

Corporate Emergency Evaluation of WFP's Response in Myanmar 2017-2022



Summary Terms of Reference

Corporate emergency evaluations (CEEs) assess WFP's performance during operations of corporate scale up (previously called Level 3 emergencies) and operations of corporate attention (previously called Level 2 emergencies). Single-country CEEs may replace a mandatory Country Strategic Plan (CSP) evaluation if timed appropriately to feed into the preparation of the new (I)CSP for the country.

Subject and focus of the evaluation

Following the Rohingya crisis, WFP activated a level 3 corporate response in the Bangladesh-Myanmar border area in September 2017. Since March 2018 the WFP response in Myanmar has continuously remained classified as a level 2 emergency – now called an “operation of corporate attention” – dealing with a series of humanitarian crises across the country: recurring violence and internal displacement in several states, floods and landslides, the covid-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the military take-over in February 2021.

The first Country Strategic Plan for Myanmar was approved by the Executive Board in November 2017. Initially planned from 2018 to 2022, it was extended by one year until the end of 2023. The CSP was initially designed around three strategic outcomes (SOs). Under SO1, WFP provides unconditional food and cash transfers to crisis-affected people. SO2 focusses on improving food security of vulnerable people through institutional capacity strengthening (suspended since February 2021), school feeding and conditional food and cash transfers for asset creation and livelihood support. Under SO3, WFP provided institutional capacity strengthening (focussed on UN agencies and NGOs since February 2021) and malnutrition prevention and treatment for children under 5, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and girls and HIV and TB patients.

A fourth SO was introduced in 2020 to support the humanitarian response to the covid-19 pandemic with on-demand services to humanitarian and development partners. This was expanded with the provision of on-demand cash transfer services on behalf of UN and other partners after the military take-over.

The CSP's initial needs-based budget in 2018 was USD 311 million but was increased through several budget revisions, rising to USD 529 million in the most recent budget revision of 15 November 2021. As per this latest revision, the CSP is intended to reach a total of 5,049,200 beneficiaries in its initial five-year course.

The evaluation will focus on the WFP response to consecutive crises in Myanmar since late 2017. It will put special emphasis on the period from 2020 onwards, namely on WFP's response to the COVID-19 emergency and the crisis following the military take-over, as coverage of this period is of particular relevance for the preparation of the new ICSP.

Objectives and stakeholders of the evaluation

This evaluation will serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning. It will provide evaluation evidence and accountability for results to WFP stakeholders; and provide learning on WFP's performance in the Myanmar emergency context, specifically for developing WFP's future engagement in Myanmar and for broader learning on WFP complex emergency responses.

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 Interim Country Strategic Plan 2024-2025.

The evaluation report will be presented at the Executive Board session in December 2023.

Evaluation scope

The main strategic reference for the evaluation will be the CSP and its subsequent budget revisions. The evaluation will cover WFP strategy and activities in Myanmar (including cross cutting results) from September 2017, when the L3 emergency response was activated, until the end of the evaluation data collection phase in February 2023.

WFP's response to the COVID-19 emergency and the crisis following the military take-over will receive particular attention. The evaluation will also consider the WFP operations ongoing in Myanmar before September 2017 to assess WFP's preparedness and the transitions between the periods before and after the L3 emergency declaration and before and after the introduction of the CSP in January 2018.

The evaluation will adopt the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria for evaluating humanitarian action in complex emergencies, namely: appropriateness, coherence, effectiveness, coverage, connectedness, coordination and efficiency. The evaluation will pay particular attention to adherence to humanitarian principles, gender equality, protection, accountability to affected populations (AAP) and environmental sustainability.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation will focus on six key areas for which a set of tentative evaluation questions are proposed:

WFP’s strategic positioning vis-à-vis evolving needs: the evaluation will assess how credible the evidence base is used by WFP to inform its strategy and interventions; how well WFP adapted its assistance to the changing context and needs; to what extent the CSP and consecutive budget revisions remained internally coherent; and how well WFP targeted and tailored its assistance to address the needs of the most food insecure and vulnerable population groups.

WFP’s effectiveness in achieving CSP objectives: the CEE will evaluate to what extent WFP delivered planned activities, outputs and strategic outcomes; the coverage of assistance compared to needs and to the overall humanitarian response; WFP’s preparedness to respond to the consecutive crises in Myanmar; and the extent to which objectives on gender equality and empowerment of women were achieved.

Connectedness of WFP’s assistance: the evaluation will assess how well WFP assistance in Myanmar taps into local capacities and is community-driven; how WFP envisions transition and exit, tailored to local capacities and context; what strategic linkages WFP managed to establish along the triple nexus between humanitarian action, development, and contributions to peace; and how well WFP took into consideration environmental sustainability.

Partnerships and coordination: the CEE will evaluate to what extent WFP assistance is coherent and aligned with the wider UN and humanitarian sector; and how WFP has developed appropriate and effective partnerships.

Humanitarian principles, protection and AAP: the evaluation will assess how WFP adheres to humanitarian principles and “Do No Harm” in all phases of its assistance; how it manages the trade-offs between humanitarian principles; how well WFP manages protection challenges faced by WFP personnel and its target populations; and how WFP ensure accountability to affected populations.

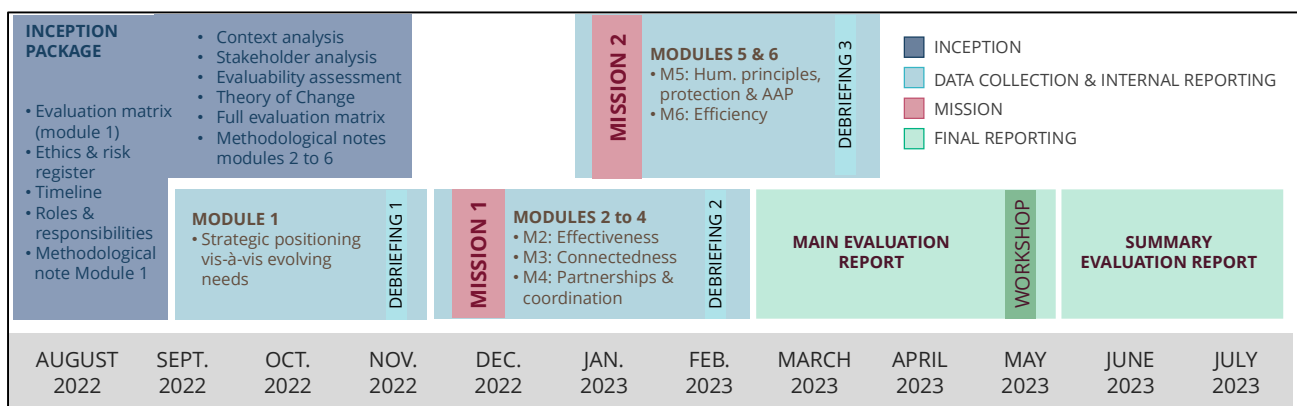
Efficiency: the CEE will evaluate to what level WFP has been able to mobilize adequate resources; to what extent WFP activities and outputs have been delivered within the intended timeframe; in how far WFP’s activities have been cost-efficient; how adequate corporate support was during the consecutive crises; and how well WFP manages operational risks.

Evaluation approach, methodology and ethical considerations

The evaluation will follow a modular approach to ensure that evidence needed by the Country Office for the development of the new ICSP, is produced on time. Inception, data collection and reporting phases will partially overlap, as some inception components will be developed, amended and adjusted during data collection, and internal reports will already be produced for the time-sensitive modules (1 to 4) while data collection may still be ongoing for the other modules (5 and 6). The evaluation modules will be delivered in three sets (module 1, modules 2-4, and modules 5-6), to allow for synergies in data collection and reduce the burden on the CO and IRG.

The evaluation will use a mixed methods approach relying on 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 will conform to WFP and 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. The evaluation will also take care not to unbalance the understanding between WFP and the de facto authorities and respect the UNCT programmatic engagement guidelines.



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 WFP operations in Myanmar including familiarity with the country context, humanitarian assistance in conflict and peri-urban settings, food and nutrition security, school-based programmes, nutrition-specific interventions and smallholder farmer support.

OEV EVALUATION MANAGEMENT: The evaluation will be managed by Michael Carbon, Senior Evaluation Officer, in the WFP Office of Evaluation. He 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, Director of Evaluation, who will also approve the final versions of all evaluation products.

INTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP (IRG): 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.

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, donors, implementing partners and other UN agencies will be consulted during the evaluation process.

Communication

For each module, the team will produce an internal working paper. For each set of modules, the evaluation team will organize a debriefing – three in total – for the IRG, to present and discuss their main findings, conclusions and areas for consideration.

The main evaluation report will bring together the six modules of the evaluation in a single, coherent document. Internal working papers and the draft main report will be shared with the IRG for review and comments.

A stakeholder workshop will be organized to share results of the evaluation with a wider audience, including key partners of WFP in Myanmar 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 the WFP website.

Timing and key milestones

Inception Phase: August – November 2022

Data collection: September 2022 – February 2023

Remote Debriefings:

Module 1: November 2022

Modules 2-4: February 2023

Modules 5-6: March 2022

Evaluation Report: May 2023

Stakeholder Workshop: May 2023

Executive Board: November 2023