

Management Response from WFP Malawi to the recommendations of the mid-term review of Adapting to Climate Change through Integrated Risk Management Strategies and Enhanced Market Opportunities for Resilient Food Security and Livelihoods Project in Malawi from June 2020 to August 2023



1. This document, finalized in September 2023, presents the management response to the recommendations of the mid-term review of Adapting to Climate Change through Integrated Risk Management Strategies and Enhanced Market Opportunities for Resilient Food Security and Livelihoods Project.
2. The mid-term review, which was commissioned by WFP Malawi and Malawi Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture covered all three outcomes of the Project: Improved access to insurance as a risk transfer mechanism for targeted farmers affected by climate change and food insecurity; Adopted climate-resilient agriculture practices among targeted farmers contributing to the integrated climate risk management approach; and Strengthened market access strategies and approaches for smallholder farmers. The mid-term review serves the dual purpose of accountability and learning and assessed progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes.
3. The mid-term review made 15 key recommendations. The matrix sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or taken) actions, responsibilities and timelines.

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions) <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division (/external stakeholder in the case of Joint Evaluation). Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	Management Response <i>[Is (sub-) recommendation Agreed, partially agreed or not agreed? If partially agreed or not agreed, provide a brief reason for this.]</i>	Actions to be taken. <i>[Briefly state what action(s) will be taken to address each sub-recommendation – one action per row.]</i>	Action Led (Supporting Offices/Divisions) <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division/unit. Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	Action Deadline <i>[Month and year – not to exceed related (sub-)recommendation deadline.]</i>
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 1: District stakeholders (such as Subject Matter Specialists) should be included (as observers) when field assessments to determine insurance pay-outs are being done. This would promote transparency and accountability.</p>	<p>WFP resilience unit and PULA</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>As a project the following key district stakeholders are already being engaged at different levels (1. Agriculture Service Panel a representative of Key Subject Matter Specialist, members of parliament and council who report the subject to District Council; 2. District Agriculture, Extension Coordinating Committee (3) Area Stakeholder Pannel that includes extension workers and Councillors (4) Area/Village Level Development committees. These are involved to support</p>	<p>1.1 project will continue to strengthen the delivery system which has been there to make sure all stakeholders are engaged at all levels.</p>	<p>Technical lead Component 1</p>	<p>Dec 2023</p>
			<p>1.2 Key subject matter specialists will be included for field assessments crop cut exercises.</p>	<p>Technical lead Component 1</p>	<p>June 2024</p>

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		sensitization on crop insurance, crop cuts exercise, registration, and final payout report for them to support smooth delivery and implementation of crop insurance. During crop cuts exercise extension workers are engaged supporting identification of sampled farmers and data collection and this has been done for the EPA to be aware of this activity happening in their locality and ensure that they were part of the exercise for credibility of results.			
Priority: Medium Recommendation 2: There is need to improve the claims	WFP resilience unit and PULA	<i>Agreed</i>	2.1: Draft insurance workplan for 2023/2024 season	PULA/WFP/AF project	Oct 2023

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settlement mechanism to ensure that claims are processed quickly.		The management agrees to the recommendation and several discussions has been in place with PULA (supporting insurance products); Insurance stakeholders; key implementing stakeholders; WFP; and AF project team to find ways to address delays in the crop cuts exercise and payout report and insurance claims distribution. The key stakeholders agreed to implement Batch pay-outs. A calendar on insurance activities was agreed and created to support Crop Cuts Exercise, Insurance Monitoring, Payout report, claims distribution, sensitization,	2.2: Government, WFP PULA and insurance association to stick to schedule and workplan timelines. Ensure. The workplan and schedule set for the insurance calendar	PULA/WFP/AF project	Oct 2024

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		<p>and registration. This entails releasing reports for matured crops in stages. Additionally, efforts are being made to expedite the registration process well in advance, ensuring insurers receive premiums promptly and allowing for the entire process to be completed on schedule. With this the 2022/2023 season the payout report was released on time by end August and claims distribution, sensitization/registration for 2023/2024 season will start by Oct 2023.</p>			
<p>Priority: High Recommendation 3: To ensure that beneficiaries are able to pay their share of</p>	<p>WFP resilience unit and National PCU</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p> <p>AF project have discussed with PULA and WFP for a</p>	<p>3.1: AF continue working with PULA advisors, Insurance stakeholders, farmers</p>	<p>Technical lead</p>	<p>Dec 2023</p>

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<p>premium, there is need to ensure that premium payment mechanisms are put in place and are made known to the beneficiaries on time</p>		<p>mechanism that will support 2023/2024 season robust premium payment by farmers. During the claim's distribution, AF project will conduct insurance sensitization concurrent, and PULA will support registration of beneficiaries. PULA advisors are exploring digital, and mobile banking alternatives accessible by farmers which will be tried in the 2023/2024 insurance season.</p>	<p>on registration and awareness of the premium collection mechanism to support robust premium collection.</p>		
<p>Priority: Medium Recommendation 4: There is need to strengthen the capacity of government staff (especially district staff and EPA staff to understand the insurance</p>	<p>WFP resilience unit and National PCU</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>As sensitization and awareness on crop insurance is key AF continues to work with</p>	<p>4.1: Continue conduct district level sensitization and capacity building on micro-insurance, for key stakeholders at</p>	<p>Technical Leads</p>	<p>Dec 2023</p>

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<p>product comprehensively. This, in turn, will promote the understanding of the product among the targeted beneficiaries.</p>		<p>key district stakeholders to support awareness at all levels. During the sensitization the following key stakeholders are used (1. Agriculture Service Panel a representative of Key Subject Matter Specialist, members of parliament and council who report the subject to District Council; 2. District Agriculture, Extension Coordinating Committee (3) Area Stakeholder Pannel that includes extension workers and Councillors (4) Area/Village Level Development committees. At community level EPA extension workers are included to even support awareness to</p>	<p>district and community level</p>		

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		beneficiaries. The project is using different approaches including Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) to build capacity for front staff on crop insurance.			
Priority: High Recommendation 5: There's needed to intensify the awareness of the insurance product to the beneficiaries and the wider population. The use of radio (especially community radios) and other channels are essential	WFP resilience unit and National PCU	<i>Partially agreed.</i> The AF project has increased awareness on insurance to beneficiaries through other channels such as radios and radio listening clubs. This is being done through PICSA to cover more areas. The project is actively promoting access to climate information via radio programs and SMS services, which have already begun	5.1: Incorporate messages on crop insurance in radio programs and SMS to reach out to more beneficiaries.	Technical lead	July 2024

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		incorporating details about micro-insurance. Radio programmes are already there incorporating the insurance messaging.			
Priority: Medium Recommendation 6: On soil and water conservation, there is need to ensure that beneficiaries are adopting the climate resilience practices in their own fields. There is need to adopt the technologies from the community-level to the household-level. The use of community-based participatory planning (CBPP) should be intensified to ensure that beneficiaries are taking up the climate resilient practices into their own fields.	WFP resilience unit and National PCU	<i>Partially agreed.</i> In addition to Community Based Participatory Planning the project continued to support community level monitoring through extension workers at EPA level.	6.1: The project working with extension workers at EPA level to strengthen Community participatory monitoring and empower communities project committees to support monitoring and adoption of technologies by many farmers. The project will continue building capacity for village level committee to support adoption on wide scale for those who have inputs from pass-on	Technical lead component 2	December 2023

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			programme supported by the project.		
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 7: On the marketing component, there is need to speed up the construction of the aggregation centres and the irrigation schemes. The project should ensure that although the country is facing challenges in the availability of building material such as cement) materials for the construction are available. There might be need to engage other government ministries and departments (such as Ministry of Trade and Malawi Revenue Authority) to ensure that the AF Project is prioritized</p>	WFP resilience unit and National PCU	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>Delays were because of prolonged contractual government system to identify the contractor for aggregated centres. Contracts were issued and construction started in FY 3 with some aggregated centres at 80% complete, while some irrigation schemes at 100% complete. Most of the aggregated at roofing level and through monitoring visits the project agreed with contractors on crucial actions that need to be</p>	7.1: Through the assigned procurement project officer, the project will continue to work with the ministry for accelerate procurement processes in all areas in order to be within the project timelines. Technical leads and all will make sure that all specs and details for any procurement are ready on time. For the construction of aggregated centres, the project will continue with monitoring the	Procurement officer. Technical Leads National Project Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On going process for all procurements. • Construction of aggregated centres to be completed by Dec 2023

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		undertaken to expedite works such as hiring additional workforce	contractor to complete as per agreed contractual timeline.		
<p>Priority: N/A</p> <p>Recommendation 8: The project needs to address these inequalities by implementing Gender transformative approaches GTA through a GESI Integrated approach to challenge the existing gender norms.</p>	WFP resilience unit and National PCU	<p><i>Not agreed</i></p> <p>Project is implementing the SHEP Approach where in addition to looking at marketing aspects the Household visioning tool and Gender balance tree are also being facilitated among project beneficiary which addresses aspects of gender inequalities among gender categories. The tools used were built in the project considering the marketing approach to support identifying issues of control and access at household level. The tool provides support to identify gaps on control</p>	8.1: The project will revisit and identify areas to focus on for action on the gender tree that women do to cause inequality, men do to cause inequality, and things that both women and men do to cause inequality. It will also draw site- and community-specific actions to address any gaps in gender inequalities as identified by the MTR. The project will continue to use household visioning and the gender balance	Component 3 technical lead	March 2024

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		<p>and access and supports the household's development of a vision that address gender equality. It should be noted that according to the MTR acknowledged that the project integrated and impacted the lives of women, men, and socially excluded groups like people with disability, the elderly, and the youth. And the number in the MTR shows more numbers of women benefiting. As such at this level we may not change the approach to GESI.</p>	<p>challenge action tree, building capacity for more peers and beneficiaries to address the issue.</p>		
<p>Priority: Medium Recommendation 9: There is need to revisit Output 3.4 (Promoted smallholder</p>	<p>WFP resilience unit and National PCU</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p> <p>Currently ADMARC is not functioning, while NFRA is</p>	<p>9.1: Activity restructured to facilitate market linkages among FOs</p>	<p>Technical lead – component 3</p>	<p>June 2024</p>

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<p>procurement through government/private sector strategies and programs) to ensure that it's implementable within the project timeframe. The involvement of NFRA and ADMARC in the process should be reconsidered because it may be difficult to undertake within the remaining few years</p>		<p>more focused on strategic grain reserve. However, the project noting that ADMARC is not function already started working with other market outlets where farmers are using to sell their crops at district level. The approach for output 3.4 should be structures on supporting (1) firm agreements with local key actors along the value chain (2) establishing vibrant agribusiness stakeholders' network at district level to strengthen agriculture marketing management at local level (3) activity can be restructured to facilitate market linkages among</p>	<p>and potential buyers/private sector actors and also to create a district Agribusiness forum with input and output suppliers as well as all relevant stakeholders including farmers</p>		

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		private sector actors at district level			
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 10: Ensure that key staff (Component Leads) are available for the remaining part of the project so that project activities do not stall over lack of leadership.</p>	National Steering Committee, WFP resilience unit and National PCU	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>The National Advisory Technical Committee and the Project Steering Committee have supported our request that the appropriate department fill the technical specialist post as soon as possible when we have a vacancy, despite the fact that project personnel turnover has had an impact on implementation throughout the years. This has made the implementation gap smaller.</p>	10.1: The National Project Coordination Unit will keep advocating with the principal secretary of agriculture, who chairs the project steering committee, to ensure that departments allow the assigned technical leads to stay and continue supporting the project for the remaining period.	AF - National Project Coordinator (NPC)	On-going

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<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 11: There is need to strengthen market linkages, as the aggregation centres are being constructed.</p>	<p>WFP resilience unit, National PCU and District PCU</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>Project is implementing the SHEP approach where among other things farmers are being capacitated to conduct market surveys and link with potential buyers.</p> <p>The aggregation centres have been linked to existing cooperatives and other beneficiaries will join these cooperatives to take advantage of the registration status</p>	<p>11.1: Capacity building trainings on strengthening market linkages and market access will continue in FY4 and FY 5 as planned in project document.</p>	<p>Technical lead</p>	<p>On – going</p>
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 12: There is need to allocate a budget for community review meetings that would provide an avenue</p>	<p>WFP resilience unit and National PCU</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>Resources for reviews are already available and channelled through</p>	<p>12.1: The project will continue to allocate resources for project reviews channelled through District Project</p>	<p>District Project Coordination Units</p>	<p>On going – periodically</p>

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for data quality assessments at the community level		District Project Coordination Units (DPCUs). What is needed at district level is to synchronize their planning so that activity reviews are conducted concurrently across all components other than each component conducting separate reviews. The project is already working with the communities through several project committees to support reviews and data collection,	Coordination Units (DPCUs) to facilitate community reviews meetings.		
Priority: N/A Recommendation 13: 13. The project should consider recruiting a dedicated project	WFP resilience unit and National PCU	Not agreed The project was designed to build capacity for the government to execute the project using the	13.1: As per the signed MOU with district councils, the project will continue to advocate using the district structures in	National Project Coordinator	On going

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<p>accountant at the district level. This would ensure that processing of resources to finance project activities are not delayed.</p>		<p>government structures. This is in line with mandate at district councils and the MOU signed which provides clear guidelines at district level on roles and responsibilities and support required for the project. The same personnel equally handle other project accounts, as part of their day-to-day duties and that should be similar to AF work.</p>	<p>line with the government and district mandate to support the implementation and delivery of the project in all areas, including finance management.</p>		
<p>Priority: Medium Recommendation 14: In the second half of implementation, there is need to ensure that government has a clear structure to implement the project beyond AF funding and with minimal support from WFP</p>	<p>National Steering Committee, WFP resilience unit and National PCU</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>The project developed an exit strategy alongside every intervention to ensure sustainability and continuity using government structures after its completion.</p>	<p>14.1: Update the project exit strategy and review the strategy together with all key partners at the national and district levels. Agree on concrete steps to implement the</p>	<p>M & E, policy officer</p>	<p>June 2024</p>

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		<p>Interventions such as crop insurance and setting up of mechanisms for efficient and effective crop insurance mechanisms are proof of exit strategies. Use of local structures such as the Area Stakeholder Panel (ASP) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) is another example of foresightedness regarding sustainability. We are already doing this, and the project is already working with government structures.</p>	<p>existing strategy and action in year 4.</p> <p>14.2: The project will facilitate awareness in the community using the revised exit strategy for the exit process.</p>		
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 15: Strengthen the timely utilization of funds and liquidation to ensure that the project has a healthy burn rate</p>	<p>National PCU</p>	<p><i>Partially agreed.</i></p> <p>The issue was persistent during earlier stages of project implementation. It has now been resolved</p>	<p>15.1: In order to speed the implementation of activities in accordance with the timelines, an accelerated plan of action will be</p>		

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions) <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division (/external stakeholder in the case of Joint Evaluation). Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	Management Response <i>[Is (sub-) recommendation Agreed, partially agreed or not agreed? If partially agreed or not agreed, provide a brief reason for this.]</i>	Actions to be taken. <i>[Briefly state what action(s) will be taken to address each sub-recommendation – one action per row.]</i>	Action Led (Supporting Offices/Divisions) <i>[Name of responsible WFP office/division/unit. Names of supporting WFP offices/divisions and/or external stakeholders if any in brackets.]</i>	Action Deadline <i>[Month and year – not to exceed related (sub-)recommendation deadline.]</i>
		through accelerated implementation of project activities across all components and including the construction works being done for the project.	implemented wherever possible in addition to adhering to the work plan and budget. There will be periodic reviews at project level.		