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Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Madagascar (2019–2023)

Executive summary

The evaluation of the country strategic plan for Madagascar for 2019–2023 was conducted between April 2022 and April 2023 and covered WFP's strategy, interventions and systems during the period from 2018 to September 2022. Taking a utilization-focused, consultative approach, the evaluation served both accountability and learning purposes and has informed the preparation of the next country strategic plan. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementing the plan and the factors explaining its performance.

The country strategic plan marked a change in WFP's approach, from a focus on operation and programme-based planning to country-level strategic planning aimed at facilitating integration among sectors, focus areas and long-term objectives.

While WFP made major efforts to guide its programmes by drawing on existing evidence, certain activities were not prioritized beyond the southern regions, even though there was evidence that other geographical areas were highly exposed to risks and vulnerable to food insecurity. WFP's planning documents are aligned with government strategies, and there are promising agreements between WFP and its state partners, while links with local partners are also developing. On the other hand, there are opportunities for exploring and strengthening partnerships with other United Nations entities, including through joint programming.

WFP has demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in continuing to deliver on the "saving lives" part of its mandate in the face of repeated shocks in the country. It has achieved significant results,

In line with WFP evaluation policy (2022) (WFP/EB.1/2022/4-C), to respect the integrity and independence of evaluation findings the editing of this report has been limited and as a result some of the language in it may not be fully consistent with the World Food Programme's standard terminology or editorial practices. Please direct any requests for clarification to the Director of Evaluation.

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particularly under the strategic outcomes focused on school feeding and capacity strengthening. To date, however, the country strategic plan does not appear to function as an integrated programme, particularly in the area of resilience.

Overall, WFP has paid attention to cross-cutting objectives and has used innovative tools to achieve some of those objectives, but there is room for improvement and the further integration of work on specific themes such as emergency preparedness, accountability to affected populations and climate change adaptation. More efforts are needed to ensure that the WFP approach facilitates strategic links at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, and there is insufficient consideration and study of the impacts of WFP's crisis response on the development actions that should follow.

Among the main factors affecting performance, WFP has been more successful in attracting funds for crisis response than for resilience building activities, partly because of its reputation among donors as a humanitarian actor. Improved monitoring of activities has provided WFP and implementing partners with a clear picture of progress in programme implementation, enabling them to take corrective action where necessary. WFP's partnerships have potential and are constantly improving, with opportunities to strengthen synergies with national institutions at the technical level and to foster collaboration with development actors, including the other Rome-based agencies. Understaffing issues persist, including a lack of the staff profiles and skills suited to long-term or development activities.

The evaluation made five recommendations focused on enhancing integrated risk management, including preparedness; developing an advocacy programme; generating stronger evidence on resilience; intensifying the focus on “do no harm”; and improving integration across strategic outcomes.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Madagascar (2019–2023) (WFP/EB.1/2024/5-A/2) and management response (WFP/EB.1/2024/5-A/2/Add.1) and encourages further action on the recommendations set out in the report, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

Introduction

Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Madagascar for 2019–2023 was commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation. It serves both accountability and learning purposes and informs the design of the next CSP for Madagascar.
2. The evaluation covered the activities implemented by WFP under the transitional interim CSP (T-ICSP) for January 2018 to June 2019 and the CSP for July 2019 to December 2023. It was conducted between April 2022 and April 2023 by an external independent team using a theory-based, mixed-methods approach.
3. The main intended users of the evaluation are the WFP country office in Madagascar, the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, technical divisions at headquarters in Rome, the WFP Executive Board, the Government of Madagascar, partner United Nations entities and donors. Other potential users include representatives of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and the beneficiaries of WFP's interventions.

Context

4. Located off the east coast of Africa, Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world and has a population of 28.2 million inhabitants,¹ of whom 49.9 percent are women and girls.² Sixty-one percent of the population live in rural areas³ and the average age is 22.4 years.⁴ The overall fertility rate is four children per woman, and the rate among adolescents is 121 births per 1,000 girls.⁵
5. Between 1999 and 2021, Madagascar's score on the Human Development Index improved by 14.9 percent to reach 0.501.⁶ Despite that progress, however, Madagascar ranked 173 out of the 191 countries in the index in 2021. In 2018, 70.3 percent of the population was affected by multidimensional poverty,⁷ and in 2020, only 16.4 percent had access to electricity and 47 percent to potable water.⁸
6. During the period from 2019 to 2021, an estimated 2.8 million people were seriously food insecure,⁹ and in 2022 the Global Hunger Index ranked Madagascar 119 out of 121 countries.¹⁰ The food situation remains alarming, and child malnutrition persists. The number of children under 5 years of age affected by stunting was 40.2 percent in 2020,¹¹ and the prevalence of anaemia among women of childbearing age was 37.8 percent in 2019.¹²

¹ National statistics institute. 2021. [Madagascar en chiffres](#).

² World Bank. 2021. [Population, female \(% of total population\) – Madagascar](#).

³ World Bank. 2021. [Rural population \(% of total population\) – Madagascar](#).

⁴ National statistics institute. 2020. [Troisième recensement général de la population et de l'habitation \(RGPH-3\)](#).

⁵ World Bank. 2020. [Fertility rate, total \(births per woman\) – Madagascar](#); and [Adolescent fertility rate \(births per 1,000 women ages 15–19\) – Madagascar](#).

⁶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2022. [Human Development Report 2021/2022. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World](#).

⁷ National statistics institute and UNDP. 2021. [Analyse de la pauvreté multidimensionnelle à Madagascar](#).

⁸ Ministry of Economy and Finance. 2021. [Deuxième rapport de Madagascar pour l'examen national volontaire sur les Objectifs de développement durable 2021](#).

⁹ FAOSTAT .2021. [Data on food security](#).

¹⁰ Global Hunger Index. 2023. [Madagascar country page](#).

¹¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2021. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all](#).

¹² FAOSTAT. 2019. [Suite of Food Security Indicators](#).

7. Owing to its geographical position, Madagascar is affected by intense meteorological and climate phenomena such as recurrent droughts, floods and cyclones. The 2022 cyclone season was one of the most disruptive of recent decades, affecting nearly 1 million people in the first half of 2022 (see figure 1).¹³

TABLE 1: MADAGASCAR SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Total population (million) (1)	28.2	2021
	Population, female (% of total population) (2)	49.9	2021
	Rural population (% of total population) (2)	61	2021
	Life expectancy at birth (years) (2)	67	2022
	Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 births) (2)	50	2018
	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women and girls of ages 15–19) (2)	121	2020
	Human development index (rank) (3)	173 of 191 countries	2021
	Population living in multidimensional poverty % of total population) (4)	70.3	2018
	Global hunger index (rank) (5)	119 of 121 countries	2022
	Prevalence of moderate and severe stunting (% of children under 5) (6)	40.2	2020
	Agriculture, forestry and fishing value added % of gross domestic product) (2)	24.7	2020
	Employment in agriculture (% of total employed population) (2)	74	2021

Sources: (1) National statistics institute. 2021. *Madagascar en chiffres*; (2) World Bank. *Madagascar country data*; (3) United Nations Development Programme. 2022. *Human Development Reports: Madagascar*; (4) National statistics institute and UNDP. 2021. *Analyse de la pauvreté multidimensionnelle à Madagascar*; (5) Global Hunger Index. 2023. *Madagascar country page*; (6) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2021. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all*.

WFP country strategic plans

8. In 2017, WFP developed a T-ICSP for the period from January 2018 to June 2019, which was informed by the findings of the mid-term evaluation of the preceding protracted relief and recovery operation.¹⁴ Under the T-ICSP, WFP intended to continue positioning itself as a leading actor in crisis response, implement more resilience-building activities, support

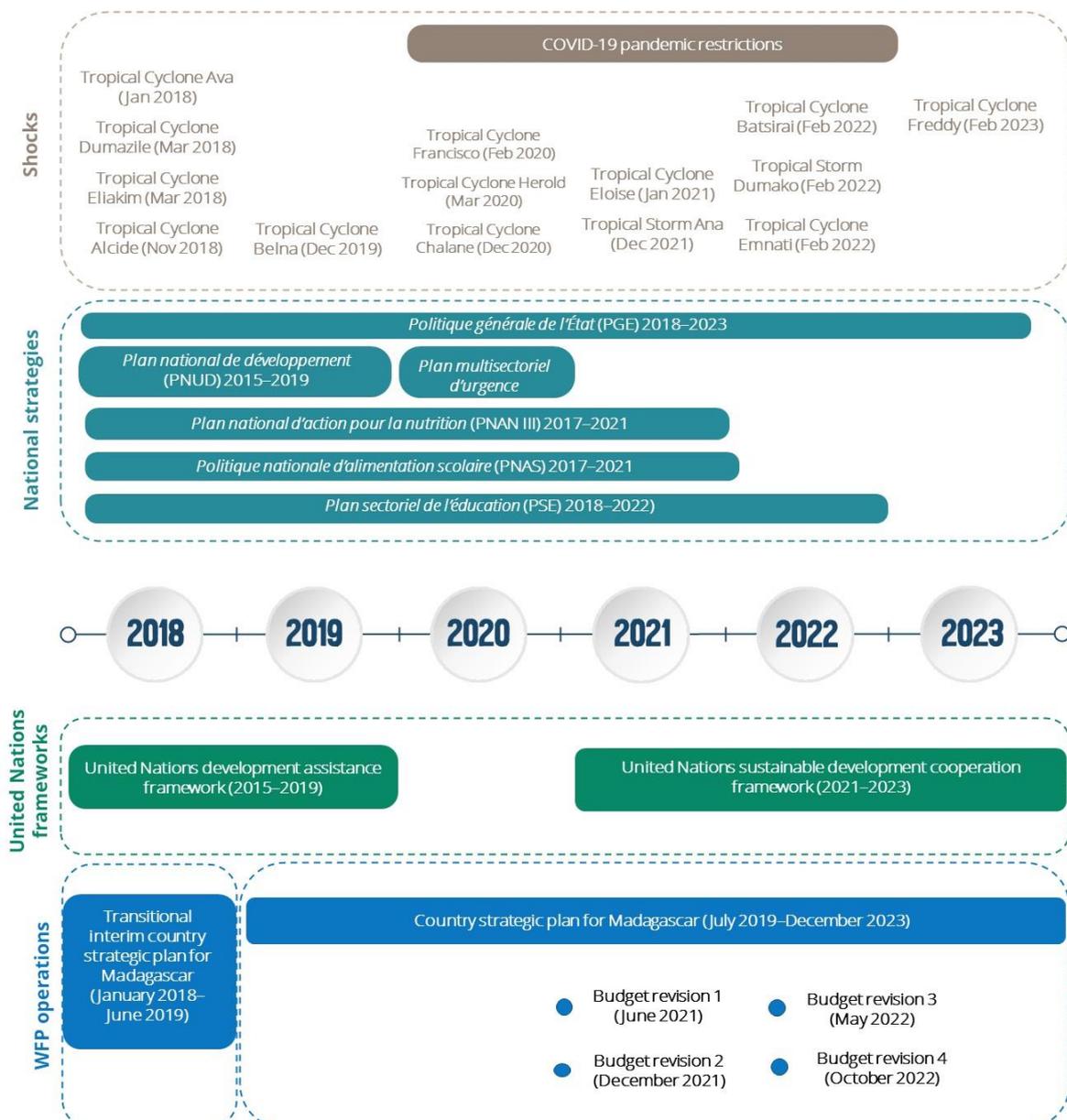
¹³ WFP. 2022. Internal Situation Report. 30 June 2022.

¹⁴ WFP. 2017. *Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200735. Response to food security and nutrition needs of population affected by natural disasters, and resilience building of food insecure communities in south-western, southern and south-eastern regions of Madagascar: mid-term evaluation of WFP Operations (January 2015–June 2017)*.

national counterparts in translating policies into action at the community level, contribute to the Scaling Up Nutrition initiative and integrate the gender dimension into all interventions. The total cost of the T-ICSP was initially estimated at USD 59.7 million for approximately 1.5 million beneficiaries, but after four revisions the final budget reached USD 114.4 million for nearly 2 million beneficiaries.

- In 2018, WFP designed a five-year CSP covering the period from July 2019 to June 2024. Focusing on five strategic outcomes, the CSP had a similar structure to the previous T-ICSP and was approved by the Executive Board in June 2019. Within the United Nations development assistance framework for 2015–2019, the integrated strategy for the Grand Sud and the 2018 zero hunger strategic review, it aimed to support the Government’s efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 on zero hunger and 17 on partnership for the goals. In December 2021, following the adoption of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) for Madagascar covering the period from 2021 to 2023, the timeframe of the CSP was reduced by six months, to end in December 2023.

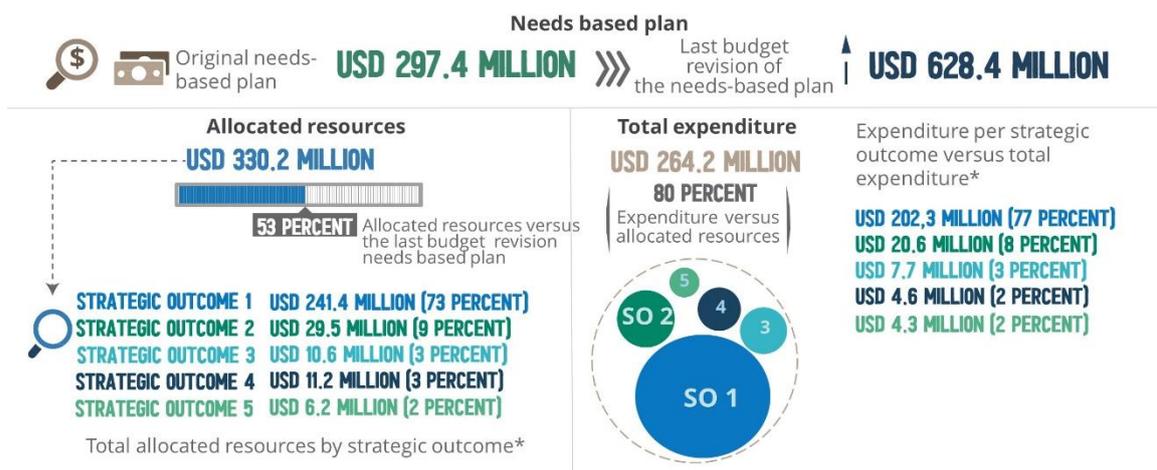
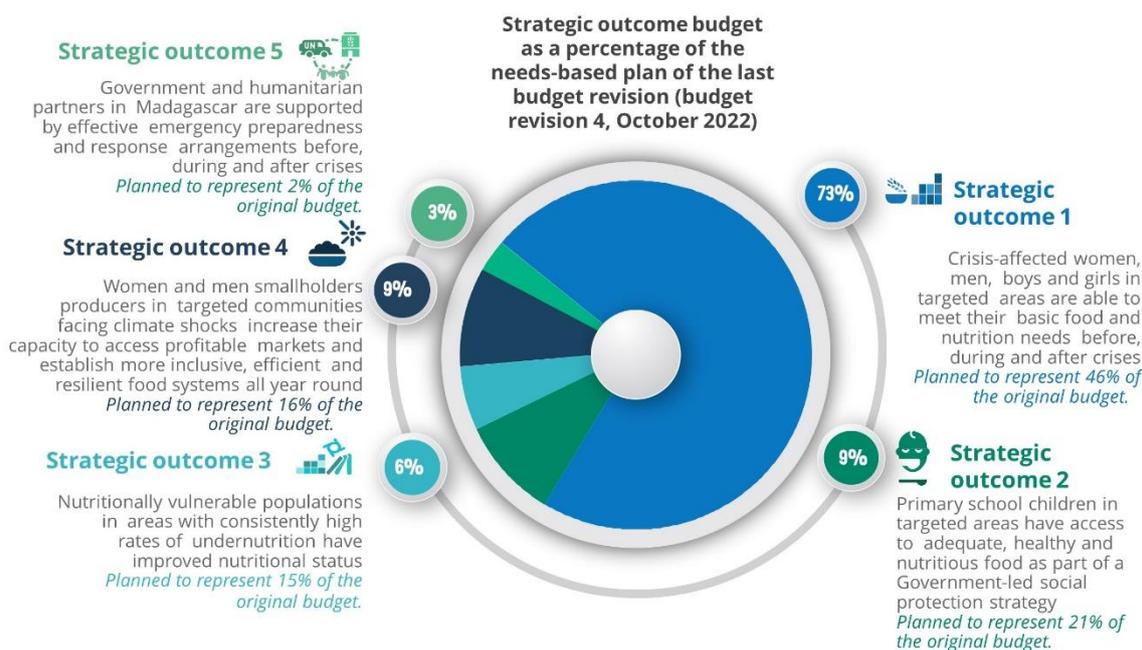
Figure 1: Country context and WFP operational overview in Madagascar, 2018–2023



Source: Elaborated by the Office of Evaluation based on the evaluation report.

10. Between July 2019 and October 2022, the needs-based plan for the CSP increased from USD 297.4 million to USD 628.4 million under four budget revisions, while the number of planned beneficiaries increased from approximately 3.1 million to nearly 4.7 million. As of October 2022, the overall funding level of the CSP was 43 percent of the needs-based plan. The United States of America was the largest bilateral donor, accounting for 41 percent of the total resources allocated, followed by Germany, with 9 percent. Resources were spread unevenly among strategic outcomes, with the highest levels of funding directed to strategic outcome 2 on school feeding, at 60 percent, and strategic outcome 1 on crisis response, at 58 percent.

Figure 2: Madagascar country strategic plan (2019–2023) strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures



* Percentages of allocated resources and expenditures by strategic outcome do not add up to 100 percent because resources were also allocated and spent to non-strategic outcome purposes.

Sources: Madagascar annual country report 1-A cumulative financial overview, extracted 27 November 2022; and Crisis response revision of Madagascar country strategic plan (2019–2023) and corresponding budget increase (Budget revision 4).

Evaluation findings

To what extent is the country strategic plan evidence-based and strategically oriented to meet the needs of the most at-risk and vulnerable individuals?

Relevance to needs

11. WFP made significant efforts to manage and harmonize multiple sources of data so as to inform the development of its programmes effectively. WFP's production and use of the evidence on which the CSP was built were strong, but the evidence base on which activities were designed is not always clear, and further efforts are required in the areas of resilience building, long-term programming and emergency preparedness, including cost-benefit analyses.
12. In terms of geographical targeting, WFP prioritized its activities in the southern regions of the country in view of the mobilization and operational capacities of the country office and in line with the complementary efforts of the Government and other partners. Nevertheless, national data on nutrition clearly indicates that there are pockets of malnutrition outside the southern region. Among the immediate humanitarian needs in the south, access to water should be prioritized, according to beneficiaries. WFP's resilience programming has begun to address those concerns and there is potential for scaling up this work.

Alignment with national priorities

13. The WFP portfolio is strategically aligned with national policies and strategies and there are promising agreements between WFP and its state partners under all strategic outcomes. For example, WFP's school feeding activities are based on national policies, and links with local partners are also developing.
14. However, government stakeholders noted an absence of adequate operational budgets for carrying out most, if not all, of the activities related to WFP's support, and the Government faces difficulties in medium and long-term planning in areas related to disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness and response.

Coherence with United Nations partners

15. Overall, partnerships with other United Nations entities were not a strong feature of the CSP, particularly where WFP was the only entity on the ground, such as in the south of the country. Some exceptions were recognized, including WFP's close collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank on some humanitarian work, such as the development of joint action plans for enhancing activities related to social protection and cash-based transfers, and with UNDP and the International Labour Organization on gender and human rights issues, particularly support for women's groups.
16. WFP successfully played the role of service provider for the humanitarian community, particularly in telecommunications and in air transport through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), and WFP's logistics expertise was made available to humanitarian actors on request.

Internal coherence and integration

17. CSP interventions are currently implemented in separate programmatic "silos" without formal links and concrete synergies among strategic outcomes. For example, the creation of community gardens is encouraged under three separate strategic outcomes, and opportunities for harmonization and cross-learning were missed. Efforts are being made to improve the synergies and integration among interventions, but a lack of institutionalization, time constraints and limited resources have hindered progress.

Strategic positioning in an evolving environment

18. Throughout the CSP cycle, WFP has seen an increase in funding for crisis response, allowing it to address repeated humanitarian emergencies caused by cyclones, droughts and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, but the level of funding for resilience building has gradually decreased. WFP has had to adapt quickly to meet the needs of individuals affected by numerous shocks, focusing on rapid humanitarian response and mobilizing funding and resources to strengthen supply chains and support partners.
19. While WFP's role in saving lives is acknowledged and its presence is relevant in responses to rapid-onset hazards such as cyclones, several stakeholders – including government counterparts, donors and civil society actors – question its strategic positioning in addressing long-term structural, socioeconomic and environmental crises such as droughts in the southern regions.

What are the extent and quality of WFP's specific contributions to the strategic outcomes of the country strategic plan in Madagascar?***Contributions to strategic outcomes***

20. Overall, WFP has managed to achieve solid results under strategic outcomes 2 and 5, but less so under strategic outcome 3. Results under strategic outcomes 1 and 4 were variable across activities and years, as follows.

Strategic outcome 1 (crisis response)

21. WFP provided unconditional and conditional (through asset creation activities) food and cash-based transfers for individuals and communities affected by natural shocks and COVID-19 and for specific vulnerable population groups, reaching an average of 1.2 million beneficiaries per year. Overall, coverage was good and helped to stabilize food security. Targets for infrastructure rehabilitation were achieved, but the intrahousehold dilution of rations was underestimated and the nutritional intake, including that of iron, vitamin A and protein, was low, especially among women.

Strategic outcome 2 (school feeding)

22. Under strategic outcome 2, WFP aimed to improve school attendance and retention and strengthen national capacities. Results were positive overall, despite the smaller than planned food rations. A major drop in school attendance rates in 2021 is attributable to COVID-19. In 2021, WFP introduced cash-based transfers aimed at diversifying children's meals and supporting local production. Regarding institutional support, WFP collaborates with state services to enhance school management, but more efforts are needed in strengthening capacities for food procurement and storage.

Strategic outcome 3 (nutrition)

23. WFP's results under nutrition activities were moderate overall, with targeting identified as the main weakness. Outcome indicators showed mixed results, with dietary diversity and children's diets falling below expectations while the coverage of and adherence to nutrition interventions surpassed the targets in 2020 and 2021. Chronic malnutrition rates improved in the south, and in 2022 the increased availability of resources enabled better coverage of vulnerable individuals, following WFP's advocacy of the expansion of interventions. Capacity strengthening efforts at the community level enabled key actors to gain a better understanding of interventions and to coordinate them. Through its capacity strengthening efforts, WFP supported the development of several key national nutrition policies, such as the national strategy for food fortification, and helped private sector companies to fortify their products and sell them on the market on a wider scale.

Strategic outcome 4 (resilience building)

24. The CSP focused on geographically targeted and integrated resilience building efforts that built on the learning from and achievements of previous resilience projects and a rigorous analysis of the potential socioeconomic benefits at the community level, including those related to the innovative introduction of insurance mechanisms. However, interventions were relatively small in scale and insufficient to counter the impact of shocks and the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. There is potential for greater collaboration with other United Nations entities with complementary expertise, particularly FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Overall, more evidence is needed to confirm the potential and effects of WFP's resilience building activities in Madagascar.

Strategic outcome 5 (support for the Government and partner agencies)

25. WFP's interventions under strategic outcome 5 were highly appreciated by its partners, particularly its implementation of UNHAS activities and its telecommunications support. WFP's capacity strengthening initiatives for the national bureau for risk and disaster management, while relevant, do not currently provide the bureau with the opportunity to acquire strong capabilities in risk management. The most visible of WFP's actions in emergency preparedness were those that it led as the implementer, such as the operation of UNHAS or the establishment of early warning and knowledge management systems. However, WFP did not articulate a clear position for itself with regard to a comprehensive multi-actor approach to cross-sector preparedness or integrated risk management in line with the Sendai Framework for Action.¹⁵

Cross-cutting issues

26. Overall, WFP has paid attention to cross-cutting objectives and applied innovative tools to achieve some of those objectives. However, achievements in the gender dimension were undermined by a lack of comprehensive gender analysis.

Gender equality

27. WFP has implemented tools and initiatives to promote gender equality. The targeting of pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls for nutrition-sensitive interventions has been successful, particularly through activities such as community gardening and food processing. Women's groups have been actively involved in various income-generating activities and the advocacy of better nutrition.
28. Despite WFP's clear efforts to ensure women's participation in all programmes – including in decision-making positions for school canteen management – the effects of WFP's interventions are attenuated by a lack of in-depth analysis of the dynamics between men and women in the socioeconomic domain, which are closely linked to customs and traditions, such as who manages the household income and how tasks and income are divided within the family. The ways in which affected communities perceive and adjust to WFP's gender-related practices and the ways in which WFP integrates such practices into activities are undocumented.

Protection and accountability to affected populations

29. WFP has taken precautions to minimize security risks, and beneficiaries generally report receiving assistance without major challenges. Grievance and complaint mechanisms, including a telephone hotline and community committees, have helped to ensure accountability to affected populations and provided a basis for adjusting the targeting of programmes. However, the expansion and accessibility of the hotline at the local level should

¹⁵ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2015. [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030](#).

be improved, along with beneficiaries' awareness of WFP's activities overall, given the downward trend in the performance indicators related to protection and accountability issues.

30. Community-based participatory planning has been used to identify activities, but there is a need to improve the inclusion of actors at the grassroots level. Concerns were raised regarding remuneration for tasks related to school feeding programmes and the responsibilities of stock managers and community leaders.

Humanitarian principles

31. The WFP country office in Madagascar adheres to the humanitarian principles, particularly humanity through its focus on the most vulnerable people and communities. Opportunities exist to avoid the risk of inequitable targeting by better applying the "do no harm" principle through closer consideration of the socioeconomic imbalances and relationships within communities and the related dynamics.

Environment

32. Climate and environmental themes are not strong features of the CSP. There is room for directing greater attention to the assessment of climate-related needs and for strategic attention to climate issues within the portfolio, particularly in light of the challenges the country faces owing to climate events.

Sustainability of WFP interventions

33. In general, the activities undertaken by WFP to implement the CSP are not sustainable owing to their focus on emergency response, as is the case of those under strategic outcomes 1 and 5. In several cases, the preconditions for greater sustainability are not met because of, for example, limited partner capacity, a lack of funds or weak exit strategies. WFP's efforts include incorporating "soft" activities into emergency responses, such as the improvement of communications and coordination, the securing of sustained government funding and the promotion of locally rooted approaches. Investments in long-term partnerships with local organizations and the private sector were a relevant innovation.
34. More efforts are needed to strengthen stakeholders' capacity, address concerns regarding the design of interventions, enhance staff skills and secure adequate funding for sustainable outcomes.

Humanitarian–development–peace nexus

35. The CSP has not yet visibly established strategic linkages for work at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Efforts are being made through the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection, but there is room for enhanced consideration of the impact of WFP's emergency response actions on the development efforts that should follow them and in developing exit strategies for activities and the CSP as a whole.
36. Encouraging steps are being taken to incorporate a project that connects humanitarian and resilience building activities, demonstrating WFP's commitment to addressing long-term challenges. While geographical coverage remains limited, these initiatives have shown positive effects and have improved income-generating activities in beneficiary communities.

To what extent has WFP used its resources effectively to contribute to country strategic plan outputs and outcomes?***Timeliness***

37. The large expansion in activities since 2020, combined with internal capacity limitations, has led to delays in a significant proportion of the activity portfolio. Internal organizational improvements are needed in order to enhance the processes for local food purchases, including through the provision of cash-based transfers for schools for the local procurement of supplies. In addition, the beneficiaries of micro-insurance schemes experienced long waiting times for receiving expected pay-outs. Difficulties were often related to the efficiency of payment processes involving cooperating partners, and logistical constraints.
38. WFP made significant efforts to address those challenges, and improvements in its logistical capacity – including the introduction of new shipping routes, pre-positioning of supplies, increased storage capacity and revised transport contracts – had positive effects on the timeliness of its interventions.

Coverage and targeting

39. The coverage and scope of WFP's activities have enabled it to reach the most food-insecure people, including women, landless individuals, people with disabilities, older people and people with tuberculosis. However, insecurity and access limitations have impeded operational delivery: in the case of school feeding the accessibility of the school outweighs vulnerability concerns in the selection of schools for WFP's programmes.
40. In the targeting of individuals, the selection of beneficiaries has sometimes caused tensions within affected communities. Challenges emerged in accurately identifying the most vulnerable individuals and ensuring equitable distributions of assistance, with the emergence of inclusion errors related to social relationships within communities, which are difficult to fully control. These errors were rectified swiftly once they came to WFP's attention. WFP is working on improving the procedures for ensuring that beneficiaries have access to assistance by partnering with local organizations for better reach, as in the southern regions, for example, where local partners have better understanding of the operational setting and are more agile in terms of their mobility.

Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness

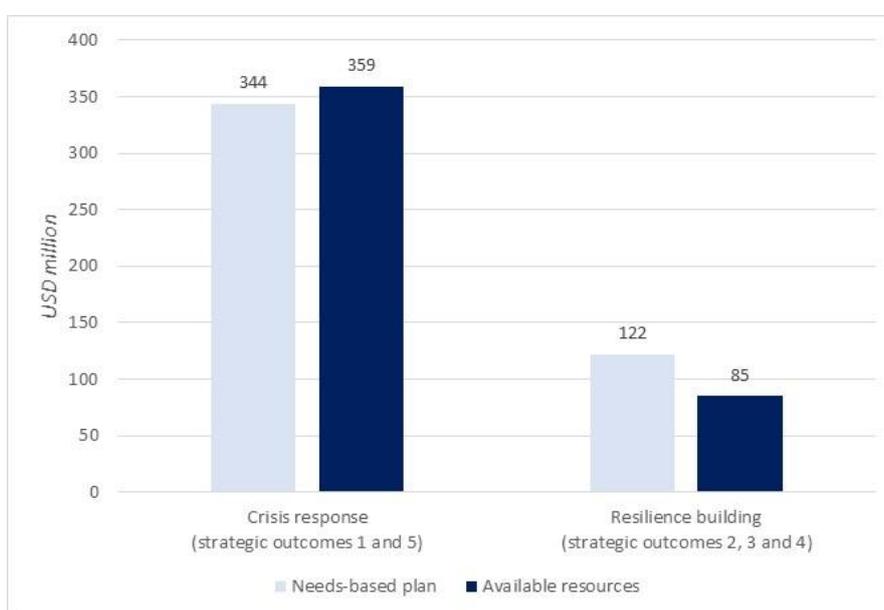
41. Over time, the efficiency of WFP's activities has improved through the expanded use of cash-based transfers, which reduce logistics costs and allow for easier access to diverse food options. Challenges include inflation and compatibility issues related to network infrastructures. Stronger collaboration with local non-governmental organizations is associated with cost-efficiency gains.
42. Despite the absence of a formal analysis of cost-effectiveness, WFP explored more economical alternatives in its programmes, such as the use of cash-based transfers and a local sourcing approach in the school feeding programme, which benefits local farmers and women entrepreneurs. However, logistics limitations and the need for quality control hinder the implementation of more cost-effective options. Evaluations of the cost-effectiveness of resilience building activities and crisis preparedness and response strategies are deemed necessary, as are efforts to improve the measurement, documentation and coordination of activities and results so as to optimize cost-effectiveness in WFP's operations.

What are the factors that explain WFP's performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected under the country strategic plan?

Funding

43. While overall funding has improved over the CSP period, WFP has been significantly more successful in attracting funds for crisis response than for resilience building activities (figure 3), which is partly explained by its reputation among donors as an “emergency response agency”.
44. Fund management has become more flexible under the CSP, although the high level of funds earmarked at the activity or strategic outcome level poses limitations in the securing of funding for resilience building activities.

Figure 3: Available resources against the needs-based plan, by focus area, 2018–2022



Source: Figures calculated from annual country reports for 2018 to 2021. Figures for 2022 are from annual country report 5-A, Madagascar country portfolio budget for 2022 as at 7 December 2022.

Monitoring

45. Over time, improvements in activity monitoring have enabled WFP and its cooperating partners to oversee the progress of programmes and to adopt corrective measures where necessary. Output and outcome indicators are monitored regularly, informing adjustments to programmes as needed.
46. Monitoring activities have gradually gained independence from the programme function, but understaffing and organizational challenges persist. In particular, the increase in activities linked to emergency operations in 2021 and 2022, combined with a lack of sufficient field monitors, had a negative impact on the monitoring of school canteens, with less than half of schools being monitored quarterly since the start of the 2021 school year.
47. There is room for improved process monitoring in domains that are relatively new to the country office, including insurance contracts with farmers, the monitoring of solar panel stations, forecast-based financing, cash-based transfers and institutional capacity strengthening.

Partnerships

48. In general, WFP's partnerships are constantly improving and have considerable potential for further enhancement. WFP's role as a coordinator is appreciated by local stakeholders and donors. WFP has made great efforts to establish solid links with the Government, as reflected in numerous memoranda of understanding and annual action plans. While such relationships are solid at the political level, there is a need to improve the extent to which they translate into technical training interventions and the design and implementation of field activities.
49. WFP also invested heavily in partnerships with non-governmental organizations and local associations, providing a valuable contribution in terms of building the skills of local stakeholders and laying the foundations for sustainable results. However, its approach is still fragmented and there is room for greater inclusion of development actors in WFP's crisis response activities so as to prepare beneficiaries for the scale-down of WFP assistance.
50. In its partnerships with the United Nations, with a few exceptions, WFP often acts relatively independently in the event of a crisis, although the services of cluster coordinators working through the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs are often used, when activated. WFP also plays an important role in coordinating the cash transfer working group and the food security cluster. However, there are no visible efforts to unite the Rome-based agencies in a "nexus approach" and there are opportunities to invest in relationship building with United Nations development actors such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for preparedness and with UNDP, FAO and the United Nations Population Fund, including through joint programmes. Relationships with the International Labour Organization are at an emergent stage.

Human resources

51. While WFP significantly expanded its workforce during the CSP period, growing from 155 employees in 2018 to 254 in early 2023, understaffing issues persist, leading to staff overload and compromising the quality of interventions, especially for crisis response, monitoring and support units. The dedication and motivation observed in WFP staff can compensate such shortfalls only partially.
52. Specific issues of concern include an increase in the use of short-term contracts (special service agreements), insufficient internal capacity to move from activities focused on emergency response to resilience building and development-oriented initiatives, and a lack of staff with the necessary profiles for work in various areas, hindering advocacy, coordination, capacity development and the availability of technical expertise.

Conclusions

53. The evaluation recognizes the strong efforts undertaken by WFP to achieve good results during one of the most tumultuous and crisis-affected periods in Madagascar's history. WFP has steadily sought to strategically improve its humanitarian response to recurrent shocks, expanding programmatically, building new partnerships and enhancing approaches so as to sharpen certain resilience activities, including through the use of cash-based transfers.
54. WFP is a key player in the humanitarian response in Madagascar and is the partner of choice for many donors, especially in the response to crises and rapid-onset hazards such as cyclones and floods. Funding partners recognize WFP for its proven speed and agility, broad coverage, in-depth logistics knowledge, and vulnerability analysis and information management. WFP is also gaining additional recognition for spearheading and promoting innovations in the resilience building and micro-insurance fields.

55. WFP's achievements are due in part to its ability to mobilize additional financial resources to respond to crises, innovate and increasingly integrate local organizations into its operations, with the potential for deeper benefits for the affected people and communities it assists. Investment in such dynamics is seen as a contribution to the localization movement and sustainable solutions, and it is recognized and appreciated by donors, who are increasingly willing to fund this approach.
56. The geographical targeting of some WFP activities does not reflect the full situation of poverty and malnutrition in the country. The Government encouraged humanitarian actors to concentrate their activities in the southern regions of Madagascar, leading WFP to omit from its activities other areas with high levels of exposure to risk and vulnerability to food insecurity. School feeding was affected by coverage issues related to access, which may need to be addressed in consultation with local actors.
57. The CSP lacked alignment with the Sendai Framework for Action, which would have provided a strategic orientation for its preparedness work. Increased investments in disaster preparedness would help to reduce the need for humanitarian response, maximize the potential synergies between humanitarian and development actors and help to build local actors' ownership of long-term actions.
58. Engagement with government actors would benefit from a more detailed capacity strengthening and phase-out strategy from WFP. WFP's contributions to national emergency preparedness and response capacity are currently more visibly conducted "for" rather than "with" the Government. Specific opportunities exist for WFP to invest more in advocacy, joint assessments of government partners' needs and the development and documentation of strategies for institutional capacity strengthening. Beyond emergency preparedness and response, WFP has also made efforts – although still insufficient – to start strengthening the Government's capacities in social protection and cash-based transfer programmes.
59. The WFP portfolio lacks certain simple actions that would contribute strongly at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, open up opportunities for WFP and improve results. Those actions include the formulation of an explicit strategy for partnership with national and United Nations development actors, and its implementation from the onset of an emergency response in order to accelerate partners' engagement in the aftermath of a crisis; the development of strategies for exiting from a purely humanitarian response; and the development of stronger internal mechanisms that ensure that WFP's humanitarian response operations do not cause unintended harm.
60. WFP has a diverse and growing portfolio that is focused on resilience building but that needs to be backed by more consolidated evidence of its results. Donors' confidence in WFP's comparative advantage in humanitarian response enables WFP to rapidly mobilize resources for responding to emergencies. In 2022, new funding opportunities emerged that would support the scale-up of promising resilience building activities that are currently disparate and small in scale. In this regard, it is crucial that WFP invest more in generating evidence of community-level results and the complementarity of its resilience building activities with its humanitarian interventions.
61. The country office's internal structure is optimized for rapid-onset crises and is not yet fully equipped for the integrated approach envisaged under the CSP. WFP's emergency-related skills, knowledge and tools are not always directly transferable to development activities, which face new technical, administrative and operational challenges. An effort to build synergies among the various sectors of intervention and between programme and support services is deemed necessary. The country office would benefit from a more coherent and fully shared internal vision for its theory of change that could help it to develop a clear and articulated position on how and where resilience can be promoted.

Recommendations

	Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	Invest in one of the country office's comparative advantages that is less often highlighted: integrated risk management, including preparedness. Centring the line of sight for the next country strategic plan on integrated risk management would help the country office to "get back to basics" and invest more in institutional capacity strengthening over the next five years, with very tangible results. Once the new line of sight has been formulated, and the Government actively assumes its role, the next country strategic plan can be transformed into a robust portfolio for resilience building.	Strategic	Country office senior management	Regional bureau, headquarters	High	March 2024
1.1	Plan and implement preparedness work in a more consolidated manner through integrated risk management, forecast-based funding, anticipatory action, risk transfer and insurance, and stronger, more clearly defined capacity strengthening interventions for all the key Government actors involved in the response.					
1.2	Position the humanitarian response in relation to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Work with development actors to assess and strengthen their capacity to take responsibility for relevant aspects of the humanitarian response from the outset or design of the response and identify when and how both humanitarian and development activities will lead to collective outcomes.					

	Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.3	Through a joint capacity strengthening strategy (shared with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction or other partners) and a WFP exit strategy, hold the Government accountable for clear results, as evidence of ownership, within a results-based management framework. Refer to the capacity development work of the Lesotho country office for inspiration.					
2	Establish and orchestrate an advocacy programme for the establishment of an enabling environment at the government level for integrated risk management, including crisis preparedness and response. In the programme, detail the objectives in terms of funding, institutional set-up, policies and – especially – the budgets needed for the Government to take autonomous responsibility for protecting people and saving lives through crisis preparedness and response. In addition, specify how WFP will work to promote and support the necessary changes.	Operational	Country office senior management		Medium	January 2024
3	Establish a stronger evidence base for determining the value of WFP's activities beyond humanitarian response. This would allow WFP to demonstrate its performance more convincingly in other sectors (primarily resilience building) with a view to informing the funding decisions of partners and donors. Use the many resilience actions that have recently been funded as an opportunity to enrich the evidence base.	Operational	Country office senior management	Regional bureau	Medium	Continuing
3.1	Conduct a multi-site cost-benefit analysis of preparedness activities, including community-level, government and WFP actions.					

	Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.2	Monitor and promote the ways in which WFP's investment in preparedness reduces, on average, the need for humanitarian response funding over the period of CSP implementation.					
3.3	Produce a robust, evaluative proof of concept for any resilience activities, including traditional food assistance for assets interventions and ongoing pilots, to determine whether they merit expansion. Work closely with donors to this end and compare the findings with similar work being undertaken in parallel by partners.					
4	Develop, deliver (according to which modules are required) and monitor an awareness programme that encourages WFP staff to consider more carefully the potentially harmful impacts of humanitarian and development assistance. Based on the examples presented in this evaluation report, carefully consider the potential for people-centred and locally driven solutions, while taking into account the concept of “do no harm”. Provide staff with guidance to encourage them to learn and practise good habits based on a better understanding of the social dynamics of each community, better knowledge of the risks of dependency, and ways of reducing them, and awareness of the dynamics created by wearing the WFP logo. Set up a capacity development programme that includes face-to-face sessions with videos (in a training-for-trainers format), written modules (for self-paced training) and, if budgets allow, an online module that is required for all staff. Note that this can also serve as an important model for other countries in which WFP is active.	Operational	Country office senior management	Regional bureau	High	December 2023

	Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5	<p>Establish or reactivate an internal unit or permanent or temporary committee that oversees vision and integration within the country office. This new unit would aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ develop, maintain and monitor the links among the strategic outcomes established in future CSPs; ➤ ensure that field offices and antennae are closely associated with and share the same vision and objectives; and ➤ ensure that all staff have the required skills that reflect the values and technical scope of such vision. 	Operational	Country office senior management		Medium	March 2024
5.1	<p><i>Human resources:</i> Change the contracts for special service agreements so as to allow staff to work for a minimum of two to three years and, generally, to reduce staff turnover at the country office level. In addition, invest in new staff profiles and training so that staff are conversant with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and both short- and medium-term approaches and acquire both general skills and specific competences in key technical areas such as hydrology and anthropology.</p>					
5.2	<p><i>Partnerships with development actors:</i> Formulate an entirely new strategy entailing strong long-term in-country relationships with development actors such as the other Rome-based agencies, key ministries and national agencies (the Development Intervention Fund, the private sector, etc.).</p>					
5.3	<p><i>Monitoring and evaluation:</i> Rethink ways of collecting data that capture the needs of affected people and communities in the medium to long term, beyond their immediate and short-term needs. Explore and select indicators that best represent resilience, starting with those in the WFP corporate results framework.</p>					

Acronyms

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
T-ICSP	transitional interim country strategic plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNSDCF	United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework