

Corporate Emergency Evaluation of WFP's Response to the Sudan Regional Crisis

2023-2025

Summary Terms of Reference

Corporate emergency evaluations (CEEs) assess WFP's performance during operations of corporate scale up (previously called Level 3 emergencies) and operations of corporate attention (previously called Level 2 emergencies). Single-country CEEs may replace a mandatory Country Strategic Plan (CSP) evaluation if timed appropriately to feed into the preparation of the new ICSP or interim CSP for the country.

Subject and focus of the evaluation

The escalating conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023 triggered an unprecedented and severe humanitarian crisis in Sudan and across the region. The conflict has exacerbated long-standing instability in key regions such as Darfur and Kordofan. The crisis has led to widespread displacement, with over 10.8 million people internally displaced and more than 2.9 million people crossing into Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Egypt, and Uganda.

The ongoing humanitarian situation has been worsened by the collapse of Sudan's health system, severe protection concerns including gender-based violence (GBV), and severe shortages in food, water and other essential services. As a result, significant portions of the population are now faced with the risk of famine. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis for mid-2024 revealed the highest levels of acute food insecurity ever recorded in Sudan, with over 25.6 million people facing crisis conditions (IPC Phase 3 or higher). The most recent figures noted that there are 755,000 people facing catastrophic conditions (IPC Phase 5).

A system-wide scale-up was activated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on 29 August 2023, for an initial duration of 6 months, before being extended until 30 June 2025. The 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Sudan estimated that 24.8m people would need humanitarian assistance – a similar figure to the revised 2023 HRP - but targets only 14.7m due to operational constraints and resource limitations. Complementing the Sudan HRP, the Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) focuses on assisting Sudanese refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries.

Early May 2023, WFP activated a Corporate Scale Up (CSU) for the Sudan Regional Crisis to boost its response to the crisis. It includes WFP's response in Sudan, Chad and South Sudan. WFP Sudan Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019–2025, was originally focused on development-oriented goals. Since April 2023, the CSP reoriented toward life-saving interventions

through several budget revisions. This reorientation saw the number of planned beneficiaries increasing from 11.3 million to 27.7 million, with a total budget of USD 5.96 billion from January 2019 to February 2026. As of late 2024, 50.4 percent of the CSP's needs-based plan was funded.

WFP's response in Sudan and neighbouring countries has included general food assistance (both in-kind and cash-based), prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition and resilience-building efforts. WFP has also expanded school feeding, supported smallholder farmers, and scaled up emergency cash transfers. The response has included logistical and telecommunications support for humanitarian operations. Cross-border efforts from Chad into Western Sudan have been a key component of the response, with WFP coordinating major food deliveries to crisis-affected populations.

The evaluation will assess WFP's preparedness and response from April 2023 until June 2025 in Sudan as well as in countries hosting refugees and returnees from Sudan, and those providing transit corridors for humanitarian assistance (CAR, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan and Uganda).

Objectives and stakeholders of the evaluation

This evaluation will serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning. It will provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders; and will generate evidence on WFP's performance in Sudan and neighbouring countries hosting refugees, specifically to inform WFP's future engagement and promote broader learning on WFP's response to complex and protracted crises.

The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a range of WFP's internal and external stakeholders and presents an opportunity for national, regional, and corporate learning. The primary users of the evaluation findings and recommendations will be the WFP Country Offices and their stakeholders to inform the design of future programmes and activities.

The evaluation report will be presented at the Executive Board session in June 2026.

Key evaluation questions

The evaluation will address the following five key questions:

QUESTION 1: How appropriate did the WFP response remain to the food security and nutrition needs of people most affected by the crisis in Sudan, as needs evolved over time and in each specific context? The evaluation will assess how WFP assessed the needs of the populations over time and how the organization adapted its programmatic response in a changing environment as well as WFP targeted and prioritized those most affected by the crisis activities in light of funding gaps.

QUESTION 2: How effective was the WFP response in Sudan and other countries affected by the crisis? The evaluation will assess what difference WFP's response made to the lives of people affected by the conflict and if there were any unintended consequences either positive or negative. The extent to which WFP ensured protection and accountability to affected populations will be examined, as will how well WFP supported women's empowerment and broader inclusion. The evaluation will also look at the operationalization of humanitarian principles and how WFP advocated and enabled humanitarian access.

QUESTION 3: How efficient was the WFP response in Sudan and other countries affected by the crisis? The evaluation will assess how prepared WFP was to respond to the crisis and how timely was the response. It will also look at the cost-efficiency of WFP response including supply chain considerations and to what extent resources were optimized.

QUESTION 4: What factors have influenced the overall coherence and results of WFP response? The evaluation will assess to what extent WFP worked in partnership with national and international organizations, as well as considering WFP's risk appetite and how it balanced global assurance commitments with a no-regrets approach.

QUESTION 5: What are the conditions and prospects for a gradual scale-down of the WFP regional response? Is there an exit strategy and, if so, how realistic is it in the current context?

Scope, methodology and ethical considerations

The evaluation will adopt a mixed methods approach using a variety of primary and secondary sources, including desk review, semi-structured interviews, online surveys, focus groups discussions, and direct observations. Systematic triangulation across different sources and methods will be carried out to validate findings and avoid bias in the evaluative judgement.

The evaluation will conform to WFP and 2020 UNEG ethical guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially

excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities.

The evaluation team will travel to Sudan as well as three of the neighboring countries (to be determined). The remaining four neighboring countries will be covered through remote interviews and desk review of secondary evidence.

Roles and responsibilities

EVALUATION TEAM: The evaluation will be conducted by a team of independent consultants with a mix of relevant thematic expertise and solid knowledge of the country and regional context.

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT: The evaluation will be managed by Julie Thoulouzan, Senior Evaluation Officer in the WFP Office of Evaluation. Aboh Anyangwe will be the OEV research analyst. Micheal O hlarlaithe will provide support for this evaluation. Second level quality assurance will be provided by the Deputy Director of Evaluation, Julia Betts. The Director of Evaluation, Anne-Claire Luzot, will approve the final versions of all evaluation products and present the evaluation to the WFP Executive Board for consideration.

An **INTERNAL EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP** of a cross-section of WFP stakeholders from relevant business areas at different WFP levels will be consulted throughout the evaluation process to review and provide feedback on evaluation products.

STAKEHOLDERS: WFP stakeholders at country, regional and HQ level are expected to engage throughout the evaluation process to ensure utility and transparency. External stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, partner governments, donors, cooperating partners and other UN agencies will be consulted during the evaluation process.

Communication

Preliminary findings will be shared with WFP stakeholders in the Country Office, the Regional Offices, and Headquarters during a debriefing session at the end of the data collection phase. A stakeholder workshop will be held in December 2025 to ensure a transparent evaluation process, promote ownership of the findings and preliminary recommendations by country and regional stakeholders and to inform the new ICSP design process.

Evaluation findings will be actively disseminated, and the final evaluation report will be publicly available on WFP's website.

Timing and key milestones

Inception phase: March-June 2025

Data collection: July-August 2025

Preliminary findings debriefing: September 2025

Reporting phase: October 2025 – January 2026

Stakeholder Workshop: December 2025

Executive Board Presentation: June 2026