

eSINGLE FORM FOR HUMANITARIAN AID ACTIONS

2016/01021/IR/01/01

REFERENCES

HIP/Decision Reference

ECHO-ME/BUD/2016/01000

Agreement number:

ECHO-ME/BUD/2016/01001

Action type

Non-emergency action

Document type

Interim report

Submission date

08/09/2017

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Name of Humanitarian organisation

WFP-IT

1.2 Title of the Action

Emergency Food Assistance to People Affected by Unrest in Syria

1.3 Narrative summary

The Syria crisis is described as the worst humanitarian and protection crisis in the world. Since its start, over 11 million have been forced to flee from their homes. A consequence of the conflict, displacement is one of the main drivers of household food insecurity.

Over five years of conflict have resulted in economic recession, damage to vital infrastructure, and increased poverty levels, which eroded the development of sustainable livelihoods and caused costly losses for both current and future generations. One third of the Syrian population now lives in poverty and over half the working age population is unemployed. Human development gains have witnessed a dramatic reversal, as infrastructural damage and economic recession have left healthcare facilities, schools and other essential services unable to meet the population's needs.

In response to the conflict in Syria, in 2011 WFP launched an emergency operation in October 2011 to provide life-saving food assistance to the conflict affected population. Initially targeting 50,000 people, WFP progressively scaled-up its response to a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis. Currently, WFP is targeting up to 4,5 million vulnerable conflict-affected people on a monthly basis, through a combination of general food assistance, livelihoods recovery interventions, specialised nutrition programmes and education support.

Under this action, ECHO's contribution would allow WFP procure 17,500 mt of milk produced in the EU, to be delivered to schools across the country in support of 500,000 pre-primary and primary school children during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, along with the fortified date bars, as part of

the existing Fortified School Snacks Programme [MR] or as part of the emergency food assistance when operational conditions require reallocation.

[MR2] Please see **Annex I**.

1.3.1 [INT] Narrative summary

WFP submitted two modification requests in February (MR1) and in June 2017 (MR2) 2017 to request a revision of the planned milk quantities due to the combined effect of below scale implementation during the first academic year and changes in the commodity rates.

As communicated through the modification requests, during the planning phase of the project, WFP estimated that it could procure 17,500 mt of milk over the course of the action, with an annual requirement of almost 9,000 mt. However, the price of milk was lower than initially anticipated resulting in a revised projection of a total of 22,500 mt of milk to be procured over the course of the action. Moreover, significant bureaucratic and logistics hurdles encountered during the upstart phase meant that WFP could only procure and distribute approximately 50 percent of the planned milk quantities during the 2016-17 academic year, some 4,501 mt of milk, leaving some 18,000 mt of milk to be distributed during the 2017-18 academic year, though it should be noted that the actual procurement is currently ongoing.

Please see Annex I to read the rest of the text.

1.4 Area of intervention

<u>World area</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Location</u>
Asia	SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	Aleppo, Homs, Rural Damascus, Damascus, Tartous, Al-Hasakeh, Hama, Lattakia. [MR2] See Annex I	-

1.4.1 [INT] Area of intervention

As per the second modification request, Quneitra, Dar'a and As-Sweida governorates were added to the plan. Al-Hasakeh governorate was removed due to access constraints.

1.5 Dates and duration of the Action

Start date of the Action

01/06/2016

Duration of the Action in months

24

Duration of the Action in days

-

Start date for eligibility of expenditure

01/06/2016

Justify the duration of the eligibility period before the start date

-

2. HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION IN THE AREA OF INTERVENTION

2.1 Presence in the area

WFP has had a continued presence in Syria for almost 50 years, providing more than USD 1 billion worth of food assistance into the country through development and emergency operations. Prior to the current conflict, WFP, together with its partner organization the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), responded to emergency food needs following consecutive droughts, assisted in the implementation of school feeding programmes and provided assistance to Iraqi refugees seeking sanctuary in Syria.

2.2 Synergies with other actions

Under this action, the ECHO contribution of EUR 30 million will enable WFP to procure 17,500 mt of milk to be distributed, along with fortified snacks, to school children as part of the Fortified School Snacks Programme (FSSP). The FSSP was launched by WFP in August 2014 in an effort to contribute to the overall objective of the No Lost Generation Initiative, an inter-agency response strategy led by UNICEF to ensure the education and protection rights of children and youth are not compromised by the conflict. The strategy recommends a range of interventions to maintain and improve access to learning and protection, and provide children with learning and development opportunities necessary for life after the crisis ends. The FSSP is identified as an integral component of the education package, in its role to support a return to learning and encourage regular classroom attendance.

[MR] As outlined in Annex VII, the milk may also be used as part of the emergency food assistance when operational conditions require reallocation.

Furthermore The FSSP is implemented by WFP as part of its Emergency Operation to people affected by the current crisis in Syria. Starting with an initial 50,000 people in October 2011, WFP's emergency food assistance has progressively increased in response to the widespread devastation caused by the conflict, and is currently targeting up to 4.5 million vulnerable people on a monthly basis through a combination of general food assistance and early recovery interventions. This is part of the 2016 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan to reach 7.5 million people with food assistance out of the 8.7 million people in need (PIN) identified by the WoS Food Security Sector.

In addition to the emergency food assistance and livelihoods support, WFP implements nutrition programmes, including supplementary feeding programmes aimed to prevent or treat acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among children under the age of five, and a cash-based transfer scheme providing fresh food vouchers for vulnerable pregnant and lactating women (PLW) to improve their dietary diversity and micronutrient intake.

[MR2] As outlined in the narrative summary, due to changes in the initially estimated rates, the overall quantity of milk to be procured under this action is almost 23,000 mt, of which 4,830 mt have already been distributed during the 2016-17 school year. [END].

3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

3.1 Needs and risk analysis

3.1.1 Date(s) of assessment

During 2015, WFP conducted two significant food security assessments were carried out in cooperation with FAO, the Government of Syria, and NGOs. The FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) was conducted in May 2015, the first one since 2013. WFP was able to conduct a Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (FSA), the first-ever household food security survey in Syria, between May and June 2015.

As part of the Education Sector, WFP supported a "Syria Education Sector Analysis" conducted by UNICEF between April and May 2015 in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and CBS. In addition, WFP regularly conducts monitoring visits to gather household-level information on food consumption patterns, access to food and coping capacity among assisted households, as well as data on food market prices to produce monthly market price bulletins.

3.1.2 Assessment methodology

Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM)

The 2015 CFSAM was based on a combination of interviews and focus group discussions at national and governorate level with key stakeholders including all relevant ministries and departments. Primary data was collected through households gathering information on agriculture; food, livelihoods, and agricultural needs; local food market conditions, and household food security. In addition to the information gathered, other sources of information were used for triangulation including vegetation-related satellite imagery (NDVI and ASIS), records and reports from MAAR and the Central Bureau of Statistics, and reports published by the UN and other agencies.

[MR2] In 2016, WFP, in partnership with FAO and MAAR, conducted a Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM), the third since 2013. The assessment followed the same methodology as the 2015 one. A CFSAM was also conducted in May 2017 but the results are not published yet. The final report is expected to be released in late July 2017, and will be shared with ECHO once available[END].

Food Security Assessment (FSA)

The FSA is a baseline survey that provides an in-depth picture of the food security situation and the vulnerability of households in a given country. The FSA uses the consolidated approach for reporting indicators (CARI) of food security to assess the multiple dimensions of food insecurity, namely the nutrition quality of food consumption, household resilience to shocks (coping capacity), poverty and food poverty status, and livelihood coping capacity. These combine to give a holistic picture of the prevalence of food insecurity in Syria. Overall, the assessment sought to map out the number of food insecure households, identify underlying causes of food insecurity, and establish a baseline to monitor food security outcomes against. The data collected for the 2015 FSA enables WFP to implement improved evidence-based programming and the data was also used for the 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).

The FSA collected primary data through household interviews and focus group discussions covering more than 19,000 in 301 sub-districts/neighbourhoods in 12 governorates. The survey was conducted from three regional hubs - Damascus (Syria), Amman (Jordan) and Gaziantep (Turkey) - and included active participation of partners. The sampling frame and the sample design is representative at the national, governorate, district and urban and rural levels. Due to access and security constraints, it was not possible to conduct the survey in Ar Raqqa and Deir Ezzor governorates.

Syria Education Sector Analysis 2014-2015

The Education Sector Assessment was conducted by UNICEF in partnership with the MoE and the CBS, to provide strategic evidence on needs in the education sector, identify key affected population groups, geographical disparities in access to education to enable evidence-based strategic planning and advocacy. Results from the assessment will complement the quantitative data available annually from the Ministry of Education's education census, and secondary data from other sources.

[Please see **Annex I** to read the rest of the text.]

3.1.3 Problem, needs and risk analysis

The Syria crisis is described as the worst humanitarian and protection crisis in the world. Since its start, more than 250,000 people have lost their lives and over 11 million have been forced to flee from their homes. Of these, over 4.8 million have become refugees outside of the country, while 6.5 million are displaced internally. A consequence of the conflict, the massive level of displacement is one of the main drivers of household food insecurity.

Five years of conflict have resulted in economic recession, damage to vital infrastructure, and increased poverty levels, which eroded the development of sustainable livelihoods and caused costly losses for both current and future generations. One third of the Syrian population now lives in poverty and over half the working age population is now unemployed.

According to CFSAM's findings, the agricultural sector has suffered significant losses due to the negative consequences of the conflict. Reduced access to land, shortage and high cost of agricultural inputs and labour, destruction of standing crops and difficulty in marketing products due to insecurity and movement restrictions have all drastically compromised human, physical and financial capacity to carry out adequate food production to meet the national food requirements. Similarly, the livestock sector has suffered substantially since 2011, due to the combined effect of reduced access to pasture, scarcity and high cost of fodder and inadequate veterinary services.

Insufficient food production, combined with reduced government subsidies and currency depreciation, led to steady and sharp food prices increases. Since the onset of the crisis the prices of the main food commodities have increased substantially both in nominal and in real terms. The average prices of wheat flour, lentils and sugar have more than tripled since 2011. The nominal price of rice rose by 54 percent during the first half of 2015 only. The prices of fresh products such as milk have witnessed even more dramatic increases, up to 500 percent when compared to pre-crisis levels.

[MR2] According to the 2016 CFSAM jointly conducted by WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the area planted with cereals in the 2015/16 cropping season was halved and wheat production contracted by 55 percent, when compared to pre-crisis levels. Reduced production, heavier reliance on import and currency depreciation continued to inflate food prices. The livestock sector, once an important element in the Syrian economy, has suffered substantially since 2011 with reductions in terms of herd and flock numbers of over 30 percent for cattle and over 40 percent for sheep and goats. As a result, the average prices of livestock production (milk and cheese) have doubled when compared to the previous year and have increased by up to more than 600 percent compared to pre-crisis levels, depending on the area. The increase in milk prices and limited availability in the market has contributed to the proliferation in the markets of non-fresh "fake" dairy products made from powdered milk. [END]

On average, the cost of a standard food basket is now three times higher compared to pre-crisis levels, while income levels have remained stagnant, further reducing the purchasing power of Syria families and their ability of poor households to meet their food needs.

Accordingly, food insecurity in Syria has deteriorated over recent years and has now reached worrying levels. According to results of the 2015 Food Security Assessment (FSA), one third of the Syrian population is acutely food insecure and do not have adequate access to food. In addition, more than half of the population is at risk of becoming food insecure.

In all governorates surveyed, the overwhelming majority of people are either already food insecure or at risk of becoming food insecure. Across the country, people living in rural areas are more food insecure in comparison to urban areas. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) give rise to the greatest concern because they are the most vulnerable and the most food insecure. More than 40 percent of IDPs and returnees are food insecure. That compares to about 30 percent of the resident population. Further analysis by gender of the head of household shows that female-headed households have a higher rate of food insecurity than male headed-households. The protracted crisis has further eroded household resilience and capacities to cope with food deprivation. A significant proportion of these were found using extreme coping strategies leading to long-term and irreversible consequences, including reducing the quantity and quality of food consumed, selling assets, going into debt and withdrawing children from school.

These observations are confirmed by findings from WFP monitoring activities. In the last quarter of 2015, monitoring data indicated that about 11 percent of female and 5 percent of male headed household had poor food consumption score, due to low frequency in consumption of vitamin and

protein-rich food such as meat and dairy food items. Data analysis for the first quarter of 2016 show the same trend, with 10 percent of female and 7 percent male headed households showing poor food consumptions core. This is mainly due to limited income to complement food assistance, as the majority of the households were noted to be relying on unsustainable income sources including petty trading and casual labour. Dietary change and rationing are among the most widespread coping strategies applied by food insecure households. Almost all interviewed households reported consuming cheaper, lower quality and less preferred food, as the first coping strategy employed when they face food shortages. Other food consumption-related coping strategies include limiting portion sizes at meals times and reducing the number of meals. According to the FSA, approximately 35 percent of the surveyed households had either low or medium dietary diversity, with their diet consisting mainly of cereal, sugar and oil, whereas vegetables are consumed a maximum of three days per week. Fruits and meat are rarely consumed by these households, and the consumption of dairy products is also limited, with households with low dietary diversity indicators consuming them only one or two times a week. WFP programme monitoring findings confirm the low consumption of dairy products, including milk, among WFP assisted beneficiaries, with the majority of interviewed households consuming these food items less than three days per week.

[Please see **Annex I** to read the rest of the text.]

3.1.4 Response analysis

In response to the conflict in Syria, WFP and its partners have been providing life-saving support to conflict-affected families in all 14 governorates of Syria, though due to access constraints, WFP is currently operating in 12 governorates. Starting with an initial 50,000 people in October 2011, WFP's emergency food assistance has progressively increased in response to the widespread devastation caused by the conflict. In 2016, WFP aims to provide general emergency food assistance to 4 million people across the country. A further 500,000 are planned to be assisted through early recovery interventions initiated in 2016 to restore, protect and promote livelihoods and increase households' resilience to future shocks. This is part of the 2016 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan to reach 7.5 million people with food assistance out of the 8.7 million people in need (PIN) identified by the WoS Food Security Sector.

In addition to the emergency food assistance and livelihoods support, WFP implements nutrition programmes, including supplementary feeding programmes aimed to prevent or treat acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies among children under the age of five, and a cash-based transfer scheme providing fresh food vouchers for vulnerable pregnant and lactating women (PLW) to improve their dietary diversity and micronutrient intake.

Since August 2014, WFP has been implementing a Fortified School Snacks Program (FSSP) in Syria to support crisis-affected children in attaining educational goals. The programme seeks to enhance enrolment while improving attendance for 500,000 school children. Currently, the programme targets pre- and primary school children in areas with a high concentration of IDPs and low education performance, as reflected by key education indicators (enrolment and attendance rates). On each school day, conditional upon attendance, each child in targeted schools receives a fortified date bar (80 g) which ensures a caloric transfer of 340 Kcal. Acknowledging the poor consumption of dairy products observed among vulnerable households across the country, during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years WFP aims to distribute 200 ml rations of UHT milk, providing 120 Kcal, along with the fortified date bars to children benefiting from the FSSP. This will improve the milk consumption levels among the assisted children and bring the total kcal delivery to almost 500 kcal, or 30% of the daily energy requirement for school children.

The programme is implemented in schools benefitting from UNICEF support to enhance learning outcomes, where UNICEF provides school supplies and learning materials. Additionally, school rehabilitation efforts by UNICEF aim to increase the number of learning spaces. The programme is coordinated with the Ministry of Education on technical aspects.

Results highlighted by monitoring data collected in 2015 illustrate the positive impact of the FSSP and

the overall importance of UNICEF and WFP working jointly together in schools. When compared to baseline data collected in 2014, attendance rates among boys in assisted schools showed an increase from 82 to 87 percent. Among girls the improvement is even more significant, with an increase from 81 to 91 percent. Similarly, retention rates were recorded at high levels, 96 percent, with no significant differences between boys and girls.

Under this action, ECHO's donation will enable WFP to boost the nutritional content of the school snacks provided to children by including fortified milk, enriched with essential minerals and vitamins. The contribution would allow WFP to procure 17,500 mt of milk produced in the EU (at a commodity cost of USD 1,500 per mt), to be delivered to schools across the country in support of 500,000 pre-primary and primary school children during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, as part of the existing FSSP programme. Each academic year starts in mid-September and ends in early May, with a total of 140 school days. In addition to the fortified date bars currently provided to school children in assisted schools, each child will receive a 200 ml of UHT milk, which will provide a caloric transfer of 120 kcal. [MR] As outlined in Annex VII, the milk may also be used as part of the emergency food assistance when operational conditions require reallocation.

[MR2] During the planning phase, WFP estimated to procure 17,500 mt of milk over the course of the action, with an annual requirement of almost 9,000 mt. However, the price of milk was lower than initially anticipated, which resulted in a revised projection of a total of almost 23,000 mt of milk to be procured over the course of the action. In addition, significant bureaucratic and logistics hurdles meant that WFP could only distribute approximately 50 percent of the planned milk quantities during the 2016-17 school year, leaving a greater quantity to be distributed over the next school year. A total of 4,830 mt of milk have already been procured and distributed during the 2016-17 academic year, leaving approximately 18,000 mt of milk to be distributed during the 2017-18 academic year. The quantities for next school year are estimated based on current rates, and can undergo some modifications subject to the results of the next tenders. Delays in the implementation, combined with the overall increase of milk quantities to be procured and distributed under this action, prompted WFP to adjust its distribution plans for the 2017-18 school year in order to be able to absorb the additional milk supplies.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) dietary guidelines for school-age children recommend the consumption of two to four servings of milk per day, where one serving is a 200 ml portion. In line with these guidelines, during the 2017-18 school year, WFP will double the daily ration distributed to school children in schools targeted through the school meals programme. Each child will receive two portions of milk (each portion is 200 ml) on each school day, instead of one portion as initially planned. The additional milk ration will increase by 122 Kcal the daily ration provided to school children, which will consist of one fortified date bar and two servings of UHT milk. This will provide a caloric transfer of 588 Kcal per child, approximately one-third of the child's daily caloric requirement, as well as around 70 percent of the Calcium requirements.

The focus of the action will remain the support of the Education Sector through the distribution of milk quantities procured to pre-primary and primary schools supported by WFP's school meals programme. WFP will maintain its initial plan to reach 500,000 school children. As the initial plan included a projection of 9,000 mt of milk per school year, doubling the ration would enable WFP to absorb the additional quantities of milk to be procured for the next school year. Close coordination is taking place among teams along the whole supply chain system, in order to reduce lead times to the extent possible and minimize delays that would force WFP to resort to reallocation to GFA as a contingency measure due to the limited shelf life of the commodity.

[Please see **Annex I** to read the rest of the text.]

3.1.5 Previous evaluation or lessons learned exercise relevant for this Action

No

3.1.5.1 Brief summary

3.1.6 [INT] Report On Needs Assessment

WFP, together with other stakeholders under the Whole of Syria Food Security Sector, is conducting a new Food Security Assessment (FSA) during the summer of 2017. The 2017 FSA will update the findings from the 2015 FSA, when the assessment was undertaken for the first time in Syria, and is covering all 14 governorates. The assessment will cover around 5,200 households from inside Syria and some 15,000 households from cross border locations. Data collected from inside Syria will be representative at national, governorate, urban, rural and district levels, while data collected from cross-border locations will be representative at sub-district levels. The data collection inside Syria and in areas served through the cross-border modality has been successfully completed and WFP, together with the Central Bureau of Statistics, is currently analysing the collected information. The findings of the 2017 FSA will be published during the second half of 2017.

Furthermore, a team of 12 international and national experts in agriculture, livestock and food security from WFP and FAO visited Syria in May 2017 to conduct the fourth independent Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) since the onset of the conflict. In order to triangulate secondary information provided by the Syrian government and international organizations, the team visited seven governorates, including Aleppo, Homs and Al-Hasakeh, where they visited farms and markets and interviewed farmers, traders, displaced and resident households.

Following the analysis of the collected data and information, the CFSAM report was released at the end of July 2017. The study found that the production of wheat and barley slightly improved in 2017 compared to last year as a result of better rainfall and improved access to agricultural land in some areas. Although the total wheat production has been estimated at 1.8 million mt, 20 percent more than last year's record low harvest, it is still 47 percent less than the pre-conflict average of 3.4 million mt (2007-2011). Main agricultural constraints continued to be high costs, lack of inputs including fertilizer and machinery, as well as the impact on infrastructure such as irrigation.

The livestock sector, once important in the Syrian Arab Republic's domestic economy and in its external trade, has also suffered substantially since 2011. There have been substantial reductions in terms of herd and flock numbers; more than 40 percent for cattle and over 45 percent for sheep and 30 percent for goats. Poultry, the usual main and most affordable source of protein of animal origin, has shrunk by 56 percent, mostly due to unavailability of poultry feed at affordable cost. As a result, the average prices of livestock production (milk and cheese) have doubled when compared to the previous year and have increased by up to more than 600 percent compared to pre-crisis levels, depending on the area. The increase in milk prices, and the overall limited availability in the market, has contributed to the proliferation in the markets of non-fresh dairy products made from powdered milk.

Data collected through WFP post-distribution monitoring in 2017 confirm that 59 percent of the surveyed households had either low or medium dietary diversity including limited consumption of dairy products. Low dietary diversity was found to be more severe amongst resident households residing in hard-to-reach and besieged areas as well as within recently displaced households.

Almost two thirds of households with low dietary diversity do not consume dairy products at all, while the remaining households consume them once or twice a week. Overall, WFP monitoring findings confirm the low consumption of dairy products, including milk, among WFP assisted beneficiaries, with the majority of interviewed households consuming these food items less than three days per week.

Please see Annex I to read the rest of the text.

3.2 Beneficiaries

3.2.1 Estimated total number of direct beneficiaries targeted by the Action

Individuals

500.000

Organisations

-

3.2.2 Estimated disaggregated data about direct beneficiaries (only for individuals)

	<u>Estimated % of target group</u>	<u>% of female (F)</u>	<u>% of male (M)</u>
Infants and young children (0-59 months)	20 %	49 %	51 %
Children (5-17 years)	80 %	49 %	51 %
Adults (18-49 years)	- %	- %	- %
Elderly (> 50 years)	- %	- %	- %

3.2.3 Does the action specifically target certain groups or vulnerabilities?

Yes

3.2.3.1 If yes, which groups or vulnerabilities?

Infants and young children - Children - Male - Female

3.2.4 Beneficiaries selection criteria

The Fortified School Snack Programme (FSSP) aims to provide fortified school snacks to all boys and girls of the pre-primary and primary school children(aged 4-12 years). Targeted schools are selected in sub-districts with high food security indicators, as identified by the FSA, as well as poor education indicators and high concentration of IDPs.

Moreover, in order to maximize the impact of the support to education and ensure a comprehensive sector approach, WFP selects schools that are assisted by UNICEF. Schools are selected in clusters to minimise pulling children from neighbouring schools to benefit from the programme whereas clustering of schools is also expected to create impact in concentrated geographic zones. Targeted governorates include Aleppo, Homs, Rural Damascus, Damascus, Tartous, Al-Hasakeh, Hama, Lattakia, and Ar Raqqa and Deir Ezzor when access becomes feasible. (See a tentative preliminary list of targeted schools attached).

WFP works in close co-ordination with UNICEF and other education sector partners to support the delivery of a comprehensive package in targeted schools, which include psycho-social support, school supplies, teacher trainings and risk management trainings. Bearing in mind growing concerns over the safety of children in light of volatile security conditions in the country, UNICEF and other education sector partners are supporting protection related initiatives, including a sensitization campaign for children and teachers on the threats and mitigation measures that can be adopted. Other initiatives include the establishment of safe havens in schools, and the development of emergency response plans and general safety protocols.

[MR] [Please see **Annex I** to read the rest of the text.]

3.2.5 Beneficiaries involvement in the Action

N/A

3.2.6 More details on beneficiaries

N/A

3.2.7 [INT] Report on beneficiaries

The Fortified School Snacks Programme (FSSP) continued to provide fortified school snacks and UHT milk to boys and girls between 5-12 years in UNICEF assisted pre-primary and primary schools. Targeted schools were selected in sub-districts with low food security and education indicators, and a high concentration of IDPs. The programme was implemented in 11 Syrian governorates, including in Dar'a and As-Sweida governorates where the programme was newly introduced in November 2016 and May 2017, as well as in new districts in Tartous and Lattakia governorates. Deir Ezzor city was also reached through the airdrop operation in October 2016, when some 11,000 children received fortified date-bars. The expansion of the programme to new governorates and districts lead to an overall increase in both the number of schools and children assisted. The number of schools increased from 949 across 2016 to 1,671 by June 2017, while the maximum number of children assisted increased from 485,000 across 2016 to almost 650,000 by the end of June 2017. Of the total number of children assisted under the FSSP during the 2016-17 academic year, a maximum of 585,000 children received UHT milk in nine Syrian governorates between December and May.

Furthermore, on an exceptional basis, milk was also reallocated to the GFA programme as a result of operational conditions on the ground. Some 160,000 children aged 5-12 in Aleppo, Homs, Lattakia and Tartous governorates received milk in their monthly food ration between January and February 2017.

Please see Annex I to read the rest of the text.

4. LOGIC OF INTERVENTION

4.1 Principal objective

The FSSP in Syria aims at improving regular access to education, while increasing micronutrient intake of children through the regular provision of fortified school snacks. The program also directly contributes to the local economy through the local purchase of date bars. At present, WFP locally buys 10 percent of its annual requirements for the programme. [MR]With reference to Annex VII, the milk may on an exception basis also be reallocated to children aged 5-12 years in families that are currently assisted under the emergency food assistance programme, contributing to stabilize or improve food consumption among assisted beneficiaries. Awareness raising labels will be placed on the packed milk cartons to avoid any misuse of the commodity.

4.2 Specific objective

4.2.1 Specific objective - Short description

To increase enrolment, attendance and retention rates in targeted schools.

4.2.2 Specific objective - Detailed description

The FSSP aims to increase enrolment, attendance and retention rates, specifically targeting areas with a high concentration of IDPs, high food insecurity and low education performance, by providing fortified date bars as well as UHT milk produced in the EU to children on each school day in selected areas.

In parallel to the educational objectives of the programme, WFP will continue to positively impact the local economy by leveraging the demand of the programme to enhance local production capacities and increase local procurement.

4.2.3 Specific objective - Indicators

4.2.3.1 Specific objective indicator (1/6)

Indicator

Custom

Description

Number of children (disaggregated by gender and age) provided with fortified date bars and UHT milk on school days

Baseline

0

Target value

500,000

Progress value

584500

Source and method of data collection

Implementing partners' monthly distribution reports

Comments on the indicator and the achievement of the target value

-

[INT] Progress report on indicator

Over the course of the action, the planned target for the FSSP increased from 500,000 to 750,000, starting from January 2017. During the 2016-17 academic year, close to 650,000 pre-primary and primary school children received WFP fortified snacks under the FSSP, representing 86 percent of the revised plan to reach 750,000 children over the course of the academic year. Of these, 584,500 children received UHT milk along with fortified date bars starting from December 2016, including 298,094 boys and 286,406 girls. During the 2016-17 academic year, the programme reached 11 of the 14 Syrian governorates: Damascus, Dar'a, As-Sweida, Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Quneitra, Latakia, Tartous, Aleppo and Deir Ezzor.

It should be noted, however, that due to operational challenges on the ground, not all governorates were consistently reached at planned scale throughout the year. Access restrictions forced the suspension of the FSSP in Al-Hasakeh city, which during the reporting period was only reachable through costly airlifts, which were limited to high priority relief items. Road access to the city was only reestablished in mid-June, after the 2016-17 academic year had come to an end. For similar reasons, the delivery of date bars to the besieged city of Deir Ezzor through high-altitude airdrops was only possible in October 2016, and milk was not included due to the fragile nature of the product. Delays in receiving the necessary approvals meant that the launch of FSSP in Dar'a and As-Sweida governorates was postponed to November and May 2017 respectively. Moreover, similar delays in obtaining approvals, access restrictions and supply chain issues hindered the expansion at planned scale of the existing FSSP in Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Tartous. Finally, the distributions of date bars in Hama was put on hold between November 2016 and January 2017 due to quality issues, which forced WFP to recall all quantities from schools in the governorate.

In parallel, milk distributions were severely impacted by significant delays resulting from lengthy and complex customs clearance and lab test procedures, particularly during the first half of the academic year, which caused milk distributions to be delayed until December. Moreover, milk distributions were also slowed down by the same challenges related to access and late approvals that negatively affected the overall implementation of the FSSP (see the Activities Section under Result 1 for further details). However, by the end of the academic year, milk distributions had reached nine governorates, instead of eight initially envisaged by the original proposal. This contributed to partially mitigate the challenges initially encountered and allowed for increased milk distributions in the latter part of the academic year.

As a result, the beneficiary figure indicated above indicates the highest number of children reached during one single monthly cycle, specifically March 2017, and not all children were consistently reached across all monthly cycles during the academic year. When looking at the monthly average, approximately 320,000 children received date bars every month during the 2016-17 academic year, including on average 281,000 children who also received UHT milk every month between December 2016 and May 2017.

Please see Annex I to read the rest of the text.

4.2.3.2 Specific objective indicator (2/6)**Indicator**

Custom

Description

Attendance rate (boys) in assisted schools

Baseline

82

Target value

> 80

Progress value

91

Source and method of data collection

WFP monitoring reports (baseline 82)

Comments on the indicator and the achievement of the target value

-

[INT] Progress report on indicator

During the reporting period, taking into account that the academic year commenced in September 2016 and ended in June 2017, the attendance rates of boys at the schools that were supported by the FSSP was on average 91 percent, 9 percent higher than the baseline and 11 percent higher than the target. When looking at the breakdown between the different quarters, the attendance rates dropped significantly during the first quarter of 2017 to 86 percent, mainly due to the winter break, harsh winter conditions observed across the country as well as the security situation in Aleppo, which prevented many children from attending classes. However, during the third quarter of 2016 and second quarter of 2017, attendance rates were at 95 and 94 percent respectively, thus reaching almost full attendance of boys at the supported schools, and thereby reducing their exposure to serious protection and education concerns if they remained outside the educational system.

4.2.3.3 Specific objective indicator (3/6)**Indicator**

Custom

Description

Attendance rate (girls) in assisted schools

Baseline

81

Target value

> 80

Progress value

90

Source and method of data collection

WFP monitoring reports (baseline 81)

Comments on the indicator and the achievement of the target value

-

[INT] Progress report on indicator

During the reporting period, recalling that the academic year commenced in September 2016 and ended in June 2017, the attendance rates of girls at the schools that were supported by the FSSP was on average 90 percent, 9 percent higher than the baseline and 10 percent higher than the target. When looking at the breakdown between the different quarters, the attendance rates of girls dropped significantly during the first quarter of 2017 to 83 percent. This was mainly due to the winter break, harsh winter conditions observed across the country, as well as the security situation in Aleppo, which prevented many children from attending classes. However, during the third quarter of 2016 and second quarter of 2017, attendance rates of girls were at 93 and 95 percent respectively, thus reaching almost full attendance of girls at the supported schools, and thereby reducing their exposure to serious protection and education concerns if they remained outside the educational system.

4.2.3.4 Specific objective indicator (4/6)**Indicator**

Custom

Description

Average Kcal transfer per child per school day

Baseline

0

Target value

460

Progress value

388

Source and method of data collection

Implementing partners' monthly distribution reports

Comments on the indicator and the achievement of the target value

-

[INT] Progress report on indicator

During the 2016-17 academic year, school children received an average of 388 kcal per school day under the FSSP, representing 84 percent of the plan to provide 460 kcal.

Due to severe delays observed with the arrival of UHT milk in Syria, WFP was only able to provide both date bars and UHT milk under the FSSP to school children from December onwards. As a result, between September and November 2016, school children received only date bars (336 kcal), which resulted in a significant decrease in the average kcal value provided over the course of the action. However, when the distribution of UHT milk started in December, and was gradually scaled up towards the end of the academic year, the average kcal provided to school children significantly increased, from an average of 383 kcal in December to more than 440 kcal from February 2017 onwards. The highest kcal value was recorded in March, when school-children received an average of 454 kcal per school day.

Interviews held with principals, teachers and children indicated that the fortified date bars and milk provided through the FSSP contributed to increased energy and concentration levels amongst children. In schools where WFP was able to provide both milk and date bars, children expressed their satisfaction with the combination. However, children indicated that they prefer to take the milk home so they can add sugar to it.

Furthermore, in Aleppo city, WFP implemented a small-scale pilot programme from March 2017 onwards at three primary schools by distributing daily fresh meals to the children. Under this project, children received fresh meals during school days consisting of one sandwich and a piece of fruit or vegetable, providing over 500 kcal per child. Children assisted through this pilot project expressed their satisfaction with the assistance. Many children relied on the provided assistance as they tend to skip breakfast due to the limited amount of food at home. Furthermore, some children reported saving the leftovers of the daily fresh school meals in order to share it with their siblings at home.

4.2.3.5 Specific objective indicator (5/6)

Indicator

Custom

Description

[MR] % of the population assisted through general food assistance with poor Food Consumption Score (FCS)

Baseline

12

Target value

12

Progress value

13

Source and method of data collection

[MR] Post Distribution Monitoring

Comments on the indicator and the achievement of the target value

[MR] WFP aims to reduce the percentage of assisted families with poor FCS below baseline values

[INT] Progress report on indicator

During the 2016-17 academic year, school children received an average of 388 kcal per school day under the FSSP, representing 84 percent of the plan to provide 460 kcal.

Due to severe delays observed with the arrival of UHT milk in Syria, WFP was only able to provide both date bars and UHT milk under the FSSP to school children from December onwards. As a result, between September and November 2016, school children received only date bars (336 kcal), which resulted in a significant decrease in the average kcal value provided over the course of the action. However, when the distribution of UHT milk started in December, and was gradually scaled up towards the end of the academic year, the average kcal provided to school children significantly increased, from an average of 383 kcal in December to more than 440 kcal from February 2017 onwards. The highest kcal value was recorded in March, when school-children received an average of 454 kcal per school day.

Interviews held with principals, teachers and children indicated that the fortified date bars and milk provided through the FSSP contributed to increased energy and concentration levels amongst children. In schools where WFP was able to provide both milk and date bars, children expressed their satisfaction with the combination. However, children indicated that they prefer to take the milk home so they can add sugar to it.

Furthermore, in Aleppo city, WFP implemented a small-scale pilot programme from March 2017 onwards at three primary schools by distributing daily fresh meals to the children. Under this project, children received fresh meals during school days consisting of one sandwich and a piece of fruit or vegetable, providing over 500 kcal per child. Children assisted through this pilot project expressed their satisfaction with the assistance. Many children relied on the provided assistance as they tend to skip breakfast due to the limited amount of food at home. Furthermore, some children reported saving the leftovers of the daily fresh school meals in order to share it with their siblings at home.

4.2.3.6 Specific objective indicator (6/6)

Indicator

Custom

Description

[MR] Average Coping Strategies Index (CSI) among population assisted through general food assistance

Baseline

15

Target value

15

Progress value

12,4

Source and method of data collection

[MR] Post Distribution Monitoring

Comments on the indicator and the achievement of the target value

[MR] WFP aims to reduce the CSI below baseline values

[INT] Progress report on indicator

Consumption-based coping strategies (CSI) continue to be adopted at the same levels during the reporting period, remaining well within target. Results indicate that beneficiaries continue to rely mainly on less preferred and less expensive food resulting in cheaper and lower quality food, followed by borrowing food or relying on help from relatives and friends. Other coping strategies applied included reducing the number of meals eaten in a day and restricting the consumption by adults in order for children to eat.

When looking at the breakdown between the different quarters, there was a downward trend in the percentage of households, who applied at least three of the five coping strategies. Between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2017, the average CSI dropped from 13.8 to 11.3 respectively. Accordingly, a lower number of households reported having to reduce the number of meals eaten per day, from 51 percent during the second quarter of 2016 to 44 percent towards the end of the reporting period. Similarly, the percentage of households restricting their consumption to allow their children to eat first

decreased by two percentage points to 41 percent during the second quarter of 2017.

However, data continues to show that female headed households tend to apply coping strategies more frequently than those headed by males, which illustrates their higher vulnerability to food insecurity. Female headed households had an average CSI of 15.2 during the reporting period, compared to an average CSI of 11.4 for male headed households.

4.3 Results

Result (1/2) - Details

Title

Nutritious foods (fortified date bars and UHT milk) distributed in sufficient quantity, quality and timely to targeted school children

Sector

Education in emergencies

Sub-sectors

Formal education

Safe and accessible learning environments

Estimated total amount

40.659.844,00

Result (1/2) - Beneficiaries

Estimated total number of direct beneficiaries targeted by the Action

Individuals	500.000
Organisations	-
Households	-
Individuals per household	-
Total individuals	-

Beneficiaries type

IDP - Local population - Returnees

Does the Action specifically target certain groups or vulnerabilities?

Yes

Specific target group or vulnerabilities

Infants and young children - Children - Male - Female

More comments on beneficiaries

• Under the FSSP, WFP will target 500,000 pre-primary and primary school children living in areas with high food insecurity levels, poor education indicators and high concentration of IDPs. Targeted schools will be identified in coordination with UNICEF.

[INT] Report on beneficiaries

Over the course of the action, the planned target for the FSSP increased from 500,000 to 750,000, starting from January 2017. During the 2016-17 academic year, close to 650,000 pre-primary and primary school children received WFP fortified snacks under WFP's FSSP, representing 86 percent of the revised plan to reach 750,000 children over the course of the academic year. Of these, 584,500 children received UHT milk along with fortified date bars starting from December 2016. During the 2016-17 academic year, the programme reached 11 of the 14 Syrian governorates: Damascus, Dar'a, As-Sweida, Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Quneitra, Latakia, Tartous, Aleppo and Deir Ezzor.

It should be noted, however, that due to operational challenges on the ground, not all governorates were consistently reached at planned scale throughout the year (see Activities Section for further details). In addition, children in Deir Ezzor and As-Sweida governorates only received fortified date bars for one

monthly cycle during the academic year, in October 2016 and May 2017 respectively. Deir Ezzor city, besieged by ISIL fighters and not accessible by land since March 2014, is currently reached by WFP only through high altitude airdrops. The airdrops deliver critical life-saving supplies including both WFP food and inter-agency cargo, making it challenging to ensure a sustained provision of fortified date bars to the city. As for As-Sweida, date bars distributions could taking place only in May, at the very end of the academic year, due the combined effect of delays in obtaining all necessary approvals and logistics bottlenecks causing delays in dispatching the commodities.

As a result, the beneficiary figure indicated above indicates the highest number of children reached during one single monthly cycle, specifically March 2017, as not all children were consistently reached across all monthly cycles during the academic year. When looking at the monthly average, approximately 320,000 children received date bars every month during the 2016-17 academic year, with 281,000 children also receiving UHT milk on average every month between December 2016 and May 2017.

Following the summer break, the FSSP resumed in late September 2016 with the start of the 2016-17 academic year. Distribution of date bars commenced in the same month, albeit at a small scale as schools were closed for most of the month and only limited quantities could be dispatched on time for distribution under the September cycle. The distribution of date bars was scaled up towards planned levels from October onwards. WFP had initially planned to start distributing the UHT milk ration together with fortified date bars at the beginning of the academic year; however, bottlenecks and significant delays resulting from cumbersome customs clearance and lab test procedures meant that the first batches of milk were available for distributions only in December (see Activities Section for further details).

Once the distribution of UHT milk started, the number of children receiving milk gradually increased every month, from 60,500 children in December to a peak of over 584,000 in March. Moreover, initially distributed only in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Homs, milk distributions gradually expanded their geographic scope, reaching all governorates assisted through the FSSP with the only exception of Deir Ezzor and As-Sweida, due to the above-mentioned limited implementation of the programme in these two governorates.

Please see Annex 1 for additional text.

Result (1/2) - Transfer Modalities

	<u>Estimated total net amount</u>	<u>Estimated number of individuals</u>	<u>Conditional transfer?</u>	<u>Origin</u>
Cash	-	-	-	
Voucher	-	-	-	
In kind	40.659.844,00	500.000	-	-

Comments on transfer modalities in this result

Over the reporting period, WFP plans to distribute 32,400 mt of fortified foods to a maximum of 500,000 pre-primary and primary school children. This includes 14,550 mt of fortified date bars for 17,537,524 EUR and 17,457 mt of UHT milk for 23,122,320 EUR.

[MR2] Due to changes in the initially estimated rates, the overall quantity of milk to be procured under this action is almost 23,000 mt. Under Result 1, WFP plans to distribute 37,350 mt of fortified foods to a maximum of 500,000 pre-primary and primary school children. This includes 14,550 mt of fortified date bars for 17,537,524 EUR and 22,800 mt of UHT milk for 23,122,320 EUR. Approximately 4,800 mt of milk were already distributed in schools during the 2016-17 school year. The amount of milk to be distributed under result 1 might vary depending on operational conditions and the quantities that will need to be reallocated to GFA (Please see Annex VII for additional details)

[INT] Comments on transfer modalities in this result

WFP school meals in Syria is implemented exclusively through the in-kind transfer modality. During the 2016-17 academic year, WFP had planned to distribute a total of 16,275 mt of fortified food snacks to school children in Syria under the FSSP, including 7,272 mt of date bars and 9,000 mt of UHT milk. Overall, during the 2016-17 academic year WFP distributed 7,623 mt of fortified snacks to schools, representing 47 percent of the tonnage transfer planned during that academic year, and 24 percent of the tonnage initially planned for the entire action (including the upcoming 2017-18 academic year). It should be noted that WFP submitted a modification request in June 2017 (MR2), to request a revision of the planned milk quantities for the academic year 2017-18 due to the combined effect of below scale implementation during the first academic year and changes in the commodity rates. Please see MR2 narrative for additional details.

When disaggregating the achievements by commodity, fortified date bars distributions amount to 3,601 mt, or 49 percent of the planned tonnage for the academic year. Operational challenges including security issues and access constraints, supply chain issues and delays in receiving necessary approvals hindered WFP's ability to implement the programme at planned scale in some governorates and during some monthly cycles. Consequently, while the FSSP reached 11 governorates and 97 percent of the planned children during the academic year, distributions could not take place regularly and consistently everywhere in every monthly cycle, causing the achievement in terms of tonnage to fall below plan.

Access restrictions forced the suspension of the programme in Al-Hasakeh city, which during the reporting period was only reachable through costly airlifts, which were limited to high priority relief items. Road access to the city was only reestablished in mid-June, after the 2016-17 academic year had come to an end. For similar reasons, the delivery of date bars to the besieged city of Deir Ezzor through high-altitude airdrops was only possible in October 2016. Delays in receiving the necessary approvals meant that the launch of FSSP in Dar'a and As-Sweida governorates was postponed to November and May 2017 respectively. Moreover, similar delays in obtaining approvals, access restrictions and supply chain issues hindered the expansion at planned scale of the existing FSSP in Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Tartous. Finally, the distributions of date bars in Hama was put on hold between November 2016 and January 2017 due to quality issues, which forced WFP to recall all quantities from schools in the governorate. This was linked to quality issues encountered with date bars procured from regional sources. Regional procurement was later discontinued and currently all fortified date bars requirements for the programme are covered through local procurement.

For additional text please see Annex 1.

Result (1/2) - Indicators

Result 1 - Indicator 1

Type / Subsector

Custom

Indicator

-

Definition

Number of days in which UHT milk was distributed (as percentage of school days)

Baseline

0,00

Target value

100,00

Progress value

64,00

Source and method of data collection

Implementing partners' monthly distribution reports

Comments

Each academic year has 140 school days.

Result 1 - Indicator 2

Type / Subsector

Custom

Indicator

-

Definition

Tonnage of fortified foods distributed (as percentage of planned)

Baseline

0,00

Target value

100,00

Progress value

96,00

Source and method of data collection

Implementing partners' monthly distribution reports

Comments

Over the reporting period, WFP plans to distribute 32,400 mt of fortified foods to a maximum of 500,000 pre-primary and primary school children. This includes 14,550 mt of fortified date bars for 17,537,524 EUR and 17,457 mt of UHT milk for 23,122,320 EUR.

[MR 2] Due to changes in the initially estimated rates, the overall quantity of milk to be procured under this action is almost 23,000 mt. Under Result 1, WFP plans to distribute 37,350 mt of fortified foods to a maximum of 500,000 pre-primary and primary school children. This includes 14,550 mt of fortified date bars for 17,537,524 EUR and 22,800 mt of UHT milk for 23,122,320 EUR. Approximately 4,800 mt of milk were already distributed in schools during the 2016-17 school year. The amount of milk to be distributed under result 1 might vary depending on operational conditions and the quantities that will need to be reallocated to GFA (Please see Annex VII for additional details)

Result (1/2) - Indicators comments**Additional comments on indicators**

-

[INT] Progress report on the indicators of one result

During the 2016-17 academic year, distributions of fortified date bars were carried out over 135 days, representing 96 percent of the overall school days in the academic year. Milk distributions could take place only during 90 days, or 64 percent of the total school days, as milk distributions commenced only in December 2016 due to delays resulting from lengthy import and clearance procedures for this commodity (see Activities sections for further details). When considering the school days for the December 2016 - May 2017 period only, during which milk was distributed, milk distributions took place during 97 percent of the 93 school days.

While distributions of date bars and milk took place over most of the school days, planned activities were slowed down in some governorates and during some monthly cycles due to a combination of access constraints, security concerns, delays in obtaining the necessary approvals and supply chain issues. As a result, only 47 percent of the planned quantities could be distributed during the academic year, or 24 percent of the quantities planned for the entire action (two academic years). Please see the Activities and Transfer Modalities Sections in Result 1 for additional details.

Result (1/2) - Activities**Result 1 - Activity 1****Short description**

Procurement and delivery of commodities to targeted schools

Detailed description

The fortified date bars will be procured from regional or local manufacturers, while the milk will be of EU origin. Once arriving at the entry ports, these commodities are transported by contracted transport companies to WFP storage facilities inside the country, and subsequently dispatched to targeted schools on a monthly basis. Please see section 6.1 of this proposal for additional details on WFP supply chain system.

[MR2] Distribution plan for the 2017-18 school year attached

Result 1 - Activity 2

Short description

Storage and handling of commodities

Detailed description

-

Result 1 - Activity 3

Short description

Daily distribution of nutritious foods (fortified date bars and UHT milk) to pre and primary school children in the targeted schools

Detailed description

Please see the tentative distribution plan attached.

Result 1 - Activity 4

Short description

Distribution and post-distribution monitoring in targeted schools by WFP monitors or designated third-parties

Detailed description

Please see section 8.1 of this proposal for further details on the monitoring activities

Result (1/2) - [INT] Overall update on activities of the result

During the reporting period WFP procured and delivered a total of 8,106 mt of fortified food snacks. These quantities included 4,505 mt of UHT milk and 3,601 mt of fortified date bars, which were distributed as part of the FSSP with the exception of 477 mt of milk, which were distributed as part of the general food assistance (please see below and Result 2 for additional details).

For the fortified date bars, WFP gradually shifted to local procurement during the course of the action. The shift was part of an EU-funded project to strengthen the local production capacity in order to enhance the food value chain, stimulate the local economy and create economic opportunities. Following extensive efforts to identify potential local manufacturers, and the implementation of activities to strengthen their production capacity and improve their quality standards, the local procurement of date bars was launched in the second half of 2015. During 2016, the percentage of locally sourced date bars increased from 5 percent in the first quarter to 56 percent at the end of the year. During 2017, local suppliers further strengthened their production capacity and are currently able to fully cover WFP's fortified date bars requirements for the FSSP. Accordingly, by September 2017, all fortified date bars for the FSSP will be procured from local sources. The shift to local sources enabled WFP to mitigate lengthy lead times and recurring quality issues associated with the procurement of date bars from regional sources, thus establishing a healthier and more reliable supply chain. Upon receipt of the commodity, date bars were stored in WFP warehouses before they were dispatched to the Ministry of Education for onward distributions at the schools.

However, security constraints and delays in receiving all necessary approvals outlined in the "beneficiaries" and "transfer modalities" sections affected WFP and Ministry of Education's ability to conduct deliveries and distributions at planned scale.

The UHT milk of EU origin was procured from European suppliers. Milk deliveries to schools started later than planned due to delays in the supply chain and lengthy customs clearance procedures. Syria has a strong regulatory framework related to food, which stipulates that the shelf life of UHT milk in Syria is six months and that food items such as UHT milk need to arrive in Syria with at least half of their shelf life remaining. The first batches arrived at Syria ports in October 2016, later than planned due to delays at the port of origin and consequently they had less than half of shelf life remaining. In addition, in line with Syrian regulations, before being transferred to WFP warehouses, the milk had to undergo the required testing scheme, including microbiological test that take 21 days. This required WFP to obtain an exemption from all relevant entities to be able to distribute the milk in spite of these delays. Following extensive negotiations, involving a wide range of Syrian government bodies, the milk reached WFP warehouses at the end of November, enabling the distributions in schools to start in December. However, concerns remained that due to the above-mentioned delays, combined with the perishable nature of the commodity and the winter break observed by public schools between December and January, quantities might not be fully absorbed by the schools ahead of the expiry date. This prompted the need to identify alternative options to utilise the milk quantities ahead of the expiry date, in order to minimise losses. As a result, WFP made a decision to include milk in the GFA programme rather than being forced to destroy the expiring quantities. Accordingly, WFP distributed 477 mt of UHT milk under the GFA programme, reaching approximately 160,000 children. The decision was made in consultation with the Nutrition Sector, and the milk was distributed to families with children between the ages of 5 and 12 years of age, and in areas with a high percentage of IDPs and high levels of food insecurity. This enabled WFP to keep losses to a minimum (only 0.08 percent of the total quantities procured) despite the significant challenges faced.

In light of these challenges, WFP has put in place measures to ensure a smoother supply chain and implementation for the upcoming academic year. For instance, thanks to extensive negotiations, WFP obtained a waiver on the shelf life requirements, allowing the arrival of milk at Syrian ports with a remaining shelf life of two months instead of the three months initially required, thus gaining some more flexibility in the import lead times. Moreover, the relevant Syrian authorities granted a second waiver enabling WFP to uplift the milk at the port immediately after the collection of samples for the lab tests and transfer it to WFP warehouses, where they can be stored in better and safer conditions compared to the port during the 21 days needed to complete the lab tests and clear the commodity for dispatch. In addition, coordination across functional units within WFP at the country office, regional bureau and Headquarter levels has been strengthened, with regular coordination meetings currently held on a weekly basis.

The procurement of milk for the 2017-18 academic year was initiated in June and is currently underway. The procurement process, however, suffered significant delays following a revision of the official Syrian specifications for milk, which forced WFP to temporarily put on hold the tendering process to review the revised specifications and ensure its ability to comply. Following extensive discussions on the newly introduced requirements, including temperature control requirements during transport, freezing point and acidity, WFP was able to resume the tendering process in August. Compounding the revised specifications, the packaging requirements (200 ml) added an additional layer of complexity, as it further reduced the range of eligible suppliers. So far, only four suppliers have been identified who can meet the complex Syrian specifications and packaging requirements. Hence, the procurement of approximately 11,800 mt of milk planned for the next academic year has been initiated, which will be followed by a new tender for the remaining quantities. WFP anticipates that finding additional suitable suppliers who can meet both the Syrian specifications and the 200 ml packaging requirements might prove challenging, potentially jeopardising WFP's ability to procure and utilise all planned quantities during the agreed timeframe of the action. Accordingly, should needs arise, WFP may evaluate revising the packaging requirements in order to have a greater supplier availability, which would result in necessary programmatic adjustments. Please see Annex 1 for additional text.

Result (2/2) - Details

Title

[MR] Stabilized or improved food consumption over assistance period for targeted households and/or individuals

Sector

Food security and livelihoods

Sub-sectors

Conditional or unconditional in-kind food assistance

Estimated total amount

Result (2/2) - Beneficiaries**Estimated total number of direct beneficiaries targeted by the Action**

Individuals	600.000
Organisations	-
Households	-
Individuals per household	-
Total individuals	-

Beneficiaries type

IDP - Local population - Refugees - Returnees

Does the Action specifically target certain groups or vulnerabilities?

Yes

Specific target group or vulnerabilities

Children

More comments on beneficiaries

[MR] The milk reallocated to GFA will be distributed in areas with high concentration of IDPs and may also be used for inter-agency convoys to hard-to-reach and besieged areas. WFP GFA targets the most vulnerable people in Syria. Geographical targeting forms the initial level of targeting, prioritizing sub-districts with a high prevalence of food insecurity as identified by the FSS based on the result of the food security assessment, and hard-to-reach areas and besieged locations. This is followed by a household targeting exercise jointly conducted with partners according to vulnerability criteria through a beneficiary selection tool, which enables WFP to ensure that resources are directed where they are most needed. The tool is based on a series of vulnerability indicators identified using evidence from the food security assessment, which enable a further ranking system to identify those showing the highest level of vulnerability to food insecurity. WFP anticipates that up to 1,750 mt of milk may be reallocated to GFA over the course of this action, which would be sufficient to reach approximately 600,000 children aged 5-12 years old once, and not on a regular monthly basis. Each milk batch reallocated to the GFA programme will be distributed in one round and as a one-off transfer in order to allow for consumption before the expiry date. Hence, these quantities would reach a greater number of children when compared to milk distributions as part of the school meals programme, where the same children receive milk over multiple monthly cycles. As of early March 2017, 483 mt have already been reallocated and distributed along with GFA rations, reaching 167,000 children aged 5-12 years.

[MR2] During the 2016-17 school year, 482 mt of milk were reallocated to GFA as a contingency measure, reaching approximately 167,000 children. During the 2017-18 school year, the amount of milk to be reallocated to GFA could be around 9,000 mt. This would enable WFP to distribute monthly supplies to up to 600,000 children for a maximum of three monthly cycles. The amount of milk to be distributed under Result 2 may vary depending on operational conditions that will determine the extent and timeframe of reallocations to GFA (Please see Annex VII for additional details). To avoid the misuse of the quantities distributed as part of GFA, WFP will put in place a range of measures to ensure beneficiaries are aware that the milk is only intended for children aged 5-12 years, including awareness labels on the cartons, posters at the distribution sites and awareness raising sessions for partners and beneficiaries.

[INT] Report on beneficiaries

Due to operational challenges, as a contingency measure, part of the milk procured under this action was reallocated to the GFA programme following operational conditions on the ground that required the reallocation (see the modification request and the Activities section under Result 1 for details). Accordingly, over the course of the action, some 160,000 children received milk as part of their monthly food ration. WFP previously reported that 167,000 children received milk through the GFA programme. However, at the time of reporting, data collection and reconciliation was still ongoing which caused some inaccuracies in the calculations.

The milk that was reallocated to the GFA programme was distributed in one round and as one-off monthly transfers in January and February to families with children aged 5-12 years in Aleppo, Homs, Lattakia and

Tartous governorates, selected due to their high concentration of IDPs. Most of the people who received milk in their monthly food ration were located in Aleppo, where at the time of distributions thousands of people were displaced and humanitarian needs were very high as a result of military activities in the city at the end of 2016. Accordingly, some 43 percent of the total distributed milk under the GFA programme was distributed in Aleppo, benefitting more than 68,000 children, followed by Lattakia where almost 52,000 children received milk as part of their monthly food ration. In Tartous and Homs, more than 38,500 children received milk, representing 25 percent of the total allocations. It should be noted that no milk was included in inter-agency convoys or airdrops due to the perishable nature of the commodity.

Almost all the milk that was reallocated to the GFA programme was distributed to families with children in January, and the beneficiary figure indicated above therefore refers to the highest number of children reached during this monthly cycle. Accordingly, in February, only 7,000 children in Lattakia received milk through the GFA programme for a second month in a row.

The decision to distribute milk under the GFA programme was made in consultation with the Nutrition sector. WFP and its partners ensured that the milk was distributed to families that were deemed eligible under the GFA programme, hence applying the WFP targeting criteria. Geographical targeting formed the first level of targeting, prioritizing sub-districts with a high prevalence of food insecurity as identified by the Food Security Sector, followed by a household targeting exercise jointly conducted with partners according to vulnerability criteria. This enabled WFP to ensure that the milk was directed where it was most needed. Accordingly, as mentioned above, approximately 160,000 children received milk as part of their monthly food ration.

Furthermore, acknowledging the potential risk of milk being utilized as a substitute for breast milk, WFP placed large awareness labels on the packed milk cartons in order to avoid any misuse of the commodity. WFP shared images of the warning labels with ECHO through the monthly milk updates. WFP's cooperating partners also had dedicated staff at distribution sites to ensure that the message was effectively delivered.

Result (2/2) - Transfer Modalities

	<u>Estimated total net amount</u>	<u>Estimated number of individuals</u>	<u>Conditional transfer?</u>	<u>Origin</u>
Cash	-	-	-	
Voucher	-	-	-	
In kind	0,00	600.000	No	- International

Comments on transfer modalities in this result

MR :As a contingency measure, part of the milk procured under this action might be reallocated to General Food Assistance if operational conditions require reallocation (see Annex VII for details). It is anticipated that a total of 1,750 mt, or 5 percent per each academic year of the total milk tonnage to be distributed under this action (17,500 mt), may be reallocated to GFA. The reallocated milk will be distributed along with monthly family food rations to beneficiary families with children aged 5-12 years. The costs of the tonnage are included in result 1

[MR2] During the 2016-17 school year, 482 mt of milk were reallocated to GFA, reaching approximately 167,000 children. During the 2017-18 school year, WFP will maintain a contingency plan to reallocate part of the milk quantities to the GFA programme when the operational conditions require. Should delays in the receipt and/or delivery of the milk to schools require a swift distribution of milk quantities in a limited timeframe (subject to the shelf life), WFP will distribute the concerned quantities as part of the general food assistance, along with the family monthly food rations, when operational conditions require. The tonnage allocated to GFA will not exceed the quantities distributed in schools during the period of the action. If required, around 9,000 mt of milk might be distributed under the GFA programme. This would enable WFP to distribute monthly supplies to approximately 600,000 children for a period of three monthly cycles. The amount of milk to be distributed under Result 2 might vary depending on operational conditions and the quantities that will need to be reallocated to GFA (Please see Annex VII for additional details). The costs

and tonnage are included under Result 1

[INT] Comments on transfer modalities in this result

Due to operational challenges, as a contingency measure, part of the milk procured under this action was reallocated to the GFA programme following operational conditions on the ground that required the reallocation (see the modification request and the Activities section under Result 1 for details). Accordingly, during the 2016-17 academic year, WFP planned to distribute a maximum of 875 mt of milk to children as part of their monthly food ration through the GFA programme (1,750 mt across the two-year implementation time of the project), representing 5 percent of the 17,500 mt of milk to be procured. During the 2016-17 academic year, WFP distributed 477 mt of milk through the GFA programme, representing 55 percent of the planned tonnage reallocation for the academic year. In parallel, this represents 27 percent of the tonnage initially planned for the entire action (which includes the upcoming 2017-18 academic year as per the modification request).

When looking at the breakdown between the governorates, the majority of the milk (41 percent) was distributed in January in Aleppo, as military activities at the end of 2016 resulted in large waves of displacement and a surge in humanitarian needs, especially during January 2017. Accordingly, WFP transferred large quantities of milk to the governorate that were provided to families receiving GFA assistance with children aged 5-12 years. In Latakia governorate, WFP distributed 35 percent of the quantities, followed by Tartous (23 percent) and Homs (1 percent).

It should be noted that the amount of milk reallocated to the GFA programme mentioned in this report differs from what had been previously communicated through the monthly updates and the latest modification request. The difference is due to the fact that at the time of the earlier submissions the reconciliation of data was ongoing causing some inaccuracies in the calculations.

Result (2/2) - Indicators

Result 2 - Indicator 1

Type / Subsector

Custom

Indicator

-

Definition

[MR] Quantity of milk distributed as percentage of planned

Baseline

0,00

Target value

100,00

Progress value

55,00

Source and method of data collection

[MR] WFP Partners monthly distribution reports

Comments

[MR] As a contingency measure, part of the milk procured under this action might be reallocated to General Food Assistance if operational conditions require reallocation (see Annex VII for details). It is anticipated that a total of 1,750 mt, or 5 percent per each academic year of the total milk tonnage to be distributed under this action (17,500 mt), may be reallocated to GFA. The reallocated milk will be distributed along with monthly family food rations to beneficiary families with children aged 5-12 years.

[MR2] As a contingency measure, part of the milk procured under this action will be reallocated to GFA if operational conditions require reallocation. During the 2016-17 school year, 482 mt of milk were reallocated to GFA, reaching 167,000 children. During the 2017-18 school year, around 9,000 mt of milk could be reallocated to the GFA programme. The amount of milk to be distributed under Result 2 may vary depending on operational conditions requiring reallocation.

Result (2/2) - Indicators comments

Additional comments on indicators

-

[INT] Progress report on the indicators of one result

During the 2016-17 academic year, as per the first modification request, WFP had planned to distribute a maximum of 875 mt of milk to children as part of their monthly food ration through the GFA programme (1,750 mt across the two-year implementation time of the project), representing 5 percent of the 17,500 mt of milk to be procured. During the 2016-17 academic year, WFP distributed 477 mt of milk through the GFA programme, representing 55 percent of the tonnage transfer planned for GFA during the academic year. In parallel, this represents 27 percent of the tonnage initially planned for the entire action (which includes the upcoming 2017-18 academic year as per the modification request). The milk that was reallocated to the GFA programme was distributed alongside monthly family food rations to families with children aged 5-12 years, benefitting some 160,000 children, of which the majority was received milk as part of their monthly food ration in Aleppo in January, followed by Lattakia, Tartous and Homs. The milk was distributed as a one-off monthly ration to families with children already receiving WFP monthly food assistance as per WFP targeting criteria.

Result (2/2) - Activities

Result 2 - Activity 1

Short description

[MR] Procurement, delivery and distribution of milk along with GFA monthly food rations to the most vulnerable conflict-affected Syrian families

Detailed description

[MR] As a contingency measure, part of the milk procured under this action might be reallocated to General Food Assistance if operational conditions require reallocation. The reallocation will not exceed a total 1,750 mt, or 5 percent per each academic year of the total milk tonnage to be distributed under this action (17,500 mt). As of February 2017, distributions of milk under GFA have already taken place (see Annexes VII and VIII for details). The reallocated milk will be distributed along with monthly family food rations to beneficiary families with children aged 5-12 years. The commodities included in the monthly food rations are not funded under this action.

[MR2] As a contingency measure, part of the milk procured under this action will be reallocated to General Food Assistance if operational conditions require reallocation. During the 2016-17 school year, 482 mt of milk were reallocated to GFA, reaching approximately 167,000 children. During the 2017-18 school year, around 9,000 mt of milk may be reallocated to distributions under the GFA programme. The amount of milk to be distributed under Result 2 may vary depending on operational conditions that will determine the extent and timeframe of reallocations to GFA (Please see Annex VII for additional details)

Result 2 - Activity 2

Short description

[MR] Monitoring and Post Distribution Monitoring

Detailed description

-

Result (2/2) - [INT] Overall update on activities of the result

Due to extensive delays in the supply chain of milk, the commodity only started to arrive at ports in Syria by the end of October. Lengthy customs clearance procedures subsequently resulted in additional delays, resulting in the first batches of milk only arriving at WFP warehouses by the end of November (see the activities section under Result 1 for details). Although the first distributions of milks started in December, concerns remained that the short shelf life of the product, in combination with the perishable nature of the commodity and the winter break at the schools, the quantities of milk would not be fully absorbed by the schools ahead of the expiry date. This prompted the need to identify alternative options to utilize the milk quantities ahead of the expiry date, in order to minimize losses. Consequently, WFP made a decision to include milk in the GFA programme rather facing a possible destruction of the commodity. Hence, WFP distributed 477 mt of milk under the GFA programme in January and February, reaching approximately 160,000 children. Approximately 96 percent of the milk reallocated to the GFA programme was distributed in January, and only 4 percent in February. The total quantity reallocated and distributed under the GFA programme represents only three percent of the plan to procure 17,500 mt of milk (as per MR1).

The decision to include milk in the monthly family food ration as part of the GFA programme was made in consultation with the Nutrition Sector. Accordingly, the milk that was reallocated to the GFA programme was distributed in one round and as one-off monthly transfers in January and February to families with children aged 5-12 years in Aleppo, Homs, Latakia and Tartous governorates, selected due to their high concentration of IDPs. Most of the people who received milk in their monthly food ration were located in Aleppo, where at the time of distributions thousands of people were displaced and humanitarian needs were very high as a result of the military activities in the city at the end of 2016. Accordingly, some 43 percent of the total distributed milk under the GFA programme was distributed in Aleppo, benefitting more than 68,000 children, followed by Latakia where almost 52,000 children received milk as part of their monthly food ration. In Tartous and Homs, more than 38,500 children received milk, representing 25 percent of the total allocations.

Geographical targeting formed the first level of targeting, followed by a household targeting exercise conducted with partners according to set vulnerability criteria. Furthermore, acknowledging the potential risk of milk being utilized as a substitute for breast milk, WFP placed large awareness labels on the packed milk cartons in order to avoid any misuse of the commodity, while WFP's cooperating partners had dedicated staff at distribution sites to ensure that the message was effectively delivered.

During January and February, monitoring of activities took place in approximately 52 percent of the food distribution points (FDP) where milk was being distributed in Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and Tartous governorates. In Aleppo governorate, WFP was able to monitor all the active food distribution points (FDPs) where milk was being distributed as part of the GFA. However, in Homs governorate, only 13 percent of the FDPs were monitored due to security constraints and consequent difficulties in obtaining the necessary travel approvals.

Data collected through WFP post-distribution monitoring throughout 2017 confirm that 59 percent of the surveyed households had either low or medium dietary diversity including limited consumption of dairy products. Low dietary diversity was found to be more severe amongst resident households residing in hard-to-reach and besieged areas as well as within recently displaced households. Almost two thirds of households with low dietary diversity do not consume dairy products at all, while the remaining households consume them once or twice a week. Overall, WFP monitoring findings confirm the low consumption of dairy products, including milk, among WFP assisted beneficiaries, with the majority of interviewed households consuming these food items less than three days per week. However, indicative monitoring data collected during January and February in the four governorates where milk was distributed as part of the GFA programme shows a slight increase in the average number of days when milk was consumed; from an average of two days in 2016 to an average of three days during the first quarter of 2017.

4.4 Preconditions

- Access to functioning education facilities is provided by the responsible authorities in Syria and humanitarian actors.
- Continuing conflict will not further impede access to assess needs and deliver food commodities to targeted beneficiaries.
- No pipeline breaks of food commodities or disruptions to the supply chain are encountered, enabling the timely and regular provision of food items
- Regular monitoring is ensured to project sites through field visits to participating schools.

4.5 Assumptions and risks

1. Deterioration of security conditions. Security incidents including mortars and rocket attacks and clashes continued to increase during 2015. Risk to staff safety continue and represent the greatest threat to sustaining WFP operations in Syria. Further deterioration of the security environment may force WFP to reduce its footprint inside the country by deploying both national and international staff to work from alternative locations. 2. Diversification of service providers. The conflict has heavily affected the Syrian public and private sectors' capacity and disrupted the previously existing supply-chain network, leading to a scarcity of service providers needed by WFP in order to carry out its operations. 3. Delays in procurement, delivery and import procedures. Delays in tendering, contracting suppliers and delivery to Syrian ports by the EU milk producer may result in delays in the implementation of the milk distributions. Additionally, delays in customs clearance procedures may result in the commodity to be held at the port, reducing the permissible shelf life of the commodity for import into Syria [MR] and deliveries to schools. 4. Deterioration of the commodity during transport and storage. Due to the sensitivity of milk as a commodity, losses might occur while transporting and handling the commodities from ports to WFP warehouses and then to recipient schools. While in storage there is a risk of spoilage since most schools have inadequate storage conditions and milk may be susceptible to direct sunlight, moisture or a humid environment. 5. Unstable, irregular and insufficient funding. Late and insufficient resources might compromise WFP's ability to implement the activities at planned levels. 6. Manipulation of aid for political, military or financial gain. Aid manipulation or diversion by parties to the conflict for political, military or financial gain continues to represent a significant risk in Syria operational environment. 7. Constraints to humanitarian access. Access restrictions continue to affect the ability to assess humanitarian needs, as well as to deliver assistance through available modalities (cross line, cross border and regular) in many areas. In particular, deliveries through the Nusaybin border crossing have been severely compromised since September 2015, affecting WFP's ability to implement planned activities in Al-Hasakeh governorate. 8. Limited capacity of Cooperating Partners. The implementation and diversification of WFP's portfolio of assistance under this EMOP may be constrained by limited technical and other capacities of its partners. 9. Looting or misappropriation of WFP food. A deterioration in the security situation and fragmentation of conflict may further shrink humanitarian space and increase attacks on humanitarian convoys, heightening the risk of food losses. 10. Negative media portrayal of WFP and its cooperating partners. The risk of any part of the United Nations system being perceived to direct humanitarian assistance to either side of the conflict due to propaganda or negative media coverage may discredit the reputation of the United Nations in Syria and increase threats against assets and staff.

4.6 Contingency measures

1. Deterioration of security conditions. Staff safety remains a key priority for WFP. Remote management plans have been developed, including the use of WFP's Lebanon and Jordan offices, should a further deterioration of the security condition force WFP to reduce its footprint within the country. Security Risk Assessments (SRA) are periodically undertaken by the security team to identify programme, vulnerability and threat levels. The SRA informs the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS), which sets the required standards and mitigation measures for operations in volatile environments. The MOSS dictates the standard operating procedures (SOP) in operational areas such as emergency communication systems, security management system, vehicle and staff movements, medical support services, security of premises and facilities, security trainings and briefings and residential security measures. Accordingly, a series of mitigation measures are currently in place, including the use of armoured vehicles for all official movements inside Syria, vehicle GPS tracking systems, regular radio checks, security clearances, an effective warden system, evacuation plans for international staff and relocation of local staff to residences to safer areas. Moreover, WFP staff are required to take specific security trainings to minimize the risks on the ground. Moreover, drivers get a defensive driving training specifically tailored to drivers in a hostile environment. In addition, as the security situation on the ground remain fluid and unstable, WFP coordinates regularly with relevant local actors and partners on the ground to ensure that all staff movements and missions take place within minimum security conditions.

2. Diversification of service providers. WFP continuously assesses potential suppliers in order to foster increased competition and reducing the risk of relying on too few providers. WFP will continue to build the capacity of smaller companies. During 2015, WFP Logistics was able to increase the number of commercial transport providers.

3. Delays in procurement, delivery and import procedures. The programme team will coordinate closely with the Procurement and Logistics unit to ensure that tendering and contracting timelines are strictly adhered to and port based WFP staff maintain close coordination with port customs authorities. [MR] Should delays in shipments arrival and customs clearance procedures hamper WFP ability to use the milk

for its school meals programme within the shelf life, quantities close to the expiry date will be reallocated to WFP's emergency food assistance programme and distributed along with family food rations, in order to avoid any destruction of the commodity. Any reallocation will be discussed with ECHO.

4. Deterioration of the commodity during transport and storage. Close coordination will take place with WFP logistics staff to ensure that port staff and transporters are aware of milk transport and handling guidelines along with being capacitated where necessary. In addition, WFP will provide prefabricated storage facilities to schools lacking adequate storage facilities. Moreover, WFP will undertake regular programme implementation capacity building trainings for school teachers and principals in order to enhance schools' commodity management school capacities.

[Please see Annex I to read the rest of the text]

4.7 Additional information on the operational context of Action

Widespread insecurity and other access restrictions continue to constrain regular and sustained humanitarian access in several parts of the country. As the situation of the ground remains fluid, shifting conflict lines and outbreaks of fighting might further shrink or modify access patterns particularly in high conflict regions of the country.

Approximately 4.5 million people live in areas that are subject to movement restrictions or entirely cut off from the rest of the country. In these areas, estimates suggest that more than half the population, 2.5 million people, are facing severe hunger, including almost 500,000 people in 18 locations besieged by different parties to the conflict. WFP, in coordination with other UN agencies and local cooperating partners, continues to put in place efforts to deliver life-saving assistance to the population in need in these areas, through all available access modalities, including cross-border and cross-line deliveries. In April 2016, WFP started conducting emergency airdrops to provide life saving food assistance for 100,000 people living in the government-held parts of Deir Ezzor city, which have been besieged by surrounding ISIL forces for over two years.

Deliveries to areas under the control of ISIL are currently not viable, as all plans to deliver assistance to these areas have been suspended due to the inability to work independently and monitor activities. This is preventing WFP from reaching Ar-Raqqa and most of Deir Ezzor governorates, as well as in pockets of northern rural Aleppo, southern rural Al-Hasakeh and north-western rural Hama.

Since the end of 2015, the continued closure and interrupted access through borders surrounding Al-Hasakeh are affecting the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the governorate, compromising WFP capacity to implement the planned activities, including the FSSP in targeted schools. WFP continues to advocate all parties to enable humanitarian deliveries through all viable international borders providing access Al-Hasakeh governorate.

The unstable security situation in Aleppo city and along the key supply lines also leads to recurrent temporary suspensions of access to the city, causing disruptions in the implementation of planned activities in the city, including the FSSP currently targeting schools in the western part of the city.

4.8 [INT] Report on precondition, assumptions and risks

The preconditions, assumptions and risks changed slightly compared to the original proposal. As noted in the two modification requests, milk was on an exceptional basis reallocated to the GFA programme, necessitated by the operational conditions on the ground. The targeted beneficiaries were children aged 5-12 years in families that are assisted under the GFA programme.

In light of the reallocation, WFP sensitized its cooperating partners regarding any upcoming distributions of milk under the GFA programme to ensure that beneficiaries were duly informed about the milk distribution

and were aware that the milk was only intended for children aged 5-12 years to avoid any misuse of the product and unintended negative effects. Special briefing sessions for partners were organized for this purpose. In addition to placing awareness raising labels on the milk cartons, additional communication and sensitization materials were produced. These include banners and posters at distribution sites as well as on-the-spot awareness sessions for beneficiaries. Partners were asked to assign dedicated staff at distribution sites to ensure that the message was effectively delivered.

Furthermore, although the procurement of milk for the 2017-18 academic year was initiated in June and is currently underway, the procurement process has suffered significant delays following a revision of the official Syrian specifications for milk, which forced WFP to temporarily put on hold the tendering process to review the revised specifications and ensure its ability to comply. Following extensive discussions on the newly introduced requirements, including temperature control requirements during transport, freezing point and acidity, WFP was able to resume the tendering process in August. Compounding the revised specifications, the packaging requirements (200 ml) added an additional layer of complexity, as it further reduced the range of eligible suppliers. So far, only four suppliers have been identified who can meet the complex Syrian specifications and packaging requirements. Hence, the procurement of approximately 11,800 mt of milk planned for the next academic year has been initiated, which will be followed by a new tender for the remaining quantities. WFP anticipates that finding additional suitable suppliers who can meet both the Syrian specifications and the 200 ml packaging requirements might prove challenging, potentially jeopardising WFP's ability to procure and utilise all planned quantities during the agreed timeframe of the action. Accordingly, should needs arise, WFP may evaluate revising the packaging requirements in order to have a greater supplier availability, which would result in necessary programmatic adjustments.

5. QUALITY MARKERS

5.1 Gender-age markers

5.1.1 Marker Details

• <i>Does the proposal contain an adequate and brief gender and age analysis?</i>	Yes
• <i>Is the assistance adapted to the specific needs and capacities of different gender and age groups?</i>	Yes
• <i>Does the action prevent/mitigate negative effects?</i>	Yes
• <i>Do relevant gender and age groups adequately participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of the Action?</i>	Yes
• <i>Initial mark</i>	2

5.1.2 Additional comments and challenges

The conflict takes a heavy toll on women and children in particular. The conflict has increasingly compelled women to become the primary caretakers for their families, as men are engaged in fighting, arrested or killed. With scarce employment opportunities, women are struggling to support their families economically. WFP monitoring data revealed that female-headed households tend to have worse food consumption score and dietary diversity indicators when compared to their male counterparts. In addition, households where women are the primary breadwinners tend to resort more often to negative coping strategies, including sending children to beg or to work for food. Acknowledging the impact of the crisis on women, WFP and partners, while not specifically targeting assistance on the basis of gender, aim to facilitate its receipt by women by affording priority at distribution sites. Moreover, through the provision of a food basket sufficient for all family members, WFP tried to ensure that the needs of women (who often eat less and last) are met and that the limited resources can be spent on other needs. There are serious protection related concerns for children and adolescents including early marriage among girls and the recruitment of adolescent boys by armed groups. Child labour is considered to be a problem in 55 percent of the country. WFP education support programme aims at encouraging school enrolment and attendance, thus reducing the exposure of children and adolescents to serious protection concerns.

5.1.3 [INT] Additional comments and challenges

WFP monitoring data collected across the reporting period revealed that female-headed households had worse FCS and dietary diversity indicators compared to their male counterparts. Just over half of female-headed households had an acceptable FCS, compared to two third of their male counterparts. When looking at households with poor FCS, the number of female headed households was higher on average by 18 percentage points compared to households headed by men, reaching up to 30 percent during the second quarter of 2017. Furthermore, female headed households applied more coping strategies than households headed by men, including sending children to beg or work for food in addition to reducing the meal size. Female headed households had an average CSI of 15.2 during the reporting period, compared to an average CSI of 11.4 for male headed households. This data confirms the higher vulnerability to food insecurity of female headed households, also highlighted in different WFP assessments and which confirms the validity of WFP targeting criteria.

Acknowledging that female-headed households are more vulnerable to food insecurity, WFP continued to prioritize assistance to vulnerable female-headed households. Accordingly, women accounted for approximately 55 percent of total WFP beneficiaries. Furthermore, in order to empower women and provide them with income generating activities, more than 5,800 women were enrolled in livelihood recovery and resilience building activities across the country, representing more than 50 percent of the total number of participants. These activities included projects specifically tailored to women, such as vocational skills training in tailoring, sewing and needlework as well as kitchen gardens. Furthermore, under the FSSP in Aleppo city, WFP launched a pilot for a fresh school meal project in Aleppo city, employing 20 single or widowed women, who prepare sandwiches for eligible children. Please see Annex 1 for additional details.

5.2 Resilience

5.2.1 Marker Details

• <i>Does the proposal include an adequate analysis of shocks, stresses and vulnerabilities?</i>	Yes
• <i>Is the project risk informed? Does the project include adequate measures to ensure it does not aggravate risks or undermine capacities?</i>	Yes
• <i>Does the project include measures to build local capacities (beneficiaries and local institutions)?</i>	Yes
• <i>Does the project take opportunities to support long term strategies to reduce humanitarian needs, underlying vulnerability and risks?</i>	Yes
• <i>Initial mark</i>	2

5.2.2 How does the Action contribute to build resilience or reduce future risk?

WFP assistance in Syria addresses the immediate food needs of vulnerable conflict-affected families thereby reducing the use of negative coping strategies which would jeopardise their food security and lead to long-term and irreversible impact. In 2016, WFP initiated livelihood recovery and resilience building initiatives, to strengthen households' capacity to withstand future shocks. Moreover, WFP provides specialised support to beneficiaries with specific nutrition needs such as young children and pregnant and lactating women. The fortified school snacks programme creates an incentive for children to attend school, and WFP is launching a pilot programme for children working/begging on the streets, contributing to prevent the loss of an entire generation.

The use of cash based transfers will be scaled up and introduced across all programme activities, which will inject resources into the local economy and improve the ability of local producers to market their produce. Livelihood and recovery activities will be progressively expanded where feasible during 2016, to reach an estimated 500,000 beneficiaries in accessible parts of the country.

In 2015, WFP started working with local food manufactures to produce the date bars for the fortified school snacks programme. The local procurement initiative is a key component of WFP livelihoods and resilience strategy, which contributes to enhance local food production, promote local employment and boost the local economy. In 2016, WFP aims to further expand the local procurement, by supporting local manufacturers to increase their capacity and enhance their quality standards .

5.2.3 [INT] Report on Resilience marker

WFP further scaled up livelihood recovery and resilience building initiatives in order to strengthen households' capacity to withstand future shocks. In 2016, WFP supported 33,350 beneficiaries across six projects, whereas in 2017, WFP has further scaled up its livelihood assistance and is currently reaching some 54,000 beneficiaries across ten different projects as of mid-2017. The projects are diverse in nature and include the rehabilitation of bakeries, support to household agricultural production, beekeeping as well as vocational skills training

WFP also further scaled up the use of cash-based transfers across its different programme modalities, thus injecting money into the local economy and increasing the demand for local produce. The use of cash-based transfers in WFP's nutrition support programme for pregnant and lactating women (PLW) was expanded to Rural Damascus and Tartous governorates during the reporting period. The programme now supports more than 11,400 PLW who can redeem their CBTs at 17 retailers in four governorates. In November 2016, WFP also launched a cash-based education support programme to encourage the return to education for out-of-school children (OOSC). Under this programme, monthly paper food vouchers worth USD 23 per child are distributed to households who enroll their children in accelerated remedial learning courses supported by UNICEF. Please see Annex 1 for additional details.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Human resources and Management capacities

Over the course of the action, WFP operations in Syria will continue to be under the Regional Bureau based in Cairo which provides overall strategic guidance, while management of the operations at country level will be the responsibility of the Country Office. WFP Syria has a total of 323 staff, including 46 internationals and 277 nationals, located inside Syria (in Damascus and in four sub-offices) as well as in Jordan and Turkey to manage cross-border operations.

WFP programmes within Syria are implemented through a complex logistics network, which maintains a high degree of flexibility to adapt to the fluid security and access situation on the ground. Food commodities, procured by WFP or received as in-kind donations, are imported into Syria through the primary supply corridors of Beirut, Tartous and Lattakia. In addition, since 2014 commodities are shipped also through the Nusaybin crossing point on the border with Turkey, as well as through three crossing points on the Turkish and Jordanian borders approved with the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 2165.

Upon arrival in Syria, food commodities are stored in WFP facilities located in Tartous, Lattakia, Homs, Rural Damascus and Al-Hasakeh and subsequently dispatched to governorates allocated to each centre according to respective strategic advantages. For cross-border deliveries, commodities are transported directly at handover points to partners within Syria, due to the lack of WFP storage facilities in the areas covered through cross-border operations.

Commodities are delivered to WFP partners for distribution to beneficiaries on the basis of monthly allocation plans. For transport inside Syria, WFP utilises existing commercial transport settings, encouraging local capacities where possible. Distributions are carried out by WFP implementing

partners on the basis of agreed plans.

The FSSP is managed by an international programme officer, under the guidance of the Head of Programme, who will be solely responsible for this programme. Support will also be provided by senior programme assistants and food monitors based in WFP's five field offices in Damascus, Tartous, Aleppo, Qamishly and Homs as well as by third party project facilitators.

Technical coordination with the Ministry of Education ensures that trained school administrators, as well as staff from the relevant NGO partners, support programme implementation - daily handling and distribution of school snacks to children, as well as provide quantitative reports to WFP on distribution figures and daily attendance of children. WFP staff will conduct monitoring visits to school to verify school snack distributions as well as random checks of enrolment and attendance records. In high risk areas where WFP staff cannot access, contracted and vetted third-party monitors, trained by WFP, will carry out monitoring activities on behalf of WFP (see section on M&E below for details).

6.1.1 [INT] Human resources and Management capacities

Across all of its operational activities in Syria, WFP contracted an additional 24 staff members during the reporting period, including 4 international and 20 national staff, in order to enhance capacity in different areas. With regards to the FSSP, one international programme officer and a senior assistant based in the country office managed the programme at the national level, while five school feeding focal points across the five field offices inside Syria supported the local implementation at the governorate level. Further support was provided by field monitors based at the field offices as well as senior management, including the head of programme, to manage and monitor the effectiveness of the programme. Furthermore, Logistics and Procurement units were also closely involved in the implementation of the programme by procuring, storing and transporting the commodities across the country to the targeted schools.

6.2 EU Aid Volunteers

No

6.3 Equipment and goods

WFP has a comprehensive procurement plan in order to maintain a reliable supply-chain for the Syria operation, subject to predictable operational planning and the timely confirmation of adequate funding. Accordingly, food commodities will continue to be procured from nearby regional sources where possible. To minimize any potential negative impact on the local market, local procurement is currently limited to salt and ready-to-eat rations that are readily available in the local market at competitive prices, and, since late 2014, to the fortified date bars used for the FSSP.

WFP is currently seeking to gradual expand the local procurement of fortified date bars, as well as of commodities used for other WFP activities. The expansion will be subject to thorough assessments of the local production capacity and market surveys, to avoid creating market distortions and ensure a beneficial impact on the local economy.

The ECHO contribution will be used to procure 17,500 mt of milk produced in the EU. The commodity will be delivered to WFP at the Syrian ports in the form of Tetrapak packages, each containing 200 ml of milk, with a shelf life of six month.

Moreover, WFP will continue to purchase non-food items locally to the extent possible despite the existing challenges i.e. the unstable exchange rate, the prohibition of dealing with foreign currencies in the country, lack of non-food items stocks, etc. Mitigations measures undertaken include having as many long-term agreements (LTAs) as practically and feasibly possible, continuous market surveys and identification of additional qualified suppliers through regular expressions of interests.

[MR2] Please see Section 3.1.4 "Response Analysis" for details on revised milk tonnage to be procured under this action.

6.3.2 [INT] Equipment and goods

Currently, 96.95 percent of food commodities used across all programme activities are procured internationally or regionally and 3.05 percent locally. To support a scale-up in local procurement, WFP conducted a countrywide capacity assessment and expanded the number of shortlisted local suppliers during the reporting period, resulting in an increase in local purchases, particularly from the fourth quarter of 2016 onwards. By the end of 2016, the share of local procurement had doubled compared to 2015 to 2.2 percent, which further increased to 3.05 percent by July 2017. Initially limited to salt, ready-to-eat food parcels and fortified date bars, local procurement was extended to bulgur, rice, pulses and sugar, with plans to further scale up the local procurement to 10 percent by the end of 2017.

For the fortified date bars, WFP gradually shifted to local procurement during the course of the action. The shift was part of an EU-funded project to strengthen the local production capacity in order to enhance the food value chain, stimulate the local economy and create economic opportunities. Following extensive efforts to identify potential local manufacturers, and the implementation of activities to strengthen their production capacity and improve their quality standards, the local procurement of date bars was launched in the second half of 2015. During 2016, the percentage of locally sourced date bars increased from 5 percent in the first quarter to 56 percent at the end of the year. During 2017, local suppliers further strengthened their production capacity and are currently able to fully cover WFP's fortified date bars requirements for its FSSP. Accordingly, by September 2017, all fortified date bars for the FSSP will be procured from local sources. The shift to local sources enabled WFP to mitigate lengthy lead times and recurring quality issues associated with the procurement of date bars from regional sources, thus establishing a healthier and more reliable supply chain. Upon receipt of the commodity, the date bars were stored in WFP warehouses before being dispatched to the schools. For additional details see Annex 1.

6.4 Use of HPCs

No

6.6 Specific security constraints

Syria represents an increasingly challenging and unstable operational environment, as the country continued to witness a progressive deterioration of the security conditions, despite repeated political efforts to end the crisis. Over 2,000 mortar and rocket attacks were recorded across the country during 2015. In addition, Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED) continue to constitute a significant threat along transport routes and in several areas of the country, making indirect fire the most significant risk to WFP staff, items and premises. WFP security constantly monitors the situation and closely coordinates with local authorities on the ground to ensure the safety and security of WFP convoys. In addition, additional security measures are put in place at critical times, such as staff movement restrictions and the adoption of flexible working modalities to reduce staff exposure to security threats.

Adding to the ongoing violence and widespread insecurity, the proliferation of armed actors active on the ground require intensified efforts from WFP and other international humanitarian actors operating inside Syria to ensure the necessary coordination and negotiations are in place to guarantee the safety of their personnel and operations. Moreover, the progressive growth and expansion of radical Islamist groups using overt anti-UN rhetoric has increased the direct threat to UN personnel, in particular when conducting deliveries to high conflict areas of the country.

6.6.1 [INT] Specific security constraints

Syria remains a challenging operational environment. Recurrent surges in mortar, rocket and IED/VBIED attacks, as well as outbreaks of fighting, compelled WFP to resort to precautionary security measures and put in place temporary movement restrictions and flexible working modalities to ensure the safety and security of WFP staff working from various locations in the countries. In addition, the proliferation and expansion of radical armed groups with overt anti-UN rhetoric continued to represent a significant threat for WFP staff in Syria, and to prevent them from reaching parts of the country under the control of these groups.

At the end of 2016 and early 2017, for example, a significant increase in mortar and rocket attacks in Aleppo city in the area where the WFP office is located, prompted WFP to temporarily relocate non-essential national and international staff to Tartous. Furthermore, in late March, Damascus city saw an increase of mortar attacks, whereas national staff were encouraged to work from home for several days. Earlier, in September 2016, a joint UN-SARC humanitarian convoy carrying life-saving assistance for 78,000 people in Urem Al-Kubra, in western rural Aleppo, came under attack. The UN mission had as per normal procedures obtained formal approval from all government entities prior to the convoy moving as well as coordinated with other concerned entities. The attack resulted in casualties amongst the trucks drivers and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) aid workers; the head of SARC branch in Urem Al-Kubra was killed in the attack.

Moreover, escalating violence and increased international military intervention resulted in deteriorating security conditions throughout the country, causing WFP and its partners to adjust delivery and distribution plans on several occasions. As a mitigation measure, a humanitarian de-confliction mechanism, operationalized by OCHA in September 2014 and February 2015, continues to be in place to identify and protect humanitarian staff, offices, facilities and sites during military operations in Syria. The de-confliction mechanism was established at the request of the humanitarian community and is designed to inform the Coalition Forces and the Russian Federation air force of the locations of humanitarian locations and movements in Syria to mitigate, to the extent possible, the risks of being targeted or hit by an airstrike. De-confliction is also conducted by the UN with non-state armed groups present in opposition-held areas in case of cross-border and cross-line deliveries.

6.7.1 Are there Implementing Partners ?

Yes

6.7.2 Implementing Partner added value

-

6.7.4 Coordination, supervision and controls

WFP is coordinating the implementation of the programme in primary schools across the country with the Ministry of Education, to provide immediate assistance and support a sustainable approach. The programme is managed by WFP and supported by WFP-trained education functionaries or authorized local and international organizations in targeted schools to ensure the safety of children and staff. In addition, in Damascus city and in Hama (Salamiyeh district) the FSS programme is implemented also through two NGOs, a local NGO and the [REDACTED] respectively, which are also involved in the implementation of other WFP activities.

All WFP partners are vetted through a Due Diligence process managed by WFP HQ Legal Division and are selected on the basis of specific criteria such as organizational strength, impartiality, operational capacity and ability to reach affected populations in targeted locations. WFP's due diligence process aims at ensuring that each partner be compatible and consistent with WFP's mandate and with the principles laid out in the United Nations Global Compact and the WFP Code of Conduct. The Due Diligence process is based upon a qualitative case-by-case basis analysis for each potential agency's partner, and the research methodology is based upon investigating specific exclusionary criteria. For Syria in particular, political and religious affiliation, neutrality and terrorism, corruption and human rights abuses were key factors considered in partner selection.

Implementing partners have been sensitized to project implementation so that programme objectives and implementation modalities to support implementation are made clear. Partners were trained on all aspects relating to the management of the school feeding programme (including implementation, logistics and monitoring aspects) and were sensitized on its objectives. Further sensitization and diversification of the implementing partners portfolio is planned as the program is scaled up.

WFP requires all cooperating partners to provide monthly distribution reports and related information and data reflecting quantity of food distributed and number of children assisted within the month. Subsequently, this data will be verified by WFP and the organization will regularly report on agreed key indicators .

Implementing Partners

6.8 Are there any subdelegates?

No

6.8.1 Subdelegates explanation

-

6.8.2 [INT] Subdelegates explanation

-

Subdelegates

6.10 [INT] Report on Implementing Partners

The FSSP was coordinated and implemented together with the Ministry of Education in targeted schools during the reporting period. The programme was managed by WFP and supported by WFP-trained education functionaries in targeted schools to ensure the safety of children and staff. In this regard, WFP provided seven trainings to 1,100 teachers and principals along with Ministry of Education staff on the successful management of the programme. Training modules included the objectives of the programme, implementation, storage and handling of date bars and milk as well as distribution reporting. The trainings were provided by WFP and the Ministry of Education and took place at the governorate level in order to ensure that all targeted schools were able to send relevant staff to attend. Some 735 teachers, principals and Ministry of Education staff underwent refresher trainings in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama and Homs governorates, while 365 new teachers, principals and Ministry of Education staff were trained in Dar'a and As-Sweida governorates where the programme was newly introduced in November 2016 and May 2017 respectively.

The Ministry of Education also provided WFP with monthly distribution reports for milk and date bars and data reflecting the quantity of food distributed and the number of children assisted. However, some challenges were faced in receiving the reports on time on a monthly basis due to challenges faced at the school level, such as the lack of electricity and insecurity on the ground. This occasionally prevented teachers and principals to compile the distribution reports and submit them to the Ministry of Education on time. WFP closely followed up with the Ministry of Education at the national and sub-national level in order to address the challenges and ensure that the required information was received.

7. FIELD COORDINATION

7.1 Operational coordination with other humanitarian actors

WFP works closely with a multiplicity of stakeholders, including other food assistance organizations, UN agencies sharing common coordination and response mechanisms. The UN response in Syria is led by the Humanitarian Country Team, which involves international NGOs accredited in Syria and provides strategic and policy guidance. An inter-sectoral working group (led by OCHA) comprising 8 sectors and 2 active clusters, provides operational guidance and support to the operation in Syria.

WFP is an active member of the Education Sector Working Group participating in all coordination meetings and contributes towards defining sector strategies and priorities. The FSSP is positioned as a component of the overarching effort to improve the condition of children in Syria where the program will complement other partners who work to enhance quality of education, quality of teaching and instruction, rehabilitation of infrastructure and provision of supplies. Under the global MOU and field level agreement with UNICEF, collaboration is ensured in education and nutrition sectors. Within the education sphere, WFP is targeting schools assisted by UNICEF to strengthen complementarities, ensure that education quality issues are addressed and enhance achievement of project objectives. Regular operational coordination meetings between WFP and UNICEF are held at national and

sub-national levels on a quarterly basis to address implementation challenges, outstanding issues and discuss targeting and monitoring strategies. In addition, these meetings provide a platform to enhance coordination and information sharing with UNICEF social protection, nutrition, child protection and WASH teams, to facilitate a holistic approach and integrate cross-cutting issues into the design and implementation of the education support initiatives. Moreover, WFP contributed to Education Sector's assessment conducted in 2015, supporting the development and review of the questionnaires and assessment forms.

Coordination with UNDP and UNICEF has been formally organized through a programme steering committee whereby an effective coordination mechanism is established leading to complementarity of different interventions as well as delivering a comprehensive package of support to targeted children. In this manner the positive impact of WFP's education support on children's access to education and learning will be maximized.

WFP, as co-lead with FAO of the Food Security and Agriculture Sector, continues to coordinate with other food sector members, at central and decentralized levels, to ensure identified gaps are addressed. The Food and Agriculture sector which includes six members (WFP, UNRWA, FAO, TDH, ACF and AKDN) and ICRC as observers. Recently Sub National Level Coordination Structures were established in Qamishly, Homs, Tartous and Aleppo. Since September 2014, a Whole of Syria (WoS) approach was adopted as a result of UN Security Council Resolution 2165 and the increased need for coordination among actors resulting from the expansion of UN presence in areas reached through cross-border operations. Through dedicated coordination in Amman, the WoS coordination platform brings together operations led by hubs in Damascus, Jordan and Southern Turkey into a single framework, in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian activities and ensure greater accountability

[Please see Annex I to read the rest of the text]

7.2 Action listed in

UN Consolidated Appeal Process

Yes

Flash Appeal

-

ICRC / IFRC appeal

-

Other

-

Not applicable

-

If other, please specify

-

7.3 Coordination with National and local authorities

The Syrian Government provides a key support on a range of technical and operational areas such as conducting assessments, sharing of secondary data, approvals for the dispatch and monitoring of assistance, and minimizing security risks for humanitarian convoys. The coordination structure is replicated at local level, through local relief committees and local directorates, to further facilitate and harmonise the humanitarian response, as well as maximize the efficiency of resources on the ground.

Technical cooperation with the Ministry of Education is central to the implementation of WFP's education support programme. The MoE provides technical support in all operational areas, ranging

from data sharing, list of targeted schools, coordination mechanisms and implementation. Through its governorate level departments, the MoE is responsible for the management of the education system, and facilitates implementation of the FSSP. Trained school administrators support the FSSP implementation, managing commodities delivered to the targeted schools and handling the daily distribution of fortified school snacks to children, as well as providing quantitative reports to WFP on distribution figures and daily attendance of children. Regular quarterly as well as ad-hoc co-ordination meetings are held with representatives of the MoE at national and sub-national levels to address implementation challenges, discuss commodity management, reporting requirements and capacity building needs. In addition, high-level coordination with the MoE and the Planning and International Cooperation Council (PICC) takes place to address strategic and policy level issues, including medium and long term strategic planning, strengthening national capacities and ensuring alignment with national policies and priorities.

7.4 Coordination with development actors and programmes

At present, WFP is coordinating with development agencies on the ground such as FAO, who will continue to provide agriculture and livestock support packages to vulnerable households, and UNDP, who will continue to implement quick-impact projects to enhance community resilience and will expand micro-financing projects to small and medium enterprises to support the local economy.

7.5 [INT] Report on Field Coordination

WFP remained an active member of the Education Sector Working Group, participating in all coordination meetings and contributing towards defining sector strategies and priorities. Through these meetings, WFP remained in regular contact with sector partners, including UNICEF, to facilitate joint targeting criteria and enhancing further coordination when new initiatives were launched. The FSSP remained an integral component of the overarching effort of the Working Group and was implemented in schools supported by UNICEF. Regular operational coordination meetings between WFP and UNICEF were held at national and sub-national levels on a quarterly basis to address implementation challenges, outstanding issues and discuss targeting and monitoring strategies. Furthermore, towards the end of 2016, meetings with the Working Group were often held in order to address the sector inputs to the 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview.

Furthermore, WFP remained in close contact with the Ministry of Education for the implementation of the FSSP. Operational bi-monthly coordination meetings were organized at the national level, while regular meetings were also held at sub-national levels in addition to ad-hoc meetings with counterparts from the Ministry. These meetings were conducted to address implementation challenges, discuss commodity management, reporting requirements and capacity building needs. For example, the process for dispatching commodities to schools under the FSSP were further enhanced as a result of these meetings, ensuring that school officials would be present once trucks with the commodities arrived after school hours.

Lastly, following the inclusion of milk in the GFA programme between December 2016 and February 2017, WFP closely coordinated with the Nutrition Sector in order to put in place preventive measures in order to minimize the risks and ensure that the milk would only be used by the intended beneficiaries (children between 5 and 12). Measures were implemented to sensitize both the partners that would distribute the food rations as well as the families that would receive the milk. Measures included large adhesive labels advising the specific age group targeted by milk on each carton of milk and the sensitization of cooperating partners so that they could advise beneficiaries on the proper usage of the milk.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1 Monitoring of the Action

WFP conducts direct-monitoring of its activities where the security situation permits to ensure that assistance reaches beneficiaries through dedicated monitoring teams, consisting of nineteen staff members based in five offices across Syria. In highly insecure areas monitoring is conducted by Project Facilitators from Third Party Monitoring companies that are contracted and trained to conduct such monitoring exercise.

The progress and results of activities will be systematically monitored through an internal monitoring and reporting framework in place for each governorate in which the project progress is assessed against set targets, timeliness factors, number of beneficiaries reached against the planned. Progress against set targets will be regularly measured and action will be taken to address any issues in implementation as they arise.

For monitoring of the activities implemented under the FSSP, each WFP or third-party monitor completes a standard monitoring checklist that captures quantitative information on attendance, enrolment, storage conditions and facilities at school. They are also used to collect information used in qualitative analysis regarding the state of implementation and challenges faced. An important component of the checklist concerns results emerging from brief focus group discussions held with children. Outcome and output level results are measured through indicators in the logical framework while M&E data will be disaggregated by sex to take gender considerations into account.

Following the successful implementation of a baseline survey in 2014, a follow-up survey will be conducted in to measure programme results. The 2014 baseline survey was carried out in a representative sample of 150 schools in the governorates of Rural Damascus, Tartous and Aleppo. The baseline survey captured enrolment and attendance related data along with information on basic facilities, infrastructure, hygiene, school supplier while inquiring about reasons for drop outs and low attendance.

8.2 Evaluations

Internal evaluation

-

External evaluation

-

External audit

-

8.2.1 Further details

-

8.3 Studies carried out in relation to the Action (if relevant)

No

Explain the content of these studies

-

8.4 [INT] Report on monitoring and evaluations

WFP conducted monitoring activities throughout Syria at food distributions points and at schools where the FSSP was implemented, allowing for continuous action-oriented process monitoring and quarterly outcome analysis as well as sex disaggregation of data. Monitoring activities were conducted by WFP dedicated teams, based in all WFP offices inside Syria. In addition, third party monitoring (TPM) companies conducted monitoring activities in areas that were inaccessible to WFP staff, including areas in the northern and southern governorates reached through cross-border deliveries.

During the reporting period, of the more than 1,700 active FDPs across the country where monthly food assistance was distributed as part of the GFA programme, 64 percent were visited by WFP and TPM

monitoring staff. In total, WFP and TPM staff conducted more than 5,400 visits to FDPs, of which multiple FDPs were visited more than once. High monitoring rates were observed in Aleppo, Deir Ezzor and Ar-Raqqa and Tartous governorates, where short travel times to the FDPs enabled WFP and TPM staff to monitor all the active FDPs. However, the volatile security situation on the ground, operational challenges and consequent difficulties in obtaining the necessary travel approvals resulted in low monitoring coverage in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Quneitra, As-Sweida and Hama governorates.

In parallel, monitoring of FSSP activities took place in approximately 13 percent of the 1,671 schools assisted throughout the year. In Homs, Damascus and rural Damascus, monitoring could not take place at planned scale due to security constraints and consequent difficulties in obtaining the necessary travel approvals.

For monitoring of the activities implemented under the FSSP, each WFP or third-party monitor completed a standard monitoring checklist that captured quantitative information on attendance, enrolment, storage conditions and facilities at school. They also collect information used for qualitative analysis regarding the state of implementation and challenges faced. An important component of the checklist also concerned results emerging from brief discussions with the children at the class level, in the presence of school principals, that were organized by WFP and third-party monitoring staff.

Furthermore, during the second quarter of 2017, WFP enhanced the existing checklist for process, output and outcome monitoring for the FSSP, while consolidating the different tools for all school activities into one. This enabled WFP to standardize and facilitate the data collection. Questions were added to reflect the diversification of the school activities, following the implementation of the fresh meals project in Aleppo, the inclusion of milk, as well as CBT for out of school children. This enabled WFP to better capture beneficiary feedback on the process and satisfaction of the assistance provided. Additional questions included the frequency and quality of the assistance provided, as well as questions on hygiene in the schools, in order to ensure that any health-related issues were identified and addressed, which is specifically relevant with the introduction of fresh food items and milk.

9. COMMUNICATION, VISIBILITY AND INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

9.1 Standard visibility

A. Display of EU Humanitarian Aid visual identity on

A1. Signboards, display panels, banners and plaques

Yes

A2. Goods and equipment

Yes

Please provide additional details on section A

WFP's response to the Syria Crisis is a complex humanitarian operation in a challenging conflict zone. Many areas in Syria remain difficult to access due factors such as active fighting; besiegement; the presence of hostile armed groups; and road closures. Movement is further complicated by tedious and time consuming approvals whereas, collecting communication material such as photographs and video footage can prove to be a highly sensitive undertaking. It must also be mentioned that EU branding within Syria will not be possible. This is due to the volatile context and overall complexity in Syria, with its own implications and risks of having marked commodities where markings may result in sabotage by certain groups. It is important to keep in mind that Syria is a very politically charged environment with an ever-increasing number of armed groups on the ground who are not under the command and control of the main parties in the conflict. Furthermore, it is important to understand that donor branding, in all its forms, poses a serious risk for the safety and security of our staff and partners from groups who may have grievances related to certain donor countries. However, despite these challenges WFP will take all necessary steps to ensure that the activities highlighted in the plan below are successfully completed, while remaining mindful of the safety of WFP staff along with Syrian children.

B. Written and verbal acknowledgement of EU funding and partnership through

B1. Press releases, press conference, other media outreach

Yes

B2. Publications, printed material (for external audiences, not operational communication)

Yes

B3. Social media

Yes

B4. Partner's website (pages related to EU funded projects)

Yes

B5. Human interest blogs, photo stories

Yes

B6. Audiovisual products, photos

Yes

B7. Other

-

Please provide additional details on section B

The overall communication objectives will be to highlight the achievements and impact of the FSSP funded by ECHO; increase the visibility among beneficiaries through available communication channels of the ECHO-funded FSSP to conflict-affected children in Syria; ensure ECHO visibility requirements are met while remaining sensitive to the operating environment of Syria. All communication activities will be closely coordinated with UNICEF and WFP will participate wherever possible.

Target groups and specific activities will include:

General Public (EU and abroad): raise awareness of the ECHO contribution in support of WFP's FSSP for conflict-affected children in Syria and to highlight the impact and achievements of the programme. A combination of communication tools will feature messages targeted to the EU public/external audience various media platforms.

Press releases in English and Arabic will be published periodically and/or at strategic moments such as the commencement of the academic year, on WFP's website www.wfp.org and www.wfp.org/ar.

WFP will produce and publish human interest stories in both English and Arabic on its website and social media outlets. These stories will highlight the impact of ECHO support on children's education. These may include stories focusing on specific beneficiaries, staff, or project achievements. Stories will be published during the academic year and promoted on social media to generate additional visibility.

WFP will generate audiovisual content and use it to promote the ECHO contribution through all available social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, You Tube, Tumblr etc. in addition to producing a short film focusing on schools and children inside Syria.

Children inside Syria: ensure that school children are aware of the objectives of the programme and that they understand the link between access to education and nutritious school snacks. Wherever possible, WFP will highlight the role of ECHO in the implementation of the project. Posters and banners will be displayed in school premises highlighting the link between education and nutritious school snacks. Posters and Banners have been developed in this regard and will be distributed to all targeted schools.

Media: using all available communication platforms, WFP will disseminate general information about affected Syrian children and the benefits and accomplishments of the ECHO-supported FSSP. Mentions of ECHO support will be made when possible - WFP spokespeople will mention

the ECHO supported FSSP when doing media interviews about Syria and the region.

9.2 Do you foresee communication actions that go beyond standard obligations?

No

9.3 [INT] Report on progress

WFP ensured that the ECHO contribution was recognized through visibility, communication and information activities. These included:

Press releases:

English: [\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

Arabic: [\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

Social Media:

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

Articles in international media:

[\[Link replaced / shortened automatically\]](#)

10. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW OF THE ACTION

10.1 Estimated expenditure

	<u>Initial budget</u>	<u>Revised budget</u>	<u>Interim report incurred costs</u>	<u>Final report incurred costs</u>	<u>Final report final update</u>
Implementation costs	49.814.332,68	49.814.332,68	7.915.963,50	-	-
Remuneration (max 7%)	3.487.003,28	3.487.003,28	554.117,45	-	-
Total costs	53.301.335,96	53.301.335,96	8.470.080,95	0,00	0,00

10.3 Funding of the Action

	<u>Initial budget</u>	<u>Revised budget</u>	<u>Final budget</u>	<u>Final report final update</u>
Direct revenue of the action	0,00	0,00	-	-
	- - -	- - -		

Contribution by applicant	0,00	0,00	-	-
Contribution by other donors	23.301.335,96	23.301.335,96	-	-
Contribution by beneficiaries	-	-	-	-
Contribution requested from ECHO	30.000.000,00	30.000.000,00	-	-
% of total funding (*)	56,29	56,29	-	-
Total funding	53.301.335,96	53.301.335,96	0,00	0,00

(*) Rounding to the second decimal. To compute the final payment, the real percentage until four decimals will be applied.

10.4 Explanation about 100% funding

-

If other, please explain

-

10.5 Contribution in kind

-

10.6 Financial contributions by other donors

-

10.7 VAT exemption granted ? (applicable only to NGO's)

No

Please specify

-

11. REQUESTS FOR DEROGATION

11.1 Specific derogations

Derogation

- 1 WFP request the following derogation in the Special Conditions regarding the exchange rate to be used. When the EC contribution is made of several installments, the expenditures incurred will be reported using the average of the exchange rate at the date of the contribution confirmation and the rate of each pre-installments when recorded in the accounts of Organisation.

11.2 Permanent derogations

Derogation

- 1 Without prejudice to the provisions of the General Conditions, an amount of up to EUR 6 000 from the amount indicated in Article 3.2 of this Agreement may be used within a central visibility fund commonly established by the International Organisation and the Commission for visibility activities targeting the European public and highlighting the partnership of the International Organisation and the Commission in the field of humanitarian aid. In such a case, with the Final Report, the International Organisation shall also submit an annual report on the use of the central visibility fund.

12. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

12.1 Name and title of legal representative signing the Agreement

[REDACTED]

12.2 Name, address, e-mail and phone of the contact person(s)

Name

Office location

E-mail

Phone

wfp.echo@wfp.org

+32250

13. CONCLUSIONS AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION'S COMMENTS

13.1 Possible comments

[MR2] During the planning phase, WFP estimated to procure 17,500 mt of milk over the course of the action, with an annual requirement of almost 9,000 mt. However, the price of milk was lower than initially anticipated, which resulted in a revised projection of a total of almost 23,000 mt of milk to be procured over the course of the action. In addition, significant challenges faced in the supply and customs clearance procedures experienced since the beginning of the action, meant that WFP could only distribute approximately 50 percent of the planned milk quantities during the 2016-17 school year, leaving a greater quantity to be distributed over the next school year. Of these quantities, 4,800 mt have already been procured and distributed during the 2016-17 academic year, leaving approximately 18,000 mt of milk to be distributed during the 2017-18 academic year.

This, combined with the overall increase of milk quantities to be procured and distributed under this action, prompted WFP to adjust its distribution plans for the 2017-18 school year and increase the number of governorates in order to be able to absorb the additional milk supplies. Accordingly, during the 2017-18 school year WFP will double the milk ration provided to school children during school days, targeting 500,000 children across ten of the 14 Syrian governorates. Each child will receive two packs of milk (for a total of 400 ml) on each school day. Combined with the fortified date bar ration, this will ensure a caloric transfer of 588 Kcal per child, covering approximately one third of the child's requirement and approximately 70 percent of the Calcium requirements. This modification is in line with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) dietary guidelines for school-age children, which recommend the consumption of two to four servings of milk per day.

As indicated in the first Modification Request, a portion of the milk procured under this action will be reallocated to General Food Assistance if operational conditions require reallocation. During the 2016-17 school year, 482 mt of milk were reallocated to GFA, reaching approximately 167,000 children. During the 2017-18 school year, around 9,000 mt may be reallocated to GFA. The quantity of milk to be distributed under GFA will vary depending on operational conditions that will determine the extent and timeframe of reallocations (Please see Annex VII for additional details)

13.2 [INT] Comments

-