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Summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for the Niger (2020–2025)

Executive summary

The evaluation of WFP's country strategic plan for the Niger for 2020–2025 was conducted between April 2024 and May 2025 and serves both accountability and learning purposes.

The evaluation found that, overall, WFP adapted well to the complex operational environment in the Niger: despite challenges linked to insecurity, access, funding and pipeline breaks after the 2023 change in government, WFP maintained its operations and strategic positioning and remained relevant and effective, including through its support for the national social protection system. Stakeholders recognize WFP as a key partner in humanitarian response and resilience activities, although there are challenges in coordination and the management of field-level agreements.

The country strategic plan was clearly structured around emergency response and an integrated resilience package, but weak articulation of the interactions between the two components, and insufficient definition of resilience-specific results at the design stage, hindered the plan's internal coherence.

WFP's crisis response reached vulnerable people affected by various shocks – including rising insecurity and floods, particularly during the lean season – with positive effects on their food security. Support for the humanitarian community through coordination and the provision of common services also strengthened WFP's positioning in the country. However, these interventions faced major challenges linked to a lack of funding and disrupted logistics, which limited the scale of WFP's response to the country's growing needs.

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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The integrated resilience package combined diverse interventions – including school meal operations, nutrition support and agricultural asset rehabilitation – to build community resilience. Tangible progress was observed in increasing access to natural resources and expanding the area of land under cultivation. The package included a wide variety of subactivities, some of which led to mixed outcomes, particularly in the area of school meal operations. There are opportunities to better define and explore synergies among the activities.

WFP integrated the promotion of gender equality, protection and environmental sustainability into its operations, and adhered to humanitarian principles. However, targeting approaches and the monitoring of specific vulnerable population groups remained challenging.

In the Niger, WFP adapted to challenges related to humanitarian access, funding and security through the use of flexible funding, local procurement and improved coordination. Monitoring tools and data systems were strengthened, but gaps remain in measuring the long-term effects of WFP's operations, including on women's empowerment. Overall, funding was limited and tightly earmarked, impeding WFP's flexibility. The reliance on just two main donors is perceived as a potential risk.

Over the period covered by the country strategic plan, human resources expanded but challenges remain in relation to staffing in remote areas, and the gender balance in the workforce. The country office's shift to "non-family duty" status in 2023 affected employees' well-being and the attractiveness of the posting for international staff. The leveraging of local capacity offers a key opportunity for WFP to strengthen its human resources in the Niger.

The evaluation made six recommendations addressed to the country office: improve integration among country strategic plan activities; improve the complementarities within partnerships; enhance monitoring and evidence generation; diversify and secure funding; strengthen human resources management; and optimize supply chain processes and management.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for the Niger (2020–2025), (WFP/EB.2/2025/6-C/7) and the management response (WFP/EB.2/2025/6-C/7/Add.1).

* 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 the Niger for 2020–2025 commissioned by WFP's Office of Evaluation serves both accountability and learning purposes and aims to inform the development of the next CSP.
2. The evaluation covered WFP's activities under the transitional interim CSP (T-ICSP) of 2019 and the CSP for 2020–2025. It was conducted between April 2024 and May 2025 by an external independent team. Its main users are WFP's country office in the Niger and internal and external stakeholders, including the Government of the Niger and beneficiaries.
3. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining document review, quantitative data analysis, key informant interviews, direct observations during visits to project sites, and focus group discussions with beneficiaries. Data collection took place in the Niger in September 2024.
4. Ethical standards were applied to ensure the anonymity, confidentiality and autonomy of stakeholders involved in the evaluation, including by obtaining their informed consent, protecting their privacy, respecting cultural sensitivities, ensuring the equitable selection of participants – including women and the members of vulnerable groups – and preventing any harm to participants or their communities.

Context

5. The Niger is a landlocked, low-income Sahel country with a population of approximately 26.2 million people.¹ It ranks among the poorest countries in the world as the 189th of the 193 countries on the Human Development Index in 2023.²
6. During the period covered by the CSP, the Niger faced multiple shocks, including weather extremes and climate variability, rising insecurity from insurgent violence that disrupted humanitarian access, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, inflation, and the change in government in July 2023, which led to temporary suspensions of aid, and border closures. While instability persists, some restrictions were eased in late 2024, allowing the gradual reopening of trade and oil transport routes with some neighbouring countries. Such dynamics also exacerbated the fragility of the Niger's supply chains, which are hindered by structural constraints such as limited infrastructure, a reliance on regional trade corridors, and high dependency on imports. A partial reopening of the borders in late 2024 allowed only a gradual recovery, and the functioning of pipelines remained compromised.
7. In terms of food security, the 2024 Global Hunger Index identifies the Niger as a country with "serious" levels of hunger, ranking 121st of 127 countries.³ According to the latest available data, at the end of 2024 1.5 million people faced severe food insecurity, mainly in Tillabéry, Diffa, Agadez and Tahoua regions, where poor rainfall, degraded resources and population displacement limit access to food.⁴

¹ World Bank. 2023. [Population, total - Niger](#).

² United Nations Development Programme. 2024. [Human Development Report 2023/2024. Breaking the gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world](#).

³ Wiemers, M. and others. 2024. [2024 Global Hunger Index: How gender justice can advance climate resilience and zero hunger](#).

⁴ Food Security Cluster. 2024. [Résultats du Cadre Harmonisé session de décembre 2024](#).

8. In January 2025, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification reported⁵ its projections estimating that between August 2024 and July 2025, 1.7 million children under 5 in the Niger would suffer from acute malnutrition, including 1.3 million children with moderate acute malnutrition; both of these figures represent levels that exceed the World Health Organization's thresholds for "critical" acute malnutrition.⁶ Key drivers include the inadequate quantity and poor quality of children's diets, a high prevalence of diseases, inadequate access to safe drinking water, poor sanitation and a lack of hygiene facilities. Reduced access to health and nutrition services, suboptimal breastfeeding practices and high levels of food insecurity exacerbate acute malnutrition levels. Other risk factors, such as widespread climate and economic shocks, continue to have negative impacts on the nutrition situation.
9. With the Niger ranking 161st of the 173 countries on the Gender Inequality Index in 2023,⁷ gender inequality continues to undermine household food security, as women – despite their central role in rural food systems – face persistent barriers to their access to land, resources and decision-making roles.
10. Ongoing insecurity and conflict in the region contribute to the arrival of refugees and the internal displacement of people. As of May 2025, the Niger hosted approximately 432,000 refugees and asylum seekers, while the number of internally displaced persons was approximately 507,000.

Country strategic plans

11. The 2019 T-ICSP for the Niger was structured around six strategic outcomes. Strategic outcome 1 focused on assisting crisis-affected people in order to save lives and support early recovery during and in the aftermath of crises, while strategic outcomes 2, 3 and 4 were part of the "integrated resilience package", focused on school meals, nutrition and livelihood activities. Strategic outcome 5 aimed to strengthen government institutions in the enhancement of emergency preparedness and response, social protection and resilience-building programmes, and strategic outcome 6 corresponded to the provision of humanitarian air transport and other common services to WFP's partners.
12. The CSP for 2020–2025 builds on the T-ICSP, incorporating lessons from the 2018 National Zero Hunger Strategic Review and previous WFP operations in the Niger. While the CSP maintained the same strategic outlook articulated through six strategic outcomes, the outcomes were adapted to better reflect the country's evolving needs. Notable changes included:
 - the extension of emergency assistance (strategic outcome 1) to host communities and returnees affected by crises, and the transfer of emergency school canteens from strategic outcome 1 to strategic outcome 2;
 - the consolidation of institutional capacity strengthening, covering the nutrition dimension (strategic outcome 3), a focus on gender issues, and greater national ownership of the interventions promoted by WFP (strategic outcome 5); and
 - the addition of communication and coordination services for partners, focused on logistics and emergency telecommunications (strategic outcome 6).

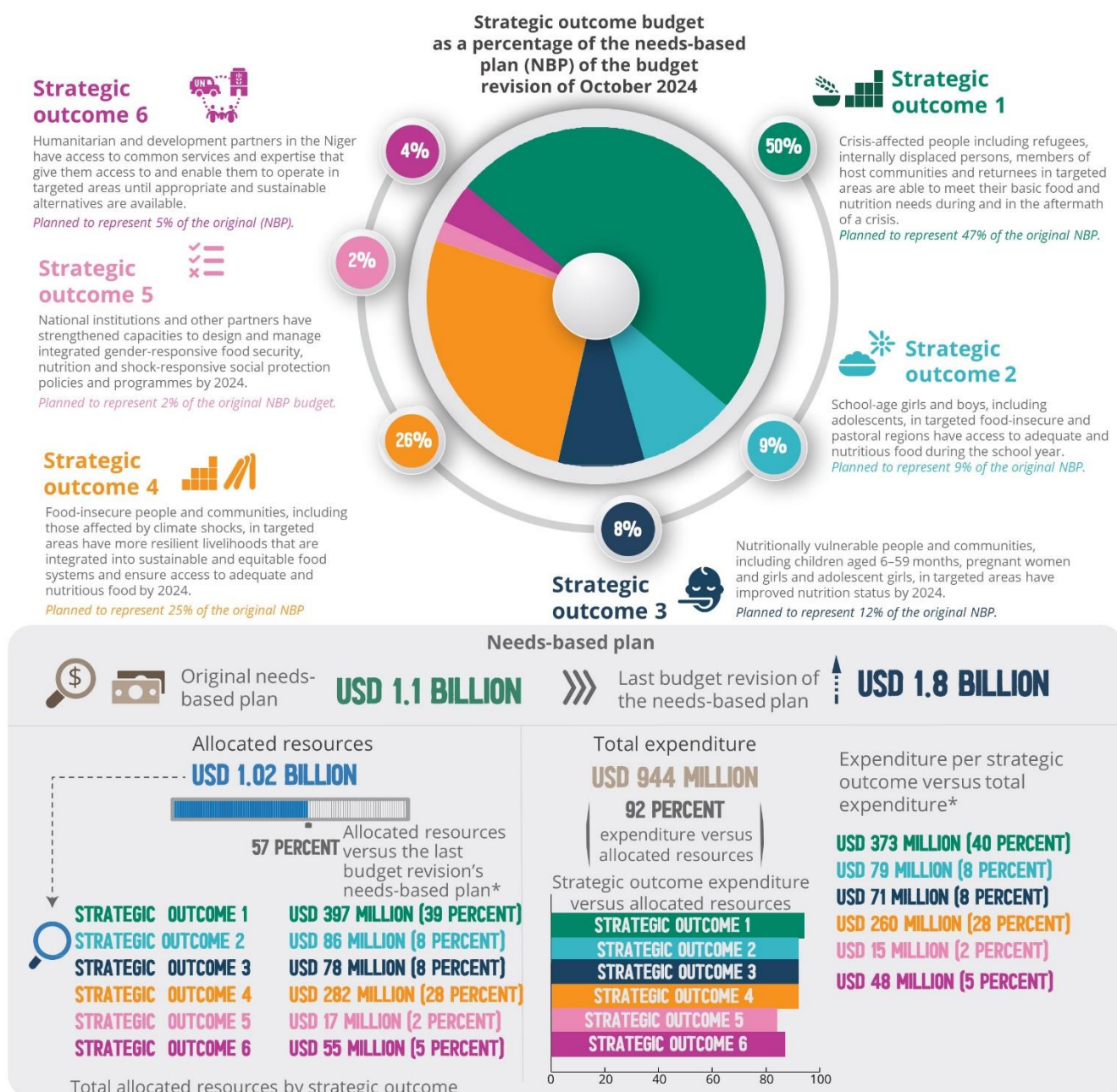
⁵ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2025. [Niger: Acute Malnutrition Situation for August - November 2024 and Projections for December 2024 – April 2025 and for May - July 2025](#).

⁶ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2025. [Analyse IPC de la malnutrition aiguë: Août 2024 – Juillet 2025](#).

⁷ United Nations Development Programme. [Gender Inequality Index](#).

- By September 2025, the CSP had undergone seven budget revisions, with plans for a further revision to extend its duration through 2026 and align the CSP cycle with the new national development strategy introduced by the Niger's transitional government. The original needs-based budget for the CSP amounted to USD 1.05 billion, with the objective of reaching 5.5 million beneficiaries between 2020 and 2024. Due to increasing needs and the extension of the CSP until December 2025, the budget approved in November 2024 rose to USD 1.8 billion, with a revised target of 12.8 million beneficiaries.

Figure 1: Niger country strategic plan (2020–2025) 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 to and spent on purposes other than strategic outcomes.

Key evaluation insights

Strategic alignment and partnerships

The CSP was aligned with national priorities and policies, the United Nations framework and the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite some disruption in the CSP's strategic alignment with national plans and priorities following the change of government in July 2023, CSP activities continued to be operationally aligned, enabling WFP to respond to the needs of vulnerable people and communities, in partnership with other humanitarian actors. WFP's readiness to respond is recognized as valuable by its partners, and the integrated resilience package has contributed to the strengthening of WFP's positioning in the Niger. Some challenges persist in WFP's collaboration with cooperating partners, and in expanding its engagement with the private sector and academia.

14. WFP's activities were closely aligned with national plans and priorities, including the economic and social development plans for 2017–2021 and 2022–2026. The change of government in July 2023 limited WFP's capacity to align its operations with national priorities because the new Government announced that it would no longer use the economic and social development plan as the framework for its actions, and a new strategy was not yet in place in November 2024, when the evaluation report was being drafted. This, along with the overall slowdown in the dialogue between national authorities and the international humanitarian community, considerably hindered planning efforts. WFP extended the current CSP until December 2025 to provide a transition period and facilitate the alignment of its next strategic cycle with the new national development plan. Despite its reduced visibility with the Government, WFP managed to maintain a degree of collaboration with national authorities, allowing for the continuity of its assistance.
15. The change of government, and the subsequent reduced dialogue with authorities, undermined in particular WFP's activities aimed at strengthening national capacity by limiting the opportunities for engagement and collaboration with government institutions, other than those involved in social protection work. WFP maintained strong momentum in social protection, based on continued technical dialogue with the national social safety nets cell and the unified social registry directorate, reflecting the organization's flexible and adaptive approach to maintaining institutional support in a fluid environment. Renewed donor support covering the period up to 2028, and the launch of a pilot cash transfer programme for chronically food-insecure households, starting in 2025, reflect WFP's leading role in supporting shock-responsive social protection systems in the country.
16. WFP is recognized by other actors as a key partner within the United Nations system in responding to multiple humanitarian crises, including through its active role in United Nations coordination mechanisms. WFP's readiness in responding to emergencies is widely recognized, particularly its logistics capabilities for the deployment of personnel and the maintenance of access to beneficiaries in hard-to-reach areas. The implementation of the integrated resilience package has strengthened WFP's positioning in the Niger in supporting the empowerment of the country's most vulnerable people and promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding. With regard to partnerships, the positive example of the partnership between WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank on social protection systems could serve as a foundation for strengthening collaboration and joint programming in other sectors.
17. WFP's collaboration with its cooperating partners played a crucial role in CSP implementation. Local non-governmental organizations were instrumental in facilitating reliable access to hard-to-reach areas, while international non-governmental organizations were mobilized primarily for resilience activities. Some challenges emerged, including the limited participation of non-governmental organizations in project steering committees, and

the short duration of partnership agreements. Efforts are under way to better define roles, responsibilities and synergies in the planning and implementation of activities, and to avoid overlaps.

18. The country office is also committed to partnering with the private sector, especially the local producers and traders who supply WFP-assisted schools, but this approach has not been extended to other sectors such as nutrition and agricultural and livestock value chains. WFP has also established partnerships with universities in the Niger with a view to strengthening local knowledge on resilience building and food security by funding research to inform its programmes. However, there is room for maximizing the use of the evidence generated.

Contextual relevance and adaptive capacity

The CSP has shown strong relevance to WFP's operational environment, and the country office has adapted to multiple crises through the implementation of data-driven responses and tailored interventions. WFP overcame operational challenges through flexible, community-based approaches, ensuring continued, context-specific assistance in insecure regions.

19. Under the CSP, WFP has demonstrated significant relevance to its operational environment by aligning its activities with the evolving needs of targeted people and communities. During the CSP period, WFP responded to multiple crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, shocks, rising insecurity, and price inflation. Over time, humanitarian needs have significantly increased: the number of internally displaced persons rose from nearly 377,000 in 2022 to more than 507,000 in September 2024, mostly in Tillabéry and Diffa regions. To better respond to the specific needs of vulnerable communities, WFP implemented tailored interventions, applying different targeting approaches for areas covered by emergency responses and those experiencing high food insecurity and exposure to climatic shocks, where resilience and nexus-centred programmes were implemented.
20. WFP's adaptive capacity was based on solid information systems, including for market monitoring, early warning and geospatial analysis, which supported the tailoring of approaches. In response to sudden crises, the CSP provided a flexible framework that allowed for strategic and operational adjustments based on needs analysis, and the adaptation of assistance modalities to better align WFP's operations with the rapidly evolving needs caused by climate shocks and insecurity. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP developed an adaptive response strategy in collaboration with its partners and vulnerable communities, and adapted its school meal operations by distributing take-home rations to students. In addition, following floods in 2024, WFP's emergency assistance plan, which initially targeted 50,000 people, was extended to reach 350,000 people, based on data from the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management.
21. In responding to multiple crises, WFP faced several operational challenges, including restricted access due to poor infrastructure, insecurity – especially in Diffa, Tillabéry and Tahoua regions – and a rise in operational costs associated with the requirement to use military escorts. While all humanitarian actors operating in the Niger faced similar challenges, WFP demonstrated particular flexibility in coordinating with cooperating partners to maintain the continuity of assistance. It promoted the mobilization of local community-based mechanisms and leveraged the field knowledge of cooperating partners to ensure the flexible delivery of assistance adapted to local conditions. In most insecure areas, WFP was also able to deliver multiple rations in a single distribution in anticipation of potential access issues in the future.
22. The change of government in July 2023 led to the suspension of most funding from major donors for the bulk of WFP's activities – with a few exceptions for emergency programmes – affecting WFP's capacity to respond to the urgent and long-term needs of vulnerable

households, especially in Tillabéry and Diffa regions. To better address these new challenges, WFP actively participated in updating the common country analysis with its partners.

Internal coherence

The CSP was clearly structured around emergency response and an integrated resilience package, but weak articulation of the interactions between the two components, and insufficient definition of resilience-specific results at the design stage hindered the CSP's internal coherence. Clearer frameworks and better monitoring would enhance the understanding of interlinked interventions and their results.

23. The CSP and its logical framework were built around the emergency response and the integrated resilience package, with various activities under each strategic outcome accompanied by several related indicators. However, a clearer articulation of the interactions between the two intervention types when implemented in the same areas – including the anticipated transition of beneficiaries from one to the other – would have strengthened internal coherence.
24. A theory of change describing the linkages between emergency and resilience activities, WFP's explicit approach to social protection, and the synergies with other sectors – such as health and education, among others – was missing. In addition, some of the original assumptions did not materialize: the reasons for this were largely beyond WFP's control and include the lack of follow-up on, and maintenance of, rehabilitated assets by local authorities, insufficient community capacity to sustain value chains, and the Government's limited commitment to institutionalizing various CSP activities.
25. Although food assistance for assets activities are conceived as the entry point for the provision of the integrated package – linking the agricultural production from rehabilitated lands and farmers' organizations to home-grown school feeding programmes, learning and nutritional rehabilitation centres, and food processing units – this role was not sufficiently reflected in the logical framework. Intended synergies among the activities were not sufficiently explicit, limiting understanding of the CSP's intersectoral effects.
26. In addition, the logical framework did not adequately reflect some intermediate results – particularly those regarding local food purchases for school canteens, and the income and empowerment achieved by food producers through those sales – limiting the monitoring of activities and the understanding of effects. The relevance of some subactivities, such as those involving school gardens, livestock keeping, and milling, was not always clear because of gaps in assessments of needs and capacity.

Emergency response – strategic outcomes 1 and 6

Under its emergency responses, WFP provided shock-affected people with vital food and nutrition assistance – particularly during the lean season and following shocks such as population displacement induced by insecurity or floods – with positive effects on the food security of beneficiaries. Support for the humanitarian community through coordination and the provision of common services has also contributed to WFP's positioning in the country. Funding shortfalls required the prioritization of assistance.

27. *Humanitarian assistance (strategic outcome 1).* Through activities under strategic outcome 1, WFP aimed to meet the basic food and nutrition needs of people affected by multiple shocks, particularly during the lean season and in the aftermath of floods or displacement caused by rising insecurity. This included the provision of short-term and extended food assistance to households facing acute food insecurity, and nutrition support for the prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition among children under 5 and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.

28. Over time, interventions under strategic outcome 1 contributed to the stabilization of beneficiaries' food security. Food consumption scores remained relatively stable, with approximately 50 percent of beneficiaries having an acceptable score, and the proportion of households with acceptable or borderline food consumption regularly exceeding 75 percent. On the other hand, the adoption of coping strategies fluctuated over time, indicating variable levels of resilience to shocks among households. The proportion of households reverting to emergency- or crisis-level coping strategies was particularly high in 2020, at 44 percent, and ranged between 27 and 7 percent in the following years.
29. Funding shortfalls affected activities under strategic outcome 1, limiting WFP's ability to respond quickly and at scale to certain crises. WFP had to prioritize its assistance, reducing both the number of beneficiaries assisted and the size of the rations distributed compared with initial forecasts. The number of beneficiaries under activity 1 was lower than projections, and rations were reduced to 80 percent of minimum caloric needs in 2021, and to 65 percent in 2022 and 2023. Such prolonged decreases in transfer volumes and coverage had a cumulative negative effect on the incomes of vulnerable households, undermining the progress achieved.
30. *Humanitarian coordination and common services (strategic outcome 6).* As co-lead of the food security cluster with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and as an active member of the cash working group, WFP played a key role in coordinating humanitarian efforts and maintaining dialogue with the Government during crises. However, several partners noted gaps in WFP's communication and data sharing, particularly regarding rapid assessments, which hindered collaboration during emergencies. In light of the growing financial constraints, there is a strong need for improved data sharing and joint advocacy to enhance the collective results of humanitarian efforts in the Niger. WFP's role in providing services through the emergency telecommunications cluster has been limited but effective, with emergency communication systems deployed since 2020 and a pilot site in Diffa providing internet connectivity to communities.
31. Despite major challenges – including chronic underfunding, rising fuel costs, the COVID-19 pandemic, and political instability – leading to the temporary suspension of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), WFP maintained the operations of the service largely in line with its targets throughout the CSP period, in terms of both the volume of humanitarian cargo and the number of passengers transported. Partner agencies emphasized UNHAS's critical role in ensuring humanitarian access, especially in remote and insecure regions. Since 2020, increased security-related requirements, such as the mandatory use of escorts for road transport, have made UNHAS even more essential.

Integrated resilience package – strategic outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5

Bringing together a wide range of interventions, the integrated resilience package aims to build the resilience of targeted communities through a holistic approach that includes, among other elements, school meal operations, nutrition support and the rehabilitation of agricultural assets within the framework of a strategy for facilitating beneficiaries' progression towards self-reliance. Tangible results were achieved, particularly in access to natural resources and agricultural production. Home-grown school feeding and complementary activities showed mixed results. Limited awareness of WFP's interventions hindered beneficiaries' progression towards self-reliance, and local ownership of the assets created.

32. *School meal operations (strategic outcome 2).* WFP's school meal programme contributed to higher enrolment, attendance and retention in school. In assisted schools, attendance rates increased from about 80 percent in 2019 to more than 95 percent in 2021–2024, and retention rates were systematically close to 100 percent of enrolled students of primary school age. The overall number of students enrolled increased over time, reaching about

- 325,000 in 2024, or 11 percent of the school-age population in the country, and exceeded targets in most years owing to the large numbers of internally displaced students enrolling in schools with operating canteens, leading to several cases of overcrowding in WFP-assisted schools.
33. Such a massive increase in the number of students attracted by the availability of school meals depleted food stocks and hindered the monitoring of school meal activities. There were also episodes of non-state armed groups carrying out attacks on some schools, which were burned down and had their food stocks looted. In response to this threat, WFP began to store food supplies in more secure warehouses identified by state authorities.
 34. WFP specifically supported girls' education through a scholarship programme that had positive effects on girls' school attendance and the reduction of early pregnancies and marriages; for example, more than 6,000 adolescent girls across several areas reportedly refused marriage requests.⁸ In addition, the end-of-year pass rate for girls receiving scholarships was 62 percent, compared with 42 percent for those in the same classes but not receiving scholarships.⁹ However, improvements in girls' school performance were limited by their domestic workloads, and the programme led to some frustration at the community level owing to the targeting of only vulnerable households.
 35. The home-grown school feeding programme aimed to source food from smallholder farmers in order to boost local economies. While pilot projects showed promising results – notably in terms of strengthening the capacity of local producers and stimulating the local economy – and a degree of integration with other livelihood activities (strategic outcome 4), logistics issues hindered their scale-up. Complementary initiatives focusing on school gardens, livestock-keeping, and mills helped to diversify school meals and generated incomes, but faced challenges related to water scarcity, maintenance issues and livestock mortality.
 36. *Nutrition (strategic outcome 3)*. Nutrition interventions aimed to prevent malnutrition and treat malnourished children aged 6–59 months, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, adolescents and other vulnerable population groups. WFP's intervention contributed to the improved nutrition status of the children and women treated in health centres, with yearly recovery rates ranging from 92 to 96 percent, but WFP's nutrition interventions were significantly impeded by border closures in 2023 because a large proportion of specialized nutritious foods were imported. As a result of these pipeline breaks, WFP was forced to drastically scale down its nutrition interventions, prioritizing children aged 6–23 months in the areas of greatest need and leaving about 240,000 malnourished children unassisted in late 2023, compared with the 465,000 malnourished children aged 6–23 months who were assisted in the same year.
 37. Outcome results reflect an overall positive performance, with some exceptions. Indicators for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition met recommended standards, with recovery rates exceeding 75 percent and increasing over the CSP period. The proportion of women and girls of childbearing age with at least minimum recommended dietary diversity increased from between 26 and 29 percent in 2019–2020 to between 44 and 50 percent in 2023–2024. However, the proportion of WFP-assisted children aged 6–23 months with a minimum acceptable diet remains a cause for concern, as it has constantly remained below the original target of 25 percent, which has subsequently been revised downwards.

⁸ WFP, United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Population Fund. 2023. [Evaluation of the Breaking Barriers for Girls' Education Programme in Niger 2019–2022](#).

⁹ WFP. 2025. [Niger Annual Country Report 2024](#).

38. Learning and nutritional rehabilitation centres played a central role in the prevention and community management of malnutrition, focusing on screening, awareness-raising and cooking demonstrations aimed at strengthening local capacity and promoting sustainable nutrition practices, and connected to food assistance for assets activities. Communication activities helped to raise parents' awareness of the importance of a diversified diet, contributing to behaviour change – including the increased practice of exclusive breastfeeding – and malnutrition prevention, with global acute malnutrition rates averaging nearly 5 percent in the areas served by the centres compared with the national rate of 12 percent.¹⁰ However, the centres had limited geographical coverage, and coordination with local authorities could have been improved.
39. WFP also supported the establishment of 15 local food processing units, and trained women's groups in the production of nutritious foods, such as peanut oil and fortified flour. Positive effects were seen in terms of women's empowerment: the women's groups in charge of managing the processing units acquired management skills and generated savings that led to the groups' engagement in other income-generating activities. Challenges included low production levels, limited demand due to the high prices of fortified foods, and the scant availability of fortifying agents.
40. *Resilient livelihoods (strategic outcome 4)*. Livelihood activities were the cornerstone of the integrated resilience package. They aimed to strengthen communities' resilience to climate or conflict-related shocks, in synergy with other activities in the integrated package. Beneficiaries of land rehabilitation and asset creation activities reportedly reduced their adoption of emergency coping strategies: from nearly 30 percent of beneficiaries in 2020–2021 to about 13 percent in 2024.¹¹ Livelihood activities also benefited beneficiaries' reported well-being, and contributed to increases in the land area cultivated and the production of staple agricultural crops, although according to the findings of a recent impact evaluation, seasonal improvements in food security in the post-harvest season were not sustained throughout the year.¹²
41. Among the key challenges identified by the evaluation team was the limited maintenance of assets in the areas visited. In addition, according to its beneficiary progression strategy, WFP aimed to gradually disengage from intervention areas over a five-year period while it prepared beneficiaries for self-reliance. However, beneficiaries' limited awareness of the duration of WFP's provision of assistance contributed to the persistence of a "dependency mindset" and did not encourage communities to take greater ownership of the assets created. Looking ahead, there is also a clear need for greater coherence between strategic outcome 4 and the other strategic outcomes in order to optimize synergies among activities and maximize their long-term effects.
42. *Country capacity strengthening (strategic outcome 5)*. Overall, WFP contributed to the strengthening of government capacity: in addition to supporting the development of national food security and nutrition strategy, capacity-strengthening efforts also focused on improving logistical equipment at the decentralized level, which contributed significantly to improving working conditions and access to the field for state technical services.

¹⁰ National Institut of Statistics. 2022. *Rapport SMART 2022 – Enquête Nutritionnelle et de Mortalité Rétrospective au Niger*.

¹¹ WFP. *Niger annual country reports 2020–2024*.

¹² WFP. 2024. *Resilience Learning in Niger – Impact evaluation endline report*.

43. The reduced dialogue with authorities following the change of government directly impeded some of these activities, limiting the opportunities for WFP to engage and collaborate in national programmes – with the exception of the national social protection programme (see the section on Strategic alignment and partnerships, particularly paragraph 14 above).

Cross-cutting themes

WFP integrated the promotion of gender equality, protection and environmental sustainability into its interventions. However, the targeting of specific vulnerable groups, and the monitoring of interventions' effects on these cross-cutting issues remained challenging. WFP strove to adhere to humanitarian principles in implementing its activities, and maintained access to beneficiaries despite operational constraints.

44. WFP integrated the promotion of gender equality into all of its activities, promoting women's participation in decision-making, providing tailored support such as school scholarships and income-generating activities for women and girls, and encouraging women's involvement in community management structures. However, greater attention should have been paid to understanding the actual effects of these efforts on women's empowerment.
45. WFP has sought to strengthen its processes and mechanisms for ensuring the protection of, and accountability to, beneficiaries. It ensured the inclusion of specific vulnerable population groups – such as older people and disabled persons – in its activities, but the monitoring system did not allow the disaggregation of findings by such groups, so the numbers of people in them who benefited from inclusion in WFP's activities remained unclear. While pastoral communities were targeted for lean season emergency response, their inclusion in the integrated resilience package was not appropriate because it did not take their mobility into account.
46. Environmental sustainability was taken into account in the design of the integrated resilience package. For example, several water-pumping stations in the community gardens are operated using solar panels, and satellite imagery was used to demonstrate increased vegetation cover in rehabilitated areas.
47. WFP strove to adhere to the humanitarian principles, with its assistance generally perceived as respecting the principles of humanity, impartiality and operational independence. Despite operational constraints, such as the mandatory use of escorts and the requirement to implement assistance modalities under the oversight of local authorities, WFP continues to be perceived as a neutral actor.
48. Humanitarian access has been a constant challenge for WFP and its partners, and the organization had to be flexible in best adapting its assistance to the evolving security situation. As highlighted in audits, a more detailed mapping of humanitarian access to distribution sites in different operational areas could have strengthened the planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions.¹³

¹³ WFP. 2024. *Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Niger*.

Evidence generation

Despite facing significant funding, security and access challenges, WFP continued to invest in evidence generation and improve data reliability. Critical gaps persist in the monitoring system, related to the lack of tracking of suitable indicators.

49. WFP has successfully enhanced the reliability and credibility of data and information through its support for national systems and structures such as the early warning system or the agricultural market information system. WFP has regularly used data generated by these entities to adjust the choice of transfer modality and the value of cash transfers or size of food rations.
50. In the face of funding, security and access constraints, WFP has continued to invest in evidence generation – including through an impact evaluation of the integrated resilience package – while strengthening its monitoring tools. To ensure the continuity of post-distribution monitoring, WFP collected data by phone and outsourced monitoring to third-party observers. This played a key role in Diffa region and helped to ensure that activities were properly implemented and any issues in the distribution process were quickly identified, but the reliability of the data collected remains uncertain.
51. During the CSP period, several joint evaluations of the activities of WFP and its partners were conducted, which helped to harmonize performance indicators and enabled the sharing of learning, including on localization and prioritization.
52. Critical limitations in the monitoring system persist. Some of the outcome indicators were not systematically tracked over the evaluation period, limiting the analysis of trends in the reduction of humanitarian needs, and results on women’s empowerment, among other factors.

Financial resources and efficiency measures

WFP faced significant funding gaps due to receiving insufficient and earmarked funding, which undermined its ability to implement the CSP in an agile and adaptive way. To maintain its operations, WFP has relied on internal financing mechanisms and adaptive strategies, but the timeliness of resource availability remained a challenge. There are opportunities to diversify funding sources, increase the flexibility of funding, and strengthen long-term programming and coordination with partners.

53. The mobilization of financial resources is a persistent challenge in the Niger, and WFP’s heavy reliance on just two main donors poses a significant risk, as the withdrawal of those donors would greatly jeopardize WFP’s ability to reach people in need. Important variations were noted among CSP components, with the resilience package being relatively better funded, at 75 percent in 2020–2024, than the crisis response, at 59 percent.¹⁴
54. The limited flexibility and predictability of funding significantly hindered CSP implementation and medium-term planning, particularly for resilience interventions. Only 23 percent of funds covered more than one year, with most funding being earmarked to specific activities or outcomes, leaving just 6 percent available for flexible use.
55. Major funding shortfalls have had a significant impact on WFP’s ability to respond to new humanitarian needs. To ensure continuous assistance despite financial constraints, the country office relied heavily on WFP’s corporate internal advance financing mechanisms – the Immediate Response Account and internal project lending – which covered 25 percent of total CSP expenditures between 2020 and 2024.

¹⁴ WFP. 2025. *Niger – Annual Country Report 2024*. (cumulative financial overview as of 31 December 2024)

56. To promote efficiency, WFP worked closely with other United Nations entities, such as UNICEF. When joint funding was available, the two agencies aligned their efforts and provided complementary assistance, including by operating in the same intervention areas, targeting the same beneficiaries, or using similar products, such as ready-to-use therapeutic foods. This collaborative approach was used in particular in joint initiatives such as school meal operations, the provision of scholarships for girls, and the social protection programme.
57. Although mechanisms and partnerships for anticipating crises exist, WFP's response has not always been timely or at the required scale and has sometimes lacked planning ahead of recurring shocks, mainly because of procedural delays, funding shortfalls and pipeline breaks – especially after the July 2023 change of government – with a peak of 140 days of delay in the delivery of assistance under strategic outcome 1 in April 2024; overall, the longest delays were recorded for activities under strategic outcomes 1 and 3. The use of the Global Commodity Management Facility helped to improve the timeliness of WFP's actions and ensured the continuity of operations, although the limited availability of food items at the Cotonou and Lomé hubs was a challenge at times.
58. These limitations highlight the crucial need to diversify WFP's donor base and establish effective mechanisms for avoiding delays and ensuring timely interventions.

Human resources

WFP expanded its national staffing and operational presence in the Niger, but continues to face challenges in human resource capacity, gender parity in the workforce, and the retention of employees, especially in remote or insecure areas. Steps were taken to improve the country office's organizational structure and support employees' well-being. The leveraging of local talent and partnerships with universities offers a key opportunity for WFP to strengthen its human resources.

59. The number of national employees has increased considerably over the CSP period, as has the number of personnel deployed to WFP sub-offices, reflecting investments in WFP's operational coverage. Despite this progress, however, the number of employees available for the monitoring and management of field activities remains inadequate. Positions in remote or insecure areas have been particularly difficult to fill, with delays in the arrival of replacement employees.
60. The country office has worked actively towards gender parity in its workforce, prioritizing the selection of women candidates whenever possible. Despite a slight increase, however, the proportion of women employees remained low, at 36 percent in 2024. The recruitment of women remains particularly challenging in remote or particularly insecure areas.
61. The recent transition of the Niger to a "non-family duty" station in 2023 affected employees' well-being and reduced the attractiveness of the posting for new international staff. To mitigate these and other challenges, in 2023 the country office conducted a review of its structure, which helped to clarify roles and responsibilities and adjust the type or grade of the contracts for some positions. In addition, the regional office has provided substantial support through training, advice on staffing management, policies, and the ongoing monitoring of human resource needs. Looking ahead, the leveraging of local capacity, including through partnerships with local universities, offers a key opportunity for WFP to strengthen its human resources in the Niger.

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 1: Strengthen the integration of activities in the next CSP, establishing clear links between crisis response and resilience- and social cohesion-building activities in terms of their coverage, targeting and transition strategies, based on realistic funding forecasts.</p>	Strategic	Country office (with support from global headquarters, including the regional office for Western and Central Africa, and government partners)	High	November 2026
<p>1.1 Strengthen the internal coherence of the CSP – for example, by reducing the number of strategic outcomes – and conduct an in-depth analysis of subactivities, such as school gardens, livestock keeping, milling and fortified flour production, with a view to retaining those that are most relevant.</p>				
<p>1.2 Articulate the social protection approach more explicitly by clarifying the roles of long-term social safety nets, shock responsiveness and livelihood strengthening in social protection programmes.</p>				
<p>1.3 Strengthen the home-grown school feeding approach by enhancing the autonomy of school garden initiatives – in terms of production capacity and the use of local products – and producer organizations in order to reduce the dependency of school canteens on imported food.</p>				
<p>1.4 Update the integrated resilience and beneficiary progression strategy, outlining the key steps and sequencing of various activities, based on best practices and lessons learned from the current CSP. To better measure results, the strategy should include the criteria, indicators and monitoring mechanisms for beneficiaries' progression towards self-reliance, developed in consultation with communities. The concept of progression should be adopted and communicated from the community planning phase onwards, and applied to all components of the integrated resilience package.</p>				

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 2: Enhance the complementarities within partnerships for effective and sustainable action.</p> <p>2.1 Shorten the time required for negotiation in the contracting process for field-level agreements.</p> <p>2.2 Strengthen the exchange of information and learning with government and development partners in order to improve coordination and the capitalization of best practices.</p>	Operational	Country office (with support from WFP sub-offices, government partners, and development partners)	High	December 2026
<p>Recommendation 3: Enhance monitoring and evidence generation to support more effective and inclusive interventions.</p> <p>3.1 Enhance the generation of evidence to inform decision-making, particularly by developing and tracking disaggregated indicators that effectively monitor the effects of interventions on the empowerment and inclusion of vulnerable people, especially women, girls and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>3.2 Strengthen inter-agency monitoring frameworks through regular meetings for the sharing of results, lessons learned, tools and data. Identify challenges and agree on how to optimize interventions, create synergies, and make strategic adjustments.</p> <p>3.3 Strengthen the use of evidence from research projects conducted with universities in order to optimize the design and implementation of WFP's programmes and support advocacy.</p>	Operational	Country office (with support from global headquarters, including the regional office, other United Nations entities, and academia)	Medium	December 2025
<p>Recommendation 4: Diversify and secure funding so as to establish a reliable and predictable resource base.</p> <p>4.1 To diversify funding sources and reduce the reliance on a small number of donors, strengthen bilateral and joint advocacy with partners, including government stakeholders, to secure short- and long-term financial commitments from bilateral and multilateral donors. As part of these advocacy efforts, make greater use of the available evidence of results.</p>	Strategic	Country office (with support from global headquarters, including the regional office)	High	December 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.2 Leverage government ownership and common priorities, such as those of flagship programmes, to position WFP as the partner of choice in implementing programmes, and to unlock opportunities for thematic and innovative funding through the Government.				
Recommendation 5: Strengthen human resource management to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of WFP's interventions.	Strategic	Country office (with support from global headquarters, including the regional office, and government partners)	High	June 2026
5.1 Focus on the development and retention of talent by strengthening and promoting the capacity of national employees through training and the creation of career advancement opportunities.				
Recommendation 6: Optimize supply chain processes and management to accelerate food deliveries and reduce operational delays.	Operational	Country office	High	November 2026

Acronyms

COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
T-ICSP	transitional interim country strategic plan
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund