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Evaluation of China WFP Country Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Terms of reference (Final)

April 23 , 2024

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1. Introduction

1. These terms of reference (ToR) were prepared by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders at the WFP China Office and the WFP's Multilateral and Programme Country Partnerships (MPC) in Rome (headquarters).
2. The purpose of these ToR is to provide key information to stakeholders about the evaluation (reasons, context, scope, and methods), 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 in China; section 4 defines the evaluation scope, criteria, and questions; section 5 identifies the evaluation methodological approach and ethical considerations; and section 6 indicates how the evaluation will be organized including the composition of the evaluation team. The annexes include the availability of performance data, list of relevant previous evaluations and list of acronyms.

2. Reasons for the evaluation

2.1. RATIONALE

- 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). The evaluation of the WFP China Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2022-2025, provides an opportunity for the China Country Office to benefit from an independent assessment of its programme of work; and generate evidence to help inform the design of the new CSP which is scheduled for the Executive Board's (EB) approval in November 2025.

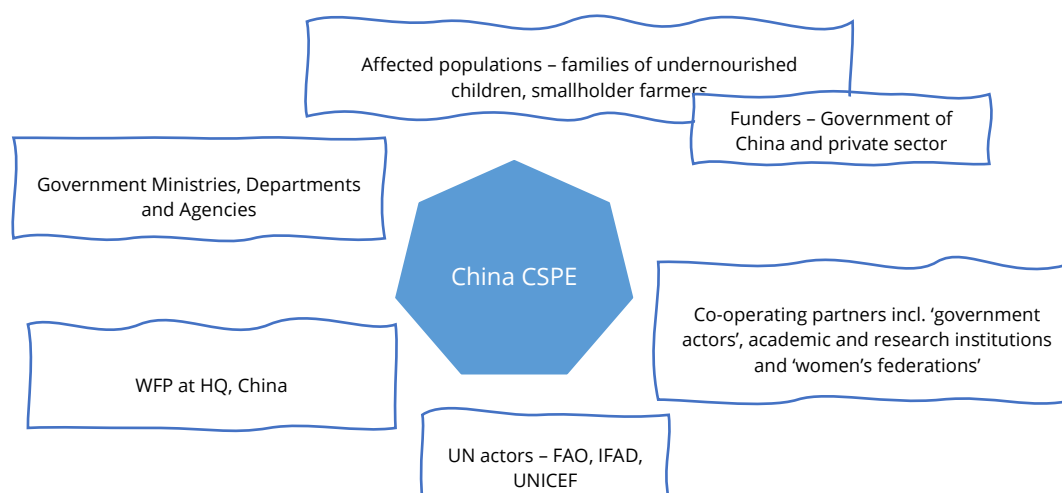
2.2. OBJECTIVES

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

2.3. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a broad range of internal and external WFP stakeholders. The key stakeholders of the CSPE are the WFP China Office, MPC and other divisions in headquarters including Programme, Nutrition and WFP's EB. Other key stakeholders include the Government of China, affected populations, private sector, the United Nations system in China, and other relevant actors.
- The CSPE will seek to engage with affected communities including families of undernourished children in rural and underdeveloped areas (central and western areas of the country), and smallholder farmers, among others. Particular attention will be given to women and girls in low-income families, left-behind children, and other potentially marginalised population groups such as persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

Figure 1: Categories of CSPE stakeholders



- The Government of China at national and sub-national levels are key stakeholders in this evaluation given their interest in WFP's contribution to key national strategies as well as alignment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) for China for 2021–2025. The CSPE will engage with government agencies, with whom WFP has developed robust partnerships to implement CSP activities including the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA), Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM), and China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE). ^[Obj]

9. The CSPE will engage with other United Nations and humanitarian actors that WFP has strategic and operational partnerships and engagements within and in China. Specifically, the CSPE will engage with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Development Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agriculture and Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).
10. The evaluation will also reach out to the main partners from the private sector including China Foundation for Rural Development, Teck Resources, Cargill, Alibaba, Tencent, and Meituan.

3. Context and subject of the evaluation

3.1 CONTEXT

Social and economic development

11. China is the world's second-most-populous country (after India)¹ with a population exceeding 1.42 billion, and the third-largest country by total land area².
12. The country is the second largest economy in the world (after the USA), with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 17.7 USD billions and a GDP per capita of 12,500 USD³. According to national figures, from 2013 to 2022 (excluding 2020), China's GDP grew on average by 6.6 percent per year⁴. In 2022, around 24.1 percent of the workforce were employed in the agricultural sector, 28.8 percent in the industrial sector and 47.1 percent in the service sector.⁵
13. China has made remarkable social progress over the past decades, with impressive poverty reduction achievements and improvements in many social indicators including health and education⁶. Over the past 40 years, the number of people in China with incomes below US\$1.90 per day, has fallen by close to 800 million. With this, China has accounted for almost 75 percent of the global reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty⁷. Average life expectancy increased from 65 years in 1981 to 78 years in 2021.⁸ Over the same period, mortality rate at birth⁹ dropped from 45 to 5¹⁰.
14. Since the introduction of Human Development Index (HDI) in 1990, China is the only country to have moved from the low to high human development group¹¹, with a HDI of 0.768 in 2024¹².

Inequality and Gender

15. Despite China's rapid development, challenges remain in "leaving no one behind". The 2022-2025 UNSDCF in China, identifies groups who are more at risk of being left behind in China including rural migrant workers in urban areas, people living in relatively remote regions with challenging natural conditions, persons with disabilities, the growing elderly population, left-behind rural children, children and women in difficulty, rural smallholder farmers, informal sector workers, victims of human trafficking, and people living with HIV. Uneven gains in social progress are reflected by the Gini index, which was 37.1¹³ in 2020.
16. In China, equality of men and women has been stipulated in the Constitution since 1954. More than 100 laws and regulations have been formulated or amended to provide fundamental guarantees for promoting women's development and safeguarding women's rights and interests¹⁴. In the last decades,

¹ [UNdata](#)

² [List of countries and dependencies by area - Wikipedia](#)

³ <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO/WORLD/CHN/JPN>

⁴ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/china?view=chart>

⁵ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270327/distribution-of-the-workforce-across-economic-sectors-in-china/>

⁶ United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the People's Republic of China 2021-2025 [link](#)

⁷ Four decades of poverty reduction in China, World Bank, 2022.

<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bdad16a4f5c1c88a839c0f905cde802-0070012022/original/Poverty-Synthesis-Report-final.pdf>

⁸ [Life expectancy at birth, total \(years\) - China | Data \(worldbank.org\)](#)

⁹ Per 1,000 live births

¹⁰ [Mortality rate, infant \(per 1,000 live births\) - China | Data \(worldbank.org\)](#)

¹¹ *ibidem*

¹² <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks>

¹³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CN>

¹⁴ <https://china.unfpa.org/en/news/23071101#:~:text=China%20has%20embraced%20gender%20equality,tailored%20to%20their%20specific%20needs>

the country has also made significant achievements in women's employment, poverty alleviation, education, health, and social security¹⁵.

17. In 2018, the net primary school enrolment rates of boys and girls were both very close to 100 per cent and the number of female graduate students in higher education accounted for 49.6 percent of all graduate students¹⁶. The maternal mortality ratio has significantly fallen from 89 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 16.9 per 100,000 live births in 2020¹⁷. In 2021, China's Gender Inequality Index (GII) was equal to 0.192, ranking 48th out of 191 countries.¹⁸
18. As in much of the world, China will require a sustained effort to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment, including by strengthening ongoing efforts to address prevailing social and economic drivers of gender inequality for China's women and girls.¹⁹

Malnutrition and food security

19. Undernutrition rates have significantly improved over time, from 7 percent in 2004 to less than 2.5 in 2020²⁰, although with disparities between urban and rural area, with higher rates of undernutrition are found in the latter.
20. Malnutrition rates at country level have also undergone a major transformation over the past few decades. In the 1990s, in China, an estimated 32 percent of children under five years were suffering from stunting.²¹ In recent years, the stunting rate dropped from 18.8 percent in 2002 to 4.9 percent in 2020²². However, stunting rates are still high in rural areas (5.8 percent).²³
21. With improved prevalence of malnutrition, levels of overweight have increased in children under five as well as in the adult population (6.8 and 34.3 per cent respectively in 2020).²⁴
22. China needs to feed 17 percent of the global population with only 7 percent of the global arable land²⁵. 95 percent of the cultivated land is managed by around 200 million smallholder farmers. Despite the rapid development and significant upgrading of China's transport infrastructure, some remote locations have relatively poor infrastructure and services. Limited access to financial services, markets and value chains continues to prevent smallholders from capitalizing on national efficiency gains.²⁶
23. With urbanisation and industrialisation, arable land is being lost to development, putting pressure on food production and security. China is facing water scarcity due to overuse, pollution, and climate change, posing a significant threat to food security. The availability of water for irrigation and other agricultural purposes is limited, and the competition for water among different sectors is intense. Climate change is causing more frequent and severe extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, which can significantly impact food production and food security²⁷.
24. Under the Nutrition Improvement Programme for Rural Compulsory Education Students, the government runs the national School Feeding programme, which had already reached 38 million students by 2020 through a total investment of around 130 USD billion since 2011.²⁸

¹⁵ United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the People's Republic of China 2021-2025 [link](#)

¹⁶ <https://china.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-equality-and-women%E2%80%99s-empowerment>

¹⁷ <https://china.unfpa.org/en/topics/gender-equality-and-women%E2%80%99s-empowerment>

¹⁸ <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdp-document/gsni202303pdf.pdf>

¹⁹ [Microsoft Word - UNSDCF_EN Final 20201104](#)

²⁰ The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 <https://www.fao.org/3/cc0639en/cc0639en.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/food-security-in-china-and-its-role-in-pushing-the-g20-agenda>

²² The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 <https://www.fao.org/3/cc0639en/cc0639en.pdf>

²³ 2020 China Residents Nutrition and Chronic Disease Status Report

²⁴ 2020 China Residents Nutrition and Chronic Disease Status Report

²⁵ <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/food-security-in-china-and-its-role-in-pushing-the-g20-agenda>

²⁶ China Country Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

²⁷ <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/food-security-in-china-and-its-role-in-pushing-the-g20-agenda>

²⁸ See: [China Country Strategic Plan \(2022-2025\) \(wfp.org\)](#)

25. The government of China is implementing the National Agricultural Sustainable Development Plan (2015-2030), to promote a sustainable agricultural development, by optimizing the development layout and steadily improving agricultural production capacity; protecting cultivated land resources and enhancing the sustainable utilization of farmland; ensuring the safety of water for agriculture; controlling environmental pollution and improving the agricultural and rural environment.²⁹

3.2 SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

26. WFP has been in China since 1969 and WFP's programme in China was WFP's largest in the late 1980s and early 1990s. WFP partnership with the Government has evolved with China's socioeconomic transformation. From 1969 through 2005, WFP and China supported food-insecure communities under an integrated agricultural development approach led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA).

27. In March 2016, WFP and MARA entered into an agreement entitled Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to Strengthen Partnership for Global Hunger Solutions and Development. Under this MoU WFP supports China's efforts to ensure food security and nutrition for the people of China. The MoU serves as the conceptual basis for the China WFP CSP for 2022-2025. The MoU serves to strengthen China's role as a partner in WFP's operations globally, including through the WFP Centre of Excellence for Enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The Centre of Excellence in China aims to strengthen peer to peer learning and knowledge exchange related to enhancing food security, improving nutrition, and alleviating poverty among developing countries by facilitating policy dialogue, technical training, deployment of experts, policy research and other activities under SDGs 2 and 17.³⁰

The development of China WFP CSP for 2022-2025, draws lessons from the evaluation of the China WFP CSP for 2017-2021. The evaluation, presented to the EB in November 2021, recommended a number of strategic directions for the design of the 2022-2025 CSP, namely:

- i) WFP to have strategic engagement with the Government of China on WFP and China's priorities and areas of expertise;
- ii) WFP to continue to identify effective ways of working with internal and external stakeholder groups;
- iii) WFP to strengthen processes in its domestic programme and the centre of excellence for capturing, sharing, and communicating results and enhancing learning; and
- iv) WFP to develop a clear plan for securing China's long-term contributions to WFP.

28. In June 2022, WFP's EB approved the China CSP for 2022-2025 whose overarching aim is to support the Government's work (China's 14th five-year economic and social development plan) to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 by helping China implement, extend, and improve national nutrition programmes and support smallholder farmers, including women. The CSP commits WFP to supporting the Government to increase rural opportunities and incomes to contribute to reducing relative poverty and rural-urban development gaps. The CSP also focuses on initiatives to enhance rural resilience and pilot approaches to the development of sustainable food systems. China CSP for 2022-2025 is a joint initiative between the Government of China and WFP to target priority areas of intervention (nutrition-sensitive school feeding, and support to smallholder farmers in rural areas). The CSP is funded by Government of China and the private sector.

29. The 2022-2025 CSP strategic orientation and directions were designed to be achieved by focusing on one strategic outcome (SO) and three associated activities as presented in Table 1.

²⁹ [National Agricultural Sustainable Development Plan \(2015-2030\). | UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform](#)

³⁰ See: [China Country Strategic Plan \(2022-2025\) \(wfp.org\)](#)

Table 1: China CSP (2022-2025), overview of strategic outcomes and activities

Strategic Outcomes	Activities	Modalities of intervention
<p>SO 1: Left-behind groups in rural areas of China have improved nutrition status and livelihoods in line with national targets by 2025.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Provide advice and assistance on integrating smallholder farmers into nutrition-sensitive value chains to national stakeholders</p>	<p>Capacity strengthening</p>
	<p>Activity 2: Provide advice and assistance on extending nutrition-sensitive school feeding programmes to national stakeholders</p>	<p>Capacity strengthening</p>
	<p>Activity 3: Provide facilitation for development and humanitarian cooperation with China</p>	<p>Capacity strengthening</p>

Source: China Country Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

30. In 2021, WFP China conducted a decentralized evaluation on the impact of the preschool nutrition pilot in selected counties of Xiangxi Prefecture, Hunan in China. The evaluation recommended WFP to extend the provision of interventions in the study sites; to consider targeting at vulnerable sub-groups to optimize the impact of the project; to pay particular attention to the rise of child overweight and obesity; to take into consideration nutrition knowledge of caregivers to improve children's diet at home in addition to the nutritional value of the food choices offered in schools; to support further research to understand reasons for the decline in child malnutrition; to strengthen supply-side interventions to support local smallholders; and to invest in rigorous evaluation at both country office and field level. The CSPE will assess the extent to which the CSP for 2022-2025 adapted to implement these recommendations.
31. The financial requirement for the WFP China CSP for 2022-2025 is USD 15,7 million with 15 percent allocated to projects with gender equality and women's empowerment considerations by 2025. As at end of 2023, the CSP's resource level was at 48 percent of the needs-based plan (NBP). The CSP is funded by the Government of China and the private sector in China. Additional details on the CSP financial situation are presented in Table 2 below.
32. WFP China CSP planned to reach an estimated 49,700 individuals as tier 2³¹ beneficiaries (including children and smallholder farmers, Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) and individual capacity strengthening). In addition, another 850,000 to 1,290,000 of Tier 2 beneficiaries from government agencies and technical institutions benefit from WFP's technical assistance, advocacy and support for policies, systems, and national programmes. Figures 2 and 3 present the overview of planned and actual beneficiaries with breakdown by activity/component, by year and disaggregated by sex and age.³²
33. WFP Office in China is in the capital Beijing with no field offices but the footprint of WFP activities is largely focused on the less developed central and western rural areas and concentrated in nationally designated poverty-stricken counties (see Annex 4).

³¹ Tier 2 beneficiaries are individuals who have access to assets, knowledge and capacity, commodities or services delivered or transferred in their communities or catchment area as a result of, but not directly through, WFP's support, and are estimated to produce changes in attitudes, behaviours or improved life outcomes.

³² [China Country Strategic Plan \(2022-2025\) \(wfp.org\)](https://www.wfp.org/publications/china-country-strategic-plan-2022-2025)

Table 2: CSP China (2022-2025) cumulative financial overview

Focus Area	SO	SO Description	Activity	Original NBP	Current NBP	Programmed and Unprogrammed Budget
Root Causes	1	People including left-behind groups in rural areas of China have improved nutritional status and livelihoods in line with national targets by 2025	Activity 2: Provide advice and assistance on extending nutrition-sensitive school feeding programmes to national stakeholders	4,937,249	4,937,249	1,705,355
Root Causes	1	People including left-behind groups in rural areas of China have improved nutritional status and livelihoods in line with national targets by 2026	Activity 3: Provide facilitation for development and humanitarian cooperation with China	1,601,974	1,601,974	947,344
Root Causes	1	People including left-behind groups in rural areas of China have improved nutritional status and livelihoods in line with national targets by 2027	Activity 1: Provide advice and assistance on integrating smallholder farmers into nutrition-sensitive value chain to national stakeholders	5,377,316	5,377,316	1,454,279
Root Causes	1	Total SO1		11,916,539	11,916,539	4,106,978
		Non SO specific				2,199,196
		Total Direct Operational Cost		11,916,539	11,916,539	6,306,174
		Direct Support Cost (DSC)		2,781,043	2,781,043	883,723
		Indirect Support Cost (ISC)		955,343	955,343	337,917
		Grand Total		15,652,925	15,652,925	7,527,813

Source: EV_CPB Resources Overview report, accessed on 31 January 2024.

4. Evaluation scope, criteria, and questions

34. The unit of analysis of this evaluation is WFP’s China CSP (2022-2025), understood as the set of strategic outcomes, outputs, activities, and inputs that were included in CSP document approved by the WFP’s EB in June 2022.
35. The evaluation will focus on assessing progress towards the CSP 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 with the Chinese Government and assess WFP’s alignment with the UN systems on development and humanitarian cooperation in China.
36. The temporal scope of the evaluation will cover the period since the cut-off date of the data collection of the previous CSPE, October 2020; while the evaluation will focus primarily on the current CSP 2022-2025, the tail-end of the previous CSP will be covered through a focus on strategic shifts/elements of continuity between the two CSPs, results trends, contextual evolutions, and the CSP 2022-2025 design process (including use of evidence). This will enable assessment of the CSP design and the transition from the previous CSP (2017-2021) to the current CSP (2022-2025).
37. The evaluation will address four main questions common to all WFP CSPEs. Evaluation questions and sub questions will be validated and refined during the inception phase, as relevant and appropriate to the WFP China CSP and country context.

EQ1 – To what extent is the CSP evidence-based and strategically focused to address the root causes of food and nutrition insecurity of the most vulnerable people in rural and underdeveloped areas (central and western areas) in China?

1.1	To what extent and how was the design of the CSP informed by credible evidence (including by the evaluation of the previous CSP as relevant) and strategically and realistically targeted to address the nutrition status and livelihoods of the key vulnerable groups in rural areas of China in line with WFP-Government of China agreements?
1.2	To what extent and how is the CSP design internally coherent (between activity types and links to other WFP co-operation within the framework of the MoU including the Centre of Excellence) and based on a clear theory of change with realistic assumptions?
1.3	To what extent and how did the CSP adapt to respond to any contextual changes and/or to any requests from key stakeholders, if applicable?

EQ2 – What difference did WFP’s CSP make to food security and nutrition in rural and underdeveloped areas (central and western areas) in China?

2.1	To what extent and how did WFP use its comparative advantage to achieve its CSP coverage and outcome targets particularly with regard to the integration of smallholder farmers into nutrition-sensitive value chains; and the extension of nutrition-sensitive school feeding programmes to national stakeholders? Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative?
2.2	To what extent and how are achievements under the CSP likely to be sustainable beyond WFP’s support or facilitation, in particular from a financial, social, institutional and environmental perspective?
2.3	To what extent and how did WFP’s concept-testing model (resilience, productivity) enhance access to markets and to enhance sustainability to smallholder farming?

2.4	How relevant/useful was WFP's technical assistance to the Government of China on targeting, and to what extent did it inform the government's targeting practice?
2.5	To what extent and how did WFP's rural resilience approaches support the Government to strengthen the connection between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization?
2.6	To what extent and how did WFP's approaches and interventions contribute to achievement of cross-cutting aims (gender integration, equity and inclusion, environment, climate change)?
EQ3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently?	
3.1	To what extent and how were the CSP outputs and related budget delivered within the intended timeframe?
3.2	To what extent and how were WFP's activities delivered in a cost-efficient manner?
EQ4: What are the critical factors, internal and external to WFP in China, explaining performance and results?	
4.1	To what extent has WFP sustained and enhanced its partnership with the Government of China (MARA, the National Administration for Rural Revitalization) and other entities over the lifetime of the 2022-2025 CSP, including at authorities at decentralised (provincial) level, within the framework of the MoU?
4.2	How well did WFP establish and leverage strategic and operational partnerships with government actors, private sector, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and other UN agencies, to maximize efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of interventions to address root causes of nutritionally vulnerable people in China?
4.3	<p>What role, if any, have the following factors played in the implementation of the CSP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical cooperation model with the Government of China. - Resourcing outlook and strategy. - Transition/handover strategy. - Country office technical expertise capacity. - Other internal or external factors.

38. The evaluation will adopt standard United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development /Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, and sustainability. Moreover, it will give attention to assessing 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 such as female-headed and male-headed smallholder farmers.

39. During the inception phase, the evaluation team in consultation with the OEV and WFP China 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. Examples of possible themes of interest include learnings from the specific model of the CSP (technical cooperation with the Government of China), WFP's role as a pilot test and technical adviser, and effects of funding base (Government of China and private sector) on implementation and results. These themes could also be related to the key assumptions underpinning the logic of intervention of the CSP; or may be informed by the recommendations of previous evaluations. The themes of interest identified should be described in the inception report and translated into specific lines of inquiry under the relevant evaluation questions and sub-questions.

5. Methodological approach and ethical considerations

5.1. EVALUATION APPROACH

40. 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).
41. The achievement of any SDGs national targets and 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.
42. The CSPE will use a **theory-based approach** to assess WFP's contribution to outcomes. This will entail the reconstruction of the CSP's ToC prior to the inception mission based on desk review, which will be discussed, adjusted, and amended in discussions with the WFP China 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.
43. The CSPE will adopt a **mixed methods approach** which should be designed methodologically to assess a technical cooperation-focused CSP. 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 unforeseen issues or lines of inquiry that had not been identified at the inception stage. This in turn would eventually lead to capturing unintended outcomes of WFP operations, negative or positive. Data will be collected through a mix of primary and secondary sources with different techniques potentially including desk review, semi-structured or open-ended interviews, surveys, focus groups and direct observation. Systematic data triangulation across different sources and methods should be carried out to validate findings and avoid bias in evaluative judgement.
44. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be expected to develop a detailed methodological design, including a detailed evaluation matrix,³³ in line with the approach proposed in these TOR. 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 data collection and analysis methods in their proposal suited to assessing a technical co-operation focused CSP.
45. The methodology should aim at data disaggregation by sex, age, disability status, administrative locations, type of beneficiary, activities or other characteristics as relevant to, and feasible in, specific locations in China. 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 stakeholder' mapping and analysis that should be as detailed and comprehensive as possible.



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33 valuation Matrix.docx

46. The evaluation should be designed and conducted using a gender and inclusion-responsive manner for a technical cooperation-focused CSP, but still ensuring that diverse voices are included and heard throughout the evaluation process, and focusing on addressing the differential effects on men, women, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, and other relevant socio-economic groups.³⁴ The final evaluation report should highlight differences by gender and relevant excluded groups in the findings, results, conclusions, and where appropriate, recommendations.

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).

47. This CSPE will be able to build on several sources of secondary evidence. Annex 2 provides a list of previous CSPE and any evaluations and audits covering the evaluation period. 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.
48. At this preparation stage of the evaluation, the following evaluability challenges have been identified:
- CSP design and implementation issues such as lack of a ToC at the CSP formulation stage, necessitating a reconstruction of the intervention logic and the evaluation TOC.
 - Information availability including gender disaggregated data, and completeness and reliability of data to measure logframe indicators (see Annex 1 for an overview of performance data availability).
 - Contextual issues such as availability of people with the adequate institutional memory of the CSP implementation period, inability for the evaluation to cover all areas of interest by the stakeholders, timing of the CSP (a year before the end of the full CSP cycle which has implications for the completeness of results reporting and attainment of expected outcomes).
 - Pilot-testing of concepts, and the technical cooperation-focused CSP.
 - Most of the project progress reports submitted from government implementing partners at various levels are in Chinese
49. 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.

³⁴ 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.

5.3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

50. Evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms.³⁵ 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, Accountability, Respect, Beneficence).³⁶ This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting personal and data 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.
51. OEV will ensure that the evaluation team and the evaluation manager will not have been involved in the design, implementation, financial management or monitoring of the WFP China CSP, have no vested interest, nor have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest.³⁷
52. 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.³⁸
53. 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

54. The WFP evaluation quality assurance (QA) system sets out processes with steps for QA 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.
55. All evaluation deliverables (i.e., inception report and main evaluation report) must be subject to a thorough QA review by the contract evaluation company/firm in line with the WFP evaluation QA system

³⁵ 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/>).

³⁶ Beneficence means striving to do good for people and planet while minimizing harms arising from evaluation as an intervention.

³⁷ "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.

³⁸ 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.

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, QA goes beyond reviewing deliverables and should include up-front guidance to the evaluation team. The person(s) responsible for QA should therefore attend OEV briefing sessions and key meetings with the evaluation team. It is essential that the evaluation company foresees sufficient resources and time for this QA.

56. WFP's OEV will conduct its own QA 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 approves all evaluation deliverables.
57. All final evaluation reports will be subjected to a post-hoc quality assessment (PHQA) by an independent entity through a process that is managed by the OEV. 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

58. 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. WFP's China Office and SPD have been consulted on the timeframe to ensure good alignment with the CO planning and decision-making so that the evidence generated by the CSPE can be used effectively to inform the formulation of the new CSP for China.

Table 3: Summary timeline – key evaluation milestones		
Main phases	Timeline	Tasks and deliverables
1. Preparation	February 2024 March 2023 April – May 2024	Final ToR Summary ToR Evaluation team and/or firm selection & contract
2. Inception	May 2024 May - June 2024 July 2024	HQ briefing Inception mission Inception report
3. Data collection	July - August 2024	Data collection mission and exit debriefing (15 working days) Analysis workshop Evaluation Team + OEV Evaluation Manager and RA (half a day - virtual) Data collection debriefing (virtual)
4. Reporting	September – October 2024 SOct - Nov 2024 Nov – December 2024 January – Feb 2025	Report drafting Draft Report Comments process

	February 2025 February 2025	Learning and Stakeholder workshops in Beijing, China (4 working days) Final evaluation report Summary evaluation report validated by Team Leader
5. Dissemination	March - April 2025 November 2025	Management response and Executive Board preparation Wider dissemination Presentation to the Executive Board

6.2. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

59. To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender, geographically, culturally, and technically diverse and balanced evaluation team of up to four³⁹ consultants, (including a research analyst and comprising of international and at least one national consultant with relevant expertise⁴⁰. The selected evaluation firm is responsible for proposing a mix of evaluators and thematic experts with the requisite experience and set of skills to effectively cover the areas of evaluation. The team leader and senior evaluator should have excellent synthesis and evaluation reporting writing skills in English. The evaluation team will have strong methodological competencies in designing feasible data capture and analysis as well as synthesis and reporting skills. The evaluation team should have good knowledge of gender, equity, and wider inclusion issues. In addition, the team members should have knowledge and experience in technical cooperation, development contexts and capacity strengthening approaches and mechanisms.

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

Areas of CSPE	Expertise required
Team leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team management, supervision, coordination, planning, ability to resolve problems and deliver on time. • Strong presentation and interpersonal skills • Excellent report writing and analytical skills. • Experience evaluating technical co-operation instruments in middle income contexts. • Experience in leading complex, strategic evaluations at country level, such as evaluations of country strategic plans, joint programmes, organisational positioning, and nexus dynamics, including with UN organizations. • Experience with applying theory-based evaluation approaches, reconstruction, and use of theories of change. • Strong ability to navigate political sensitivities, and strong understanding the complexity of the relation between UN and member states.
Nutrition-sensitive school feeding programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in evaluating school-based programming and transition to national ownership. Prior experience of WFP's school feeding programmes would be desirable. • Experience in evaluating nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programming, policies, and systems. Education background in nutrition or nutrition-related studies would be desirable.

³⁹ Excluding person(s) involved in quality assurance.

⁴⁰ WFP may conduct reference checks and interviews with selected team members.

Areas of CSPE	Expertise required
Technical cooperation, facilitation for development and humanitarian cooperations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in and knowledge of technical cooperation-focused programmes. • Experience in and knowledge of WFP field-level programme implementation of development and humanitarian cooperation. • Experience in evaluating facilitation of development and humanitarian cooperation in middle-income countries. • Knowledge of interagency coordination and response mechanisms for the SDGs. • Experience in evaluating technical assistance to government agencies on policy development/reform and capacity and systems strengthening interventions in nutrition-sensitive programming, or school feeding programmes. • Experience of provision of technical assistance to government agencies is desirable.
Resilience/livelihoods/food systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise in evaluating integration of smallholder farmers to national-level value chains. • support, or market access, or food systems, or anticipatory action and climate change adaptation activities. • Experience in evaluating, implementing market systems/food systems programmes in middle-income countries would be desirable.
Research assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant understanding of research and analysis requirements for evaluations of capacity strengthening food systems, nutrition and school feeding programmes. • Ability to provide qualitative and quantitative research support to evaluation teams including design surveys, analysis of M&E data, data cleaning and analysis, writing and presentation skills, proofreading, and note taking.
Quality assurance and editorial expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in writing high quality, complex evaluation deliverables (detailed reports and summaries). • Experience in quality assurance of written technical reports and briefs.

6.3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

60. This evaluation is managed by the OEV. Wilson Kaiikai has drafted the ToR and Philippa Morgan will take over the management of the evaluation from the approval of the ToR. Isabella Decesaris will be OEV's research analyst (RA). 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 [Internal Reference Group](#) (IRG); 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 EM will be the main interlocutor between the Evaluation Team (ET), 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 and oversight. The Anne-Claire Luzot, Director of OEV will clear the final evaluation products and present the CSPE to the WFP's EB for consideration in November 2025.

61. An IRG composed of selected WFP stakeholders at WFP China Office, and headquarters levels will be expected to review and comment on draft evaluation reports; provide feedback during evaluation briefings; and be available for interviews with the evaluation team.

62. The CO will facilitate the evaluation team’s contacts with stakeholders in China; provide logistical support during the fieldwork and organize in-country stakeholder workshops (inception and learning). Jiang Han has been nominated the WFP China Office focal point and will assist in communicating with the EM and the contracted CSP ET and setting up meetings and coordinating field visits. To ensure the independence of the evaluation, WFP staff will not be part of the ET or participate in meetings where their presence could bias the responses of the stakeholders.

6.4. SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

63. As an “independent supplier” of evaluation services to WFP, the contracted firm will be responsible for ensuring the security of the ET, and for making adequate arrangements for evacuation for medical or insecurity reasons. However, to avoid any security incidents, the EM will ensure that the WFP China 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 ET must observe applicable United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) rules including taking requisite 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 WFP’s 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.

64. A communication and knowledge management plan will be developed by the EM in consultation with the ET and the CO during the inception phase. The ET will propose/explore communication/feedback channels to appropriate audiences (including affected populations as relevant) as part of the inception phase.
65. 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 OEV will ensure dissemination of lessons through the annual evaluation report.

6.6. THE PROPOSAL

66. Technical and financial offers for this evaluation should consider in-country inception (5 working days) and data collection missions (15 working days), and travel of the evaluation team leader for the stakeholder workshops to be held in Beijing, China (4 working days). 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 (SER) is drafted by the EM, financial proposals should budget time for the Team Leader to review and validate the final draft SER before it is submitted to the Executive Board in November 2025.
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.

Annex 1: Overview of performance data availability

Table 1: Country Strategic Plan China [2022-2025] logframe analysis			
Logframe version		Outcome indicators	Output indicators
v 1.0 3/11/2022	Total nr. of indicators	4	8
v 2.0 27/03/2023	New indicators	0	0
	Discontinued indicators	0	0
	Total nr. of indicators	4	8
Total nr. of indicators that were included in all versions of the logframe		4	8

Source: COMET report CM-L010 (accessed 07.02.2024.)

Table 2: Analysis of results reporting in China 2022 Annual Country Reports		ACR 2022
Outcome indicators		
	Total number of indicators in applicable logframe	
Baselines	Nr. of indicators with any baselines reported	4
Year-end targets	Nr. of indicators with any year-end targets reported	4
CSP-end targets	Nr. of indicators with any CSP-end targets reported	4
Follow-up	Nr. of indicators with any follow-up values reported	4
Output indicators		
	Total number of indicators in applicable logframe	
Targets	Nr. of indicators with any targets reported	7
Actual values	Nr. of indicators with any actual values reported	7

Source: COMET report CM-L010 (accessed 07.02.2024.), ACR China 2022

Annex 2: List of relevant Previous Evaluations, Reviews and Audits

Centralized Evaluations

[2021 Evaluation of China Country Strategic Plan for 2017-2022](#)

[2021 Impact Evaluation of the Preschool Nutrition Pilot in Selected Counties of Xiangxi Prefecture, Hunan, PR China](#)

Decentralized Evaluations

[2021 Impact Evaluation of the Preschool Nutrition Pilot in Selected Counties of Xiangxi Prefecture, Hunan, PR China](#)

Reviews/Studies

2015 A Strategic Review of Sustainable Development Goal 2 in China

Annex 3: Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
BSAFE	Basic Safe and Secure Approaches to Field Environments
CICETE	China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchanges
CIDCA	China International Development Cooperation Agency
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CSPE	Country Strategic Plan Evaluation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EB	Executive Board
EM	Evaluation Manager
ET	Evaluation Team
FAO	Food and Agricultural Development Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture and Development
IRG	Internal Reference Group
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARA	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBP	Needs-based plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OIGI	Office of Inspection and Investigation
PHQA	Post-Hoc Quality Assessment

QA	Quality Assurance
SBCC	Social and Behaviour Change Communication
SER	Summary Evaluation Report
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SO	Strategic Outcome
SPD	Strategic Partnership Division
SSAFE	Safe and Secure Approaches to Field Environments
SSC	South-South Cooperation
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Annex 4: WFP operational presence



Adapted from: China, WFP presence February 2024, prepared by WFP HQ GIS unit on 5 February 2024.

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