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## Summary report on the evaluation of WFP's policy on building resilience for food security and nutrition

### Executive summary

The evaluation of the 2015 WFP policy on building resilience for food security and nutrition (hereinafter, the “resilience policy”) was initiated in 2021.

Overall, the evaluation found that the policy provides a high-level overview of WFP's vision for and engagement in resilience programming, with a strong focus on integrated programming. The policy contains a relevant definition of resilience, but practice has since evolved to encompass anticipatory capacity, and the terminology used alongside the definition is ill-defined and confusing. The policy's main limitations are its lack of an accountability framework, failure to assign roles and responsibilities for policy implementation and absence of financial and human resources for implementation, the last of which has held back the systematic uptake of the policy.

Most resilience programmes align, to some extent, with the principles underlying the resilience policy design. Where integrated resilience programming is evident, it is driven largely by country offices' previous experience, senior management's preferences, the political and climate-related conditions in the relevant region or country and the funding priorities of the national government and donors. In many of the countries reviewed resilience programming is seen as a set of activities rather than an intermediate outcome for the whole of WFP. In emergency settings there is a tendency to view resilience-building work on the ground as part of livelihoods work, rather than to integrate resilience thinking into emergency response and humanitarian programming.

WFP's corporate reporting and monitoring systems are not set up to capture WFP's resilience achievements effectively, although efforts are being made to develop and improve resilience measurement. Where data are available, resilience-focused activity areas, as measured by relevant

*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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indicators from the corporate results framework, show some positive results, in particular in the strengthening of absorptive capacity.

WFP is recognized as a nimble humanitarian response organization. There is strong evidence that resilience programmes are designed in response to their context, and there are some good isolated examples of the adaptive management of resilience programmes, but there is insufficient evidence to conclusively reveal the extent to which resilience programming has been adapted to evolving circumstances.

Many of the factors that explain the current performance in implementing the policy are internal. They relate to management buy-in, staffing and the emergency focus and culture of WFP. Important external factors are donor influence and WFP's relationship with the other Rome-based agencies.

Since 2020 WFP, including senior management, has done much work to guide the implementation of the policy. That work includes the institutional anchoring of resilience and the development and piloting of guidance.

Although funding for resilience has increased steadily since 2015, it tends to come from a narrow set of donors via short-term earmarked funding that is not conducive to mid- to long-term resilience programming; there has, however, been some progress in recent years.

Despite a lack of direct support from the resilience policy, the evidence shows the significant efforts that WFP is making at the country level to engage with civil society, national governments and the private sector.

The added value of resilience in bridging humanitarian response and long-term interventions is well embedded in corporate frameworks, and WFP is making promising progress towards the establishment of integration processes at the humanitarian–development nexus, which also support resilience programming and vice-versa. However, those processes are undermined by the continued “siloing” of work and the tendency to dichotomize humanitarian and development work – “saving lives” and “changing lives” – into separate strands; this is also affected by donor earmarking of contributions. The operationalization of resilience work along the humanitarian–development–peace continuum remains challenging, including with regard to peace.

The evaluation makes five strategic and operational recommendations, which include updating the resilience policy and developing a costed policy implementation plan. Other recommendations relate to the development of guidance and the promotion of shared ownership of resilience building throughout the organization, promoting flexible and multi-year funding; monitoring, evaluation and learning; staffing capacity and skills; and complementary and effective partnerships.

## **Draft decision\***

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of WFP's policy on building resilience for food security and nutrition (WFP/EB.A/2023/7-D) and management response (WFP/EB.A/2023/7-D/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.

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\* 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 WFP's policy on building resilience for food security and nutrition (hereinafter, the "resilience policy"),<sup>1</sup> approved in 2015, assesses the quality and results of the policy and the factors that enabled or hindered progress in its implementation.
2. The evaluation builds on the formative strategic evaluation of WFP's support for enhanced resilience (2019). It also complements the concurrent evaluation of WFP's policies on disaster risk reduction and management – building food security and resilience (2011) and climate change (2017).
3. The primary audience for the evaluation is the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, which comprises the Resilience and Food Systems Service as the policy owner and various thematic units and divisions responsible for gender, nutrition, school-based programmes, social protection, climate and disaster risk reduction, to each of which the resilience policy established clear programmatic links, as well as the regional bureaux, country offices, the WFP Executive Board and senior management.
4. The evaluation covers the period from 2015 to 2022, emphasizing the period from 2017 to 2022. Primary and secondary data collection and analysis took place between July and September 2022 at the global, regional and country levels and included:
  - document and literature review;
  - retrospective construction of the theory of change underlying the policy;
  - field missions in Burkina Faso, Honduras, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mozambique and South Sudan;
  - desk reviews covering Kenya, Malawi, the Niger, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Yemen, four of which were carried out as "desk reviews plus", combining document review and selected interviews;
  - key informant interviews and focus group discussions with WFP staff at headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices and with governments, donors, academic institutions and employees from other United Nations entities; and
  - a review of comparable organizations: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Oxfam International and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.
5. The evaluation conformed to WFP and United Nations Evaluation Group ethical guidelines, and gender considerations were taken into account throughout.

### Context

6. Resilience is considered in global policy agendas and frameworks as a critical step towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup> and the sustaining peace agenda.<sup>3</sup> Prior to 2015 a number of global milestones in resilience set the scene for resilience policy development, notably the 2005 United Nations Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015 and the establishment of the Climate Investment Funds in 2008.

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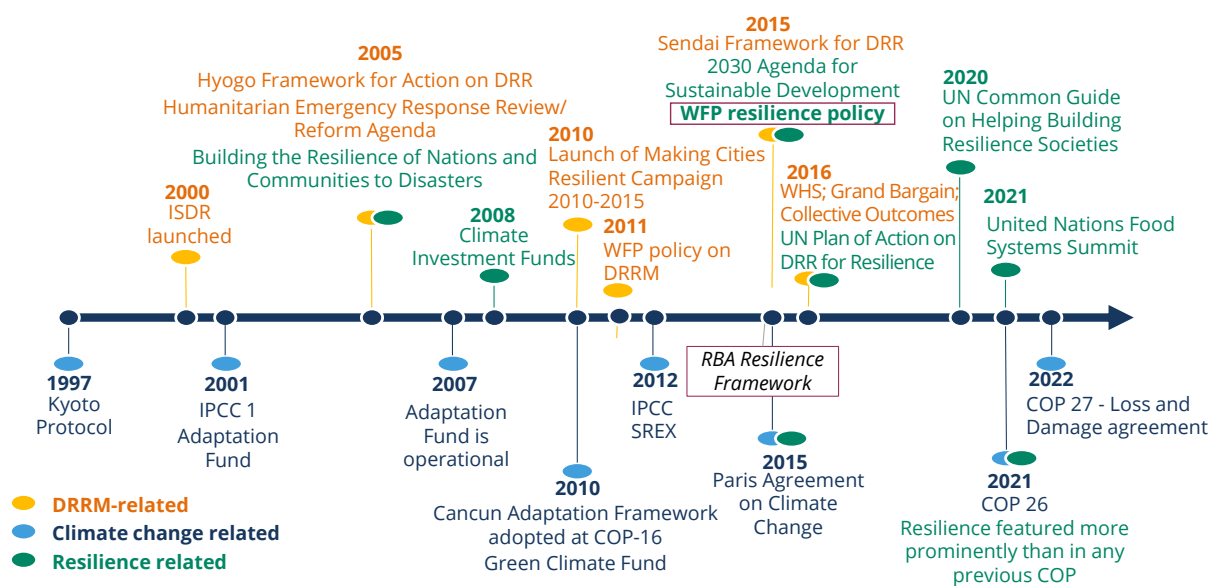
<sup>1</sup> "Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition" (WFP/EB.A/2015/5-C).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. 2020. *UN Common Guidance on Helping Build Resilient Societies*, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations. 2022. *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace – Report of the Secretary-General (A/76/668-S/2022/66)*.

7. In April 2015 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP finalized the joint resilience framework, “Strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition: A Conceptual Framework for Collaboration and Partnership among the Rome-Based Agencies”.<sup>4</sup>
8. The resilience policy spans three WFP strategic plans, for 2014–2017, 2017–2021 and 2022–2025. The policy’s executive summary refers to resilience as an “overarching theme”.<sup>5</sup> It builds explicitly on WFP’s 2011 disaster risk reduction and management policy. WFP’s 2017 climate change policy also articulates the organization’s position on resilience, and specifically how it supports the most vulnerable food-insecure communities and governments in building their resilience and capacity to address the impact of climate change on hunger. Figure 1 situates resilience in relevant policy frameworks.

**Figure 1: Policy frameworks relevant to resilience**



Source: Resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change evaluation teams.

Abbreviations: COP = Conference of the Parties; DRRM = disaster risk reduction and management; IPCC = Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; ISDR = International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; RBA = Rome-based agency; SREX = Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation; WHS = World Humanitarian Summit.

<sup>4</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development and WFP. 2015. *Strengthening resilience for food security and nutrition: A Conceptual Framework for Collaboration and Partnership among the Rome-based Agencies*.

<sup>5</sup> “Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition” (WFP/EB.A/2015/5-C). Executive Summary.

9. The overarching definition of resilience used in the policy refers to “the capacity to ensure that shocks and stressors do not have long-lasting adverse development consequences”.<sup>6</sup> This reflects both a normative condition and a return to equilibrium. Associated capacities are understood to be required before, during and after the onset of shocks and stressors. Such capacities build the ability to:
- *absorb* or resist a shock or stressor by reducing risk and buffering impact in order to sustain livelihoods and systems;
  - *adapt* or respond to change through proactive and informed choices, leading to improved ability to manage risk; and
  - *transform* or change the choices available through empowerment, improved governance and an enabling environment, leading to positive changes in systems, structures and livelihoods.

### **Subject**

10. The resilience policy articulates WFP’s resilience building role in food security and nutrition in pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17. Resilience is seen as a means of achieving and sustaining food security and nutrition in the face of shocks and stressors, in line with the conceptualization of resilience as an intermediate outcome through which high-level outcomes and long-term results (strategic objectives) are supported and achieved.
11. In the absence of an explicit logic model or theory of change for the resilience policy, the evaluation team constructed a theory of change to map the scope of the evaluation, including the policy’s underlying assumptions.<sup>7</sup> The theory of change helps to identify the policy’s likely spheres of control, influence and interest.

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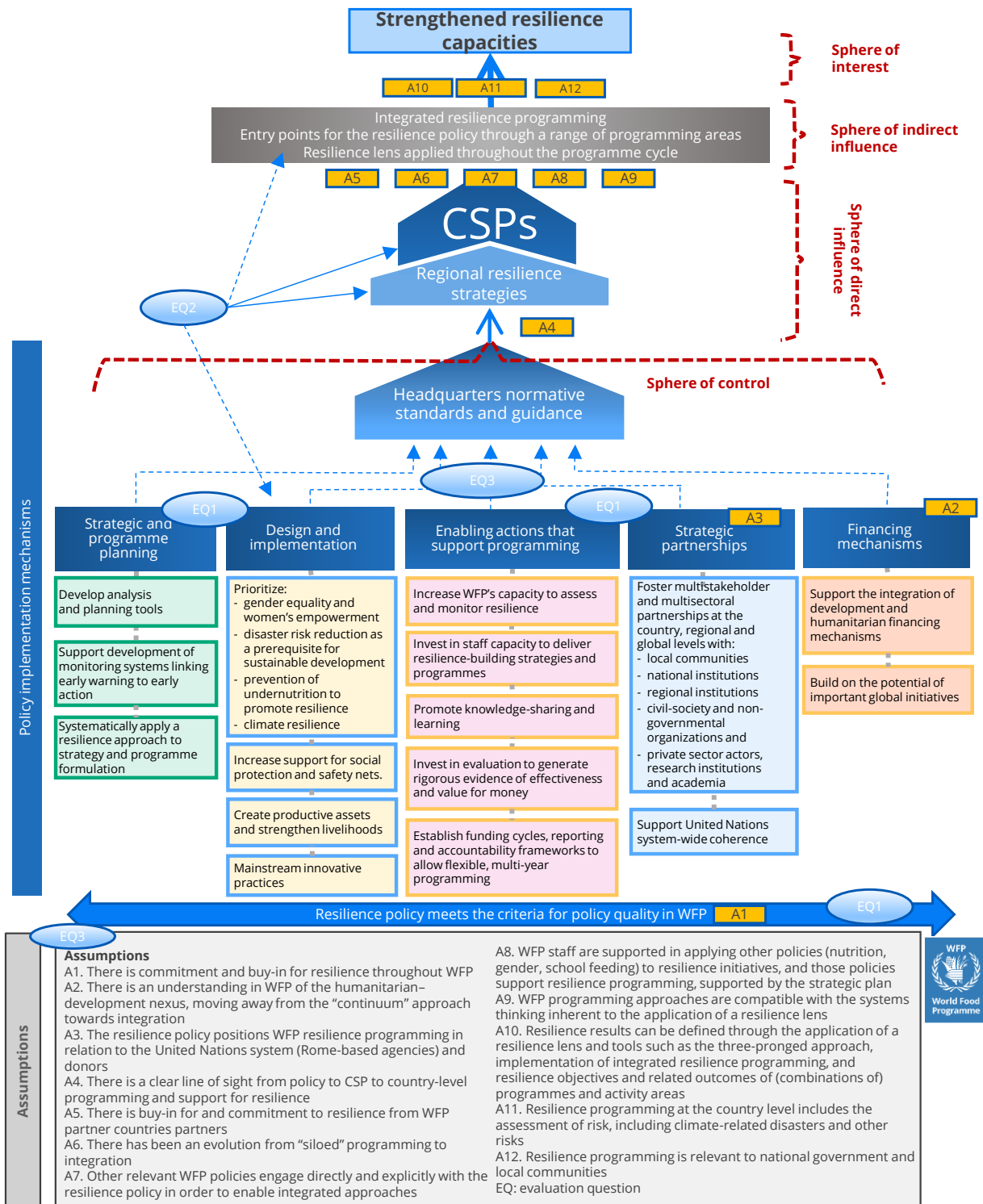
<sup>6</sup> This is the definition of resilience formulated by the multi-agency Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group of the Food Security Information Network.

<sup>7</sup> The theory of change and its related assumptions were discussed and validated by the Resilience and Food Systems Service on 6 June 2022.

**Figure 2: Theory of change**

**Resilience policy objective**

Within the scope of the WFP strategic plan, the objective of the resilience policy is **to guide WFP's efforts** in enabling the most vulnerable people to absorb, adapt and transform in the face of shocks and stressors in order to achieve sustainable food security and nutrition.



Source: Resilience evaluation team.

## Evaluation findings

### How good is the policy?

12. This section provides the evaluation team's key findings for the three evaluation questions asked.

#### *Policy quality*

13. Measured against established benchmarks, the resilience policy has performed well against the criteria related to the design of the policy, its relevance, its scope and its internal coherence. The evaluation found that as a guiding document the policy provides a valued and strategic high-level overview of WFP's vision for and engagement in resilience programming, with a strong focus on integrated programming. Specifically, the policy:
  - adopts a definition of resilience that was agreed in collaboration with the other Rome-based agencies, and its conceptual framework is still used widely in resilience work;
  - outlines the normative principles for resilience, reflecting global good practice at the time of its formulation;
  - has been a timely and relevant first step in establishing a direction for resilience work at WFP amid the growing external prominence of such work;
  - was developed in consultation with internal stakeholders and built on internal practice and external consultation and engagement;
  - defines its scope related to the climate change and disaster risk reduction agendas (with direct reference to the 2011 disaster risk reduction and management policy) and delineates a broad range of contexts (humanitarian and development) and sectors (nutrition, social protection and safety nets, and disaster risk management capacity) in which resilience is important, including gender as a cross-cutting priority; and
  - is of a quality that is comparable to the quality of the current resilience policies of the organizations selected for comparison.
14. The evaluation also noted the following critical gaps and weaknesses:
  - While the policy contains a definition of resilience that was relevant at the time of its formulation, the terminology used alongside the definition is ill-defined and confusing. In addition, the policy does not define what underlies each capacity described in the definition.
  - The policy lacks a clear theory of change that shows the pathway for policy implementation towards the intended outcomes. The policy was not accompanied by practical guidance for implementation in all programming areas, which has compromised its integrated programming ambitions.
  - No accountability framework was presented with the policy, and roles and responsibilities for policy implementation were not assigned. The policy was not accompanied by financial or human resources for its implementation.
15. Overall, while the policy coheres directly with the Rome-based agency framework of 2015, it no longer articulates clearly enough WFP's "place at the table" when it comes to resilience. The lack of clear cross-institutional ownership, combined with the lack of an implementation plan, is a fundamental weakness of the policy and underlies the reported difficulties in connecting the policy to work on the ground.

### **Policy implementation**

16. There is evidence of the adoption of resilience building approaches in alignment with the policy in certain regions, with, for example, regional bureaux and some country offices developing resilience strategies and theories of change that drive and guide the integration and layering of resilience programmes in the settings concerned. However, WFP does not provide adequate tools or frameworks for consistently supporting strategic and programme planning or applying a resilience approach programmatically, especially beyond the rural livelihoods entry point. For example, the three-pronged approach<sup>8</sup> is highlighted as a key tool for applying a resilience approach in rural settings but was considered less useful in middle-income countries – where programming focuses on government capacity strengthening – or where urban settings are more prominent.

### **What are the results of the policy?**

17. The results of the policy have been assessed at four levels: the design of interventions that support resilience building under country strategic plans (CSPs) and in resilience programming; the implementation of interventions that support resilience; the contribution to improved resilience capacity (absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacity, in accordance with the policy); and adaptation and response to context.

### **Design**

18. There is limited evidence to suggest that CSP design is informed or driven directly by the resilience policy. However, most resilience programmes are, to some extent, aligned with at least some of the principles underlying resilience policy design. While activity-centred approaches dominate most programmatic areas, resilience-focused programming has an outcome- and systems-oriented framing. The six areas below reflect the six programmatic areas identified in the resilience policy:
  - *Disaster risk reduction.* The prioritization of disaster risk reduction programming in the countries studied is apparent from the national or systems level to the community level, with some evidence demonstrating the varied roles that WFP plays in policy and systems support. Disaster risk reduction is not frequently mainstreamed as part of an integrated approach to resilience building, and approaches vary among CSPs. Disaster risk reduction is driven more by government, donor or cooperating partner interest than by a WFP resilience approach, and efforts are more systems-focused than in other areas of work such as livelihoods and asset creation.
  - *Nutrition.* There is good evidence of the integration of nutrition into resilience strengthening programmes. For example, home-grown school feeding programmes are frequently leveraged as platforms for integrating school meals into food systems programming by engaging local farmers in the school feeding supply chain with a view to including more nutritious foods and building community resilience, as in Burkina Faso and the Niger. However, the potential programmatic contributions of nutrition activities to resilience outcomes are uneven within CSPs, despite some corporate-level effort to clarify the opportunities to link them. Activities for the prevention of undernutrition and nutrition outcomes were present in all CSPs analysed, but they were usually placed under their own strategic outcomes, and they were insufficiently linked to other strategic outcomes.

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<sup>8</sup> The three-pronged approach is an approach to designing programmes at three levels, with integrated context analysis at the national level, seasonal livelihood programming at the subnational level, and community-based participatory planning at the local level.



- *Social protection.* There are clear conceptual links between social protection and safety nets and resilience building in WFP's policy and planning work. Shock-responsive social protection is an important contributor to the building and strengthening of resilience, and guidance on the implementation of such programmes exists.<sup>9</sup> In some countries WFP is active in supporting host government capacity for social protection and safety nets, but internally integration, coherence and coordination between social protection and safety nets and resilience programming vary significantly.
- *Climate resilience.* WFP is developing a growing range of tools to help integrate climate-risk management into its overall programmatic approach. Such tools include climate analysis and assessment, climate services, insurance and policy or planning support, for example for the development of climate-resilient food systems and for better access to climate finance. However, challenges remain in aligning technical advice with the programmatic choices available and constraints faced at the field level.
- *Food assistance for assets, food assistance for training and livelihood strengthening.* These activities are often WFP's main programmatic vehicles for strengthening the resilience of beneficiaries and communities. Integrated approaches, such as those that combine financial and social inclusion activities and climate services, have shown good results, but the approach is not well adapted to all environments, such as urban and conflict settings. When applied in emergency settings, despite being aligned with resilience policy objectives and helping to create improved absorptive capacity, such interventions are not always conceptualized or systematically reported as resilience building.
- *Gender.* While there is evidence of gender-targeted and gender-responsive activities in resilience programming, gender-transformative approaches are not yet fully embedded, reflecting a wider pattern across WFP. However, the uptake of resilience programming has deepened the appreciation that exposure and sensitivity to, and capacity for, recovery from shocks and adaptation to change are shaped by multiple drivers of exclusion (gender norms, socioeconomic status, age and others).

### **Programme implementation**

19. Evidence indicates that many of the programmatic elements of resilience building highlighted in the resilience policy are understood and widely implemented in WFP. However, the continued "siloing" of work constrains the potential for integrated programming. Other key factors affecting integrated programming include the organizational culture, senior management choices, donor funding conditions, the limitations imposed by the prevailing country-level aid architecture, host government preferences and a lack of sufficiently flexible medium- and long-term funding. The improvement of the integration, layering and sequencing of WFP's actions for resilience is very much a work in progress, although there is evidence that integration is under way in some regions and countries such as the Sahel and Malawi.
20. Common challenges to resilience programming across countries identified by the evaluation team include fragmented approaches in CSP design and the conflation of resilience with livelihoods work, which has created a lack of alignment in resilience thinking at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In emergency settings interventions are focused on arresting declines in the food security and nutrition status of affected communities rather than on addressing the root causes of food insecurity. However, some new CSPs, such as that for Lebanon, reflect a shift in thinking and the drawing together of disaster risk management, shock-responsive social protection and national school feeding programmes.

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<sup>9</sup> WFP. 2021. *Shock-Responsive Social Protection in the Caribbean Handbook*.

### **Contribution to improved resilience capacity**

21. The recognition and measurement of changes in resilience capacity are challenging at WFP because indicators cover several activities and have frequently changed over time. Moreover, most WFP indicators relate to absorptive capacity and there are limited indicators capturing anticipatory and transformative capacity, meaning that most of the evidence reported is in the area of absorptive capacity. Nonetheless, the number of WFP country offices reporting results on resilience has increased over time.
22. Figure 3 maps core WFP interventions against the three specific types of resilience capacity highlighted in the policy: absorptive, adaptive and transformative.

**Figure 3: Examples of WFP's interventions for enhancing resilience-related capacities**

Transformative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of <b>programmes for smallholder farmers</b> when they result in livelihoods and markets that provide reliable incomes that are sufficient to prevent negative impacts from a shock (Purchase for Progress, R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, home-grown school feeding, Farm to Market Alliance).</li> <li>• <b>Gender approaches</b> when they help to alter the social conditions that lead to women experiencing greater negative impacts during the preparation for, response to or recovery from shocks and when women's ability to anticipate, absorb and adapt is utilized without burdening them.</li> <li>• A combination of <b>capacity-building</b> approaches when they lead to the development of a reliable government system that covers shocks eventualities and livelihood needs (WFP's capacity building for disaster work reduction; shock-responsive social protection; climate adaptation; nutrition education and food systems assessment).</li> <li>• <b>Asset building</b> when the threat to a community is completely prevented (food assistance for assets).</li> </ul>
Adaptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Asset building</b> when it alters the nature of a shock, reducing or avoiding its impact (food assistance for assets).</li> <li>• <b>Programmes for smallholder farmers</b> when they result in the diversification of crops (Purchase for Progress; conservation agriculture through the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative).</li> <li>• <b>Programmes for smallholder farmers</b> when they result in the diversification of buyers (Purchase for Progress, Farm to Market Alliance).</li> <li>• <b>Training</b> when it equips people with new skills that can be used to diversify incomes (food assistance for training).</li> </ul>
Absorptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lean season food and cash-based support</b> when it smooths consumption patterns and reduces the use of negative coping strategies (food assistance for assets)</li> <li>• <b>Insurance mechanisms</b> when they allow farmers to maintain food consumption during a drought and replenish assets used or destroyed (R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, African Risk Capacity).</li> <li>• <b>Asset building</b> when it reduces the impact of a shock on a community (food assistance for assets).</li> <li>• <b>Nutrition programmes</b> when they prevent serious nutrient loss during a shock or build individual's long-term physical and mental health, enabling them to absorb and deal with shocks (supplementary and complementary foods programmes to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children from 6 months).</li> <li>• <b>School feeding</b> when it smooths consumption for children during a shock and relieves pressure on household food supply.</li> </ul>

Source: Resilience evaluation team based on [Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience](#), table 1.

23. Evidence from a combination of corporate outcome and programme performance data and evaluation findings is as follows:
  - **Absorptive capacity.** Most of the evidence available is related to absorptive capacity, although the indicators applied varied greatly among country offices. Activities showed some significant positive results, including improved consumption-based coping strategies (in South Sudan), enhanced livelihood strategies and improved resilience in the face of shocks (in Burkina Faso, Mozambique and countries in the Sahel), improved climate resilience (in Burkina Faso) and more diversified household incomes (in Zimbabwe). However, results were not always consistent, with little or no progress on food consumption scores and the livelihood-based coping strategy index in certain countries.
  - **Adaptive capacity.** Results related to the strengthening of beneficiaries' adaptive capacity are inconclusive owing to the limited data available, the fact that some country offices did not include relevant indicators in their programme logical frameworks and inconsistent reporting. Evaluation evidence found that despite positive well-being

outcomes from resilience programmes, people continued to resort to damaging coping strategies in the face of shocks and stressors, demonstrating that resilience strengthening takes time.

- *Transformative capacity.* Indicators and available evidence did not allow reporting on transformative capacity. Transformative capacity may best be captured through qualitative and multi-year approaches, which do not fit the current reporting frameworks, although work to address this issue is under way.

### ***Adapting and responding to context***

24. There is strong evidence that resilience programmes are designed in response to specific circumstances. A resilience approach is applied in relevant programme design, most commonly through, for example, integrated context analysis as part of the three-pronged approach, but such analysis is done largely on an “as-needed” basis and requires dedicated resources. Some unique analysis approaches have been applied, such as the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) impact and food security assessment (in Sri Lanka), but this is not the norm.

### **What factors account for the results observed?**

25. The evaluation identified and assessed the factors that plausibly contributed to or hindered the results derived from policy implementation.

### ***Senior management support and corporate responsibilities and accountabilities***

26. Since the 2019 strategic evaluation of resilience much work has been done to guide the implementation of the resilience policy, with support from senior management. For example, the Livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience Unit’s resilience team led the development of a resilience programming framework, ensuring buy-in across divisions. In 2021, the Resilience and Food Systems Service was set up<sup>10</sup> with the aim of integrating resilience and food systems as “federating concepts”, reflecting WFP’s positioning as the lead agency for the 2021 United Nations food systems summit action track on resilience building.<sup>11</sup> The 2022 resilient food systems framework is another promising initiative that could be used in pursuit of WFP’s resilience objectives through other programmes. However, there is still work to be done in adopting a more holistic resilience approach across the organization.

### ***Policy dissemination, staff awareness and ownership***

27. The resilience policy has informed resilience work streams and strategies developed at the regional and country levels to a limited extent. Limited dissemination has impeded ownership and frequent staff turnover at all levels of WFP has hindered progress in implementation, leading to varying points of view about whether and how the policy should be implemented at various levels of the organization.

### ***Financial resources for implementation***

28. While funding has steadily increased since 2015, gaps in funding for resilience remain acute. As of October 2022 resilience funding represented approximately 16.2 percent of the total needs-based plan.<sup>12</sup> Table 1 shows the percentages of funding received per focus area from 2019 to 2022, with gaps ranging from 49 percent in 2019 to 57 percent in 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Including the Livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience Unit and the Food Systems and Smallholder Support Unit.

<sup>11</sup> WFP. 2021. *Update on WFP’s engagement in the 2021 United Nations food systems summit – WFP and the food systems summit and WFP’s role in action track 5.*

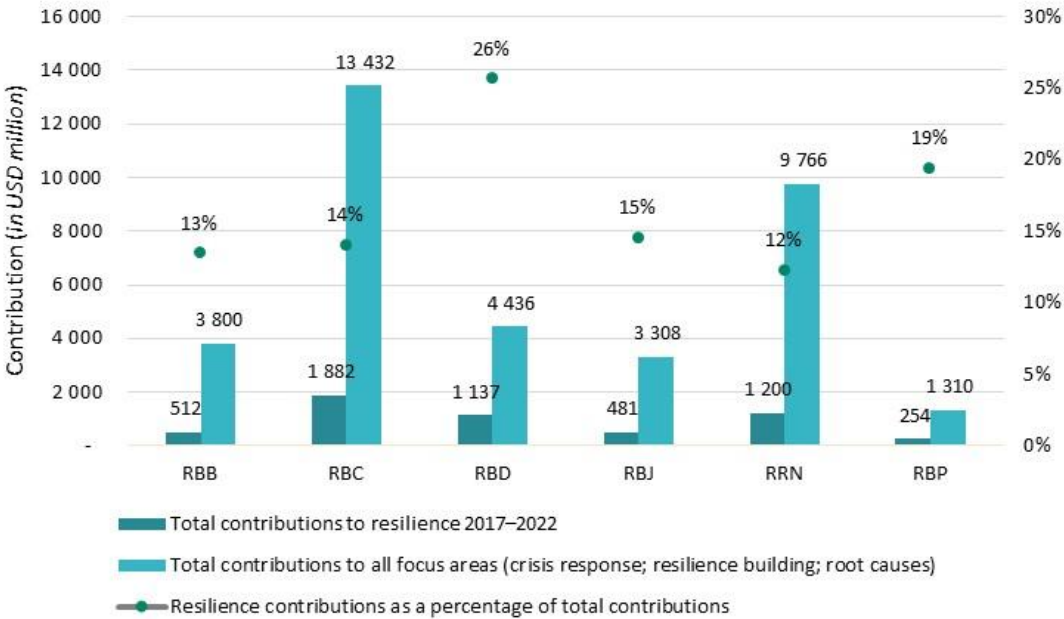
<sup>12</sup> Integrated Road Map analytics, plan and actual comparison, data up to October 2022. (Data extracted 3 October 2022).

Focus area	2019	2020	2021	2022 (3 Nov. 2022)
Crisis response	72 (28)	63 (34)	68 (32)	53 (47)
Resilience building	51 (49)	54 (46)	48 (52)	43 (57)
Root causes	53 (47)	56 (44)	69 (31)	42 (58)

Source: Integrated Road Map analytics, country portfolio budget resources overview (data extracted 3 November 2022).

- 29. WFP faces challenges in fundraising at scale. According to key informant interviews, the robustness of the processes used to identify needs is a concern for certain donors. As a result, resilience work is funded by a limited number of donors, mainly via short-term earmarked funding streams that are not conducive to mid- to long-term resilience programming. Tight spending deadlines also cause concern.
- 30. Resource availability also varies across regions. The Regional Bureau for the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe and the Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa received the highest financial contributions in absolute terms in 2022, while the Regional Bureau for Western Africa contributed the highest proportion of its budget to resilience (26 percent) (figure 4).

**Figure 4: Total donor contributions to the resilience-building focus area, by region, from 2017 to 3 October 2022**



Source: WFP. 2022. Distribution donor contribution report.

Abbreviations: RBB = Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific; RBC = Regional Bureau for the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe; RBD = Regional Bureau for Western Africa; RBJ = Regional Bureau for Southern Africa; RBN = Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa; RBP = Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

***Robust results frameworks, monitoring and reporting systems***

31. WFP's corporate reporting and monitoring systems are not set up to capture resilience achievements effectively. Most indicators are designed mainly to track key activities related to food security, asset creation and other things that can reasonably be assumed to influence a household's ability to anticipate, absorb and adapt to shocks and stressors. The resilience monitoring and measurement approach<sup>13</sup> is expected to help facilitate specific reporting on, and performance analysis of, WFP's resilience generation under CSPs and beyond.

***Human resource capacity and internal coordination mechanisms***

32. The resilience team at headquarters has been reorganized since 2020 with a view to addressing concerns related to "siloes" working and enhancing an integrated approach. In addition, resilience focal points have been appointed in individual programme divisions and units such as nutrition and social protection. The availability of programme staff with resilience expertise has also been strengthened by a recent Future International Talent pool recruitment exercise.
33. Overall, however, the number of staff is still insufficient and it is particularly difficult to attract and recruit skilled professionals for resilience work in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

***Partnerships and external drivers of change***

34. While the resilience policy has contributed to a major push towards increased Rome-based agency collaboration in some countries, such as the joint programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Niger and Somalia, there is little evidence that it has had an impact on the way in which new partnerships are designed at the country level. However, the evaluation team found that in many countries WFP was making significant efforts in that area, engaging with actors from civil society, national governments and the private sector to enhance its resilience work. Examples include working with the national Government in the Niger on a large-scale, cross-sectoral initiative aimed at improving the resilience of farmers and herders with regard to climate shocks and other stressors and connecting county governments, the private sector and other partners in Kenya to insurance products for underserved markets in semi-arid regions. Other examples of Rome-based agency collaboration include the joint Sahel programme in response to the challenges of COVID-19, conflicts and climate change, which aims to contribute to the implementation of the Group of 5 Sahel strategy for development and security at the request of the governments of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal.

***Coherence between humanitarian responses and long-term development***

35. WFP is making promising progress in establishing processes for integrated programming at the humanitarian–development nexus that also support resilience programming. However, those processes are undermined by a broader corporate pattern of the continued "siloeing" of work and the tendency to dichotomize humanitarian and development work and "saving lives" and "changing lives" into separate strands. The operationalization of resilience work along the humanitarian–development–peace continuum remains challenging, including with regard to peace.

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<sup>13</sup> The approach draws on a 2021 review carried out by the Overseas Development Institute (*Review of Resilience-Building Indicators, Guiding WFP's Monitoring and Evaluation*) (not available online) exploring how existing qualitative and quantitative approaches to the measurement of resilience could be used more effectively.

## Conclusions

36. **Conclusion 1: While a resilience policy is highly relevant to WFP's mandate, the current policy no longer fulfils its role in positioning WFP in the resilience landscape. The policy should be updated for greater conceptual clarity and clearer links with internal and external policy instruments.**
37. The current policy reflects the key resilience concepts and priorities at the time of its formulation. It has served to position WFP in the resilience landscape at a time when the importance of resilience work in humanitarian and development programming has been recognized and such work has assumed a prominent role. While the concepts contained in the policy remain relevant today, the policy lacks clear terminology, does not fully reflect prevailing programmatic practice within WFP and does not embrace the full spectrum of current needs, such as those arising in conflict zones or in urbanization.
38. Crucially, the lack of a clearly articulated role for resilience in food security is causing confusion. The policy is being interpreted in vastly different ways by different stakeholders, resulting in a lack of both internal and external coherence and raising questions about WFP's added value in resilience work, particularly in the humanitarian sphere. Since the last strategic evaluation of resilience, a concerted effort to improve resilience programming has been made, particularly in the livelihoods area. However, that engagement has not been driven by a shared corporate understanding of WFP's role in resilience.
39. The evaluation finds that the resilience policy is no longer fulfilling its role in positioning WFP in the resilience landscape (see recommendation 1). WFP needs to articulate its contribution and added value in resilience work in the light of its overall mandate, in particular as regards the role of resilience in the saving lives and changing lives agenda.
40. **Conclusion 2: The lack of an accountability framework, including roles and responsibilities and a clear performance assessment framework, has impeded the policy's systematic uptake across WFP.** A lack of clear, cross-institutional ownership over time, combined with the lack of an implementation plan, are fundamental weaknesses of the policy and underlie difficulties in connecting it to work on the ground. This is compounded by the absence of a theory of change. The absence of a road map and accountability framework with clearly assigned responsibility for policy implementation means that there has been no clear champion working consistently across programming areas and no development of the structures and frameworks needed for cross-organizational policy implementation (see recommendations 1 and 2).
41. **Conclusion 3: Increasing support in all programming areas to facilitate achievement of resilience objectives will help WFP to play a more effective and enabling role at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.** As humanitarian needs become increasingly complex and protracted, the demands placed on WFP are on the rise. The need to reduce household and community reliance on humanitarian assistance requires WFP to articulate clearer and more diverse pathways to greater resilience. However, the scale of resilience-related programming remains very small relative to WFP's humanitarian caseload. The degree to which resilience is integrated into WFP programming and engagement with partners has scope for improvement (see recommendation 2).
42. Across the spectrum of WFP's partners there are various opinions on the organization's role in resilience building. In part this reflects a general lack of clarity, and some misunderstanding of, WFP's role and results. Concerns regarding WFP's role distract from the overwhelming need to implement the organizational changes, improvements in capacity and means of integration recommended in previous evaluations. Defining the relation of resilience to the nexus, clarifying to various partners WFP's comparative advantage and its role as an enabler in delivering long-term support, improving results and scaling up

resilience programming are the most effective immediate means of addressing those concerns (see recommendations 1, 3 and 5).

43. **Conclusion 4: To ensure resilience outcomes, there is need for support and guidance that facilitate policy implementation through integrated programming.** The policy was intended to allow various interpretations and flexibility and to avoid the prescription of a single pathway to the achievement of resilience. In practice, however, support for resilience programming is much stronger in livelihoods and asset creation activities than in other areas of WFP's work, creating the risk of those activities being considered synonymous with resilience to the exclusion of other programme areas. Other programme areas need explicit guidance on resilience in order to ensure integrated programming. The 2022 resilient food systems framework potentially identifies a range of entry points and pathways for WFP's contributions to resilience strengthening, emphasizing integration, but it has yet to be rolled out (see recommendations 1 and 2).
44. **Conclusion 5: WFP has achieved some consistent outcomes in absorptive capacity. However, evidence of the organization's contribution to other resilience-related capacity has yet to be fully demonstrated.** An analysis of results finds the strongest gains in the strengthening of absorptive capacity, such as through lean season-responsive food assistance for assets, social protection and school feeding. Achievements in those areas are enhanced by the scale of certain programmes that seek to build resilience to shocks and stressors over the long term. There is limited evidence of WFP's contributions to the building of adaptive capacity for resilience, and no evidence that transformative capacity has been generated (see recommendation 4). The building of adaptive and transformative capacity requires layered and sequenced activities at various levels (individual, community, institutional, etc.). In the face of climate-related shocks and stressors, WFP needs, in particular, resilience and climate change policies that complement each other.
45. **Conclusion 6: Practical support and funding are needed for the consistent integration of gender and social inclusion objectives, analysis and strategies into resilience programming if the policy's transformative potential is to be achieved.** Despite individual staff members' recognition of differentiated vulnerabilities to shocks and stressors, there has been no comprehensive approach to gender-responsive or gender-transformative resilience programming. Action on gender tends to be interpreted as targeting women, and social inclusion is relatively neglected. Specific guidance, tools and approaches are needed to integrate gender equality, the empowerment of women and other social inclusion objectives into resilience programmes, including by linking gender to transformative capacity (see recommendation 1).
46. **Conclusion 7: Current monitoring and reporting frameworks do not adequately support the measurement of resilience results and WFP's contribution to them, although improvements are under way.** Pressure to demonstrate WFP's contribution to resilience, and challenges inherent in the tracking and measurement of resilience outcomes, have led to a focus on activities and the use of indicators that are unsuited to tracking progress over time. As a result, there is a risk that such as those in social protection, nutrition and capacity building for national governments go uncaptured. This compounds the challenge of clarifying WFP's role in engaging in resilience as part of its food security mandate. A clear conceptual framework for and measures of resilience, and a monitoring system that tracks progress towards resilience outcomes have been developed and piloted but have yet to be operationalized (see recommendation 4).

47. **Conclusion 8: To truly embrace a resilience agenda WFP needs to reconsider its organizational structures, human resources, funding and partnership strategies.** The commitment of individual WFP staff members at all levels drives WFP's support for resilience. Sustaining resilience capacity in the long term requires core budget support. Guidance and support for resilience programming come largely from the livelihoods staff cadre, and resilience needs to benefit from similar attention in all programming areas. Resilience programming is also undermined by external factors such as the competing priorities of governments and other partners, especially where there are funding shortfalls for emergency response (see recommendations 2, 3 and 5).
48. **Conclusion 9: The lack of long-term and multi-year funding sources constrains progress in resilience building. While the leveraging of humanitarian funding can offer an interim solution, forward planning is required to ensure that medium-term programming and funding intentions are aligned.** WFP resilience programming has been over-reliant on a single major donor for multi-year funding. WFP concerns regarding the lack of high-quality funding for resilience are justified – funding tends to be not only short-term, but also earmarked and often unpredictable. Given the well-established evidence of the importance of multi-year funding and long timeframes for the strengthening of resilience, an increase in flexible multi-year funding is required for WFP to be able to deliver results (see recommendation 5). At the same time, WFP should continue to maximize the potential flexibility of some short-term, often humanitarian, funding that is already contributing to resilience outcomes.

## Recommendations

49. The evaluation team made five main recommendations, each with several sub-recommendations. In light of the interconnectedness of the concepts of resilience, disaster risk reduction and management, and climate change, the parallel timing of the related evaluations and certain common aspects of the recommendations from the present evaluation and that of the disaster risk reduction and management and climate change policies, WFP management is encouraged to consider the recommendations of all three policies side-by-side in order to capitalize on synergies.



#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	<b>WFP should update the resilience policy to reflect changes in the context since 2015, refine the definition of resilience and clarify terminology.</b>	Strategic	Resilience and Food Systems Service (PROR)	Deputy Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, and a committee composed of the Livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience Unit, Food Systems and Smallholder Support Unit, Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Service (PROC), Social Protection Unit (PROS), Emergencies and Transitions Service (PROP), Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service (PROT), Nutrition Division (NUT), Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division (RAM), Gender Equality Office (GEN), Emergency Operations Division (EME), School-based Programmes Division (SBP) and regional bureaux	High	Second quarter of 2025
1.1	To inform the update of the policy, WFP should clearly articulate and institutionalize an organization-wide definition of resilience as an intermediate outcome, highlighting the importance of integrated resilience programming in the journey towards that outcome, and the role of resilience at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. This work should be supported by a theory of change for the policy.	Strategic	PROR	As above	High	Third quarter of 2024
1.2	Make the gender and social inclusion dimensions explicit in the revised policy and its supporting costed implementation plan, emphasizing a clear articulation of what the transformative capacity included in the resilience definition and the WFP gender policy mean to WFP.	Strategic	PROR	As above	High	Third quarter of 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.3	To operationalize the policy, WFP should, in a consultative, coordinated manner, develop a costed implementation plan that describes how the updated resilience policy will be rolled out across the organization. The plan should include a clear definition of roles and responsibilities across WFP and an estimation of the human resources required to roll out the policy. This will help to ensure comprehensive attention in all programming areas and coherence with future country strategic plans, and will guide the effective identification of resourcing and capacity needs.	Strategic	PROR	As above	High	Second quarter of 2025
<b>2</b>	<b>Promote a culture of shared ownership of integrated resilience programming, with particular emphasis on rolling out the forthcoming resilience guidance and ensuring coherent and consistent design and operationalization throughout WFP.</b>	Operational	PROR	PROC, PROS, PROT, NUT, RAM, GEN, PROP, EME, SBP, regional bureaux, country offices	High	Fourth quarter of 2025
2.1	Define the role that the Resilience and Food Systems Service (and other resilience staff in regional bureaux and country offices) will play in supporting other units of WFP at headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices.	Operational	PROR	As above	High	Fourth quarter of 2024
2.2	Ensure that any forthcoming Resilience and Food Systems Service resilience guidance explains how resilience programming should be integrated across relevant strategic outcomes and support units in the Programme and Policy Development Department developing messaging on resilience for coherent design and operationalization throughout the organization.	Operational	PROR	As above	High	Second quarter of 2024
2.3	Widely disseminate any forthcoming guidance to staff across the organization.	Operational	PROR	As above	High	Fourth quarter of 2025

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3	<b>Drawing from the recent policy and programme strategic workforce planning exercise, prioritize and implement a set of actions that will ensure that sufficient staffing, capacity and skills are in place at the global, regional and country office levels and across functional areas in line with the requirements of the updated resilience policy.</b>	Operational	Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division (PRO)	Human Resources Division (HRM), regional bureaux	High	Fourth quarter 2025
3.1	At the headquarters level, ensure that an adequate number of staff members focused on resilience are in place. At the regional and country office levels advocate increases in the number of resilience building staff.	Operational	PRO	HRM, PROR, PROC, PROS, PROT, NUT, RAM, GEN, PROP, EME, SBP, Partnerships and Advocacy Department (PA), regional bureaux	High	Fourth quarter 2025
3.2	Identify and address the organizational learning needs of relevant staff across the organization so as to improve staff capacity and subsequently improve the design and implementation of resilience building programmes.	Operational	PRO	As above	Medium	Second quarter 2025
3.3	Review the contract types of staff and assess rotation requirements with a view to fostering the retention of people with appropriate and adequate skills in specialist positions.	Operational	Programme and Policy Development Department staffing coordinator	HRM, PRO, regional bureaux	High	Third quarter 2024
4	<b>Prioritize and advocate resources for resilience monitoring measurement and learning from WFP-supported resilience-focused interventions.</b>	Operational	PROR	RAM, Corporate Planning and Performance Division, regional bureaux, Office of Evaluation	Medium	Fourth quarter of 2025
4.1	Advocate resources and roll out the corporate resilience monitoring and measurement approach across country programmes in order to support the effective capture of and reporting on resilience results.	Operational	PROR	RAM	Medium	Second quarter of 2024
4.2	Continue to work to include resilience indicators in the corporate results framework, further develop resilience monitoring and measurement at all levels of WFP and assign accountability for reporting on progress towards resilience outcomes, in collaboration with other units.	Operational	PROR	Corporate Planning and Performance Division, RAM	Medium	Second quarter of 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.3	Ensure that approaches to generating evidence and fostering learning on resilience draw from both qualitative and quantitative monitoring and analysis and reporting.	Operational	PROR	RAM	Medium	Second quarter of 2024
4.4	Develop evaluation guidance on how resilience can be integrated into centralized and decentralized evaluations. In particular, WFP should ensure that the framework for and guidance on evaluations of country strategic plans incorporate clear guidance on the assessment of WFP's resilience outcomes.	Operational	Office of Evaluation	PROR	Medium	Second quarter of 2024
4.5	Synthesize the evidence on what works, how and why in various settings in order to boost the evidence base for resilience programming in WFP. Particular emphasis should be placed on the evidence on conflict and protracted crises that is critical in addressing evidence gaps at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.	Operational	PROR	RAM	Medium	Fourth quarter 2025
<b>5</b>	<b>Take steps to increase access to more diversified and multi-year funding for resilience programming through resource mobilization, advocacy and partnerships built on a clear articulation of WFP's role in resilience. This should be done in close coordination with similar efforts undertaken for disaster risk reduction and management and climate change programming.</b>	Operational	PA (Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division (PPR), Strategic Partnerships Division (STR), and Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division (PPF))	(PROR, Communications, Advocacy and Marketing Division, regional bureaux)	Medium	Fourth quarter of 2025
5.1	Based on sub-recommendation 1.1, develop consistent messages for fundraising (the benefits of various resilience investments and the role of food security and nutrition in resilience building), partnerships and advocacy purposes, working with multiple stakeholders, including other United Nation entities and the global resilience community.	Operational	PROR	PA (PPR, STR, PPF), Communications, Advocacy and Marketing Division	Medium	Third quarter of 2024

#	Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2	Map the financing priorities and funding streams related to various components of the integrated resilience concept, the access modalities and thematic and geographic interests of donors and strategic partners (public and private), along with relevant events. Communicate the results with relevant headquarters units, regional bureaux and country offices with a view to guiding resource mobilization for resilience programming. This work will build on the partnership action plans developed by country offices and supported by regional bureaux and headquarters.	Operational	PA (PPR, STR, PPF)	PROR	Medium	First quarter of 2024
5.3	Depending on the circumstances, increase effective engagement with partners actively engaged in resilience building (other United Nations entities, international financial institutions, governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, donors, etc.) with a view to identifying and capitalizing on opportunities, for instance on joint programming.	Operational	PROR	PA (PPR, STR, PPF)	Medium	Fourth quarter of 2025

## Acronyms

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
EME	Emergency Operations Division
GEN	Gender Equality Office
HRM	Human Resources Division
NUT	Nutrition Division
PA	Partnerships and Advocacy Department
PPF	Private Partnerships and Fundraising Division
PPR	Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division
PROC	Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Programmes Service
PROP	Emergencies and Transitions Service
PROS	Social Protection Unit
PROT	Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service
PROR	Resilience and Food Systems Service
RAM	Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division
SBP	School-based Programmes Division
STR	Strategic Partnerships Division