



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Evaluation of Guinea WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024

CONTEXT

Guinea, a low-income country with a population of around 13.9 million, grapples with multifaceted challenges, including multidimensional poverty and persistent food and nutrition insecurity. The resurgence of the Ebola virus in 2021 compounded the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating health crises. Climate change effects manifest in recurrent extreme weather events and ecosystem degradation. Agriculture, a pivotal sector, contributes significantly to the national economy, employing about 67 percent of Guineans and 52 percent of the workforce in 2022.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation period covers the transitional interim country strategic plan (T-ICSP) from January 2018 to June 2019 and the interim country strategic plan (ICSP) from July 2019 to June 2024. The T-ICSP budget increased from USD 15.1 million to USD 16.8 million, to reach 287,107 planned beneficiaries. The ICSP budget increased from USD 40.3 million to over USD 119 million by July 2023, to reach 1,431,600 planned beneficiaries. The T-ICSP focused on school feeding, food assistance, nutrition, and strengthening smallholder livelihoods. The ICSP aims to shift WFP from direct food assistance to a technical partnership with the Government and position WFP as a catalyst for sustainable solutions to hunger. Continuing the T-ICSP's focus, it emphasizes resilience and livelihood improvement. Initially comprising five strategic outcomes and activities, a sixth outcome was added in February 2021 for COVID-19 response. The ICSP combines emergency response, social protection support, malnutrition prevention, and capacity-building to promote long-term resilience. Both plans aimed to transform gender relations and promote gender equality.

OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was carried out from February 2023 onwards for the dual purpose of accountability and learning and to inform the preparation of the next country strategic plan.

The evaluation covered the implementation periods of the T-ICSP and the ICSP up to May 2023. It aimed to determine WFP's strategic positioning, its contribution to the achievement of outcomes, its efficiency in implementation and the factors explaining the results achieved.

The main intended users of the evaluation are the WFP Guinea country office, the Regional Bureau for Western Africa, technical divisions at WFP headquarters, the WFP Executive Board, the Government of the Republic of Guinea, other United Nations entities in Guinea, donors, and civil society organizations.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

Contributions to the strategic outcomes

Strategic outcome 1. WFP has been highly effective in setting up new school canteens in Guinea, but results vary by region depending on funding available and purchasing methods employed. Measuring the impact on children's nutrition is challenging. Activities were adjusted based on donor funding. The abrupt scale-up of cash-based transfers in 2022-2023, particularly in areas with little experience in local purchases, presented difficulties. There is a need to improve the capacity of canteen management committees to purchase food in bulk.

Strategic outcome 2. Emergency activities surged in 2020 and particularly during 2021-2022 due to the COVID-19 response and RESIGUI Project (2020 - 2022) – *“Improving the resilience of vulnerable populations in Guinea”*. Planned beneficiary numbers fluctuated significantly across the years, from 15,000 in 2019 to 300,000 in 2020. Beneficiary targets were not reached except in 2022. Results in terms of food and nutrition security were hard to interpret due to inconsistent sample sizes and population variations year-to-year.

Strategic outcome 3. From 2019 to 2023, over 15,000 individuals received annual treatment for moderate acute malnutrition, with actual beneficiaries falling short of targets except in 2022. A holistic approach including screening, care, awareness, and cooking lessons proved to be more effective

and sustainable than specialized food distributions alone. Combining cash transfers and income-generating activities improved nutritional care for people living with HIV compared to sporadic food support. Performance indicators for malnutrition treatment are neither sufficiently reliable nor comprehensive.

Strategic outcome 4. Food assistance for assets (FFA) activities grew over time reaching 65,000 beneficiaries in 2021 but slowed in 2022 due to funding fluctuations and delays in irrigation infrastructure development works. Activities involving local actors in the rice sector improved seed access for smallholder farmers and boosted rice production. Challenges remain in market gardens due to water access issues. Reforestation efforts were less successful. WFP revived producer organizations, but local procurement declined in 2021 due to poor harvests and local supply capacity issues. The evaluation questioned the scale-up potential of a farming model based on intensive rice cultivation in the highly diverse Guinean agroecological context.

Strategic outcomes 5 and 6. Country capacity strengthening (strategic outcome 5) lacked clear objectives and its activities tended to be combined with those of the other strategic outcomes, thus complicating analysis of results. Priority was given to strengthening health logistics capacity. Progress in establishing a national home-grown school feeding programme was limited. UNHAS transport (strategic outcome 6) proved invaluable during health crises, with a doubling of organizations using the service in 2022.

Cross-cutting issues

Gender was integrated into WFP interventions and women's groups were directly targeted, but overall progress on women empowerment was limited. Transformative effects, such as changes in women's workload or decision-making, weren't adequately measured.

WFP's approach promoted strong local participation, yet community feedback mechanisms were inadequate and contributed little to operational decision-making. Protection issues were well considered in activity design but lacked effective monitoring, and targeting did not sufficiently consider social exclusion factors such as disability.

Climate change adaptation could have been better integrated in resilience activities and could have drawn more from partners' experiences. Hand-over of malnutrition management to public health services was progressing, but several factors may affect their sustainability. Negotiation of land access reduced risk of tensions. Communities struggled with maintenance of irrigation schemes due to insufficient capacity strengthening and follow-up support. High staff turnover hampered capacity strengthening of national institutions. Humanitarian and resilience efforts were well integrated in the RESIGUI project which combined COVID-19 relief and resilience-building activities.

Timeliness and efficient use of resources

Delays in procurement and payments affected emergency food distribution and cash transfers, driven by financial, logistical, and COVID-19 related challenges. Coverage decisions relied on Cadre Harmonisé results but were constrained by limited funding, leading to deprioritization of assistance in some remote areas. Targeting could be made more precise, especially in vulnerable communities. The pre-school cycle is currently

given little attention, with limited focus on preschool nutrition. Financial utilization fluctuates yearly due to various factors, including limited funding visibility. Activity-specific cost-effectiveness or modality analyses were not conducted due to a lack of country office expertise and resources.

Factors that explain WFP's performance

The country office adopted an agile annual planning to cope with insufficient and unpredictable funding. It has enhanced resource mobilization and obtained funding from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for 2023 but securing long-term funding and maintaining donor confidence have been a challenge. The monitoring and evaluation system, understaffed and under-resourced, did not yield reliable data and provided limited information on outcome achievement. As a result, it could not contribute much to decision-making. WFP prioritized involvement of public services and the private sector but could have better coordinated with other UN agencies. Cooperating partners played an important role in delivery, but collaboration was constrained by administrative delays and short duration of contracts. Communication within the country office and staff diversity improved, but staff reductions since 2021 exacerbated workload strain.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Overall, WFP was recognized at the national level for its logistical expertise and contribution to food security, although its output targets were only met in 2018. WFP's focus on agricultural development would have required more diverse technical skills, so that support could be better tailored to diverse agroecological contexts. Resilience building initiatives faced targeting, coverage, and exit strategy challenges. The commitment to vulnerable groups lacked a systematic approach to addressing underlying vulnerabilities. Despite strong community participation, operational feedback, up-to-date data, and monitoring were limited, hampering decision-making.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Strengthen strategic and operational partnerships in terms of resource mobilization, programme synergy and geographical coverage by implementing joint activities and prioritizing the most promising partnerships.

Recommendation 2. Improve the preparation of integrated resilience projects, including the stages prior to implementation, while ensuring that solid, long-term technical partnerships and clear exit strategies are in place.

Recommendation 3. Promote more inclusive and transformative approaches to sustainable recovery from situations of nutritional vulnerability arising from discrimination (e.g., in relation to gender or HIV status), in particular by tackling underlying causes and implementing long-term empowerment strategies complemented by qualitative monitoring mechanisms.

Recommendation 4. Continue efforts regarding accountability to populations, the monitoring and assessment of activities and the monitoring of food and nutrition insecurity.