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For consideration

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

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

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Malawi for 2019–2023. The evaluation was conducted from February to December 2022.
2. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its effectiveness in contributing to strategic outcomes, its efficiency in implementing CSP activities and the factors explaining its performance.
3. Taking a utilization-focused and consultative approach, the evaluation served both accountability and learning purposes and informed the preparation of a new CSP for Malawi.
4. The evaluation team made five recommendations, four of which are strategic and one operational.
5. The following response sets out whether WFP management agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MALAWI (2019–2023)						
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Responsible WFP office or division (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office or division (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Deadline for completion	Status of implementation
Priority: High 1. Build on progress made in developing an integrated programme. (Deadline: December 2023 and throughout CSP implementation)	Country office management and programme unit, including monitoring and evaluation and other relevant functions	Agreed				
1.1 Revise the theory of change and use it to inform the structure of the next country strategic plan and to explore opportunities to better capture the results of integration, including through indicators that go beyond corporate reporting requirements. (August 2023)		Agreed (with December 2023 as the deadline, in time for the start of the new CSP in 2024)	The country office will revise the theory of change for the current CSP and use it to inform the development of the next CSP.	Country office programme unit, including monitoring and evaluation unit (regional bureau programme and evidence generation units)	March 2023	Completed
			The country office will revise the logical framework of the CSP and include any additional indicators from the revised compendium of indicators.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit	December 2023	Under way
			With support from the regional bureau, the country office monitoring and evaluation unit will develop and test country-specific qualitative measurements.	Country office monitoring and evaluation unit (regional bureau evidence generation unit)	December 2023	Under way

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<p>1.2 Establish greater integration between programme, supply chain and other functions at the country office internally and through external forums (such as Nations sustainable development cooperation framework discussions).</p> <p>(December 2025)</p>		Agreed	<p>The country office's programme and supply chain units are enhancing cross-functional integration and fostering increased collaboration with partners so as to leverage the inherent strengths and the expertise of each partner in areas such as capacity strengthening, food systems, home-grown school feeding, disaster preparedness, anticipatory action and nutrition. An example of this work is a joint exercise in modelling the dynamics of food systems, which will play a role in shaping the food system initiatives of the country office. The office is committed to sustaining this integrated approach within WFP and in its engagement with external partners. As co-lead of the food security and transport and logistics clusters, WFP is in a good position to implement this integrated approach.</p>	Country office programme and supply chain units	December 2025	Under way

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			The country office will proactively identify opportunities for further external collaboration with key stakeholders, particularly through the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework, capitalizing on its leadership role in strategic priority area 4 “adapt to climatic change, reverse environmental degradation and support energy transformation”.			
Priority: High 2. Expand on the strategy for a phased withdrawal in which WFP plays a stronger role as an “enabler.” (Deadline: January 2024 and throughout CSP implementation)	Country office management and programme and partnerships units	Agreed				

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<p>2.1 Develop a more strategic approach to country capacity strengthening grounded in capacity gap assessments conducted with the Government. (December 2023)</p>		<p>Agreed (with June 2024 as the deadline because Tropical Cyclone Freddy delayed the start of this work, which should be based on the new CSP following its approval)</p>	<p>The country office will develop a road map for its work on institutional capacity strengthening which will be used as a tool for gaining support from stakeholders, exploring pathways to self-sufficiency and monitoring the progress made under various interventions.</p>	<p>Country office programme and supply chain units (headquarters Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service, regional bureau country capacity strengthening unit, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development and the Department of Disaster Management Affairs)</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>Not started</p>
<p>2.2 Articulate and communicate a clearer strategy for institutional sustainability, including WFP advocacy with the Government on domestic financing for proven programming approaches. (January 2024 and throughout implementation)</p>		<p>Agreed (with June 2026 as the deadline to allow more time for the implementation of this action, which will be based on new CSP following its approval)</p>	<p>The country office will advocate the allocation of increased domestic resources to national crisis response, develop a road map for a phased and realistic handover of its school feeding interventions to the Government, support the gradual integration of resilience activities into existing national programmes and strengthen the coordination capacity of partners.</p>	<p>Country office programme, supply chain and partnerships units (regional bureau innovative finance team)</p>	<p>June 2026</p>	<p>Under way</p>

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2.3 Clearly communicate to beneficiaries WFP's intentions with regard to the transition of beneficiaries and review the parameters of the transition model so that communities are able to sustain benefits once they transition out of WFP support. (January 2024 and throughout implementation)		Agreed (with December 2024 as the deadline to allow more time for careful planning and external consultations)	The country office will strengthen the transition strategy for the integrated resilience programme, focusing specifically on the timing of the transition, the locations of the communities that are ready to transition away from WFP assistance, and how to ensure the effective implementation of the transition.	Country office programme unit (regional bureau programme unit)	December 2024	Under way
			The country office will develop a brief that communicates clear messages on the transition for sharing with partners and facilitating the "cascading" of information into the communities in the integrated resilience programme.	Country office programme unit	December 2024	Not started
Priority: High 3. Refine strategic position and programme directions for the next country strategic plan. (Deadline: November 2023)	Country office management and programme unit (regional bureau and relevant headquarters units in the programme function)	Agreed				

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<p>3.1 Enhance WFP's strategic positioning in relation to the humanitarian–development nexus, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) clarifying WFP's strategy, approach and positioning in resilience building and the link to early recovery (could include building evidence on “cash-plus”, jobs for youth programming and scaling up of livelihood work with refugees); and b) articulating and communicating WFP's strategy for social protection, which emphasizes the sustainability of social safety nets. <p>(November 2024)</p>		<p>Agreed (with November 2024 as the deadline; the draft CSP for 2024–2028 outlines WFP's overall strategy and approach for resilience and early recovery interventions)</p>	<p>WFP's approach is to integrate early recovery interventions into resilience building activities whenever feasible. Examples in Malawi include the use of conditional transfers in interventions aimed at creating household and community assets that address deforestation, soil erosion and other challenges. Where feasible, unconditional transfer programmes (including for refugees) will include complementary activities based on simple, low-risk technology, thereby creating linkages to strategic outcome 3 in the new CSP (“people have improved and sustainable livelihoods”) and increasing self-reliance. WFP led the formulation of the national “cash plus” guidelines, which encourage the inclusion of conditional food or cash-based transfers during the lean season response, with targeted people undertaking community work such as reforestation initiatives.</p>	<p>Country office programme unit</p>	<p>November 2024</p>	<p>Under way</p>

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			As co-lead of the food security and logistics and transport clusters, WFP is able to include its early recovery plans in government-led planning documents, such as the lean season response plan and post-disaster needs assessments. The country office also includes the plans in proposals presented to specific donors and shares them with its government, United Nations and donor partners during in-country meetings with donors, engagement with government staff and field visits.			
			The country office will enhance its strategy for social protection and communicate it to stakeholders.	Country office programme unit (regional bureau social protection unit)	June 2024	Not started
3.2 Refine WFP's approach to strengthening sustainable food systems in Malawi based on food systems mapping. (January 2025)		Agreed	The country office will use a causal loop diagram approach based on a food systems mapping exercise to inform its work in this area.	Country office supply chain and programme units (regional bureau programme unit)	January 2025	Under way

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3.3 Build on nutrition-sensitive programming that uses a life-cycle approach and is integrated in other programmes as a means of addressing moderate acute malnutrition. (November 2023)		Agreed	The country office will redouble its efforts to mobilize resources for the scale-up of nutrition-sensitive interventions that use the life-cycle approach.	Country office programme unit	November 2023	Under way
3.4 In the refugee response, continue advocacy with the Government on the comprehensive refugee response framework and enhance communications channels with refugee communities/leaders and other stakeholders. (December 2024)		Agreed (with December 2024 as the deadline for reporting purposes)	The country office will continue to advocate with the Government on the comprehensive refugee response framework.	Country office management and programme unit	December 2024	Under way
		Agreed (with December 2024 as the deadline for reporting purposes)	The country office will enhance its channels for communication with the refugee and other communities through, for example, more regular stakeholder meetings. WFP has engaged with the recently elected refugee leaders with a view to managing beneficiaries' expectations given the difficulties in mobilizing resources for food assistance programmes in protracted refugee situations.	Country office management, programme unit	December 2024	Under way

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Priority: Medium 4. Scale up partnerships and collaboration for impact and sustainability. (Deadline: End of CSP period)	Country office management and supply chain, programme and partnerships units (regional bureau partnerships unit and headquarters Rome-based agencies and Committee on World Food Security, private partnerships and fundraising and strategic partnerships divisions)	Agreed				
4.1 Strengthen private sector food production and supply chain (transport/distribution/storage) partnerships in support of food systems development and nutrition. (January 2026)		Agreed	With the support of experts in food safety and quality, the country office will strengthen the capacity of local Super Cereal suppliers in order to better support the region by providing nutritious food commodities.	Country office supply chain unit (regional bureau supply chain unit)	January 2026	Under way
			The country office will map potential private sector partners in food systems and establish partnerships where possible.	Country office supply chain unit (regional bureau supply chain unit)	January 2026	Not started

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			The country office will continue to engage with key national actors in enhancing local food production capacity.	Country office supply chain unit	January 2026	Under way
			The country office will continue to implement local and regional procurement of food crops for which Malawi has a comparative advantage in terms of production, such as pulses and rice.	Country office supply chain unit	January 2026	Under way
4.2 Provide greater strategic emphasis to the relationship with the other Rome based agencies – in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – as key partners in food systems capacity development. (January 2024)		Agreed	The country office will establish a joint action plan with the other Rome-based agencies and other relevant United Nations entities in Malawi as key partners in the development of food systems capacities.	Country office programme unit and management	January 2024	Under way
4.3 Prioritize partnerships that support innovation and enhance the sustainability of programming, expanding country office efforts to work with private sector and international financial institutions. (December 2025)		Agreed (with December 2025 as the deadline for reporting purposes)	The country office will continue to partner with the Government at all levels, other United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and other development partners on enhancing climate-smart sustainable livelihoods and increasing market opportunities for targeted households and communities.	Country office programme and supply chain units	December 2025	Under way

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			The country office will scale up its engagement with the private sector to explore the options for a sustainable scale-up of crop insurance schemes and the piloting and scale-up of innovative technologies.	Country office programme and supply chain units	December 2025	Under way
			The country office will foster partnerships with academic and research institutions with a view to improving the quality and analysis of data on food and nutrition security. The evidence generated will support advocacy on policy development and national investments from the Government.	Country office programme and supply chain units (regional bureau programme and supply chain units)	December 2025	Under way
Priority: High 5. Enhance the approach to addressing the root causes of gender inequality and advancing the economic empowerment of women. (Deadline: January 2024)	Country office programme unit (regional bureau gender adviser)	Agreed				
5.1 Explore partnerships for more gender-transformative work. (January 2024)		Agreed	The country office will train stakeholders, including gender officers in the Government and implementing partners, in the gender-transformative approaches used in WFP's resilience activities.	Country office programme unit (regional bureau programme unit)	January 2024	Under way

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			The country office will build evidence on effective approaches to, and emerging good practices in, gender-transformative work.	Country office programme unit (regional bureau gender unit)	January 2024	Not started
			The country office will explore collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Population Fund and women's rights organizations with a view to enhancing gender-transformative actions, including the mitigation and, where possible, prevention of gender-based violence.	Country office programme unit	January 2024	Under way
5.2 Strengthen gender analysis to inform the next country strategic plan and integrated context analysis. (November 2023)		Agreed	Building on previous assessments, the country office will conduct a comprehensive gender analysis to inform the planning and implementation of the new CSP and integrated context analysis.	Country office programme unit (regional bureau gender unit)	November 2023	Under way