

# Evaluation of Nepal WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Terms of reference



World Food  
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# 1. Background

1. These terms of reference (ToR) were prepared by the WFP Office of Evaluation based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders.
2. The purpose of these terms of reference is to provide key information to stakeholders about the evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and to specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation. The ToR are structured as follows: Section 1 provides information on the context; Section 2 presents the rationale, objectives, stakeholders and main users of the evaluation; Section 3 presents the WFP portfolio and defines the scope of the evaluation; Section 4 identifies the evaluation approach and methodology; and Section 5 indicates how the evaluation will be organized. Annexes provide additional information.

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

3. Country strategic plan evaluations (CSPEs) encompass the entirety of WFP activities during a specific period. Their purpose is twofold: 1) to provide evaluation evidence and learning on WFP performance for country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing the next country strategic plan (CSP); and 2) to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders. These evaluations are mandatory for all CSPs and are carried out in line with the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plan and the WFP Evaluation Policy.

## 1.2. CONTEXT

### General overview

4. Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia with an area of 147,516 km<sup>2</sup>. The country is mainly situated in the Himalaya mountains and covers parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain. It borders China to the north and India to its other latitudes (see Annex 1).
5. The country has a population of approximately 29.1 million of which 51.04 percent are female<sup>1</sup>. Sixty-six percent of the people falls under the age bracket of 15-64 years; and another 28.1 percent are under 15 years old.<sup>2</sup> The life expectancy at birth in Nepal is 71 years (women 72; men 69) (2019)<sup>3</sup>. The adolescent birth rate per 1000 females is 63<sup>4</sup> and the fertility rate is 1.8<sup>5</sup>.
6. The growth of urban population is steep (3.9 percent in 2020) and currently urban population accounts for 21 percent of the overall population<sup>6</sup>.
7. Around three quarters of the country's population speaks the official language, Nepali, as their first or second language. In capital city Kathmandu and other major cities, English is starting to be widely spoken.
8. After 28 years of political instability with 27 governments in power, the 2015 constitution established a federal democratic republic. The current minority government took office in August 2021 following months of instability.

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<sup>1</sup> Nepal National Planning Commission Central Bureau of Statistics. National Census 2021 at <https://censusnepal.cbs.gov.np/Home/Details?tpid=5&dcid=3479c092-7749-4ba6-9369-45486cd67f30&tfsid=17> Accessed on 21/02/2022.

<sup>2</sup> UNFPA World Population Dashboard, *Nepal*. 2021. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank Data, *Nepal*. 2019. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>4</sup> WHO Data, *Nepal*. 2018. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>5</sup> UNFPA World Population Dashboard, *Nepal*. 2021. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank Data, *Nepal*. 2020. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

9. Nepal has significantly reduced poverty rates and in 2020 it reached a status as lower-middle income country.<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> However, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, both Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and GNI declined in 2021.
10. The population vulnerable to multidimensional poverty is estimated at 17.8 percent, while approximately 4.9 percent suffer from severe multidimensional poverty.<sup>9</sup> Rural/urban disparities related to poverty are very significant (rural poverty rate 28 percent; urban 12.3 percent) and also exist among provinces, with Karnali province reporting the highest percentage of people living in multi-dimensional poverty (39.5 percent) followed by Sudurpashchim Province (25.3 percent) and Province 2 (24.2 percent).<sup>10</sup>
11. In 2019, Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) value stood at 0.602, ranking the country 142 out of 189 countries as a medium human development category.<sup>11</sup> The GINI coefficient measuring (in)equality stood at 39.5 in 2018<sup>12</sup>, fairly similar to other Southern Asian countries. Inequalities in Nepal are frequently caste and ethnicity based.
12. Around 84.6 percent of the country's total working population is employed in the informal sector, with women's share in the informal economy (90.5 percent) being higher than men's (81.1 percent)<sup>13</sup>. Almost half of the country's households has a member who is either working overseas or has returned<sup>14</sup>. Nepal's strong reliance on remittances that amount to 24 percent of the gross domestic product<sup>15</sup> renders it very vulnerable to fluctuations in currency values.

## National policies and the SDGs

13. The Government of Nepal places a strong emphasis on reducing poverty and food insecurity and has promoted policies and programmes explicitly targeting poverty reduction, nutrition, quality education, and sustainable family agriculture while enhancing emergency preparedness on the short and long term. The so-called 14<sup>th</sup> Plan, the first national plan to adopt the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs), was launched little after the 2015 Constitution of Nepal had come into effect. The more recently released 15<sup>th</sup> Plan (2019/20-2023/24) has continued mainstreaming the SDGs. For 2024, the country aims to have a per capita income of USD 1,595, a literacy rate of 95 percent (15 years and above) and 60 percent of the population covered by basic social security. According to the country's long-term vision, by the end of 2034, Nepal should have graduated to a middle-income country<sup>16</sup>.
14. Multiple sectorial policies, strategies and plans reinforce these and other social commitments (see sections below).

## Food and nutrition security

15. Nepal's Global Hunger Index score improved from 36.8 ("very serious") in 2000 to 19.1 ("moderate") in 2021<sup>17</sup>. However, to date, still 6 out of 7 provinces in Nepal have a moderately high prevalence of insufficient food consumption ( ). Food security in Nepal is associated with physical access constraints (mountains) and disasters, and in particular affects women, certain ethnic and lower caste groups.

<sup>7</sup> World Bank Data, *Nepal*. 2020. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>8</sup> The UN Committee for Development Policy has recommended for Nepal's graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category with preparatory period of five years. This means that the graduation of Nepal would be effective in 2026.

<sup>9</sup> UNDP, *Statistical Update*. 2018. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>10</sup> OPHI, UNDP and UNICEF, *Nepal Multidimensional Poverty Index*. 2021. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>11</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*. 2020. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>12</sup> A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.

<sup>13</sup> Tanushree Agrawal, *Impact Of COVID-19 On SMEs From A Gender Lens*. Nepal Economic Forum, 6 September 2021. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

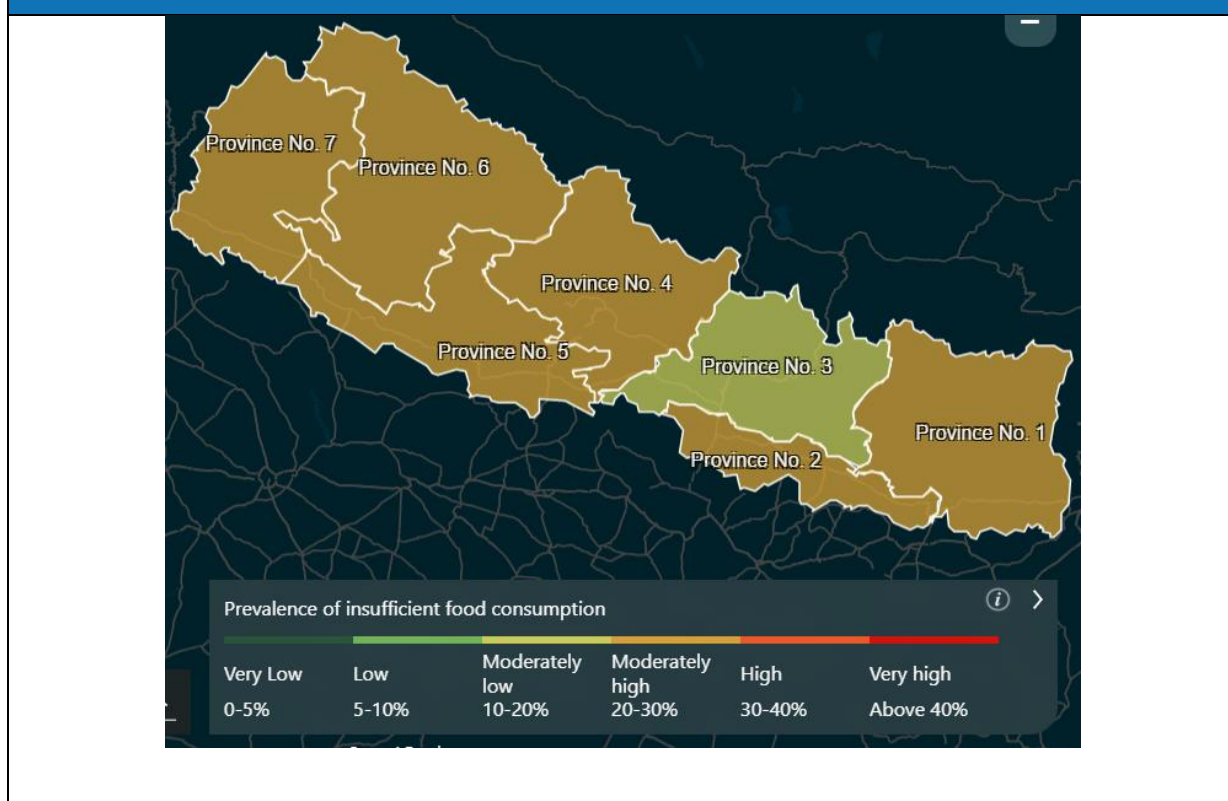
<sup>14</sup> IOM, *Migration in Nepal, a Country Profile*. 2019. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>15</sup> World Bank Data, *Nepal*. 2020. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>16</sup> Aarjan Rupakheti, *Key Highlights from Nepal's long term economic vision (FY2020 – FY2044) and Nepal's 15th five-year plan (FY2020 -FY2024)*. Nepal Economic Forum. 1 March 2021. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>17</sup> Global Hunger Index, *Nepal*. 2021. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

**Figure 1: Nepal, Food insecurity situation (Dec 2021)**



Source: <https://hungermap.wfp.org>

16. The Global Nutrition Report 2021<sup>18</sup> indicates that no progress has been achieved towards national targets for acute malnutrition (wasting) in Nepal. Twelve percent (13.5 percent boys and 10.4 percent girls) of children under 5 suffered from wasting in 2020. Progress is also lacking in terms of breastfeeding, with only 62 percent of children aged 0 to 5 months being exclusively breastfed. Nepal is 'on course' to meet the target for stunting, but 30 percent of children under 5 years of age are still affected<sup>19</sup>, which is higher than the average for the Asia region (21.8 percent). The percentage for overweight children is reported at 2 percent<sup>20</sup>.

17. Micronutrient deficiencies, in particular anaemia, are a major health issue in Nepal, especially among infants, children, and pregnant women with low socio-economic status, insufficient food intake and poor dietary habits. Anaemia prevalence has increased since 2006. In 2017, about 69 percent of children six to twenty-three months and 53 percent of children under five were reported to suffer from anaemia<sup>21</sup>. Anaemia among women aged 15 to 49 years was 41% in 2016, an increase of 6% since 2006. However, anaemia among pregnant women decreased by 2% over the same timeframe.<sup>22</sup>

18. The food security of all Nepali citizens became enshrined in the 2018 Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act, presenting an opportunity to include Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (Zero Hunger) in national policies, budgets and sub-national plans.

19. The key document for improving maternal and child nutrition in Nepal is the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) II (2018-2022), including national aspirations to reduce stunting to 24 percent by 2025.

<sup>18</sup> The Global Nutrition Report 2021 is a multi-stakeholder initiative, consisting of a Stakeholder Group, Independent Expert Group and Report Secretariat. Accessed at 13/01/2022

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF, *State of the World Children 2021*. Accessed on 04/01/2022.

<sup>20</sup> *Idem*

<sup>21</sup> Nepal National Planning Commission, *Towards Zero Hunger in Nepal*, 2018.

<sup>22</sup> *Idem*

## Agriculture

20. Nepali agriculture occupies around 29 percent of the total land area<sup>23</sup>, represents 25 percent of the GDP (2018)<sup>24</sup>, and employed 64.3 percent of all workers in 2019<sup>25</sup>. Agriculture in Nepal is predominantly subsistence based. Smallholder farmers produce up to 80 percent of the food consumed in the country.<sup>26</sup>
21. In terms of the composition of agricultural produce, 75.1 percent of the agriculture GDP is generated by cereal (i.e., mainly paddy, maize and wheat) and livestock (i.e., production of milk, meat, eggs and wool)<sup>27</sup>. Production of fruits and vegetables is limited, and seasonality and prices are an underlying cause for their limited consumption<sup>28</sup>.
22. Agriculture is regarded as a key cornerstone within the 15th Plan; and Nepal's Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035) integrates a Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action (2014-2024), that aims to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty among the poorest households by improving sustainable agricultural-based livelihoods.

## Natural disasters and climate change

23. Nepal continues to rank among the most disaster-affected countries in the world in terms of mortality, cost and number of events. Seismologists warn for possible earthquakes in the future with larger magnitudes than the devastating ones of 2015.
24. The country ranks 10 (out of 176 countries) in the Climate Change Index (2010-19)<sup>29</sup>. Climate change has intensified the occurrence of flooding and landslides during the annual monsoon season, especially in the country's southern plains and also has increased drought and soil erosion. Mountainous regions are also at risk of retreating glaciers and erratic rainfall patterns.
25. The impact of climate change is compounded by Nepal's social vulnerability, such as its dependence on subsistence farming. Recent studies by the Asian Development Bank suggest that Nepal faces losing 2.2 percent of its annual GDP due to climate change by 2050.<sup>30</sup>
26. Nepal's Disaster Risk Management Act, 2017, is the country's first act to recognize sudden-onset natural disasters, drought, famine and epidemics as disasters and includes provisions on disaster risk reduction. Two years after, in 2019, Nepal enacted a National Climate Change Policy.

## Education

27. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in Nepal's primary education reached 97.2 percent in 2018/19. The overall literacy rate of the population was measured at 67.9 percent in the same year, while it was 92 per cent for people between 15-24<sup>31</sup>. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) in enrolment for primary schools was 1.06 against the target of 1.01 in 2019<sup>32</sup>, meaning that there were more girls in primary schools than boys.
28. Albeit overall progress, poor quality of education prevails and inequity in access persist<sup>33</sup>. Key barriers to enrolment and attendance include poverty, social exclusion, disability, migration, child labour, social norms and gender bias.

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<sup>23</sup> FAO, <https://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=NPL>, accessed on 5/1/2022

<sup>24</sup> Government of Nepal, *National Economic Census 2018 Analytical Report Food and Beverage Industry*. 2021.

<sup>25</sup> World Bank, *Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) (modelled ILO estimate)*. 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Nepal's Tibhuvan University, *Nepal at the edge of sword with two edges: the COVID-19 pandemics and Sustainable Development Goals*, 2021

<sup>27</sup> Government of Nepal, *National Economic Census 2018 Analytical Report Food and Beverage Industry*. 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Wageningen University, *Scoping study on fruits and vegetables; results from Nepal*. 2021

<sup>29</sup> German Watch, *Global Climate Index*. 2021

<sup>30</sup> World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal accessed on 5/1/2022 at <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/nepal>

<sup>31</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*. 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, *National Review of Sustainable Development Goals*. 2020.

<sup>33</sup> UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/education>. Accessed at 13/01/2022

29. The National Framework for Education 2030 and the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016-2023) together govern the national commitment to increase school enrolment and retention among all population groups; and to enhance gender equality in education. They consider school meals as a cross-cutting tool for the achievement of those goals, as well as for improved nutrition and health.
30. Positive recent developments related to school meals in Nepal include the Free and Compulsory Basic Education Act of 2018, which guarantees school meals for children in areas with low Human Development Index scores, by means of the expansion of the school meal budget to cover an additional 720,000 students.

### **Gender and inclusion**

31. With a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.452, Nepal ranks a high 110th out of 162 countries<sup>34</sup>. According to the Nepal Voluntary National Review 2020, the main challenge towards ensuring gender equality in social and economic life is the prevalence of the patriarchal social ethos. Besides gender, caste and class and their intersections are cause of discrimination.
32. Women face multiple obstacles as food producers, with inadequate access to land, extension services, financial services and markets. The restricted mobility and low literacy and overall education levels of women and girls in rural areas hamper women and girls' ability to exercise their rights. Opposition to girls' education and traditions such as early marriage still exist.
33. To address this situation, Nepal's system of gender-responsive budgeting and the President's Women Empowerment Program were founded to contribute towards improved gender equality.
34. A national Human Rights for Persons with Disabilities Act of 2017 contains provisions for persons with disabilities to access basic services. Several other programmes have been established to promote inclusion of those left behind, like the Prime Minister's Employment Programme, the Poverty Alleviation Fund; and the country's Social Security scheme which targets marginal communities and vulnerable population groups.

### **Migration, refugees and internally displaced people**

35. According to UNHCR, Nepal in 2020 hosted nearly 20,000 refugees, mostly Tibetans, followed by Bhutanese, with arrival dates in 1959 and in the early 1990s respectively. While the Bhutanese refugees are bound to live within camps in Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal, the Tibetans are free to stay where they prefer.

### **Nepal and the Covid-19 pandemic**

36. Two waves of the Covid-19 pandemic (March 2020 and April 2021) caused a national lockdown; an

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