Evaluation of WFP's Cash Based Transfers and Social Protection Activities in Transitioning Emergency Assistance to National Systems and Preparing for a Responsible Exit in Moldova (March 2022-May 2025)

Decentralized evaluation

Terms of reference

WFP Moldova

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1. Introduction

1.	These terms of reference (ToR) were prepared by the WFP Moldova Country Office based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders. The purpose of these terms of reference is to provide key information to stakeholders about the evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and to specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation.

2.	These terms of reference are for the activity evaluation of social protection and cash-based transfer activities in the WFP Moldova transitional and interim country strategic plans. This evaluation is commissioned by WFP Moldova Country Office and will cover the period from March 2022 to May 2025. These activities are implemented in all the *raions* of the country and focussing on the Ministry of Labour and Social protection.

3.	WFP has been present in Moldova since March 2022, working under Ukraine Limited Emergency Operation (March – August 2022) in alignment with the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine (March – August 2022) to deliver life-saving assistance to refugees and vulnerable Moldovan communities hosting refugees. Under the transitional interim country strategic plan (TICSP) (2022-2023), WFP supported the Government of Moldova with the emergency response to the conflict, while expanding efforts to address structural issues and increasing needs of refugee and host communities. This entailed extending support to targeted crisis-affected host communities to meet their needs and ensure social cohesion among the local population and refugees, while providing capacity and systems strengthening support to the Government. A key aim was to enhance shock-responsive social protection and food systems to strengthen the ability of the Government to meet the unique needs of at-risk women, men, girls and boys during times of crisis while fostering humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. This was done under activity two of the TICSP: Provide technical assistance to the Government to enhance shock-responsive social protection and food security systems and capacities.

4.	Under the interim country strategic plan (2024-2026), WFP continued to meet the needs of refugees, host communities, and vulnerable Moldovan households directly and indirectly affected by the war. WFP aimed to accelerate the transition from emergency response towards strengthening national social protection systems, extending their reach to support refugees, and providing a safety net for impoverished Moldovans. The ICSP has three interlinked and mutually reinforcing outcomes to provide emergency assistance to refugee and crisis-affected Moldovan households, strengthen national capacities and systems, and provide services to partners to enable a coordinated and efficient response. Social protection capacity strengthening and cash transfers activities in ICSP were done under outcome two: The Government of Moldova has enhanced capacities and programmes to address the essential needs of vulnerable populations by 2026; and activity two: Provide assistance to national institutions on social protection, including through the provision of transfers for targeted populations.

2. Reasons for the evaluation

2.1. Rationale

5.   WFP has been present in Moldova since 2022 and intends to exit responsibly by 2026 as outlined in the current ICSP. This evaluation is being commissioned for the following reasons:

      a. To prepare for and guide the responsible exit of WFP out of Moldova, generating evidence and recommendations for the continuation of activities by partner UN agencies and to future planning and programming of Ministry of Labour and Social protection (MLSP) measures that:

           i. Reinforce the national poverty reduction and shock responsive social protection programme and its cash delivery chain to better respond to the needs of different vulnerable groups.

          ii. Ensures the MLSP is a capable service provider to the government and to international donors to deliver cash for national emergencies and crises.

      b. To provide learning for WFP operations around the world on how WFP cash assistance and capacity strengthening for social protection complements and transitions to technical assistance and inclusion efforts in government social assistance programmes at each step along a pathway of Country Office opening, an acute main emergency phase, a protracted emergency phase and to different types of country presence.

      c. To provide WFP with evidence to feed into international and regional decision-making for addressing policy, programming and funding issues related to protracted humanitarian emergencies and operating social protection in fragile, conflict affected and violent (FCV) contexts.

2.2. Objectives

6.   Evaluations serve the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning.

- **Accountability** – The evaluation will assess and report on the performance and results of the capacity strengthening for social protection and cash-based transfer[1] (CBT) activities as well as the programme's ability to meet the diverse needs of male and female refugees, host population and Moldovans affected by war.

- **Learning** – The evaluation will assess whether implementation of the social protection capacity strengthening and cash assistance activities in Moldova unfolded as planned considering that Moldova is a quite specific context for WFP (middle-income country with no WFP prior presence prior to the war). The evaluation findings will provide the Government of the Republic of Moldova, WFP, UN agencies and other key stakeholders valuable lessons on what has worked and has not worked in responding to the refugee crisis and supporting vulnerable Moldovans through national social protection systems including how the national social protection system was a vehicle for WFP to deliver direct assistance (CBT) as well as capacity strengthening.

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[1] CBT was used for the winter support programme and refugee hosting household (RHH) activities. See annex 12 for definition of WFP terminology.

It will explore reasons behind these outcomes and identify any unintended results (positive or negative) The evaluation will draw lessons, derive good practices, and provide pointers for learning. It will also provide evidence to inform operational and strategic corporate decision-making. For WFP Moldova, this will support in particular the transitioning of the capacity strengthening for social protection and cash-based transfer activities to the government and should contribute significantly to WFP corporate learning. The findings will be actively disseminated, and lessons will be incorporated into relevant lesson-sharing systems . The stakeholders can use these lessons to sustain the response and in designing similar interventions in future.

- **Country case study -** To document and communicate effectively the story of WFP's engagement in social protection in Moldova from start up to phasing out, the Country Office proposes to include a request for a standalone case study in these ToRs which will draw from the evaluation methodology but will be presented in annex as a separate deliverable to the overall evaluation report. The case study will document WFP's journey in supporting social protection, emphasising not just what WFP did but how the assistance was delivered and with what results, i.e. the processes that WFP used in establishing itself as an actor in the social protection space in Moldova.in a short space of time.

7.   Conducted by an independent evaluation firm that will be required to follow WFP's quality standards for independent decentralised evaluation, the evaluation will be inclusive and participatory and will engage women, men, boys and girls, people with disabilities, Roma community and older persons at various stages of the evaluation. Per UN SWAP requirements, the evaluation will use a gender and inclusion lens throughout the evaluation, starting from these ToR until the development of final evaluation report.

8.   As part of WFP's exit strategy, the evaluation will put strong emphasis on the learning objective which can be taken by the key stakeholders including the government and donors as they continue implementing the social protection work. The completed evaluation should help to deepen knowledge and understanding of design and implementation of refugee response using host government social protection systems as well as WFP's operating model on entering and exiting in a responsible manner in a high-level refugee crisis.

2.3.   Key stakeholders

9.   The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a broad range of WFP internal and external stakeholders. A number of stakeholders will play a role in the evaluation process in light of their role in the design and implementation of the social protection capacity strengthening and cash assistance activities, their interest in the results of the evaluation and relative power to influence the design, funding and implementation of the programme being evaluated. Table 1 provides a preliminary stakeholder analysis, which should be deepened by the evaluation team as part of the inception phase.

10.   Accountability to affected populations, is tied to WFP commitments to include beneficiaries as key stakeholders in WFP work. WFP is committed to ensuring gender equality, equity and inclusion in the evaluation process, with participation and consultation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from diverse groups (including persons with disabilities, the elderly and persons with other diversities such as ethnic and linguistic).

Table 1: Preliminary stakeholder analysis

Stakeholders	Interest and involvement in the evaluation
Internal (WFP) stakeholders	
WFP country office (CO) in Moldova	**Key informant and primary stakeholder** - Responsible for the planning and implementation of WFP interventions including cash assistance and social protection capacity strengthening at country level, the WFP Country Office will have a different type of country presence from March 2026 and has an interest in learning from experience to inform decision-making. It is also called upon to account internally as well as externally to its beneficiaries and partners for performance and results of its programmes. The CO will use evaluation findings to guide the responsible exit of WFP out of Moldova, by generating evidence on the effectiveness of support provided to government and making recommendations for the responsible transitioning of activities to partner UN agencies. This will also inform future planning and programming of MLSP programme implementation and/or in deciding on the next activities for the social protection programme and partnerships. In line with the provisions for independent decentralised evaluation in WFP, the Country Office is responsible for both designing and managing the evaluation – with the support of the Regional Evaluation Unit in the Regional Bureau in Cairo – as well as in using and disseminating the findings of the evaluation to key stakeholders. As the primary intended user of the evaluation, the CO will be involved throughout all phases. Initially, the CO led the design of the ToR, identifying the purpose, objectives, and key evaluation questions. The CO[2] will serve as a key informant during inception and data collection phase and will also have the opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary findings and will be engaged in co-creating the recommendations, Additionally, CO management are also the members of the Evaluation Committee (EC) and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), with the governance and technical advisory roles.
Regional bureau (RB) in Cairo (Middle East, North Africa and eastern Europe)	**Key informant and primary stakeholder** - Responsible for both oversight of Country Offices and technical guidance and support, the Regional Bureau has an interest in an independent/impartial account of operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to understand how the subject is contributes to overall regional priorities. RBC staff will also be engaged as key informants during inception and data collection phase, reviewing draft deliverables, reviewing the preliminary data. The learning generated from this evaluation can be applied to other country offices where applicable. The subject of evaluation offers unique learning opportunity for WFP in terms of purpose of country office establishment, duration of operation in Moldova and planned responsible exit within five years of WFP's establishment. Considering the ongoing regional crisis, the evidence generated

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[2] Given the natural amount of turnover in the office during the evaluation period, this includes WFP Moldova former employees for key informant purposes. Should also include anyone from Ukraine operation if necessary.

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	will be useful to assess if and how such modality is useful and can be used to inform WFPs support planned for short to medium term interventions. The regional bureau will be involved in the planning of the new country presence; thus, it is expected to use the evaluation evidence to provide strategic guidance, programme support, and oversight. The regional evaluation team support country office to ensure quality, credible and useful DEs.
WFP HQ divisions (Social Protection; CSP cycle unit; Strategic coordination service)	**Primary stakeholder** - WFP headquarters divisions are responsible for issuing and overseeing the rollout of normative guidance on corporate programme themes, activities and modalities, as well as of overarching corporate policies and strategies. Similarly to the Regional Bureau, and considering the unique nature of operation in Moldova, they also have an interest in the lessons that emerge from evaluations, as many may have relevance beyond the geographical area of focus. They may use the evaluation for wider organizational learning accountability as well as advocacy.
WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV)	**Primary stakeholder** – OEV has a stake in ensuring that DEs deliver quality, credible and useful evaluations respecting provisions for impartiality as well as roles and accountabilities of various DE stakeholders as identified in the evaluation policy. It may use the evaluation findings, as appropriate, to feed into centralized evaluations, evaluation syntheses or other learning products.
WFP Executive Board (EB)	**Primary stakeholder** – the Executive Board provides final oversight of WFP programmes and guidance to programmes. The WFP governing body has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP programmes. This evaluation will not be presented to the Executive Board, but its findings may feed into thematic and/or regional syntheses and corporate learning processes. It will contribute to evaluation coverage of WFP work which is reported to the EB through the annual evaluation report.
External stakeholders	
Beneficiaries • Refugees in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) • Refugee hosting households • Vulnerable Moldovans	**Key informants and primary stakeholders -** As the ultimate recipients of food and cash assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. As such, women, men, boys and girls from diverse groups that benefited from WFPs support will be interviewed and consulted during the data collection phase and their respective perspectives will be sought. Special attention will be given in hearing the voices of diverse groups including refugees, host population and Moldovans affected by war.
Government • Central level • Ministry of Labour and Social Protection • Raion level	**Key informants and primary stakeholder** - The Government has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with its priorities, harmonized with the action of other partners and meet the expected results. WFP supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in its rollout of the RESTART reforms aimed at enhancing the shock responsiveness of the national social protection system. The Ministry also received technical capacity support, policy advice and operational guidance. MLSP is particularly interested in understanding the issues related to capacity development, handover and sustainability and has an interest in learning from WFP experiences to inform

	social protection programme after transition of WFP. Representatives from MLSP including Social Assistants will be engaged and consulted throughout the evaluation process.
United Nations country team (UNCT) • IOM • UNICEF • UNFPA • UNHCR • RCO	**Key informants and primary stakeholder** - The harmonized action of the UNCT should contribute to the realization of the government developmental objectives. It has therefore an interest in ensuring that WFP programmes are effective in contributing to the United Nations concerted efforts. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level. In support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and in close collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), WFP led the provision of cash-based transfers (CBTs) for over 54,000 vulnerable Moldovan households, of whom 70 percent were headed by women and 73 percent had a member with a disability.
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) • Action Against Hunger • Help Age • World Vision • Communitas	**Key informants and secondary stakeholder** - NGOs are WFP partners for the implementation of some activities while at the same time having their own interventions. The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientations and partnerships. They will be involved in using evaluation findings for programme implementation.
Donors • UKFCDO • ECHO	**Primary stakeholders** - WFP interventions are voluntarily funded by a number of donors. They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programmes. They are also interested in learning linked to transition out of humanitarian assistance and the responsible exit for this form of financing. Current donors will be consulted and engaged in the evaluation process and may use the findings for their accountability, reporting and communication process.

3. Context and subject of the evaluation

3.1. Context

11.   The Republic of Moldova is a land-locked, upper-middle-income country in Eastern Europe with a population of 2.4 million[3]. Since independence in 1991, Moldova has made notable improvements on the Human Development Index, primarily driven by advancement in life expectancy, education, and per capita gross domestic product (GDP). Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, with the second lowest GDP per capita (after Ukraine) - at USD 6,048 in 2024[4].

12.   Over two years since the onset of the war, over 127,000 refugees from Ukraine remain in Moldova (100,000 in March 2022), primarily women, children, and elderly persons[5]. While the implementation of the Temporary Protection Law (TPL) in March 2023 has provided refugees with a more stable and predictable legal status, many still face structural barriers that prevent them from meeting their basic needs. Roma refugees face additional barriers including discrimination, language differences, and illiteracy, which hinder their access to services, information, and opportunities for integration.

13.   Beyond the refugee influx, Moldova has been significantly impacted by the war due to its geographical proximity, economic ties, and energy and food dependency on Ukraine and Russia. The GDP contracted by 5.9 percent in 2022[6]. Despite ongoing spillovers from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the economy is showing promising recovery signs. In the first half of 2024, the economy grew by 2.2%, driven by rebounds in domestic trade, manufacturing, and a substantial recovery in the energy sector, which saw double-digit growth following the 2023 energy crisis[7]. Despite the significant proportion of the workforce engaged in agriculture, the contribution to GDP contracted from 25.4 to 7.6 percent between 2000 and 2023[8]. This can partly be attributed to the coronavirus disease 2019, the war in Ukraine and recurring droughts.

14.   Almost one in three[9] Moldovans now live below the poverty line (compared to 25 percent prior to the war) with 14 percent living in extreme poverty – which is highest among rural populations, and in particular among households with elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Households headed by women are slightly more affected by poverty, with 35 percent of women headed households experiencing absolute poverty, in contrast to 30 percent of men headed households[10].

15.   Moldova's commitment to the 2030 Agenda is articulated in the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" and further reflected in the 2020 Voluntary National Review[11], and the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) progress report. In 2020, notable advancements had been made regarding poverty reduction, decent work and economic growth, climate action, and partnerships for development

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[3] [National bureau of statistics of the Republic of Moldova (2024). Population.](#)
[4] [World Population Review (2024)](#)
[5] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. November 2024. [Operational Data Portal, Moldova](#)
[6] World Bank. 2022. Moldova Overview
[7] World Bank. 2024. [Moldova Overview](#)
[8] World Bank. 2022. [Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)](#) – Moldova
[9] [National Bureau of statistics in Republic of Moldova](#)
[10] [National Bureau of statistics of the Republic of Moldova](#)
[11] United Nations Moldova. July 2020. [Republic of Moldova - Voluntary National Review (VNR)](#)

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(SDGs 1, 8, 13 and 17), compared with limited progress towards the enhancement of quality education, water and sanitation, nutrition, health and well-being, gender equality, sustainable energy, industry, innovation, infrastructure, sustainable cities, and toward the reduction of inequalities (SDGs 2, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11)[12]. However, the war has impeded any progress previously made to tackle poverty and food security.

16.   Exacerbated by the war, the prevalence of food insecurity in Moldova increased from 19 to 25 percent between 2016 and 2023 and is now more than three times the average of Europe (7.8%)[13]. Food insecurity is compounded by poverty, high outward labour force migration, and limited purchasing power. Rural areas face increasing levels of food insecurity, as they are highly reliant on agricultural outputs that are influenced by unpredictable climate conditions. The prevalence of absolute and extreme poverty, which is correlated with food insecurity, is higher among pensioners and rural populations self-employed in agriculture. Moldovan households spend 40 percent of their budget on food, with the rural households spending up to 45 percent indicating poor economic access to food[14].

17.   Women residing in rural areas face limited livelihood opportunities and dedicate more time to unpaid responsibilities, leading to lower incomes and increased reliance on social benefits and remittances. This is further exacerbated during retirement, as gender disparities in pension distribution are over 20 percent[15]. Households with three or more children register the highest rate of absolute poverty, at 40 percent[16]. Furthermore, a shrinking and aging population has resulted in low productivity growth. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of the lower-income population is supported with state pensions or social assistance which provide an essential additional income source[17]. In the Republic of Moldova, considerable progress has been made in the recent years to advance gender equality. In 2024, the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index scored Moldova at 0.791 points, positioning the Country in the 13th position out of 146 countries and the 10th in Europe. This number represents an increase of 0.0782 points since 2006 . Moldova is in the top five countries that report relatively even access for women and men when it comes to economic participation and opportunity and where the rate for parity in labour-force participation is above 95 percent[18].

18.   The Republic of Moldova promotes and respects human rights based on international legal instrument that have been ratified such as the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in force since 1 May 2022 and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no. 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work since December 2023. Moldova has made international and national commitments to promote gender equality and empowerment of women, in particular through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Beijing Platform and Action Plan (1995), the Millennium Declaration (2000), the corresponding Conventions of the International Labour Organisation[19].

19.   The Government introduced the Temporary Protection Law (TPL) in March 2023 establishing a legal framework and provision for essential assistance to refugees and asylum seekers to address their basic needs through existing national systems, and in accordance with international conventions[20]. The TPL is

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[12] United Nations Moldova. 2020. Common Country Analysis

[13] Food and Agriculture Organization. 2023. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 (SOFI) p.163

[14] National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova. 2024. Incomes and expenses of the population in 2023

[15] Government of the Republic of Moldova. April 2023. RESTART: for equitable access to quality social services

[16] Ibid

[17] United Nations Moldova. 2020. Common Country Analysis.

[18] World Economic Forum. 2024. Global Gender Gap 2024. Insight Report (June 2024)

[19] EU 4 Gender Equality: Reform Helpdesk. Country Gender Profile. Republic of Moldova. 2021.

[20] Government of the Republic of Moldova. March 1, 2023. Temporary Protection Law.

only for Ukrainian refugees, and it was modelled based on the European Union member states initiative.

20.   The Government's social reform agenda, RESTART, aims to increase access to quality social services and strengthen its shock-responsive capacity, including through improving vulnerability profiling and accurate data generation, establishing an interoperable information management system to streamline registration, monitoring and Government-to-person payment procedures at the local and district levels, and providing training for human resource capacity building. The RESTART Programme aims to increase the percent of beneficiaries from 11.7% of the population in 2022 to 35% in 2026. In April 2023, the Ministry of Agricultural and Food Industries launched its National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for 2023-2030 to enhance the capacities of the agricultural sector through the promotion of smart, efficient, and sustainable agricultural practices, to foster the growth of the domestic market, boost export potential, and establish a sustainable rural socio-economic system .

21.   Moldova has been the recipient of significant international assistance over the years, with key donors and agencies contributing to its development and humanitarian needs. The United Nations in Moldova created a dashboard[21] with information on donors/agencies in the country, level of resources, humanitarian and development assistance. WFP is accountable for each donor through the annual country reports[22].

3.2.   Subject of the evaluation

22.   WFP established its presence in Moldova in March 2022 in response to Ukraine crisis. A Limited Emergency Operation (February to August 2022), in alignment with the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine (February – December 2022), was quickly launched to provide immediate food assistance to refugees in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) and cash support to refugee host households, while UNHCR took responsibility for registering refugees and providing them with cash assistance to cover basic needs. Following this, a Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) (September 2022 to February 2024) was implemented to sustain the emergency response and initiate a bridge with longer-term food security interventions. Efforts under this T-CSP aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Moldova (2023 – 2027), the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine as well as national strategies and plans. The T-ICSP was extended in time to allow to take stock of the fast-evolving situation in country, including evolution of caseloads and positioning of key partners, before proceeding with the design of the ICSP. Design focussed and leveraged WFP's positioning in country to build an exit strategy.

23.   The ICSP is based on a realistic, collaborative assessment of the country's anticipated needs, draws on national priorities and complementarities between agencies, and takes into account WFP's operational potential. The Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) focused on building Government capacity and deploying a sustainable transition strategy. Through the interim country strategic plan (2024-2026), in collaboration with partners and government counterparts, WFP aimed to accelerate the transition from emergency response towards strengthening national social protection systems, extending their reach to support refugees and providing a safety net for impoverished Moldovans. In alignment with the regional refugee response plan and government priorities under the reforms of the social protection system, WFP aimed to further strengthen national capacities and systems by improving vulnerability profiling, optimizing beneficiary targeting and inclusion, and implementing effective local service management to enable a smooth transition from humanitarian response to a responsible exit from Moldova.

24.   The MLSP-UN Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) contained two complementary workstreams supporting the national social protection system managed by the MLSP: (1) an emergency cash transfer

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[21] United Nations in Moldova. UN INFO Moldova Dashboard.
[22] WFP Moldova. ACR 2022. ACR 2023.

programme for vulnerable Moldovans, **(winter support Programme,** see [annex 10](#) for targeting and beneficiary details**)** and (2) technical assistance to the MLSP to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusiveness of the social protection system, including building elements conducive to future shock-responsiveness (the ability for the government to set up and manage emergency cash transfer programmes as a form of disaster response). The overall objectives of the winter support programme are to provide social assistance cash top-ups to vulnerable populations in Moldova, supporting their food and other essential needs; and to link financial support with social services and benefits, and to strengthen the government's capacity to implement the "RESTART" reforms.

25.   WFP scaled up its technical assistance to the MLSP in the ongoing two-year **Interim Country Strategic Plan (2024-2026)** which is aligned with the Republic of Moldova United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework (UNSDCF) for 2023–2027, national development strategy of Moldova 2030 and the 2022 Ministry of Labour and Social Protection strategy. The ICSP adopted more 'realistic' planning assumptions, which is in line with the new CSP calibration methodology even if the ICSP design preceded the release of the guidelines. The shift in the ICSP (2024-2026) was strategic, demand driven, but also responsive to changes in the response context. This was conceived with an express objective to engage in a process to close the Country Operation at the end of the ICSP in 2026. The ICSP focuses on three mutually reinforcing Strategic Outcomes in the areas of crisis response (SO1) , institutional capacity strengthening (SO2) and service provision (SO3), contributing to the achievement of SDGs 2 and 17. SO3 was not activated as there was no demand for services from humanitarian and development actors.

26.   While the evaluation will focus on SO2, activities under SO1 have leveraged national systems and provided an entry point for further engagement in the social protection space. There are linkages between the activities and considerations cannot be 100% limited to SO2. Under ICSP SO1, WFP focuses on refugee-related activities, including food provision through vouchers to refugees in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs), multipurpose cash assistance to Refugee Hosting Households (RHH) support, and provision of snacks at the border. SO1 includes a contingency for potential new refugee influxes from Ukraine, in line with interagency planning.

27.   Under ICSP SO2, WFP focuses on building resilience providing a crisis response to populations impacted by the war in Ukraine[23]. SO2 is centred on Social Protection activities and includes two main components: provision of cash top-ups to vulnerable Moldovans (winter support programme[24]) under the winterization initiative; and technical assistance aimed at building national capacity, strengthening systems – especially as part of Moldova's Ajutor Social programme – and fostering their shock-responsiveness. These winter support programme cash transfers were shifted from T-ICSP SO1 to ICSP SO2 to increase the complementarity of assisting the most vulnerable Moldovans through direct links to the government social protection system to progressively transition highly vulnerable people from humanitarian assistance to government social protection programmes.

28.   WFP has also scaled up and formulated its technical assistance to the government under ICSP SO2 based on a series of contextual and technical analyses undertaken by WFP and structured with a Theory of Change: For the government social assistance system to serve the most vulnerable people with a shock responsive capacity for disasters and crisis, there is need for increased fiscal space, functional Ajutor Social programme, refugee inclusion in social assistance programmes, sustainable social canteens that can be scaled up during emergencies, and emergency cash responses that use MLSP delivery platforms (see [Annex 9](#)). WFP technical assistance aims to ensure that the government social assistance system is better able to serve the most vulnerable people and is equipped with a shock-responsive capacity to be better prepared

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[23] This outcome is aligned with the Moldovan United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 (UNSDCF) Outcome 2: "By 2027, more accountable, and transparent, human rights-based and gender responsive governance empowers all people of Moldova to participate in and to contribute to development processes."
[24] 143,77 beneficiaries in 2022/2023; 91,529 beneficiaries in 2023/2024; and planned 86,687 in 2024/2025.

for disasters and crisis.

29.   In terms of **support to government digital processes**, WFP led Workstream 1 of the UN Digitalization Working Group and analysed the 14 MLSP management information systems (MIS) with UNDP, UNICEF, Data 4 Impact and the Moldovan Government. Final report, including technical reports for each MIS, was delivered to the MLSP in June 2024 and is being used by the MLSP and UNDP for the e-Social Digital Project - unifying all MLSP MIS under a single window and creating a single beneficiary registry. In February 2024, *Posta Moldovei*, a key Financial Service Provider (FSP) for WFP's cash assistance and the Government of the Republic of Moldova social assistance and social benefits delivery, was subject to a ransomware cyberattack. Following this incident, WFP provided technical assistance to enhance their IT security, including architectural design recommendations and support for implementing two-factor authentication for VPN access to their servers. WFP piloted the updated architecture, featuring private servers isolated from the internet to better safeguard sensitive beneficiary data.

30.   Table 2 is a summary of resource allocation disaggregated by year and activity calculated from monitoring data:

Table 2: Resources by activity and year

Activity	Resources by year (US Dollars)		
	2022	**2023**	**2024**
RACs	9,623,269	9,509,606	7,348,537
Border snacks	0	28,759	51,057
RHH	6,734,116	8,422,039	8,734,002
Winter support[25]	18,577,378	15,005,043	8,978,265

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[25] For winter support the years overlap: 2022/23; 2023/24 and 2024/25.

4. Evaluation scope, criteria and questions

31.   The scope of the evaluation is as follows:

Timeframe: The evaluation will cover the period March 2022-May 2025. Data collection should take place in June 2025. The evaluation report is expected in September 2025 (see Annex 2 for the evaluation schedule).

Geographical Coverage: The evaluation will be centred on the expected changes made at the national level thanks to WFP support and on the basis of programme implementation done in raions across the country (except Transnistria region). There was no geographical targeting. Annex 10 explains targeting for all the interventions. WFP provides assistance to RACs accredited by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection that requested support. There were 102 RACs in 2022 and 24 RACs were being supported as of December 2024. The reduction in number of RACs is due to reduction in number of refugees residing in RACs and RAC consolidation strategy implemented by the MLSP.

Target: The target group for this evaluation will include the government, UN agencies (including WFP) involved in the social protection work and refugee response, the refugees, refugee hosting households, and Moldovan beneficiaries (including women, men, boys, girls, the elderly, Roma community and people with disabilities). At the national level, apart from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the evaluation should include all government ministries involved in shock responsive social protection, emergency preparedness and refugee contingency planning activities. At the local level, the intervention also worked with raions including social assistants who should also be targeted by the evaluation. Local NGOs (Action against Hunger and Help Age) will also be involved in this evaluation as they participated in implementing the provision of hot meals to refugees in refugee accommodation centres and at border points.

Activities: Apart from providing food to refugees in refugee accommodation centres (RACs), WFP also provided supplementary support to meet the food needs of vulnerable households hosting refugees to reduce their economic burden and encourage their continued provision of accommodation for refugees while promoting social cohesion. Social protection capacity strengthening activities have been under SO2 in both TICSP and ICSP. The cash winter support programme shifted from SO1 in TICSP to SO 2 in ICSP as part of the strategic shift towards a responsible exit of the ICSP. This design shift of the winter support programme should also be evaluated how it contributed to the responsible exit outcomes and inclusion. The evaluation should also include all activities under the technical assistance workstream: capacity strengthening, partnerships, management information systems technical support, digital processes support, business process mapping. Evaluating all these activities will help to assess the contribution of all interventions implemented by the social protection offer. This should include cross cutting issues of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

32.   The logical framework and theory of change for the subject of evaluation can be found in Annex 8 and 9. To address the learning objective, the evaluation will answer the following main questions:

- To what extent have WFP interventions[26] been relevant to meeting the needs of the vulnerable Moldovans, refugees and of MLSP?
- How coherent have WFP interventions been with broader social protection policies and programmes in Moldova and how has WFP ensured synergies between its CBT and social

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[26] The WFP interventions are RACs, RHH, winter support programme and capacity strengthening.

protection support?

- To what extent have WFP 's capacity strengthening and cash assistance interventions been efficient in meeting the needs of vulnerable Moldovans, refugees and national social protection systems?
- To what extent have WFP interventions contributed to strengthening the institutional capacities, tools and procedures necessary for the functioning of the MLSP?
- To what extent are the benefits of WFP interventions likely to last in the long-term and after the closure of the Country Office?
- To address the accountability objective, the evaluation will address the following key question: to what extent did the CBT and capacity strengthening activities achieve or are expected to achieve their objectives and results?

33.   The evaluation will apply the international evaluation criteria of relevance, appropriateness, coherence, connectedness, sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness. The evaluation will not cover longer-term impact because much of the social protection support impact will occur in the longer-term beyond the ICSP and closure (February 2026).

34.   The evaluation should analyse how gender, equity and wider inclusion objectives and GEWE mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention design, and whether the evaluation subject has been guided by WFP and system-wide objectives on GEWE. The gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions should be integrated into all evaluation criteria as appropriate. Gender, equity, and inclusion analysis prior to designing or implementing the activities was conducted by different actors including a brief analysis on the gendered impacts of the crisis in Ukraine: a focus on Moldova by UN Women in 2022; Rapid Gender Analysis Brief Ukrainian Refugees in Moldova by CARE in 2022; Understanding the information ecosystem: Roma refugees in Moldova by Internews and International Rescue Committee in 2022. These reports analysed the needs of diverse groups in response to the war in Ukraine.

35.   The evaluation questions are summarised in Table 2 and will be further developed and tailored by the evaluation team in a detailed evaluation matrix during the inception phase. Collectively, the questions aim at highlighting the key lessons (learning) and performance of the social protection capacity strengthening and cash assistance activities (accountability), with a view to informing future strategic and operational decisions both inside Moldova and beyond, as this evaluation has been planned at a time when WFP Moldova's ICSP is about to end and the Country Office about to transition to a different country presence (2026).

Table 3: Evaluation questions and criteria (to be applied in the separate phases[27] of country presence)

Evaluation questions		Criteria
EQ1 – To what extent are WFP interventions relevant to meeting the needs of the vulnerable Moldovans, refugees and of MLSP?		**Relevance** (did the intervention respond to the needs/ policies/ priorities of the beneficiaries and partners?)
1.1.	Was the design of the intervention relevant and did it remain relevant to the wider Moldovan context, the underlying structural issues underpinning vulnerability and the impact of the influx of refugees?	Relevance

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[27] Entry and surge (2022); acute emergency and scale up (2023); stabilization and transition (2024); phase out of CBT transfer modalities (2025) and phase out of capacity strengthening modality and exit (2026)

1.2	To what extent did the intervention plan to address the specific needs and priorities refugees?	Relevance
1.3	To what extent did the intervention plan to address the specific needs and priorities of vulnerable Moldovans?	Relevance
1.4	How well was the intervention designed to address the relevant needs and priorities of the MLSP supported by WFP?	Relevance
1.5	How did the design and implementation of the intervention consider contextual factors including the available capacities of the government and other partners?	Relevance
EQ2 – How coherent have WFP interventions been with broader social protection policies and programmes in Moldova and how has WFP ensured synergies between its cash-based transfers (CBT) and social protection capacity strengthening support?		**Coherence** (Comparability with other interventions within WFP Moldova and Government policies and programmes)
2.1	How well has WFP's social protection intervention aligned with the national social protection policies and reforms of the Government of Moldova implemented by the MLSP and other partners?	Coherence
2.2	How complementary have WFP-designed CBT and social protection actions been to each other over the course of WFP presence in Moldova from the opening of the Country Office until preparations for Country Office closure?	Coherence
2.3	How well did the design of ICSP (such as moving cash assistance to vulnerable Moldovans between the different outcomes in TICSP and ICSP) contribute to the transition from humanitarian response to technical assistance?	Coherence
2.4	What have been the synergies between WFP interventions, UNSDCF and the government - UN refugee response managed under the Refugee Coordination Model?	Coherence
EQ3 – To what extent have WFP 's capacity strengthening, food and cash assistance interventions been efficient to meet the needs of vulnerable Moldovans, refugees and national social protection systems?		**Efficiency** (extent to which the intervention was implemented in an economic and timely way)
3.1	To what extent have WFP CBT processes been timely, secure, and accessible?	Efficiency
3.2	How far has WFP social protection support led to efficiencies in the delivery of assistance to vulnerable Moldovans, refugees and to the functions of MLSP social assistance	Efficiency

		processes?	
3.3		To what extent did the use of government systems contribute to WFP's ability to deliver assistance to vulnerable Moldovans and refugees, and what were the success factors / challenges?	Efficiency
3.4		To what extent and in what ways have WFP's institutional arrangements (HR processes, planning, financing, monitoring and reporting; etc.) facilitated or constrained the ability of WFP Moldova to deliver on its commitments to support strengthened social protection?	Efficiency
EQ4 – To what extent have WFP interventions contributed to, or are they expected to contribute to, strengthening the institutional capacities of the MLSP to address the essential needs of vulnerable population in Moldova?			**Effectiveness** (extent to which objectives and results were achieved or are expected to be achieved)
4.1		To what extent is WFP support achieving its intended objective of enhancing inclusive and shock-responsive social protection and food security systems and capacities of Government of Moldova?	Effectiveness
4.2		What factors influenced WFP's ability to achieve or not achieve the intended objective of enhancing inclusive and shock-responsive social protection and food security systems and capacities of Government of Moldova?	Effectiveness
4.3		How did the social protection capacity strengthening and cash assistance activities address gender inequality and the special needs of children, vulnerable Moldovans and refugees?	Effectiveness
4.4		To what extent have the multipurpose cash assistance to Moldovans and hot meals targeting refugees enabled beneficiaries to meet their essential needs?	Effectiveness
4.5		How far have WFP interventions built the capacity of the MLSP social assistance systems to deliver support to vulnerable populations over the medium to longer term?	Effectiveness
EQ5 – How have WFP activities been designed and conducted to facilitate a responsible exit by WFP?			**Sustainability** (extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue)
5.1		To what extent did WFP leverage its partnership with the government, local and international actors and donors to plan for a responsible exit from Moldova?	Sustainability
5.2		What exit strategies were implemented in Moldova, and how	Sustainability

	can they be adapted to ensure sustainable transitions in other crisis settings?	
EQ6 – To what extent can the WFP Moldova model be applied in other similar contexts (high level refugee crisis/response in upper middle-income countries, protracted humanitarian situations, political instability shocks)?		**Appropriateness** (extent to which the intervention was tailored to Moldova context)
6.1	To what extent has the Moldova model contributed to strengthening local institutions and response mechanisms, and can this impact be replicated in other countries?	Appropriateness
6.2	How scalable is the Moldova response model given different funding environments and infrastructure constraints?	Appropriateness

36.   **The evaluation should include a country case study as a stand-alone deliverable presented as an annex to the evaluation report**. Expanding on answers to key questions in the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness sections of the matrix above, the aim of the case study is to narrate how WFP moved through its different phases[28] of country presence, from establishment of WFP Moldova as an area office for the Ukraine emergency response, to identifying its added value compared with other partners whilst providing technical assistance to the government in a context of protracted humanitarian crisis, towards the planned responsible exit in 2026. The country case study will place equal importance on the contribution of programme and support services. The case study will be expected to pay attention throughout to the way that WFP's work was adapted to respond to the specific context, including the particularities of the acute emergency phase as compared with the protracted crisis, and the context of displaced populations; and the implications of working in a middle-income country with long established social protection systems and programmes.

37.   Analysis of the programmatic contribution will include, for instance, how WFP's provision of direct assistance to refugees and Moldovan households served the purpose of time-bound gap-filling for the national social assistance programmes, and how this created an opportunity to provide technical assistance on improvements to national social protection that can be expected to have a positive longer-term consequence for food security in the country. The analysis will look where relevant across the whole sequence of programme implementation, from targeting and enrolment through to delivery of transfers and programme management, including lessons learned from our activities strengthening digital systems and processes. Lessons regarding the role played by support services might include:

- Planning: How capacity-strengthening work in social protection was planned and scaled up between the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan and the Interim Country Strategic Plan

- Partnerships: How WFP developed its partnership with the government and other agencies to scale up its technical assistance while preparing for a responsible handover of issues

- Funding: Lessons learned in attracting, managing and spending funds from donors supportive of WFP's engagement in social protection, including leveraging a proportion of funds from larger pots of emergency funding.

- Workforce: Lessons learned in other aspects of resourcing, including around the workforce. See

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[28] Entry and surge (2022); acute emergency and scale up (2023); stabilization and transition (2024); phase out of CBT transfer modalities (2025) and phase out of capacity strengthening modality and exit (2026)

5. Methodological approach and ethical considerations

5.1. Evaluation approach

38.   The methodology will be refined by the evaluation team during the inception phase on the basis of the proposed approach set out in the technical proposal. The evaluation team are requested to propose innovative evaluation approaches and methods that can answer the evaluation questions and take into account the existing body of evidence elaborated in section 5.2. The proposed methodology should be clearly justified in relation to the subject of evaluation and the context.

39.   Given the learning objective of the evaluation, the evaluation methods should be participatory. This means early identification of primary intended users of evaluation including beneficiaries and engaging them throughout the process. The methodology should be aimed at developing a credible contribution story of WFP's intervention, alongside other relevant actors and factors, including any unintended effects on policies, systems, and beneficiaries that were not foreseen during programme design. It should:

- Employ the relevant evaluation criteria above (section 4)
- Apply an evaluation matrix geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions taking into account the data availability challenges, the budget and timing constraints
- Ensure through use of mixed methods that women, girls, men and boys from different stakeholders' groups participate and that their different voices are heard and used
- The methodology should be theory-based to allow testing of the conditions under which social protection capacity strengthening and cash assistance activities plus the different combinations of packages (technical assistance and direct assistance[29] to refugees and vulnerable Moldovans) produce the best results for targeted beneficiaries and the government. The evaluation team can consider using the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), and/or contribution analysis which are good approaches to doing such an assessment.

40.   The methodology chosen should demonstrate attention to impartiality and reduction of bias by relying on mixed methods (quantitative, qualitative, participatory etc.) and different primary and secondary data sources that are systematically triangulated (documents from different sources; a range of stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries; direct observation in different locations; across evaluators; across methods etc.). It will take into account any challenges to data availability, validity or reliability, as well as any budget and timing constraints. The evaluation questions, lines of inquiry, indicators, data sources and data collection methods will be brought together in an evaluation matrix, which will form the basis of the sampling approach and data collection and analysis instruments (desk review, interview and observation guides, survey questionnaires etc.).

41.   The methodology should be sensitive in terms of GEWE, equity and inclusion, indicating how the perspectives and voices of diverse groups (men, women, boys, girls, the elderly, people living with disabilities, Roma community and other marginalized groups) will be sought and considered. The methodology should ensure that primary data collected is disaggregated by sex and age; an explanation

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[29] Provided through Refugee Accommodation Centres and Cash to Vulnerable Moldovans activities

should be provided if this is not possible. To ensure that the voices of both males and females from diverse beneficiary groups such as refugees, host population, social assistants and those affected by war are heard and considered, data triangulation must consider these varied perspectives. Given that, direct assistance packages target the most vulnerable, the methodology should prioritize engaging them throughout the evaluation process.

42.   Looking for explicit consideration of gender and equity/inclusion in the data after fieldwork is too late; the evaluation team must have a clear and detailed plan for collecting data from women and men in gender and equity-sensitive ways before fieldwork begins.

43.   The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations must reflect gender and equity analysis as appropriate within the context of the subject of evaluation. The findings should include a discussion on intended and unintended effects of the intervention, including along gender equality and equity dimensions. The report should provide lessons/ challenges/recommendations for conducting gender and equity-responsive evaluations in the future.

44.   The following mechanisms for ensuring an independent, credible and relevant evaluation will be used: the evaluation team will work independently in the design and implementation of the evaluation, final decisions on and approval of evaluation products will be made by the Evaluation Committee; and an Evaluation Reference Group will review and provide feedback, in relation to data collection and the methodology. Within WFP Moldova Country Office, the evaluation is managed by an evaluation manager without prior engagement in programme design and implementation. The manager ensures that all the relevant documents are provided to the ET, and evaluation progresses as per the Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) process guide. An internal evaluation committee, with the primary responsibility of ensuring a credible, transparent, impartial and quality evaluation, has been established. Furthermore, the evaluation also has an evaluation reference group (ERG) which involves internal and external stakeholders and contributes to the relevance, impartiality and credibility of the evaluation. The evaluation is supported by the regional evaluation office at Regional Bureau of Cairo and the evaluation reports are publicly available. Evaluation committee is chaired by the WFP Country Director for the proper conduct of the evaluation according to relevant UN norms of evaluation such as independence, impartiality, credibility and utility. ERG is an advisory body with representation from internal, RBC, Moldova government and cooperating partner representatives. The ERG members will review and comment on the draft evaluation products and function as key informants to contribute to the relevance, impartiality and credibility of the evaluation by offering a range of viewpoints and ensuring a transparent process.

45.   The following potential risks likely to affect proposed approach have been identified as shown in table 3.

Table 4: Potential risks and mitigation actions

#	Potential risk	Mitigation actions
1	The evaluation will be conducted before completing activity implementation. The timing of the evaluation may therefore affect the ability to fully assess the effects and results of the interventions.	The evaluation team to take into consideration the time the evaluation is done against number of activities that have been completed and planned.
2	Difficulties accessing government institutional partners and representatives; staff turnover within government and partner organisation may result in significant changes in personnel	WFP country office to use their relationships with Government and partners to establish means of reaching the key persons even if they no longer work in the same positions and will reach out also to those in WFP who have been involved at various

		stages.
3	The Evaluation Team may have challenges regarding the availability of data for some indicators due to gaps in record keeping as well as quality issues.	Evaluability assessment needs to be done during the inception phase and relevant methods to fill the data gaps should be agreed including collecting additional data or exploring secondary data.

46.   The evaluation team will expand on the methodology presented above and develop a detailed evaluation matrix in the inception report.

5.2.   Preliminary considerations on evaluability and methodological implications

47.   The main source of data for evaluation will be made available to the Evaluation Team, organized through document library on the day of kick off meeting of the inception phase. The document library will include but not limited to annual country reports (ACR) for 2022, 2023 and 2024, monitoring data (output indicators), outcome monitoring surveys for the direct assistance, activity reports, donor reports, programme design documents, internal planning documents, agreements with the government and UN agencies.

48.   There are no previous evaluations as WFP Moldova is a new Country Office. All the indicators in the TICSP and ICSP log frames have been regularly monitored, have baselines and targets (see annex 8). Outcome monitoring surveys[30] (for the direct assistance i.e. RACs and RHH) have been conducted twice every year. The outcome surveys were from a representative sample size and the data was segregated by gender of the household head. Data was also collected on age breakdown of the family members and disability status. Data gaps are expected in the winter support programme activity as it is a one- off cash distribution hence no outcome surveys were conducted but perception surveys that focused on the processes and use of assistance. The second winter support programme has different beneficiary categories in the different rounds. This due to change in targeting criteria between the rounds. Even if the second winter support programme had outcome monitoring surveys conducted, they would not be comparable to the first winter support programme outcome indicators because of the changes in the targeting criteria. The baseline that was done for the first winter support programme can therefore not be used to make comparison with indicators in the f second and third winter support programmes. The evaluation team should consider looking at each beneficiary category instead of looking at the different winter support programmes. The technical assistance component has activity reports produced by the programme team detailing out what activities (including trainings) were done. These will be provided as part of the document library. The Republic of Moldova government has an up to date and comprehensive database through the National Bureau of Statistics. The UNHCR operational data portal dashboard provides information on refugee figures in Moldova.

49.   During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be expected to critically assess data availability, quality and gaps expanding on the information provided above. This assessment will inform the data collection and the choice of evaluation methods. The evaluation team will be expected to systematically check accuracy, consistency and validity of collected data and information and acknowledge any limitations/caveats in drawing conclusions using the data during the reporting phase.

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[30] Outcome surveys report indicators on food security, process monitoring including beneficiary satisfaction, protection and accountability to affected populations.

5.3.   Ethical considerations

50.   The evaluation team is expected to conform to UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluation (Integrity, Accountability, Respect, Beneficence[31]) at all stages of the evaluation. This may include, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of stakeholders (the evaluators have the obligation to safeguard sensitive information that stakeholders do not want to disclose to others), ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of respondents, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups), ensuring appropriate and inclusive representation and treatment of the various stakeholder groups in the evaluation process (and that sufficient resources and time are allocated for it),and ensuring that the evaluation results do no harm to respondents or their communities.

51.   Personal data[32] should be processed in accordance with principles of fair and legitimate processing; purpose specification; proportionality and necessity (data minimization); necessary retention; accuracy; confidentiality; security; transparency; safe and appropriate transfers; and accountability.

52.   The evaluation team will be responsible for managing any potential ethical risks and issues and must put in place, in consultation with the evaluation manager, processes and systems to identify, report and resolve any ethical issues that might arise during the implementation of the evaluation. Ethical approvals and reviews by relevant national and institutional review boards must be sought where required.

53.   Should the evaluators uncover allegations of wrongdoing and misconduct in the implementation of a programme either by a WFP staff or a partner (including fraud, food diversions, misuse of WFP assets, harassment, sexual harassment, etc), the evaluation team should report those allegations to WFP Office of Inspection and Investigation (OIGI) through WFP hotline (http://www.wfphotline.ethicspoint.com)[33]. At the same time, the commissioning office management and the REU should also be informed.

54.   The commissioning office will ensure that the evaluation team and evaluation manager will not have been and/or are not currently involved in the design, implementation or financial management of the WFP social protection capacity strengthening and cash assistance activities, have no vested interest, nor have any other potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

55.   Conflicts of interest are typically identified by a lack of independence or a lack of impartiality. These conflicts occur when a primary interest, such as the objectivity of an evaluation, could be influenced by a secondary interest, such as personal considerations or financial gains (UNEG 2020 Guidelines). There should be no official, professional, personal or financial relationships that might cause, or lead to a perception of bias in terms of what is evaluated, how the evaluation is designed and conducted, and the findings presented. A conflict of interest can also occur when, because of possibilities for future contracts, the evaluator's ability to provide an impartial analysis is compromised. Cases of upstream conflict of interest are those in which consultants could influence the analysis or recommendations so that they are consistent with findings previously stated by themselves. Cases of downstream conflict of interest are those in which evaluators could artificially create favourable conditions for consideration in future assignments (e.g. making recommendations for additional work with aim of being contracted to conduct that work). The potential for bias increases when an evaluator's work is solely focused on one agency. During the evaluation process, the evaluators are not allowed to have another contract with the evaluand/ unit subject to evaluation. To avoid conflicts of interest, particular care should be taken to ensure that independence

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[31] Beneficence means striving to do good for people and planet while minimizing harms arising from evaluation as an intervention.
[32] Names or identifying information from evaluation participants (e.g. interviewees, survey respondents).
[33] For further information on how to apply the UNEG norms and standards in each step of the evaluation, the evaluation team can also consult the Technical Note on Principles, Norms and Standards for evaluations.

and impartiality are maintained.

56.   All members of the evaluation team should abide by the 2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines, including the Pledge of Ethical Conduct, the 2014 Guidelines on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation as well as the WFP technical note on integrating gender in WFP evaluation. The evaluation team and individuals who participate directly in the evaluation at the time of issuance of the purchase order (or individual contracts) are expected to sign a confidentiality agreement and a commitment to ethical conduct.[34] These templates will be provided by the country office when signing the contract.

5.4.   Quality assurance

57.   The WFP evaluation quality assurance system sets out processes with steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products based on a set of Quality Assurance Checklists. The quality assurance will be systematically applied during this evaluation and relevant documents will be provided to the evaluation team. This includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. The relevant checklist will be applied at each stage, to ensure the quality of the evaluation process and outputs.

58.   The WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) is based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community and aims to ensure that the evaluation process and products conform to best practice. This quality assurance process does not interfere with the views or independence of the evaluation team but ensures that the report provides credible evidence and analysis in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.

59.   The WFP evaluation manager will be responsible for ensuring that the evaluation progresses as per the DEQAS Process Guide and for conducting a rigorous quality control of the evaluation products ahead of their finalization. There will be several rounds of reviews and feedback until draft deliverables are up to the expected quality.

60.   To enhance the quality and credibility of DEs, an outsourced quality support (QS) service directly managed by the OEV reviews the draft ToR, the draft inception and evaluation reports, and provides a systematic assessment of their quality from an evaluation perspective, along with recommendations.

61.   The evaluation manager will share the assessment and recommendations from the quality support service with the team leader, who will address the recommendations when finalizing the inception and evaluation reports. To ensure transparency and credibility of the process in line with the UNEG norms and standards[35],a rationale should be provided for comments that the team does not take into account when finalizing the report.

62.   The evaluation team will be required to ensure the quality of data (reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the data collection, synthesis, analysis and reporting phases.

63.   The evaluation team should be assured of the accessibility of all relevant documentation within the provisions of the directive on disclosure of information WFP Directive CP2010/001 on information disclosure.

64.   WFP expects that all deliverables from the evaluation team are subject to a thorough quality assurance review by the evaluation firm in line with the WFP evaluation quality assurance system prior to submission of the deliverables to WFP. In case evaluators are contracted directly as individuals, the team

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[34] If there are changes in the evaluation team or a sub-contracting for some of the planned evaluation activities, the confidentiality agreement and ethics pledge should also be signed by those additional members.
[35] UNEG Norm #7 states "that transparency is an essential element that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability"

leader is responsible for thorough QA before submission of drafts.

65.   All final evaluation reports will be subject to a post hoc quality assessment (PHQA) by an independent entity through a process that is managed by the Office of Evaluation. The overall PHQA results will be published on the WFP website alongside the evaluation report.

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6. Organization of the evaluation

6.1. Phases and deliverables

67.	Table 3 presents the structure of the main phases of the evaluation, along with the deliverables and deadlines for each phase. [Annex 2](#) presents a more detailed timeline.

Table 5 Summary timeline – key evaluation milestones

Main phases	Indicative timeline	Tasks and deliverables	Responsible
1. Preparation	**January to March 2025**	• Preparation of ToR • Establishment of EC and ERG • Final ToR • Selection of the evaluation team & contracting • Library of key documents	• Evaluation manager • Evaluation reference group • Evaluation Committee
2. Inception	**April to May 2025**	• Kick off meeting with evaluation team • Document review/ briefing • Inception mission [in person] • Preparation of inception report (evaluation and case study) including interview guides and other data collection tools • Summary ToRs (by ET) • Final inception report (evaluation and case study)	• Evaluation Team • Evaluation manager • Evaluation reference group • Evaluation Committee
3. Data collection	**June 2025**	• Fieldwork (evaluation and case study) • Exit debriefing	• Evaluation Team
4. Reporting	**July (case study)** **July to September 2025 (evaluation)**	• Data analysis and report drafting • Comments process • Learning workshop • Final evaluation (maximum 30,000	• Evaluation Team • Evaluation manager • Evaluation reference group • Evaluation Committee

		words and case study (maximum 10,000 words) reports • Evaluation and case study briefs (two pager) in English and Romanian. • Evaluation report summary in Romanian language • Final power point presentations	
5. Dissemination and follow-up	**October 2025**	• Management response • Dissemination of the evaluation report	• Evaluation manager • Evaluation Committee

6.2. Evaluation team composition

68.   The evaluation team is expected to include four members, including the team leader, with a mix of national/regional and international evaluator(s) with relevant expertise. To the extent possible, the evaluation will be conducted by a gender, geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse and balanced team who can effectively cover the areas of evaluation. The evaluation team should have good knowledge of gender, equity, wider inclusion issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics. It will have strong methodological competencies in designing feasible data collection and analysis as well as synthesis and reporting skills. At least one team member should have demonstrated recent experience with WFP evaluation. Team members should have relevant mix of expertise, including social protection and cash-based transfer, capacity strengthening, refugee operations, and the HDP nexus.

Table 6: Summary of evaluation team and areas of expertise required

	Expertise required
Team Leadership (Senior level evaluator with thematic expertise)	**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS** - Excellent team management skills (coordination, planning, ability to resolve problems and deliver on time). - Strong experience in leading evaluations at country level, such as evaluations of direct assistance and technical assistance to government for social protection work in emergencies capacity strengthening and refugee operations. - Experience with applying a range of evaluation approaches including approaches that mix quantitative and qualitative including reconstruction, and use of theories of change in evaluations. - Strong presentation skills and excellent writing and synthesis skills. - Experience facilitating in-person and hybrid meetings and workshops. - Experience in humanitarian and/or development contexts. - Expertise in one or more of the technical areas below. **DESIRABLE** - Familiarity with WFP programmes and modalities of intervention. - Good knowledge of country/regional context. - Previous experience leading or conducting WFP evaluation in social protection, capacity strengthening, refugee response(s). - Good knowledge of gender, equity, wider inclusion issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics

Evaluators with thematic expertise (social protection, CBT, support to govt. capacity development)	**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**
	
	- Fluency and excellent writing skills in English and Romanian/Russian (at least one of the team members).
	- Demonstrable analytical skills relevant to social protection, cash-based transfer, government capacity strengthening, and HDP nexus.
	- Experience in humanitarian contexts.
	- Prior experience in evaluating design, implementation, outputs, and outcomes in the following areas (one of these will be under the team leader):
	    o Social protection, capacity strengthening and refugee response
	    o Mixed methods expert
	    o Gender equality and women empowerment
	
	DESIRABLE
	
	- Familiarity with WFP programmes and modalities of intervention.
	- Previous experience leading or conducting WFP evaluation(s).
	- Good knowledge of country/regional context.
	- Good knowledge of gender, equity, wider inclusion issues and, to the extent possible, power dynamics

Quality assurance Evaluator	**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS** - Experience in quality assurance of evaluations. **DESIRABLE** - Familiarity with WFP programmes and modalities of intervention.

	Expertise required
	• Previous experience with WFP evaluation(s).
Consultant (Country case study)	• Post graduate qualifications in social policy, economics / development or related fields • At least 6 years of professional experience in working on projects/ programmes related to social protection and research, including qualitative data collection and analysis • Excellent writing skills • Knowledge of the Moldovan social protection context an advantage

69.   The team leader will have expertise in one of the key competencies listed above as well as demonstrated experience in leading similar evaluations, including designing methodology and data collection tools. She/he will also have leadership, analytical and communication skills, including a record of excellent English writing, synthesis and presentation skills. Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team; and iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception report, the end of field work (i.e. exit) debriefing presentation and evaluation report in line with DEQAS.

70.   Team members will: i) contribute to the methodology in their area of expertise based on a document review; ii) conduct field work; iii) participate in team meetings and meetings with stakeholders; and iv) contribute to the drafting and revision of the evaluation products in their technical area(s). The consultant will be responsible for the case study which will not be requiring an evaluation approach but would be more of 'telling the story' as to the appropriateness of what has been done in the separate phases of WFP presence in Moldova. See annex 11 for details on roles of the case study consultant.

39.   The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation under the direction of its team leader and in close communication with the WFP evaluation manager. The team will be hired following agreement with WFP on its composition.

6.3.   Roles and responsibilities

71.   The WFP Moldova **management (**Director) will take responsibility to:

- Assign an evaluation manager for the evaluation
- Establish the internal evaluation committee (EC) and the evaluation reference group (ERG)
- Approve the final ToR, inception, and evaluation reports (including case study)
- Approve the evaluation team selection
- Ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation at all stages through EC and ERG
- Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and the evaluation subject, its performance and results with the evaluation manager and the evaluation team
- Organize and participate in debriefings with internal and external stakeholders
- Oversee dissemination and follow-up processes, including the preparation of a management response to the evaluation recommendations.

72.   The **evaluation manage**r manages the evaluation process through all phases including:

- Acting as the main interlocutor between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader, the firm's focal point, and WFP counterparts to ensure a smooth implementation process.
- Drafting this evaluation Terms of Reference in consultation with key stakeholders.
- Identifying and contracting the evaluation team and preparing and managing the evaluation budget;
- Preparing the terms of reference and schedule of engagement for the EC and ERG ;
- Ensuring quality assurance mechanisms are operational and effectively used;

- Consolidating and sharing comments on draft inception and evaluation reports (including case study) with the evaluation team;
- Ensuring that the team has access to all documentation and information necessary to the evaluation; facilitating the team's contacts with local stakeholders;
- Supporting the preparation of the field mission by setting up meetings and field visits, providing logistic support during the fieldwork and arranging for interpretation, if required;
- Organizing security briefings for the evaluation team and providing any materials as required;
- Ensuring EC and ERG are kept informed on progress, and escalating issues to the EC as appropriate
- Conducting the first level quality assurance of the evaluation products.
- Submit all drafts to the REU for second level quality assurance before submission for approval.

73.   An internal Evaluation Committee (EC) is formed to steer the evaluation process and ensure it is independent and impartial. The roles and responsibilities of the EC include overseeing the evaluation process, making key decisions and reviewing evaluation products. Annex 3 provides further information on the membership/composition of the evaluation committee and roles and responsibilities.

74.   The regional bureau in Cairo will take responsibility to:

- Advise the evaluation manager and provide technical support to the evaluation throughout the process through the REU.
- Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the evaluation subject as required through the Regional Social Protection Advisor.
- Provide comments on the draft ToR, inception and evaluation reports (including case study) from a subject-contents perspective through the Regional Gender and Social Protection Advisors.
- Provide second level quality assurance of all evaluation products through the regional evaluation unit before they are approved.
- Support the preparation of a management response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.

75.   While Andrew Fyfe, Regional Evaluation Officer, is the RB focal person for this DE and will perform most of the above responsibilities, other regional bureau-relevant technical staff may participate in the ERG and/or comment on evaluation products as appropriate.

76.   Relevant WFP Headquarters divisions will take responsibility to:

- Discuss WFP strategies, policies or systems in their area of responsibility and subject of evaluation.
- Comment on the evaluation TOR, inception and evaluation reports (including case study), as required.

77.   **Other Stakeholders (National Government including relevant ministries, implementing partners / NGOs, partner UN agencies)** will review and comment on draft evaluation TOR, inception report, and evaluation report (including case study).

78.   **The Office of Evaluation (OEV)**. OEV is responsible for overseeing WFP DE function, defining evaluation norms and standards, managing the outsourced quality support service, publishing as well submitting the final evaluation report to the PHQA. OEV also ensures a help desk function and advises the REU, EM and Evaluation teams when required. Internal and external stakeholders and/or the evaluators are encouraged to reach out to the REU and the Office of Evaluation helpdesk (wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org) in case of potential impartiality breaches or non-adherence to UNEG ethical guidelines or other risks to the credibility of the evaluation process.

6.4.   Security considerations

79.   **Security clearance:** WFP Moldova Country Office, through UNDSS, will organise for a security briefing for the evaluation team.

- As an "independent supplier" of evaluation services to WFP, the contracted firm will be responsible for ensuring the security of the evaluation team, and adequate arrangements for evacuation for medical or situational reasons. There are no specific security considerations for different groups (women, people with disabilities, children, elderly, etc) visiting the field sites. However, to avoid any security incidents, the evaluation manager will ensure that the WFP country office registers the team members with the security officer on arrival in country and arranges a security briefing for them to gain an understanding of the security situation on the ground. The evaluation team must observe applicable United Nations Department of Safety and Security rules and regulations including taking security training (BSAFE & SSAFE), curfews (when applicable) and attending in-country briefings.

80.   As per annex I of LTA agreement, companies are expected to travel to all relevant WFP programme countries, including those with hazardous contexts. Prior to company participation in a mini-bid and submission of proposal, the company is advised to check whether government restrictions are in place that prevent team members from travelling to countries/areas to conduct the services. If it is the case that government restrictions prevent team member travel, the company should not participate in the mini bid.

6.5. Communication

81.   To ensure a smooth and efficient evaluation process and enhance the learning from this evaluation, the evaluation team should place emphasis on transparent and open communication with key stakeholders throughout the process. This will be achieved by ensuring a clear agreement on channels and frequency of communication with and between key stakeholders. The Evaluation Manager will be responsible for:

a. Sharing all draft products including TOR, inception report, and evaluation report (including case study) with the internal and external stakeholders to solicit their feedback; The communication will specify the date by when the feedback is expected and highlight next steps;

b. Documenting systematically how stakeholders feedback has been used in finalising the product, ensuring that where feedback has not been used a rationale is provided;

c. Informing stakeholders (through the ERG) of planned meetings at least one week before and where appropriate sharing the agenda for such meetings;

d. Informing the team leader in advance the people who have been invited for meetings that the team leader is expected to participate and sharing the agenda in advance,

e. Sharing final evaluation products (TOR, inception, evaluation report and case study) with all the internal and external stakeholders for their information and action as appropriate.

82.   The evaluation team will propose/explore communication/feedback channels to appropriate audiences (including affected populations as relevant) during the inception phase. The evaluation team will be responsible for:

a. Communicating the rationale for the evaluation and case study design decisions, sampling, methodology, and tools in the inception report and through discussions;

b. Working with the evaluation manager to ensure a detailed evaluation schedule is communicated to stakeholders before field work starts (annexed to the inception report);

c. Sharing a brief PowerPoint presentation before the debriefings to enable stakeholders joining the briefings remotely to follow the discussions;

d. Including in the final report and case study the list of people interviewed, as appropriate (bearing in mind confidentiality and protection issues); and

e. Systematically considering all stakeholder feedback when finalising the evaluation report and case study and transparently provide rationale for feedback that was not used.

83. Should translators be required for fieldwork, the evaluation firm will make arrangements and include the cost in the budget proposal.

84. Based on the stakeholder analysis, the draft communication and knowledge management plan (in Annex 5) identifies the users of the evaluation to involve in the process and to whom the various products should be disseminated. The communication and knowledge management plan indicates how findings including gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be disseminated and how stakeholders interested in, or affected by, gender, equity and wider inclusion issues will be engaged.

85. As per norms and standards for evaluation, WFP requires that all evaluations be made publicly available. It is important that evaluation reports are accessible to a wide audience, thereby contributing to the credibility of WFP – through transparent reporting – and the use of evaluation. Following the approval of the final evaluation report and case study, the evaluation will be published in WFP internal and public websites.

86. Evaluators shall provide a copy of the evaluation report and case study that is free of personally identifiable information (PII) and proprietary information. Final versions of evaluation report and case study ready for publication should be accessible to persons with disabilities. For guidance on creating documents accessible to persons with disabilities, please see the following resources: https://www.section508.gov/create/documents; https://www.section508.gov/create/pdfs

6.6. Proposal

87. The evaluation will be financed from WFP Moldova Country Office funds.

88. The offer will include a detailed budget for the evaluation, including consultant fees, travel costs and other costs (interpreters, etc.). In country road travel for the evaluation team shall be arranged by the Evaluation Team. The budget should be submitted as excel file separate from the technical proposal document.

89. Following the technical and financial assessment, an improved offer could be requested by WFP to the preferred bid(s) to better respond to the TOR requirements. WFP may conduct reference checks and interviews with proposed team members as part of the decision-making process and selection.

Annex 1. Map of Moldova

Annex 2. Timeline

Phases, deliverables and timeline		Dates
Phase 1 - Preparation		
EM	Desk review, draft ToR and quality assure (QA) using ToR QC	10-Dec-24
REU	Quality assurance by REU	10-Jan-25
EM	Revise draft ToR based on feedback received	17-Jan-25
EM	Share draft ToR with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS, if required	23-Jan-25
EM	Revise draft ToR based on DEQS and share with ERG	3-Feb-25
ERG	Review and comment on draft ToR	6-Feb-25
EM	Revise draft ToR based on comments received from ERG and submit final ToR to EC Chair	13-Feb-25
EM	Start recruitment process	19-Feb-25
EC Chair	**Approve the final ToR, share with ERG, and key stakeholders**	24-Feb-25
EM	Assess evaluation proposals/ Conduct interviews and recommend team selection	21-Mar-25
EC Chair	**Approve evaluation team selection**	28-Mar-25
EM	Evaluation team contracting and PO issuance	1-Apr-25
Phase 2 - Inception		
ET	Desk review of key documents	
EM/ET	Inception briefings, with REU support as needed	
ET	Inception mission in the country	
ET	Draft inception report (with case study as annex to the evaluation inception report)	
EM	Quality assures draft IR by EM and REU using QC	
ET	Revise draft IR based on feedback received by EM and REU	
EM	Share draft IR with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS, if required	
ERG	Review and comment on draft IR	
EM	Consolidate comments and share with ET	
ET	Revise draft IR based on feedback received and submit final revised IR	April and May 2025
EM	Review final IR and submit to the evaluation committee for approval	
EC Chair	**Approve final IR and share with ERG for information**	30 May 2025
Phase 3 – Data collection (evaluation and case study)		
ET	**Data collection**	June 2025
ET	**In-country debriefing (s)**	
Phase 4 – Reporting		

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ET	Draft evaluation report (with case study as an annex to the evaluation report)	
EM	Quality assurance of draft ER by EM and REU using the QC,	
ET	Revise and submit draft ER based on feedback received by EM and REU	
EM	Share draft ER with quality support service (DEQS) and organize follow-up call with DEQS, if required	
ERG	Review and comment on draft ER	
ET	Revise and submit draft ER based on feedback received by DEQS and ERG	
ET	Learning workshop	
EM	Consolidate comments received	
ET	Revise draft ER based on feedback received	July to September 2025
EM	Review final revised ER and submit to the evaluation committee	
EC Chair	**Approve final evaluation report (with case study as an annex to the evaluation report) and share with key stakeholders**	30 September 2025
Phase 5 - Dissemination (total duration		
EC Chair	Prepare management response	
EM	**Share final evaluation report and management response with the REU and OEV for publication and participate in end-of-evaluation lessons learned call**	31 October 2025

Annex 3. Role and composition of the evaluation committee

90.   Purpose and role: The purpose of the evaluation committee (EC) is to ensure a credible, transparent, impartial and quality evaluation in accordance with WFP evaluation policy. It will achieve this by supporting the evaluation manager in making decisions, reviewing draft deliverables (ToR, inception report and evaluation report) and submitting them for approval by the Country Director/Deputy Country Director (CD/DCD) who will be the chair of the committee.

91.   Composition: The evaluation committee will be composed of the following staff:

1. Katrien Ghoos (Country Director and Representative / Chair of the Evaluation Committee)
2. Stephane Meaux (Deputy Country Director /Head of Programme)
3. Andrew Fyfe (Regional Evaluation Officer)
4. Andrew Mitchel (Social Protection Activity Manager)
5. Fadel Daoud (Direct Assistance Activity Manager)
6. Jason Nyirenda (Evaluation Committee Secretariat)
7. Clare Obrien (HQ Senior Social Protection Advisor)
8. Raphaelle Noel (HQ POC Strategic Coord. & AED Office)

Evaluation Phase and engagement task	Estimate level of effort in days	Tentative Dates
Preparation Phase • Select and establish ERG membership. • Reviews the revised draft ToR prepared by the EM • Approves the final TOR • Approves the final evaluation team and budget	**1 day**	**December 2024** **January 2025** **March 2025**
Inception Phase • Brief the evaluation team on the subject of the evaluation. • Inform evaluation design through discussions with the evaluators. • Support identifying field visit sites on the basis of selection criteria • Review the revised draft IR • Approve the final IR	**2 days**	**April 2025** **July 2025** **August 2025**
Data Collection Phase • Function as key informants, responds to interview questions • Facilitate access to sources of contextual information and data, and to stakeholders • Attend the end of field work debriefing(s) meeting • Support the team in clarifying emerging issues/gaps how to fill them	**2 days**	**August 2025**
Analysis and Reporting Phase • Review final evaluation report after quality assurance by ET + EM • Approve the final ER	**2 days**	**November 2025** **December 2025**

Dissemination and Follow-up Phase • Decide whether management agrees, partially agrees or does not agree with the recommendations and provides justification • Lead preparation of the management response to the evaluation recommendations	**2 days**	**January 2026**

Annex 4. Role, composition and schedule of engagement of the evaluation reference group

92.   **Purpose and role**: The evaluation reference group (ERG) is an advisory group providing advice and feedback to the evaluation manager and the evaluation team at key moments during the evaluation process. It is established during the preparatory stage of the evaluation and is mandatory for all DEs.

93.   The overall purpose of the evaluation reference group is to contribute to the credibility, utility and impartiality of the evaluation. For this purpose, its composition and role are guided by the following principles:

- **Transparency**: Keeping relevant stakeholders engaged and informed during key steps ensures transparency throughout the evaluation process
- **Ownership and Use**: Stakeholders' participation enhances ownership of the evaluation process and products, which in turn may impact on its use
- **Accuracy**: Feedback from stakeholders at key steps of the preparatory, data collection and reporting phases contributes to accuracy of the facts and figures reported in the evaluation and of its analysis.

Composition

Country office	Name
Core members: 1. Country Director and Representative (Chair) 2. Evaluation Manager (secretary) 3. Head of Programme (Deputy Country Director) 4. Social Protection Activity Manager 5. Direct Assistance Activity Manager 6. Head of Support Services 7. Ministry of labour and social protection 8. Ministry of labour and social protection 9. UNICEF 10. IOM 11. UNHCR 12. UK FCDO (Donor) 13. ECHO (Donor) 14. EU delegation 15. World Vision (NGO partner)	1. Katrien Ghoos 2. Jason Nyirenda 3. Stephen Meaux 4. Andrew Mitchel 5. Fadel Daoud 6. Bahodur Khodjaev 7. Barcari Oleg 8. Vasile Cusca 9. Maha Damaj 10. Ibrahim Marte 11. Yigit Anil Gurer 12. Pippa Bown 13. Ilhan Güvel 14. Evghenia Hiora 15. Shadi Seifeldine
Regional bureau	**Name**

Core members:	
1. Regional Evaluation Officer 2. Regional Social Protection Advisor 3. Regional Gender and Inclusion Adviser	1. Andrew Fyfe 2. Felix Veronneau 3. ==XXX==
Headquarters (optional)	**Name**
1. Senior Social protection Advisor 2. POC Strategic Coord. & AED Office	1. Clare Obrien 2. Raphaelle Noel

Schedule of ERG engagement and Time commitments

Evaluation Phase and engagement task	Estimate level of effort in days	Tentative Dates
Preparation Phase • Review and comment on the draft ToR • Where appropriate, provide input on the evaluation questions. • Identify source documents useful to the evaluation team • Attend ERG meeting/conference call etc	**1 day**	**March 2025**
Inception Phase • Meet with evaluation team to discuss how the evaluation team can design a realistic/practical, relevant and useful evaluation. • Identify and facilitate dialogues with key stakeholders for interviews • Identify and access documents and data • Help identify appropriate field sites according to selection criteria set up by the evaluation team in the inception report. • Review and comment on the draft Inception Report	**1 day**	**May 2025**
Data Collection Phase • Function as a key informant: respond to interview questions • Provide information sources and facilitate access to data • Attend the evaluation team's end of field work debriefing	**2 days**	**June 2025**
Analysis and Reporting Phase • Review and comment on the draft evaluation report focusing on accuracy, quality and comprehensiveness of findings, and of links to conclusions and recommendations.	**2 days**	**August 2025**
Dissemination and Follow-up Phase • Disseminate final report internally and externally, as relevant; • Share findings within units, organizations, networks and at events; • Provide input to management response and its implementation	**2 days**	**October 2025**

Annex 5. Communication and knowledge management plan

When Evaluation phase	What Product (including case study as an annex)	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How Communication channel	Why Communication purpose
Preparation	Draft TOR	Evaluation Reference Group	Evaluation manager	Email	To request review of and comments on TOR
	Final TOR	Evaluation Reference Group; WFP Management; Evaluation community; WFP employees	Evaluation manager	Email; WFPgo; WFP.org	To inform of the final or agreed upon overall plan, purpose, scope and timing of the evaluation
Inception	Draft Inception report	Evaluation Reference Group	Evaluation manager	Email	To request review of and comments on IR
	Final Inception Report	Evaluation Reference Group; WFP employees; WFP evaluation cadre	Evaluation manager	Email; WFPgo	To inform key stakeholders of the detailed plan for the evaluation, including critical dates and milestones, sites to be visited, stakeholders to be engaged etc.
Data collection	Debriefing power-point	Commissioning office management and programme staff; Evaluation Reference Group	Team leader (may be sent to EM who then forwards to the relevant staff)	Meeting	To invite key stakeholders to discuss the preliminary findings
Reporting	Draft Evaluation report	Evaluation Reference Group	Evaluation manager	Email	To request review of and comments on ER

When	What	To whom	From whom	How	Why
Evaluation phase	Product (including case study as an annex)	Target audience	Creator lead	Communication channel	Communication purpose
	Validation workshop power-point	Commissioning office management and programme staff; Evaluation Reference Group; partners	Evaluation manager and Team Leader	Meeting	To discuss preliminary conclusions and recommendations
	Final Evaluation report Evaluation Brief (two pager) Evaluation report summary in Romanian Final power point presentation	Evaluation Reference Group; WFP Management; donors and partners; Evaluation community; WFP employees; general public	Evaluation manager	Email; WFPgo; WFP.org; Evaluation Network platforms (e.g. UNEG, ALNAP)	To inform key stakeholders of the final main product from the evaluation and make the report available publicly
Dissemination & Follow-up	Draft Management Response	Evaluation Reference Group; CO Programme staff; CO M&E staff; Senior Regional Programme Adviser	Evaluation manager	Email	To discuss the commissioning office's actions to address the evaluation recommendations and elicit comments
	Final Management Response	Evaluation Reference Group; Government of republic of Moldova; WFP in Moldova (Capacity strengthening	Evaluation manager	Email; WFPgo; WFP.org;	To ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the commitments made on taking actions and make the Management

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When Evaluation phase	What Product (including case study as an annex)	To whom Target audience	From whom Creator lead	How Communication channel	Why Communication purpose
		technical assistance only); WFP in Regional Bureau Cairo WFP Hed quarters; WFP employees; general public			Response publicly available
Dissemination & Follow-up (Associated Content)	Evaluation Brief	WFP Management; WFP employees; donors and partners; National decision-makers	Evaluation manager	WFP.org, WFPgo	To disseminate evaluation findings
	Infographics[36]	Donors and partners; Evaluation community; National decision-makers; Affected populations, beneficiaries and communities; General public	Evaluation Team; OEV/RB/CO Communications/ KM unit	WFP.org, WFPgo; Evaluation Network platforms (e.g. UNEG, ALNAP).	
	Lessons learned papers, tailored briefs, summaries of findings		Evaluation manager		

[36] See the example of the Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Capacity to Respond to Emergencies.

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Annex 7. Acronyms and abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AS	Ajutor Social
CVM	Cash to Vulnerable Moldovans
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EFA	Emergency Financial Aid
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICSP	Interim Country Strategic Plan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MDL	Moldovan Leu
MIA	Ministry of internal affairs
MIS	Management information system
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RAC	Refugee Accommodation Centre
RHH	Refugee Hosting Household

Annex 8. Logical Framework

Indicators		Baseline (March 2022)	Target (February 2024)	Baseline (March 2024)	Target (February 2026)	NOTES
Outcome	The Government of Moldova has enhanced capacities and programmes to address the essential needs of vulnerable populations by 2026.					
Outcome Indicators	Food consumption score					ICSP only
	Consumption-based coping strategy index (average)					ICSP only
	Number of national policies, strategies, programmes and other system components contributing to Zero Hunger and other SDGs enhanced with WFP capacity strengthening support	0	2	0	2	both CSP
	Number of people covered (WFP indirect beneficiaries) by national social protection systems or programmes to which WFP provided support	0	650000			TICSP only
	Number of policies and legislative instruments contributing to Zero Hunger and other SDGs created or adapted by national stakeholders with WFP capacity strengthening support			0	2	ICSP only
	Number of national policies, strategies, programmes and other system components contributing to Zero Hunger and other SDGs that have benefitted from WFP capacity strengthening support			0	2	ICSP only
	Proportion of people participating in training, coaching, or mentoring reporting improvement in knowledge/skills contributing to Zero Hunger and other SDGs			0	0	ICSP only

Output 1	The Government benefits from an enhanced shock-responsive social protection system that more effectively reaches the most vulnerable populations.						
Output 1 Indicators	1.1 Number of people engaged in capacity strengthening initiatives facilitated by WFP to enhance national stakeholder capacities contributing to Zero Hunger	0	2210		150	both CSP
	1.2 Number of capacity strengthening initiatives facilitated by WFP to enhance national stakeholder capacities to contribute to Zero Hunger and other SDGs	5	0			both CSP
	1.3 Number of tools or products developed or revised to enhance national systems contributing to zero hunger and other SDGs as part of WFP capacity strengthening	██	██			ICSP only
	1.4 Value of assets and infrastructure handed over to national stakeholders as part of WFP capacity strengthening support	██	██		0	ICSP only
	1.5 Number of national institutions engaged in WFP capacity strengthening activities at national and subnational levels	7	32		3	both CSP
	1.6 Social protection system building blocks supported	Completed	Completed		Completed	both CSP
Output 2	Vulnerable populations in Moldova are provided with social assistance cash top-ups that help them to meet their food and other essential needs.					
Output 2 Indicators	2.1 Number of people receiving assistance unconditionally or conditionally (complementary with UNICEF, FAO, WHO)	██	██			ICSP only
	2.2 Total value of cash transferred to people	██	██			ICSP only

Cross-cutting Results						
Cross-cutting result 1	Protection					
Cross-cutting indicators	CC.1.1 Percentage of beneficiaries reporting no safety concerns experienced as a result of their engagement in WFP programmes	100%	= 100%			both CSP
	CC.1.2 Percentage of beneficiaries who report they experienced no barriers to accessing food and nutrition assistance	100%	= 100%			both CSP
	CC.1.3 Percentage of beneficiaries who report being treated with respect as a result of their engagement in programmes	100%	= 100%			both CSP
	CC.1.4 Number of women, men, boys and girls with disabilities accessing food/cash-based transfers/commodity vouchers/capacity strengthening services	48,289	No follow up			both CSP
	CC.1.5 Country office meets or exceeds UNDIS entity accountability framework standards concerning accessibility (QCPR)	Missing	Approaching or meeting			both CSP
Cross-cutting result 2	Accountability					
Cross-cutting indicators	Percentage of beneficiaries reporting they were provided with accessible information about WFP programmes, including PSEA					both CSP
	Country office meets or exceeds United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) standards on consulting organizations of persons with disabilities (QCPR)	Missing	Approaching or meeting			both CSP

	Country office has a functioning community feedback mechanism	Yes	Yes			both CSP
	Country office has an action plan on community engagement	No	No			both CSP
	Number of children and adults who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian, development, protection and/or other personnel who provide assistance to affected populations (IOM, OHCHR, UNDP)	11,788				both CSP
Cross-cutting result 3	Gender equality and women's empowerment					
Cross-cutting indicators	Percentage of households where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of food/cash/vouchers, disaggregated by transfer modality					both CSP
	Percentage of food assistance decision making entity members who are women					both CSP
	Proportion of women and men reporting economic empowerment					both CSP
	Type of transfer (food, cash, voucher, no compensation) received by participants in WFP activities, disaggregated by sex, age and type of activity					TICSP only
Cross-cutting result 4	Environmental sustainability					
Cross-cutting indicators	Proportion of field-level agreements (FLAs)/memorandums of understanding (MOUs)/construction contracts (CCs) for CSP activities screened for environmental and social risks	0	= 100			both CSP

Cross-cutting result 5	Nutrition integration					
Cross-cutting indicators	Percentage of people supported by WFP operations and services who are able to meet their nutritional needs through an effective combination of fortified food, specialized nutritious products and actions to support diet diversification					both CSP
	Percentage of WFP beneficiaries who benefit from a nutrition-sensitive programme component					both CSP
	Nutrition-sensitive score					ICSP only

Annex 9. Theory of Change of the WFP Social Protection Offer to MLSP

Impact - The government social assistance system is better able to serve the most vulnerable people and is equipped with a shock-responsive capacity to be better prepared for disasters and crisis				
Challenges	**Actions**	**Intermediate Outcome**	**Overall Outcomes**	**Exit Strategy Outcome**
AS is not recognised as a successful programme worthy, leading to a lack of fiscal space for MLSP to support vulnerable Moldovans and Refugees	Advocacy, influence and technical assistance models	1. WFP facilitates joint advocacy by the international community whilst to raise the profile of poverty and jobs with the government and development donors	**1. AS is viewed as a valued project to invest in by the government and donors**	**Increased fiscal space and functioning of AS allows better coverage of the most vulnerable people whilst opening the way for refugee inclusion**
Procedures and the capacity to identify and treat fraud and corruption require scaling up at the local level	Overarching Ajutor Social (AS) cash assurance / risk management support	2.1 Role of the Social Inspectorate is expanded and strengthened in priority raions to demonstrate best practice for MLSP scale up.	**2. Ajutor Social inclusion and exclusion risks are reduced to ensure that those most in need access benefits**	
Applicants and beneficiaries who need AS are unable to access benefits due to exclusion issues in AS processes	Ajutor Social delivery chain optimisation	2.2 Exclusion errors are reduced along key parts of the benefit delivery chain to maximise inclusion		
The general public do not know exactly how AS works and there is at times a perception that it is unfair	Ajutor Social outreach and communication campaign	2.3 An outreach and communication approach to the public increases the understanding and knowledge of AS		

AS has a poor coverage of highly vulnerable groups due to a lack of targeted resources, particularly during times of heightened needs during winter	Gap-filling winter support programme distributions	2.4 A winter support programme distribution fills critical gaps in social assistance coverage during the winter period		
Lack of oversight on the progress of key AS programme indicators and risks and the inability to report and react	Upgrade Ajutor Social dashboards	3.1 An integrated Performance and Risk Management Dashboard is set up and used at raion-, ATAS- and central levels to better manage AS	**3. Ajutor Social efficiencies and quality are reinforced**	
SIASS requires a maintenance of its platform, and its full capacities are not being leveraged to their maximum	Upgrade SIASS and digitalisation	3.2 The functionality of the SIASS MIS platform is reinforced and linked to the digitalisation of AS processes		
AS staff are linked to many of the challenges at the local level, and are unaware of changes and opportunities to build their capacity and learn	AS Staff capacity building and information campaign	3.3 The overall technical competency of AS staff is improved backed by an internal communications strategy in priority raions to demonstrate best practice for MLSP scale up		
Limited capacity to feed the most vulnerable by social food services with insufficient use of digital management and monitoring processes and adherence to quality assurance regulations	Kitchen and food service installations.	4. Equipment of social canteens and upgrading of digital, targeting/monitoring and quality assurance processes backed by sustainable funding and pipeline elements	**4. A sustainable model for managing social canteens is developed**	**The MLSP has a sustainable social canteen model ready for scale up nationally and in times of emergency**

	introduce and pilot mobile catering service.	5. SOPs developed for scalable food services offered by social canteens and mobile social food services trialled in three priority raions and built into national contingency plans	**5. Social canteens can scale up services during national emergencies**	
Local contingency plans do not sufficiently leverage the presence of social canteens				
MLSP is not sufficiently prepared for the next major emergency involving the use of cash and is not positioning to leverage international support	SRSP feasibility analysis and draft SOPs	6.1 The shock-responsive capacity of Ajutor Social and/or other MLSP cash transfer programmes and how this could serve the MLSP offer to key national contingency plans are analysed leading to a plan of action	**6. The MLSP is better able to leverage its cash transfer programmes to respond to disasters**	**Emergency cash responses source MLSP delivery platforms backed by WFP cash transfers**
There is a lack of contingency planning for internal political instability withing the government and the international community	SRSP implementation	6.2 Standard Operating Procedures for delivering shock -responsive cash transfers are embedded in national contingency plans and the MLSP is equipped to do this		
WFP EPR does not sufficiently leverage strategic national contingency plan nor MLSP cash transfer platforms	Link WFP EPR to SRSP	6.3 WFP EPR is reinforced and linked to shock-responsive SOPs embedded in national contingency plans on forced displacement and internal displacement		

Annex 10. Targeting, beneficiary numbers and transfer values for the direct assistance programmes

For all the three winter support programmes, beneficiary households were selected based on criteria jointly determined by the MLSP and UN agencies/WFP. The objectives of the winter support programmes were:

a. To provide social assistance cash top-ups to vulnerable populations in Moldova, supporting their food and other essential needs.
b. To link financial support with social services and benefits, and to strengthen the government's capacity to implement the "RESTART" reforms.

First winter support (2022/2023)

The first winter support programme initially targeted 40,000 households, but due to increased needs, coverage was expanded to 56,000 households and ran from January to June 2023. The monthly first winter support programme entitlement was set to match the MLSP Winter Support Programme (APRA). To better address the needs of vulnerable Moldovans, the duration of the transfer was extended from six to seven months, providing each beneficiary household with a total of 4,900 MDL. To qualify for the first winter support programme, households needed to be recipients of the APRA and/or Ajutor Social (AS) programmes and had to meet at least one of the following demographic criteria:

a. One or more members with disabilities of any grade.
b. A single-parent household with at least one child under 18 years old.
c. A household with more than three children under 18 years old.
d. One or more members who are pregnant or lactating or having at least one child under 13 months old.

Second winter support (2023/2024)

Implemented from December 2023 to April 2024.

The main target groups were split into four categories:

a. Category 1: Elderly persons/pensioners, comprised of 56,236 individuals, receiving a pension of less than 3,000 MDL and born before 1,945.
b. Category 2: Households (HH) with children with severe disabilities; comprised of 3,019 HHs.
c. Category 3: Households with adults with severe disabilities; comprised of 7,195 HHs.
d. Category 4: Households with a pregnant or lactating woman (at least one child aged between 0-13 months); comprised of 1,261 HHs.

Third winter support (2024/2025)

Implemented from November 2024 to February 2025 targeting three categories of beneficiaries:

a. Households with children living with severe disabilities
b. Households with children with disabilities

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    c.   Pensioners receiving a pension of MDL 3,300 or less (which is the extreme poverty line for Moldova in 2023) and who have a contribution period of at least 40 years at the time of retirement.

Refugee hosting households (RHH)

Targets Moldovan households hosting Ukrainian refugees for at least one week. If a household hosts 1 to 4 refugees for at least a week, they receive 3,900 Lei. If hosting 5 or more refugees for at least a week, the household receives 4,800 Lei. It is a bi-monthly payment. Beneficiaries who meet the criteria self-register into the programme via www.UAhelp.md.

Refugee accommodation centres (RACs)

WFP provides three hot meals daily to refugees residing in Refugee Accommodation Centres that have been accredited by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP). The accredited RAC administration submits an official request to local authorities or directly to WFP/implementing partner. Unaccredited RAC in need of food assistance can also submit a request to WFP for consideration. Meals are provided through catering services for RACs without kitchens, while commodity vouchers are given to those with certified kitchens.

Annex 11. Moldova Country Case Study Terms of Reference

How WFP engaged in social protection in Moldova during Ukraine emergency response, 2022–25

Background

Since 2022, following the start of Ukraine conflict, WFP has been active in Moldova, responding to increased vulnerabilities. Alongside—and integral to—its emergency operations supporting Ukrainian refugees and refugee-hosting households, WFP has developed and delivered a set of interventions that constitute a 'social protection offer', working in partnership with the government and other international humanitarian and development agencies. This comprises direct assistance to vulnerable Moldovan populations in complementarity to government social assistance programmes, combined with technical assistance to strengthen the national social protection system. The latter includes supporting improved investments in, and the effectiveness of, the national social assistance programme Ajutor Social; enhancing the quality of social canteens; and equipping the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection with a shock-responsive capacity to be better prepared for disasters and crises. The aim is to leave behind deliverables of value over the longer term, preparing for 'responsible exit' as WFP operations phase out in 2026 by ensuring that the government is better able to support vulnerable people. The experience in Moldova can provide lessons for WFP operations around the world, showcasing the country office as an innovative model for operating across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

Case study objective

The objective of the case study is to provide a more in-depth look at the full lifecycle of WFP's engagement in supporting social protection in Moldova, from its initial setup in the country to the present and looking ahead to the processes expected for the planned withdrawal by December 2026. It will present in a stand-alone appendix to the evaluation as a narrative analysis of key success factors, challenges and lessons learned in operating in a fragile and displacement-affected context, with a focus on how WFP can effectively establish, manage, and transition its presence in such settings.

Spanning WFP's operational phases—Country Office opening, emergency response, protracted crisis management, and eventual closure—the case study will document the process of WFP's engagement in social protection support; the resources required to deliver it; and the enabling factors and constraints that determine success.

The data used for the case study will derive from the broader evaluation methodology and particularly from the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency questions in the evaluation matrix and will function as an intermediary deliverable in the broader aggregation and analysis of data from across the different lines of evidence by the evaluation team.

The case study will pay detailed attention to the influence of WFP processes including the support services (human resources, budgeting, legal), as well as funding mechanisms, and strategic partnerships with the government, UN agencies, donors, and other international and local actors. The evaluation team should prepare a summary brief of the case study alongside that of the full evaluation to contribute to international policy discussions on social protection in protracted humanitarian emergencies and fragile, conflict-affected, and displacement settings.

Annex 12: WFP terminology

Cash transfer: Cash transfers (also referred to as cash assistance or cash grants) are assistance provided in the form of money - either physical currency or e-cash - to recipients (individuals, households, or communities). Cash transfers are unrestricted by definition, which means that recipients can choose how to use their assistance. As such, cash is distinct from restricted modalities including vouchers and in-kind assistance. The terms 'cash' and 'cash assistance' should be used when referring specifically to cash transfers only and should not be used to refer to 'cash and voucher assistance.'

Cash-Based Transfers (CBT): Cash-based transfers encompass all money or value entitlement transfers that are either unrestricted (money) or restricted (value vouchers). Cash-based transfers can be delivered in physical form (cash-in-hand) or electronically onto digital wallets and mobile money accounts. Value vouchers are redeemable at locally contracted merchants. Commodity vouchers are not considered to be cash-based transfers.

Commodity voucher: Assistance to individuals or households catered by local supply chains (non-WFP), which does not enable beneficiary choice. Commodity vouchers utilize cash-like business processes and encompass activities ranging from the provision of meals to beneficiaries to voucher redemption against fixed quantities of pre-defined food items. WFP treats and will report commodity vouchers as a distinct transfer modality neither cash based nor in-kind.

Multipurpose Cash (MPC): Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPC or MPCA) comprises transfers (either periodic or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money required to cover, fully or partially, a household's basic and/or recovery needs that can be monetized and purchased. Cash transfers are "multipurpose" if explicitly designed to address multiple needs, with the transfer value calculated accordingly.

Transfer modality: The way in which we transfer assistance to people: cash/money (unrestricted), value vouchers (restricted), commodity vouchers (restricted and not considered under 'CBT'), in-kind assistance. Capacity strengthening and service delivery are also considered (indirect) transfer modalities. Each modality can be used by itself or in combination with others.

Value voucher: A voucher that has a denominated currency value and can be redeemed with specific vendors for goods or services of an equivalent monetary cost. Value vouchers are inherently restricted as they can only be redeemed with designated vendors or service providers. Some value vouchers may also have restrictions on the range of commodities that can be purchased, excluding specific commodities, or be time-bound (e.g., expiry date). Value vouchers are considered a form of cash-based transfer.

Voucher: A paper voucher or e-voucher that can be exchanged for a set value, quantity and/or type of goods or services, denominated either as a currency value (e.g., $15), a predetermined range of commodities (e.g., fruits and vegetables) or specific services (e.g., a medical treatment)), or a combination of value and commodities. Vouchers are restricted by default, although the degree of restriction will vary based on the programme design and type of voucher.