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# **Evaluation of Iran WFP Interim Country Strategic Plans (2018-2023 and 2023-2025)**

Terms of reference

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# 1. Introduction

1. These terms of reference (ToR) were prepared by the WFP Office of Evaluation based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders.
2. The purpose of these terms of reference is to provide key information to stakeholders about the evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and to specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation.
3. The ToR are structured as follows: following this section, section 2 presents the rationale, objectives, stakeholders and main users of the evaluation; section 3 presents the context and the WFP portfolio; section 4 defines the evaluation scope, criteria and questions; section 5 identifies the evaluation the methodological approach and ethical consideration; and section 6 indicates how the evaluation will be organized.

## 2. Reasons for the evaluation

### 2.1. RATIONALE

4. Country strategic plan evaluations (CSPEs) are mandatory and conducted in line with the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans (2016) and the Evaluation Policy (2022). They provide an opportunity for the country office (CO) to benefit from an independent assessment of its programme of work; and generate evidence to help inform the design of the new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) or interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP), scheduled for Executive Board approval in November 2025.

### 2.2. OBJECTIVES

5. Evaluations serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning. As such, this evaluation will: 1) provide evaluation evidence and learning on WFP performance for country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing the future engagement of WFP in the Islamic Republic of Iran; and 2) provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.

### 2.3. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

6. The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a broad range of internal and external WFP stakeholders. The key stakeholders of a CSPE are the WFP country office, regional bureau in Cairo and headquarters technical divisions. Other key stakeholders include the Executive Board (EB), the beneficiaries, the Islamic Republic of Iran, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United Nations country team and the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) for synthesis and feeding into other evaluations.
7. The CSPE will seek to engage with beneficiaries and affected populations, including refugees in settlements. Particular attention will be paid to seeking the perspectives of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, families with school-aged children, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.
8. The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its ministries and local governments are key stakeholders in this evaluation and have interests in WFP programme effectiveness, coherence, results, and sustainability. WFP partner ministries include the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior, and the National Organization for Migration (NOM).
9. Amongst non-governmental stakeholders, this evaluation will seek to engage organisations, which have been involved in the refugee response in Iran, including the Iranian Red Crescent Society and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

10. Within the UN system, WFP's key partner remains UNHCR, with which WFP has developed a joint plan of action for the coming three years.
11. The evaluation will also seek the views of, and engage with, the main donors of the ICSP, such as Germany, the European Commission, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

## 3. Context and subject of the evaluation

### 3.1 CONTEXT

12. The Islamic Republic of Iran – hereafter referred to as Iran - is a middle-income country with high human development (0.774) as per the Human Development Index<sup>1</sup> and a low level of hunger (score 6.5) as per the Global Hunger Index<sup>2</sup>. Its economy is one of the largest in the Middle East and North Africa and relies heavily on oil revenues. However, ongoing trade restrictions and external barriers as indicated in the UN Sustainable Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027<sup>3</sup>, fluctuating oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to an economic downturn in the years covered by this evaluation, with inflation and job losses having an impact on the population, and particularly on lower-income households and women. More recently, the economy has returned to growth (2.7 percent in 2022), driven by Iran's non-oil industries and services sector<sup>4</sup>.
13. Approximately 762,000 documented refugees live in Iran<sup>5</sup>, of whom 750,000 are Afghans and 12,000 are Iraqis, making Iran one of the world's largest refugee hosting countries<sup>6</sup>. In addition, UNHCR estimates that 2.6 million undocumented Afghan nationals currently reside in Iran<sup>7</sup>. While most refugees live side-by-side with the Iranian host community, a small share of 31,000 people live in one of 20 refugee settlements and receive WFP assistance.
14. The 2022 WFP-UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) indicated that refugees in settlements rely heavily on monthly food assistance provided by WFP and that assistance should be increased to allow refugees cope with rising prices<sup>8</sup>. The volatile economic situation and high inflation has kept on exerting pressure on their purchasing power to afford basic goods and services, with the year-on-year inflation rate rising from 9.5 percent in 2018 to 49 percent in 2022<sup>9</sup>. The return to power of the Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan has led to an influx of approximately 500,000 additional refugees and the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to drive Afghans to migrate. Iran remains one of the largest receiving countries due to its proximity, the common language family, and the availability of basic services for refugees<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP. 2022. [Human Development Report 2021/2022](#).

<sup>2</sup> Global Hunger Index: [Iran](#).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations I.R. Iran. ([Iran.un.org](#)).

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. 2023. [Iran Economic Monitor, Spring/Summer 2023](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/irn>

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR Operational Data Portal [Iran](#)

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR [Annual Results Report, 2022](#).

<sup>8</sup> WFP UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission 2022.

<sup>9</sup> [IMF average consumer prices](#), Annual percent change.

<sup>10</sup> WFP UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission 2022.

15. Persistent cultural barriers to women's participation in livelihood activities outside settlements represent an impediment to the economic participation of women refugees. For this reason, most livelihood initiatives designed to support refugees are targeting women.<sup>11 12</sup>
16. Iran has achieved remarkable progress on SDG 2, as shown by a very low prevalence of undernourishment (6.1 percent), stunting (4.7 percent) and wasting (4.3 percent) in 2022<sup>13</sup>. Given these successes, food security efforts focus on the provision of food assistance to refugees. However, Iran is a disaster-prone country, with earthquakes and increasingly frequent climate-related hazards, such as the 2019 floods<sup>14</sup>. The scale of recent disasters indicates the continued need for a strong emergency preparedness and response capacity in the country. Hence disaster risk reduction and management has been identified as a major area for investment as reflected under pillar 4 of the current UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2023-2027)<sup>15</sup> and the 2019 National Disaster Management Law.

### 3.2 THE SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION.

17. WFP has been present in the Islamic Republic of Iran since 1987. In recent years, it has been operating in the country within the framework of Interim Country Strategic Plans (ICSP). These are:
  - [Islamic Republic of Iran interim country strategic plan \(2018-2023\)](#)
  - [Islamic Republic of Iran interim country strategic plan \(2023-2025\)](#)
18. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the two ICSPs together with the budget revisions (BR) and the major developments, which occurred in the country. Figure 2 provides an overview of the strategic outcomes, activities and modalities of the two plans.
19. Both ICSPs are very similar in their design. ICSPs are usually only approved for a limited period, pending the development of a proper CSP. Due to WFP's limited mandate in Iran, the development of a CSP has not been agreed on. With the new WFP strategic plan and corporate results framework (2022-2026) approved, the Iran CO developed a new ICSP to align its operations.
20. The first ICSP was approved by WFP's Executive Board in November 2017. It was originally composed of one Strategic Outcome - focused on crisis response - and three activities with a needs-based plan (NBP) of USD 18.1 million. Throughout the ICSP, WFP intended to support food security and the livelihoods of the most vulnerable refugees in settlements. Special attention has been given to supporting livelihood opportunities for women. Between 2018 and 2022, the ICSP was revised eight times. The BRs contributed to an increase the number of SOs and activities; the BRs extended the duration of the ICSP (i.e., from December 2020 to March 2023).
21. The current ICSP was approved by WFP's Executive Board in February 2023. It builds on WFP's long-standing experience in successfully assisting refugees and other crisis-affected populations in Iran. It is composed of two Strategic Outcomes – both focused on crisis response – and four activities. Moreover, the new ICSP embeds emergency preparedness and response across all activities, with carefully designed contingencies and corresponding budget allocations. This will enable WFP to respond rapidly to new arrivals of refugees, sudden-onset disasters, or partner requirements for services. Similarly, a new key element is the expansion of WFP's school feeding programme to urban areas with the inclusion of schools attended by refugee and host community children.
22. This evaluation will cover the operational years of WFP under both ICSPs, from 2018 until mid-2024. The previous ICSP did not undergo a centralized evaluation.

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<sup>11</sup> WFP UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission 2019.

<sup>12</sup> WFP. 2023. Iran [Annual Country Report 2022](#): Progress towards gender equality.

<sup>13</sup> FAOSTAT [Iran](#), consulted on 28/09/2023.

<sup>14</sup> [At least 62 people killed in Iran floods as US accused of blocking aid](#). The Guardian, 4 April 2019.

<sup>15</sup> [UNSDCF Iran \(2023-2027\)](#)

### **Financial overview**

23. As mentioned, the ICSP Iran (2018-2023) was originally approved with a NBP of USD 18.1 million. Following the approval of eight budget revisions, the original NBP doubled, reaching USD 36.3 million. Most of the resources were allocated to Strategic Outcome 1, particularly under activities 1 and 2.
24. The budget of the new ICSP (2023-2025) is similar the previous programming cycle with a NBP of USD 37 million. Additional financial details of both ICSPs are reported in Table 1 and 2 below.

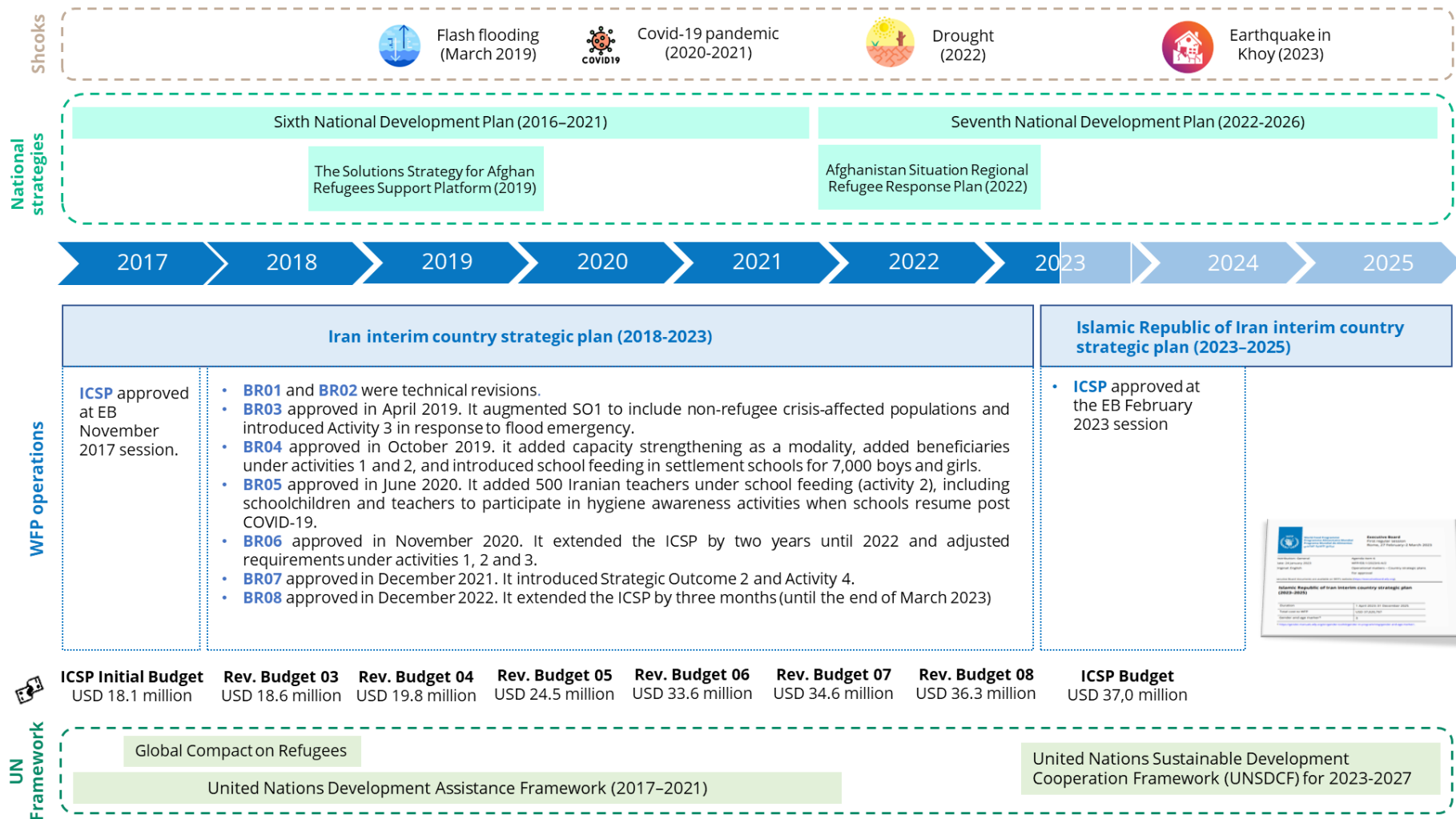
### **Staffing and institutional arrangements**

25. The WFP Country Office Iran is in Tehran. There are no operating sub-offices and field offices in the country. As of September 2023, the CO was employing 21 staff (57 percent female, 43 percent male).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> WFP. 2023. [WFP Dashboard -Iran](#), consulted on 28/09/2023.

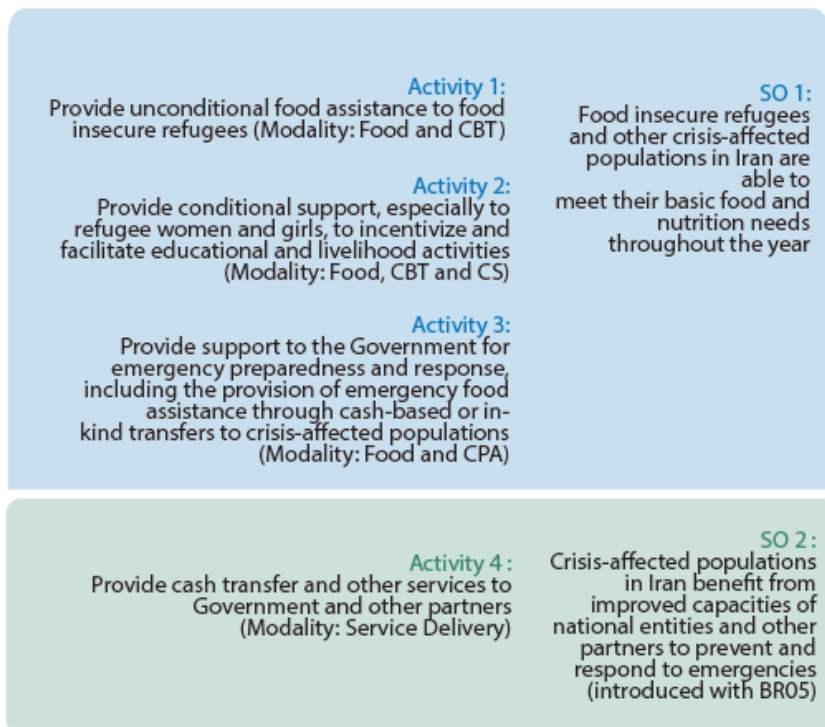
Figure 1: Evolution of Iran ICSPs and changes in the external environment, 2017-2023



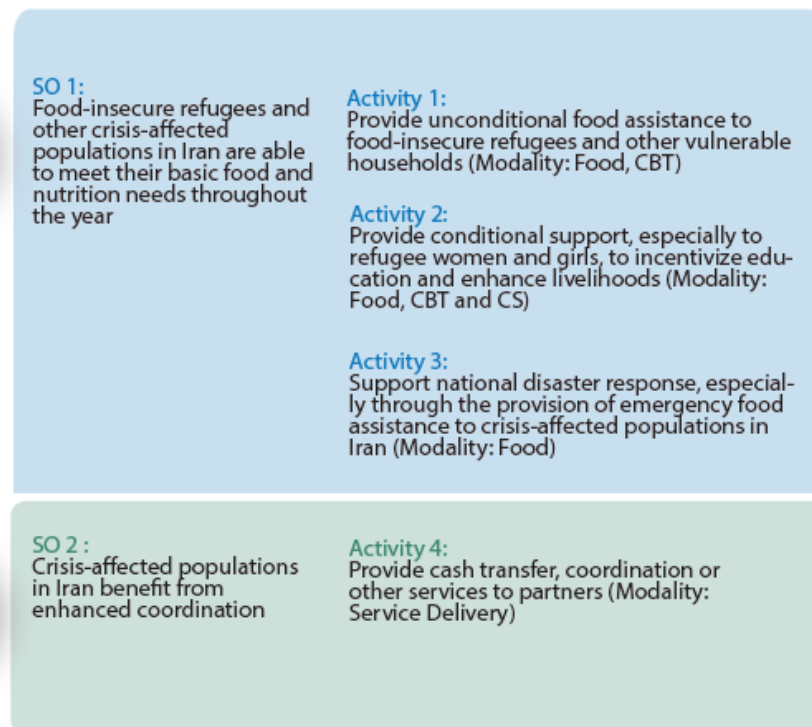
Source: OEI

Figure 2: Iran ICSP 2018-2025, overview of strategic outcomes and activities

Iran interim country strategic plan (2018-2023)



Islamic Republic of Iran interim country strategic plan (2023–2025)



Source: SPA Plus.



**Table 1: ICSP Iran (2018-2023) cumulative financial overview**

Focus Area	Strategic Outcome	Activity	Original NBP	NBP as BR08	Allocated Resources	Resourcing level (%)	Expenditures	Expenditures level (%)
Crisis Response	Strategic Outcome 1	Activity 1	\$ 14,759,208	\$ 20,046,717	\$ 19,747,719.59	99%	\$ 19,747,719.59	100%
		Activity 2	\$ 690,540	\$ 5,217,521	\$ 2,458,118.40	47%	\$ 2,458,118.40	100%
		Activity 3		\$ 4,708,548	\$ 5,816,918.54	124%	\$ 5,816,918.54	100%
	Strategic Outcome 2	Activity 4		\$ 618,000	\$ 601,211.28	97%	\$ 601,211.28	100%
<b>Total Direct Operational Costs</b>			<b>\$ 15,449,749</b>	<b>\$ 30,590,785</b>	<b>\$ 28,623,968</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>\$ 28,623,968</b>	<b>100%</b>
	Direct Support Costs (DSC)		\$ 1,468,144	\$ 3,577,505	\$ 2,389,839	67%	\$ 2,389,839.19	100%
	Indirect Support Costs (ISC)		\$ 1,184,253	\$ 2,172,484	\$ 1,875,187	86%		
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>\$ 18,102,145</b>	<b>\$ 36,340,774</b>	<b>\$ 32,888,994</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>\$ 31,013,807.00</b>	<b>94%</b>

Source: EV\_CPB Resources Overview, data extracted on 19/09/2023.

**Table 2: ICSP Iran 2023-2025 cumulative financial overview**

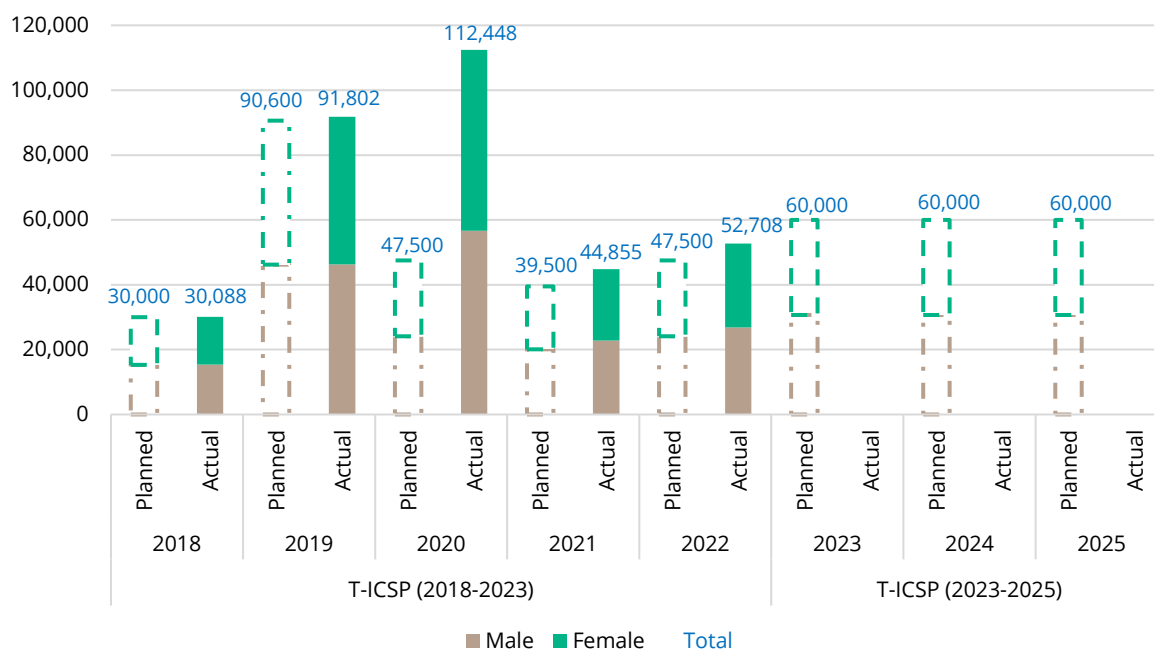
Focus Area	Strategic Outcome	Activity	Needs Based Plan	Allocated Resources	Resourcing level (%)	Expenditures	Expenditures level (%)
Crisis Response	Strategic Outcome 1	Activity 1	\$ 27,715,681.74	\$ 3,296,560.03	12%	\$ 1,993,548.29	60%
		Activity 2	\$ 3,120,111.53	\$ 378,845.76	12%	\$ 13,477.74	4%
		Activity 3	\$ 192,954.23	\$ 0	0%	\$ 0	0%
	Strategic Outcome 2	Activity 4	\$ 1,515,000.00	\$ 0	0%	\$ 0	0%
<b>Total Direct Operational Costs</b>			<b>\$ 32,543,747.50</b>	<b>\$ 3,675,405.79</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>\$ 2,007,026.03</b>	<b>55%</b>
	Direct Support Costs (DSC)		\$ 2,316,576.16	\$ 490,742.08	21%	\$ 218,720.19	45%
	Indirect Support Costs (ISC)		\$ 2,160,473.06	\$ 138,954.12	6%	\$ 0	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>\$ 37,020,796.72</b>	<b>\$ 4,305,101.99</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>\$ 2,225,746.22</b>	<b>52%</b>

Source: EV\_CPB Resources Overview, data extracted on 19/09/2023.

## Beneficiaries

26. With respect to beneficiaries (Figure 3), in 2022 WFP addressed the basic food and nutrition needs of 32,000 food-insecure refugees living in 20 settlements<sup>17</sup> and 20,000 crisis-affected Iranians. In total it assisted 52,708 beneficiaries (51 percent male, 49 percent female). The new ICSP (2023-2025) ensured continuation of existing interventions, emphasizing an inclusive approach that puts the most vulnerable, including refugee girls, women and persons with disabilities at the centre of programming. By the end of the ICSP and across the years, WFP is planning to have assisted up to 70,300 unique direct beneficiaries (51 percent male, 49 percent female).<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 3: ICSP Iran (2018-2023) and ICSP Iran (2023-2025) planned and actual beneficiaries**



Note: data for ICSP Iran 2023-2025 not available. Actual values for 2023 still not available.

Source: COMET CM-R001b Iran, extracted on 19/09/2023.

## Previous evaluations, reviews and audits

27. The WFP Country Office has never conducted a decentralized evaluation. The country was covered only by a Synthesis of Operations Evaluations for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Region, covering the period 2013-2017.<sup>19</sup> A centralised Operations Evaluation was conducted in 2014.<sup>20</sup> More information is available in Annex 2.

28. During the ICSP (2018-2023), the Iran CO conducted a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the ICSP, covering the period between January 2018 and September 2021. An audit has been conducted by the Office of Internal Audit in Iran in 2022.<sup>21</sup> It focused on beneficiary management, cash-based transfers, supply chain, monitoring, and finance, covering the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 July 2021. Based on the results, the Office of Internal Audit has come to an overall conclusion of effective / satisfactory.

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR Iran: [Refugee settlements](#) as of 9 Dec 2020

<sup>18</sup> WFP. 2023. [Islamic Republic of Iran interim country strategic plan \(2023-2025\)](#). (WFP/EB.1/2023/6-A/2).

<sup>19</sup> WFP. 2017. [Operation Evaluations Series, Regional Synthesis 2013-2017: Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Region](#) (OEV/2017/008).

<sup>20</sup> WFP. 2015. [OPERATION EVALUATION Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200310 \(2013-2015\) Food assistance and education incentive for Afghan and Iraqi refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran Mid-term Evaluation Report](#). OEV/2014/18.

<sup>21</sup> WFP. 2022. [Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Iran](#). Office of the Inspector General. Internal Audit Report AR/22/03.

## 4. Evaluation scope, criteria and questions

29. The unit of analysis of this evaluation is the two interim country strategic plans, understood as the set of strategic outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were included in the ICSP documents approved by WFP Executive Board (EB), as well as any subsequent budget revisions.
30. The evaluation will focus on assessing progress towards the ICSPs expected outcomes and cross cutting results, including any unintended consequences, positive or negative. In so doing, the evaluation will also analyse the WFP partnership strategy, including WFP strategic positioning in complex, dynamic contexts, particularly as relates to relations with national governments and the international community.
31. The evaluation scope will include all the expected outcomes of the current and previous ICSPs.
32. As this will be the first evaluation covering the entire portfolio of WFP Iran, the temporal scope of the evaluation will cover the previous and current ICSPs until mid-2024. This will allow for analysis of trends over a six-year period.
33. The evaluation will address four main questions common to all WFP CSP Evaluations.<sup>22</sup> Evaluation sub-questions will be validated and refined during the inception phase, as relevant and appropriate to the country strategic plan and country context, including as they relate to assessing the response to any unforeseen crisis.

### EQ1 – To what extent and in what ways is the ICSP evidence-based and strategically focused to address the needs of food insecure refugees and other crisis affected populations covered by WFP’s mandate in Iran?

1.1	To what extent were the design of the ICSP and its consecutive budget revisions informed by credible evidence?
1.2	To what extent is the CSP design internally coherent and based on a clear theory of change with realistic assumptions?
1.3	To what extent and in what ways did the ICSP adapt and respond to evolving needs of food insecure refugees and other crisis affected populations to ensure continued relevance during implementation?

### EQ2 – What difference did the ICSP make to food security and nutrition of refugees and other crisis affected populations covered by WFP’s mandate in the country?

<sup>22</sup> EQ1 Is focused on program design and its further adaptations to ensure internal programme coherence and integration, alignment, relevance, and strategic positioning.

EQ2 Is focused on the results: what has changed or not at the outcome level and what are WFP contributions.

EQ3 and EQ4 are about inputs (human and financial resources) and WFP processes, mechanisms and systems (the extent to which WFP is well equipped to deliver effectively and efficiently); and these elements should not be discussed under EQ 1 or 2.

2.1	To what extent did WFP achieve its coverage and outcome targets and in what ways did it contribute its to the expected outcomes of the ICSP? Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative?
2.2	To what extent did WFP contribute to achievement of cross-cutting aims (protection and community engagement and accountability to affected populations; GEEW; disability inclusion and other issues as relevant) and adhere to humanitarian principles?
2.3	To what extent is WFP's assistance under the ICSP geared to contribute to developing a long-term perspective for the assisted refugees, including to find sustainable livelihoods?

### EQ3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently?

3.1	To what extent were the ICSP outputs delivered and related budget spent within the intended timeframe?
3.2	To what extent and in what ways did the CO reprioritize its interventions to optimize limited resources and ensure continued relevance and effectiveness in view of eventual funding gaps?
3.3	To what extent was the ICSP delivered in a cost-efficient manner. In particular, did the introduction of cash-based modalities lead to expected efficiency or effectiveness gains?

### EQ4: What are the critical factors, internal and external to WFP, explaining performance and results?

4.1	To what extent and in what ways has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, timely, predictable, and flexible resources to finance the ICSP?
4.2	How well and in what ways did WFP develop and leverage strategic and operational partnerships, particularly with UNHCR, the Interior Ministry's Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigrant Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to maximize efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of WFP's supported intervention results?
4.3	<p>What role have the following factors played:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme integration at design stage and during implementation</li> <li>- Adequacy of Human resources</li> <li>- Innovation in the ICSP design and implementation leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness.</li> <li>- Adequate availability and use of monitoring data to track progress and inform decision making.</li> <li>- Other internal or external factors</li> </ul>

34. The evaluation will adopt standard UNEG and OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Moreover, it will give attention to assessing adherence to humanitarian principles, protection issues, Accountability to Affected Population, environmental impact of WFP activities, and to the extent feasible, differential effects on men, women, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, and other relevant socio-economic groups.

35. During the inception phase, the evaluation team in consultation with the Office of Evaluation and the Country Office will identify a limited number of key themes of interest, related to the main thrust of WFP activities, challenges or good practices in the country. These themes could also be related to the key assumptions underpinning the logic of intervention of the country strategic plan; or may be informed by the recommendations of previous evaluations. The themes of special interests identified should be described in the inception report and translated into specific lines of inquiry under the relevant evaluation questions and sub-questions.
36. At this ToR stage, the following possible themes have been tentatively identified:
- Community engagement and accountability to affected populations.
  - Partnership arrangements and the WFP mandate.

## 5. Methodological approach and ethical considerations

### 5.1. EVALUATION APPROACH

37. The 2030 Agenda conveys the global commitment to end poverty, hunger, and inequality, emphasizing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. This calls for a systemic approach to development policies and programme design and implementation, as well as for a systemic perspective in analysing development change. WFP assumed the conceptual perspective of the 2030 Agenda as the overarching framework of its Strategic Plan (2022-2025), with a focus on supporting countries to end hunger (SDG 2).
38. The achievement of WFP strategic outcomes is the result of the interaction among multiple variables. In the context of the SDGs, the attribution of net outcomes to any specific organization, including WFP, may be extremely challenging or sometimes impossible. While attribution of results would not be appropriate at the outcome level, it should be pursued at the output and activity level, where WFP is meant to be in control of its own capacity to deliver.
39. The CSPE will use a **theory-based approach** to assess WFP's contribution to outcomes. This will entail the reconstruction of a theory of change (ToC) prior to the inception mission based on desk review, which will be discussed, adjusted and amended in discussions with the country office. The reconstructed ToC will show the intervention logic, i.e. the intended causal pathways from WFP activities to outputs to strategic outcomes, as well as the internal and external assumptions made for the intended change to take place along these pathways.
40. The CSPE will adopt a **mixed methods approach**, whereby data collection and analysis are informed by a feedback loop combining a deductive approach, which starts from predefined analytical categories, with an inductive approach that leaves space for lines of inquiry that had not been identified at the inception stage, including eventually the analysis of unintended outcomes, positive or negative.
41. Data will be collected through a mix of primary and secondary sources with different techniques including desk review, semi-structured or open-ended interviews, focus groups and direct observation as per below table. Systematic data triangulation across different sources and methods should be carried out to validate findings and avoid bias in evaluative judgement.

<b>Desk review of relevant documentation</b>	<p><b>WFP</b> MoUs, strategies, plans, monitoring data, risk register, annual reports, donor reports, evaluations, post distribution monitoring reports, beneficiary feedback databases.</p> <p><b>UN system and government</b> policies, strategies, and reports, particularly on the refugee policy; country strategies and reports from strategic partners, donors and cooperating partners.</p> <p><b>Other relevant documentation</b> as identified during the inception phase.</p>
<b>Semi-structured interviews</b>	<p><b>with key informants</b>, both remote and in-person where possible, including WFP CO management and relevant staff including in the field offices; relevant WFP HQ and RBC staff; Government partners, cooperating partners, UN, NGO etc.</p>
<b>Interviews, focus group, phone surveys, direct field observation</b>	<p>different options should be explored to ensure that the evaluation seeks the <b>perspectives from affected populations</b> (from both assisted members and non-assisted members of the community if possible), and marginalized population groups. This will include a combination of in-person interviews, focus group discussions as well as phone surveys and direct field observation, to the extent possible.</p>

42. Data analysis methods for this evaluation will include the following:

- **Contribution analysis:** to assess the extent to which WFP supported interventions contributed to (or is likely to) expected outputs and outcomes. The evaluation will gather evidence to confirm the validity of the theory of change in the various circumstances, in which the refugees are living, and to identify any logical and/or information gaps that it contained; examine whether and what types of alternative explanations/reasons exist for noted changes; test assumptions, examine influencing factors, and identify alternative assumptions for each pathway of change.
- **Content analysis:** to analyse documents, interviews, group discussions and focus groups notes and qualitative data from the survey to identify emerging common trends, themes and patterns for each key evaluation question. Content analysis can be used to highlight diverging views and opposing trends. The emerging issues and trends provide the basis for preliminary observations and evaluation findings.
- **Quantitative analysis** and descriptive statistics: to interpret quantitative data collected by WFP Iran for reporting and monitoring purposes over the course of the ICSPs. Available data will have to be analysed more thoroughly, and findings presented in a different manner from the country office's usual approach to reporting monitoring findings (e.g. longitudinal analysis, cross-tabulations, etc.)

43. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be expected to develop a detailed methodological design, including a detailed [evaluation matrix](#), in line with the approach proposed in these terms of reference. The design will be presented in the inception report and informed by a thorough evaluability assessment. The latter should be based on desk review of key programming, monitoring and reporting documents and on some scoping interviews with the programme managers. Evaluation firms are encouraged to propose realistic, innovative data collection and analysis methods in their proposal.

44. The methodology should aim at data disaggregation by sex, age, disability status, nationality (e.g. Iraqi and Afghan), or other characteristics as relevant to, and feasible. Expectations for the granularity of the analysis will be determined during the inception phase. Moreover, the selection of informants and site visits should ensure to the extent possible that all voices are heard. In this connection, it will be very important at the inception stage to conduct a stakeholders' mapping and analysis that should be as detailed and comprehensive as possible.

45. The evaluation should be designed and conducted in a gender and inclusion-responsive manner, ensuring that diverse voices are included and heard throughout the evaluation process, and focusing on addressing and analysing the differential effects on men, women, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, and other relevant socio-economic groups.<sup>23</sup>

## 5.2. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS ON EVALUABILITY AND METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

**Evaluability** is the extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in an independent, credible, and useful fashion. Beyond availability and access to reliable information on WFP performance, it necessitates that there is: (a) reliable information on the intervention context and the situation of targeted population groups before and during its implementation; (b) a clear statement of intended outcomes, i.e. the desired changes that should be observable once implementation is under way or completed; (c) a set of clearly defined and appropriate indicators with which to measure changes; and (d) a defined timeframe by which outputs should be delivered and outcomes should be occurring. It also requires the evaluation to be relevant and timely to feed into important strategic and/or operational decisions. Independence is required to ensure an unbiased and impartial assessment of performance and challenges met, which is needed for accountability but also to base lessons learned as much as possible on what was really achieved (or not achieved).

46. This CSPE will be able to build on several sources of secondary evidence. Annex 2 provides a list of evaluations and audits covering the evaluation period and beyond. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be expected to perform an in-depth evaluability assessment and critically assess data availability, quality and gaps to inform its choice of evaluation methods. This will include an analysis of the results framework and related indicators to validate the pre-assessment made by the Office of Evaluation.
47. At this stage the following evaluability challenges have been identified:
- Necessity for extensive clearance processes before fieldwork can take place, which may have an impact on the timeline of this evaluation.
  - The time frame covered by the evaluation (the evaluation is conducted during the penultimate year of the ICSP which has implications for the completeness of results reporting and attainment of expected outcomes).
  - Possible challenges assessing WFP's contribution to the food security outcomes of the beneficiaries.
48. The evaluation team will review and assess these limitations and devise measures to mitigate them. Any other evaluability challenges identified by the team during the inception phase will be discussed in the inception report together with appropriate mitigation measures where possible.

## 5.3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

49. Evaluations must conform to WFP and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards and norms.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, the evaluation firm is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle in line with the UNEG guiding ethical principles for evaluation (Integrity,

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<sup>23</sup> In choosing the methods to evaluate the CSP, the evaluation team should refer to the Office of Evaluation's Technical Note for Gender Integration in WFP Evaluations and the Technical Note on Integration of Disability Inclusion in Evaluation.

<sup>24</sup> For further information on how to apply the UNEG norms and standards (<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>) in each step of the evaluation, the evaluation team can also consult the Technical Note on Principles, Norms and Standards for evaluations (<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000003179/download/>).

Accountability, Respect, Beneficence).<sup>25</sup> 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 and inclusive participation of stakeholders (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results do no harm to participants or their communities.

50. The commissioning office will ensure that the team and the evaluation manager will not have been involved in the design, implementation, financial management or monitoring of the Iran ICSPs, have no vested interest, nor have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest.<sup>26</sup>
51. All members of the evaluation team will abide by the [2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#) and the [2014 Guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#). In addition to signing a pledge of ethical conduct in evaluation, the evaluation team will also commit to signing a Confidentiality, Internet and Data Security Statement.<sup>27</sup>
52. Should the evaluators uncover allegations of wrongdoing and misconduct in the implementation of a programme either by a WFP staff or a partner (including fraud, food diversions, misuse of WFP assets, harassment, sexual harassment, etc), the evaluation team should report those allegations to WFP Office of Inspection and Investigation (OIGI) through WFP hotline (<http://www.wfphotline.ethicspoint.com>). At the same time, the team leader should inform the Evaluation Manager and the Director and Deputy Director of Evaluation that there are allegations of wrongdoing and misconduct without breaking confidentiality.

#### **5.4. QUALITY ASSURANCE**

53. The WFP evaluation quality assurance system sets out processes with steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products based on quality checklists. This process does not interfere with the views or independence of the evaluation team but ensures that the report provides credible evidence and analysis in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions and recommendations on that basis. The evaluation team will be required to ensure the quality of data (reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the data collection, synthesis, analysis and reporting phases.
54. All evaluation deliverables (i.e., inception report and main evaluation report) must be subject to a thorough quality assurance review by the evaluation company in line with the WFP evaluation quality assurance system prior to submission of the deliverables to OEV. This includes reviewing the response-to-comments matrices and changes made to evaluation deliverables after OEV and stakeholder comments, and editorial review of deliverables. However, quality assurance goes beyond reviewing deliverables and should include up-front guidance to the evaluation team. The person(s) responsible for quality assurance should therefore attend OEV briefing sessions and key meetings with the evaluation

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<sup>25</sup> Beneficence means striving to do good for people and planet while minimizing harms arising from evaluation as an intervention.

<sup>26</sup> "Conflicts of interest are typically identified by a lack of independence or a lack of impartiality. These conflicts occur when a primary interest, such as the objectivity of an evaluation, could be influenced by a secondary interest, such as personal considerations or financial gains" (UNEG 2020 Guidelines). There should be no official, professional, personal or financial relationships that might cause, or lead to a perception of bias in terms of what is evaluated, how the evaluation is designed and conducted, and the findings presented. A conflict of interest can also occur when, because of a person's possibilities for future contracts, the evaluator's ability to provide an impartial analysis is compromised. Cases of upstream conflict of interest are those in which consultants could influence the analysis or recommendations so that they are consistent with findings previously stated by themselves. Cases of downstream conflict of interest are those in which evaluators could artificially create favourable conditions for consideration in a downstream assignment. The potential for bias increases when an evaluator's work is solely focused on one agency. During the evaluation process, the evaluators are not allowed to have another contract with the evaluand/ unit subject to evaluation. To avoid conflicts of interest, particular care should be taken to ensure that independence and impartiality are maintained.

<sup>27</sup> If there are changes in the evaluation team or a sub-contracting for some of the planned evaluation activities, the confidentiality agreement, internet and data security statement, and ethics pledge should also be signed by those additional members.



team. It is essential that the evaluation company foresees sufficient resources and time for this quality assurance.

55. The Office of Evaluation will conduct its own quality assurance of all evaluation deliverables at two levels: the evaluation manager (QA1) and a senior evaluation officer (QA2). The evaluation manager, with QA2 support as needed, will provide guidance to the evaluation team on any aspects of the evaluation (substantive areas to be covered, methodology, interaction with stakeholders, organizational matters etc.) as required. They will both review all evaluation deliverables. The Director of OEV must approve all evaluation deliverables.
56. The final evaluation report will be subjected to a post hoc quality assessment (PHQA)<sup>28</sup> by an independent entity through a process that is managed by the Office of Evaluation. The overall PHQA results will be published on the WFP website alongside the final evaluation report.

## 6. Organization of the evaluation

### 6.1. PHASES AND DELIVERABLES

57. The evaluation is structured in five phases summarized in Table 3 below. The evaluation team will be involved in phases 2 to 5 of the CSPE. The country office and regional bureau have been consulted on the timeframe to ensure good alignment with the country office planning and decision-making so that the evidence generated by the CSPE can be used effectively.

**Table 3: Summary timeline – key evaluation milestones**

Main phases	Timeline	Tasks and deliverables
1. Preparation	<b>15<sup>th</sup> November 23</b> <b>20<sup>th</sup> November 23</b> <b>20<sup>th</sup> December 23</b>	Final ToR Summary ToR Evaluation team and/or firm selection & contract
2. Inception	<b>Feb-March 24</b> <b>April 24</b> <b>July 24</b>	HQ, RBC and CO scoping briefings Inception mission Inception report
3. Data collection	<b>September 24</b>	Evaluation mission, data collection and exit debrief Analysis work session (virtual) prior to the data collection debriefing Evaluation Team and OEV Evaluation Manager Data collection debriefing (3 weeks after the mission)
4. Reporting	<b>October -</b> <b>December 24</b> <b>January 25</b> <b>March 25</b> <b>May 25</b>	Report drafting Comments process Stakeholder workshop Final evaluation report Summary evaluation report validated by Team Leader

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.wfp.org/publications/post-hoc-quality-assessment-evaluations>

5. Dissemination	<b>May-November 25</b>	Management response and Executive Board preparation
	<b>May-November 25</b>	Wider dissemination

## 6.2. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

58. To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender, geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse and balanced evaluation team of 2-3 international (team leader, senior thematic expert and/or researcher) and 1-2 national consultants with relevant expertise, at least one of which should be female. The selected evaluation firm is responsible for proposing a mix of evaluators with language skills in Farsi/Dari and possibly Arabic (national consultants) who can effectively cover the areas of evaluation. The team leader should have excellent synthesis and evaluation report writing skills in English. The evaluation team will have strong methodological competencies in designing feasible data collection and analysis as well as synthesis and reporting skills. The evaluation team should have good knowledge of gender, equity, wider inclusion issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics. In addition, the team members should have experience in humanitarian and development contexts and knowledge of the WFP food and technical assistance modalities.

**Table 4: Summary of evaluation team and areas of expertise required**

Areas of CSPE	Expertise required
<b>Team Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Management, coordination, planning, ability to resolve problems and deliver on time</li> <li>• Strong presentation skills and excellent writing skills</li> <li>• Experience in leading complex, strategic evaluations at country level, such as evaluations of country strategic plans, organisational positioning and nexus dynamics, including with UN organizations</li> <li>• Experience with applying theory-based evaluation approaches, reconstruction and use of theories of change</li> <li>• Strong ability to navigate political sensitivities, and strong understanding the complexity of the relation between UN and member states.</li> <li>• Experience working in Iran, Afghanistan and the middle east desirable</li> <li>• Experience with WFP desirable</li> </ul>
<b>Thematic Expertise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise evaluating different modalities for unconditional and conditional food assistance, including cash-based modalities</li> <li>• Expertise on evaluating in forced displacement contexts, including evaluations for UNHCR, school-based activities, livelihood activities for refugees, and protection issues</li> <li>• Expertise on capacity strengthening and transitions to local authorities, particularly in a middle eastern context (desirable)</li> </ul>
<b>Research Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant understanding of evaluation and research and knowledge of food assistance, ability to provide qualitative and quantitative research support to evaluation teams, mobile phone survey design, analysis of M&amp;E data, data cleaning and analysis; writing and presentation skills, proofreading, and note taking.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality assurance and editorial expertise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in writing high quality, complex evaluation deliverables (detailed reports and summaries)</li> <li>• Experience in quality assurance of written technical reports and briefs</li> </ul>

### 6.3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

59. This evaluation is managed by the WFP Office of Evaluation. Christoph Waldmeier has been appointed as evaluation manager (EM) and Michele Gerli has been appointed as OEV research analyst. Both have not worked on issues associated with the subject of evaluation. The EM, assisted by the OEV RA, is responsible for drafting the ToR; selecting and contracting the evaluation team; preparing and managing the budget; setting up the review group; organizing the team briefing and the in-country stakeholder workshop; supporting the preparation of the field mission; drafting the summary evaluation report; conducting the first-level quality assurance of the evaluation products and soliciting WFP stakeholders' feedback on draft products. The evaluation manager will be the main interlocutor between the team, represented by the team leader, and WFP counterparts to ensure a smooth implementation process. Alexandra Chambel, Senior Evaluation Officer, will provide second-level quality assurance. The Director of Evaluation or Deputy Director of Evaluation will clear the final evaluation products and present the CSPE to the WFP Executive Board for consideration in November 2025.
60. An [internal reference group](#) composed of selected WFP stakeholders at country office, regional bureau and headquarters levels will be expected to review and comment on draft evaluation reports; provide feedback during evaluation briefings; be available for interviews with the evaluation team. The country office will facilitate the evaluation team's contacts with stakeholders in Iran; provide logistic support during the fieldwork and organize an in-country stakeholder workshop. Leila Keivanani has been nominated the WFP country office focal point and will assist in communicating with the evaluation manager and CSPE team and setting up meetings and coordinating field visits. To ensure the independence of the evaluation, WFP staff will not be part of the evaluation team or participate in meetings where their presence could bias the responses of the stakeholders.

### 6.4. SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

61. As an "independent supplier" of evaluation services to WFP, the contracted firm will be responsible for ensuring the security of the evaluation team, and for making adequate arrangements for evacuation for medical or insecurity reasons. However, to avoid any security incidents, the evaluation manager will ensure that the WFP country office registers the team members with the security officer on arrival in country and arranges a security briefing for them to gain an understanding of the security situation on the ground. The evaluation team must observe applicable United Nations Department of Safety and Security rules including taking security training (BSAFE & SSAFE) and attending in-country briefings.

### 6.5. COMMUNICATION

It is important that evaluation reports are accessible to a wide audience, as foreseen in the Evaluation Policy, to ensure the credibility of WFP – through transparent reporting – and the usefulness of evaluations. The dissemination strategy will be based on the stakeholder analysis and consider whom to disseminate to, whom to involve and it will also identify the users of the evaluation, duty bearers, implementers, beneficiaries, including gender perspectives.

62. A communication and knowledge management plan will be developed by the evaluation manager in consultation with the evaluation team and the Country Office during the inception phase. The evaluation team will propose/explore communication/feedback channels to appropriate audiences (including affected populations as relevant) as part of the inception phase.
63. The summary evaluation report along with the management response to the evaluation recommendations will be presented to the WFP Executive Board in November 2025. The final evaluation report will be posted on the public WFP website and the Office of Evaluation will ensure dissemination of lessons through the annual evaluation report.

### 6.6. THE PROPOSAL

64. Technical and financial offers for this evaluation should consider in-country inception for the team leader; data collection missions, and travel of the evaluation team leader for the stakeholder workshop

(s) to be held in the country's capital, including visa costs. Proposals should build in sufficient flexibility to deal with possible risks e.g., flare-up of civil unrest / conflict. Evaluation firms should take note that local payments in Iran (e.g. to suppliers of services, travel or consultants) may have to be in cash.

65. Financial proposals should include local travel costs to allow for visiting at least 8 out of 20 refugee settlements<sup>29</sup>, which will be selected purposively. Two settlements may be accessed through day trips from Tehran and other settlements can easily be combined as part of field trips. It is foreseen that the entire field mission will take no longer than three weeks, at least two weeks of which will be spent outside of Tehran.
66. Should translators be required for fieldwork, the evaluation firm will make arrangements and include the cost in the budget proposal. All evaluation products will be produced in English.
67. While the Summary Evaluation Report is drafted by the Evaluation Manager, financial proposals should budget time for the Team Leader to review and validate the final draft before it is submitted to the Executive Board.
68. Following the technical and financial assessment, an improved offer could be requested by WFP to the preferred bid(s) to better respond to the TOR requirements. WFP may conduct reference checks and interviews with selected team members.

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<sup>29</sup> UNHCR Iran: [Refugee Settlements](#) as of Dec 2020

# Annex 1: Overview of performance data availability

Iran interim country strategic plan (2018-2023)- logframe analysis				
Logframe version		Outcome indicators	Cross-cutting indicators	Output indicators
v 1.0	<b>Total nr. of indicators</b>	3	6	9
v 4.0	New indicators	1	4	9
	Discontinued indicators	0	0	0
	<b>Total nr. of indicators</b>	4	10	18
v 6.0	New indicators	0	1	2
	Discontinued indicators	0	0	0
	<b>Total nr. of indicators</b>	4	11	20
v 8.0	New indicators	1	2	1
	Discontinued indicators	0	0	0
	<b>Total nr. of indicators</b>	5	13	21
<b>Total number of indicators that were included across all logframe versions</b>		3	6	9
Islamic Republic of Iran interim country strategic plan (2023–2025) - logframe analysis				
v 1.0	<b>Total nr. of indicators</b>	5	10	20
V 2.0	New indicators	0	0	0
	Discontinued indicators	0	0	0
	<b>Total nr. of indicators</b>	5	10	20
<b>Total number of indicators that were included across all logframe versions</b>		5	10	20

		ACR 2018	ACR 2019	ACR 2020	ACR 2021	ACR 2022
<b>Outcome indicators</b>						
	Total number of indicators in applicable logframe	3	4	4	4	5
Baselines	Nr. of indicators with any baselines reported	3	3	3	4	4
	Total nr. of baselines reported	15	15	16	16	17
Year-end targets	Nr. of indicators with any year-end targets reported	3	3	3	4	4
	Total nr. of year-end targets reported	15	15	16	17	17
CSP-end targets	Nr. of indicators with any CSP-end targets reported	3	3	3	4	4
	Total nr. of CSP-end targets reported	15	15	16	17	17
Follow-up	Nr. of indicators with any follow-up values reported	3	3	3	4	4
	Total nr. of follow-up values reported	15	15	16	17	16
<b>Cross-Cutting indicators</b>						
	Total number of indicators in applicable logframe	6	10	10	11	13
Baselines	Nr. of indicators with any baselines reported	5	8	8	9	9
	Total nr. of baselines reported	10	20	18	21	21
Year-end targets	Nr. of indicators with any year-end targets reported	5	8	8	9	9
	Total nr. of year-end targets reported	11	20	18	21	20
CSP-end targets	Nr. of indicators with any CSP-end targets reported	5	8	8	9	8
	Total nr. of CSP-end targets reported	11	20	18	21	20
Follow-up	Nr. of indicators with any follow-up values reported	5	8	8	9	8
	Total nr. of follow-up values reported	11	11	17	21	20
<b>Output indicators</b>						
	Total number of indicators in applicable logframe	9	18	18	20	21
Targets	Nr. of indicators with any targets reported	0	13	13	17	15
	Total nr. of targets reported	0	23	22	28	26
Actual values	Nr. of indicators with any actual values reported	0	13	13	16	15
	Total nr. of actual values reported	0	20	22	28	26

Source: Annual Country Reports [2018](#), [2019](#), [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#).

# Annex 2: List of relevant Previous Evaluations and Audits

## Evaluations

Year	Type	Title	Main Features
2017	Synthesis	<a href="#">Operation Evaluations Series, Regional Synthesis 2013-2017: Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Region</a>	<p>This Synthesis of Operations Evaluations for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe Region (Cairo region) brings together the findings of nine operations evaluations, conducted from mid-2013 to mid-2017. The synthesis aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance efficient and effective use of evaluation evidence and learning in programme development</li> <li>Help facilitate the continued country strategic planning process for the regional bureau</li> <li>Create a concise, regional-friendly 'body of evidence' analysis to inform the upcoming development of the regional evaluation strategy.</li> </ul>
2015	Operation evaluation	<a href="#">OPERATION EVALUATION Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200310 (2013-2015) Food assistance and education incentive for Afghan and Iraqi refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran</a>	<p>The evaluation aims to provide feedback on the activities implemented and the results achieved, learn lessons and formulate recommendations in order to improve the operation implementation, and prepare the design of the WFP future operation. It covers the period from early 2013 to October 2014.</p> <p>The timing of the evaluation was chosen so that it can provide findings and information to prepare the next Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) planned between June and September 2015, which will define the main orientations of the next WFP operation.</p>

Source: OEV

## Audits

Year	Type	Title	Main Features
2022	Audit	<a href="#">Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Iran</a>	<p>WFP's work in Iran aims to contribute to improving the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable refugees in settlements within the framework of the regional Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. Interventions include the provision of: (i) unconditional food assistance to food-insecure refugees; (ii) conditional support to refugee women and girls to incentivize and facilitate educational and livelihood activities; and (iii) emergency food assistance through cash-based or in-kind transfers to shock-affected populations. The audit focused on the implementation of two activities under strategic outcome 1 of the Interim Country Strategic Plan that accounted for 87 percent of total cumulative expenditure up to 31 July 2021. Based on the results of the audit, the Office of Internal Audit has come to an overall conclusion of effective / satisfactory.</p>

Source: Office of Internal Audit

# Annex 3: Acronyms

<b>ACR</b>	Annual Country Report
<b>BAFIA</b>	Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs
<b>CCS</b>	Country Capacity Strengthening
<b>CO</b>	Country Office
<b>CSP</b>	Country Strategic Plan
<b>CSPE</b>	Country Strategic Plan Evaluation
<b>EB</b>	Executive Board
<b>ECHO</b>	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<b>EM</b>	Evaluation Manager
<b>GEEW</b>	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>HDI</b>	Human Development Index
<b>ICSP</b>	Interim Country Strategic Plan
<b>JAM</b>	Joint Assessment Mission
<b>NBP</b>	Needs-Based Plan
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>OEV</b>	Office of Evaluation
<b>PHQA</b>	Post Hoc Quality Assessment
<b>RA</b>	Research Analyst
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme



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