the strategy for assisting refugees and host communities based on the comparative advantages of stakeholders, including local communities.</p> <p>3.1 Strengthen the deployment of sustainable solutions.</p>	<p>Country office (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development; national social register; Tekavoul (national social protection programme), Taazour; local communities; United Nations country team)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>1. Employ a tighter targeting strategy that allows for the identification of more diverse funding opportunities, notably with regard to durable solutions and resilience-building as an exit from humanitarian work for refugees living within the camp and classified as being in group 2, refugees outside the camp and host community members; identify strategic partnerships for the provision of training and income-generating support (with, for example, the German Agency for International Cooperation and UNHCR).</p>	<p>Country office programme unit, Bassikounou sub-office programme unit, country office resilience unit (WFP cooperating partner(s) (to be identified); Taazour; UNHCR; national social registry; camp management committee)</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

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			2. Endeavour to introduce formal financial inclusion activities in the refugee camp, including literacy training.		
3.2 Strengthen WFP's positioning and capacity in regard to protection and humanitarian access issues and better calibrate interventions to the constraints.	Country office (regional bureau; headquarters)	Agreed.	3. Train WFP staff and cooperating partners in high-risk areas on humanitarian access and safety issues. 4. Ensure that a dedicated focal point is in place at each sub-office and in the country office and that the focal points are able to deal with both office-specific and programme-related protection concerns. 5. Promote opportunities for learning about protection and protection mainstreaming within the country office's programmes.	Country office and sub-office focal points (United Nations prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse committee; WFP cooperating partners; Department of Safety and Security; UNHCR; country office security focal point, head of programmes, programme unit; regional bureau protection unit)	December 2023

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2022 Recommendation 4: Strengthen the impact of the integrated resilience package. 4.1 Strengthen the operationalization of synergies between the activities of the integrated resilience package.</p>	Country office resilience unit, sub-offices (including resilience focal points) (UNICEF; regional bureau; international non-governmental organizations)	Agreed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a limited restructuring of the country office programme unit to enhance support for the coordinated approach. 2. Regularly update the mapping of the integrated resilience package to ensure optimum programme overlap. 3. Develop a joint monitoring checklist for all integrated resilience activities and appoint one partner to be responsible for joint monitoring, including with the creation of data visualizations that enhance the country office's ability to present data in a user-friendly format. 4. Conduct advocacy and fundraising for the overall integrated resilience package (as opposed to individual activities). 5. Develop synergy among all the programme activities 	Country office programme, resilience, donor relations and RAM units (WFP cooperating partners; country office and sub-offices; regional bureau resilience and donor relations units; government entities including prefects, mayors, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and the National Agency of the Great Green Wall)	December 2023

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			that support resilience (CSP activities 1–5) so as to promote cross-cutting social protection (through joint planning, resource sharing, the use of convergence zones, joint assessment, etc.).		
4.2 Strengthen the sustainability of the integrated resilience package at the regional, departmental, community and activity levels, in conjunction with efforts at the national level.	Country office resilience unit, activity managers and sub-offices (including resilience focal points) (international non-governmental organizations)	Agreed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Develop an evidence-based transition (phase-out) strategy with clearly defined metrics for ensuring a sustainable hand-over. 7. Continue to conduct community-based participatory planning, engaging all key stakeholders at the local and regional levels and using the results to develop effective sustainability and hand-over strategies. 8. Identify funding opportunities for integrated resilience activities implemented by the Government with technical support from WFP. 	Country office programme unit, food assistance for assets team (country office and sub-offices)	December 2024

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			9. Conduct learning visits and exchanges, presentations, etc. aimed at ensuring that national-level government staff are aware of integrated resilience activities and able to link them to their own programmes and those of decentralized government units.		
4.3 Strengthen the generation of quantitative and qualitative evidence related to the integrated resilience package and its components.	Country office RAM unit (UNICEF; other international organizations; actors engaged in resilience support; regional bureau)	Agreed.	10. Generate qualitative and quantitative evidence that demonstrates the outcomes and impacts of the integrated resilience package, including the value of each activity (through, for example, an attribution analysis, case studies, fact sheets or other studies). 11. Establish evidence that demonstrates the link between the implementation of WFP's integrated resilience package and a reduction in humanitarian assistance.	Country office RAM unit with support from the programme unit, integrated resilience teams; UNICEF; country office partnerships unit (country office and sub-offices; government offices including the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the National Agency of the Great Green Wall, the Ministry of Agriculture and CSA; regional bureau RAM, resilience and partnerships units)	December 2023

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<p>Priority: High Deadline: December 2022 Recommendation 5: Strengthen national policy support for school feeding and the management of acute malnutrition. 5.1 Strengthen WFP's support for the Government in the operationalization of the national school feeding programme and demonstrate the effects of school feeding.</p>	Country office (Ministry National Education and Reform of the Education System; Counterpart International; regional bureau)	Agreed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a country office school feeding strategy that defines how WFP can best support the Government in strengthening the national policy. 2. Consider hiring a short-term consultant who can be seconded to the Ministry National Education and Reform of the Education System to provide support for the drafting of an updated school feeding strategy that supports the operationalization of the school feeding programme and is in line with the school meals coalition established in conjunction with the 2021 United Nations food systems summit. 3. Support DCAN's nutrition strategy by revitalizing the nutrition technical committee through regular meetings, advocacy, etc.). 	Country office programme and school meals units. (Ministry National Education and Reform of the Education System; Counterpart International; regional bureau school meals, nutrition and programme units)	December 2024

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5.2 Review WFP's strategy on moderate acute malnutrition and the related strategic partnerships to ensure effective implementation.	Country office (CSA; UNICEF; Ministry of Health)	Agreed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Develop a country office nutrition treatment and prevention strategy with clear links between severe and moderate acute malnutrition initiatives. 5. Consider seconding a consultant to CSA for the coordination of emergency nutrition activities. 	Country office programme and nutrition units (Ministry of Health, CSA, Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family, Taazour, Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Promotion of Productive Sectors; UNICEF; global task team for nutrition; regional bureau nutrition and programme units)	December 2024

Acronyms

CBT	Cash-based transfer
CSA	<i>Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire</i> (food security commission)
CSP	country strategic plan
DCAN	<i>Dispositif national de prévention et de réponse aux crises alimentaires et nutritionnelles</i> (national food and nutrition crisis prevention and response mechanism)
RAM	research, assessment and monitoring
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework