



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Evaluation of Islamic Republic of Iran WFP interim Country Strategic Plans 2018-2023 and 2023-2025

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 (CSP) and 2) to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.

Subject and focus of the evaluation

This evaluation will cover the current Iran interim CSP (2023-2025) as well as the previous (2018-2023) interim CSP. This is the first independent evaluation of WFP's portfolio in Iran.

In its first strategic outcome, both ICSP documents focus on food and nutrition assistance for the most vulnerable refugees living in 20 settlements in Iran. The second strategic outcome under the previous ICSP positioned WFP to support national entities to prevent and respond to emergencies, while the current ICSP positions WFP to provide services to partners to support enhanced coordination.

The previous ICSP's budget was revised eight times over the course of the five years of its duration, and concluded with a final budget of USD 36 million, of which approximately 91 percent has been resourced. The current ICSP has a needs-based plan budgeted at USD 37 million for three operational years and as of September 2023, 12 percent has been funded.

Annual beneficiary targets under the first ICSP ranged between 30,000 in its first year and 90,600 during the COVID pandemic and the country office reached a maximum of 112,448 people in the year 2020. The current ICSP targets 60,000 beneficiaries during each operational year.

The evaluation will assess WFP contributions to both CSP 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 will be presented at the Executive Board session in November 2025.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation will address the following four key questions:

QUESTION 1: To what extent and in what ways is the CSP 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? The evaluation will assess the extent to which the CSP was informed by credible evidence, the extent to which the CSP design is internally coherent and based on a clear theory of change; and the extent to which the ICSP adapt and respond to evolving needs of refugees and other crisis-affected populations to ensure continued relevance during implementation.

QUESTION 2: 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? The evaluation will assess to what extent WFP achieved its coverage and outcome targets and in what ways it contributed to the expected outcomes of the ICSP, including unintended outcomes. In addition, the evaluation will analyse the extent to which WFP contributed to achieve 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. Finally, the evaluation will assess the extent to which WFP's assistance was geared to contribute to developing a long-term perspective for the assisted refugees, including to find sustainable livelihoods.

QUESTION 3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently? The evaluation will assess whether outputs were delivered within the intended timeframe, if activities were cost-efficient in their delivery, particularly if the cash-based modalities have led to expected efficiency or effectiveness gains, and in what ways or to what extent the CO reprioritized its interventions to optimize limited resources and ensure continued relevance and effectiveness in view of eventual funding gaps.

QUESTION 4: What are the critical factors, internal and external to WFP, explaining performance and results? The evaluation will assess the extent to which WFP has been able to mobilize adequate, timely, predictable, and flexible resources; how well WFP leveraged strategic and operational partnerships, particularly with UNHCR, the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs to enhance its contributions; and what roles other factors (programme integration at design stage and during implementation, human resources, innovation, monitoring, etc.) played in explaining performance and results.

Several key themes of interest will be identified and integrated in the evaluation matrix during the inception phase. At this stage the following themes have been identified:

- Community engagement and accountability to affected populations.
- Partnership arrangements and the WFP mandate

Scope, methodology and ethical considerations

The units of analysis are the two interim Country Strategic Plans (2018-2023 and 2023-2025), which will allow for a longer-term analysis of the evolution of WFP's work and results achieved in Iran. The evaluation will cover all WFP activities (including cross-cutting results) from 2018 until mid-2024.

The evaluation will adopt a mixed methods approach using a variety of primary and secondary sources, including desk review, key informant interviews, 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 Iran interim CSP (i.e. humanitarian assistance and policy (including cash-based assistance), unconditional and conditional refugee assistance, capacity strengthening and research assistance.

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT: The evaluation will be managed by Christoph Waldmeier, 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. Michele Gerli will be the OEV research analyst for this evaluation and second level quality assurance will be provided by Alexandra Chambel, Senior Evaluation Officer. The Director of Evaluation, Anne-Claire Luzot, will approve the final versions of all evaluation products.

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.

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 and the Regional Bureau, and Headquarters during a debriefing session at the end of the data collection phase. A country evaluation stakeholder workshop will be held in January 2025 to ensure a transparent evaluation process, promote ownership of the findings, conclusions and preliminary recommendations by country stakeholders and inform the new CSP design process.

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: February-July 2024
Data collection and exit debriefing: September 2024
Data collection debriefing (remote): October 2024
Reports: October-December 2024
Stakeholder Workshop: January 2025
Executive Board Presentation: November 2025