



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

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

Summary Terms of Reference

Evaluation syntheses are part of the WFP 'toolkit' in support of its commitment to evidence-based decision-making.¹ An evaluation synthesis is: "A combination and integration of findings from quality-assessed evaluations to develop higher-level or more comprehensive knowledge and inform policy and strategic decisions."²

Objectives and intended users of the Synthesis

Evaluation syntheses serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning. The main purpose of the synthesis is to better understand what features characterise WFP's work in middle-income countries (MICs). Specifically, the synthesis looks at whether, how, and with which results WFP has pursued – in line with Strategic Plan (2022-2025). – namely, an agenda in MICs focused on technical assistance, policy advice, evidence generation and system strengthening, while retaining an emergency response role. At the same time, the synthesis will examine the evidence of how, and with which results WFP has been able to preserve and roll-out its emergency response capacity to pivot and respond to a crisis in MIC settings.

The synthesis aims to contribute to WFP's global and regional evidence base and support key ongoing corporate strategic discussions. It is relevant to both internal and external stakeholders of WFP.

- Internally, it targets departments at Headquarters and regional and country offices involved in MIC contexts.
- Externally, stakeholders include WFP government counterparts in MICS, and other national cooperating partners, donor government agencies, Executive Board members, other UN resident agencies in MICs and WFP counterparts in different International Financial Institutions.

The evaluation synthesis report will be presented at the Executive Board session in **June 2025**.

Synthesis questions

This synthesis will answer the following questions:

- *What characterises WFP's strategic positioning in MICS, and how has this evolved since 2019?*
- *How have partnerships in MICs worked, and how have they evolved?*
- *What results were generated in MICS in the 2019-2024 period?*
- *Which factors affected WFP's results in MICS?*
- *How does WFP approach sustainability in MICS and with which results?*

Scope

The synthesis is global, focusing on independent evaluative evidence from WFP-commissioned evaluations in middle-income countries from 2019 to 2024.

Evaluations were included based on criteria such as:

- **Geographic coverage** – evaluations focused on those MICs that in the period 2019-2024 have shown an above average Needs Based Plan allocation to/expended on activities aimed at supporting national governments in their food security and nutrition work, national actors, systems, and institutions; and/or experienced a rapid scale-up and scale down.
- **Timeframe**: evaluations completed in the 2019-2024 period
- **Evaluation type** – including all WFP-commissioned centralised and decentralised evaluations.
- **Evaluation quality** – evaluations scored through an external quality assessment with minimum satisfactory quality (60 percent score).

From 163 evaluations, 73 were selected, covering 25 middle-income countries across all regions where WFP operates as shown in the following table.

¹ [WFP Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#)

² WFP. 2021. Evaluation Synthesis, Guidance for Process and Content, WFP Office of Evaluation.

RB	Evaluations consulted in the following 25 MICS have been included in the synthesis
Reporting to HQ	China
RBB	Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Rep, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Timor-Leste
RBC	Armenia, Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, Türkiye (Rep. of)
RBD	Ghana
RBJ	Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe
RBN	Kenya
RBP	Colombia, Dominican Republic, Peru

Synthesis methodology

This exercise is not an evaluation. Its primary data source is evidence contained in completed evaluations.

The synthesis will be conducted internally by OEV, adhering to a rigorous methodological approach as per the Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) requirements. The methodology will focus on the comprehensive and systematic extraction, compilation, and analysis of evaluation data to address the synthesis questions and sub-questions. The main proposed features are:

- Development and systematic application of an **analytical framework** to structure and systematize data extraction.
- Iterative refinement of analytical fields through **pilot data extraction** to adhere to the synthesis themes while capturing emerging and unforeseen themes and relevant evidence.
- **Combination of software-assisted data extraction (using NVIVO-15)** with manual data extraction for cross-validation purposes.

To enhance the relevance of the synthesis and its recommendations, the approach will also include:

- **Analysis of the programme portfolio** and resourcing flows in MICs comparing it with low-income countries
- **Analysis of secondary sources** to triangulate emerging findings.
- **Review of recommendations and management responses data** to better understand recurring issues and the uptake of recommended actions.
- **Consultation and feedback with stakeholders** on the draft emerging themes and findings from the synthesis.

Roles and responsibilities

A synthesis team from OEV comprising Francesca Bonino, Arianna Spacca, Isabella Decesaris and Michele Gerli 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 report and present the summary synthesis report to the Executive Board for consideration.

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.

Communication

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.

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.

Timing and key milestones

Inception Phase: June - August 2024

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Data Extraction: November 2024

Analysis and reporting: December 2024 - March 2025

Executive Board: June 2025