

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES



# Impact Evaluation for Resilience Learning in the Sahel

The G5 Sahel countries - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger - are home to 80 million people, and demographic growth projections suggest the population will double in the next 20 years. The region faces drought every three years, and a major drought every five to ten years. Adding to the complexity, the conflict in the Lake Chad basin drive population displacement and disrupt livelihoods.

The Sahel also harbours enormous opportunities for transformation, presented by technological advancement and a very young population. WFP, with support from the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Germany, the wider donor community and implementing partners, has created an ambitious platform in the Sahel to leverage this potential and strengthen resilience. Through a five-year commitment across five countries, BMZ and the WFP have jointly demonstrated a commitment to lasting impact across countries.

A key part of this agenda is to document the impact of WFP interventions on wellbeing, human capital development, and resilience, and test strategies to build on existing programme effectiveness to maximize these impacts. The impact evaluations will examine what interventions, combinations and sequences are most effective in building capacities related to resilience outcomes in communities supported by WFP in the Sahel.

## WHAT IS AN IMPACT EVALUATION?

Impact evaluations measure positive and negative, short- or long-term changes in development outcomes that can be attributed to a specific programme or a policy. This is achieved by using a credible counterfactual.

Impact evaluations rely on data collected primarily at the individual or household level to measure expected or unexpected programme outcomes.

For WFP, most impact evaluations will be conducted ex-ante. This means that, the impact evaluation design is built into the programme planning and involves at least baseline and end-line data collections.

The Sahel impact evaluations are implemented within the framework of [WFP's Impact Evaluation Strategy \(2019-2026\)](#) in partnership with the Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) unit of the World Bank.

## DEFINING RESILIENCE

BMZ and the WFP share a closely aligned conception of resilience as the capacity to absorb shocks and chronic stressors, adapt to changing and challenging physical and social environments, and transform capacities at the individual, household and community level. Using programs, projects, and

policy interventions to maximize resilience is achieved through improvements in identification of who is affected by various risks and stressors, and creating supportive systems, structures, and livelihood options to reinforce individuals and households' ability to cope with risks and stressors.

## PRIORITY OUTCOME AREAS IN THE SAHEL

At the highest level, impact evaluation priorities are already fixed by the key resilience outcomes to be achieved in the Sahel, and the strategies adopted for achieving them. For the Integrated Resilience Programme in the Sahel, these are:

- Social cohesion and reduction of intra-community conflict
- Environment/natural resources
- Food systems and nutrition
- Integration of services, activities and nutrition-sensitive solutions
- Cost-benefit assessments
- Institutions and systems building
- Partnerships and complementarities

However, not all of these priority areas may be feasible to examine in detail using impact evaluation methods, or during a programme timeframe.

# BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING AN IMPACT EVALUATION INTO PROGRAMMING?

- **Effective, efficient, equitable and empowering programming** that supports transformative change
- Timely production of **rigorous evidence** around key questions of country programming
- Increased support to strengthen the programme's **results-based monitoring** system
- Opportunity for **national capacity building** in impact evaluation
- Evidence to **improve outcomes** in future programming
- Valuable and compelling material for **current and future funding and implementing partners**

## HIGHER-LEVEL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Within the priority outcome areas, broad research questions for the IE include:

- How do multiple components of resilience programming, including participatory methods, interact to maximize impact on resilience? While some complementarities between programme components may be context specific, are there general lessons about how the sequencing of core components influences impacts?
- How do targeting decisions in terms of geographies, demographic types, vulnerability assessments or timing of interventions affect returns to programming? Are there alternative targeting strategies that could improve returns with a fixed intervention budget?
- How do existing measurement strategies need to be adapted to better capture the shared BMZ-WFP resilience framework for resilience on multiple dimensions?

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) and the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation unit (DIME) will work in partnership to deliver the impact evaluations. The following outlines the expected roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders:

**Country Offices:** Country offices will be the key implementing partners of the IE. IE plans will be developed in close consultation with country office staff, and field coordinators from DIME will work closely with country offices to supervise data collection and implementation of project components relative to the IE plans.

**OEV and DIME:** This IE programme is a joint initiative of OEV and DIME. Researchers from DIME and staff from OEV will lead impact evaluation activities, including design of IEs, supervision of IE implementation, data analysis, and dissemination.

**WFP Regional Bureau Dakar:** Regional bureau staff in capacities related to either monitoring, evaluation, or resilience, will be asked at all stages of IE development for input and will be included in all dissemination. Engagement and coordination with ongoing resilience programme activities in WFP country offices will be facilitated by WFP's Regional Bureau Dakar (RBD). RBD will also support OEV and DIME to ensure alignment of impact evaluations with other research, evaluation and monitoring activities in the region.

**BMZ:** BMZ will be part of the Steering Committee.

Additionally, BMZ will be invited to all regional dissemination events to share learning.

## TIMELINE

The planned impact evaluation activities align with programme implementation timeline, and span from 2019 to 2023.

The impact evaluation design workshop was conducted in Dakar in **September 2019**. In the workshop, WFP Country Offices, the Regional Bureau for West Africa, OEV and researchers from DIME jointly developed initial research designs for the impact evaluation.

Based on the feasibility and commitment to participate in the impact evaluation, **Mali, and Niger** were proposed as the first two countries to start the evaluation activities.

A scoping mission by OEV and DIME researchers is planned for **January 2020** to further develop the impact evaluation design and begin the in-country preparations for baseline data collection.

## OVERSIGHT

OEV has established a Steering Committee to oversee impact evaluation activities, consisting of BMZ, Regional Bureau Dakar, and WFP Country Offices of Mali and Niger. The Steering Committee will monitor progress and advise on broad strategic issues at each stage of the impact evaluations. The Committee will be supported by a Reference Group to draw on global expertise and capacities.

## CONTACT

For additional information, please reach out to **Hanna Paulose** ([hanna.paulose@wfp.org](mailto:hanna.paulose@wfp.org)) with CC to **Jonas Heirman** ([jonas.heirman@wfp.org](mailto:jonas.heirman@wfp.org)) and **Filippo Pompili** ([filippo.pompili@wfp.org](mailto:filippo.pompili@wfp.org)).