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Evaluation reports

For consideration

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Summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for Guinea (2019–2024)

Executive summary

The evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for Guinea was carried out from February 2023 onwards in order to serve the dual purpose of accountability and learning and to inform the preparation of the next country strategic plan. The evaluation covered the implementation periods of the transitional interim country strategic plan and the interim country strategic plan (January 2018 to May 2023). It aimed to determine WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to the achievement of outcomes, its effectiveness in implementation and the factors explaining the results achieved.

The interim country strategic plan was designed to achieve two major strategic shifts: i) to gradually move WFP from direct food assistance to engagement in a technical partnership with the Government; and ii) to present WFP as a catalyst for sustainable solutions to hunger through the implementation of resilience building and livelihood strengthening activities and the addition of a nutrition dimension to all relevant interventions.

WFP is recognized at the national level for its efficiency, its experience in logistical support and its field presence. At the decentralized level, however, coordination and exchange of experiences with other United Nations entities and strategic partners could be improved.

WFP has contributed to the achievement of food and nutrition security objectives in Guinea. However, targets relating to the number of beneficiaries have not been met, except in 2018. In addition, the interventions carried out under the provisional country strategic plan do not include exit strategies.

In line with WFP's 2022 evaluation policy (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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The WFP country office in Guinea is increasingly focusing its efforts on agricultural development, which should be supported by technical skills that take account of the country's agro-ecological diversity and local knowledge. Some initiatives have promoted an integrated approach to resilience, but the application of this approach in Guinea faces a number of problems relating to beneficiary targeting, geographical coverage, operational choices and possible exit strategies.

The interim country strategic plan reflects WFP's strong commitment to working for the most vulnerable, particularly in relation to nutrition-related risks, exclusion and gender inequality. However, the approaches to nutrition do not systematically address the underlying causes of vulnerability. The irregular provision of nutrition support in some severely affected regions, and the lack of sustained funding, contribute to undermining WFP's ability to achieve more sustainable results with regard to nutrition.

Participation by beneficiary communities has been extensive and satisfaction with the support received has been high. Nevertheless, community feedback mechanisms are not fully operational, needs analysis and targeting suffer from a lack of up-to-date data, and monitoring data do not enable the impact of activities to be properly measured, which hampers operational decision making.

The evaluation gave rise to four recommendations focusing on the following elements: strengthen strategic and operational partnerships by supporting joint activities and prioritizing the most promising partnerships; improve the preparation of integrated resilience projects, including the stages prior to their implementation, and forest out clear exit strategies; promote inclusive and transformative approaches that facilitate a sustainable path out of nutritional vulnerability arising from discrimination; and continue to work on accountability to populations, the monitoring of activities, and the assessment and monitoring of food and nutritional insecurity.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the interim country strategic plan for Guinea (2019–2024) (WFP/EB.A/2024/7-C/1) and management response (WFP/EB.A/2024/7-C/1/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

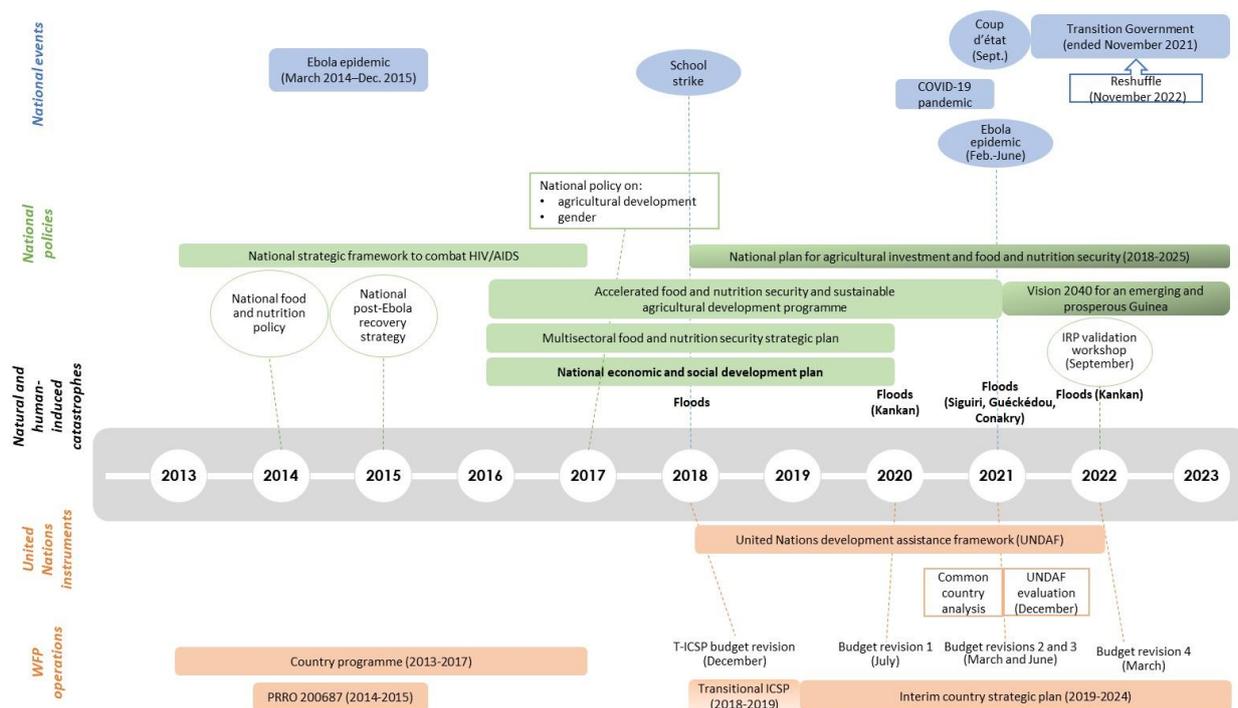
1. The evaluation covers all WFP activities in Guinea from January 2018 to May 2023. Its purpose was twofold: i) to analyse the performance of WFP's strategic decisions at the country level, particularly with an eye toward the development of the next country strategic plan (CSP); and ii) to report the results to WFP's stakeholders.
2. The evaluation followed a theory-driven approach, assessing WFP's positioning, decision making and results based on a reconstruction of its intervention logic and underlying assumptions. The evaluation is based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. It drew on the opinions of various stakeholders, including the country office, the regional bureau, beneficiaries, national institutions, non-governmental organizations, United Nations entities and private-sector partners, all of whom will be able to benefit from its results.
3. The evaluation took account of gender, equity and WFP's inclusion objectives. It was piloted and managed by the WFP Office of Evaluation and conducted by an independent evaluation team.

Context

4. With a population of around 13.9 million, Guinea is a low-income country facing numerous challenges and multidimensional poverty aggravated by high inflation (12.2 percent in 2022).
5. Major sociopolitical events in the country include large-scale strikes in 2018–2019 that disrupted school operations (and therefore canteens) and a coup d'état in September 2021.
6. In addition to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the reappearance of the Ebola virus disease in 2021 triggered another major health crisis. The period 2018–2023 was also marked by several floods. Climate change in Guinea is reflected in the recurrence of extreme weather events as well as the degradation of terrestrial, forest and coastal ecosystems. Family farms are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.¹

¹ International Fund for Agricultural Development. 2021. *L'avenir de l'agriculture en Guinée: 2030-2063*.

Figure 1: Country context and overview of WFP operations in Guinea for the last 10 years (2013–2023)



Abbreviations: IRP = interim reference programme; PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation.

Source: Evaluation team, based on multiple sources including annual reports for Guinea and country fact sheets for the period 2018–2022 and national policy and strategy documents.

7. Food and nutrition insecurity remains a major public health challenge and one of the main causes of infant mortality.² The underlying causes of food insecurity include low agricultural production and productivity, major crop losses and poor road conditions that limit the marketing of produce.
8. Agriculture is a key sector of the national economy, accounting for 27.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022.³ It employs nearly 67 percent of Guineans and 52 percent of the workforce.⁴ The sector's performance falls short of its potential.
9. The primary school completion rate is low, at 59 percent in 2020, and even lower for girls (52 percent).⁵ In 2021 Guinea ranked 182nd of 191 countries on the Gender Inequality Index. The labour force participation rate for women was 42.9 percent in 2019,⁶ compared with 62 percent for men.⁷ Guinea ranks 95th of 140 countries on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Social Institutions and Gender Index.⁸ Women account for a significant proportion of the workforce in the agrosilvopastoral sector but are often marginalized, with limited access to land and means of production, among other challenges.⁹

² WFP. 2018. *Analyse Globale de la Vulnérabilité, de la Sécurité Alimentaire et de la Nutrition (AGVSAN), Décembre 2018*.

³ World Bank. 2022. [Databank Guinea](#).

⁴ International Fund for Agricultural Development. 2021. *L'avenir de l'agriculture en Guinée: 2030-2063*.

⁵ World Bank. 2022. [Databank Guinea](#).

⁶ The most recent data available for Guinea are for 2019.

⁷ World Bank. 2022. [Databank Guinea](#).

⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2023. *Social Institutions and Gender Index 2023*. Accessed on 27 March 2023.

⁹ World Bank. 2019. *Guinea: The Economic Benefits of a Gender Inclusive Society*.

SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS			
	Indicator	Value	Year
	Human Development Index (score and rank) (2)	0.465 182 of 191	2021
	GDP per capita (current USD) (1)	1 174	2021
	Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population) (1)	43.5	2022
	Global Hunger Index (rank) (3)	91 of 119	2017
	Population suffering acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 3 or higher) (5)	649 159 persons (4.6 percent of the total population)	2022
	Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population) (1)	21.8	2018
	Percentage of children under 5 suffering from malnutrition (4)	26	2022
	Adult literacy rate (% of people ages 15 and above) (1)	45	2021

Sources: (1) World Bank. 2022. [Databank Guinea](#); (2) United Nations Development Programme. 2022. [Human Development Report 2021/2022. Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World](#); (3) Global Hunger Index: Guinea; (4) United Nations Children's Fund. 2023. [Child Malnutrition](#); (5) [Cadre Harmonisé – Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#).

10. Guinea receives significant influxes of refugees (121,400 international migrants in 2020), which have intensified with the security crisis in Mali.
11. Over the period 2018–2020 Guinea received an average of USD 695 million gross per year in official development assistance. Humanitarian aid rose from USD 3.8 million in 2019 to USD 26.1 million in 2022.

Country strategic plans

12. The period covered by the evaluation corresponds to that of the implementation of the transitional interim country strategic plan (T-ICSP) (January 2018–June 2019) and the interim country strategic plan (ICSP) (July 2019–June 2024, after two extensions). The initial T-ICSP budget (USD 15.1 million) was intended to support 153,286 beneficiaries.¹⁰ A revision of the T-ICSP budget allowed the number of beneficiaries nearly to double, at a total adjusted cost of USD 16.8 million. The initial ICSP budget of USD 40.3 million targeted 381,457 beneficiaries.¹¹ It was revised five times, resulting in a budget of over USD 119 million in July 2023, while the needs-based plan was tripled.
13. Following on from the 2013–2017 country programme, the T-ICSP was structured around three strategic outcomes covering school feeding and food assistance (strategic outcome 1), nutrition (strategic outcome 2), and strengthening smallholder livelihoods and local

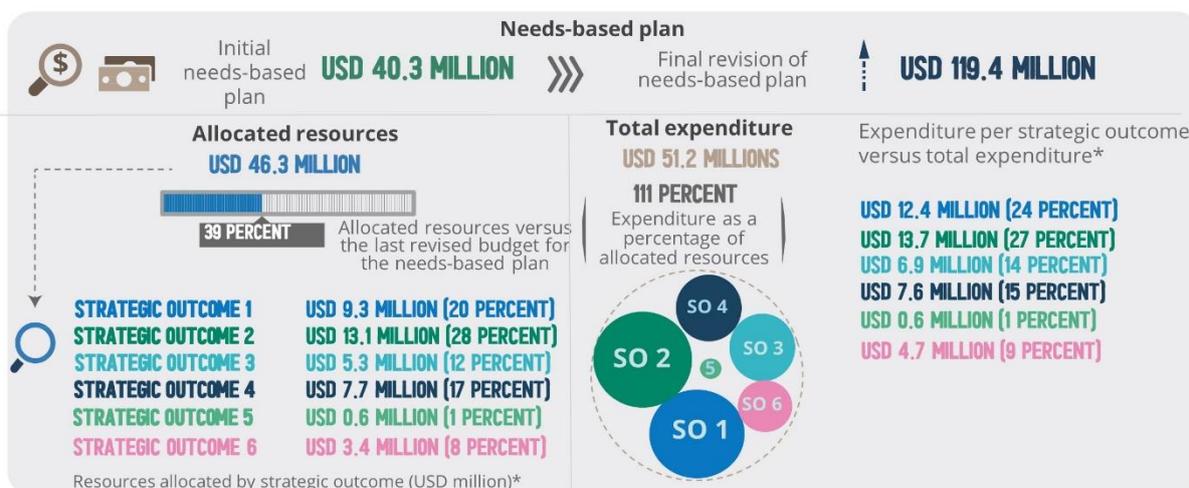
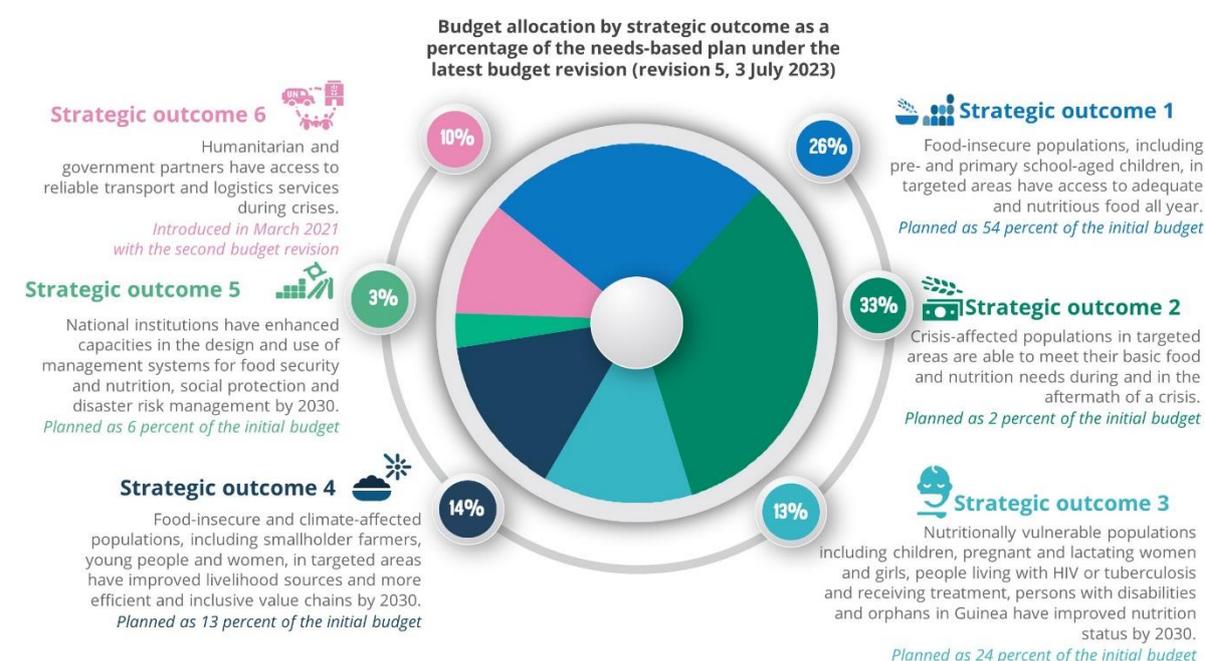
¹⁰ WFP. 2017. [Documents relating to the Guinea transitional interim country strategic plan \(January 2018–June 2019\)](#).

¹¹ "Guinea interim country strategic plan (2019–2022)" (WFP/EB.A/2019-8-B/2).

purchasing (strategic outcome 3). It adopted an approach designed to transform gender relations and promote gender equality.

14. In the absence of a national zero hunger strategic review, the ICSP was intended to enable two major strategic shifts: i) to gradually move WFP from direct food assistance to engagement in a technical partnership with the Government; and ii) to present WFP as a catalyst for sustainable solutions to hunger. The ICSP continues the reorientation initiated during the T-ICSP, in particular by placing ever greater emphasis on activities to build resilience and improve livelihoods. Combining emergency response, support for the social protection system and efforts to tackle the root causes of malnutrition and build the country's capacity to promote long-term resilience, the ICSP initially had five strategic outcomes and five activities. A sixth strategic outcome was added in February 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2: Guinea interim country strategic plan (2019-2024): strategic outcomes, budget, funding and expenditures¹²



* The sum of the percentages shown for resources allocated and expenditure by strategic outcome does not equal 100 percent because some resources were also allocated and spent for purposes not related to strategic outcomes.

¹² The fifth budget revision, in July 2023, increased the budget to USD 119 million, for a total of 1,431,600 planned beneficiaries.

Evaluation findings

To what extent is the interim country strategic plan evidence-based and strategically focused to address the needs of the most vulnerable?

Relevance to the challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition

15. The design of the ICSP is based on a relatively sound analysis of food and nutrition security needs and takes into account the specific sources of vulnerability of various population groups. There are a few gaps in the analysis in terms of gender and determination of food quantities and cash transfer amounts.
16. Support activities for producers (strategic outcome 4) address the main challenges facing the rice sector in Guinea (in particular post-harvest losses) but do not take sufficient account of the wide diversity of agrarian systems in Guinea nor of the need to ensure long-term viability.

Alignment with national policies and the United Nations system

17. The ICSP is appropriately aligned with national policies and strategies. The formulation and planning of activities are relevant to the achievement of national objectives and are based on existing consultation mechanisms such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement.
18. WFP plays an important role within the United Nations system in Guinea. Consultation with other entities is effective at the Conakry level but less so at the decentralized level. Targeting strategies and activity mapping are poorly coordinated between the various entities (including WFP), resulting in a lack of complementarity.

Intervention logic and adaptation to changing context

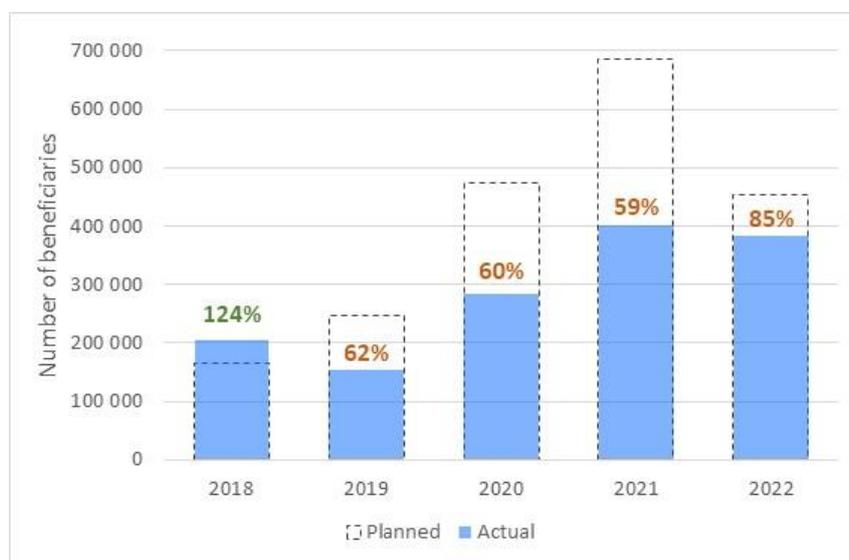
19. Although no theory of change was explicitly stated during the formulation of the T-ICSP and later the ICSP, the latter present a coherent intervention logic that is based in part on lessons learned from past experience and clearly reflects WFP's comparative advantages. Assumptions and preconditions have been insufficiently analysed, however. Furthermore, they are fairly general and do not specify the conditions to be met in order to achieve the desired results.
20. With regard to the planning of its interventions, WFP has not taken sufficient account of changing needs, notably due to a lack of up-to-date surveys. Data from the Cadre Harmonisé enable WFP to adjust its geographical targeting and anticipate recurrent crises (interventions during lean periods), but the data collected on needs at the decentralized level is not sufficiently precise.
21. Thanks to budget revisions the arrangements under the T-ICSP and ICSP are sufficiently flexible to enable the country office to adjust its strategy in the short and medium terms, which it has done to deal with crises during the 2018–2023 period and to take advantage of funding opportunities. WFP's limited investment in emergency preparedness and stockpiling and the over-centralization of decision making at the country office level are two factors that have prevented WFP from being even more responsive to sudden crises.
22. In the absence of forward-looking analyses measuring the medium- and long-term impacts of crises on people's food and nutrition insecurity, the results of participatory community planning processes carried out in the localities targeted for resilience activities help to guide certain technical choices (types of agricultural equipment and machinery, types and locations of productive facilities, etc.) but have little influence on the nature of the support provided to targeted communities by WFP and its partners.

What are the extent and quality of WFP's contributions to the strategic outcomes defined in the interim country strategic plan and the United Nations development assistance framework for Guinea?

Achievement of outputs and contribution to strategic outcomes: overview of interim country strategic plan results

23. The evaluation revealed a high level of satisfaction among WFP beneficiaries, particularly with regard to school canteens, food assistance during lean seasons and support for small-scale producers. It also appears that the quantity and quality of food received are generally satisfactory. The increase in children's school enrolment figures prominently among the positive changes listed.

Figure 3: Number of planned and actual beneficiaries under the T-ICSP (2018–2019) and ICSP (2019–2022)

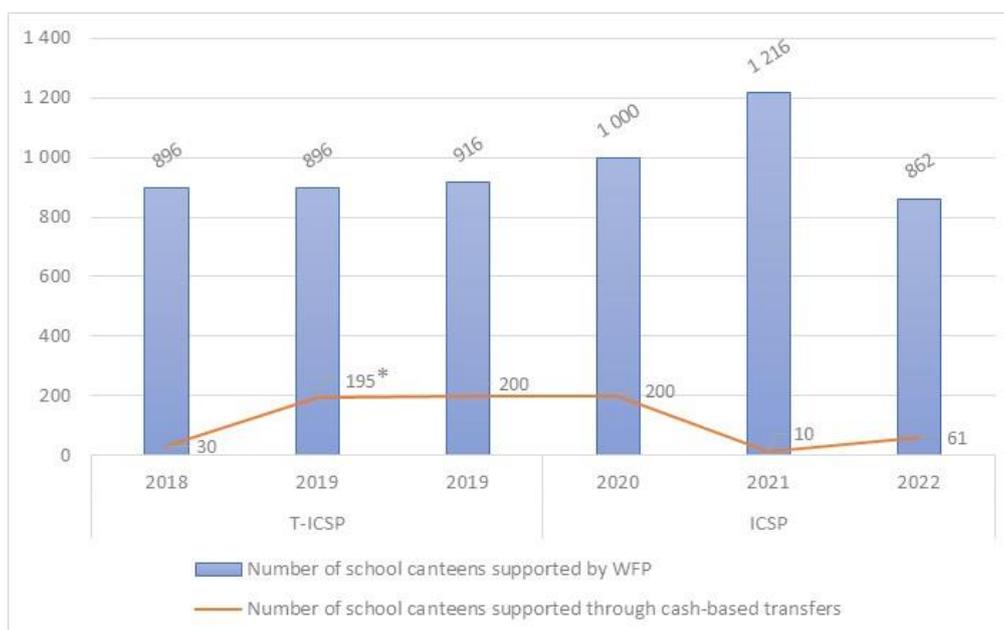


Source: Guinea annual reports for 2018–2022.

24. The targets for the number of actual beneficiaries have not been met, except in 2018. However, there was an increase in the number of beneficiaries over the five-year period, stabilizing in 2021 and 2022 at between 350,000 and 400,000 beneficiaries.
25. **Strategic outcome 1.** School canteens are one of WFP's flagship activities in Guinea. WFP is highly effective in setting up new canteens, but the results are relatively uneven in some regions, which can be partly explained by erratic funding and the food purchasing methods used. The impact of canteens on children's nutrition status is difficult to measure. WFP has adjusted its school canteen activities according to the availability of external funding (allocated by donors). The scale-up of cash-based transfers in 2022 and 2023 proved to be a little abrupt, particularly in areas where there was little experience with local purchases and where WFP had to rely on local traders¹³. Training canteen management committees in bulk food purchasing is a major challenge.

¹³ The use of cash-based transfers for school canteens aims to empower canteen management committees and encourage them to engage in local purchasing.

Figure 4: Number of canteens supported by WFP (particularly through cash-based transfers), 2018–2022



Source: Evaluation team, based on data reported in the Guinea annual reports for 2018–2022, the T-ICSP and the ICSP.

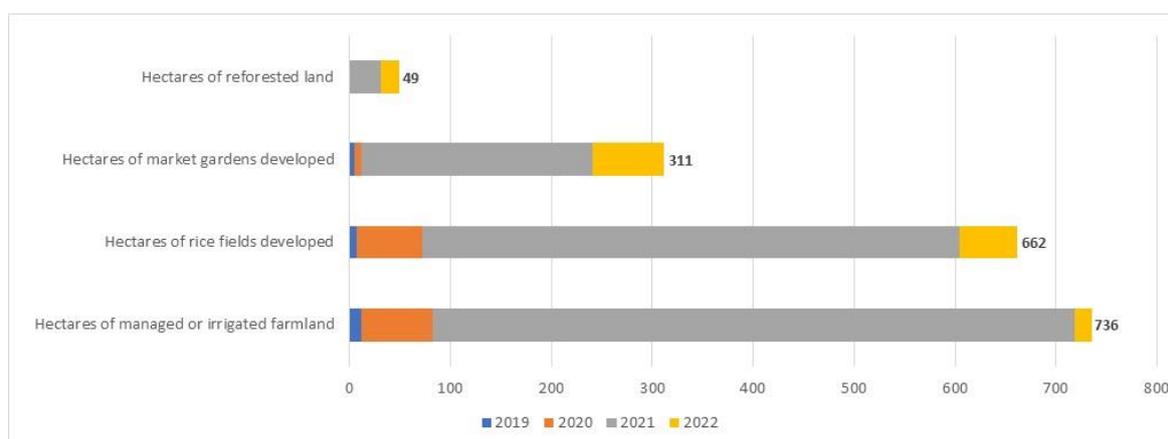
* Thirty-five schools operated entirely on cash-based transfers, while 160 schools received hybrid assistance (food and cash-based transfers).

26. Due to disruptions linked to COVID-19 and teachers' strikes, some school canteen activities were shifted to the distribution of take-home rations. The results and impact of the school canteens and takeaway rations are positive overall, with an increase in enrolment and attendance and a reduction in the dropout rate among girls.
27. **Strategic outcome 2.** Emergency activities peaked in 2020 and especially during the 2021–2022 period with the COVID-19 response and the emergency phase of the RESIGUI project.¹⁴ The number of beneficiaries has fluctuated sharply with budget revisions. For example, the number of planned beneficiaries rose from 15,000 (in 2019) to 300,000 people (in 2020). The planned number of beneficiaries was not reached (or exceeded) until 2022. Results in terms of food and nutrition security are difficult to interpret.
28. **Strategic outcome 3.** More than 15,000 children and pregnant or breastfeeding women suffering from moderate acute malnutrition received treatment each year between 2019 and 2023; the ratios of planned to actual beneficiaries fell short of the targets, however, except in 2022. The distribution of specialized foods alone does not prevent malnutrition in the long term; it does not fundamentally solve problems linked to dietary diversification and access to these specialized foods. The combination of screening, care, awareness-raising and cooking lessons, on the other hand, shows good results in improving the nutritional practices of mothers and children. Nutritional care for people living with HIV is more sustainable when cash transfers and income-generating activities are combined, as this combination is more effective than food support, which is too irregular and sporadic. Performance indicators for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition are not sufficiently reliable or comprehensive to show the results achieved by WFP in this area.

¹⁴ The RESIGUI project, which aims to improve the resilience of vulnerable populations in Guinea, was implemented by WFP and funded by the European Union.

29. **Strategic outcome 4.** Food assistance for assets (FFA) activities got off to a slow start in 2019, peaking in 2021 (with over 65,000 beneficiaries) and slowing in 2022. This evolution is linked to the availability of financial resources (in particular funding by the European Union for the implementation of FFA activities as part of the RESIGUI project) and the postponement of development work from one year to the next. The activities involve the development of 736 hectares of lowlands/rice fields and 311 hectares of market gardens over the period 2019–2022. The activities carried out by WFP and its partners have led to a significant increase in rice production and easier access to seeds and inputs and a high-quality agricultural advisory service, which has had a direct effect on shortening the lean season. They have also strengthened the involvement of local actors in the development of the rice sector. The results are less tangible for market gardens, where the problem of access to water has rarely been overcome; they are also less convincing for reforestation. WFP has ensured the revival or emergence of producers' organizations, with positive effects on social cohesion. From 2018 to 2022 there was a drop in the quantity of products purchased locally by WFP (parboiled rice) from the producer organizations it supports, following poor harvests and problems experienced by producer organizations and smallholder associations in honouring a large contract (for 1,650 mt) in 2021. WFP was therefore forced to turn to other local suppliers in 2022.

Figure 5: Areas developed, improved and reforested as part of FFA activities from 2019 to 2022



Source: Guinea annual reports for 2019–2022.

30. **Strategic outcomes 5 and 6.** As strategic outcome 5 has no clear objectives, its country capacity building activities tend to be mixed with those of the other strategic outcomes; this complicates the analysis of results. Priority was given to strengthening the health logistics capacity of the central pharmacy of Guinea (*Pharmacie centrale de Guinée*) and the national health safety agency (*Agence nationale de sécurité sanitaire*). The evaluation team notes that only very limited progress has been made in setting up a national home-grown school feeding programme. The transport provided by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) (strategic outcome 6) proved to be very useful in times of health crisis. In 2022 the number of organizations using the service doubled.
31. **Contribution to the results of the United Nations development assistance framework.** Despite its participation in joint responses to various crises (particularly health crises), WFP only partially contributed to the results of the United Nations development assistance framework under its ICSP. The achievement of the results defined in the framework was also hampered by a lack of coordination between United Nations entities.

Cross-cutting issues

32. **Gender equality and women's empowerment.** Gender has been systematically integrated into WFP interventions, and some activities directly target women's groups, but the approaches do not guarantee women's empowerment or enable the measurement of the transformative nature of activities (in areas such as the difficulty or intensity of women's work, women's decision-making power and leadership and the specific needs of mothers). Furthermore, the analysis of the impact of interventions (e.g. on women's working hours) is insufficient.
33. **Participation, protection and accountability to affected populations.** The degree of participation by the local population in the implementation of the various ICSP activities is relatively high, thanks in particular to the participatory approach adopted by WFP and its partners. The mechanisms in place to ensure feedback from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike are limited, however, and at this stage cannot be used to guide operational choices. Protection issues are taken into account in activity design but there are few qualitative studies or operational tools with which to monitor their effective integration into implementation. Targeting was not sufficiently inclusive to take into account factors such as disability, social conditions (refugees, minority ethnic groups) or chronic illnesses.
34. **Environment and climate change.** Adaptation to climate change comes under strategic outcome 4 but is not adequately taken into account in the implementation of activities (e.g. in the choice of plots, crops and varieties, and farming practices). The results and achievements of partners in this field (ministries responsible for agriculture and the environment, the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) are not sufficiently exploited. The introduction of short-cycle hybrid rice varieties that can deliver high yields but require large amounts of water and are relatively susceptible to insects and rodents does not appear to be well suited to the Guinean context. Strengthening the local seed system is an option to which WFP has not paid sufficient attention.
35. **Sustainability.** The transition from direct contractual relations with external service providers to memorandums of understanding with health services for the management of moderate acute malnutrition has encouraged state services to take control, but other conditions for sustainability have not yet been met. Nutrition support for people living with HIV yields more sustainable results when it is provided directly by associations of people living with HIV and is accompanied by community awareness-raising and income-generating activities. Such activities need to be reinforced, however.
36. Access to land has been negotiated with landowners, limiting the risk of conflict and securing investment for producer groups. Nevertheless, sustainability remains fragile, particularly in terms of mechanisms to ensure that the operation, upkeep and maintenance of community assets, such as hydro-agricultural schemes, are carried out by communities, which currently have very limited technical skills and financial resources.
37. Generally speaking, high staff turnover within national institutions and decentralized technical services compromises the sustainability of the positive effects of capacity building.
38. **Links between humanitarian and development action.** Since the RESIGUI project, the integration of humanitarian and resilience activities has been firmly established and has been incorporated into the pilot "Zero Hunger Villages" (ZHV) project,¹⁵ which embodies the rural transformation objectives defined in the country office's resilience strategy; it is still

¹⁵ In 2022 WFP launched a pilot project entitled "Zero Hunger Villages" (ZHV), implementing a comprehensive integrated anti-hunger approach (linked to home-grown school feeding) that concretely translates the strategy of integrating food assistance for assets, market support for smallholder farmers and home-grown school feeding.

early, however, to measure the results of the project or to assess the relevance and feasibility of scaling it up.

To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently?

Timeliness of output delivery

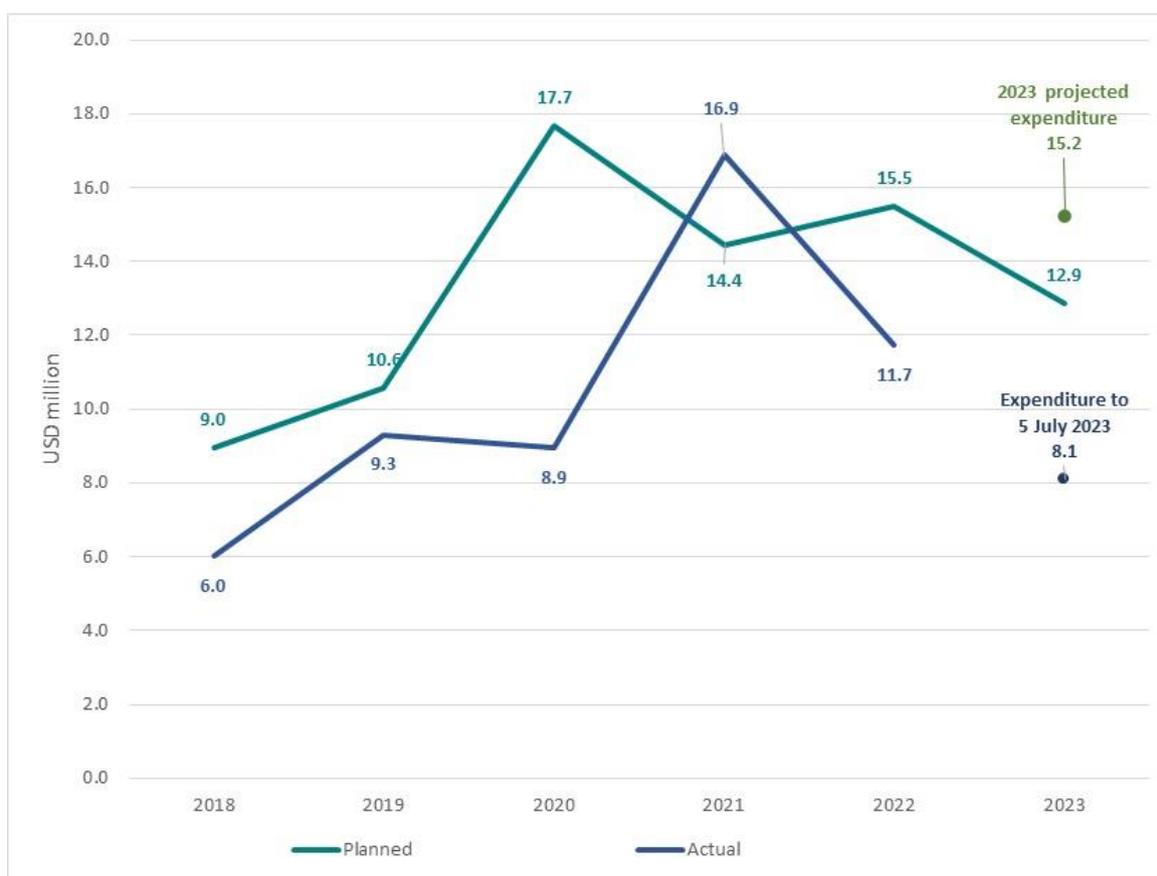
39. Significant delays, including in procurement and the payment of service providers, have weighed heavily on certain activities. These delays concern food distribution during emergency interventions (as in 2020) and cash transfers (as in the case of the RESIGUI project) as well as the supply of specialized nutritious foods, support for agricultural activities and local purchases from rice parboiler associations. There are several causes and they are often combined: financial capacity of financial service providers, logistical difficulties in the field, funding problems, WFP disbursement procedures and delays, supply chain disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and stock shortages at the international level. Air transport activities were carried out on schedule, however, and they enabled WFP to respond appropriately to recent health crises.

Coverage and targeting

40. The determination of geographic priorities is based on the results and projections of the Cadre Harmonisé, in particular with regard to emergency operations (with certain limitations of scale). The extent of coverage was essentially determined by available funding (especially for school canteens). As a result, WFP was forced to make trade-offs and temporarily interrupt its assistance in the most remote areas, which are often the most vulnerable in Guinea. The targeting of villages for resilience activities and the ZHV project is mainly based on criteria of accessibility and potential for rice development, which does not necessarily allow WFP to target the localities most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. The targeting of beneficiaries could also be made more precise to enable the most vulnerable to be reached in connection with several activities. The pre-school cycle, an important focus in the fight against malnutrition, is currently given little attention. While community targeting through village committees appears to be fairly effective in the context of emergency and resilience-building activities, the country office has no rigorous mechanism for checking the proper functioning of the committees, the beneficiary lists they compile or compliance with WFP criteria.

Cost effectiveness and other possible approaches

41. The level of financial utilization varies from year to year for a variety of reasons, including the limited visibility of funding. According to the data in the 2022 annual country report, support costs (around 10 percent of operating costs) are under control. The same applies to food losses, which remain below the reporting threshold of 2 percent of total stock value. These results testify to the cost-effectiveness of the assistance provided. In line with the strategy of extending coverage by reducing rations and the frequency of distributions, the cost per beneficiary was almost a third lower than forecast for 2020 and 2022. The significant increase in the number of beneficiaries of school feeding activities and the proportionately smaller increase in the budget resulted in a lower cost per beneficiary. No activity has been subjected to a cost-effectiveness or modality analysis, mainly due to a lack of in-house expertise and resources.

Figure 6: Overall annual financial utilization

Source: Plan developed under the country portfolio budget and actual expenditures. Version 2.1 (data extracted on 5 July 2023).

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

Financial resources

42. Insufficient financial resources and predictability of future funding have forced the country office to "pilot" operations, with annual planning based essentially on available funds. Faced with such funding challenges WFP has had to be agile. Its resource mobilization strategy has become more effective and has even led to a number of interesting solutions (including closer ties with national institutions and the allocation of funding by the International Monetary Fund to nationwide emergency food assistance in 2023). There nevertheless remain a number of challenges to securing long-term funding and maintaining donor confidence (in particular, with regard to those who provide funds for development). WFP's operational choices have been strongly influenced by donor requirements, particularly with regard to the introduction of cash-based transfers and the promotion of home-grown school feeding.

Monitoring and evaluation

43. The monitoring and evaluation system is not backed by sufficient staff and resources to cover all areas, enable timely monitoring and ensure the reliability of data provided by partners (data recorded by schools and clinics, for example, do not always correspond to reality). The effects of interventions are little or poorly measured: various methodological biases limit the monitoring of effects over time (e.g., variable collection periods, non-comparable samples, modification of indicators during the course of the ICSP); post-distribution monitoring is very limited; the country office does not have adequate tools

for compiling, grouping and analysing the data submitted by sub-offices. The information produced by the monitoring and evaluation system is incomplete and insufficient to guide decision making. Beyond the monitoring of outcome indicators, there is no analysis of impact or of WFP's contribution to the changes observed in the various activities.

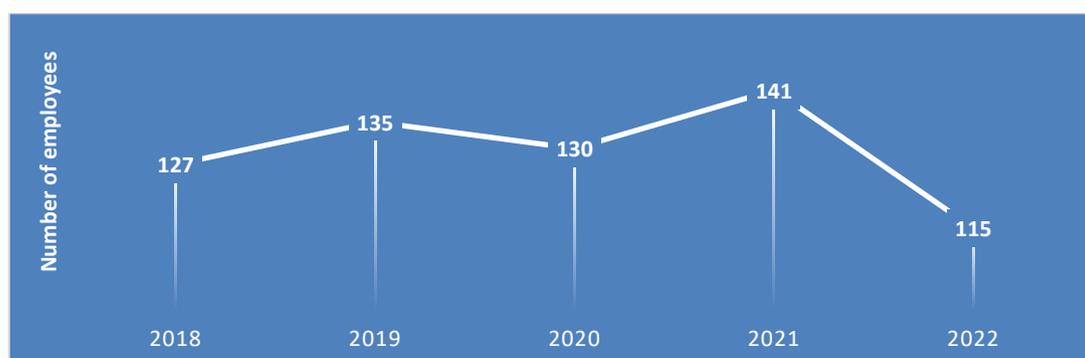
Partnerships

44. WFP's partnership strategy has evolved to prioritize the assumption of responsibility for certain core activities by state services (prevention of malnutrition and school canteens), which raises new challenges including the services' lack of capacity and resources and a decrease in WFP's supervision of activities. The private sector (e.g. local traders) is also playing a growing role. WFP's administrative procedures and payment delays are major constraints for some partners and service providers. The lack of coordination among United Nations entities also compromises the achievement of results and limits the complementarity of interventions. The very short duration (3–6 months) of contracts with cooperating partners limits the quality of activities, in particular support for producers and hydro-agricultural development.

Country office human resources

45. As a result of restructuring between 2021 and 2022, the number of field office staff shrank while the level of activity remained the same, leading to an overload of work and greater difficulty in monitoring. Grades have remained abnormally low for positions with significant decision-making power. The country office's human resources policy has suffered as a result of funding difficulties: fewer posts (especially in the field), local recruitment and less experienced staff. On the other hand, more secure contracts are being offered and key positions are now being filled, which is likely to have a positive effect on activities in the long term.

Figure 7: Guinea country office staffing changes, 2018–2022



Source : Employee records for 2018–2022.

Other factors

46. Since 2021, the context in which the ICSP has been implemented has been generally unfavourable to the achievement of WFP's objectives in terms of transferring responsibilities to national institutions (e.g., loss of institutional memory). Certain internal problems of WFP have had a negative impact on country office performance (e.g., delay in incorporating risk management into the country office monitoring system and a failure to evaluate suppliers regularly, or at all). Factors positively influencing WFP performance include staff versatility, direct collaboration with decentralized technical services and improved communication between the country office and field offices.

Conclusions

47. **Conclusion 1.** WFP has contributed to the achievement of food and nutrition security objectives in Guinea. It is recognized at the national level for its efficiency, its experience in logistical support and its presence in the field. It is also appreciated for its ability to intervene in emergency situations, thanks in particular to the transport provided by UNHAS. At the decentralized level, however, coordination and exchange of experience with other United Nations entities and strategic partners is inadequate. The "*faire faire*" strategy,¹⁶ with the Guinean Government as the main technical partner, still faces a number of problems, including weak capacity and limited resources of decentralized technical services, insufficient monitoring and supervision of performance and a lack of detailed exit strategies.
48. **Conclusion 2.** WFP's strategic planning in Guinea is increasingly focused on agricultural development, which is justified in view of the national context. Increased rice production and the strengthening of food chains, combined with the establishment and revival of producer organizations, promise medium-term benefits. Lacking the necessary technical skills, however, WFP offers only standardized solutions that fail to take into account the country's great agro-ecological diversity and local knowledge. Some initiatives (RESIGUI and ZHV) carried out within the framework of the ICSP have promoted an integrated approach to resilience, but implementation of the approach in Guinea faces problems linked to beneficiary targeting, geographical coverage, operational choices and withdrawal strategies.
49. **Conclusion 3.** Despite the marked concern evident in the ICSP, the country office has not done enough to help the most vulnerable with regard to nutritional risk, exclusion and gender inequality. WFP is known in Guinea for its core activities to combat infant and maternal malnutrition and malnutrition among vulnerable people, but such activities are often too sporadic to have a long-term impact. Activities implemented by health services to treat moderate acute malnutrition are hampered by major input supply problems. The approaches adopted do not systematically address the underlying causes of vulnerability, and they are generally based on assistance mechanisms that are not sustainable or are likely to produce negative side-effects (e.g. on women's work) that are not documented.
50. **Conclusion 4.** Beneficiary community participation and satisfaction with the support received were high, but community feedback mechanisms are not fully operational and do not guarantee anonymity, resulting in their under-utilization by beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are insufficiently informed about targeting strategies, WFP projects and their results and the difficulties encountered. Needs analysis and targeting are hampered by a lack of up-to-date data of sufficient geographical accuracy. The country office has limited tools for collecting and analysing food and nutrition security data to guide its interventions. Monitoring data are incomplete or insufficiently exploited, which makes it impossible to measure impact properly and hampers operational decision making.

¹⁶ This strategy refers to a gradual shift for WFP from the direct provision of food assistance to a technical partnership with the Government that is focused on mutually agreed priority areas and the transition of WFP's role from implementer to enabler of sustainable hunger solutions.

#	Recommendation	Type	Responsible country office units	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1	Strengthen strategic and operational partnerships in terms of resource mobilization, programme synergy and geographical coverage by implementing joint activities and prioritizing the most promising partnerships.	Strategic	Country office (management and partnerships, programme, and research, assessment and monitoring units)		High	2025 (while designing and launching the next country strategic plan)
1.1	Harmonize targeting and promote synergies with complementary interventions carried out by other organizations, particularly with regard to activities relating to the resilience and adaptation of rural communities to climate change (such as with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United Nations Development Programme, World Bank projects and partners, the African Development Bank, the French Development Agency and the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel)); gender equality and women's empowerment (such as with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and Caritas); and pre-school care (including with the United Nations Children's Fund, the German Agency for International Cooperation and plan International).				High	December 2025
1.2	Draw lessons that can be incorporated into programmes (e.g. on the suitability of facilities and value chains according to the context and areas of intervention) from the experience of other United Nations entities, government bodies and other technical and financial partners.				High	June 2024

#	Recommendation	Type	Responsible country office units	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.3	Update the memoranda of understanding between WFP and its strategic partners (notably the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock) on the basis of lessons learned and good practices from the implementation of the interim country strategic plan and supplement them with road maps and operational workplans complemented by joint annual review mechanisms; and focus support for the Guinean Government on priority areas (notably social protection and school feeding) and certain key institutions (e.g. the National Directorate of School Canteens and the National Agency for the Management of Humanitarian Emergencies and Disasters), defining support needs and "entry points" (such as the development of national strategies and technical capacity-building) based on assessments developed jointly with state partners.				High	July 2024
2	Improve the preparation of integrated resilience projects, including the stages prior to implementation, while ensuring that solid, long-term technical partnerships and clear exit strategies are in place.	Operational	Country office (programme, partnerships, human resource, research, assessment and monitoring, and supply chain units)	Regional bureau (research, assessment and monitoring, supply chain, and resilience units)	High	2024 (while designing and launching the next CSP)
2.1	Strengthen the skills of country office staff in agricultural development and rural engineering and subcontract or delegate to qualified partners or service providers with technical skills those tasks that WFP cannot or will not be able to undertake in-house.				High	July 2024
2.2	Give preference to relatively long projects (at least three years) and extend the duration of service provision contracts (minimum six months) renewable in large tranches (instead of re-launching recruitment procedures for service providers), particularly in the case of hydro-agricultural schemes.				High	Next CSP
2.3	Carry out preliminary studies using methods such as agrarian diagnosis or production systems analysis to tailor standard approaches and adapt agricultural development activities to local settings.				Medium	June 2024
2.4	Revise the general framework for environmental and social impact studies to take into account the standards of the Guinean Environmental Assessment Agency, WFP's environmental and social commitments and donor requirements so that these studies can lead to genuine environmental and social management plans.				Medium	June 2024

#	Recommendation	Type	Responsible country office units	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2.5	1) Draw lessons from the "Zero Hunger Villages" pilot project before scaling it up, clearly highlighting: i) the technical-economic results of the proposed package of technical measures (including crop yields, their added value per hectare and their competitiveness against imported products); ii) the social, economic and environmental results of this approach (e.g., increased and diversified income, the organization of producers, the participation of women and the preservation of natural resources); and iii) the conditions for replicability (water management, sustainable access to seeds and other inputs and access to markets, in particular).				High	June 2024
	2) Anticipate, in the next country strategic plan, the exit strategy applicable to "Zero Hunger Villages" (in particular the financing of recurring costs relating to the maintenance of assets and equipment provided to producer organizations), by clarifying beforehand with national counterparts (in particular the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock) the role they will have to play and by complementing the strategy with a budgeted action plan, discussed with and validated by those national counterparts.				Medium	July 2024
3	Promote more inclusive and transformative approaches to sustainable recovery from situations of nutritional vulnerability arising from discrimination (e.g. in relation to gender or HIV status), in particular by tackling underlying causes and implementing long-term empowerment strategies complemented by qualitative monitoring mechanisms.	Operational	Country office (partnerships and programme units, gender focal point, and research, assessment and monitoring,	Regional bureau (including partnerships, gender, and nutrition units)	High	2025 (for the remainder of the current ICSP and while designing and launching the next CSP)
3.1	Through strengthened partnerships, better coordination and joint resource mobilization, ensure complementarity in planning, geographical targeting and implementation with regard to activities to prevent and treat malnutrition and support people living with HIV.				High	June 2024

#	Recommendation	Type	Responsible country office units	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.2	Improve malnutrition treatment and invest more in malnutrition prevention by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ supporting local production of nutritious foods to limit input shortages; ➤ promoting sustainable solutions that add value to local products (diversification of household production for own consumption and support for local processing or the enrichment of nutritious foods such as flour for babies); ➤ developing, with support from qualified operational partners, a social and behaviour change communication strategy; and ➤ diversifying the targets of nutrition awareness-raising activities (producer organizations, traders, authorities, etc.) and communication channels (farmer focal points, schools, traditional authorities, etc.). 		supply chain, and human resources units		High	Next CSP
3.3	Based on existing data and documents, analyse barriers to inclusion and develop specific strategies to: i) overcome discrimination against people living with HIV and people with disabilities; and ii) empower women (e.g. technologies to reduce the difficulty and duration of women's work and communications that promote social and behaviour change and, more specifically, promote women's leadership and decision-making power).				High	End of 2024
3.4	Strengthen support for people living with HIV by helping them to set up sustainable income-generating activities, in particular by offering advisory services and technical capacity building throughout the value chain (from production to marketing).				Medium	Next CSP
3.5	Expand monitoring indicators for assessing the impact of activities on women (representation in the decision-making bodies of producer organizations, increased income, working hours, etc.).				Medium	End of 2024
3.6	To the extent that funding is available, recruit specialized full-time staff with qualifications and experience in gender equality and women's empowerment, ensuring that this cross-functional competence is properly coordinated with the various areas of technical intervention.				High	Beginning of 2024

#	Recommendation	Type	Responsible country office units	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4	Continue efforts regarding accountability to populations, the monitoring and assessment of activities and the monitoring of food and nutrition insecurity.	Operational	Country office (research, assessment and monitoring, partnerships, and human resource units and field offices)		High	2023-2024 (before the launch of the next CSP)
4.1	Plan a joint assessment of vulnerability and food and nutrition security at the national level and improve data collection for the Cadre Harmonisé (level of precision, collection method, etc.).				High	2024
4.2	Strengthen community feedback mechanisms, particularly with regard to local purchases associated with cash-based transfers and food distributions and systematically communicate feedback to beneficiaries and other stakeholders of such activities.				High	December 2023
4.3	Increase country office human resources for monitoring and evaluation and feedback, in the office in Conakry and in field offices, while ensuring ongoing capacity building to guarantee: i) full mastery of internal procedures relating to these various functions; and ii) a systematic approach to data collection and processing and to the use of data for planning.				High	2024
4.4	Ensure better coverage and enhance the quality of activity monitoring by outsourcing certain monitoring and evaluation tasks (third-party monitoring or the ad hoc recruitment of non-governmental organizations, consultants, surveyors, etc.) and integrate the related additional expenditure items into project budgets.				High	2024

Acronyms

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
FFA	food assistance for assets
GDP	gross domestic product
ICSP	interim country strategic plan
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
T-ICSP	transitional interim country strategic plan
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
ZHV	Zero Hunger Villages