

Evaluation of Syrian Arab Republic WFP Interim Country Strategic Plan 2022-2023

Summary Terms of Reference

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's performance for country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing the next Country Strategic Plan and 2) to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders

Subject and focus of the evaluation

The Syria Interim CSP (ICSP 2022-2023) centers around four Strategic Outcomes focusing on crisis response, resilience building, nutrition and humanitarian common service provision, aiming at responding to the growing food and nutrition needs, the severe deterioration of livelihoods and resilience and the collapse of food systems. WFP continues its large-scale life-saving food assistance, while it refocuses its education, nutrition and livelihoods strengthening activities complemented by support for national social protection systems.

The overall budget of the Syria ICSP approved by the Executive Board in November 2021 was USD 2.87 billion for a total of 9.9 million beneficiaries.

The evaluation will assess WFP contributions to ICSP strategic outcomes, establishing plausible causal relations between the outputs of WFP activities, the implementation process, the operational environment and changes observed at the outcome level, including any unintended consequences.

It will also focus on adherence to humanitarian principles, gender equality, protection and accountability to affected populations.

The evaluation will adopt standard UNEG and OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability as well as connectedness, and coverage.

Objectives and stakeholders of the evaluation

WFP evaluations serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning.

The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a range of WFP's internal and external stakeholders and presents an opportunity for national, regional and corporate learning. The primary user of the evaluation

findings and recommendations will be the WFP Country Office and its stakeholders to inform the design of the new Country Strategic Plan.

The evaluation report is planned to be presented at the Executive Board session in November 2024.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation will address the following four key questions:

QUESTION 1: To what extent is the ICSP evidence based and strategically focused to address the needs of the most vulnerable?

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the ICSP was informed by existing evidence on hunger challenges, food security and nutrition issues to ensure its relevance at design stage; the extent to which the ICSP is aligned to national policies and plans as well as the SDGs; and the extent to which the ICSP is coherent and aligned with the wider UN and includes appropriate strategic partnerships based on the comparative advantage of WFP in the country. It will further assess the extent to which the ICSP design is internally coherent and based on a clear theory of change and the extent to which WFP's strategic positioning has remained relevant throughout the implementation of the ICSP in light of changing context, national capacities and needs.

QUESTION 2: What is the extent and quality of WFP's specific contribution to ICSP strategic outcomes and the UNSF in Syria?

The evaluation will assess the extent to which WFP activities and outputs contributed to the expected outcomes of the ICSP and to the UNSF and whether there were any positive or negative unintended outcomes. This will further include assessing the achievement of cross-cutting aims (humanitarian principles, protection, accountability to affected populations, gender, equity and inclusion, environment, climate change and other considerations). It will also assess the extent to which the achievements of the ICSP are likely to be sustainable; and whether the ICSP facilitated more strategic linkages between humanitarian, development and, where appropriate, peace work.

QUESTION 3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently in contributing to ICSP outputs and strategic outcomes? The evaluation will assess



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whether outputs were delivered within the intended timeframe; the appropriateness of coverage and targeting of interventions; cost-efficient delivery of assistance; and whether alternative, more cost-effective measures were considered.

QUESTION 4: What are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the ICSP?

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the ICSP led to: the mobilization of adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources; to monitoring and reporting systems that are useful to track and demonstrate progress and inform management decisions; to the development of appropriate partnerships and collaboration with other actors; and how these factors affect results. Finally, the evaluation will assess whether the CO had appropriate human resources capacity to deliver the ICSP and will seek to identify any other organizational and contextual factors influencing WFP performance and the strategic shift expected by the ICSP.

Scope, methodology and ethical considerations

The unit of analysis is the Interim Country Strategic Plan, approved by the WFP Executive Board in November 2021, as well as any subsequent approved budget revisions.

The evaluation covers all WFP activities (including cross-cutting results) from 2018 - early 2023, following on from the corporate emergency evaluation of the WFP regional response to the Syrian Crisis (2015- March 2018). Hence, this includes activities prior to the Interim Country Strategic Plan (2022-2023) to better assess the extent to which the strategic shifts envisaged with the introduction of the ICSP have taken place.

The evaluation will adopt a mixed methods approach using a mix of methods and a variety of primary and secondary sources, including desk review, key informant interviews, surveys, and focus groups discussions. Systematic triangulation across different sources and methods will be carried out to validate findings and avoid bias in the evaluative judgement.

The evaluation conforms to WFP and 2020 UNEG ethical guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

Roles and responsibilities

EVALUATION TEAM: The evaluation will be conducted by a team of independent consultants with a mix of relevant expertise related to the Syria CSPE (i.e. humanitarian and emergency assistance, supply chain, cash-based transfer, food security and nutrition, livelihoods, social safety net,

gender, protection and accountability to affected populations).

OEV EVALUATION MANAGER: The evaluation will be managed by Alexandra Chambel in the WFP Office of Evaluation. She will be the main interlocutor between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader, and WFP counterparts, to ensure a smooth implementation process and compliance with OEV quality standards for process and content. Second level quality assurance will be provided by Andrea Cook, the Director of Evaluation.

An **Internal Reference Group** of a cross-section of WFP stakeholders from relevant business areas at different WFP levels will be consulted throughout the evaluation process to review and provide feedback on evaluation products.

The Director of Evaluation will approve the final versions of all evaluation products.

STAKEHOLDERS: WFP stakeholders at country, regional and HQ level are expected to engage throughout the evaluation process to ensure a high degree of utility and transparency. External stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, government, donors, implementing partners and other UN agencies will be consulted during the evaluation process.

Communication

Preliminary findings will be shared with WFP stakeholders in the Country Office, the Regional Bureau and Headquarters during a debriefing session at the end of the data collection phase. A more in-depth debrief will be organized in July 2023 to inform the new CSP design process. A country stakeholder workshop will be held in November 2023 (TBC) to ensure a transparent evaluation process and promote ownership of the findings and preliminary recommendations by country stakeholders.

Evaluation findings will be actively disseminated and the final evaluation report will be publicly available on WFP's website.

Timing and key milestones

Inception Phase: September 2022 – March 2023

Data collection Phase: May – June 2023

Exit Mission Debriefing: June 2023

Preliminary Findings Data Collection Debriefing: early July 2023

Reporting Phase: July – Jan 2024

Stakeholder Workshop: Nov 2023 (tbc with CO)

Executive Board: November 2024