Evaluation Synthesis on WFP's Engagement in Middle-Income Countries (2019 – 2024)

Terms of Reference (final)

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

October 2024

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1. Background

1.1 Introduction

2. This synthesis has been included in the WFP Office of Evaluation's workplan for 2024-2026. It will be conducted by OEV between June 2024 and February 2025 and be presented at EB.A/2025.

3. Evaluation syntheses are delivered by OEV to respond to the growing demand within WFP for succinct analysis drawing from completed independent evaluations. They systematically combine and integrate findings from quality-assessed evaluations to develop higher-level, or more comprehensive knowledge, to help inform policy and strategic decisions.

4. This synthesis will draw together evidence from centralized and decentralised evaluations to examine **WFP's role (strategic positioning), partnerships and results in middle income countries (MICS).** The synthesis will encompass both WFP's 'enabling' support to national partners, and its adaptive capacity to crisis response where required, over the period 2019-2024. The synthesis aims to contribute to WFP's global and regional evidence base and support key ongoing corporate strategic discussions – particularly towards the development of the next Strategic Plan.

5. These Terms of Reference (ToR) outline the relevance, scope, timeline, and questions asked in the synthesis. They draw from an initial document review, and an earlier Concept Note that was circulated for a targeted set of comments from stakeholders in HQ and in the Regional Bureaux in August 2024.

1.2 Context for the synthesis

External context: global issues and trends

6. The 2019-2024 period covered in this synthesis has been characterised by:

- the unprecedented global impact of COVID-19, which has disrupted economies, health systems, and social structures, pushing millions of people into extreme poverty.[1]
- declining income trends continuing since the pandemic, with many governments (across upper and lower MICS) increasingly unable to protect the population from the impact of successive shocks.[2]
- new and protracted conflicts and economic shocks driving higher demand for humanitarian assistance, while in parallel funding shortfalls have resulted in the 2023 global humanitarian appeal being the lowest-funded since 2012.[3]
- low- and middle-income countries struggling with limited fiscal space, severely impacting their spending on safety nets and social protection programmes, affecting governments' ability to keep up with growing demands.[4]

7. Within the UN context, greater attention to middle-income countries and to the specific challenges they face, has emerged from high-level discussions[5] and analysis on the progress towards the SDGs[6] showing a mixed picture of their development trajectory, particularly since after COVID.

8. Within the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) analysis and discussion post-COVID have focused on developmental challenges for MICs, stressing how macroeconomic stability is a necessary

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[1] United Nations. 2021. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021. New York.

[2] WFP. 2024. Global Hunger Explainer – June 2024 and WFP. 2024 Global Food Security Situation – April 2024.

[3] OCHA. 2023. Global Humanitarian Overview 2023, December update. Also cited in: WFP. 2024. Annual Performance Report 2023, para 6.

[4] *Ibidem*.

[5] The 2023 High-Level Political Forum focused specifically on overcoming MICs challenges in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

[6] United Nations. 2024. The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024. New York.

but insufficient condition to sustain a continuous path of progress, particularly when deep economic setbacks occur after period of intense growth.[7]

Internal context: WFP's strategic frameworks for MIC engagement

9. WFP's current Strategic Plan (2022-2025)[8] highlights that 'WFP has a growing enabling agenda in MICs focused on technical assistance, policy advice, evidence generation and system strengthening'.[9]

10. WFP's expected role in MICS is framed in the SP as linked directly to what the organisation is expected to do, at the request of governments, in an enabling role[10], to support national capacities and systems in different areas ranging from emergency preparedness to nutrition, and from school meal management to south-south knowledge exchanges (see table 1 for a detailed overview). The consultation process for the successor Strategic Plan is currently underway.

11. The latest organization-wide programme strategy[11] of June 2024 does not include a reference to WFP's engagement in MICS. However, it speaks to the broader principle that WFP should focus on its comparative advantages, tailored to local demand and context' and focus on those areas where it can make the biggest difference also when it works to support governments to build their own capacities.

Table 1: WFP's role in middle income countries as articulated in the Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

WFP's role in MICS in the Strategic Plan (2022-2025)	
Why	Support governments in MICS to: ▪ eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition ▪ contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth
What	➢ technical assistance to governments including on post-harvest loss management ➢ policy advice ➢ evidence generation ➢ system strengthening ➢ support governments in sharing their expertise, technology and resources with other developing countries to fight hunger and malnutrition ➢ innovative financing solutions – including debt swaps and exploring opportunities to involve other key stakeholders such as multilateral development banks ➢ innovative financing opportunities for nutrition
How	▪ engaging at the request of governments ▪ adapting activities based on needs and considering high levels of inequality and social exclusion ▪ grounding activities in gender analysis ▪ leveraging WFP's expertise in emergencies to provide technical and policy support to enhance national capacity for emergency preparedness and response
Examples	WFP works in MICS: ▪ with partners and governments to provide policy support for improved **school meal quality**; ▪ to support the reform and strengthening of **national school health and nutrition programmes**, in particular to ensure that children in need are integrated into them; ▪ in Small Island Development States (SIDS) to enhance **national capacities for EPR** ▪ to support MICS during and following COVID-19 in pivoting towards **long-term recovery programming** to mitigate the impact of the crisis and enable them to **build back better**

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[7] Alonso, A. and Ocampo, A. 2020. Trapped in the Middle? Developmental Challenges for Middle-Income Countries. Oxford University Press.

[8] The previous SP (2017-2022) only refers to WFP's engagement in MICS in an introductory section focused on evidence and lessons from evaluations. The section highlights WFPs' relevance in MICS and the need to focus its support "on helping countries to strengthen their own national policies and systems working effectively as an independent and impartial partner and enhancing capacity-building effort". The most recent WFP's Programmatic Focus – interim strategy of June 2024 explicitly refers to 'countries facing protracted or recurring crises, and fragile contexts' but does not articulate or tease out specific strategic directions for engagement in MICS contexts.

[9] WFP. 2021. Strategic Plan (2022-2025) Box 9, emphasis added.

[10] WFP's enabling role has been introduced in the current SP (2022-2025) as an important shift compared to the previous SP (2018-2022) whereby the organisation, where possible, through Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS), technical assistance, and service provision enables others to address food security and nutrition needs in their contexts.

[11] WFP. 2024. WFP's Programmatic Focus – interim strategy. June 2024 (internal) page 2.

	▪ to **scale up debt swaps** to mobile new resources for essential programmes, allowing host governments to reduce sovereign debt and devote resources to their own social safety nets and national development. ▪ To **explore innovative financing opportunities for nutrition**, to stimulated private investment in the first 1,000 days of life.

Source: Verbatim excerpts from WFP Strategic Plan (2022-2025), box 9 page 29, and para 123.

12. A review of corporate policies, strategies and guidance has found that:

- different markers - other than the one linked to income - are more commonly used in WFP (e.g. countries with L2, L3 situations (up until 2023) countries in situation of corporate attention or scale up; countries with larger / smaller offices and operations).[12]

- whenever policies and corporate guidance refer to country income classifications[13] it is mostly only in the context section, and with limited differentiation between e.g. upper-middle and lower middle-income countries.

- there is little explanation of why and how WFP's strategic positioning, and programmatic offer and approaches should be adjusted or refocused in MIC contexts. The policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)[14], the WFP's School Feeding Strategy (2020-2030), and the recent corporate strategy on urban programming[15] are examples where a distinction between approaches more relevant and applicable to middle-income versus low-income contexts are identified.

WFP's engagement in MICS: overview on contexts and activities

13. Following the World Bank (WB) classification, the category of MICS encompasses two sub-groups: lower-middle income countries (LMICS) and upper-middle income countries (UMICS). In 2023, the WB classified 105 countries as MICS, of which 51 are low-MICS and 54 upper-MICS.[16]

14. Currently, **70 percent of the countries (60 in total) where WFP operates are middle income countries:** 40 of these are Lower-MICS, and 20 Upper-MICS. Table 2 provides an overview, and highlights the countries included in this synthesis exercise.[17]

Table 2: Overview on WFP's presence in low- and middle-income countries (2019-2024) – highlighting countries proposed for inclusion in the synthesis (n=30)

Region	Income classification	Countries	
Reporting to HQ	**Upper-middle**	**China**	
RBB	**Low**	Afghanistan Korea, Dem. Rep.	
	Low-middle	Bangladesh **Bhutan** **Cambodia** **India**	**Nepal** **Pakistan** **Papua New Guinea** **Philippines**

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[12] See Audit on Decentralisation and 2019 WFP review of country office presence (internal).

[13] Reference to MICS is mostly included the 'context sections' of the Nutrition & HIV Guidance, in the Youth Focused Programming Guidance, in School Based Programming Guidance, in the Social Protection Manual, in the Energy for Food Security Manual.

[14] WFP. 2017. Emergency preparedness policy. WFP/EB.2/2017/4-B/Rev.1 'As many countries move from low- to lower- and upper-middle-income status, WFP will shift its support towards strengthening the capacity of national stakeholders and institutions to improve national early warning systems, analysis and data dissemination and use for improved decision-making and early action and to enhance coordination, information management and efficiency in responses to food and nutrition emergencies. Depending on the operating environment, WFP's engagement with national partners ranges from service delivery to capacity augmentation and operational and policy advice' para 37.

[15] WFP. 2023 WFP Urban Strategy – Achieving zero hunger in an urbanising world.

[16] Based on the latest WB classification available (consulted on 17 July 2024) and noting that Venezuela could not be classified by the WB for two consecutive years due to missing country-level data since 2020.

[17] The WB classification is updated yearly. To account for possible fluctuations in/out of MICS, countries have been listed based on the most recurrent classification as UMICS or LMICS over the synthesis timeframe (2018-2024). Full sampling details and rationale for the selection are in section 3 of the ToR.

		Kyrgyz Republic Lao PDR Myanmar	Sri Lanka Tajikistan **Timor-Leste**
	Upper-middle	**Indonesia**	Pacific Island
RBC	**Low**	Syrian Arab Republic Yemen, Rep.	
	Low-middle	Algeria **Egypt, Arab Rep.** **Morocco** **Tunisia**	**Ukraine** Palestine
	Upper-middle	**Armenia** Iran, Islamic Rep. **Iraq** Jordan	Lebanon Libya Moldova **Türkiye**
RBD	**Low**	Burkina Faso Central African Rep. Chad Gambia, The Guinea	Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mali Niger Sierra Leone Togo
	Lower-middle	**Cape Verde** Benin Cameroon Côte d'Ivoire **Ghana**	Mauritania Nigeria São Tomé and Príncipe Senegal
	Upper-middle	---	
RBJ	**Low**	Congo, Dem. Rep. Madagascar	Malawi Mozambique
	Lower-middle	Angola Congo, Rep. **Eswatini** **Lesotho**	Tanzania **Zambia** **Zimbabwe**
	Upper-middle	**Namibia**	
RBN	**Low**	Burundi Ethiopia Rwanda Somalia	South Sudan Sudan Uganda
	Lower-middle	**Djibouti** **Kenya**	
	Upper-middle	---	
RBP (*)	**Low**	---	
	Lower-middle	Bolivia El Salvador Haiti	Honduras Nicaragua
	Upper-middle	Caribbean Community **Colombia** Cuba **Dominican Republic**	Ecuador Guatemala **Peru**

Note (*): Venezuela could not be classified by the WB due to missing country-level data since 2020

Source: OEV compilation based on WB data

15. The **diversity within the MICS group** influences both the scale and types of WFP's activities in each country[18] and contributes to shaping how WFP articulates its strategic positioning and comparative advantage in relation to national partners. For example:

- Many MICs –upper-MICs in particular – are characterised by **unfinished development agendas** and face so-called second-generation challenges. These challenges include the need to tackle social

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[18] WFP. 2019. Country presence review – May 2019 (internal document).

inequality, pay more attention to green growth, and to social welfare, trade and tax reforms to better withstand macroeconomic shocks, pandemics, global displacement.[19] In these contexts, WFP's support is often focuses on technical assistance[20], policy advice and other 'enabling' areas (see Table 1)

- Several MICS face **ongoing emergencies, both natural and man-made, which impact their development and stability** often displacing communities and straining resources. In fact, around one third of MICS where WFP operates (19 countries including e.g. Algeria, Türkiye, Moldova) are characterised by refugee operations.

- MICS show **diverse levels of urban and rural development**, with 54 percent of their populations currently living in urban areas.[21] Over the next five decades, urban land expansion is projected to increase by 44 percent in LMICS and 13 percent in UMICS. At the same time, the burden of food insecurity and malnutrition is shifting from rural to urban areas, as many urban residents face high living costs and cannot afford enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs.[22] Accordingly, WFP is increasingly engaging in social safety nets, including in urban areas (see para. 10).

- **Small Islands Development States (SIDS)** are a distinct MICS group characterised by specific challenges linked to climate change and rising sea level. In SIDS, WFP's activities range from technical support for shock-responsive social protection systems and climate adaptation to crisis response interventions, especially after natural shocks or in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- With variations within such broad group, MICS are contexts where the relationship between WFP and host governments is not only one of provider /recipient of assistance, but, in some contexts, one where **host governments are also funders of WFP's work in-country** (as shown in figure 1). In around 10 percent[23] of all MICS where WFP works, the host government is the largest donor to WFP's work in-country. This percentage grows to 15 percent,[24] where the host government funds at least one third of WFP's work in-country.

Figure 1: Top 20 MICS contributors to own national WFP programmes
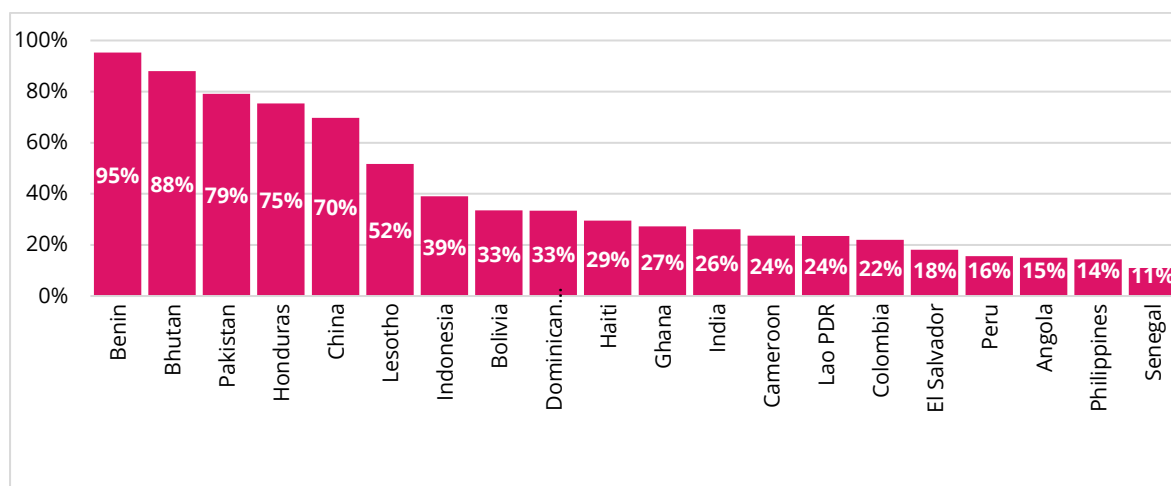
Source: The Factory, Annual Resource situation (data consulted on 10 September 2024)

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[19] World Bank. 2017. World Bank Group Engagement in Upper-Middle-Income Countries: Evidence from IEG Evaluations. Independent Evaluation Group, Synthesis Report. Washington, DC: World Bank, pp.1-3.

[20] In line with the WFP Country Capacity Strengthening Policy (2022) technical assistance is defined as follows: 'on-financial assistance provided by local or international specialists. Technical assistance can take the form of sharing information, expertise and working knowledge through secondment, short-term consultation, instruction, skills training or consulting services, and may also involve the transfer of technical data. Technical assistance may be a means of supporting country capacity strengthening but may also be provided in a form that constitutes capacity substitution.'

[21] World Bank. 2024. Urban population (% of total population) - Middle income. Data extracted on 24.09.2024.

[22] WFP. 2023 WFP Urban Strategy – Achieving zero hunger in an urbanising world.

[23] Six countries in total: Benin, Bhutan, Pakistan, Honduras, China, Lesotho

[24] Nine countries in total: Benin, Bhutan, Pakistan, Honduras, China, Lesotho, Indonesia, Bolivia, Dominican Republic.

16. Despite comprising 70 percent of the countries where WFP operates (para 14), between 2019 and 2024,[25] MICS accounted for only 32.4 percent of the WFP total Needs Based Plan (NBP), with lower-income countries absorbing the remaining 68 percent. Specifically, lower-MICS accounted for 20.8 percent, while upper-MICS for 11.6 percent.

17. The absolute NBP value in MICS increased from approximately USD 4 billion in 2019-2021 to USD 7 billion in 2022-2024. Despite the increase, MICS share of WFP's total NBP decreased from nearly half to one-third, reflecting the overall growth in WFP's budget.

Figure 2: Evolution of WFP's Needs Based Plan absorbed by MICs (2019 - 2024)
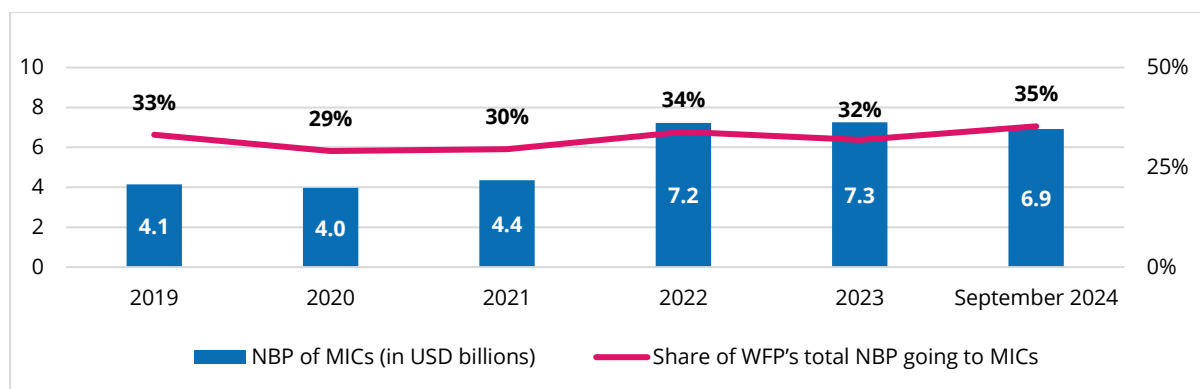
Source: IRM analytics, EV_CPB_Resources_Overview (data consulted on 10 September 2024)

18. At the broadest level, the NBP allocation towards middle-income countries is as follows:

   - Unconditional Resource Transfers (58 percent)
   - Service Provision and Platforms Activities (7 percent)
   - Community and Household Asset Creation (6 percent)
   - School Meals Activities (6 percent).

19. Zooming in on those activities in the WFP's Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) where the objective is enabling national actors, systems, and institutions, the resource allocation shows the following distribution:

   - Institutional Capacity Strengthening Activities (29 percent)
   - School Meal Activities (19 percent)
   - Malnutrition Prevention Programmes (17 percent)
   - Social Protection Sector Support (15 percent).

20. WFP's work relating to the enabling agenda is primarily tagged under resilience building (60 percent), followed by addressing root causes (35 percent) and crisis response (5 percent).

2. Reasons for the synthesis

2.1 Rationale and objectives

21. This synthesis aims to contribute to ongoing discussions around WFP's comparative advantage in middle income countries. Specifically, it will assess:

   - How, with whom, and with what results, WFP has strategically positioned itself in MICs, and provided **enabling support**; and

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[25] Data consulted on 10 September 2024.

- How, with whom and with what results, WFP has demonstrated **adaptive capacity**, **pivoting its role to crisis response** where necessary, e.g. when spikes in food security and related needs occur.

22. The synthesis aims to understand not only the specific contextual conditions and approaches followed by WFP (e.g. in terms of partnerships, policy advocacy, localisation etc.) to establish and maintain an enabling role in MICS, but also what it takes to preserve and roll-out the capacity to pivot and respond to a crisis – and scale back after the peak of the response. From a learning perspective, it seeks to contribute to WFP's evidence base by:

- helping to foster learning around how WFP's articulation of its role and comparative advantage in MICS has evolved since 2019, to feed into the ongoing discussions in preparation to the next Strategic Plan.
- providing information around one of the MOPAN recommendations which called for WFP to clarify and communicate its mandate in the context of reduced resources including through building on its comparative advantage and geographic presence[26].
- filling one of the gaps also noted in the recent Mid-Term Evaluation of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan around limited clarity on WFP's comparative advantage in the 'changing lives' agenda particularly in those regional bureaus with a predominance of countries focused on changing lives.[27]
- providing some complementarity to some of the Summaries of Evaluation Evidence (SEEs) commissioned by WFP HQ Divisions and Regional Bureaux on issues such as Social Protection and Emergency Preparedness and Response.

23. From an accountability perspective the synthesis will:

- provide WFP stakeholders, national partners and ultimately people served by WFP, as well as donors and Executive Board members, with accountability for WFP results in MIC contexts.
- provide evaluative evidence against the expectations set in the current Strategic Plan, and inform the development of its successor, in relation to WFP's increasing engagement in MICS.

2.2 Stakeholders and main users

24. Several stakeholders internal and external to WFP, are expected to have an interest in the evidence and results from this evaluation synthesis, and some will be asked to play a role in the synthesis process.

25. The <u>primary intended audience</u> targeted by this synthesis is internal and include:

- At <u>Headquarters</u>, the Programme Operations, and the Partnerships & Innovation Departments, responsible for working on elements of the new Strategic Plan and whose work involves developing new, and/or revising exiting corporate guidance and strategies related to MICs.
- At <u>regional and country level</u>, the synthesis will help inform RBs and COs who are engaged in MIC contexts, including both senior management and technical staff.

26. External stakeholders with a possible interest in the synthesis include WFP government counterparts in MICS, and other national cooperating partners, donor government agencies, EB members, other UN resident agencies in MICS and WFP counterparts in different International Financial Institutions (IFIs)[28].

27. To provide focused inputs, and guidance at key moments during the synthesis, an Internal Reference Group (IRG) will be established following consultation with internal stakeholders. (Proposed membership and role are presented in ANNEX).

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[26] Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network. 2024. MOPAN Assessment of World Food Programme, p. 14.

[27] As highlighted in the MTE 'regional bureaux with a predominance of countries focused on changing lives expressed a view that the SP insufficiently reflects the contextually-specific features of WFP's comparative offering in those contexts'. WFP. 2024. Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's Strategic Plan 2022-2025, *forthcoming*, para 38.

[28] As secondary audience, UN agencies members of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Working Group on synthesis, and members of the Global SDG Synthesis Coalition are also expected to have an interest in this synthesis from both a thematic and methodology perspective.

3. Synthesis scope and questions

3.1 Scope and sampling

28. The scope of the synthesis is global, considering independent evaluative evidence[29] generated through WFP-commissioned evaluations in middle income countries. Evaluations were selected for inclusion in the synthesis if the following criteria were met:

    - **Timeframe** – evaluations completed in the 2019-2024 period to include both the current and previous Strategic Plans.
    - **Evaluation type** – including all WFP-commissioned evaluations (centralised[30] and decentralised[31]) including Country Strategic Plan, Policy, Strategic and Corporate Emergency Evaluations, as well as activity, operation, and thematic evaluations at decentralised level.
    - **Evaluation quality** – evaluations that have been scored through an external quality assessment[32] with minimum satisfactory quality (60 percent score).
    - **Geographic coverage** – evaluations focused on those MICs that in the period 2019-2024 **(a)** have shown an above average NBP allocation to/expended on activities targeting national governments, national actors, systems, and institutions[33]; and/or **(b)** experienced a rapid scale-up and scale down.[34]

29. From the initial set of 163 WFP-commissioned evaluations completed between 2019 and 2024 in MICS, the systematic application of the criteria above resulted in a sample of 73 evaluations (fully listed in Annex III) which cover 30 countries across all RBs (see tables 3 and 4). This resulting sample ensures:

    - Geographic diversity and representation of all regions where WFP operates.
    - Inclusion of both lower-middle income countries (17) and upper-middle income countries (11).
    - Diversity of contextual features e.g. fragility, conflict, vulnerability to natural hazards, risk profile.

Table 33: Evaluations selected for the synthesis by type

Centralized evaluations (CE)					Decentralized evaluations (DE)			Total
Corporate Emergency Response	Country strategic plan	Policy	Strategic	System-wide	Activity	Thematic	Pilot	**73** 39 CEs 34 DEs
1	21	8	8	1	27	6	1	

Source: Compilation from OEV Evaluation Information management system (E-MIS)

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[29] Generated through 163 evaluations completed between 2019-2024 in MICS.

[30] Centralized Evaluations (CEs) are commissioned and managed by OEV and presented to the Executive Board and comprise Policy Evaluations, Strategic Evaluations, Country Strategic Plan Evaluations, and Impact Evaluations.

[31] Decentralized Evaluations (DEs) are commissioned and managed by country offices, regional bureaux or Headquarters-based divisions other than OEV. They are not presented to the Board and can cover, activities, pilots, themes and transfer-modalities.

[32] OEV's externally managed post-hoc quality assessment (PHQA).

[33] This criterion has been applied using a weighted average.

[34] As indicated in WFP's operational data on emergency activation and de-activation in the 2018-2024 period.

Table 4: Overview on MICS included in the synthesis universe (n=30)

Region	WB Classification	Country	Latest CSP	Size of Operation	Scale up / Scale down	Refugee Operation	Institutional and Social Fragility	Conflict	Natural Hazard Index	Global Assurance Project High Risk Operation
OTHER	UM	China	CN02 (2022 - 2025)	34,780,956		-	-	-	7.8	-
RBB	LM	Bhutan	BT02 (2019 - 2024)	9,532,726		-	-	-	2.9	-
		Cambodia	KH02 (2019 - 2023)	87,921,370		-	-	-	4.6	-
		India	IN02 (2019- 2022)	16,540,369		-	-	-	7.9	-
		Kyrgyz Republic	KG02 (2023 - 2027)	100,131,324		-	-	-	4.1	-
		Nepal	NP02 (2019 - 2023)	169,922,974		-	-	-	5.1	-
		Pakistan	PK02 (2023 - 2027)	787,335,907	Q4 2022 - Q3 2023: CA*	-	-	-	7.5	-
		Pap. New Guinea	PG01 (2018-2018)	21,592,495		-	Yes		6.1	-
		Philippines	PH02 (2018 - 2024)	115,857,206	Q1 2022: CA	-	-	-	8.3	Yes
		Timor-Leste	TL02 (2023 - 2025)	21,178,773		-	Yes	-	3.4	-
	UM	Indonesia	ID02 (2021 - 2025)	15,828,623		-		-	7.4	-
RBC	LM	Egypt	EG02 (2018 - 2023)	589,046,872		Yes	-	-	6.2	Yes
		Morocco	MA02 (2019 -2022)	400,000		-	-	-	4.3	-
		Tunisia	TN02 (2022 - 2025)	11,550,785		-	-	-	4.3	-
		Ukraine	UA02 (2023 - 2024)	2,070,751,416		Yes	-	Yes	3.1	Yes
	UM	Armenia	AM02 (2019 - 2025)	84,191,636		-	-	Yes***	3.8	-
		Iraq	IQ02 (2020 - 2025)	668,448,993	Q4 2017 - Q4 2021: L2 Q2 and Q4 2022: CA	Yes	-	Yes	5.9	
		Türkiye	TR03 (2023 - 2025)	186,876,802	Q1 2023: CA	Yes	-	-	5.5	
RBD	LM	Cape Verde (LEO)	CV01 (2022-2023)	4,735,322					1.7	
		Ghana	GH02 (2019 - 2023)	94,110,883		-	-	-	3.3	-
RBJ	LM	Eswatini	SZ02 (2020 - 2025)	76,838,626		-	-	-	1.8	-
		Lesotho	LS02 (2019 - 2024)	168,097,417		-	-	-	2.1	-
		Zambia	ZM03 (2023 - 2028)	176,763,238		Yes			3	
		Zimbabwe	ZW02 (2022 - 2026)	571,353,219	Q2 - Q3 2019: L2		Yes	-	4	Yes

					Q4 2022 - Q1 2023: CA					
	UM	*Namibia*	NA01 (2017 -2023)	51,187,510		-	-	-	4.1	-
RBN	LM	*Djibouti*	DJ (2020 - 2024)	104,709,906		Yes	-	-	4.5	-
		Kenya	KE02 (2023 - 2027)	1,433,999,462	Q1 2022 - Q3 2023: CA	Yes			4.2	
		Colombia	CO02 (2021 - 2024)	795,730,186	Q1 2022, Q3 2022 - Q1 2023 and Q3 2023: CA	-	-	-	6.4	Yes
RBP	UM	*Dominican Rep.*	DO02 (2019 - 2023)	45,149,802		-	-	-	6.6	-
		Peru	PE02 (2023 - 2026)	73,821,586		-	-	-	6.4	-

LEGEND:

Countries marked with:

White: Selected based on a weighted average of NBP and expenditures allocated to the enabling agenda.

Light blue: Selected for a scale-up and scale-down of emergency response between 2019 - 2024.

Light red: Meet both criteria: selected based on NBP and enabling agenda expenditures, as well as the scale-up/scale-down of emergency response during 2019 - 2024.

* Corporate Attention (CA)

**Maximum value across Marshall Island; Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu

*** Countries affected by violent conflict, identified based on a threshold number of conflict-related deaths relative to the population. Armenia is not in the list, however given the conflict relevance within Armenia CSP Budget revision 2 it has been inserted in the table.

Source: Compiled by OEV [35]

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[35] Institutional Fragility and Conflict: World Bank FY25 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations
Natural Hazard: European Commission Inform Risk Index
Global Assurance Project High Risk Operation

3.2 Synthesis Questions

30. The synthesis will ask the following questions, depending on the evidence available within the evaluations:

SQ1	What characterises WFP's <u>strategic positioning</u> in MICS, and how has this evolved over time (2019-2024 period)?
	1.1: How do evaluations characterise WFP's role and comparative advantage in MICS in relation to both its 'enabling' role and emergency response role, and how has this evolved since 2019? Were any opportunities for strategic positioning missed?
	1.2: To what extent do evaluations find that WFP's strategic positioning in MICS is aligned with expectations outlined in corporate strategic documents, in particular the SP (2022-2025)?
	1.3: To what extent do evaluations find that WFP has been able to adapt to, and respond to changes in the external environment in MICS, particularly in relation to crisis response?
	1.4: To what extent do evaluations find that WFP's partnership approaches and strategies (Government, UN, Co-operating partners, and others) in MICS have been appropriate over the period, and were any opportunities missed?
SQ2	Which <u>factors</u> internal and external to WFP have supported or constrained WFP's strategic positioning in MICS over the period?
	2.1: What <u>contextual factors</u> shaped WFP's strategic positioning in MICS? (e.g. economic development levels, government priorities, existing social protection systems)
	2.2: What <u>internal factors</u> facilitated or hindered its strategic positioning in MICS? (E.g. risk management; resourcing (human and financial); resource mobilisation etc; management and institutional arrangements etc)
SQ3	What results were reported relating to WFP's engagement in MICS in the 2019-2024 period?
	3.1: What results were reported in the evaluations in relation to WFP's engagement in MICS in the 2019-2024 period? (by Strategic Outcome area) What are any areas of under-performance?
	3.2: What other results were reported, not captured by Strategic Outcomes?
	3.3: What opportunities for results were missed, if any?
SQ4	How does WFP approach sustainability in MICS and with which results?
	4.1: According to evaluations, what characterize WFP's efforts towards handover, exit strategies and sustainability in MICS? (e.g. appropriateness; evidence-informed; localisation-aware)
	4.2: What evidence is available of actual or prospective sustainability of WFP's activities in MICs, e.g. handover to national actors, exit strategies? What are the challenges and opportunities, and how do these vary across different contexts?

4. Approach, methodology and ethical considerations

4.1 Methodology

31. The synthesis will be conducted internally by OEV. A rigorous methodological approach will be adopted, in line with the requirements established by the Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) for Evaluation Synthesis.[36] The synthesis methodology will focus on comprehensive and systematic extraction, compilation and analysis of evaluation data to address the synthesis questions and sub-questions.[37]

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[36] WFP. 2021. Evaluation Synthesis, Guidance for Process and Content, Evaluation Quality Assurance System.

[37] An OEV Technical Note on Evaluative Products, providing guidance on evaluation synthesis will be used for reference.

32. The synthesis will combine the main component of qualitative content analysis on the universe of the sampled evaluations, with elements of primary data gathering from selected stakeholders, and analysis of secondary sources for validation and triangulation purposes. Specifically, the main features of the evaluation synthesis design and methodology are:

- Development in the inception phase of a detailed method for **refining as needed the screening and selection process of the final universe**[38] **of evaluations** for inclusion in the synthesis.
- Development and systematic application of a **comprehensive analytical framework** based on a set of **evaluation synthesis sub-questions and related analytical fields** to help structure and systematise the data extraction from the synthesis.
- **Iterative refinement of analytical fields based on pilot data extraction[39]** – The approach for developing analytical fields will combine *inductive[40]* and *deductive* [41] approaches to ensure adherence to the themes subsumed by the synthesis, but also maintain a degree of openness to capture emerging / unforeseen themes and relevant evidence.
- **Combination of software-assisted data extraction** (through NVIVO-15) **with manual data extraction** on a sub-set of evaluations for cross-validation purposes, and for testing the data extraction process and application of the analytical fields.

33. To help better situate the synthesis against the current organisational realities, and enhance the relevance of the recommendations it will put forward, the synthesis approach will include:

- **Analysis of secondary sources** (other than the evaluations included in the sample) to triangulate emerging findings.
- **Analysis of the recommendations and management responses (MR) data** to better understand recurring issues and uptake of recommended actions.
- **Consultation and feedback with stakeholders** and main intended users of the synthesis results on draft emerging themes and findings from the synthesis.

4.2. Ethical considerations

34. Ethical considerations shall be taken into account in the evaluation synthesis, in line with the [UNEG ethical standards and norms](#). Accordingly, the evaluation synthesis team is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the synthesis cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, and ensuring cultural sensitivity, and ensuring that the synthesis results do no harm to participants or their communities.

35. The synthesis team will not have been involved in the design, implementation or monitoring of any of the activities considered in the focus of the synthesis or have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest. All members of the evaluation synthesis team will abide by the 2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the 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 synthesis team will also commit to signing a confidentiality, internet and data security statement.

4.3 Quality Assurance

36. WFP's EQAS sets out processes with steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products, including synthesis, based on standardized checklists. The quality assurance will be systematically applied during this synthesis and relevant documents will be provided to the team. This quality assurance process does not interfere with the views or independence of the team but ensures that the report

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[38] The universe is intended as the final list of evaluations that will form part of the synthesis.

[39] The pilot data extraction process will also be used to validate the data extraction approach and coding application across the members of the OEV team who will conduct the synthesis.

[40] Inductive approaches allow analytical fields to emerge as data is reviewed, with codes developed, tested and reviewed in a more iterative manner.

[41] Deductive approaches refer to the development of a full set of analytical fields, against which evidence within evaluations will be coded and subsequently extracted.

provides credible evidence and analysis in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.

37. The synthesis team will be required to ensure the quality of data (validity, consistency, and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases. OEV expects that all deliverables from the evaluation team are subject to a thorough quality assurance review prior to submission for final clearance to the Director of Evaluation.

5. Organization of the synthesis

5.1 Synthesis team

38. This synthesis will be conducted by a team of two OEV evaluation officers and a data analyst.

5.2 Phases and deliverables

39. In order to present the evaluation synthesis in the June 2025 session, the following timetable will be used. Annex I presents a more detailed timeline.

Main Phases		Timeline
PREPARATION	Concept Note phase	June-July 2024
	IRG establishment and consultation	Aug-Sept 2024
	Pilot data extraction and finalisation of synthesis universe	July-Aug 2024
INCEPTION	Finalisation of analytical framework	Aug 2024
	Data extraction (NVIVO) and inception note	Sept-Oct 2024
ANALYSIS	Analysis of emerging themes	Jan 2025
	Draft report and stakeholder workshop	Feb-Mar 2025
REPORTING	Report finalisation, drafting of summary synthesis report	April 2025
EB PHASE	Executive Board followed by dissemination	June 2025

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities

40. A synthesis team from OEV comprising Francesca Bonino, Arianna Spacca and Isabella Decesaris has been assigned to conduct the synthesis. Julia Betts, Deputy Director for Centralised Evaluations in OEV will provide second level quality assurance. The Director of Evaluation, Anne-Claire Luzot, will approve the final synthesis products and present the summary synthesis report to the Executive Board for consideration.

41. An internal reference group (IRG) composed of selected WFP stakeholders will be established and asked to review and comment on draft synthesis reports, provide feedback during briefings and be available for interviews with the synthesis team.

5.4 Communication

42. All WFP synthesis products will be produced in English. The synthesis report, its summary report, and management response to the synthesis recommendations will be presented to the WFP Executive Board in June 2025. The final synthesis report will be posted on the public WFP website and OEV will ensure dissemination of lessons through the annual evaluation report.

43. The relevant Headquarter divisions and the Regional Evaluation Units will be encouraged to circulate the final synthesis report with their staff, with WFP country offices and relevant WFP external stakeholders, including cooperating partners.

5.5 Budget

44. The evaluation will be financed from OEV's Programme Support and Administrative budget.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I. Detailed synthesis timeline

	Key actions	By Whom	Dates
Phase 1 - Preparation			
	Rapid scoping paper	DDoE	20 May 2025
	Development of AF based on rapid scoping, and proposed identification of synthesis universe and revision of SQs accordingly	EM/RA (Synthesis Team)	24 May – 10 June
	Screening process of identify evaluation universe	EM/RA/ DDoE	10-19 June 2024
	Pilot data extraction on small evaluation sample to probe, and inform the proposed SQs	Team	24 June-12 July
	Discussion on emerging results of pilot data extraction and refinement of SQs and AF as needed	EM/RA/DDoE	15-18 July
	Submission to DDoE of draft CN and Analytical Framework (AF) for review	EM	22 July
	DDoE review of draft CN	**DDoE**	**22 -26 July**
	Synthesis Team Revision of draft CN to address DDoE comments	Synthesis Team	by 30 July
	Submission of revised CN for DoE review **DoE review window**	**DoE**	**31 July-4 Aug**
	Synthesis Team addresses DoE comment and seek final DDoE approval to share draft CN for comments	Synthesis Team	By 9 Aug
	Parallel work to continue pilot data extraction, develop code book and test it on small set of evaluations	Team	31 July- 30 Aug
	Draft CN shared for **IRG / stakeholders' comments**	**IRG**	**12-30 Aug** *Considering deadline extension requested by stakeholders*
	Synthesis Team's revision to address IRG comments and expand the CN to meeting the content element of a full synthesis TOR	EM and Synthesis Team	By 20 Sept *considering extended timeline needed for re-discuss the synthesis scope entirely*
	DDoE review of rev. ToR reflecting IRG comments **DDoE review window**	**DDoE**	**27 Sept-4 Oct**
	Final adjustment by synthesis team as needed and final TOR approval	DDoE	7 Oct
	Final TOR shared with WFP Stakeholders for information and posted online	EM	8 Oct
Phase 2 - Data extraction and early analysis			
	Continued work to read/ review the evaluation reports (review in batches and calibration of coding among synthesis team members)	Team	w-c 1 Oct
	Desk review of secondary data	Team	by 10 October
	Submission of **Inception Note** outlining the synthesis methodology and limitations	Team	By 18 October
	DDoE comment window on the Inception Note	**DDoE**	**w-c 21 Oct**
	Extraction, compilation and early analysis including of R2 system data	Team	Starting w-c 21 October

	Joint analysis and feedback session synthesis team +DDoE	**DDoE+Team**	**w-c 4 Nov**
	Conduct interviews with stakeholders (max 5) to probe and validate emerging themes from the analysis	Team	w-c 11 Nov
	Synthesis Team to incorporate DDoE feedback and resubmit	EM/ RA	w-c 18 Nov
Phase 3 Desk review of secondary data, content analysis and interviews			
	In-depth review of relevant information across evaluations; data extraction and coding	Team	1-18 October
	Conduct interviews with stakeholders (max 5)	Team	1-18 October
	Fully-fledged content analysis on the entire synthesis universe	Team	11 Oct-11 Nov
Phase 4 Reporting			
D0	Submission of draft zero synthesis report (D0) to DDoE	Team	11 Dec
	DDoE comment window on D0	**DDoE**	**11 Dec 24 / 6 Jan 2025**
	Synthesis Team revision to address DDoE comments	Team	by10 Jan
	DDoE review to check if comments adequately addressed and subsequent round(s) of Team review as needed	DDoE/Team	by 15 Jan
	DDoE clearance to share draft report for DoE's comments	EM/ DDoE	21 Jan
	DoE comment window on draft synthesis report (D1)	**DoE**	**22 -29 Jan**
D1	Draft revised to address DoE comments (*additional round(s) of DDoE comment and Team review if needed before re-submitting to DoE)*	Team	By 7 Feb
	DoE clearance to circulate synthesis report (D1) to WFP stakeholders	DoE	By 12 Feb *(noting EB dates 17-21 Feb)*
	IRG and WFP stakeholders' comment window	IRG / stakeholders	13 -26 Feb
	Consolidate WFP's comments and starts early review.	Team	28 Feb
	Stakeholder workshop	**Stkh/ Team**	**4 March**
D2	Submit to DDoE **revised draft (D2)** synthesis based on WFP's comments, with responses on the matrix of comments	Team	10 March
SER	**Start work on Summary Evaluation Report (SER)**	**EM**	**10 March**
	DDoE review of D2 synthesis report	**DDoE**	**10-14 March**
D3 and SER	**Submission to DoE of draft SER**	**Team**	**17 March**
	Team addresses DDoE comments and **submits D3**	Team	27 March
	DoE comment window on the SER	**DDoE**	**17-21 March**
	EM addresses DoE comments on the draft SER and resubmits	EM	25 March
	Seek final approval of Synthesis Report by DDoE	EM	By 31 March
Final SER and Final synthesis	Seek final approval of SER by DoE	EM	By 31 March
Phase 5. Follow up and dissemination			
	Submit SER/ recommendations to CPP for management response + Synthesis to EB Secretariat for editing and translation	EM	1 April 2025
	Tail end actions, OEV websites posting, EB Round Table Etc.	EM	15 May 2025
	Presentation of Synthesis to the EB	DOE	June 2025
	Presentation of management response to the EB	CPP	June 2025

ANNEX II: Internal Reference Group composition

HQ Departments	
Multilateral and Programme Country Partnerships	Shannon Howard
POCC, Social Protection Unit and Changing Lives Transformation Fund	Nicolas Bidault
PPGS, Social Protection Unit	Sara Pavanello
PPGS, Regional and Government Networks / Country Capacity Strengthening	Soha Haky
PPGR, Policy and Programme Design / Resilience	Delphine Dechaux
PPGE, Emergency Preparedness (urban programming)	Isis Ferrera
Regional Bureaux and Country Offices	
RBC	Tobia Flaemig (tbc)
RBJ / CO Namibia	Tiwonge Machiwenyika (tbc)
RBP	Patrick Foley

ANNEX III: Evaluations included in the synthesis[42]

WFP. 2024. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

WFP. 2023. Adapting to Climate Induced Threats to Food Production and Food Security in the Karnali Region of Nepal from 2018 to 2022

WFP. 2024. Regional Evaluation of WFP's contribution to Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean (2015 – 2022)

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Country Strategic Plans

WFP. 2023. Endline Evaluation of USDA McGovern Dole Grants FFE-442-2019-013-00 in Cambodia, 2019-2023

WFP. 2024. Endline Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement LRP-442-2019-011-00 in Cambodia, 2019-2023

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Cambodia WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2023

WFP. 2023. Joint evaluation of the UNAIDS Joint Programme's work on social protection

WFP. 2024. Evaluation of Colombia WFP Country Strategic Plans 2017-2021 and 2021-2024

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of WFP's Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Climate Change Policies

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition

WFP. 2022. Thematic Evaluation of Supply Chain outcomes in the Food System in Eastern Africa, 2016-2021

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Zambia WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2023

WFP. 2023. Final evaluation of the Joint UN SDG Funded Programme for Social Protection in Kenya 2020-2022

WFP. 2021. WFP Contribution to Market Development and Food Systems in Southern Africa: A thematic Evaluation (2018 to 2021)

WFP. 2022. Final Evaluation of School-feeding response activity, Colombia (2019-2021)

WFP. 2022. Evaluación final conjunta de piloto de protección social reactiva a emergencias en Arauca, Colombia, 2020-2021

WFP. 2022. WFP's Role in Peacebuilding in Transition Settings

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of the WFP Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Lesotho WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2024

WFP. 2024. Evaluation of Iraq WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2020-2024

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Nepal WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2023

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Kenya WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2018-2023

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of India WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Ghana WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2023

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Egypt WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2018-2023

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of Bhutan WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2023

WFP. 2022. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's work on Nutrition and HIV/AIDS

WFP. 2022. Evaluación de Plan Estratégico País de PMA Peru 2018-2022

WFP. 2021. Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies

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[42] The bibliography listing does not include the forthcoming evaluation reports due to be tabled at EB.2/2024. The listing will be updated after the EB session.

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of WFP livelihood support, asset creation and climate adaptation activities in Iraq from January 2020 to December 2021

WFP. 2022. WFP's Use of Technology in Constrained Environments

WFP. 2021. Evaluation of the WFP South-South and Triangular Cooperation Policy

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of linking Eswatini Smallholder Farmers to the Home-grown School Feeding Market (HGSF) in Eswatini from 2019 to 2021

WFP. 2021. Global End-term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of the Asset Creation and Public Works Activities in Lesotho, 2015-2019

WFP. 2023. Thematic Evaluation of WFP's Country Capacity Strengthening Activities in Lesotho from 2019 to 2023

WFP. 2020. End-term evaluation of Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO 200875) in Dhading, Gorkha and Nuwakot districts of Nepal

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of WFP's support to smallholder farmers and expanded portfolio across the agriculture value chain in Bhutan, 2019-2021

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Dominican Republic WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2023

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Philippines WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2018-2023

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of Pakistan WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of the Kyrgyz Republic WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018-2022

WFP. 2021. Republic of Zimbabwe: An evaluation of WFP Country Strategic Plan (2017–2021)

WFP. 2023. Evaluation of Namibia WFP Country Strategic Plan, 2017-2023

WFP. 2021. Evaluation of China WFP Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

WFP. 2021. Strategic evaluation of the contribution of school feeding activities to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

WFP. 2020. Funding WFP's Work

WFP. 2020. Gender Policy Evaluation

WFP. 2020. Evaluation of Indonesia WFP Country Strategic Plan 2017-2020

WFP. 2020. Evaluation of Timor-Leste WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018-2020

WFP. 2019. WFP's Capacity to Respond to Emergencies

WFP. 2019. Evaluation of the WFP People Strategy (2014-2017)

WFP. 2019. Update of WFP's Safety Nets Policy

WFP. 2019. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Support for Enhanced Resilience

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Masvingo and Rushinga Districts in Zimbabwe, 2018–2021

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of WFP's Livelihood Activities in Türkiye, 2020-2022

WFP. 2019. Evaluation of WFP's capacity strengthening activities to develop the School Meals Programme from 2016 to 2018 in Tunisia

WFP. 2019. Evaluation of National School Feeding Programme in Eswatini (2010-2018)

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of Humanitarian Response Facilities Network in Pakistan, 2014-2020

WFP. 2022. Thematic Evaluation of WFP Philippines' Country Capacity Strengthening Activities, 2018-2022

WFP. 2022. Evaluación del Efecto Estratégico 1 hacia los objetivos Hambre Cero a través de la abogacía, comunicación y movilización, del Plan Estratégico de País-Perú, 2017–2021

WFP. 2022. Endline evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Programme in Nepal, 2017-2022

WFP. 2019. Endline evaluation of McGovern Dole School Feeding Programme in Nepal (2014-2017) combined with baseline (2017-2020)

WFP. 2020. Evaluation of Namibia National School Feeding Programme (2012-2018)

WFP. 2020. Endline Evaluation of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern Dole Grant Food for Education Programme for WFP Cambodia (2017-2019)

WFP. 2023. Endline evaluation of WFP'S USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Kenya, 2016-2022

WFP. 2020. Final evaluation of the USDA-supported Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) project in Kenya, 2017-2020

WFP. 2020. Endline Assessment of Fortification of Mid-day Meal Project in Dhenkanal, Odisha

WFP. 2019. Endline Evaluation of the Target Public Distribution (TPDS) Reforms Project in India (Bhubaneswar - Odisha)

WFP. 2021. Final Evaluation of Enhanced Nutrition and Value Chains (ENVAC) project 2016-2021

WFP. 2022. Evaluation of the First 1000 Days Programme in Egypt, 2017-2021

WFP. 2021. Evaluación conjunta de la actividad articulada de Progresando con Solidaridad y el Servicio Nacional de Salud, con apoyo del Programa Mundial de Alimentos, para la prevención de la desnutrición y la anemia en población nutricionalmente vulnerable de la República Dominicana 2014-2020