

Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Summary Terms of Reference



Strategic evaluations focus on systemic issues of corporate relevance as defined in strategic documents, policies, and directives. The purpose of this evaluation is to meet both accountability and learning needs with a strong emphasis on learning.

Subject and focus of the evaluation

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), as defined by IASC/WFP, involves humanitarian workers committing exploitation and abuse against beneficiaries and affected communities. It includes “any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.”

Two thirds of the 100 million people assisted by the World Food Programme (WFP) live in conflict-affected and insecure settings, which are often affected by gender inequalities, power imbalances, and general conditions which heighten the risk of abuse and exploitation, including of sexual nature.

Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse is a “moral imperative” for WFP, and as such, it is mainstreamed into WFP policy and guidance, and throughout the organization and its operations, and incorporated into WFP’s legal framework and is explicitly proscribed in WFP’s Code of Conduct. WFP’s approach to PSEA is rooted in the United Nations Secretary General Bulletin on PSEA, which includes six core principles and defines SEA as ‘acts of gross misconduct’, constituting grounds for termination of employment. Framed by the first Executive Director Circular on Special Measures for Protection from SEA (2003), WFP has a zero-tolerance policy against SEA which applies to all WFP employees and all WFP partners.

In the 2022-2025 strategic plan, PSEA is established as an explicit priority. WFP recognizes sexual exploitation and abuse as “a serious form of gender-based violence committed by WFP employees or partners against those we serve.” The Strategic Plan commits WFP to integrating PSEA measures into WFP operations and programming to safeguard beneficiaries and ensure that they can safely access WFP’s programmes without being subject to sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by WFP employees or partners.

Within this context, the strategic evaluation will examine WFP’s policies and practices, structures, and processes, and the enabling and hindering factors surrounding its actions regarding PSEA.

Objectives and users of the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are the following:

- i) assess the evolving capacity of WFP to meet changing needs in responding to and meeting system-wide commitments to PSEA.
- ii) assess how, why and under which conditions, WFP’s approach to PSEA has been effective and where there are opportunities to bolster both prevention and response to PSEA at all levels, and through inter-agency efforts.

The primary users of the evaluation WFP’s Executive Board, Senior Management and various HQ divisions including the Ethics Office, Workplace Culture Department, the Programme and Policy Development Department, the Office of the Inspector General, and Regional Bureaux and Country Offices. A wide range of WFP partner organizations are also key users, including donors, other UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and civil-society organizations.

Evaluation questions

The evaluation will address the following five key questions, which will be expanded upon during inception:

- QUESTION 1:** How relevant and effective are WFP’s strategy and mechanisms for PSEA?
- QUESTION 2:** To what extent does WFP provide a coherent, coordinated approach to PSEA?
- QUESTION 3:** How have WFP policies, procedures, and mechanisms affected levels of awareness, willingness to report, and perceptions for those people involved in WFP programming?
- QUESTION 4:** To what extent has WFP’s approach established an enabling environment within the organisation for PSEA?

Scope, methodology and ethical considerations

The scope of the evaluation is global in nature and will include an examination of the following interrelated components:

- WFP’s policy and regulatory framework;
- Organizational structures (HQ, regional, and country level)
- Training and capacity building for staff
- Community feedback mechanisms
- Victim support services
- Coordination and joint initiatives through inter-agency partnerships
- Capacity building for Implementing Partners
- Communications and awareness raising

The evaluation will assess results achieved from March 2017 (launch of Secretary General strategy for PSEA) to the end of data collection in 2023.

The scope of the evaluation will be further elaborated during the inception phase and will be informed by extensive consultation and reflection as part of the overall evaluation design to be developed by the evaluation team.

The evaluation will adopt a mixed approach combining qualitative and quantitative data and employing multiple methods of data collection including:

- benchmarking of PSEA policies, practice, strategies, and guidance
- synthesis of evaluations, audits and lessons learned
- analysis of WFP administrative data and reporting
- survey of key WFP personnel
- key-informant interviews
- localized discussion groups
- innovative methods for seeking the views of beneficiaries and affected populations.

Systematic data triangulation across different sources and methods will be carried out to validate findings and minimize bias in the evaluative judgement.

While having a strategic, global outlook, the evaluation will have a clear focus at country level. It is anticipated that there will be visits to Regional Bureaux and Country Offices to understand the WFPs efforts across a range of contexts and organizational structures for PSEA.

The evaluation will conform 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 proven capacity to conduct complex global evaluations and strong thematic expertise in protection, accountability to affected populations, gender mainstreaming and gender-based violence. They will have extensive experience conducting evaluations of social development and humanitarian programming.

OEV EVALUATION MANAGER: The evaluation will be managed by Judith Friedman, Senior Evaluation Officer 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 the Director of Evaluation.

An **Internal Reference Group** of a cross-section of WFP stakeholders from relevant units and Divisions at different WFP levels will be consulted throughout the process to review and provide feedback on evaluation products. The group will include representatives from across WFP.

An **External Advisory Group** will review and comment on evaluation deliverables from a subject-matter perspective. The Group includes the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, a representative from the IASC, the UN Secretary General Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, and the former SEA focal point from UNHCR. The overall purpose of the group is to contribute to the credibility and utility of the evaluation.

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

STAKEHOLDERS: The Executive Board of WFP is the primary audience of this evaluation. External stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, international initiatives and consortiums, research and academic institutions, NGOs, donors and other UN agencies will be consulted during the evaluation process.

Communication

The emphasis on learning will require ongoing communication with stakeholders throughout the evaluation. Preliminary findings will be shared with WFP stakeholders in Headquarters, the Regional Bureaux and the Country Offices, during a debriefing session at the end of the data collection phase.

A stakeholder workshop will be held to ensure a transparent evaluation process and promote understanding and ownership of the findings and preliminary recommendations.

A Summary Evaluation Report (SER) will be presented to the Executive Board.

Findings will be actively disseminated, and the final evaluation report will be publicly available WFP's website.

Timing and key milestones

Inception Phase: Jan-June 2023

Data collection: July-Oct 2023

Reporting: Oct 2023-Mar 2024

Stakeholder Workshop: Jan 2024

Executive Board: June 2024