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## Draft Benin country strategic plan (2024–2027)

Duration	1 January 2024–31 December 2027
Total cost to WFP	USD 386,427,465
Gender and age marker*	3

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

### Executive summary

Benin is a lower-middle-income country of 13.7 million inhabitants with a gross domestic product of USD 17.1 billion. The country has a young population, with two thirds of Beninese aged under 25. The population is unevenly distributed: 70 percent live in the southern quarter of the country. The national poverty rate is 38.5 percent, rising to almost 44.2 percent in rural areas. Benin ranked 166 of 191 countries in the Human Development Index in 2022. The primary school completion rate declined from 81 percent in 2016 to 62 percent in 2020, before picking up again to 73 percent in 2021.

Food insecurity remains high. The latest cadre harmonisé figures estimate that 547,422 Beninese are severely food insecure (in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or 4). Almost 83 percent of households are unable to afford a healthy diet.

WFP has been supporting the Government of Benin since 2017 with the implementation of the national integrated school feeding programme (*programme national d'alimentation scolaire intégré*), which reaches 75 percent of public primary schools. The Government has committed to ensuring full coverage of all primary schools and has already allocated more than USD 200 million for a five-year cycle of the programme. WFP has been requested to implement the national programme and will continue to support the enhancement and extension of the programme with the aim of

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#### Focal points:

Mr C. Nikoi  
Regional Director  
Western Africa  
email: [chris.nikoi@wfp.org](mailto:chris.nikoi@wfp.org)

Mr A. Ouattara  
Country Director  
email: [ali.ouattara@wfp.org](mailto:ali.ouattara@wfp.org)

strengthening community resilience and programme sustainability, mainly through the promotion of local procurement and home-grown school feeding.

This country strategic plan is based on the analysis and strategic orientation of the Government's national action plan for 2021–2026 and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework. It envisages a continuation of WFP's implementation of the national school feeding programme and the provision of technical assistance and policy advisory work, leveraging WFP's successful and long-lasting partnerships with the Government and other national and international stakeholders to achieve three country strategic plan outcomes:

- *Outcome 1:* People affected by shocks in Benin can meet urgent food and nutrition needs before, during and after shocks, by 2027.
- *Outcome 2:* School-age children and communities in Benin have access to affordable, nutritious diets and basic social services as a result of the leveraging of the school feeding programme as an entry point for the achievement of enhanced nutrition, health and education outcomes, by 2027.
- *Outcome 3:* Targeted institutions and systems in Benin have strengthened capacity to implement school feeding and other inclusive programmes to promote food security and nutrition, by 2027.

The country strategic plan provides support in strategic areas prioritized by the Government and through it, WFP will endeavour to respond to challenges related to gender inequality. In addition to contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17, the country strategic plan will enhance Benin's capability to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty), 4 (quality education) and 5 (gender equality). Implementation of the plan will contribute to the achievement of WFP strategic outcomes 1 (People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs), 2 (People have better nutrition, health and education outcomes) and 4 (National programmes and systems are strengthened).

### **Draft decision\***

The Board approves the Benin country strategic plan (2024–2027) (WFP/EB.2/2023/X-X/X) at a total cost to WFP of USD 386,427,465.

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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.

## 1. Country analysis

### 1.1 Country context

1. Benin has experienced stability and a culture of peaceful transition of power since 1990. The current government, backed with an absolute majority at the parliament, has launched ambitious structural reforms to strengthen democracy and governance, transform the economy and improve social welfare.
2. However, Benin faces the threat of a spillover of the conflict in the Central Sahel and the activities of organized transnational crime, particularly in the north. This could present a challenge to the achievement of the Government's national action plan for 2021–2026 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. Benin is a lower-middle-income country of 13.7 million inhabitants. Forty-nine percent of the population live in urban areas,<sup>1</sup> 43 percent are under the age of 14<sup>2</sup> and two thirds are under 25. The national poverty rate stood at 38.5 percent in 2019, a decrease from 40.1 percent in 2015. Nearly 44.2 percent of people in rural areas are poor, compared with 31.4 percent in urban areas.<sup>3</sup>
4. The Beninese economy has shown resilience in the face of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis. The economy rebounded strongly in 2021, growing at an estimated 7.2 percent, up from 3.8 percent in 2020.<sup>4</sup> Agriculture contributes to 35 percent of Benin's gross domestic product and generates 70 percent of employment and 72 percent of imports. However, it is dependent on rainfall and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially droughts, flooding and environmental damage from deforestation and soil degradation.<sup>5</sup> Benin is the 16<sup>th</sup> most vulnerable country to climate change in the and ranks 133 of 182 countries in terms of its readiness to adapt to climate change.<sup>6</sup>
5. Food insecurity has increased over the past years. According to cadre harmonisé projections,<sup>7</sup> an estimated 547,422 Beninese faced crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 3 or 4) between March and May 2023, and 1,870,025 were experiencing food security stress (IPC phase 2). This represents a sharp deterioration compared to the same period in 2019,<sup>8</sup> when an estimated 31,606 people were in IPC phase 3 and 1,323,799 were in IPC phase 2. In 2022, 82.9 percent of households were unable to afford a healthy diet.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, stunting levels

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. 2022. [Rural population \(% of total population\) - Benin](#).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> United Nations. 2021 [Bilan commun pays](#) (Common country analysis, Benin).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> International Fund for Agricultural Development. [Benin country profile](#); African Development Bank Group. [Benin country profile](#).

<sup>6</sup> Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative. [ND-GAIN country index – Benin](#).

<sup>7</sup> Cadre harmonisé. 2023. [Cadre Harmonisé d'identification des zones à risque et des populations en insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel, en Afrique de l'Ouest et au Cameroun: Résultats de l'analyse de l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle aigüe courante en mars-mai 2023 et projetée en juin-août 2023](#) (Cadre harmonisé for the identification of at-risk areas and food- and nutrition-insecure populations in the Sahel, West Africa and Cameroun: Food and nutrition insecurity analysis results for March–May 2023 and forecast for June–August 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Cadre Harmonisé. 2019. [Cadre Harmonisé d'identification des zones à risque et des populations en insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel, en Afrique de l'Ouest et au Cameroun: Situation courante \(mars-mai 2018\) et projetée \(juin-août 2019\)](#) (Cadre harmonisé for the identification of at-risk areas and food- and nutrition-insecure populations in the Sahel, West Africa and Cameroun: Current situation (March–May 2018) and forecasted (June–August 2019)).

<sup>9</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others. 2022. [The State of Food and Nutrition Security in the World, 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable](#).

are above the average for West Africa: 31.3 percent of children were stunted in 2020 and 5 percent suffered from wasting.<sup>10</sup>

6. Benin ranked 166 of 191 countries in the 2022 Human Development Index and 147 of 173 countries in the 2020 Human Capital Index. Primary education is compulsory and free for all children aged 6–11. Although education is free until ninth grade for girls and boys, girls do not always have the same educational opportunities. In 2021, literacy rates were 35 percent for women compared to 57 percent for men.<sup>11</sup> In some parts of the country, girls receive no formal education<sup>12</sup> and in general, girls are more likely than boys to drop out before finishing primary school education. Primary school completion rates dropped from 81 percent in 2016 (76 percent for girls and 85 percent for boys) to 62 percent in 2020 (59 percent for girls and 65 percent for boys), before picking up to 73 percent in 2021 (70 percent for girls and 77 percent for boys).<sup>13</sup>
7. The national school feeding programme is one of the Government's main social protection programmes. The Government has made a strong political commitment to support universal school feeding: more than USD 200 million is planned to be allocated by the Government for a five-year cycle. Investment in school feeding is deemed effective because in Benin, it yields an estimated return of USD 5 for every dollar invested.<sup>14</sup> Benin's school feeding programme is a model in the region. A project to develop a national law on school feeding has recently been adopted by the Government and will be submitted to the parliament.
8. While the primary objective of the national school feeding programme is to reduce school dropouts and improve primary school attendance and completion rates, it also aims to contribute to the country's economic and social development. The programme has several intermediate effects: the abandonment of harmful practices such as illicit work and early marriage; the adoption of good hygiene, health and nutrition practices; and local ownership and management of the canteens, including the supply of food by small-scale producers. The expected effects are wider, not only on education but also on social issues including social cohesion and economic issues such as agricultural value chains, nutrition-sensitive practices and access for smallholder farmers to stable and institutional markets.
9. Benin ranked 138 of 148 countries in terms of gender equality in 2022. Gender gaps were narrower in health, survival and educational attainment than in political empowerment and economic participation.<sup>15</sup> As a result women, girls and other marginalized population groups are likely to experience disproportionately high barriers to food security. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, a situation compounded by minimal social protection provision.

## 1.2 Progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

10. In 2022, Benin ranked 153 of 163 countries in terms of its progress towards the SDGs and is halfway towards achieving the goals, with an index score of 50.7 out of 100.<sup>16</sup> Progress is positive towards SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (responsible

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> World Bank. 2021. [Literacy rate, adult female \(% of females ages 15 and above\) – Benin](#).

<sup>12</sup> United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. 2020. [Country report on human rights practices for 2020: Benin 2020 Human Rights Report](#).

<sup>13</sup> World Bank. 2021. [Primary completion rate, total \(% of relevant age group\) – Benin](#).

<sup>14</sup> Government of Benin, WFP and MasterCard Foundation. 2019. [Programme d'alimentation scolaire du Bénin: Analyse Coût-Bénéfice](#) (Benin school feeding programme: cost-benefit analysis).

<sup>15</sup> World Economic Forum. 2022. [Global Gender Gap Report 2022](#).

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. 2022. [Benin Sustainable Development Report 2022](#). The SDG Index is an assessment of each country's overall performance on the 17 SDGs; equal weight is given to each goal.

consumption and production) and SDG 13 (climate action).<sup>17</sup> By contrast, progress is slow on SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).<sup>18</sup> For the following nine SDGs, gains appear to have been reversed: SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3 Progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 17

#### **Progress on Sustainable Development Goal 2 targets**

11. *Access to food.* While physical access to markets is relatively easy,<sup>20</sup> financial access is an issue for 50.3 percent of households.<sup>21</sup> Food prices have increased due to the compounded effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine conflict, limiting households' economic access to food. About 46 percent of households cite the increase in food prices as a shock that has impacted them.<sup>22</sup>
12. *End malnutrition.* The rollout of the national protocol for the management of acute malnutrition in 2011<sup>23</sup> contributed to the decline in the combined infant-and-child mortality rate from 125 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 96 per 1,000 in 2018.<sup>24</sup> However, undernutrition persists and 19.7 percent of children under 5 are underweight.<sup>25</sup> The proportion of stunted children under 5 decreased slightly from 33.8 percent in 2012 to 31.3 percent in 2020. Wasting levels have remained unchanged at 5 percent of children in 2018 and 2020.<sup>26</sup>
13. Anaemia has become more prevalent, affecting 72 percent of children aged 6–59 months in 2018 (up from 58 percent in 2012) and 58 percent of women and girls aged 15–49 years (up from 41 percent in 2012).<sup>27</sup> However, some progress has been made towards achieving the exclusive breastfeeding targets: 42 percent of infants aged 0–6 months were exclusively breastfed in 2018,<sup>28</sup> up from 33 percent in 2012.<sup>29</sup>
14. *Smallholder productivity and income.* Smallholder farmers are responsible for 90 percent of national production even though they farm no more than 10 percent of the total arable land.<sup>30</sup> In 2021, 28 percent of all employment was in the agriculture sector.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. [Web page on SDG 13](#).

<sup>18</sup> United Nations. 2021 *Bilan commun pays* (Common country analysis, Benin).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> WFP. 2018. *National strategic review "Zero hunger" in Benin to 2030*.

<sup>21</sup> Government of Benin and WFP. 2022. *Benin: Analyse globale de la vulnérabilité, de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition* (Benin: Comprehensive vulnerability, food security and nutrition analysis) (provisional results, unpublished).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Government of Benin. 2011. *Protocole national de prise en charge de la malnutrition aiguë* (National protocol for the management of acute malnutrition).

<sup>24</sup> Government of Benin. 2019. *Enquête Démographique et de santé 2017–2018* (Demographic and health survey, 2017–2018).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others. 2022. *The State of Food and Nutrition Security in the World, 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*.

<sup>27</sup> Government of Benin. 2019. *Enquête Démographique et de santé 2017–2018* (Demographic and health survey, 2017–2018) and Government of Benin. 2013. *Enquête Démographique et de santé 2011–2012* (Demographic and health survey, 2011–2012).

<sup>28</sup> Government of Benin. 2019. *Enquête Démographique et de santé 2017–2018* (Demographic and health survey, 2017–2018)

<sup>29</sup> Government of Benin. 2013. *Enquête Démographique et de santé 2011–2012* (Demographic and health survey, 2011–2012).

<sup>30</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. 2014. *Agricultural situation report – Benin*.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank. 2021. *Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate) – Benin*.

15. Women perform between 60 and 80 percent of agricultural work and 44 percent of the work necessary to feed their families.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, discrimination against women persists in land ownership and succession rights, affecting their capacity to participate effectively in food security programming.
16. *Sustainable food system.* Although Benin is striving to diversify its agricultural production, its economy is still underpinned by subsistence agriculture. Intense and successive periods of drought and floods could affect food security by reducing water resources by up to 60 percent and food production by 6 percent by 2025 if adaptive measures,<sup>33</sup> such as more resilient crops and improved irrigation, are not effective. In addition, Benin has high levels of dry post-harvest losses: 16.8 percent for maize, 13.6 percent for rice and 10.5 percent for sorghum.<sup>34</sup>
17. Sixty percent of smallholder farmers cite climate-related challenges as a threat to their production.<sup>35</sup> Localized droughts and floods already affect thousands of people in the north (Malanville and Karimama) and south (Oueme, Mono and Couffo), pushing the agriculture sector to implement adaptive measures.<sup>36</sup> By 2030, the impacts of climate change could reduce corn yields by 21.6 percent and cotton yields by 0.9 percent.<sup>37</sup>

### **Progress on Sustainable Development Goal 17 targets**

18. *Capacity strengthening.* WFP and other United Nations entities support the Government with continuous monitoring of food security<sup>38</sup> and implementation of the nationwide analysis of vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition.<sup>39</sup> The Government has called on WFP to implement the national school feeding programme, with the specific mandate of building the capacity of national partners in preparation for the future transfer of operations management.
19. *Enhanced global partnership.* The Government of Benin is a member of the global School Meals Coalition and the President of Benin has been appointed as a champion of the coalition. South–South and triangular cooperation partnerships have been catalytic in strengthening national capacities and empowering young people, women and small businesses and driving innovation.
20. *Diversified resourcing.* In 2021, the Government carried out the first international bond issue dedicated to the financing of the SDGs and mobilized EUR 500 million. This operation, the first of its kind in Africa, marks the Government's commitment to achieving the SDGs.

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<sup>32</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. [Fact sheet: Benin – Women, agriculture and rural development: Role of women in agriculture.](#)

<sup>33</sup> Government of the Netherlands. 2018. [Climate Change Profile, Benin.](#)

<sup>34</sup> African Postharvest Losses Information System. [Dry weight loss: Benin - All crops - All years.](#)

<sup>35</sup> Government of Benin and WFP. 2022. *Benin: Analyse globale de la vulnérabilité, de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition* (Benin: Comprehensive vulnerability, food security and nutrition analysis) (provisional results, unpublished).

<sup>36</sup> Government of the Netherlands. 2018. [Climate Change Profile: Benin.](#)

<sup>37</sup> Government of Benin. 2022. [Plan national d'adaptation aux changements climatiques du Bénin](#) (National climate change adaptation plan).

<sup>38</sup> Through the *Cadre harmonisé d'identification des zones à risque et d'estimation des populations vulnérables au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest* (Cadre harmonisé for the identification of at-risk areas and the estimation of vulnerable populations in the Sahel and West Africa).

<sup>39</sup> Government of Benin and WFP. 2022. *Benin: Analyse globale de la vulnérabilité, de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition* (Benin: Comprehensive vulnerability, food security and nutrition analysis) (provisional results, unpublished).

## 1.4 Hunger gaps and challenges

21. Although food and nutrition security is a key policy priority outlined in a variety of policy documents and strategic plans, gains have been marginal. This underperformance is linked to a lack of resources and fragmented implementation, including insufficient coordination between institutions and inadequate coherence among stakeholder programmes.
22. Poor access to nutritious food is more a function of nutrition habits and the inadequate purchasing power of the most vulnerable people than a lack of food availability. The national poverty rate is 38.5 percent, with persistent disparities between rural and urban areas. In early 2023, 18.8 percent of the population were affected by food insecurity (IPC phases 2 to 4); 4.2 percent were severely food insecure (IPC phases 3 and 4).<sup>40</sup> Almost 83 percent of households are unable to afford a healthy diet and would therefore be gravely impacted in the event of further price rises.<sup>41</sup>
23. The food systems analysis<sup>42</sup> confirms that food and nutrition insecurity risks are linked to an unequal distribution of assets and inadequate access to natural resources, education and employment opportunities, particularly for women and girls. The analysis underscores the importance of addressing food security and nutrition through a food systems approach and highlights the linkages between supply chains, food environments, consumer behaviour and economic and social institutions that are connected to food. Further research is needed to support adequate action.<sup>43</sup>
24. Progress has stalled on achieving food and nutrition security<sup>44</sup> due to a combination of factors such as inadequate purchasing power, insufficient access to nutritious diets and clean water, the impacts of climate change and damage to ecological systems, insufficient access to nutrition and health information and services, unmet needs for training and innovation, limited opportunities linked to land and credit for women farmers, poor market access for smallholder farmers, suboptimal management of agricultural production (post-harvest losses and low transformation), poor resilience of vulnerable households and communities to climate change, increasingly violent extremism and gender-based violence. The effects of COVID-19 crisis, the Ukraine conflict and recent global food and energy price inflation have compounded the situation.
25. Non-contributory social protection is still at the early stages of development. The “ARCH” human capital insurance scheme is one of the flagship programmes designed and implemented by the Government since 2016 to support vulnerable populations and guarantee social protection. The national school feeding programme is also embedded in the social protection system.

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<sup>40</sup> Cadre harmonisé. 2023. *Cadre Harmonisé d'identification des zones à risque et des populations en insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel, en Afrique de l'Ouest et au Cameroun: Résultats de l'analyse de l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle aiguë courante en mars-mai 2023 et projetée en juin-août 2023* (Cadre harmonisé for the identification of at-risk areas and food- and nutrition-insecure populations in the Sahel, West Africa and Cameroun: Food and nutrition insecurity analysis results for March–May 2023 and forecast for June–August 2023).

<sup>41</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others. 2022. *The State of Food and Nutrition Security in the World, 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*.

<sup>42</sup> Government of Benin and WFP. 2022. *Benin: Analyse globale de la vulnérabilité, de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition* (Benin: Comprehensive vulnerability, food security and nutrition analysis) (provisional results, unpublished).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> WFP. 2018. *National strategic review “Zero hunger” in Benin to 2030*.

## **2. Strategic implications for WFP**

### **2.1 Achievements, lessons learned and strategic changes for WFP**

26. As confirmed by the preliminary findings of the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for 2019–2023, WFP's strategic orientation in Benin is rooted in real needs, notably building human capital through the implementation of national school feeding programme.
27. Under the CSP for 2019–2023, WFP has supported inclusive and high-quality education while building government capacity. WFP has been selected as a privileged government partner based on its expertise and comparative advantage. Its contribution to school feeding and related capacity was confirmed in the findings from the final joint evaluation of the national school feeding programme and the CSP evaluation. The coverage of national school feeding programme has been expanded to 75 percent of all public primary schools and most of the results expected were achieved, particularly in terms of improved enrolment, attendance and retention rates. However, the potential for local purchases from small-scale producers has not been fully exploited. Opportunities to support the local economy and harness the "greening" potential could be seized to maximize the impacts of national school feeding programme beyond educational and social security outcomes.
28. The CSP evaluation assessed WFP's support to the Government in addressing the root causes of food and nutrition insecurity as limited. While the evaluators considered WFP's nutrition and emergency response strategic outcomes to be relevant, underfunding and other factors were found to have prevented WFP from making a broader contribution and limited its perceived added value. The need for a stronger focus on anticipatory and preparedness measures and technical assistance to strengthen government capacity in emergency preparedness and response at the central and local levels has been identified as very important. A diversification of transfer modalities through the integration of cash could render assistance more efficient and meaningful.
29. A handover road map was developed in 2018 but has proven to be rather prescriptive, insufficiently aligned with the workings of local public management and administration and based on inadequate consideration of stakeholder incentive structures. Learning from that experience, WFP is now adopting new approaches to strengthening country capacity and national systems that focus on addressing problems and adapting solutions through an iterative process. Starting in early 2022, WFP engaged differently with the Government by positioning itself as a facilitator and convenor instead of providing ready-to-use solutions. In this new role, it aims to foster change through a co-creation process and a test-and-learn approach.
30. In terms of strategic shift, the school feeding component will remain central to WFP's portfolio and will be used as an entry point to all other components. WFP will also promote the development of a nutrition-sensitive food system and the local economy in order to increase the resilience and social cohesion of communities. The home-grown element of the national school feeding programme will be a focus area. WFP will support national emergency preparedness and response capacity, while retaining its readiness to provide direct support when necessary. Nutrition will be integrated in all interventions along with protection, accountability to affected populations, disability and inclusion, gender equality and women's empowerment, access to clean energy services and environmental sustainability.

### **2.2 Alignment with national development plans, the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and other frameworks:**

31. The CSP is aligned with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) for 2023–2026 and the Government's national action plan. The national school feeding policy sets the strategic orientation for the school feeding component of the CSP. In



addition, the CSP is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified by Benin in 2012, and the act on national promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. The CSP is aligned with the second and third pillars of the Government's national action plan and with UNSDCF outcomes 1 and 2. It also reflects the African Union's Agenda 2063, which calls for the pursuit of climate-smart agriculture and food security.

### **2.3 Engagement with key stakeholders**

32. WFP will facilitate responsible and accountable partnerships for strengthening national capacity, striving to ensure that policies and actions are coherent and encouraging multi-stakeholder participation in order to contribute to achieving zero hunger and strengthening emergency preparedness and response, social protection and food systems.
33. The CSP builds on ongoing partnerships and programmes and regular discussions held within the United Nations system and with government ministries and various organizations including civil society organizations and foundations. WFP continues to focus on providing technical assistance and enabling government-led change. The country office has compiled data, analysis and expert outputs to guide prioritization and has consulted with ministries, universities, private sector actors, donors and development partners. In addition, within the framework of the preparation of the UNSDCF, the country office participated in formal consultations and held informal consultations with organizations for people with disabilities, women's civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing marginalized groups to consider their needs and concerns. Memoranda of understanding and action plans signed with various stakeholders will be maintained.
34. WFP will continue to facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation to support the Government in skills enhancement and the sharing of systems and lessons learned, including through WFP's centres of excellence.

## **3. WFP strategic portfolio**

### **3.1 Direction, focus and intended impacts**

35. WFP will adopt an approach based on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, taking school feeding as entry point to ensure coherent, complementary and integrated interventions that help to meet essential needs while seeking to address the root causes of vulnerability in order to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, particularly SDG 2, and to make strong contributions to SDGs 1, 4, 5, 16 and 17, thereby supporting the protection and development of Benin's human, social and economic capital.
36. Through the CSP, WFP aims primarily at assisting the Government in the following three ways:
  - Strengthen national institutions and local actors in emergency preparedness, planning and response, including anticipatory action and recovery. In case of crisis, WFP will provide assistance to those affected to meet their direct and immediate essential needs.
  - Ensure that all schoolchildren benefit from healthy and nutritious meals by extending the school feeding programme to cover all public primary schools. Furthermore, WFP will use its nutrition-sensitive, sustainable and integrated approach to foster good nutrition and hygiene practices. WFP will also contribute to building the capacity of targeted food value chain actors, particularly smallholder farmers, to ensure more diversified and nutritious school meals and to contribute to sustainable local food systems.

- Provide technical assistance to strengthen government capacity in order to facilitate national ownership of school feeding operations through a co-design process.

### **3.2 Country strategic plan outcomes, WFP strategic outcomes, focus areas, expected outputs and key activities**

#### ***Country strategic plan outcome 1: People affected by shocks in Benin can meet urgent food and nutrition needs before, during and after shocks, by 2027***

37. WFP will provide technical assistance and capacity strengthening to targeted national institutions and local actors to anticipate, prevent, mitigate, prepare for and respond to shocks in a gender-responsive and inclusive manner.
38. WFP will be ready to provide food and nutrition assistance to people in urgent need by delivering rapid, cost-effective and accessible assistance where and when it is required, based on humanitarian principles and corporate and national targeting criteria that ensure an inclusive and equitable response. WFP will utilize cash and in-kind modalities to address immediate food and nutrition needs, considering the circumstances and reflecting the needs and dietary preferences of affected populations and ensuring the nutritional adequacy of the food basket. The response will be coordinated with and complementary to national emergency response systems to avoid delays and overlaps. It will also build on existing functional social protection systems, supporting a shock-responsive and nutrition-sensitive approach.

#### ***WFP strategic outcome***

39. CSP outcome 1 is aligned with WFP strategic outcome 1: People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs.

#### ***Focus area***

40. The focus area of CSP outcome 1 is crisis response.

#### ***Alignment with national priorities***

41. CSP outcome 1 is aligned with the third pillar of the Government's national action plan and contributes to UNSDCF outcome 1.

#### ***Expected outputs***

42. The following output will contribute to the achievement of CSP outcome 1:
  - Output 1.1: Food-insecure people affected by shocks receive assistance that meets their direct food and nutrition needs and benefit from the strengthened capacity of targeted national institutions and local actors to prevent, mitigate and respond to shocks.

#### ***Key activities***

*Activity 1: Provide food and nutrition assistance to shock-affected people, including school-children, to meet their needs and technical assistance to national institutions and local actors to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacities*

43. WFP will work with and strengthen the capacity of national counterparts, particularly the national agency for civil protection and the technical cell in charge of monitoring and managing food security and in consultation with all relevant partners in order to improve coordination and responsiveness to shocks.
44. WFP will strengthen engagement with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance with a particular attention to adaptive, nutrition-sensitive and gender-responsive social protection and will strengthen institutional capacity related to food and nutrition security

monitoring and analysis to inform emergency preparedness and response. Finally, WFP will leverage its comparative advantage in introducing innovation and digital solutions.

45. In the event of shocks and when needed, WFP will provide direct food and nutrition assistance to shock affected and vulnerable people. Transfer modalities will be chosen with consideration of context, feasibility and protection concerns. Targeting will be based on the national social protection scheme and vulnerability criteria related to shocks, food security and nutrition. WFP will advocate and prioritize the provision of life-saving support to poor and shock-affected women and girls. In collaboration with communities, WFP will use an inclusive approach that addresses accountability and protection issues and reflects differences linked to disability, gender and age while mitigating risks related to inclusion and exclusion and conflict sensitivity. The timing and duration of support may vary based on the severity of the shock.

### **Partnerships**

46. WFP will coordinate with partners at the national and regional levels and with government technical services. The organization will implement anticipatory action and emergency response in close collaboration with the local focal points of the Government's national civil protection and social protection agencies. To ensure that nutrition requirements are met, WFP will also leverage its ongoing partnerships with the Ministry of Health and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). As the agency lead of the emergency group, WFP will lead the food security working group and will seek out synergies with partners' interventions.

### **Assumptions**

47. Government cooperation in targeting and resource mobilization is a prerequisite to the achievement of CSP outcome 1. WFP will be able to contribute to this outcome provided that a network of reliable cooperating partners and financial service providers remains active in targeted areas and that these areas continue to be accessible, especially in the north.

### **Transition/handover strategy**

48. WFP will prioritize the transfer of technical knowledge, skills and systems to national counterparts at the central and local levels to ensure that emergency preparedness and response along with shock-responsive social protection are managed adequately and autonomously.

### ***Country strategic plan outcome 2: School-age children and communities in Benin have access to affordable, nutritious diets and basic social services as a result of the leveraging of the school feeding programme as an entry point for the achievement of enhanced nutrition, health and education outcomes, by 2027***

49. WFP will continue to support the Government in ensuring increased access to good quality education through the expansion of the national school feeding programme and improved, more widespread access to nutritious foods to further contribute to the protection and development of Benin's human capital. While the primary objective of the national school feeding programme is to reduce school dropouts and improve primary school completion rates, it can also contribute to the country's economic and social development.
50. Complementing activities under CSP outcome 1, WFP will ensure that a shock-sensitive approach is taken to school feeding. This should allow the programme to be adapted to evolving circumstances, ensuring the adequacy of the response, especially for people and communities who face climate hazards and regional security challenges, particularly in the north of the country.

51. Considering the evolving security situation in the north, the school feeding platform will also play an important role in fostering stability and peace. The continuity of the school meals services provides a sense of normality and stability for the future and enhances the legitimacy and visible presence and role of the State. It plays an important protective role by helping to keep children in schools who might otherwise be at risk of early marriage, gender-based violence or recruitment into armed groups. It contributes to strengthening social cohesion by mobilizing the community around the project. The contribution of local procurement to smallholder farmers' livelihoods can also reduce the economic drivers of conflict.
52. WFP will take into consideration and advocate embedding disability and inclusion, child protection and gender equality principles in the school feeding programme. WFP will also include climate-sensitive measures in the operationalization of school feeding and will use schools as an entry point for building social cohesion.

### ***WFP strategic outcome***

53. CSP outcome 2 is aligned with WFP strategic outcome 2: People have better nutrition, health, and education outcomes.

### ***Focus area***

54. The focus area of CSP outcome 2 is root causes.

### ***Alignment with national priorities***

55. CSP outcome 2 contributes to UNSDCF outcome 2 and is aligned with the second and third pillars of the Government's national action plan.

### ***Expected outputs***

56. The following outputs will contribute to the achievement of CSP outcome 2:
- Output 2.1: Schoolchildren benefit from nutritious and healthy meals every school day and are trained along with their communities in good nutrition and hygiene practices and climate-sensitive measures.
  - Output 3.1: Targeted food value chain actors, including smallholder farmers, benefit from climate-smart services and capacity building that increase their resilience and facilitate their access to markets, especially markets connected to school feeding.

### ***Key activities***

*Activity 2: Provide nutritious school meals to schoolchildren through an integrated and inclusive programme that benefits the community*

57. As the Government's partner of choice, WFP has been entrusted with supporting national efforts to achieve 100 percent of coverage of schools by the school feeding programme by the end of 2026. Most of the remaining canteens to be covered are located in urban and peri-urban areas. Consistent with activity 3 and in line with WFP's local and regional food procurement policy, WFP will promote purchases from smallholders, in particular women, to improve the availability of nutritious foods in schools. WFP plans to increase the use of cash transfers to schools and to continue its work with school canteen management committees, promoting leadership roles for women, in order to progressively develop their capacity to manage local procurement independently, thereby strengthening community management of school feeding. Finally, based on lessons learned from the implementation of the CSP for 2019–2023 related to supply chain constraints and challenges, WFP will strengthen its work on developing sustainable, efficient and effective supply chain models that can be transferred to the Government in the medium term. This will include the use of innovative and digital solutions that connect communities to economic opportunities.

58. WFP will use the results and recommendations of the Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis conducted in 2023 to adapt the school menus, which will in turn influence procurement approaches by putting more emphasis on fresh and diversified locally produced foods for better health and nutrition outcomes. Furthermore, WFP will analyse several different approaches, including in terms of cost-benefit, to increase the nutritional value of school meals through food diversification and food fortification.
59. WFP will implement capacity strengthening and social and behaviour change communication activities with parents' associations, schoolchildren, school feeding committees, teachers and cooks in order to promote good nutrition practices. This work will include support for nutrition surveillance, food safety, deworming and vaccination campaigns. Capacity strengthening will also be aimed at promoting gender equality and minimum protection standards that seek to develop a safe and empowering school environment for children, especially girls. In collaboration with partners, WFP will promote equitable and meaningful engagement with beneficiaries for the improvement of food storage and preparation, infrastructure and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to ensure these respond to the needs of women, men, girls and boys, while ensuring sanitary food preparation conditions and paying attention to energy conservation and environmental sustainability.
60. WFP will work with local NGOs to mobilize community support for the development of school gardens for pedagogical purposes, nutrition education and community and civic engagement.

*Activity 3: Provide technical assistance to targeted food value chain actors to improve the availability of locally produced nutritious food products, especially for school canteens*

61. The main objective of this activity is to improve the availability of locally produced and nutritious food products for school feeding, while contributing to improvements in the development of local nutrition-sensitive value chains, income streams and the food and nutrition security of the local community, especially women smallholder farmers.
62. WFP will build on the existing national structures related to key value chains and work with technical services, particularly extension services at the department and commune levels that provide direct support to smallholder farmer organizations and other actors. Processing, aggregation and delivery systems in support of local procurement will be important entry points. Special attention will be given to short food supply chains and the nutrition quality of food. WFP will leverage its presence throughout the country, its recognized expertise and experience in supply chain management and its network and innovation capacity to source, support and scale up high-potential solutions that will not only allow the handover of a sustainable school feeding model to the Government but also contribute to the economic empowerment of key actors along the value chain.
63. WFP will work with at least 100 small farmer organizations, representing no less than 9,000 farmers, and decentralized public institutions to support nutrition-sensitive value chains for crops such as maize, rice, cassava, beans, cotton seed oil and vegetables. Furthermore, WFP will promote the enhancement of smallholder farmers' knowledge of agricultural, post-harvest and supply chain management best practices and their access to markets, especially institutional markets such as the national school feeding programme. When feasible, WFP will prioritize capacity strengthening for women who are active in local food systems as they play an important role in food production and processing and can provide food to school canteens.
64. WFP will work on strengthening inclusive and nutrition-sensitive value chains to better impact nutrition by working with men and women along the chains to improve sustainability, including through food diversification and fortification. WFP plans to strengthen the capacity of industrial and semi-industrial food producers, food processor units and others involved

in fortifying food products using advocacy, training and the provision of technical and advisory services. WFP will furthermore pursue advocacy and policy advice in support of sustainable and inclusive food systems.

### **Partnerships**

65. WFP will continue building coalitions for sustainable results by playing a convenor role and will support the ministries responsible for agriculture, health, education and social affairs, and community organizations. The partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries is particularly critical to increasing the share of local procurement and its impact on the economy. Engagement with other United Nations entities, technical and financial partners, the private sector, foundations, NGOs and knowledge partners will be vital for the implementation of the proposed activities and will ensure that local production increases to cover the requirements of the school feeding programme. This work will build on and extend existing partnerships including with the other Rome-based agencies, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and international foundations to cover complementary services, foster more resilience in local food chains and harness positive collateral effects in terms of job creation, women's empowerment and economic growth.
66. WFP will continue its engagement on South-South and triangular cooperation, leveraging its centres of excellence. WFP will also work towards mobilizing the expertise of emerging countries that have had successful experiences in school feeding, rural development and sustainable farming.

### **Assumptions**

67. WFP will be able to contribute effectively to the achievement of this CSP outcome provided that a network of reliable cooperating partners remains active in targeted areas and that these areas remain accessible. Success will also depend on the support and investment in value chain components by the Government and partners. It will also depend on the implementation of the new co-designed and decentralized supply chain model for national school feeding programme under activity 4.

### **Transition/handover strategy**

68. The full handover of operations to the Government will occur beyond the timeframe of this CSP. Meanwhile, WFP will continue to support the Government in the development and implementation of the national school feeding model. A technical group has been set up to examine the supply chain building block of school feeding under the lead of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. Once local procurement is institutionalized and targeted organizations have acquired sufficient capacity and experience in supplying the national school feeding programme, WFP will share the model as part of the work carried under activity 4 and encourage its adoption by the Government.

### **Country strategic plan outcome 3: Targeted institutions and systems in Benin have strengthened capacity to implement school feeding and other inclusive programmes to promote food security and nutrition, by 2027**

69. WFP will be mainly supporting the Government through institutional and legal framework and policy development, capacity strengthening, and knowledge management and transfer. A co-design process to develop a nationally owned school feeding model is ongoing and will constitute a central element of the transition process.

### **WFP strategic outcome**

70. CSP outcome 3 is aligned with WFP strategic outcome 4: National programmes and systems are strengthened.

**Focus area**

71. The focus area of CSP outcome 3 is root causes.

**Alignment with national priorities**

72. Interventions under this CSP outcome focus on root causes and seek to build the long-term capacity of national and regional institutions to take full ownership and management of the national school feeding programme. This CSP outcome is aligned with the third pillar of the Government's national action plan and UNSDCF outcome 2.

**Expected outputs**

73. The following output will contribute to the achievement of CSP outcome 3:

- Output 4.1: School-age children and communities benefit from the strengthened capacity of the systems and institutions of the national integrated nutrition-sensitive school feeding programme and the operationalization and gradual transition of the programme to national authorities.

**Key activities**

*Activity 4: Provide technical assistance to national institutions to enable them gradually to take operational ownership of the national school feeding programme*

74. To ensure full national ownership and the sustainability of the school feeding programme, it is envisioned that the implementation of the programme will be gradually transferred from WFP to the Government. WFP will work jointly with the Government to identify questions and scenarios that pertain to how the national system can take over the school feeding programme. For this purpose, WFP will support and facilitate a process through which the Government and WFP can identify bottlenecks together then co-design solutions to address them. An iterative approach will allow government institutions to identify a model that is both technically correct and administratively feasible. At the same time, WFP will continue its support for the development of an equitable and inclusive institutional, legal and governance framework for school feeding in Benin.
75. WFP will work under the lead of a coalition of six ministries and agencies, supported by all partners involved, to develop a national implementation model that is suitable for Benin. Efforts to strengthen operational capacity will be an integral part of this. The work will be structured under the six building blocks that have been co-identified and validated by the coalition with a view to ensuring equitability and inclusivity. The building blocks cover food procurement and supply chain; meal management; financing and administration; monitoring and accountability; community organization; and infrastructure. WFP will also support evidence generation, analysis, knowledge management and sharing, and advocacy as part of the transition. A continuous assessment of national systems will be carried out, including through the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) exercise.
76. WFP will continue to refer to the national capacity strengthening plan for 2022–2026, which was approved by the Government in 2022. WFP will support the Government in the development of a national school feeding law, jointly with other partners. WFP will advocate sectoral and intersectoral policies and operational synergies that integrate in the school feeding model the different needs, experience and priorities of the people of Benin within complementary sectors such as agriculture, health and nutrition while supporting links with the broader social protection framework. In addition, WFP will engage with decentralized authorities to increase local ownership of school feeding.

### **Partnerships**

77. While collaborating with all relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the proposed activities, WFP will work in close coordination with the ministries involved in the handover of the national school feeding programme to the Government of Benin including those responsible for education, agriculture and finance, and the presidential education unit (*cellule présidentielle de l'éducation*). To ensure a full cross-sectoral approach, the ministries in charge of health, social affairs, local governance, and development and the coordination of government action will be other key partners with which a sustained engagement will be essential to cover complementary services and foster local-level community organization. Collaboration with the WFP centres of excellence in Brazil and Côte d'Ivoire and work through the School Meals Coalition will also ensure adequate support for the development of the school feeding policy and legal framework, the identification of sustainable financing options and the generation of evidence for the development of the national model.
78. The country office also plans to increase its engagement with other United Nations entities and local knowledge multipliers such as the national institute for training and research in education, universities, and research and innovation bodies.

### **Assumptions**

79. WFP will be able to contribute effectively to the achievement of CSP outcome 3 provided that the Government continues to invest in capacity strengthening efforts, complementing WFP's contributions with its own resources. General political stability and normal staff turnover in institutions are also assumed. Finally, the adoption of an institutional framework will be essential in the handover and transition process.

### **Transition/handover strategy**

80. Activity 4 under this CSP outcome is a significant part of the transition strategy for the national school feeding programme. A sustainable, efficient and effective model will be co-developed by strengthening country capacity, co-designing national systems, strengthening the operational capacity of relevant institutions and supporting the enabling environment for a gradual transition to full ownership and management of the national school feeding programme by the Government. The co-designing process will build on the lessons learned, good practices from implementation and relevant evidence. All pilots and operational improvements in the WFP model will be tested under the national model before their potential scale-up is considered to maximize chances for success and sustainability. The socioeconomic situation and the duration of policy change and the gradual handover of the national school feeding programme to the Government will influence the duration of the required support.

## **4. Implementation arrangements**

### **4.1 Beneficiary analysis**

81. Children are the primary focus of WFP's activities in Benin. Two million primary schoolchildren will be covered by the national school feeding programme by 2026. Beneficiary numbers for activity 2 are designed to match school enrolment data projections for Benin and will be adjusted as needed based on official data.
82. The projected numbers of beneficiaries for activity 1 are based on the country office's experience during floods since 2019 and take into account the fragility of the northern regions. The WFP country office will integrate protection and accountability to affected populations in all its operations to ensure that the assistance provided is safe, appropriate and received in a dignified manner.



83. Beneficiaries of capacity strengthening under activity 2 and of social and behaviour change communication initiatives under activity 3 will be prioritized where possible for home-grown school feeding (HGSF), as described in activity 3.
84. Capacity strengthening will be provided under CSP outcome 3, benefiting public institutions linked to the national school feeding programme. It will complement capacity strengthening efforts implemented under each activity in relation to emergency preparedness and response, social protection and local and community organizations.

#### **4.2 Transfers**

85. WFP's primary transfer modality for school feeding will be food. WFP will provide primary schoolchildren with in-kind meals that cover most of their daily nutritional requirements and reflect local food habits. Further to this, WFP plans to increase the use of CBT as a transfer modality for schools from 2.5 percent of assistance in 2024 to 10.5 percent in 2027 as a way of supporting local purchases and nutrition under activity 2. Support for food value chains through HGSF will be complemented by technical assistance, training and equipment for food fortification and post-harvest loss reduction in order to improve food quality and strengthen market access.
86. WFP will work with financial service providers to deliver cash assistance. WFP will also train school committees and organize meetings with local community leaders to ensure proper implementation.
87. The country office expects to increase the use of CBTs to cover 80 percent of beneficiaries by the end of the CSP under activity 1, prioritizing households headed by women.

#### **4.3 Country office capacity and profile**

88. The country office conducted a strategic workforce review exercise in November 2022. WFP's human resource capacity is generally high, but the scale-up and the progressive shifts related to transfer modalities and capacity strengthening will require an increase in staffing and an expansion of certain fields of expertise. The review helped to identify the core skills required to implement the CSP, with a 9 percent increase in staffing between 2022 and 2025 followed by a targeted reduction in the workforce phasing in 2026 and 2027. Key roles required for the handover of school feeding operations will be retained. WFP acknowledges that this plan will affect workforce segments differently; among the areas that require special attention are operations, CBT management, nutrition, supply chain, social protection, capacity strengthening, digitalization and technology,<sup>45</sup> innovation, partnerships and data analytics and literacy.
89. WFP is in the process of decentralizing its activities in Benin to the sub-offices. Staffing levels at the country office will be reinforced in line with required organizational alignments to ensure adequate capacity, and new provisions for staffing have been accounted for in budgets.

#### **4.4 Partnerships**

90. WFP will cooperate and coordinate with the Government (as the main donor) at the national and regional levels and will work with local authorities to strengthen their coordination and planning capacity. The CSP will be implemented under the overall guidance of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in collaboration with the ministries in charge of education and a range of government institutions including the offices in charge of food security analysis and response planning; technical ministries in charge of health and nutrition, social protection and agriculture; and the ministry in charge of coordinating government action.

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<sup>45</sup> The country office has started the deployment of the "last mile solution" in 2023 and the full rollout is expected to be finished by August 2023.

91. WFP will seek to diversify its donor base, exploring opportunities for partnerships with international financial institutions and international climate funds (such as the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) to secure long-term and stable resources for the CSP. WFP will further its evidence-based advocacy towards the international community to foster greater donor interest for emergency preparedness, response and anticipatory action in Benin while leveraging its strategic positioning as one of the Government's partners of choice.
92. WFP will work on the joint advocacy, design, implementation and monitoring of its activities with a wide range of local NGOs, especially those that represent groups at risk of marginalization and vulnerability, farmers' associations, civil society organizations and local communities and counterparts. This approach will enable WFP to expand the reach of its capacity strengthening work and enhance the national ownership of its programmes. Knowledge partnerships will be central in generating evidence and knowledge to inform programming and decision-making. WFP will also capitalize on existing South-South cooperation initiatives and support from its centres of excellence to cover proposed activities linked to knowledge transfer and technological innovation. The School Meals Coalition will be also an important platform for strengthening the promotion of local procurement, HGSF and knowledge exchange to improve the quality and sustainability of the national school feeding programme.
93. WFP will seek to engage with the private sector on innovative financing, delivery mechanisms, information and communications technology and enhanced supply chains, with a particular focus on nutrition.

## **5. Performance management and evaluation**

### **5.1 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements**

94. The CSP monitoring and evaluation system will ensure robust gender-responsive monitoring and measure programme performance in line with the WFP corporate results framework. WFP will revise the Benin monitoring strategy during the CSP to enhance monitoring and evaluation capabilities by improving data quality, ensuring that the system is gender-inclusive and disability-responsive and developing harmonized monitoring tools.
95. WFP will conduct baseline surveys, assessments and collect qualitative data to measure progress on outcome, output and cross-cutting indicators. A community feedback mechanism with a toll-free access number will be set up to identify issues related to implementation, protection and other matters and ensure accountability. If access to the programme area is jeopardized, remote monitoring will be carried out using computer-assisted telephone interviews and third-party monitoring.
96. To support evidence-based policy design and implementation, WFP's regular monitoring will be supplemented by gender-sensitive food security and nutrition assessments, which will incorporate conflict-sensitivity considerations.
97. Gender perspectives will be emphasized during the monitoring and analytical phases to ensure a balance of inputs from women and men. Monitoring will strive to capture, analyse and report, by age and gender, the positive and any possible negative impacts of activities on the lives of women, men, girls and boys and the contribution of WFP's activities to gender outcomes. The country office will ensure sufficient gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation capacity, including through the screening of cooperating partners, and gender and disability disaggregated data reporting will be provided where possible.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Using the Washington Group Questions to disaggregate data by disability.

98. WFP will monitor progress towards the results outlined in the plan of action for the national school feeding programme and related indicators on a quarterly basis. WFP will help strengthen government tools for developing and using nutrition-sensitive indicators in the national school feeding programme and will set up gender-responsive monitoring mechanisms that measure progress towards approved indicators. The new base value for Benin's national capacity index for school meals will be established under the SABER exercise conducted by WFP in 2023.
99. WFP will select and develop indicators and qualitative research approaches to monitor and assess the progress of the implementation of the national capacity development and the handover of interventions as well as improvements in sectoral and intersectoral policies especially in agriculture, social protection, health, nutrition and gender equality.
100. A CSP mid-term review is planned for mid-2025. In 2025, the country office will also conduct a decentralized evaluation of the school feeding component, jointly with the Government, and a CSP evaluation will be carried out in the penultimate year of the CSP to generate evidence, contribute to learning and inform the future direction of programming. WFP will contribute to the UNSDCF evaluation.

## **5.2 Risk management**

### ***Strategic risks***

101. Climate shocks and malnutrition could exacerbate current vulnerabilities, especially in northern regions. To mitigate this risk, WFP intends to contribute to building long-term resilience, as well as supporting the Government in establishing effective early warning systems.
102. Insufficient coordination among line ministries could affect the development of a national implementation model for the school feeding programme and the handover of the programme to the Government. To mitigate these risks, WFP will enhance its capacity building work with the Government to improve coordination and collaboration among relevant ministries, providing technical inputs, expertise and facilitation.
103. Security issues in the north with slow but persistent encroachments by non-state armed groups from the central Sahel constitute a threat to Benin and to the implementation of school feeding and emergency response activities. To mitigate this risk WFP will continue to monitor the situation very closely and will work with the Government to develop contingency plans, concept of operations, to ensure continuity in the provision of school meals through the use of take-home rations and preparation in case of a significant increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons.

### ***Operational risks***

104. The quality and reliability of local procurement will depend partly on the involvement and capacity of school canteen management committees, smallholder farmers' organizations and national structures. To mitigate risks related to food safety and local supply chain failures, WFP will foster linkages between extension services and decentralized government structures and other partners, train all relevant stakeholders and work closely with partner NGOs on monitoring.
105. WFP will strengthen its community feedback mechanisms so that they address gender, disability and protection challenges, including gender-based violence risks. They will include both referral and escalation mechanisms and facilitate the use of results to inform programming, taking an inclusive approach and making sure that the feedback mechanisms are accessible to the people at greatest risk of being left behind. WFP partners with UNFPA, organizations that promote women's rights and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance on the prevention of gender-based violence and on raising the awareness of direct and indirect beneficiaries.

**Fiduciary risks**

106. The WFP anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy is integrated into legal agreements with cooperating partners. Some limitations related to the private sector and market structure could pose the risk of non-compliance with WFP procurement rules and regulations. WFP will expand its roster of vendors, enhance competitive processes and ensure that potential suppliers are aware of WFP procurement standards.
107. To address risks of sexual exploitation and abuse, WFP will provide training to employees and partners, sensitize beneficiaries to this issue and strengthen internal reporting procedures.

**Financial risks**

108. Regular food security, market and supply chain assessments and monitoring will be carried out, and WFP will maintain the flexibility to adjust its activities to mitigate financial risks related to inflation, funding shortfalls and economic shocks.

**5.3 Social and environmental safeguards**

109. In line with WFP's environmental and social safeguards framework, all WFP activities will be screened with a view to preventing, avoiding or mitigating any potential negative direct or indirect impacts. Environmental and social plans will be developed on a project basis in accordance with corporate mandatory safeguard screening. They will reflect commitments set out in WFP's policies on climate change, the environment and resilience building for food security and nutrition and will ensure that fundamental human rights and gender equality are respected and protected in all WFP activities. Activities will entail the adequate use and management of natural resources, discouraging practices that are not environmentally friendly, taking climate-related risks into account, raising awareness of climate change and including targeted activities that enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability.

**6. Resources for results****6.1 Country portfolio budget**

110. The country portfolio budget of USD 386,427,465 covers strengthened national school feeding and nutrition programmes and country capacity strengthening, an adequate emergency response and preparedness portfolio and increased support to smallholders. About 6.7 percent of the budget is allocated to crisis response, 91 percent is allocated to activities related to integrated school feeding under CSP outcome 2 and 1.6 percent is for institutional capacity strengthening. Approximately 1 percent of the budget (USD 3,828,000) will be allocated to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

<b>COUNTRY PORTFOLIO BUDGET (USD)</b>						
<b>Country strategic plan outcome</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	1	6 208 239	6 222 187	6 275 226	6 486 705	<b>25 192 358</b>
2	2	70 832 425	80 859 721	96 288 548	96 351 785	<b>344 332 479</b>
	3	2 187 699	2 456 900	2 517 972	2 472 131	<b>9 634 702</b>
3	4	2 128 707	1 649 032	1 613 314	1 876 872	<b>7 267 926</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>81 357 071</b>	<b>91 187 840</b>	<b>106 695 060</b>	<b>107 187 494</b>	<b>386 427 465</b>

## **6.2 Resourcing outlook and strategy**

111. Over recent years, WFP has successfully managed to maintain its government and private sector donor base, ensuring long-term and stable resources to its school feeding operations, while attracting new donors to secure additional funding for crisis response. The Government of Benin has reaffirmed its commitment to funding the new CSP as part of its strong collaboration with WFP, which remains its partner of choice for the implementation of the national school feeding programme. This underscores Benin's commitment to the state-led development and preservation of human capital. A new funding agreement should be prepared in 2026 for the third phase of the national school feeding programme and should fund the last year of the CSP.
112. WFP will look to diversify its resource base by further engaging with donor governments and international financial institutions, leveraging its strategic positioning with the Government. WFP will build partnerships with non-traditional and emerging donors including multi-donor thematic funds such as the Green Climate Fund and the SDG Fund.
113. Regarding crisis response and emergency operations, WFP will advocate greater support to preparedness and raise donor awareness on the need for stabilization initiatives in view of the deteriorating security situation in northern Benin. The results-based structure underpinning the CSP will help to mobilize resources by demonstrating results and impact, highlighting value for money to donors and the relevance of WFP's interventions in humanitarian and development fields.

**ANNEX I****LOGICAL FRAMEWORK BENIN COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN (2024–2027)****SDG 2: Zero hunger****SDG target 1: Access to food**

**Country strategic plan outcome 1: People affected by shocks in Benin can meet urgent food and nutrition needs before, during and after shocks, by 2027**

WFP strategic outcome 1: People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs

Nutrition-sensitive

Focus area: crisis response

**Assumptions**

Availability of funding to implement the activity

**Outcome indicators**

Consumption-based coping strategy index, reduced CSI

Dietary diversity score

Economic capacity to meet essential needs

Emergency preparedness capacity index

Food consumption score

Food consumption score – nutrition

Livelihood coping strategies for essential needs

Minimum diet diversity for women and girls of reproductive age

Number of national policies, strategies, programmes and other system components contributing to zero hunger and other SDGs enhanced with WFP capacity strengthening support

Proportion of children 6-23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet

## Activities and outputs

### 1. Provide food and nutrition assistance to shock-affected people, including school-children, to meet their needs and technical assistance to national institutions and local actors to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacities (URT-1.2: Unconditional resource transfer)

1.1 Food-insecure people affected by shocks receive assistance that meets their direct food and nutrition needs and benefit from the strengthened capacity of targeted national institutions and local actors to prevent, mitigate and respond to shocks (Output category A: Resources transferred, Standard output 1.1: Food insecure and crisis-affected populations have access to nutritious food and cash-based assistance, restored assets and services to meet their urgent needs)

1.1 Food-insecure people affected by shocks receive assistance that meets their direct food and nutrition needs and benefit from the strengthened capacity of targeted national institutions and local actors to prevent, mitigate and respond to shocks (Output category B: Nutritious food provided, Standard output 1.1: Food insecure and crisis-affected populations have access to nutritious food and cash-based assistance, restored assets and services to meet their urgent needs)

1.1 Food-insecure people affected by shocks receive assistance that meets their direct food and nutrition needs and benefit from the strengthened capacity of targeted national institutions and local actors to prevent, mitigate and respond to shocks (Output category C: Capacity development and technical support provided, Standard output 1.1: Food insecure and crisis-affected populations have access to nutritious food and cash-based assistance, restored assets and services to meet their urgent needs)

**Country strategic plan outcome 2: School-age children and communities in Benin have access to affordable, nutritious diets and basic social services as a result of the leveraging of the school feeding programme as an entry point for the achievement of enhanced nutrition, health and education outcomes, by 2027**

WFP strategic outcome 2: People have better nutrition, health and education outcomes

Focus area: root causes

Nutrition-sensitive

## Assumptions

Full community involvement

## Outcome indicators

Annual change in enrolment

Attendance rate

Graduation rate

Number of complementary school health and nutrition interventions delivered alongside school feeding delivered by WFP

Number of national policies, strategies, programmes and other system components contributing to zero hunger and other SDGs enhanced with WFP capacity strengthening support

Percentage of targeted smallholder farmers reporting increased production of nutritious crops

Percentage of targeted smallholders selling through WFP-supported farmer aggregation systems

Retention rate, by grade

Value of smallholder sales through WFP-supported aggregation systems

Volume of smallholder sales through WFP-supported aggregation systems

## **Activities and outputs**

### **2. Provide nutritious school meals to schoolchildren through an integrated and inclusive programme that benefits the community (SMP-1.5: School based programmes)**

2.1 Schoolchildren benefit from nutritious and healthy meals every school day and are trained along with their communities in good nutrition and hygiene practices and climate-sensitive measures (Output category A: Resources transferred, Standard output 2.3: School-age children and adolescents have access to school-based health and nutrition packages)

2.1 Schoolchildren benefit from nutritious and healthy meals every school day and are trained along with their communities in good nutrition and hygiene practices and climate-sensitive measures (Output category B: Nutritious food provided, Standard output 2.3: School-age children and adolescents have access to school-based health and nutrition packages)

2.1 Schoolchildren benefit from nutritious and healthy meals every school day and are trained along with their communities in good nutrition and hygiene practices and climate-sensitive measures (Output category C: Capacity development and technical support provided, Standard output 2.3: School-age children and adolescents have access to school-based health and nutrition packages)

2.1 Schoolchildren benefit from nutritious and healthy meals every school day and are trained along with their communities in good nutrition and hygiene practices and climate-sensitive measures (Output category D: Assets created, Standard output 2.3: School-age children and adolescents have access to school-based health and nutrition packages)

2.1 Schoolchildren benefit from nutritious and healthy meals every school day and are trained along with their communities in good nutrition and hygiene practices and climate-sensitive measures (Output category E: Social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) provided, Standard output 2.3: School-age children and adolescents have access to school-based health and nutrition packages)

2.1 Schoolchildren benefit from nutritious and healthy meals every school day and are trained along with their communities in good nutrition and hygiene practices and climate-sensitive measures (Output category N: School feeding provided, Standard output 2.3: School-age children and adolescents have access to school-based health and nutrition packages)



**3. Provide technical assistance to targeted food value chain actors to improve the availability of locally produced nutritious food products, especially for school canteens (SMS-1.8: Smallholder agricultural market support programmes)**

3.1 Targeted food value chain actors, including smallholder farmers, benefit from climate-smart services and capacity building that increase their resilience and facilitate their access to markets, especially markets connected to school feeding (Output category A: Resources transferred, Standard output 2.1: Food-insecure populations have increased and sustained access to nutritious food, cash-based assistance, new or improved skills and services to meet their food and nutrition needs)

3.1 Targeted food value chain actors, including smallholder farmers, benefit from climate-smart services and capacity building that increase their resilience and facilitate their access to markets, especially markets connected to school feeding (Output category C: Capacity development and technical support provided, Standard output 2.1: Food-insecure populations have increased and sustained access to nutritious food, cash-based assistance, new or improved skills and services to meet their food and nutrition needs)

3.1 Targeted food value chain actors, including smallholder farmers, benefit from climate-smart services and capacity building that increase their resilience and facilitate their access to markets, especially markets connected to school feeding (Output category F: Smallholder farmers supported, Standard output 2.1: Food-insecure populations have increased and sustained access to nutritious food, cash-based assistance, new or improved skills and services to meet their food and nutrition needs)

3.1 Targeted food value chain actors, including smallholder farmers, benefit from climate-smart services and capacity building that increase their resilience and facilitate their access to markets, especially markets connected to school feeding (Output category G: Skills, capacities and services for climate adapted livelihoods, Standard output 2.1: Food-insecure populations have increased and sustained access to nutritious food, cash-based assistance, new or improved skills and services to meet their food and nutrition needs)

**SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals**

**SDG target 9: Capacity building**

**Country strategic plan outcome 3: Targeted institutions and systems in Benin have strengthened capacity to implement school feeding and other inclusive programmes to promote food security and nutrition, by 2027**

WFP strategic outcome 4: National programmes and systems are strengthened

Nutrition-sensitive

Focus area: root causes

**Assumptions:**

Availability of funding for implementation

**Outcome indicators**

Number of complementary school health and nutrition interventions delivered alongside school feeding delivered by WFP

Number of national policies, strategies, programmes and other system components relating to school health and nutrition/including school feeding enhanced/developed with WFP capacity strengthening support and/or advocacy

Number of people covered (WFP indirect beneficiaries) by national social protection systems or programmes to which WFP provided technical support

Resources mobilized (USD value) for national systems contributing to zero hunger and other SDGs with WFP capacity strengthening support

SABER school feeding index

Transition strategy for school health and nutrition/including school feeding developed with WFP support

**Activities and outputs****4. Provide technical assistance to national institutions to enable them gradually to take operational ownership of the national school feeding programme (SMP-1.5: School based programmes)**

4.1 School-age children and communities benefit from the strengthened capacity of the systems and institutions of the national integrated nutrition-sensitive school feeding programme and the operationalization and gradual transition of the programme to national authorities (Output category C: Capacity development and technical support provided, Standard output 4.1: National actors have increased capacity and knowledge to enhance policies, strategies, processes and programmes, contributing to the achievement of zero hunger and other SDGs)

**SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals****CC.1. Protection****Cross-cutting indicators**

CC.1.1: Percentage of beneficiaries reporting no safety concerns experienced as a result of their engagement in WFP programmes

CC.1.2: Percentage of beneficiaries who report they experienced no barriers to accessing food and nutrition assistance

CC.1.3: Percentage of beneficiaries who report being treated with respect as a result of their engagement in programmes

CC.1.4: Number of women, men, boys and girls with disabilities accessing food/cash-based transfers/commodity vouchers/capacity strengthening services

CC.1.5: Country office meets or exceeds UNDIS entity accountability framework standards concerning accessibility (QCPR)

**CC.2. Accountability****Cross-cutting indicators**

CC.2.1: Percentage of beneficiaries reporting they were provided with accessible information about WFP programmes, including PSEA

CC.2.2: Country office meets or exceeds United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) standards on consulting organizations of persons with disabilities (QCPR)

CC.2.3: Country office has a functioning community feedback mechanism

CC.2.4: Country office has an action plan on community engagement

CC.2.5: Number of children and adults who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian, development, protection and/or other personnel who provide assistance to affected populations (IOM, OHCHR, UNDP)

**CC.3. Gender equality and women's empowerment****Cross-cutting indicators**

CC.3.1: Percentage of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers, disaggregated by transfer modality

CC.3.2: Percentage of food assistance decision making entity members who are women

**CC.4. Environmental sustainability****Cross-cutting indicators**

CC.4.1: Proportion of field-level agreements (FLAs)/memorandums of understanding (MOUs)/construction contracts (CCs) for CSP activities screened for environmental and social risks

**CC.5. Nutrition integration****Cross-cutting indicators**

CC.5.1: Percentage of people supported by WFP operations and services who are able to meet their nutritional needs through an effective combination of fortified food, specialized nutritious products and actions to support diet diversification

CC.5.2: Percentage of WFP beneficiaries who benefit from a nutrition-sensitive programme component

## **SDG 2: Zero hunger**

### **CC.1. Protection**

#### **Cross-cutting indicators**

- CC.1.1: Percentage of beneficiaries reporting no safety concerns experienced as a result of their engagement in WFP programmes
- CC.1.2: Percentage of beneficiaries who report they experienced no barriers to accessing food and nutrition assistance
- CC.1.3: Percentage of beneficiaries who report being treated with respect as a result of their engagement in programmes
- CC.1.4: Number of women, men, boys and girls with disabilities accessing food/cash-based transfers/commodity vouchers/capacity strengthening services
- CC.1.5: Country office meets or exceeds UNDIS entity accountability framework standards concerning accessibility (QCPR)

### **CC.2. Accountability**

#### **Cross-cutting indicators**

- CC.2.1: Percentage of beneficiaries reporting they were provided with accessible information about WFP programmes, including PSEA
- CC.2.2: Country office meets or exceeds United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) standards on consulting organizations of persons with disabilities (QCPR)
- CC.2.3: Country office has a functioning community feedback mechanism
- CC.2.4: Country office has an action plan on community engagement
- CC.2.5: Number of children and adults who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian, development, protection and/or other personnel who provide assistance to affected populations (IOM, OHCHR, UNDP)

### **CC.3. Gender equality and women's empowerment**

#### **Cross-cutting indicators**

- CC.3.1: Percentage of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers, disaggregated by transfer modality
- CC.3.2: Percentage of food assistance decision making entity members who are women

**CC.4. Environmental sustainability****Cross-cutting indicators**

CC.4.1: Proportion of field-level agreements (FLAs)/memorandums of understanding (MOUs)/construction contracts (CCs) for CSP activities screened for environmental and social risks

**CC.5. Nutrition integration****Cross-cutting indicators**

CC.5.1: Percentage of people supported by WFP operations and services who are able to meet their nutritional needs through an effective combination of fortified food, specialized nutritious products and actions to support diet diversification

CC.5.2: Percentage of WFP beneficiaries who benefit from a nutrition-sensitive programme component

## ANNEX II

BENEFICIARIES BY COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME, OUTPUT AND ACTIVITY								
Country strategic plan outcome	Output	Activity	Beneficiary group	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
1	1.1	1	Girls	24 200	24 200	24 200	24 200	96 800
			Boys	24 800	24 800	24 800	24 800	99 200
			Women	35 500	35 500	35 500	35 500	142 000
			Men	15 500	15 500	15 500	15 500	62 000
			<b>Total</b>	<b>100 000</b>	<b>100 000</b>	<b>100 000</b>	<b>100 000</b>	<b>400 000</b>
2	2.1	2	Girls	690 000	782 000	920 000	920 000	951 050
			Boys	810 000	918 000	1 080 000	1 080 000	1 116 450
			Women					
			Men					
			<b>Total</b>	<b>1 500 000</b>	<b>1 700 000</b>	<b>2 000 000</b>	<b>2 000 000</b>	<b>2 067 500</b>
	3.1	3	Girls					
			Boys					
			Women	4 000	4 000	4 000	4 000	4 000
			Men	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000
			<b>Total</b>	<b>9 000</b>	<b>9 000</b>	<b>9 000</b>	<b>9 000</b>	<b>9 000</b>
<b>Total (without overlap)</b>				<b>1 609 000</b>	<b>1 809 000</b>	<b>2 109 000</b>	<b>2 109 000</b>	<b>2 476 500</b>

**ANNEX III**

<b>FOOD RATION (<i>g/person/day</i>) AND CASH-BASED TRANSFER VALUE (<i>USD/person/day</i>) BY COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY</b>				
	<b>Country strategic plan outcome 1*</b>		<b>Country strategic plan outcome 2</b>	
	<b>Activity 1</b>		<b>Activity 2</b>	
<b>Beneficiary type</b>	<b>Crisis-affected populations (refugees, crisis-affected host population)</b>		<b>Schoolchildren (boys, girls)</b>	
<b>Modality</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>CBTs</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>CBTs</b>
Maize	450		75	
Rice			75	
Beans	60		15	
Yellow split peas			15	
Vegetable oil	25		10	
Salt	5		3	
Total kcal/day	1 931		725	
% kcal from protein	12		10.6	
Cash-based transfer ( <i>USD/person/day</i> )		0.5		0.119
Number of feeding days per year	90		175	

\* A new minimum expenditure basket exercise is being undertaken and the food basket and transfer values may be adjusted during the implementation of the new CSP.



**ANNEX IV**

<b>TOTAL FOOD/CASH-BASED TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS AND VALUE</b>		
<b>Food type/cash-based transfer</b>	<b>Total (mt)</b>	<b>Total (USD)</b>
Cereals	183 686	130 041 312
Pulses	36 402	34 567 090
Oil and fats	12 190	24 927 402
Mixed and blended foods		
Other	3 629	1 141 791
<b>Total (food)</b>	<b>235 907</b>	<b>190 677 595</b>
Cash-based transfers		20 783 242
<b>Total (food and cash-based transfer value)</b>	<b>235 907</b>	<b>211 460 837</b>

**ANNEX V**

<b>INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN BY COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN OUTCOME (USD)</b>				
	<b>SDG target 2.1/ WFP strategic outcome 1</b>	<b>SDG target 2.1/ WFP strategic outcome 2</b>	<b>SDG target 17.9/ WFP strategic outcome 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>CSP outcome 1</b>	<b>CSP outcome 2</b>	<b>CSP outcome 3</b>	
<b>Focus area</b>	<b>Crisis response</b>	<b>Root causes</b>	<b>Root causes</b>	
Transfer	21 008 780	280 414 711	5 276 418	<b>306 699 910</b>
Implementation	1 280 800	32 932 558	1 150 751	<b>35 364 109</b>
Adjusted direct support costs	1 365 216	19 016 281	397 175	<b>20 778 672</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	23 654 796	332 363 550	6 824 344	<b>362 842 690</b>
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	1 537 562	21 603 631	443 582	<b>23 584 775</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 192 358</b>	<b>353 967 181</b>	<b>7 267 926</b>	<b>386 427 465</b>

## Acronyms

CBT	cash-based transfer
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HGSF	home-grown school feeding
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NGO	non-governmental organization
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework