

18 September 2024

Management Comments to the Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Pakistan (AR/24/09)

WFP Management welcomes the observations and recommendations made by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in its internal audit report on WFP operations in Pakistan (AR/24/09), covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023. WFP Management appreciates the audit's focus on critical areas such as risk management and management oversight, management of cooperating partners, external stakeholder relationship management and communication, management services, operational effectiveness, monitoring, community feedback mechanisms, logistics and procurement.

Pakistan faces complex challenges including significant economic and food security issues exacerbated by political and social tensions and recurrent natural disasters, such as the unprecedented 2022 floods in Pakistan, which triggered a massive humanitarian crisis. Through its country strategic plan for the period 2023-2027, WFP has made a strategic shift and now supports the government in addressing these challenges through strengthening the country's social protection system, helping transform its food systems and providing technical/capacity support. Within this context, WFP is consolidating its position in these areas and has scaled up a country-wide nutrition-focused social protection programme in partnership with the government's Benazir Income Support Programme. In 2023 alone, WFP reached approximately 4.4 million beneficiaries, including those affected by the 2022 floods, with a budget of USD 176 million, making it a critical partner in Pakistan's humanitarian and development landscape.

WFP Management appreciates the recognition of positive practices in risk management, monitoring and logistics, as well as the significant progress made in strengthening cooperating partner management. These strong operational practices are pivotal in allowing the country office to enhance the quality of delivery and achieve positive outcomes.

WFP Management acknowledges the audit's overall conclusion of **"some improvement needed"** and agrees with the one high-priority and three medium-priority observations. Agreed actions are closely aligned with ongoing initiatives to improve operational efficiency and compliance with both WFP and donor/partner requirements. WFP has already initiated the implementation of these agreed actions in Pakistan, and full completion is expected within the designated timelines.

Regarding the high-priority observation on planning and coordination with the government, WFP Management recognizes the need for clearer roles, responsibilities, and operational targets with the government in the implementation of the Benazir Nashonuma Programme under the Benazir Income Support Programme. WFP will partner with the government to enhance coordination and delivery of the programme by setting clear, measurable targets, building on documented lessons learned from the initial phase of the project.



WFP acknowledges the three medium-priority observations identified and is taking steps to address them, including through (i) developing standardized procedures and processes for expense categorization to meet both donor and WFP requirements; (ii) improving communication to beneficiaries and working more closely with the government's own feedback mechanism for the Benazir Income Support Programme and WFP's cooperating partners; and (iii) ensuring regular, standardized and centralized monitoring mechanisms for the renovation of health centres to proactively address any maintenance-related issues.

WFP Management appreciates the constructive engagement of the Office of the Inspector General. The audit's recommendations will serve as a valuable guide for enhancing the effectiveness of WFP's operations in Pakistan and ensuring continued accountability to its donors and beneficiaries. WFP Management is confident that the actions being implemented will further strengthen WFP's capacity to meet its objectives in Pakistan and implement its work under the country strategic plan, for the period 2023-2027.