



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

Executive Board

Second regular session
Rome, 14–17 November 2022

Distribution: General

Agenda item 6

Date: 11 October 2022

WFP/EB.2/2022/6-G/Add.1*

Original: English

Evaluation reports

* Reissued for technical reasons on
2 November 2022

For consideration

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

Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Pakistan (2018–2022)

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary evaluation report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Pakistan for 2018–2022.
2. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to outcomes, its efficiency in implementing the plan and the factors explaining its performance.
3. The evaluation was conducted between July 2021 and February 2022. It served the dual purpose of accountability and learning and informed the preparation of a new CSP. The link to the new CSP is particularly relevant given the strategic direction of the current CSP.
4. The evaluation made four recommendations, each with sub-recommendations. Two recommendations are strategic and two are operational. They are to be implemented primarily by the Pakistan country office, with support from the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and headquarters.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for the implementation of those recommendations. In some instances, the country office has agreed to recommendations but has adjusted the proposed timelines for their completion.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PAKISTAN (2018–2022)					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Deadline: December 2023</p> <p>Recommendation 1: WFP should ensure that the next country strategic plan primarily focuses on supporting the Government in developing strategies to enhance food and nutrition security while maintaining the ability to respond to crises. Country capacity strengthening needs should be jointly identified with the Government taking into consideration the decentralized nature of the government system in Pakistan and clearly distinguishing efforts that must be addressed at the national level from those that must be addressed at the provincial level. In addition, it will be important to ensure that the country strategic plan reflects the fact that Pakistan is a very diverse country whose provinces have diverse set of needs and capacities and that different provinces will therefore require different types of support. This approach should be embedded in the following steps:</p>	Country office (regional bureau; headquarters Partnership and Advocacy Department)	Agreed	The country office adopted a participatory approach to the design of the new CSP, conducting consultations with all provincial governments and the relevant ministries at the federal level in order to assess their needs and priorities. Based on the findings of that exercise, the country office plans to support shock-responsive social protection systems, improve the quality of nutrition programmes and support the development of a national school feeding policy. The country office will also extend policy support to the Government in emergency preparedness, food systems augmentation and the strengthening of supply chains through national and subnational engagement. More specifically, the country office will pursue the initiatives outlined in the following responses to sub-recommendations.	Country office management (Sustainable Development Goal policy unit, all CSP outcome teams, all provincial offices)	December 2022

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1.1 Carry out an in-depth and iterative consultation process with the Government at the central and provincial levels (taking into account the process of devolution and regional diversity) to identify needs and existing capacities at both levels and design national and provincial country capacity strengthening interventions accordingly. (December 2023)		Agreed	The country office will formulate provincial-level strategies for the development of the Government's capacity to design and implement school feeding and nutrition programmes.	Country office (CSP outcome 2 team) ¹	December 2023
			Where applicable, a “joined-up” approach will be adopted, with programmes co-funded by the Government reflected in annual development plans in order to foster firm commitments and facilitate the development of joint work plans that ensure the timely implementation of activities.	Country office (programme unit, all provincial offices)	December 2023
			The country office will work closely with relevant provincial disaster management authorities to augment their capacity in disaster preparedness and response.	CSP outcome 1 team	December 2023

¹ The numbering of CSP outcomes in this document is in line with the new CSP for 2023–2027.

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1.2 Develop a detailed theory of change that outlines the change pathways and strengthened linkages and synergies between focus areas, strategic outcomes and activities and how these can be achieved. Integrate country capacity strengthening into the various strategic outcomes so that it organically supports specific thematic areas. The country office could use the strategic outcomes as the starting point and develop a storyline that allows the goals to be reached. Depending on the complexity of the strategic outcomes under the next country strategic plan, the country office could develop a single overarching theory of change or multiple ones. (December 2023)		Agreed	The country office developed an overarching theory of change and a line of sight as part of its formulation of the new CSP for 2023–2027. The line of sight encompasses all the strategic areas mentioned in recommendation 1. As an overarching theme, country capacity strengthening (CCS) is reflected in all CSP outcomes. The country office will also develop a comprehensive capacity strengthening strategy.	Country office (all CSP outcome teams, all provincial offices)	March 2023

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1.3 Embed WFP interventions within government systems and structures to ensure that effective interventions can be scaled up and sustained. This work includes strengthening emergency response capacity and leveraging collaboration with the Government of Pakistan at the policy and strategy levels in areas including stunting prevention and the consolidation and expansion of nutrition support as part of <i>Ehsaas Nashonuma</i> and resilience building. (December 2023)		Agreed	<p>A strategic shift has already been made in order to focus on government systems and identify the areas within government structures where system strengthening and upscaling are required. Alignment between WFP planning and the Government's annual development planning cycle will be needed for the timely and systematic design and approval of joint programmes and the definition of budgetary allocations in fiscal budgets and annual development plans. Work has already started under an effective provincial engagement strategy for stunting prevention, emergency preparedness and response, school feeding and resilience building.</p> <p>The national flagship stunting prevention programme (the Benazir Nashonuma Programme) is funded by the Government, well integrated into the national health system and other programmes, is making use of all existing facilities and infrastructure of the Government, and its project management unit is housed in the Benazir Nashonuma Programme secretariat, all of which are critical for the effective handover and sustainability of programmes.</p>	Country office (all CSP outcome teams, all provincial offices)	December 2023

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1.4 WFP should develop an operational plan for the next country strategic plan focused on its core areas of competence. This requires the identification of a clear implementation road map that facilitates the shift required to implement activities and deliver the country strategic plan strategic outcomes. A key activity for this recommendation is a self-assessment or staffing review to ensure that staff have the capacity and expertise needed to implement the country strategic plan effectively. (March 2023)		Partially agreed	The country office will undertake a self-assessment with a view to ensuring that staff have the capacity and expertise necessary to meet the needs of the CSP. Management is in partial agreement with the recommendation because consultations with internal and external stakeholders, carried out as part of the formulation process for the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and the new CSP, identified key entry points that are in line with the country office's mandate and operational capacity. That mandate was further reviewed during the development of the CSP. Management is therefore of the opinion that there is no need for an iterative road map because an operational review has already been carried out.	Country office management (human resources unit)	March 2023
Priority: High Deadline: December 2023 Recommendation 2: The country office should review its fundraising, partnerships and advocacy plan with a view to exploring new funding sources and further leveraging domestic financing. This may entail identifying new financing mechanisms with support from headquarters.	Country office (regional bureau, headquarters)	Agreed	As stated in the response to recommendation 1, the country office will increasingly be providing technical assistance for strengthening the capacity of relevant government departments with the aim of enabling them to take over programme implementation within a specific timeframe and to scale up programmes so as to increase efficiency and effectiveness. In line with those commitments, and to ensure that the required funding and strategic partnerships	Country office (programme unit, communications team)	December 2023

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			with key government departments and organizations are in place, the country office has developed a partnership action plan and will make efforts to generate resources through the Government's annual budget allocation process and from non-traditional donors, the private sector and international financial institutions (IFIs).		
2.1 Position WFP as a key development actor (beyond the humanitarian sphere) and ensure clear and coherent messaging on WFP's comparative advantages and value propositions. This will entail communicating the impact of upstream capacity strengthening work and promoting a shift from "implementing" to "enabling", working to become a catalyst and the go-to partner for development priorities. (December 2023)		Agreed	The country office has identified four key areas – emergency preparedness; social protection; food systems; and humanitarian response in the event of large-scale emergencies beyond the full response capacity of the Government (and upon their request for support) – and has formulated its strategy to fulfil unmet needs in those areas while focusing on capacity strengthening and technical assistance.	Country office (management)	December 2023

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2.2 Contribute to and inform the engagement between the Government and international financial institutions by leveraging data, analysis and other tools; convening dialogue; and subsequently, where appropriate, playing a role in assisting with the implementation of government-led projects financed by international financial institutions. (December 2023)		Agreed	WFP will demonstrate its efficacy as a partner of choice for the Government by leveraging its comparative advantages in data collection, analysis, mapping, food security assessment and monitoring and tracking.	Country office (vulnerability analysis and mapping unit)	December 2023
2.3 Work with for-profit organizations and the Government to explore opportunities for technical partnerships with the private sector in selected programmes, with a particular focus on the development of nutritious foods. The country office should also explore the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network as a key platform for private sector engagement. (December 2023)		Agreed	For more than a decade, the Pakistan country office has developed the capacity of local food manufacturers and suppliers in the private sector to produce specialized nutrition products, linking those efforts to its expertise in supply chain management and quality assurance. As a co-leader of Scaling Up Nutrition networks, the country office has already positioned itself as a technical partner and is currently managing a very large nutrition programme in Pakistan. Moving forward, the country office will further expand its partnerships, particularly with the private sector and academia, to address the prevailing malnutrition in the country.	Country office (partnerships unit, supply chain team, CSP outcome 2 team)	December 2023

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Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2023 Recommendation 3: Deepen WFP's strategic and operational partnership with government partners and civil society organizations.	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed	The country office has developed strategic and operational partnerships with various government ministries and departments, civil society organizations and local organizations under various initiatives. It has also invested significant resources in developing its partners' capacity to implement effective interventions. As part of the implementation of the new CSP, the country office will carry out the actions outlined in the following responses to sub-recommendations.	All provincial offices	December 2023
3.1. It is important to introduce regular strategic interaction with government partners, at the national and provincial levels, to exchange ideas and information on opportunities, country strategic plan plans, gaps, country capacity strengthening needs and future expectations. This will serve to ensure effective and continual communication. WFP should select entities to engage with based on their capacities and the activities to be conducted. In some instances, particularly at the provincial level, multiple government partners may need to be engaged to support single initiatives. (December 2023)		Agreed	Interactions with provincial governments will be enhanced to ensure that interventions are relevant and in accordance with CCS needs.	Country office (programme unit, partnerships unit, reports and communications team, monitoring and evaluation team, all provincial offices)	December 2023

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3.2 WFP should more actively engage with civil society organizations to benefit from their field knowledge. This should go beyond the collection of monitoring data and include learning through dialogue, which may be used by WFP to inform its strategic objectives and improve its understanding of field realities. Specific areas where focused attention is needed are social protection, identification of the most vulnerable groups and gender transformation. (December 2023)		Agreed	WFP will benefit from the local knowledge of civil society organizations through increased interactions and the documentation of best practices and lessons learned from joint consultations. Collaboration with civil society organizations will be enhanced to facilitate joint work in the areas of food security, social protection, needs assessment for the most vulnerable population groups and gender transformation. Civil society organizations will also be increasingly involved in food security assessments, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification exercises, seasonal livelihood programming and community-based participatory planning.	Country office (all provincial offices, vulnerability analysis and mapping unit, gender and protection team, disability inclusion team)	December 2023
Priority: Medium Deadline: December 2023 Recommendation 4: WFP should increase its efforts to promote gender equality, accountability to affected populations and protection.	Country office (regional bureau)	Agreed	The country office has recently graduated from a gender-transformation programme exercise with the aim of integrating a gender-transformative approach into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its projects and programmes. Moving forward, the country office will carry out the actions described in the following responses to sub-recommendations.	Country office (gender and protection team, disability inclusion team, programme unit)	December 2023 and beyond

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4.1 WFP should explore ways to contribute to shifts in gender construction and reducing gender inequality. This must go beyond the inclusion of women or gender minorities in activities, and WFP should engage with partners who focus on gender equality to ensure that its activities are based on the most current knowledge and practice. (December 2023)		Agreed	WFP will enhance its focus on gender-transformative programming that addresses the root causes of gender inequality; strengthen its engagement and partnerships with organizations that focus on women's empowerment and gender equality, including United Nations partners and government entities mandated to promote gender equality. In addition, the new CSP follows a gender-transformative approach by challenging the barriers that influence the meaningful contribution of all members of communities as agents of change.	Country office (gender and protection team, field-level agreement and cooperating partners unit, programme unit)	December 2023
4.2 WFP should continue its efforts to achieve greater gender balance among its staff, noting the structural challenges. (December 2023)		Agreed	Women's representation in the staffing of the country office continues to increase, rising from 19 percent in 2020 to 31 percent in late 2022. Efforts to increase it further are being incorporated into daily operations. Outreach efforts are being increased through the use of various social media platforms. In addition, the heads of provincial offices and other hiring managers are increasingly engaged in active work with the country office human resources unit to attract qualified female candidates and provide an enabling environment for women personnel, especially in the field.	Country office (gender and protection team, disability inclusion team, monitoring and evaluation team, management, human resources unit)	December 2023

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<p>4.3 To promote their effective implementation, WFP should ensure that accountability to affected populations and protection mechanisms are aligned with local cultural traditions and norms and are fully understood by cooperating partners.</p> <p>(December 2023)</p>		Agreed	<p>To ensure accountability to affected populations, the country office is continually sensitizing cooperating partners to the need to disseminate appropriate messages to affected people, which is critical to enabling those people to participate in and fully benefit from WFP programmes. Such work will better equip and enable communities to contribute to decision making, raise concerns, flag problems, make suggestions for improvements to programmes and plan for the future.</p> <p>WFP also will address emerging protection and accountability to affected populations concerns through field visits, monitoring, protection analysis and engagement in interagency protection and accountability to affected populations forums, as well as awareness raising and information sharing particularly focusing on communities' concerns.</p> <p>As part of its approach, the country office has established an online platform for its community feedback mechanism (CFM), which is continually improved and strengthened. WFP will seek to enable those most vulnerable to use its hotline number and other online platforms such as email and social media pages and to inform WFP of any programme adjustments that are</p>	Country office (gender and protection team, disability inclusion team, monitoring and evaluation team)	December 2023

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			<p>needed. Community engagement will inform the personnel involved in WFP protection and accountability to affected populations initiatives and processes, helping them to be sensitive to cultural and social norms.</p> <p>Noting that the existing CFM allows community members to register concerns and share feedback mainly by telephone, and given the prevailing cultural norms in which women and girls have limited access to the CFM and thus to register their complaints directly, the country office will conduct face-to-face interviews in various communities to obtain feedback. The resulting information will be triangulated with regular post-distribution monitoring data, and further efforts will be made to enable people to register concerns directly. The country office will also make efforts to raise awareness of the CFM through increased interaction with community groups.</p> <p>WFP is building the capacity of cooperating partners and providing awareness-raising materials, such as banners and posters, on the CFM for display at distribution sites.</p>		

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			The CFM also facilitates the confidential reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse. To address such issues, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse focal points have received information and training on the CFM. To address gender-based violence, the country office engages with formal and informal social networks, including United Nations protection groups and women's rights organizations.		