



**WFP EVALUATION**



SAVING  
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LIVES

# Corporate emergency evaluation of WFP's response in Yemen (2019–2024)

Centralized evaluation report

OEV/2024/019  
March 2025

# Acknowledgements

The evaluation team is very grateful for the support and guidance provided throughout the evaluation process by Julie Thoulouzan (Senior Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Manager), Raffaella Muoio, Michele Gerli, Silvia Pennazzi Catalani (Research Analysts) and Julia Betts (Deputy Director of Evaluation) at the Office of Evaluation. The team would like to thank the regional bureau in Cairo, the country office in Sana'a, the Aden area office, and the various field offices for their support. Additionally, the team would like to express gratitude to all the key informants, from World Food Programme (WFP) staff, authorities, WFP partners, UN agencies, community representatives and beneficiaries who have made themselves available to provide information and insights.

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

### Evaluation features

1. The corporate emergency evaluation of WFP's response in Yemen was conducted by an independent evaluation team between January 2024 and March 2025. It served both accountability and learning purposes and informed the design of the next interim country strategic plan (ICSP).
2. The evaluation covered WFP activities between the start of the Yemen ICSP for 2019–2022 in January 2019 and the conclusion of the data collection phase (October 2024) under the ICSP for 2023–2025.
3. The evaluation employed a theory-based, mixed-methods approach, drawing on document review, analysis of quantitative performance and financial data, key informant interviews (both remote and in-person), focus group discussions and direct observations through field visits. Data collection took place in September and October 2024, prior to the latest escalation in conflict.
4. The evaluation sought the views of a broad range of WFP and external stakeholders, including crisis-affected people. Primary users of the evaluation include WFP staff at headquarters and at country, area and field offices, and members of the United Nations and humanitarian country teams. Other key stakeholders include the internationally recognized Government of Yemen, the Sana'a-based authorities, donors, cooperating partners, private sector actors, and representatives from academic institutions and civil society.

### Context

5. Located in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen comprises 22 governorates and is home to an estimated 40.6 million people.<sup>1</sup> Women account for 49.5 percent of the population, 41 percent of the population is under the age of 14, and life expectancy stands at 71 years for women and 67 for men.<sup>2</sup>
6. Since the 2014 military takeover of Sana'a and subsequent escalation in armed conflict in 2015, Yemen has faced one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. In 2024, an estimated 18.2 million people – two thirds of the population – were in need of humanitarian assistance or protection.<sup>3</sup>
7. The protracted conflict has led to the emergence of two distinct economic and political entities with separate governance systems: the areas controlled by the internationally recognized Government of Yemen in the south and the areas controlled by the Sana'a-based authorities in the north. Each has established its own institutions and regulations.<sup>4</sup> Basic infrastructure and services have been severely degraded, and more than 4.5 million children are unable to attend school.
8. Since 2015, the economy has contracted by more than half.<sup>5</sup> The collapse of public services and economic activity has driven a notable increase in extreme poverty levels, with 82.7 percent of the population now living in multidimensional poverty. The humanitarian crisis has been compounded by the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic and recurring natural disasters, including floods and droughts, exacerbated by the effects of frequent and increasingly intense climate shocks.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. 2023. [Population, total - Yemen Rep.](#)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2024. [Humanitarian Response Plan Yemen 2024.](#)

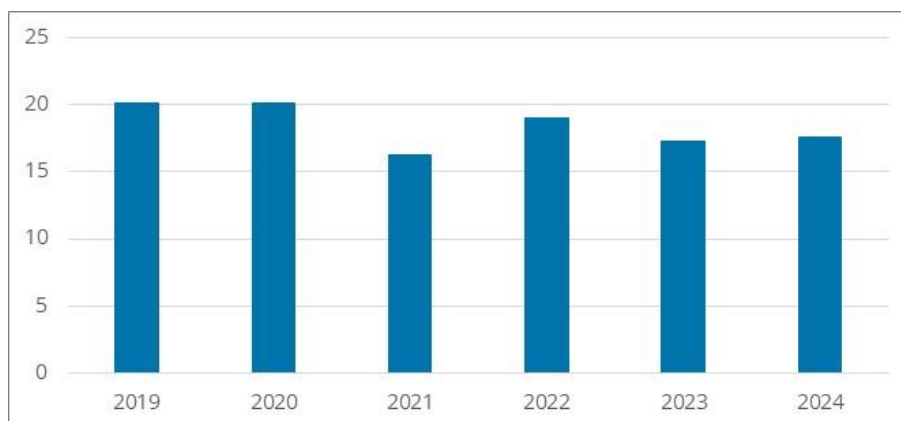
<sup>4</sup> World Bank. 2023. [Yemen Economic Monitor: Peace on the Horizon? Fall 2023.](#)

<sup>5</sup> World Bank. 2024. [The World Bank in Yemen – Overview](#) (accessed on 2 April 2024).



9. Yemen has one of the largest internally displaced populations in the world, with over 4.5 million people forcibly displaced.<sup>6</sup> Women and children account for 80 percent of those displaced within the country.
10. Food insecurity remains widespread, and food security has consistently been the top priority in humanitarian response plans. The number of severely food-insecure people in Yemen presented in the successive annual humanitarian needs overviews stood at 20.1 million in 2019 and 2020, but declined to 17.6 million in 2024 (figure 1).<sup>7</sup> Yemen also faces one of the world's most critical nutrition crises, with nearly half of all children under 5 experiencing stunting, and one in six suffering from wasting.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 1: Number of severely food-insecure people in Yemen, 2019–2024 (millions)**



Source: Humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian response plan reports, 2019–2024.

11. Humanitarian operations continue to be impeded by access constraints. In the north, stringent administrative procedures and movement restrictions hamper needs assessments, aid delivery and monitoring. Humanitarian personnel face serious risks, including violence, kidnappings, detentions, fatalities and attacks on staff, assets and facilities.<sup>9</sup> In both the north and the south of the country, conflict dynamics and security risks, including the presence of explosive remnants of war, regularly disrupt operations.<sup>10</sup>
12. As shown in figure 2, overall humanitarian funding for Yemen dropped from USD 3.6 billion in 2019 (88 percent of total requirements) to USD 2.0 billion in 2020. Funding increased slightly in 2021 and 2022 before falling sharply in 2024, with only USD 1.3 billion (47 percent of total requirements) received as of October that year.

<sup>6</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. 2024. [Yemen Fact Sheet, January–December 2023](#).

<sup>7</sup> Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC). 2025. [The 2025 Yemen FSAC People in Need and Severity Classification](#).

<sup>8</sup> Central Statistics Organization and United Nations Children's Fund. 2023. [Yemen Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2022–2023, Statistical Snapshot](#).

<sup>9</sup> OCHA. 2023. [Humanitarian Response Plan Yemen 2023](#).

<sup>10</sup> OCHA. 2024. [Humanitarian Response Plan Yemen 2024](#).



**Figure 2: Funding of humanitarian assistance response plans against total requirements, 2019–2024 (USD millions)**



Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2019–2024. Financial Tracking Service – Yemen (accessed on 30 October 2024). In line with the OCHA approach to boundary setting<sup>11</sup>, the strategic objectives for the 2024 humanitarian response plan reflect shifts in needs and targeting by humanitarian actors, while ensuring a prioritized response approach.

## WFP emergency response in Yemen

13. In response to the escalating conflict in 2015, WFP classified its operations in Yemen as a level 3 emergency. In 2022, the classification was revised to “corporate attention” in line with WFP’s updated emergency activation protocol.
14. The ICSP for 2019–2022, approved in November 2018 following two consecutive emergency operations, focused on life-saving assistance (strategic outcomes 1 and 2), resilience-building (strategic outcome 3) and the provision of humanitarian services (strategic outcome 4). Initially intended to last for two years, the plan was extended until December 2022 and revised through five budget revisions in the light of evolving needs. The aim of the plan, which had a total budget of USD 8.7 billion, was to provide assistance to 18.2 million people.<sup>12</sup>
15. The subsequent ICSP for 2023–2025, approved in November 2022, retained the previous plan’s three-pillar structure: life-saving assistance (ICSP outcomes 1 and 2), localized recovery-oriented efforts (ICSP outcome 3), and humanitarian services (ICSP outcome 4). Under the original 2023–2025 plan, which had a total budget of USD 8.5 billion, WFP aimed to provide assistance to 24.9 million people.<sup>13</sup> Life-saving assistance remained the top priority in order to prevent a further deterioration in the

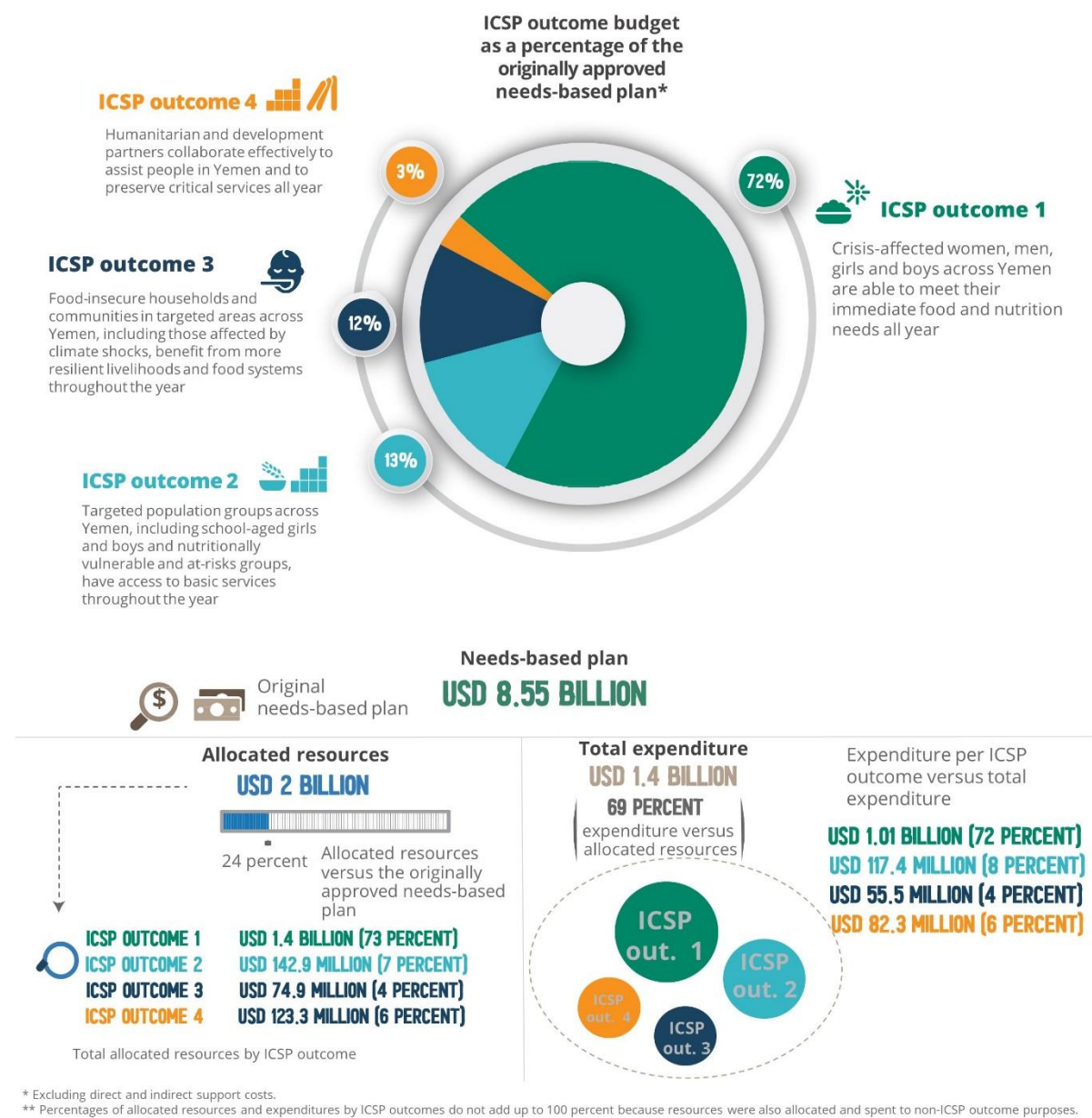
<sup>11</sup> The Boundary-Setting and Prioritization Initiative led by OCHA aims to ensure that limited resources are first directed to where they are most urgently required by including in the humanitarian response plans only life-saving and life-sustaining activities in areas where needs are the most severe.

<sup>12</sup> Taking into consideration the original ICSP and subsequent budget revisions.

<sup>13</sup> In accordance with the plan that was originally approved. The plan was revised in December 2024, reducing the budget by nearly USD 3 billion and lowering the planned beneficiaries for 2024–2025 in line with WFP’s corporate shift from needs-based planning to more realistic budgeting. However, since this revision occurred after the data collection phase, it is not reflected in the present report.

humanitarian situation. A budgetary and financial overview of the ICSP for 2023–2025, is provided in figure 3.

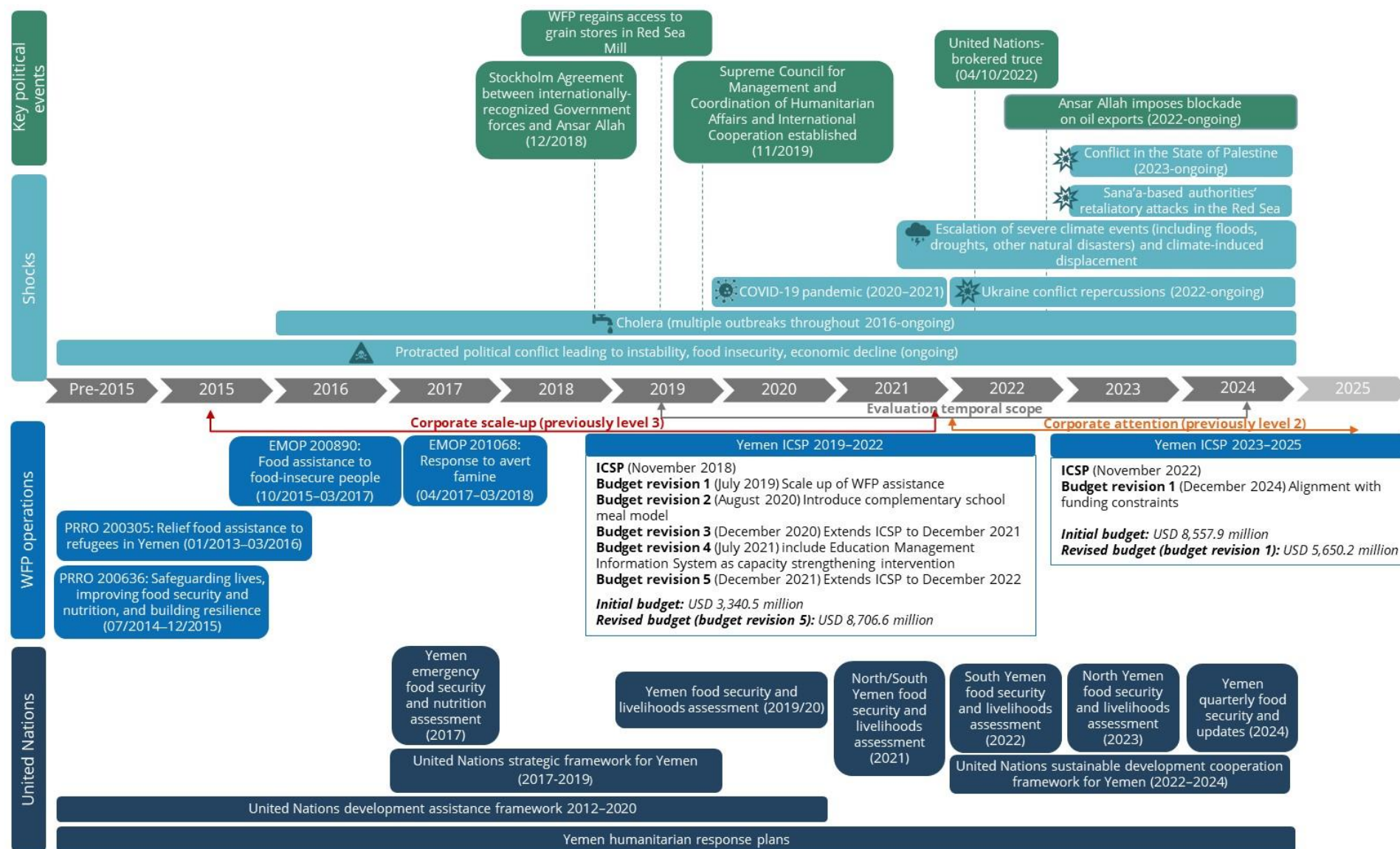
**Figure 3: Budget dashboard for the interim country strategic plan for 2023–2025, as of September 2024**



Source: Yemen country portfolio budget: ACR-1 standard country report as of September 2024.

- Figure 4 provides an overview of the evolution of the situation in Yemen and WFP's response. Events and heightened insecurity observed since October 2024 are not reflected in the present report, as data collection concluded in early October of that year.

Figure 4: Evolution of WFP operations in Yemen, together with relevant shocks and key political events, 2019–2024



Abbreviations: EMOP = emergency operation; PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation.

## Summary of key conclusions and insights from the evaluation

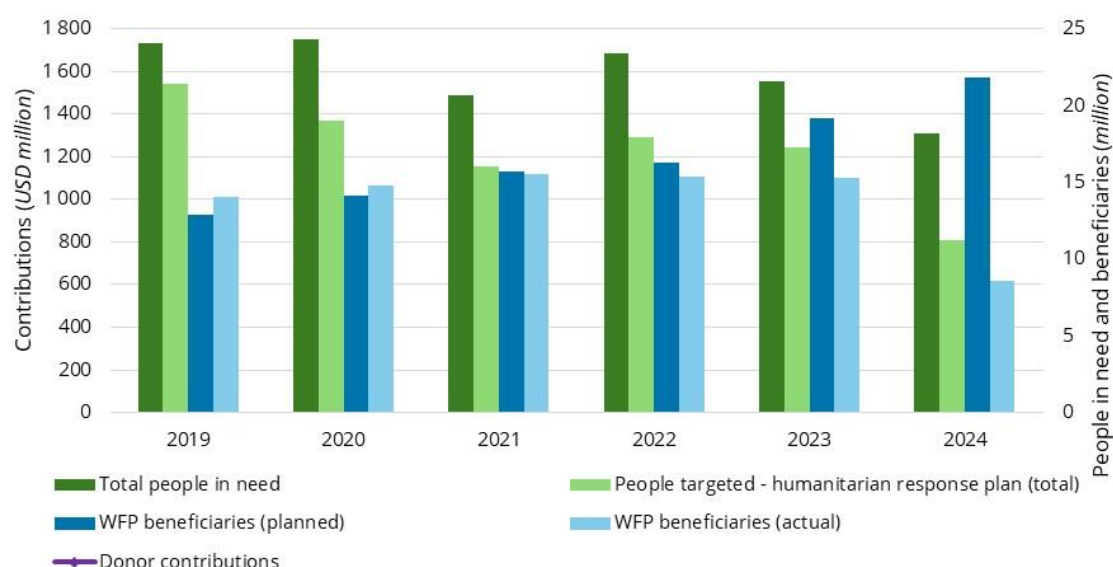
WFP effectively navigated the complexities of the protracted crisis in Yemen, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability in the delivery of life-saving interventions in one of the largest humanitarian operations globally. Key enablers, including proactive supply chain management, the use of advance financing mechanisms, and the effective use of data monitoring mechanisms to inform decision-making, enhanced WFP's operational responsiveness. However, WFP's adaptive capacity was increasingly constrained during the evaluation period by a deteriorating funding environment, which limited the ability of the WFP country office to plan for the longer term and ultimately forced a scale-down of interventions.

### Adaptability and timeliness

17. In order to navigate a challenging operational environment characterized by protracted conflict, overwhelming humanitarian needs, access restrictions, insecurity and reliance on a limited donor base, **WFP demonstrated considerable flexibility and adaptability in delivering life-saving interventions at scale.** The organization was able to adjust its operations in response to evolving needs and operational constraints, reflecting its strong capacity to adapt to shifting circumstances.
18. A key enabler of the organization's adaptability was its proactive supply chain management, which was supported by the strategic use of internal advance financing mechanisms, including the Global Commodity Management Facility. Those tools and mechanisms enabled WFP to shorten food delivery lead times during the evaluation period and helped to minimize pipeline breaks during the peak of the emergency response. Nonetheless, operational challenges persisted and the overall timeliness of operations was negatively affected by delays in food production and procurement (particularly for specialized nutritious food), food quality inspection issues, insecurity and funding uncertainty as well as bureaucratic impediments such as customs clearance delays.
19. **WFP also strengthened its adaptability through the use of monitoring data and assessments.** The integration of multiple data sources into operational decision-making processes improved operational responsiveness, allowing WFP to scale up assistance in response to shocks, prioritize geographic areas in the light of funding shortfalls and tailor its interventions to emerging needs. However, a number of challenges, including political sensitivities (particularly in the north), restrictions on in-person consultations with beneficiaries in certain areas, and resource constraints, continued to limit the full potential of evidence-based programming to address the specific needs of beneficiaries.
20. Since 2021, WFP's adaptive capacity has been undermined by a deteriorating funding environment and its growing reliance on a limited number of key donors. Increased earmarking of funding for specific activities, transfer modalities or locations, combined with the short-term nature of most grants, has further reduced the organization's flexibility. As a result, WFP has been forced to scale down its general food assistance (GFA), nutrition and livelihood programmes. Long-term planning efforts have also been hindered. Figure 5 illustrates the decline in donor contributions relative to the number of people in need, the number of people targeted under the Yemen humanitarian response plan and the number of planned and actual WFP beneficiaries between 2019 and 2024.



**Figure 5: Evolution in donor funding and numbers of people in need, people targeted under the Yemen humanitarian response plan and WFP beneficiaries, 2019-2024**



*Sources:* Humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian response plan reports (2019–2024) for total number of people in need and targeted populations; annual country reports (2019–2023) for WFP planned and actual beneficiaries; CM-C006 and CM-R001b for 2024 planned and actual WFP figures (as of 18 February 2025); and WFP FACtory data (16 September 2024). In 2024, WFP’s planned beneficiaries exceeded the total number of people in need due to expanded resilience-building targets, while GFA figures remained unchanged amid the lack of an agreement with the Sana’a-based authorities to reduce caseloads. A budget revision in December 2024 significantly reduced 2024–2025 planning figures (see footnote 13).

## Coverage, targeting and prioritization

WFP continued its efforts to support a significant proportion of those affected by food and nutrition insecurity. However, the GFA programme remained static for too long, without updates to beneficiary lists. This led to the exclusion of certain vulnerable groups, including newly displaced persons. WFP engaged in complex negotiations with both the internationally recognized Government and the Sana’a-based authorities to implement a re-targeting exercise aimed at ensuring that assistance reaches those most in need but encountered persistent barriers. In late 2023, WFP paused GFA in northern areas of the country. Although the exercise represented a step towards more principled, needs-based programming, the evaluation found that the impact of that prolonged suspension of assistance, which affected millions of people, could have been mitigated more effectively.

21. WFP is the primary provider of food assistance in Yemen. During the evaluation period, it continued its efforts to support a substantial share of the population affected by food and nutrition insecurity. However, the use of outdated beneficiary lists for GFA across the country has undermined WFP’s capacity to prioritize and reach the most vulnerable people. Certain vulnerable groups, including persons newly displaced from the frontlines of the conflict, received only one-off emergency distributions and were not incorporated into longer-term support programmes. At the same time, other households have remained on GFA beneficiary lists for years without being required to demonstrate continued eligibility. The evaluation found that prolonged assistance had created a

sense of entitlement among GFA beneficiaries. As funding gaps widened across all activities beginning in 2023, assistance levels – in terms of both ration size and duration – became insufficient to meet growing needs. The number of people reached fell far short of those requiring support, and newly displaced populations were excluded from sustained assistance.

22. For several years, WFP engaged in complex and protracted negotiations with both the internationally recognized Government and the Sana'a-based authorities with a view to conducting a re-targeting exercise to ensure that assistance reached those most in need. However, progress was impeded by persistent challenges, including political sensitivities, divergent expectations regarding data sharing and control, limited access to conduct needs verification, and difficulties in facilitating meaningful community engagement. Meanwhile, WFP has been under mounting pressure from donors to strengthen accountability and enhance the effectiveness of its assistance in a context of deepening needs and tightening resources.
23. Given that resources were insufficient to maintain the GFA programme at scale, and in the absence of agreement with the Sana'a-based authorities on an overall approach to re-targeting and reprioritization, WFP paused GFA in the north in late 2023. In December 2023, WFP reached a general agreement with the Sana'a-based authorities to reduce the GFA caseload from 9.5 million to 6.5 million beneficiaries. A re-targeting and prioritization exercise, informed by updated vulnerability data and relevant assessments, was successfully piloted in selected areas in 2024. This enabled the resumption of food assistance in those areas in mid-2024. However, subsequent developments prevented WFP from rolling out the exercise to other areas controlled by the Sana'a-based authorities.
24. While the re-targeting and prioritization exercise marked a positive step towards more principled and needs-based programming, the interruption of WFP assistance was unprecedented in scale and duration and affected millions of people. The evaluation found that WFP had not conducted a comprehensive risk analysis to assess the potential impact of reductions in beneficiary numbers on communities, and that WFP's community sensitization efforts had been insufficient to fully address local concerns or build trust. The evaluation underscored the need for improved risk analysis and enhanced stakeholder engagement and communication.
25. The evaluation found that WFP remained responsive to the evolving nutrition situation over time, noting that the organization engaged on an annual basis with partners in the nutrition cluster to review the geographic coverage of moderate acute malnutrition treatment and prevention programmes. WFP achieved significant programmatic reach, in part by integrating its nutrition interventions into the network of local health facilities. Coverage was, however, limited by funding shortfalls, production lead-time constraints and delays in the customs clearance of specialized nutritious food. A major pipeline break in 2024 resulted in limited or no availability of nutritional supplies at most health facilities across the country.
26. Severe funding shortfalls also constrained WFP's ambitions to scale up support for sustainable livelihoods under the ICSP for 2023–2025. Less than 10 percent of the planned 2.5 million beneficiaries were reached in 2024, reflecting a persistent gap between programme aspirations and available resources.

## Effectiveness and efficiency

WFP played a critical role in addressing widespread food insecurity and malnutrition in a highly challenging operational context, delivering essential assistance and helping to avert a further deterioration in food security. However, several factors constrained overall effectiveness, including insecurity, restricted humanitarian access, declining funding levels, and the irregular and short-term nature of assistance provided to beneficiaries. The evaluation also found that limited geographic prioritization of resilience interventions and weak integration across activities resulted in missed opportunities for the creation of synergies that could have strengthened programme outcomes. Although operational costs in Yemen were high due to contextual factors, WFP implemented measures to improve cost-efficiency where feasible.

27. **Strategic outcome 1: Large-scale GFA played a critical role in preventing a significant decline in food security among vulnerable populations.** Following the scale-up of GFA between 2017 and 2019, food consumption improved and the use of negative coping strategies declined. However, those indicators worsened in subsequent years due to reduced funding (which resulted in smaller food rations and fewer food distribution cycles) and the country's deepening economic and financial crisis. The suspension of the GFA programme in 2024 further exacerbated severe food deprivation among households. To mitigate those effects, WFP conducted a one-off emergency distribution in priority districts of Hajjah and Hodeidah governorates in May 2024, which resulted in a notable reduction in the prevalence of food insecurity among beneficiary households.<sup>14</sup>
28. **Strategic outcomes 1 and 2: WFP delivered strong results in the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition but faced challenges in sustaining prevention efforts.** While both treatment and prevention interventions yielded positive short-term outcomes, the absence of a strategic, integrated approach has limited the sustainability of those gains. Although WFP took action to make its interventions more nutrition-sensitive and sought to build synergies among moderate acute malnutrition management and other programme activities, the evaluation found that those efforts were insufficient. Collaboration with nutrition cluster partners to address the underlying causes of malnutrition was also deemed insufficient. Moreover, WFP's corporate outcome indicators were not fully suited to capturing progress in that area, hindering a comprehensive understanding of intervention effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.
29. **Strategic outcome 2: The WFP school feeding programme contributed to maintaining attendance and retention rates.** The provision of date bars and high-energy biscuits contributed positively to school enrolment and retention. Acceptability of the distributed products varied across communities, however. The launch of the Healthy Kitchen project in densely populated urban areas showed promise, although further analysis is needed to assess cost-efficiency and determine the feasibility of implementing similar approaches in rural areas. The evaluation identified opportunities to strengthen the transformative potential of school feeding through greater integration with livelihood activities, nutrition education and initiatives designed to promote girls' empowerment.

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<sup>14</sup> WFP. 2024. [Assessing the impact of WFP's one-off food distribution in Hajjah and Al Hodeidah, six months after the pause](#).



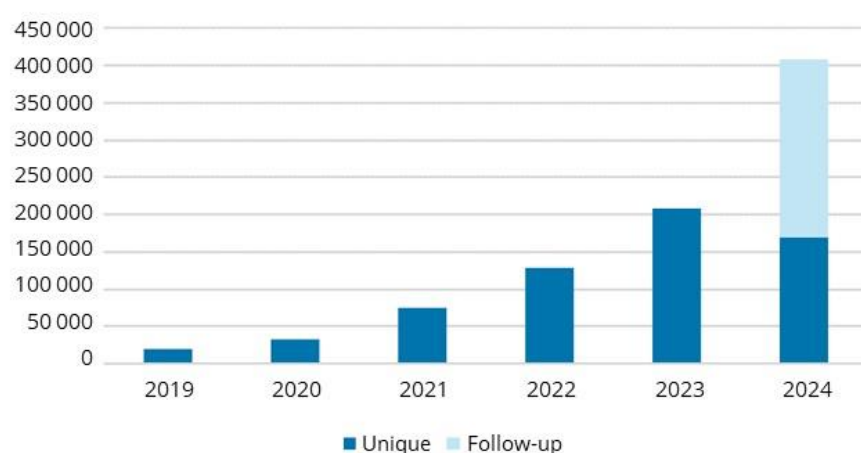
30. **Strategic outcome 3: WFP faced persistent challenges in achieving sustainable livelihood outcomes.** Interventions in that area had mixed success in enhancing household self-reliance and limited effectiveness in strengthening value chains and food systems. Beneficiary targets were not met, primarily because of funding shortfalls, while scattered geographic coverage further reduced the efficiency and effectiveness of WFP interventions. The evaluation found that, while community assets created through those interventions temporarily improved living conditions, there was limited evidence that food assistance for assets led to durable livelihoods or created pathways to longer-term opportunities. Moreover, the labour-intensive nature of food assistance for assets activities limited women's participation, and food for training projects were not always designed in ways that reflected women's needs and preferences, constraining their potential contribution to positive gender outcomes.
31. **Strategic outcome 4: WFP's comparative advantage in logistics and its strong emergency response capacity made a significant contribution to the broader humanitarian response in Yemen.** Despite funding and operational constraints, WFP supported the continuity of critical service delivery, particularly through its leadership in the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters and its provision of on-demand bilateral services. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service played a vital role in transporting passengers and facilitating cargo transport and medical and emergency evacuations, including in hard-to-reach areas. The logistics cluster supported humanitarian partners by providing free common services, including logistics gap assessments, warehousing and logistics information management and coordination, and by facilitating maritime and overland transport. In addition, WFP's bilateral service provision addressed fuel shortages with a view to sustaining critical health service operations.
32. **While the operational environment in Yemen resulted in high implementation costs, WFP took steps to enhance cost-efficiency,** notably through the reduction of food losses. However, recent changes in WFP's corporate approach to handling Global Commodity Management Facility unsold stocks have had cost implications. The evaluation found that a more systematic analysis of supply chain adjustments and programme modalities would have provided opportunities for further optimizing programme efficiency and strengthened advocacy for specific transfer modalities.

## Cross-cutting areas and humanitarian principles

Progress on cross-cutting issues was mixed during the evaluation period. WFP made noticeable improvements to its community feedback mechanisms, but more regular in-person engagement in targeted communities, where feasible, would improve understanding of beneficiary perspectives. While gender equality and women's empowerment received limited attention and some opportunities to draw on local knowledge were not fully exploited, the organization increasingly incorporated considerations related to environmental sustainability and climate shocks into its operations. WFP demonstrated strong commitment to conflict sensitivity and humanitarian principles, maintaining a principled response despite major bureaucratic challenges and external pressures.

33. **Progress on cross-cutting issues was mixed.** WFP made noticeable improvements in its community feedback mechanisms, thereby strengthening its accountability to affected people. The establishment and increased coverage of a range of feedback channels, which now include a feedback hotline, coupled with the suspension of food assistance and the country's worsening food security situation, led to a sharp increase in the number of community feedback cases, with 400,000 cases received in 2024 (see figure 6).

**Figure 6: Evolution in the number of community feedback cases, 2019–2024<sup>15</sup>**



Source: Yemen country office.

34. While the hotline and remote surveys have served as important channels for community feedback, particularly given the scale of WFP operations in Yemen and the significant access constraints faced by the organization, they cannot fully substitute for direct in-person engagement. The evaluation noted that, where conditions permit, more regular face-to-face interaction with affected populations would enhance understanding of their concerns and perspectives, thereby enabling programme adjustments that better reflect community needs.
35. Yemeni society is characterized by significant sociocultural barriers that can impede gender equality and women's empowerment. The evaluation found that those considerations received limited attention in WFP's programme design and implementation. While WFP encouraged cooperating partners to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment considerations into their programming, including through small annual budget allocations and training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-related issues, a number of opportunities in that area have been missed. For example, WFP has not engaged with local women-led organizations to incorporate culturally sensitive, gender-responsive approaches into its livelihood interventions, despite the potential value of their local knowledge.
36. WFP demonstrated a sound understanding of the conflict dynamics in Yemen, leveraging insights from its broad network of partners on the ground. The evaluation found, however, that those insights were not fully consolidated into comprehensive conflict analysis that could inform more nuanced assistance strategies across different areas of the country. It should be noted, however, that WFP has increasingly integrated considerations related to the environment and climate shocks into its operations, particularly in the design of livelihood activities.

<sup>15</sup> In 2024, the Yemen country office started reporting the number of cases logged by counting unique cases only, with follow-up calls classified as updates to previously registered cases.

## Humanitarian principles

37. In Yemen's highly restrictive operating environment, WFP's operational independence has been undermined by interference by the authorities, access restrictions, administrative obstructions and donor-imposed geographic earmarking of funds. Despite those challenges, the evaluation found that WFP continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to upholding humanitarian principles, maintaining a principled response despite major bureaucratic challenges and external pressures. The evaluation noted, however, that the pause in WFP's provision of GFA, which had been implemented in the absence of adequate safeguards for particularly vulnerable populations, and the organization's inability to resume distributions due to funding shortfalls during a period of heightened regional instability, had adversely affected perceptions of WFP's neutrality and independence in Yemen.
38. WFP made sustained efforts to engage with relevant authorities in order to secure access to hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas. The organization continued to advocate for humanitarian access and engaged in dialogue at multiple levels. In parallel, WFP partnered with local cooperating partners and third-party monitors to extend its operational reach. Nonetheless, persistent security risks, staff detentions and access restrictions imposed by the Sana'a-based authorities continued to constrain operations. While WFP provided overall support and guidance, cooperating partners often assumed responsibility for managing risks and conducting access negotiations with local authorities. In practice, the level and consistency of support varied, and training on humanitarian principles was not delivered to cooperating partners on a regular or systematic basis.

## Strategic and integrated nexus approach

Managing a large-scale humanitarian response in a highly complex operational environment has limited WFP's ability to adopt a more strategic and integrated approach across its portfolio. Progress in transitioning towards resilience-building and more sustainable solutions has been constrained and further hampered by persistent insecurity, political instability and economic fragility. Looking ahead, WFP will need to engage with the relevant coordination structures in Yemen to contribute to cohesive, strategic and effective interventions that bridge humanitarian and long-term development goals.

39. The intense focus of WFP on the delivery of GFA in a challenging operational environment has required substantial resources, thereby limiting the attention and resources available for longer-term resilience-initiatives. Although WFP aimed to scale up its livelihoods and resilience efforts under the ICSP for 2023–2025, progress was constrained during the evaluation period by limited donor support, overstretched country office capacity and expertise, and administrative challenges in areas under the control of the Sana'a-based authorities. In contrast, in areas under the control of the internationally recognized Government, WFP was able to pilot and develop multi-year resilience initiatives. Those initiatives are still in their initial stages, however, and are not yet supported by a comprehensive strategic framework.

40. WFP provided food assistance for assets within the context of joint programmes with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Labour Organization. Those multi-year, multi-partner programmes were intended to deliver a comprehensive package of support to communities, leveraging the comparative advantage of each specialized agency. The evaluation found, however, that the programmes did not, in practice, constitute genuine joint programming and lacked a long-term vision. Instead, different agencies implemented parallel interventions, undermining overall programme effectiveness. Nevertheless, the evaluation observed increasing awareness within the WFP country office that a fully integrated nexus approach would require a more granular understanding of environmental sustainability and climate risks, as well as local agricultural opportunities. A nexus approach must, moreover, be supported through robust planning, the provision of adequate resources and technical expertise and careful implementation so as to simultaneously address immediate needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable recovery and resilience in targeted communities and local food systems.
41. WFP's resilience-building efforts have also been impeded by the absence of a comprehensive United Nations country team-level resilience strategy and the limited resources available to development actors operating in Yemen. Moving forward, WFP will need to engage with the relevant coordination structures in Yemen to contribute to the development of such a strategy in order to ensure that WFP implements cohesive, strategic and effective interventions that address both immediate humanitarian and long-term development objectives. Active engagement in the development of the next United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework could strengthen WFP's role in promoting recovery and resilience in Yemen.

## **Fostering and strengthening partnerships and localization**

Although WFP has been recognized for its cluster leadership role and has made progress in fostering partnerships, greater emphasis should be placed on strategic engagement, complementary and joint programming, and the strengthening of local capacity.

42. Although WFP strengthened its partnerships during the evaluation period, further improvements in communication and coherence are needed to maximize their effectiveness. WFP increasingly prioritized collaboration with other United Nations entities and national responders, recognizing their collective importance in fragile settings characterized by significant humanitarian and early recovery needs and limited resources. For example, WFP coordinated closely with international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (in support of localization, see paragraph 45), UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Public Health and Population, both in areas under the control of the internationally recognized Government and in areas under the control of the Sana'a-based authorities, in order to deliver a continuum of care to address acute malnutrition. That coordination promoted local ownership and facilitated the integration of moderate acute malnutrition treatment into primary healthcare systems – an approach that the evaluation identified as a model of good practice for other countries. The Restoring Education and Learning project, implemented in partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children, provided another positive example, demonstrating the value of integrated, multi-year and well-funded partnerships in supporting education and nutrition outcomes in Yemen.
43. Nevertheless, the evaluation identified further opportunities for leveraging complementarities with other agencies in order to maximize programmatic results and minimize the duplication of resources. For example, WFP and UNICEF operate distinct supply chains for nutrition-related interventions and use separate mechanisms to make incentive payments to health facilities. Similarly, stronger collaboration with FAO on livelihoods and resilience, and with UNDP on early recovery and community asset-building, could enhance the effectiveness of interventions. There is

also potential for more strategic engagement among WFP, other United Nations entities and the World Bank on cash-based programming. While WFP can play its part in those areas, the evaluation noted that strengthening alignment is not solely the responsibility of WFP; opportunities also exist for other United Nations entities and international financial institutions to improve coordination in areas such as social protection and cash transfers.

44. **WFP was widely recognized for its leadership of the food security and agriculture cluster, which is co-led by FAO**, and for its substantial contribution to food security analysis, which supported the provision of more focused assistance to particularly vulnerable populations. The evaluation also commended WFP's logistical and emergency telecommunications support to the broader humanitarian community. However, gaps remained in communication and coordination with the humanitarian country team. For example, the lack of clear communication with regard to key operational decisions, such as the suspension of GFA in the north, revealed a need for stronger engagement with partners and for enhanced transparency and information sharing. The evaluation noted that greater emphasis on inclusive coordination, strategic advocacy and alignment with recovery and resilience priorities would enhance WFP's contribution to the collective humanitarian and development response.
45. **Progress has been made in advancing localization, but strategic engagement remains insufficient.** Drawing on its extensive network of cooperating partners, WFP has increasingly prioritized partnerships with local NGOs over international ones (see figure 7). While WFP has taken steps to strengthen the capacity of its cooperating partners, particularly in programme implementation, the evaluation found significant gaps in institutional development, financial support mechanisms and long-term planning, which limit the effectiveness and sustainability of actions taken by local responders. Furthermore, WFP has failed to sufficiently strengthen its duty of care with regard to its local partners, who often face significant security risks as primary interlocutors with affected communities and other stakeholders, particularly during periods of heightened tension.

**Figure 7: Evolution in the number of cooperating partners by type and interim country strategic plan, 2019–2024\***



\* As of November 2024.

Source: CM-S010 "Partnership information".

46. While WFP was able to establish more equitable partnerships in certain geographic areas and sectors, the evaluation identified the need for more systematic strategic engagement with partners, with greater emphasis on shared ownership. Strengthening engagement with both local and central authorities across all sectors would support the development of a more comprehensive and inclusive approach. However, the evaluation acknowledged the potential risks of taking action to that end in Yemen, where local partners are often subject to pressure and to interference in their activities.

## Recommendations

47. The evaluation made a total of six recommendations: three strategic and three operational.

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p><b>Recommendation 1. Considering the fluid operating environment and the unpredictability of funding, ensure that future programming in Yemen retains a strong focus on implementing an agile and scalable humanitarian response while seizing opportunities to support resilience where conditions are favourable. Promote greater coherence and synergies across activities to enhance overall performance and reduce humanitarian needs.</b></p>	Strategic	Country office	Global headquarters including the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe Regional Office (MENAEERO) (Functions: Programme Policy and Guidance Division (PPG); Analysis, Planning and Performance Division (APP); Partnerships and Innovation Department (PI))	High	November 2026
1.1. Ensure that the GFA programme is delivered with a clear focus on the most vulnerable people, maintaining adequate transfer levels through dynamic targeting and prioritization that adapts to changing needs and funding levels.					
1.2. Develop and implement a comprehensive and localized resilience strategy using area-based approaches that leverage complementarities and the respective comparative advantages of partners (see recommendations 2 and 3).					
1.3. Support greater integration and linkages across programme components to ensure that interventions complement and reinforce each other, contributing to a reduction in humanitarian needs.					
1.4. Improve nutrition integration across programme activities and support joint and context-specific approaches to prevent malnutrition.					
1.5. Adopt a resource-informed approach based on rigorous forecasting and analysis of funding prospects to ensure that future programmes are grounded in realistic ambitions.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<b>Recommendation 2. Strengthen, where the context allows, partnerships with authorities, including relevant line ministries, and local actors and expand direct engagement with communities in the design and implementation of WFP programmes.</b>	Operational	Country office	Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PPG; APP) and local actors in Yemen	High	June 2026
2.1. Foster more regular engagement with authorities, including relevant line ministries, local actors and community representatives, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups in the design of activities to better align with national and local priorities.					
2.2. In line with principled humanitarian action, establish clearer and more transparent and consistent communication with local authorities, communities and cooperating partners about resource constraints, targeting and prioritization decisions, and eligibility criteria.					
2.3. Expand direct community engagement and increase awareness-raising efforts in relation to feedback mechanisms, with a particular focus on women and underrepresented groups, to enhance the inclusivity, responsiveness and effectiveness of the community feedback mechanisms.					
2.4. Continue efforts to ensure that feedback collected from both women and men is systematically analysed and used to inform timely adjustments to programmes.					



Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<b>Recommendation 3. Foster stronger partnerships with other United Nations entities, the World Bank, donors and other international actors to promote greater complementarity and synergies supported by predictable and flexible funding.</b>	Strategic			Medium	December 2027
3.1. Strengthen and expand partnerships with other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and other international actors to support greater complementarity and synergies across interventions in various sectors and geographical areas (e.g. resilience-building, cash transfers, identity management, shock-responsive social protection, management of malnutrition).		Country office	Other partners at the country level; global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PI; Supply Chain and Delivery Division (SCD); PPG)		
3.2. Provide corporate support to WFP Yemen in conducting resource diversification analysis and support donor engagement efforts to broaden the donor base while advocating for predictable, multi-year and flexible donor funding.		Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Function: PI)	Country office		
<b>Recommendation 4. Better tailor activities to local realities by continuously investing in context analysis, including conflict dynamics and the root causes of food insecurity, and adopting evidence-based approaches.</b>	Operational	Country office	Partners at the country and global headquarters levels including MENAEERO (Functions: APP, PPG)	High	December 2027
4.1. Complete the re-targeting and registration process and regularly update GFA lists, taking into account operational constraints, prioritizing the inclusion of marginalized groups, and considering local social norms to enhance community acceptance.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.2. Deepen WFP's understanding of natural resources, agricultural opportunities and climate risks in order to identify geographic priority areas and design a focused and scalable programme supporting environmental restoration, sustainable local food systems and resilience.					
4.3. Leverage the country office's vulnerability analysis and mapping, monitoring and evaluation capacity to stay responsive to evolving needs and highlight lessons learned and results from the whole portfolio in order to adapt programming accordingly.					
4.4. Work with partners to enhance the joint analysis of malnutrition and food insecurity, promoting shared understanding that informs more targeted, complementary and effective interventions.					
<b>Recommendation 5. Integrate gender equality and women empowerment, protection and inclusion considerations in all activities. Set achievable and context-sensitive objectives for WFP interventions to support the meaningful participation and inclusion of women and other marginalized people.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PPG; APP)	High	December 2026
5.1. Strengthen and systematically conduct gender analysis, in collaboration with women organizations, recognizing differences across Yemen, to ensure WFP activities are guided by a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls, and barriers faced by different population groups.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2. Enhance efforts to empower women and other marginalized groups by increasing their participation in WFP activities, including decision-making processes. Promote their leadership and economic empowerment through specific interventions – e.g. in the areas of malnutrition prevention, school feeding and livelihood support – with clear benchmarks for participation, leadership roles and economic empowerment within each intervention.					
5.3. Ensure proactive and sustained senior management leadership at the country office, area offices and field offices on gender equity, protection, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Further strengthen WFP staff capacity in this domain and support partners in upholding gender and protection standards.					
<b>Recommendation 6. In collaboration with relevant partners, identify and implement a set of measures to resolve the recurring supply chain challenges that have impacted the timely availability of specialized nutritious foods and disrupted nutrition interventions.</b>	Operational	Specialized nutritious foods working group and country office	Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PPG; Supply Chain Planning and Optimization Unit)	High	June 2026
6.1. Strengthen joint demand/supply planning and align with longer-term funding forecasts for specialized nutritious foods at the country office, regional office and WFP headquarters levels and develop contingency plans to mitigate supply disruptions.					
6.2. Invest in pre-positioning specialized nutritious foods (ideally inside Yemen or else in the region, depending on risks and funding) and ensure robust quality control processes, especially in light of the long lead-times for those foods, while considering regulatory constraints specific to Yemen.					

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Evaluation features

1. The Corporate Emergency Evaluation (CEE) of the World Food Programme's (WFP) Response in Yemen (2019-2024) mandated by the Office of Evaluation (OEV) was conducted between January 2024 and March 2025 by an independent evaluation team. The purpose was to provide evidence and learning on the performance of WFP in the Republic of Yemen (Yemen) from 2019 to 2024, as well as accountability for results to stakeholders (see Annex I).
2. CEEs assess WFP performance during "corporate scale-up" and "corporate attention" operations. Given the complexity and scale of the crisis in Yemen, WFP classified its operations in Yemen as a Level 3 emergency in 2015 and then reclassified it as corporate attention in 2022 when WFP changed its emergency activation protocol.
3. The evaluation covered WFP interventions in Yemen from January 2019, the start of the Interim Country Strategy Programme (ICSP) 2019-2022, until the conclusion of the data collection phase in October 2024 under the ICSP 2023-2025. The evaluation was timed to inform the design of the next ICSP.
4. The evaluation addressed four evaluation questions (EQs) (see Annex I) and devoted particular attention to registration and targeting, safeguarding the WFP operational space, access challenges, assurance measures, operating in a divided country context and transitioning to early recovery and resilience.
5. The evaluation considered cross-cutting issues including women's empowerment, conflict sensitivity, protection and accountability to affected people (AAP) and humanitarian principles. The evaluation adopted appropriate gender-responsive tools and methods in data collection, analysis and reporting.
6. The evaluation encountered some challenges, including the reassignment of WFP international staff with two-year cycles, which impacts institutional memory, and limitations to travelling and data collection in parts of Yemen. Limitations are summarized in Section 1.4.
7. The evaluation applied a theory-based, mix methods approach, including documentary review, remote and in-person key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and site visits (Annex II). The evaluation started with an in-country inception mission in May 2024. The primary data collection took place in September-October 2024. The evaluation is scheduled to be presented to the WFP Executive Board (EB) in November 2025 (see Annex IV).
8. The evaluation sought the views of a broad range of WFP internal and external stakeholders. The primary users of the evaluation include WFP country office (CO), WFP area offices (AOs) and field offices (FOs), WFP regional bureau in Cairo (RBC), WFP headquarters (HQ) technical units and senior management, the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the humanitarian country team. Other users and relevant stakeholders include the Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen (IRG), the Sana'a-based authorities (SBA), donors, cooperating partners (CPs), the private sector, research institutions, academia, civil society and affected communities.

## 1.2. Context

### General overview

9. Yemen is in the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and comprises 22 governorates with a population of 40.6 million in 2024.<sup>16</sup> Women make up almost half (49.5 percent) of Yemen's population. Over a third of the population (41 percent) is under 14 years old, and life expectancy stands at 71 for

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<sup>16</sup> World Bank. 2024. Population, total – Republic of Yemen.

women and 67 for men.<sup>17</sup> The total fertility rate is 3.7 births per woman<sup>18</sup> and the adolescent birth rate is 77 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19.<sup>19</sup> The country has been profoundly affected by prolonged conflict. The crisis, described as one of the world's most significant humanitarian emergencies, has left two thirds of its population – 21.6 million people – in dire need of humanitarian assistance or protection.<sup>20</sup>

10. In 1990, the Republic of Yemen was founded by merging the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Between its establishment and the SBA's takeover of the capital, Sana'a, in 2014, Yemen faced continuous political instability and conflicts marked by shifting political and security alliances among local governing bodies. During the first decade of the century, resentment of Ali Abdullah Saleh's rule (after the establishment of YAR) gave rise to the southern separatist movement and the Houthi movement in the country's far north.<sup>21</sup>

11. A national uprising against the Saleh regime in 2011 led to an internationally supported transition regime, established after the Gulf Cooperation Council agreement was signed in November 2011. This resulted in the election of Abdu Rabdo Mansour Hadi as president for a two-year transitional period in February 2012.

12. By 2014, the National Dialogue Conference ended without having achieved its task of preparing the foundations for a more democratic Yemen responding to popular needs and demands for reform. Fighting during that year eventually led to the takeover by the Houthi movement of Sana'a on 21 September 2014, the exile of the IRG and the beginning of the international military intervention in March 2015.<sup>22</sup>

13. Initially, after 2014, the period was marked by four conflicting political-military entities vying for legitimacy – Ansar Allah and the Houthis, the IRG, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Southern Transitional Council. Since then, the conflict in Yemen has evolved into a more convoluted state.<sup>23</sup>

14. The truce, agreed in April 2022 for a six-month duration, included key terms such as the temporary cessation of all offensive military operations and a commitment to work with the United Nations Special Envoy on steps towards ending the war.<sup>24</sup> While the truce has officially expired, it is broadly holding with many of its elements still in place, leading to a significant reduction in violence in many areas.<sup>25</sup> Notable outcomes include the resumption of commercial flights from Sana'a and improved fuel imports. However, ongoing violations by all parties, including cross-border attacks and maritime threats, underscore the fragility of the agreement.

15. The continuing conflict has deepened the division of Yemen into two distinct economic and political regions: SBA-controlled areas in the north, and IRG-controlled areas in the south, each governed by its own institutions and regulations.<sup>26</sup> The deteriorating security context in Yemen since 2023 has been exacerbated by broader regional tensions, including the ongoing crisis in Gaza,<sup>27</sup> the conflict in Lebanon in 2024, and SBA retaliatory attacks in the Red Sea.<sup>28</sup> These developments, coupled with the responses from the United States of America (US) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK), as well as the involvement of key regional actors such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, present significant risks of a broader regional spillover. These tensions threaten to derail ongoing de-escalation efforts between Riyadh, the IRG and the SBA, further complicating prospects for peace and stability in Yemen.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> World Bank Open Data. Yemen.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> UNFPA. Yemen. Accessed on 05.11.2024.

<sup>20</sup> UNHCR. 2024. Yemen Crisis Explained. Accessed 30.10.2024.

<sup>21</sup> IASC. 2022. Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Humanitarian Crisis.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. 2024. War in Yemen. Accessed 23.05.2024.

<sup>24</sup> Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OESGY). 2023. Timeline on the Progress of the Truce Implementation.

<sup>25</sup> OESGY. 2023. A year after the Truce Agreement: the way ahead.

<sup>26</sup> World Bank. 2023. Yemen Economic Monitor, Fall 2023.

<sup>27</sup> WFP. 2024. New Gaza food security assessment sees famine risk persisting amid ongoing fighting and restricted aid operations.

<sup>28</sup> UN. 2024. Security Council meets over Red Sea attacks amid growing threat of spillover from Gaza war.

<sup>29</sup> UN. 2024. Yemen: Recent progress marred by Gaza war fallout, UN envoy reports.

16. The collapsing economy, shrinking by more than half since 2015,<sup>30</sup> has deepened poverty with reportedly 82.7 percent of the population living in multidimensional poverty.<sup>31</sup> In 2023, the situation worsened due to an SBA-imposed blockade on oil exports with severe consequences on foreign currency liquidity and the fiscal position of the IRG.<sup>32</sup>

### **Natural hazards**

17. Yemen ranks third globally among countries most vulnerable to natural hazards, facing amplified impacts from frequent and severe climate events.<sup>33</sup> Since January 2024, 489,545 individuals have been displaced with 93.8 percent affected by climate-related crises.<sup>34</sup> Devastating rains and flooding between June and August 2024 exposed around eight million people to high risk.<sup>35</sup>

18. Yemen is also one of the world's most water-stressed nations, facing agricultural challenges from recurrent droughts and other climate shocks. Water shortages, reserve depletion and desertification are worsening.<sup>36</sup> In 2023, cyclone Tej destroyed over 5,000 hectares of crops. In 2024, floods submerged farmlands, destroyed crops and caused livestock losses, leaving families without income and significantly increasing reliance on humanitarian aid.<sup>37</sup>

### **Agriculture**

19. According to the latest available data from 2018, agriculture, forestry and fishing account for 28.7 percent of Yemen's gross domestic product.<sup>38</sup> The country relies on imports for 85 percent of its food, making it highly susceptible to price increases and supply disruptions. Although two thirds of Yemenis depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, they receive less than USD 2 of every USD 100 allocated for food production support. The year 2024 has been characterized by rising instability in the Red Sea, a key shipping lane for Yemen's food exports.<sup>39</sup>

### **Education**

20. The ongoing conflict, economic downturn, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate disasters have severely disrupted children's education, with only 61 percent of children aged 5-17 enrolled, leaving over 4.5 million children without education. Among them, 1.3 million displaced children and 600,426 children with disabilities face additional barriers.<sup>40</sup> Key obstacles include financial constraints, transportation costs,<sup>41</sup> child labour, household duties and child marriage.<sup>42</sup> Minority groups, particularly the Muhamasheen community (a marginalized ethnic group in Yemen,) face exclusion from formal education, contributing to high illiteracy rates. Adult literacy stands at 54 percent,<sup>43</sup> with literacy in women and girls at 53 percent.<sup>44</sup>

21. Years of conflict have pushed the education system to the brink of collapse; damaged infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of women teachers, inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and a lack of teaching materials have resulted in unsafe learning environments. Many teachers have left due to unpaid salaries, further straining the system.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> World Bank. 2024. Yemen Overview. Accessed 02.04.2024.

<sup>31</sup> UNDP. 2024. A Roadmap to recovery: addressing poverty in Yemen's ongoing conflict.

<sup>32</sup> World Bank. 2023. Yemen Economic Monitor, Autumn 2023.

<sup>33</sup> European Commission. 2022. INFORM Climate Change Data. Accessed 30.10.2024.

<sup>34</sup> UNFPA. 2024. Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) First Line Response RRM Cumulative Snapshot, January to September 2024.

<sup>35</sup> IFRC. 2024. Yemen Floods Disaster Brief.

<sup>36</sup> ICRC. 2022. The Water Situation, June 2022.

<sup>37</sup> IFRC. 2024. Yemen Floods Disaster Brief.

<sup>38</sup> World Bank Data. Yemen. Accessed 30.10.2024.

<sup>39</sup> FAO. 2024. Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2024-Yemen.

<sup>40</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. Yemen Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2024.

<sup>41</sup> UNOCHA. 2022. Yemen: Multi-Cluster Location Assessment

<sup>42</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. Yemen HNO 2024.

<sup>43</sup> World Bank open data. Accessed 30.10.2024.

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF. 2017. Yemen Country Brief.

<sup>45</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. Yemen HNO 2024. People in Need – food security.

## Displacement and protection of vulnerable groups

22. As of June 2024, Yemen hosted 60,193 refugees and asylum seekers,<sup>46</sup> mostly from Somalia (64 percent) and Ethiopia (25 percent).<sup>47</sup> Protracted conflict and climate disasters have displaced up to 4.5 million people,<sup>48</sup> many multiple times. Women and children account for about 80 percent of internally displaced persons (IDPs).<sup>49</sup>

23. Without legal frameworks to protect them, millions of people face wide-ranging protection risks, including lack of civil documentation, poor shelter, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. These risks are heightened for women, unaccompanied children, and people with disabilities.<sup>50</sup> The Muhamasheen face systematic discrimination, being referred to as “*Akhdam*” (servants) and treated as the lowest social class.<sup>51</sup>

24. Gender-based violence is endemic, with over 6.3 million women and girls at risk of abuse, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. The breakdown of protection mechanisms has increased child marriage, human trafficking, forced begging and child labour.<sup>52</sup> Women struggle to access reproductive healthcare, and maternal mortality rates remain elevated.

25. Despite more women entering the workforce due to the conflict, pre-existing inequalities have worsened.<sup>53</sup> Since 2022, strict *Mahram* (male guardian) requirements in SBA-controlled areas have restricted women’s movement, limiting access to education, employment and humanitarian aid.<sup>54</sup> These restrictions also hinder women humanitarian workers, reducing response effectiveness.<sup>55</sup>

## Food security and nutrition

26. As shown in Figure 1, the number of severely food insecure people in Yemen presented in the successive annual humanitarian needs overviews stood at 20.1 million in 2019 and 2020, before decreasing to 17.6 million in 2024. In the IRG-controlled areas, nearly half of the population (4.7 million) experienced high levels of acute food insecurity between July and September 2024, classified as Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or above (crisis or worse). Among them, 1.2 million people experienced critical levels of food insecurity – IPC Phase 4 (emergency) – characterized by large food gaps and high levels of acute malnutrition.<sup>56</sup> In the SBA-controlled areas, 12 million people were food insecure between October 2024 and February 2025, including 3.6 million, who were classified as IPC Phase 4 (emergency).<sup>57</sup>

27. In July 2024, 62 percent of Yemeni households reported inadequate food consumption, the highest on record – 64 percent in IRG-controlled south and 61 percent in SBA-controlled north. Severe food deprivation reached 36 percent in both regions, rising to 79 percent year-on-year in the north and 51 percent in the south. The worst-affected areas include Al Jawf, Hajjah, Al Hodeidah, Hadramawt, Ta’iz, and Al Mahwit.<sup>58</sup> Yemeni women are disproportionately affected by food insecurity due to entrenched gender norms, economic exclusion, conflict-related vulnerabilities caused by displacement and barriers to aid access.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> UNHCR. 2024. Yemen Fact Sheet, January-December 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council. Nine things to know after nine years of crisis in Yemen, accessed 06.11.2024

<sup>50</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. Yemen HNO 2024.

<sup>51</sup> Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. 2022. Muhamasheen Community Profile.

<sup>52</sup> UNFPA. 2024. Humanitarian Response in Yemen 2024.

<sup>53</sup> UNDP. 2024. Gender Equality – Yemen Country Profile, accessed 04.04.2024.

<sup>54</sup> *Mahram* requirements prevent women from travelling between governorates, to other areas of the country, or internationally without a male guardian or guardianship permission. Sources: i) UNOCHA. 2022. Yemen HRP 2023; ii) WFP. Yemen Annual Country Report (ACR) 2022.

<sup>55</sup> UNOCHA. 2022. Yemen HRP 2022.

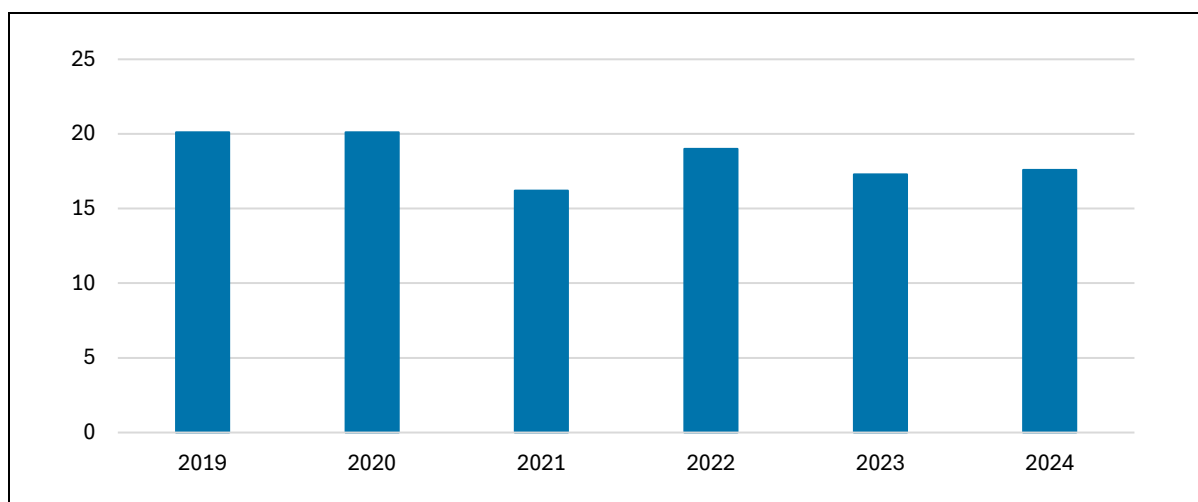
<sup>56</sup> IPC. 2024. Yemen: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for July-September 2024 and Projection for October 2024–February 2025 (partial analysis).

<sup>57</sup> Yemen. FSAC. 2024. The 2025 Yemen FSAC PiN and Severity Classification.

<sup>58</sup> WFP 2024. WFP Yemen Food Security Update, August 2024.



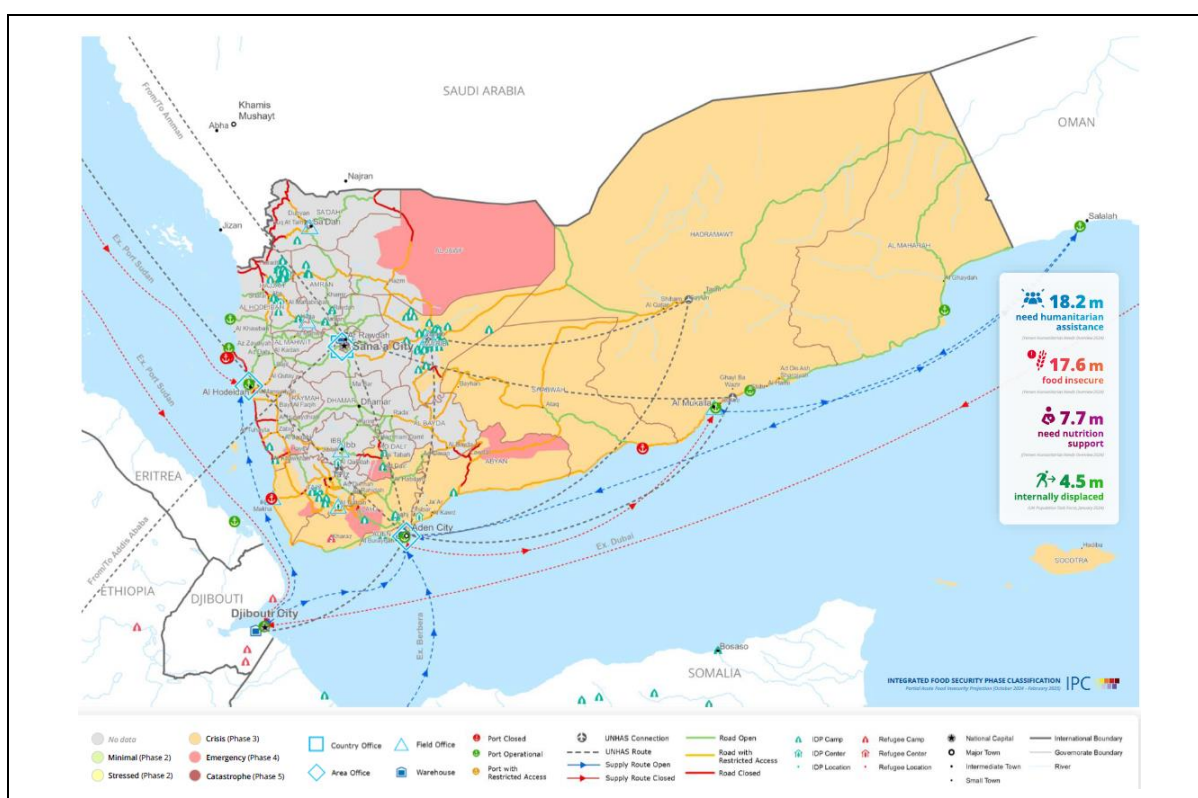
**Figure 1: Number of severely food-insecure people in Yemen, 2019-2024 (millions)**



Source: Human needs overview (HNO) and humanitarian response plan (HRP) reports 2019-2024.

Note: In the absence of IPC numbers for both the north of Yemen available across all years, HNO & HRP reports were used instead. Starting from 2024, in line with United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) boundary setting approach, humanitarian response plan figures were developed considering both the needs and a prioritized response.

**Figure 2: Emergency dashboard – food insecurity overview**



Source: WFP. 2024. Yemen Emergency Dashboard September | 2024<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-emergency-dashboard-september-2024>.

28. According to the 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 5 million children under 5 and 2.7 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) need life-saving nutrition in Yemen.<sup>60</sup> The nutrition situation is alarming with nearly half of all children under 5 experiencing moderate to severe stunting, and one in six suffering from moderate to severe wasting<sup>61</sup> conditions that reflect long-standing, widespread undernutrition with devastating consequences for child survival and development. The most vulnerable areas – the lowlands of Al Hodeidah, Lahj, Ad Dali', and Ta'iz – report child wasting rates of 17.1 percent to 23.8 percent, exceeding the World Health Organization (WHO) 15 percent of emergency threshold.<sup>62</sup> The situation is particularly alarming in several districts of the west coast. According to the August 2024 IPC acute malnutrition analysis, four districts – Al Khawkhah and Hays in Hodeidah southern lowlands, and Al Makha and Mawza in Ta'iz lowlands – had reached or were projected to reach IPC acute malnutrition Phase 5 (extremely critical) levels, with acute malnutrition rates exceeding 30 percent. These conditions are driven by a convergence of factors, including high food insecurity, disease outbreaks, poor access to clean water and health services, and economic collapse. By the end of 2024, an estimated 1.7 million children under 5 were projected to be acutely malnourished, including approximately 500,000 with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) – a 34 percent increase from 2023. Additionally, over 0.9 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls were expected to be malnourished.

### **Humanitarian access**

29. Humanitarian efforts in Yemen face persistent challenges. In 2023, the most common access constraints affecting humanitarian operations included stringent administrative procedures, insecurity and movement restrictions and the presence of explosive remnants of war.<sup>63</sup> Beyond physical and administrative barriers, access challenges also included attempts of undue influence on data collection for needs assessments, programme design and delivery, further complicating programme design and implementation. Additionally, humanitarian aid workers face significant risks, including violence, kidnappings, detentions, fatalities and attacks targeting personnel, property and facilities.<sup>64</sup>

30. Moreover, the conflict impacted logistical infrastructure, causing road closures and shutdown of many of the country's ports and airports. According to the Yemen logistics cluster, the main constraints include: i) changing customs regulations; ii) insufficient warehouse capacity in remote areas; iii) lack of temperature-controlled warehousing facilities; iv) limited capacity within customs authorities; and v) insufficient geographic information system (GIS) and mapping capacity.<sup>65</sup>

### **International humanitarian assistance**

31. The ongoing conflict and economic collapse have intensified humanitarian needs. This, coupled with declining humanitarian funding,<sup>66</sup> has resulted in a significant increase in the funding gap. In response, over 60 humanitarian organizations issued a joint appeal for donor support in September 2023.<sup>67</sup>

32. Overall funding decreased by nearly half from 2019 to 2020, covering only 59 percent of the required resources for that year. Although a slight recovery occurred in 2021, subsequent years saw a downward trend in total funding, which worsened significantly in 2023 and reached a critical low in 2024. By October 2024, only 48 percent of the required USD 2.7 billion had been secured, leading to substantial reductions in humanitarian assistance.

<sup>60</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. HNO Yemen.

<sup>61</sup> Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2023. Yemen Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2022-2023, Statistical Snapshot. Yemen: Central Statistical Organization and United Nations Children's Fund.

<sup>62</sup> IPC. 2023. Yemen: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis, January-December 2023; IPC. 2024. Yemen: Acute Food Insecurity Projection Update, October 2023-February 2024.

<sup>63</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. Yemen HRP 2024.

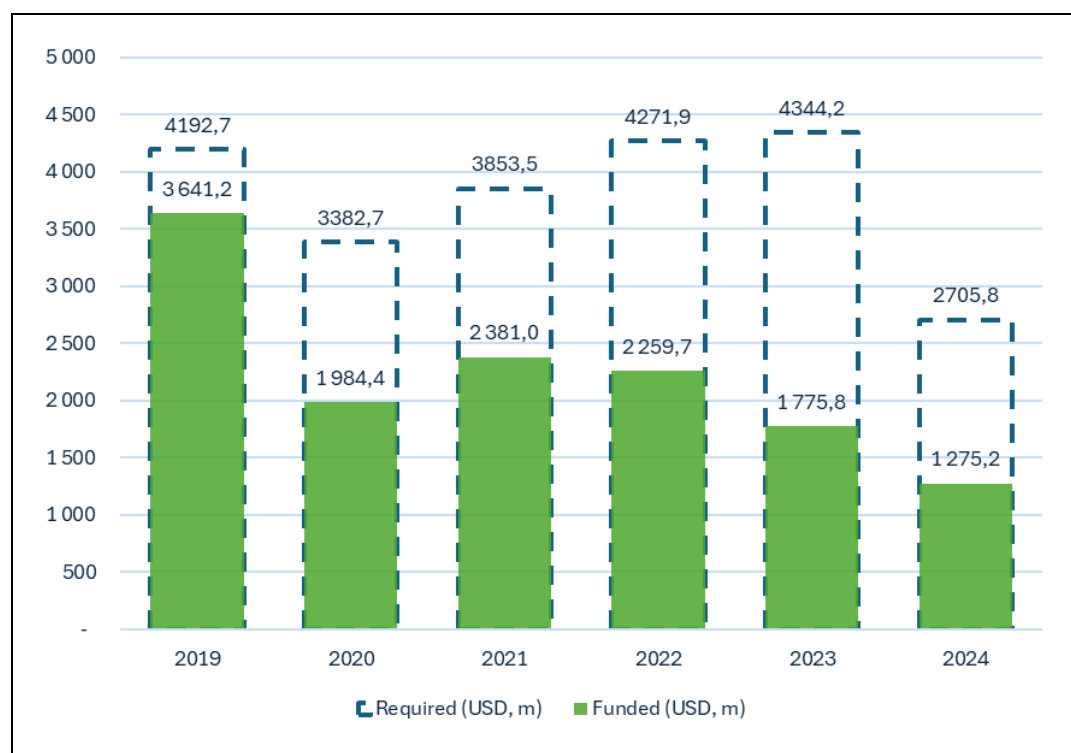
<sup>64</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. Yemen HRP 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Logistics Cluster. 2023. Yemen Gaps and Needs Analysis – Assessment and Recommendations Report.

<sup>66</sup> See: i) UNOCHA. 2023. Joint Statement on Yemen Humanitarian Situation and Funding Gap; and ii) UNICEF. 2024. 9 years into the conflict in Yemen, millions of children are malnourished and stunted. Published on 26 March 2024.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 3: Funding of humanitarian assistance response plans against total requirements, 2019-2024 (USD millions)**

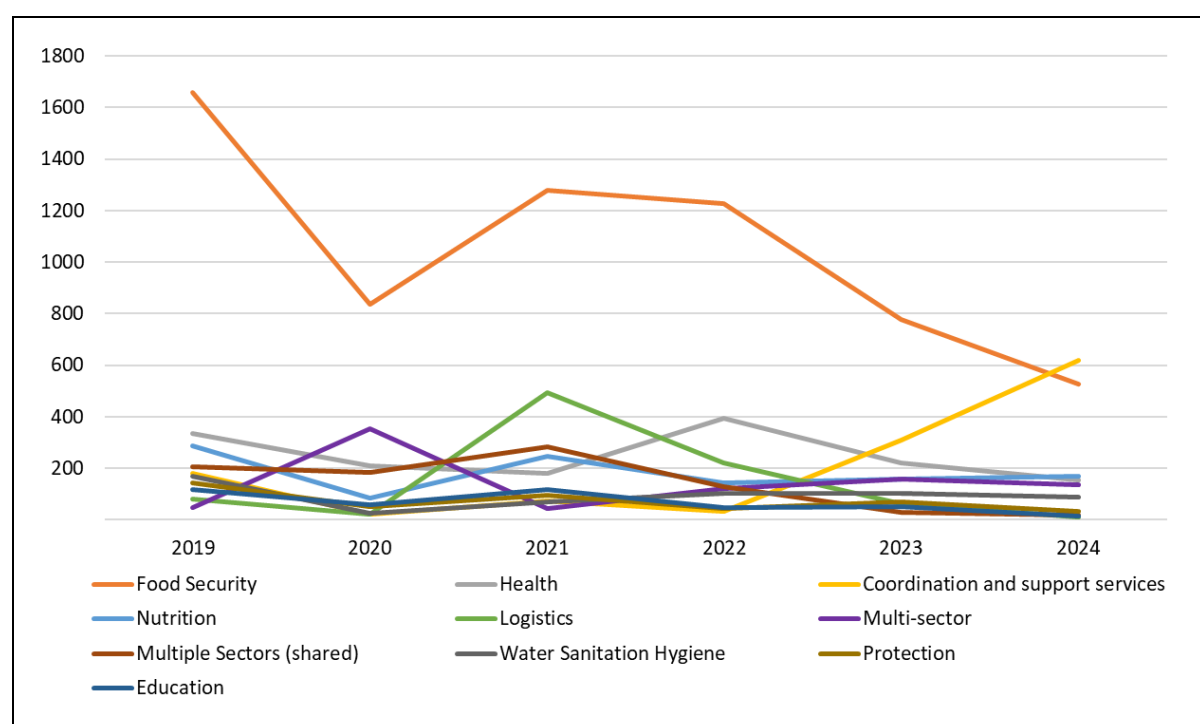


Source: UNOCHA. 2019-2024. Financial Tracking Service (FTS) - Yemen, accessed 30.10.2024. Note: in line with UNOCHA boundary setting approach, the strategic objectives for the 2024 HRP were developed to reflect a change in needs and targeting by humanitarian actors, while ensuring a prioritized response approach.

33. Between 2019 to 2024, Yemen received an average of USD 2.2 billion annually in humanitarian funding, primarily from the United States of America, followed closely by Saudi Arabia, with significant contributions from the United Arab Emirates, Germany, the United Kingdom and the European Commission. Food security was among the top-funded sectors (see Figure 4). Annual programming is guided by Yemen's humanitarian response plans (HRPs), launched in 2010. The 2024 humanitarian response plan appealed for USD 2.7 billion, reflecting a more focused and prioritized response compared to previous years. Yet, as of 30 October 2024, it was only USD 1.3 billion funded.<sup>68</sup> United Nations multi-year planning is outlined in the transitional United Nations Yemen Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2024 (extended until 2025), which was exceptionally endorsed by UNCT members without being signed by the Government. However, due to these exceptional circumstances, donors have not funded the UNSDCF.

<sup>68</sup> UNOCHA. 2024. Financial Tracking Service - Yemen, accessed 05.12.2024.

**Figure 4: Top ten sectors receiving humanitarian funding (USD millions), 2019-2024**



Source: UNOCHA. 2019-2024. Financial Tracking Service (FTS) - Yemen, accessed 05.12.2024.

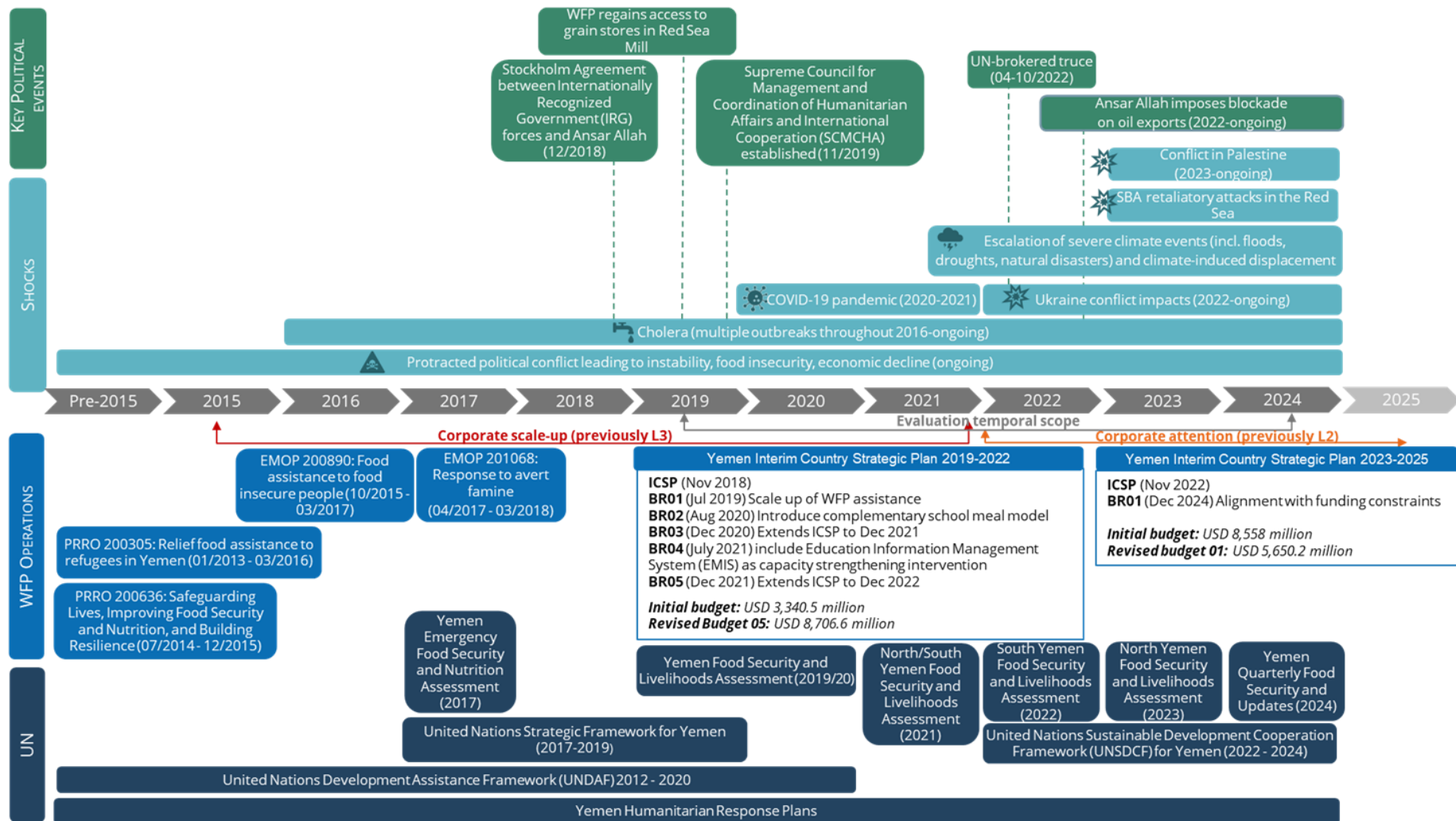
### 1.3. Subject being evaluated

34. Since 1967, WFP carried out various operations in Yemen, each with specific objectives, durations, activities and target populations. In response to the heightened conflict in 2015, WFP designated its operations in Yemen as a Level 3 (L3) emergency and launched two emergency operations (EMOPs) to address the urgent food and nutrition needs of those affected by the conflict. Additionally, through three special operations,<sup>69</sup> WFP provided critical air transport and telecommunication services to support the broader humanitarian community.

35. Starting in 2022, WFP categorized its operations in Yemen as for corporate attention (previously called L2 emergencies). The first ICSP 2019-2022 was approved in November 2018 and extended until the end of 2022. The subsequent ICSP 2023-2025 was approved in November 2022 and will be in effect until December 2025. Figure 5 depicts the evolution of WFP operations in Yemen since 2015.

<sup>69</sup> Special Operations 200798, 200841 and 200845. See Yemen CEE Terms of Reference, page 7.

Figure 5: Evolution of WFP operations in Yemen, together with relevant shocks & key political events, 2019-2024



## Strategic focus

36. Since 2019, WFP operations in Yemen have been guided by two ICSPs, with the initial ICSP 2019-2022 focusing on life-saving assistance (SO1 and SO2), resilience-building (SO3), and humanitarian services provision (SO4). During this timeframe, it underwent five budget revisions (BRs), extending its duration and adapting to changing needs. Including all budget revisions, the ICSP 2019-2022 was designed to provide assistance to 18,219,839 beneficiaries with a total budget of USD 8.7 billion.

37. The subsequent ICSP 2023-2025, developed during the truce when Yemen's outlook appeared more promising, was approved in November 2022. It maintains the three-pillar approach: life-saving assistance (SO1 and SO2), localized recovery-oriented efforts (SO3) and humanitarian services (SO4) with life-saving assistance as the priority to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation and to mitigate the scale and severity of food insecurity and malnutrition. Initially, WFP planned to assist 24,989,600 beneficiaries with a total budget of USD 8.5 billion. However, a budget revision approved at the end of December 2024 reduced the budget by nearly USD 3 billion, adjusting planned beneficiaries for 2024 and 2025 in line with the corporate shift of WFP from needs-based planning to more realistic budgeting and aligning operational plans with funding outlooks rather than solely with assessed needs.<sup>70</sup>

38. Both ICSPs recognized the importance of complementing life-saving assistance with interventions that support resilience and restore livelihoods. While their strategic focus has remained consistent, the ICSP 2023-2025 places greater emphasis on stabilizing the food security situation in IPC phases 4 and 5 to prioritize support for the most vulnerable. Both ICSPs also underscore the importance of fostering interlinkages across the different strategic outcomes and stress the need for the country to transition towards reduced aid dependency in the long term.

## Theory of change

39. No explicit theory of change (ToC) is presented in either ICSPs to explain the internal logic of WFP interventions in Yemen. Both ICSPs include lines of sight with indicators at output and outcome levels, which the evaluation team used to reconstruct a theory of change for this evaluation (Figure 6), incorporating inputs from the online theory of change workshop and in-country inception mission.

40. The reconstructed theory of change illustrates how inputs, activities and outputs are expected to lead to short-term and medium-term outcomes, contributing to strategic outcomes and impact areas while highlighting key assumptions and cross-cutting themes.

41. The ICSPs note that the WFP strategy is aligned with the humanitarian response plan and the UNSDCF and aims to support the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals), which informed the theory of change's impact areas.

42. Both ICSPs made several assumptions or conditions that must be met for expected changes to occur. Based on country office interviews and document reviews, the evaluation team identified that many critical conditions required for ICSP implementation are beyond WFP control.

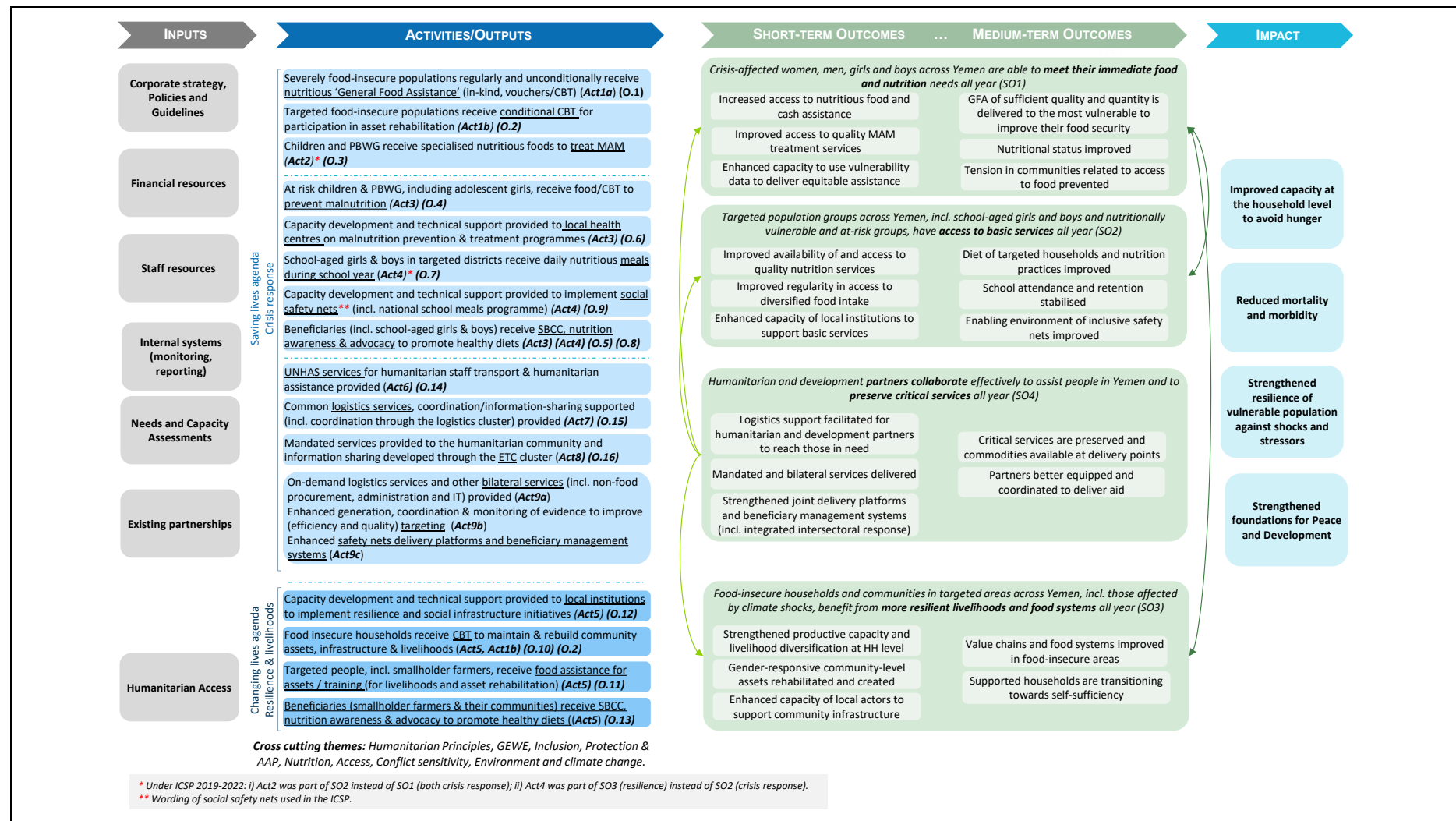
43. Three key contextual constraints affect the theory of change at all levels:

- i. prolonged conflict has severely impacted basic infrastructure and services;
- ii. WFP operations face challenges due to separate governance structures in north and south Yemen; and
- iii. in the north, restrictions hinder access to communities, assessments, timely assistance and monitoring. In both north and south, shifting conflict dynamics and security risks continue to disrupt operations.

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<sup>70</sup> WFP. 2024. Calibrating our ambition: guidelines to formulate focused country strategic plans and develop realistic country portfolio needs and budgets. October 2024.

Figure 6: Reconstructed theory of change

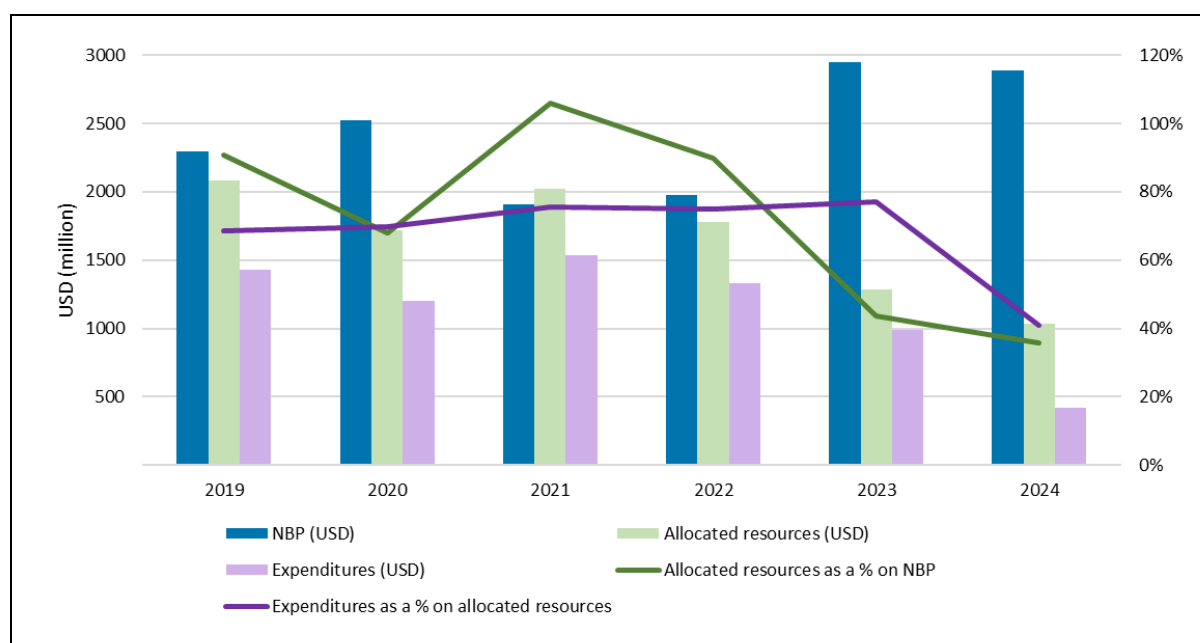




## Resource mobilization

44. Under the ICSPs, the needs-based plan (NBP) fluctuated significantly but showed a marked increase in 2023 and 2024, reflecting expected worsening trends of food insecurity and malnutrition in IPC 4 and 5 areas. The needs-based plan also reflected a greater focus on resilience, as the ICSP was developed at a time of relative stability creating opportunities to support resilience efforts. However, allocated resources and expenditures showed a general reduction over the years (Figure 7). While in 2019, WFP was able to fund 91 percent of its needs-based plan, as of 9 October 2024 it was only able to fund 36 percent of its needs-based plan for 2024.

**Figure 7: Annual financial overview of ICSP 2019-2022 & 2023-2025**

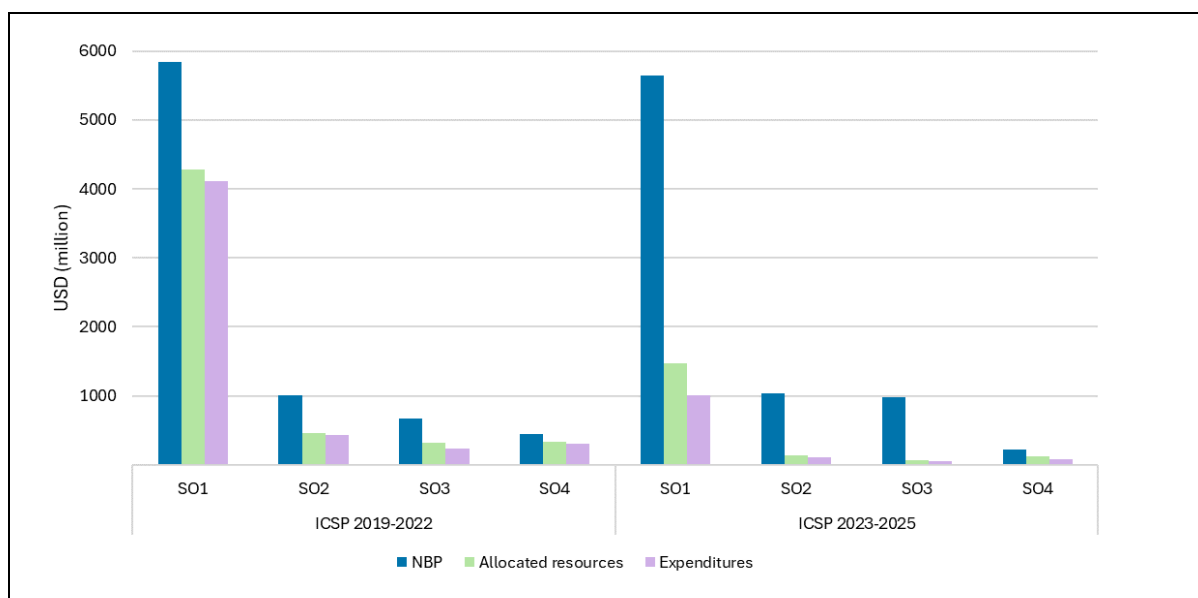


Source: WFP Yemen Annual Country Report (ACR) 2019-2023 and WFP Yemen 2024 ACR5A, extracted 09.10.2024

Notes: i) Needs-based plan: latest approved version of operational needs. WFP needs-based plans constitute an appeal for resources to implement operations, which are designed based on needs assessments undertaken in collaboration with government counterparts and partners. ii) Allocated resources: includes confirmed contributions with exchange rate variations, multilateral contributions, miscellaneous income, resource transferred, cost recovery and other financial adjustments and Internal advanced or allocated resources but not repaid. iii) Expenditures: cumulative monetary value of goods and services received and recorded within the reporting period.

45. In terms of focus area across the ICSPs, crisis response (SO1 and SO4) represented the largest share of the budget (89-92 percent of needs-based plan), while resilience building only accounted for 8-11 percent of the budget. SO1 (general food assistance (GFA)) alone represented 73-74 percent of the budget. Under both ICSPs, allocated resources as compared to the needs-based plan remained highest for crisis response (Figure 8).

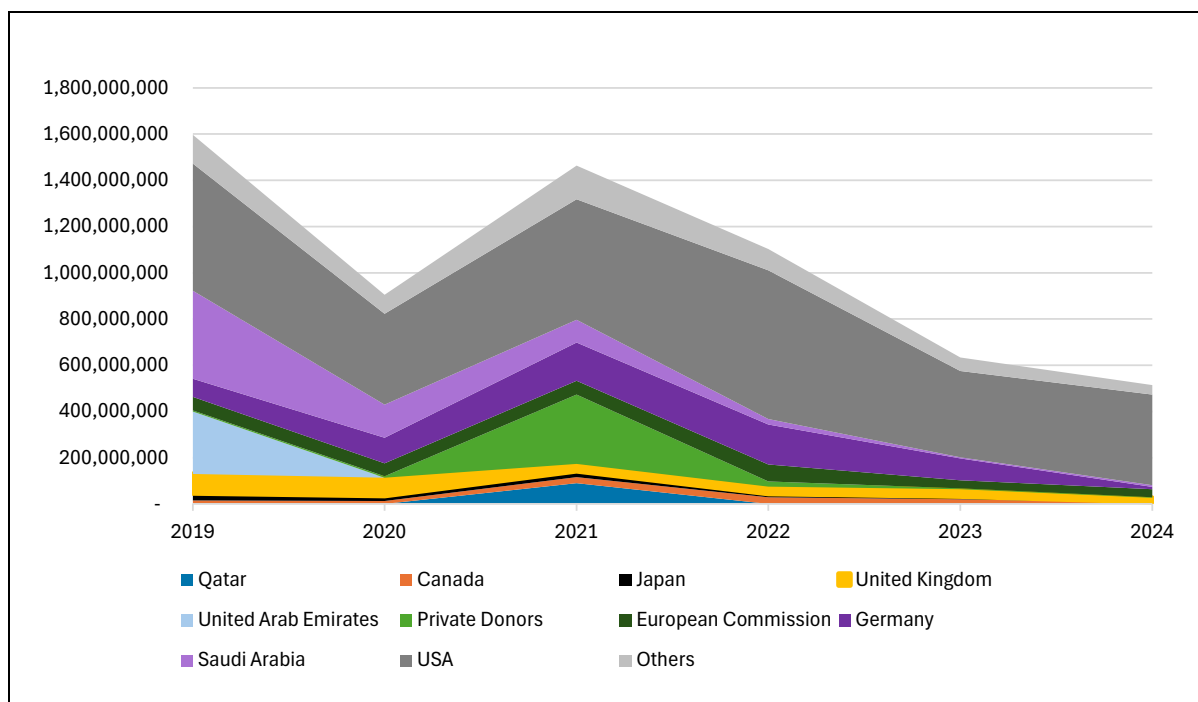
**Figure 8: Cumulative financial overview by strategic outcome of ICSP 2019-2022 and 2023-2025**



Source: WFP Yemen 2022 ACR and WFP Yemen ACR1A, extracted on 19/04/2024 for the NBP and 30.09.2024 for allocated resources and expenditures (excluding indirect and direct support costs).

46. The analysis of donor funding reveals a strong dependence on a small number of donors (see Figure 9). The United States of America, Saudi Arabia and Germany constitute the biggest donors over the evaluation period.

**Figure 9: Funding sources, 2019-2024**

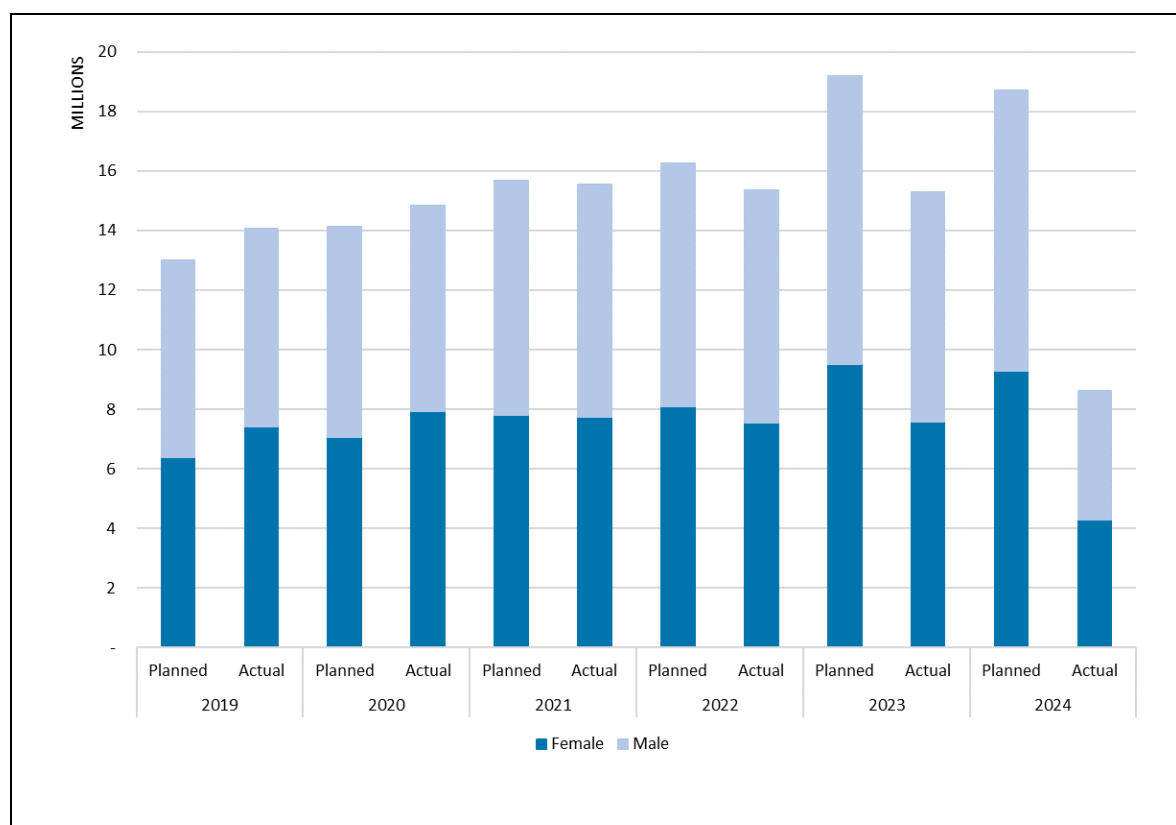


Source: WFP. 2024. FACTory data - Distribution Contribution and Forecast Stats as of 16.09.2024.

## Beneficiaries

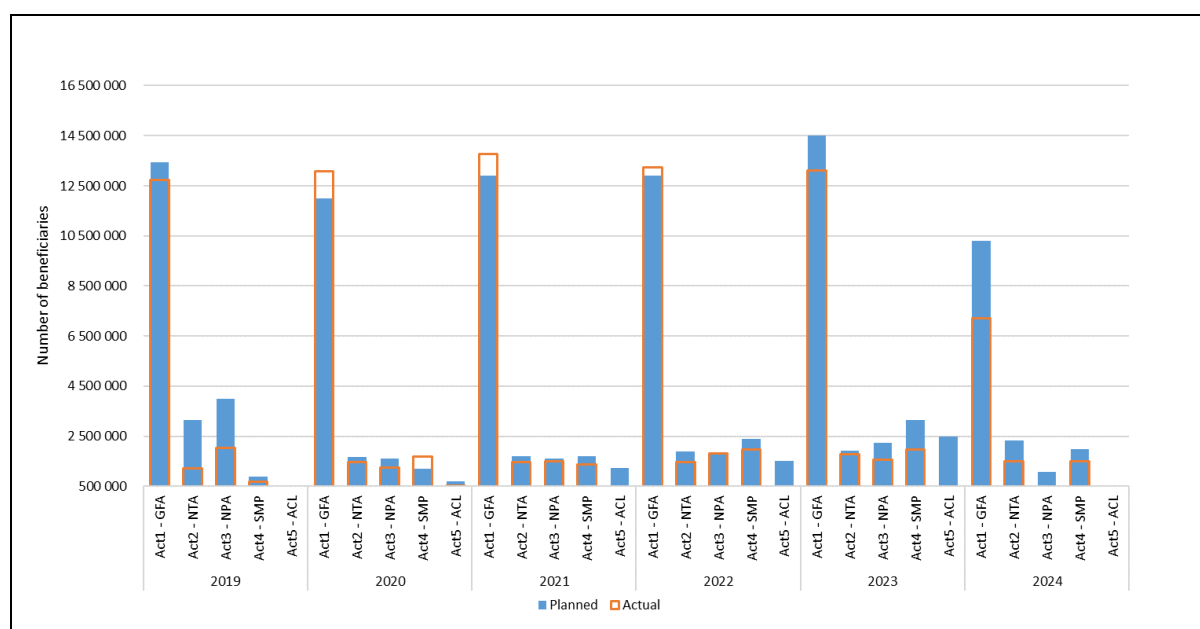
47. Between 2019 and 2023, WFP assisted, on average, around 15 million beneficiaries per year at the overall country strategic plan (CSP) level. As shown in Figure 11, a decline in the total number of beneficiaries occurred in 2024 following the temporary general food assistance (GFA) pause. The vast majority of beneficiaries across all years received WFP support through general food assistance (Figure 10). In 2023, WFP continued to support 13 million people through unconditional resource transfers, albeit with reduced assistance due to funding shortfalls. In December 2023, WFP, in consultation with key donors, decided to temporarily pause general food assistance in areas under SBA control due to limited funding and the absence of an agreement with the SBA to reduce the number of beneficiaries from 9.5 million to 6.5 million people, by prioritizing the most vulnerable through evidence-based targeting. Livelihoods and asset creation, nutrition and school feeding programmes continued in SBA-controlled areas throughout 2024, and general food assistance gradually resumed from July 2024 onwards, shifting to a more targeted approach.

**Figure 10: Beneficiaries – planned versus actual by men and women, 2019-2024**



Source: WFP Yemen country office ACRs 2019-2023 and for 2024 planned figures CM-R001b. CMR001b as of 18/02/2025 for 2024 actual beneficiaries.

**Figure 11: Beneficiaries – planned versus actual by programme area, 2019-2024**



Source: i) ACRs 2020-2023; ii) CM-R020 for 2019 figures (since ACR 2019 did not contain disaggregated data at the programme level) and 2024 planned figures. For 2024 actual figures, WFP Yemen country office data shared on 18.11.2024. iii) CM-R015a for 2024 actual beneficiaries extracted on 18.02.2025.

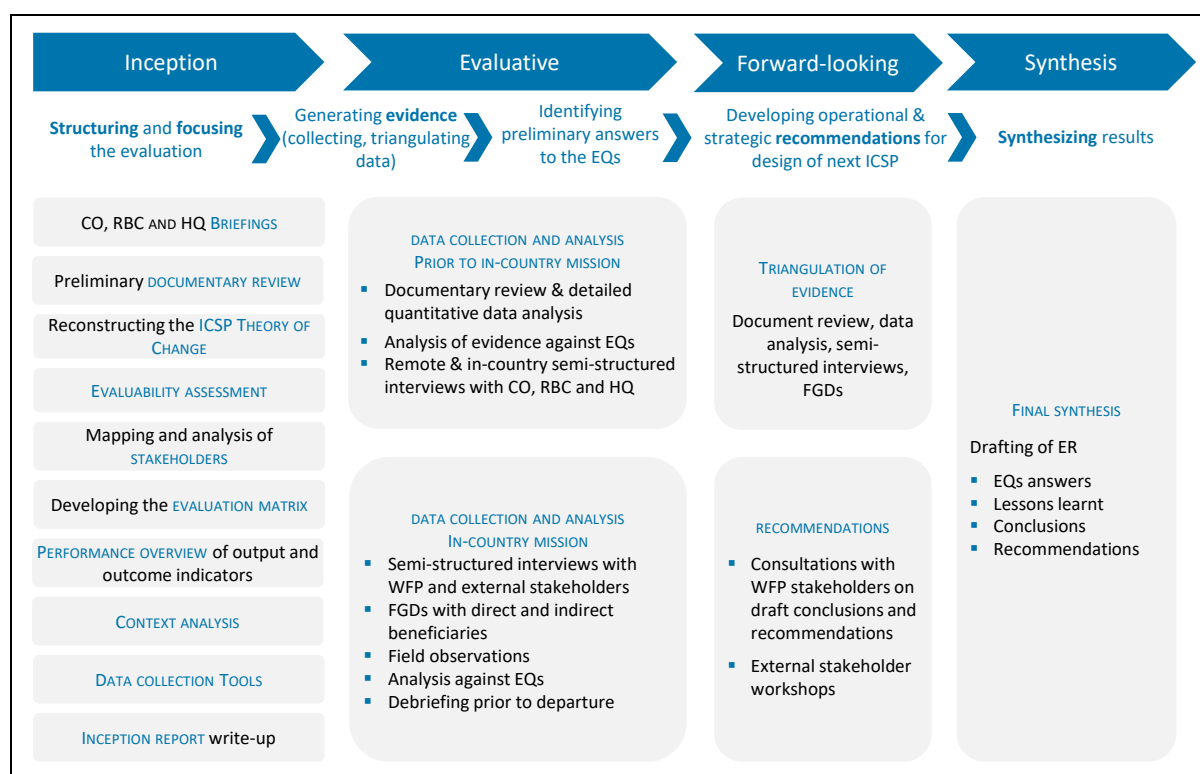
## 1.4. Methodology, limitations and ethical considerations

48. The scope of the CEE is reflected in Section 1.1. Financial and administrative data until end of Q3 2024 were used, corresponding to the end of the evaluation data collection phase.<sup>71</sup> In order to present a complete picture of WFP performance in 2024, beneficiary, output and outcome data covering the whole of 2024 were reflected in the final version of the report. The analysis also considered any significant developments that occurred up until October 2024.

49. The methodological approach followed the Office of Evaluation's Evaluation Quality Assurance System aligned with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) framework and quality standards for evaluation. A theory-based approach relying on contribution analysis principles was applied. The reconstructed theory of change (see Section 1.3) enabled the evaluation team to place the logic of the ICSP objectives and activities within a broader context. The methodological approach aimed for equal representation of women and men during stakeholder consultations and providing women the space to speak. However, of the 682 individuals consulted through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), 36 percent were women, reflecting the operational environment in Yemen. Figure 12 provides a summary of the key methodological elements. The full evaluation methodology is described in Annex V and the accompanying evaluation matrix in Annex VI.

<sup>71</sup> This cut-off date is based on a joint decision between the country office, OEV and evaluation team.

**Figure 12: Overview of key methodological elements**



50. Data collection employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Secondary data were analysed through a desk review of existing documents and datasets, complemented by primary data collection through semi-structured key informant interviews during the inception and data collection phases.

51. Evaluating in conflict-affected contexts like Yemen presented challenges, including limited access to SBA-controlled areas, unavailable SBA stakeholders, WFP staff rotations and incomplete 2024 datasets. The team triangulated data from various sources to mitigate these issues, conducted remote interviews in SBA areas and consulted national staff. Ethical considerations included informed consent, privacy protection, confidentiality and cultural sensitivity (see Annex V).

52. The evaluation team occasionally faced challenges in obtaining reliable government data, particularly in the education sector, such as out-of-school children's figures. Similar difficulties arose in other sectors, raising concerns about official data accuracy across sectors.

53. Due to access and security constraints, a hybrid data collection approach was adopted. In-person field data collection occurred only in IRG areas, while for SBA areas, the evaluation team conducted selected remote interviews with key stakeholders and used secondary data to widen geographical coverage and generalize findings.

54. The team interviewed a total of 337 key informants at country, regional and headquarters levels. Community consultations were carried out to capture evolving needs and response adaptation but could only take place in IRG areas. The team conducted 28 focus group discussions, including 23 with WFP beneficiaries and 5 with non-beneficiaries, involving 345 individuals. The detailed breakdown of consulted stakeholders is provided in Annex II and VII.

55. The evaluation complemented interviews with direct observations during site visits in four governorates (Aden, Hadhramaut, Lahj and Ta'iz). The site visit locations were purposively selected in consultation with the country office, area offices and field offices. An online perception survey targeting WFP country office staff, cooperating partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, donors and international financial institutions was conducted in October 2024 with 62 of 228

targeted respondents completing the survey. Because of the low response rate, the survey results could not be meaningfully compared across stakeholder categories.

56. Preliminary findings and conclusions were shared with the country office, the regional bureau in Cairo (RBC) and headquarters (HQ) during a debrief in late October 2024. Internal and external stakeholder workshops took place in early February 2025 to validate findings and refine the recommendations.

## 2. Evaluation findings

### 2.1. EQ1: To what extent has the WFP response in Yemen been strategically focused and adaptable to changing contexts and needs?

**EQ 1.1 To what extent has the evidence collected by WFP been sufficient and relevant to inform ICSP design, budget revisions and programme decisions, ensuring a focus on those most in need?**

**Summary Finding 1.** WFP has strengthened its evidence-based programming by leveraging assessments, monitoring and data collection systems to inform decision making. The integration of multiple data sources has improved responsiveness. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding data reliability in certain regions and the sensitivity around food security data. There is also an opportunity to further strengthen inclusive and direct consultation mechanisms.

57. The ICSPs were strategically designed and adapted based on needs assessments and contextual analyses. Budget revisions reflected changes in requirements, funding or emerging opportunities. The 2019–2022 ICSP was informed by famine risk monitoring systems, IPC analyses, and SMART surveys. Beneficiary projections were based on these assessments and IPC results, supplemented by evidence from the food security and agriculture cluster (FSAC) and data collected by its members.

58. The subsequent 2023–2025 ICSP demonstrated an evolution in strategic design, incorporating lessons from several evaluations carried out in Yemen<sup>72</sup> and the 2021 food security and livelihood assessments (FSLA). This approach underscores a more tailored response, reflecting an understanding of emerging needs and contextual shifts.

59. WFP employs a wide range of tools to ensure a comprehensive understanding of food and nutrition security, facilitating informed and context-responsive programming (see also EQ 4.4). These include integrated context analysis, household-level data, remote data collection, market assessments<sup>73</sup> and rapid assessments. WFP programming decisions have consistently relied on evidence. Key highlights include:

- **Use of IPC and humanitarian response plan and humanitarian needs overview data:** IPC classifications and humanitarian response plan findings directly informed programme adjustments. For example, BR 1 in 2019 scaled up WFP activities to assist 15.2 million people based on a 27 percent increase in acute need reported by the 2019 humanitarian needs overview.<sup>74</sup>
- **Targeted responses:** In 2022, IPC assessments identified areas in phases 4 and 5, leading WFP to prioritize general food assistance in the most food-insecure regions. The IPC data released in November 2022 indicated that this approach successfully averted catastrophic food insecurity. In response to the March 2022 IPC acute malnutrition findings, WFP expanded the range and reach of nutrition interventions. Considering funding constraints, WFP prioritized the moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) programme to address these challenges effectively.<sup>75</sup>
- **Rapid emergency responses:** In 2024, following the general food assistance pause in northern Yemen and worsening food insecurity, the plan outlined an immediate response targeting 1.7 million people and was informed by WFP assessment of the general food assistance pause's impact on household food security in the north.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> UNOCHA. 2022. IAHE Yemen. UNICEF. 2021. Evaluation of Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition in Yemen. UNDP. 2021. Evaluation of UNDP 'Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen II (ERRY II)'.  
<sup>73</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2022.

<sup>74</sup> WFP. 2019. Crisis response revision of Yemen ICSP and corresponding budget increase.

<sup>75</sup> WFP. 2022. ACR.

<sup>76</sup> WFP. 2024. Assessing the impact of the General Food Assistance Pause in Northern Yemen.

60. Despite these strengths, persistent challenges undermine the full potential of evidence-based programming, such as political factors in the north, funding constraints and limited face-to-face beneficiary consultation resulting in insufficient inclusivity.<sup>77</sup>

**EQ 1.2 To what extent has WFP demonstrated its ability to adapt to changes in the context, including conflict dynamics and shocks, and the resulting changes in needs (including through the use of forecasting, conflict analysis and risk assessments)?**

**Summary Finding 2.** WFP has demonstrated good capacity for risk assessment, data collection and targeted interventions. However, some challenges remain with a need to better align conflict and climate analyses to address overlapping vulnerabilities. Responses to emerging crises are often short-term, leaving gaps in sustained support especially for new internally displaced persons.

61. WFP maintains strong risk assessment and data collection capacity, enabling targeted interventions. To adapt to Yemen's evolving operating environment, it tracks and maps risks annually in a country office risk register, with mid-year and end-of year updates. Risks – categorized as strategic, operational, fiduciary, or financial – are assessed on a likelihood scale (1-5). This approach led to the 2023 revision of the WFP Concept of Operations to ensure business continuity amid Red Sea disruptions.<sup>78</sup> The methodology provides a clear understanding of risk severity, incorporates worst-case scenarios and reflects a nuanced approach to risk management.<sup>79</sup>

62. WFP effectively maps risks of exposure to natural hazards and their effects on food insecurity. A detailed cyclone impact analysis, focusing on its effects on food markets, showcases the organization's capability to monitor and respond to climate-induced risks. This demonstrates strong integration of climate forecasting with disaster risk assessment.<sup>80</sup> The assessment informed actions from the rapid response mechanism (RRM) partners, supported coordination of the response by FSAC members, and informed the geographical targeting of food distribution by WFP.

63. Conflict analysis is effectively integrated into the WFP risk assessment framework, strengthening its understanding of interconnected risks. This approach has the potential to provide actionable insights for adapting operations in conflict settings.<sup>81</sup> However, stakeholders noted the need to better link conflict with climate and natural hazard risks to address overlapping vulnerabilities. Focus group discussions with beneficiaries and site visits highlighted a gap in understanding the effects of reduced food assistance on community dynamics and tensions.

64. The targeted interventions of WFP demonstrate its adaptability in addressing acute malnutrition, food insecurity and emerging crises like flooding in Yemen. In response to the IPC analysis showing a 34 percent increase in severe acute malnutrition and the emergence of extremely critical (Phase 5) malnutrition levels in parts of Al Hodeidah and Ta'iz governorates, in August 2024, WFP initiated the west coast emergency response in six affected districts. The intervention included scaled-up malnutrition prevention efforts and a two-month food assistance expansion, reaching 115,400 internally displaced persons. Additionally, the rapid emergency response in SBA areas reached 1.4 million people across 34 districts, mitigating the effects of the food assistance pause.<sup>82</sup>

65. Additionally, WFP, through the rapid response mechanism, assisted newly displaced households with ready-to-eat food. Early assistance predominantly targeted conflict-induced displacement but later adapted to respond to natural disasters. In September 2024, WFP supported 39 flood-affected districts in SBA areas through the rapid response mechanism, addressing compounded humanitarian needs.<sup>83</sup> Assistance numbers fluctuated, with notable spikes in September 2023 (40,200<sup>84</sup>), October 2023 (24,600

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2022 and 2023.

<sup>79</sup> WFP. Risk Register Yemen. Integrated Conflict Analysis. February 2023.

<sup>80</sup> WFP. 2024. Tej cyclone impact assessment findings November 2023. FSAC monthly meeting. Aden – 7 February 2024.

<sup>81</sup> WFP. 2023. Annual Performance Plan (APP) and Review of External Situation Reports and Daily Operational Briefs.

<sup>82</sup> WFP. 2024. WFP Yemen Situation Report #8, August 2024.

<sup>83</sup> WFP. 2024. WFP Yemen Situation Report #9 September 2024.

<sup>84</sup> WFP. 2023. WFP Yemen Situation Report #9, September 2023.



people<sup>85</sup>), May 2024 (28,900 people<sup>86</sup>) and July 2024 (33,000 people<sup>87</sup>), indicating a degree of responsiveness to emerging crises. However, these responses were short-term and did not translate into sustained support.

**EQ 1.3 To what extent did WFP strategy in Yemen appropriately balance the response to immediate food and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable and transition to early recovery and more sustainable solutions where feasible?**

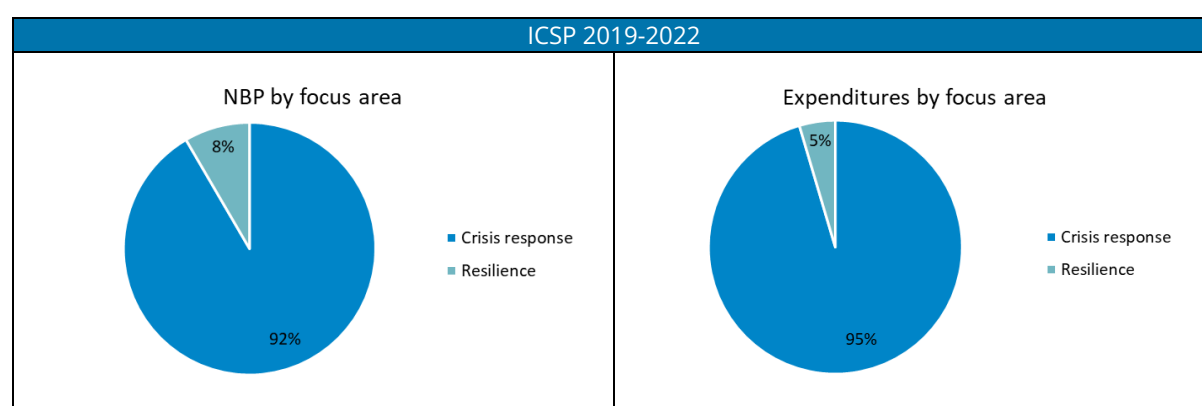
**Summary Finding 3.** Based on the evidence, WFP has made progress in integrating resilience-building under its 2023-2025 ICSP compared to the 2019-2022 ICSP. Where feasible, WFP has focused on context-specific interventions aimed at aligning humanitarian assistance with recovery and resilience efforts. However, designing and implementing a nexus approach that effectively combines humanitarian efforts and resilience-building remains in its early stages and is not fully realized. Transitioning general food assistance beneficiaries into livelihoods programmes represents progress but does not equate to a comprehensive nexus strategy.

66. Under the 2019-2022 ICSP, early recovery and resilience-building interventions were limited to short-term food assistance for assets (FFA) and food assistance for training (FFT) activities. The focus was primarily on restoring community-level infrastructure and livelihood assets but did not extend into broader early recovery or resilience-building efforts.

67. The 2023-2025 ICSP places greater emphasis on food systems and value chains, moving beyond short-term food assistance for assets and food assistance for training interventions. A key transition strategy aims to gradually phase out general food assistance and moderate acute malnutrition treatment where no longer required, linking general food assistance beneficiaries to livelihoods programming while continuing humanitarian assistance in IPC 4 and 5 areas.

68. While the WFP needs-based plan for resilience activities increased as a proportion of total needs-based plans between the two ICSPs (see Figure 13), the allocated resources consistently fell below the needs-based plan target – standing at 48 percent of needs-based plan for the ICSP 2019-2022 and 13 percent of needs-based plan for the ICSP 2023-2025, as of 30 September 2024. This gap between planned and allocated funding highlights the challenges of securing adequate resources for resilience interventions. Moreover, expenditure data further underscore the limited resilience programming of WFP (see Figure 13).

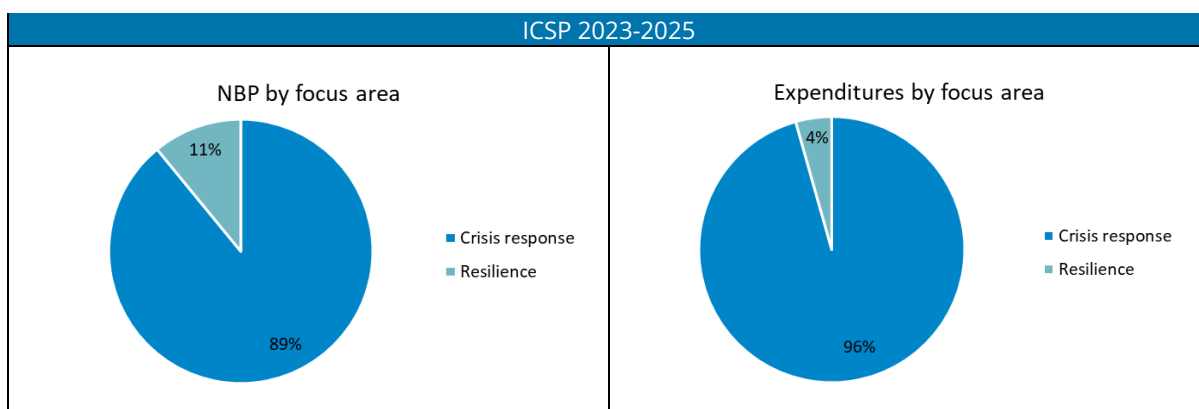
**Figure 13: Needs-based plan and expenditures by focus area for ICSP 2019-2022 and ICSP 2023-2025**



<sup>85</sup> WFP. 2023. WFP Yemen Situation Report #10, October 2023.

<sup>86</sup> WFP. 2024. WFP Yemen Situation Report #5, May 2024.

<sup>87</sup> WFP. 2024. WFP Yemen Situation Report #7 July 2024.



Source: WFP Yemen 2022 ACR and WFP Yemen ACR1A, extracted 30.09.2024.

69. Document reviews and key informant interviews with WFP stakeholders indicate that early recovery and general food assistance transitioning are being brought together. For example, WFP introduced an area-based multi-year livelihoods programme in Hadramout, integrating resilience efforts with the transition from general food assistance.<sup>88</sup> Learning from the Hadramout experience has informed the draft multi-year transition plan being developed for Ta'iz.<sup>89</sup>

70. Geographic areas for multi-year livelihoods programming have been selected based on their potential for recovery, particularly in the agricultural sector, as well as the level of support from local authorities for recovery and resilience activities. Clear linkages with WFP's targeting strategy help identify general food assistance beneficiaries with capacity and skills to transition towards sustainable livelihoods.

71. Interviews with external stakeholders highlighted that WFP, along with other United Nations agencies, has been slow in transitioning to recovery and resilience, lacking clarity on how to achieve scale and identify the most appropriate areas to support. Additionally, government stakeholders in the south noted insufficient coordination of early recovery with ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture.

72. Stakeholders also highlighted that WFP prioritizes reducing reliance on general food assistance over fully operationalizing an integrated resilience approach that supports food systems and value chains, while integrating issues of climate adaptation and environmental and water sustainability. Document reviews and key informant interviews show that long-term planning still needs improvement. Additionally, the geographical scattering of resilience – potentially driven by the WFP households' general food assistance graduation approach – has made it challenging to achieve scale and depth.

73. To advance recovery, WFP must strengthen country office expertise, receive adequate support from the regional bureau, build strong partnerships and secure multi-year funding (see Figure 42 on donor earmarking and Figure 43 on grant duration). However, WFP has yet to demonstrate sufficient capacity to design and implement multi-year recovery programmes, which is key to attracting sustained multi-year funding and effectively supporting recovery.

## 2.2. EQ2: What difference did the WFP response make for the affected people and the humanitarian community?

**EQ 2.1 How extensive and comprehensive was the coverage of WFP assistance in comparison to the needs and the broader humanitarian response? How effective was WFP strategy in targeting assistance based on needs and prioritizing support according to available resources?**

<sup>88</sup> WFP transition to livelihoods and resilience programmes in IRG areas: targeting strategy.

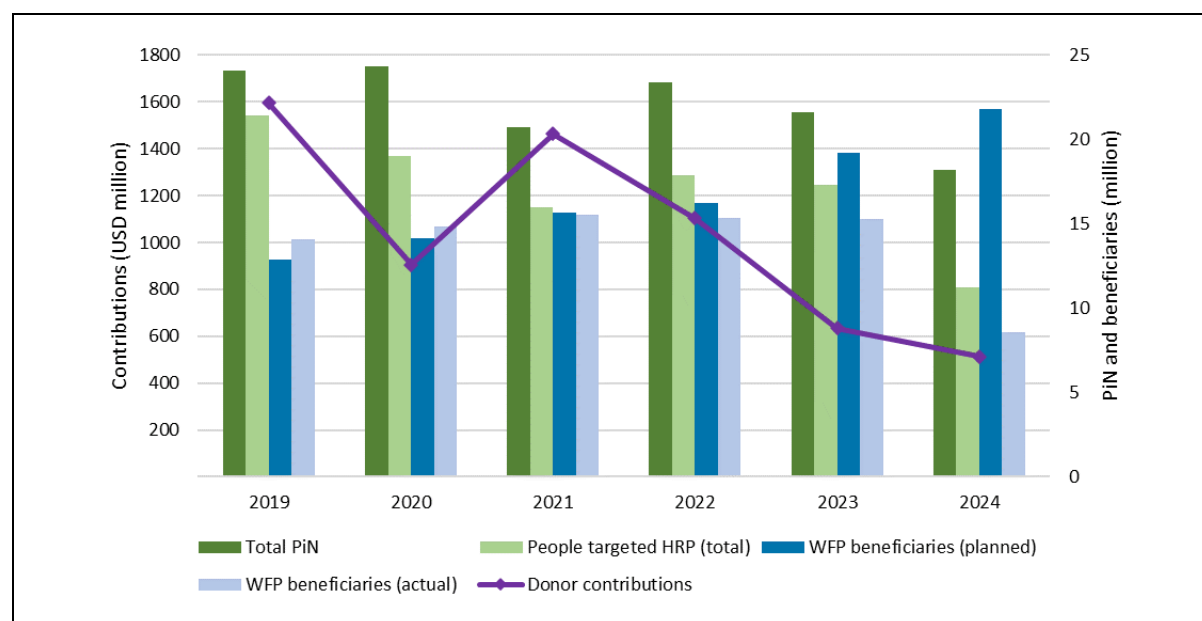
<sup>89</sup> WFP Aden area office. Expansion of multi-year livelihoods programme in Ta'iz (draft).

**Summary Finding 4.** WFP is the main provider of food assistance, striving to support a significant proportion of those affected by food and nutrition insecurity in Yemen. However, in the absence of updated beneficiary lists, some vulnerable groups, including people newly displaced from the front lines, have not received sustained assistance from WFP beyond a one-off emergency distribution. Reduced funding across all activities since 2023 further compounds the situation, significantly impacting the level of assistance (rations and duration) and leading to reduced coverage.

74. Food insecurity has been pervasive throughout the country, with consistently high levels making food security the top priority in the humanitarian response plan. Through various operational adjustments (see EQ 2.2), WFP has sought to increase or maintain the number of people benefiting from food assistance reducing the gap between the total of people in need under the humanitarian response plan and actual WFP beneficiaries.<sup>90</sup> The decline in 2024 was caused by the general food assistance pause and reduced funding.

75. As shown in Figure 14, donor contributions have dropped significantly since 2021. As a consequence, WFP was forced to reduce the level of assistance provided to maintain its beneficiary coverage during this period (see EQ 2.2).

**Figure 14: Evolution in donor funding and numbers of people in need, people targeted under the Yemen humanitarian response plan and WFP beneficiaries, 2019-2024**



Source: i) HNO & HRP reports 2019-2024, for total PiN and people targeted HRP (total); ii) ACRs 2019-2023 for planned and actual figures of WFP total beneficiaries; ii) CM-C006 for planned WFP beneficiaries in 2024; and iii) CM-R001b for WFP actual beneficiaries in 2024 (extracted 18 February 2025); WFP. FACtory data - Distribution Contribution Forecast Stats as of 16.09.2024.

Note: People in acute need methodology from 2021 to 2023 includes PiN categories 4-Extreme and 5-Catastrophic. Methodology in 2019 differs from other years.

76. Local authorities in IRG areas, cooperating partners and United Nations agencies in IRG and SBA areas consulted emphasized that WFP is the primary provider of food assistance. However, they expressed concerns that the scale of assistance has become insufficient to meet the growing needs, with the number of people reached falling far short of those requiring support.

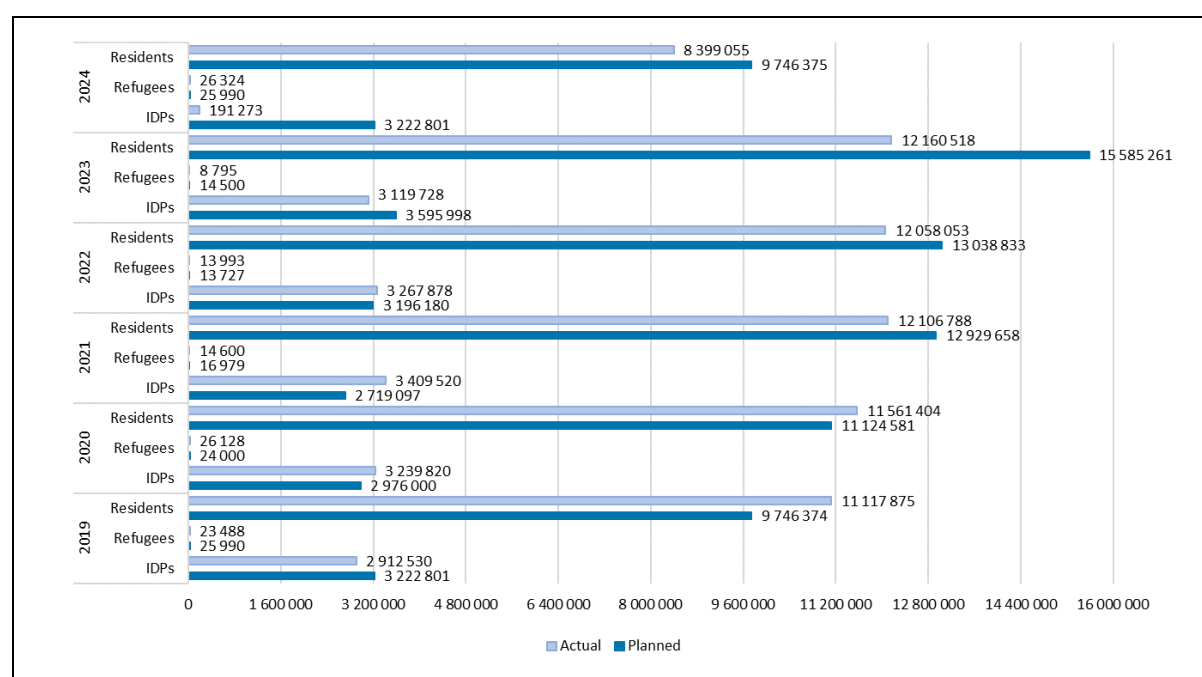
77. Authorities consulted in IRG areas, along with cooperating partners and beneficiaries, raised

<sup>90</sup> The steady increase in targeted beneficiaries reflects a stable number of targeted general food assistance beneficiaries and an increasing number of targeted resilience beneficiaries, see also Figure 18 and Figure 33.

concerns about the WFP general food assistance beneficiary lists not being updated for several years. They noted that newly arrived vulnerable households, particularly people newly displaced from the front lines, often receive only one-off emergency food assistance and are not included for ongoing support, leaving their ongoing needs unmet. The static nature of the WFP beneficiary lists in both IRG and SBA areas was a concern raised by all stakeholders consulted. Internally displaced persons experience some of the largest deprivations in food security.<sup>91</sup> Figure 15 provides an overview of WFP beneficiaries by residence status, showing that over the 2019-2024 period, residents constituted the majority of beneficiaries reached by WFP, followed by internally displaced persons and then refugees. Yemen currently hosts an estimated 4.5 million internally displaced persons and over 70,000 refugees and asylum seekers. A review of the data reveals a significant gap between the total number of internally displaced persons and those reached by WFP.<sup>92</sup>

78. While there is a need to support newly displaced persons, the corporate approach by WFP of transitioning from status-based targeting to vulnerability-based targeting ensures equitable consideration of both internally displaced persons and residents with similar levels of vulnerability. This approach allows for more needs-driven and effective support, making it a relevant consideration for Yemen.

**Figure 15: Beneficiaries – planned versus actual by residence status, 2019-2024**

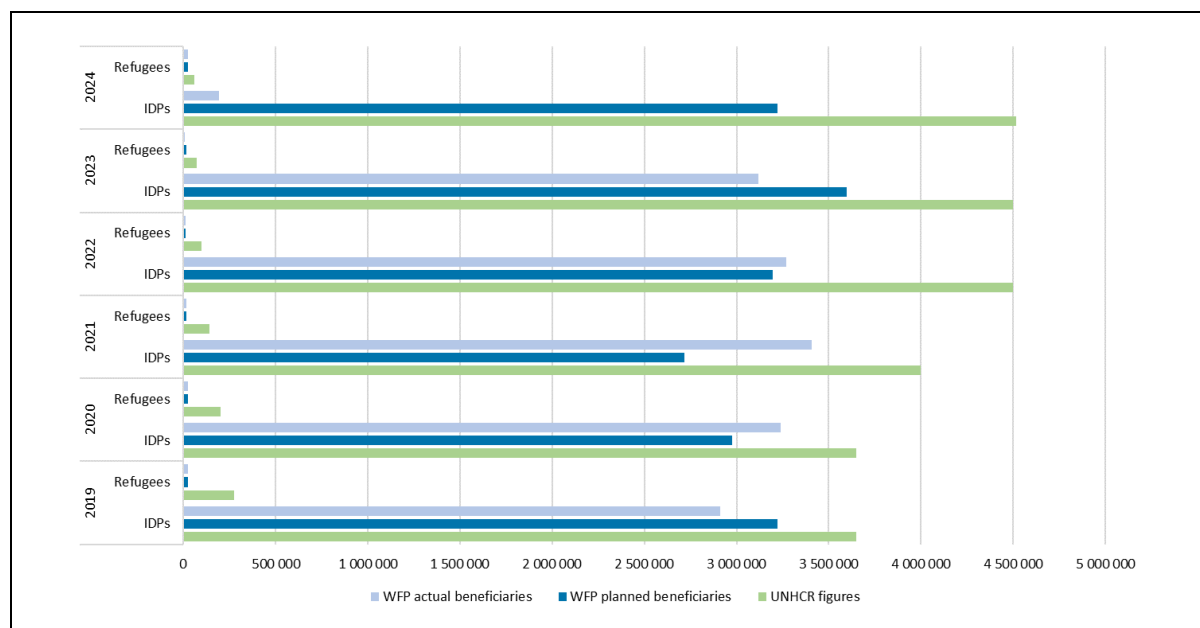


Source: WFP Yemen country office ACRs 2019-2023, and for 2024 planned figures CM-R001b data as of 3 December 2024. Actual figures for 2024 are based on CMR001b data as of 18 February 2025.

<sup>91</sup> World Bank. 2024. Yemen Poverty and Equity Assessment 2024.

<sup>92</sup> UNHCR. 2023. IDPs in Yemen: Socioeconomic overview and cash responses.

**Figure 16: Evolution of internally displaced persons and refugees planned versus reached by WFP compared to UNHCR figures in Yemen, 2019-2024**



Source: WFP data: WFP Yemen country office ACRs 2019-2023, and for 2024 planned figures CM-R001b as of 18 February 2025 for 2024 actual figures. UNHCR data: UNHCR 2019-2023 December Factsheets and Operational Updates. For 2024 data: Yemen Operational Data Portal, accessed 10/12/2024<sup>93</sup>

79. In Al Makha, local officials noted that since 2019, the number of displaced people requiring general food assistance has doubled from 100,000 to 200,000. Despite this increase, WFP is still only assisting approximately 50,000 beneficiaries in the district. This concern was echoed across all districts near the frontline consulted by the evaluation team, where the exclusion of new internally displaced people from beneficiary lists was a widespread issue. This feedback from local officials was discussed with WFP staff, confirming that sustained support for internally displaced people remained a concern.

**Summary Finding 5.** Significant efforts have been made to update the 2018 general food assistance beneficiary list to ensure that those targeted are "eligible, unique and real" beneficiaries. Decisions on geographical targeting – highly sensitive due to the country's division – and the determination of the overall number of targeted beneficiaries at governorate level are made in close coordination with relevant cluster working groups to ensure alignment with identified needs. Among those already included in the beneficiary list, WFP has prioritized the most vulnerable populations in alignment with available resources, ensuring that assistance reaches those in greatest need.

80. WFP engaged for many years in complex and extensive negotiations with IRG and SBA authorities on the retargeting exercise to ensure that assistance reaches those most in need. However, it encountered persistent barriers, namely political sensitivities, divergent expectations around data sharing and control, restricted access to verify needs and challenges in ensuring community engagement. In 2019, general food assistance was temporarily suspended in Sana'a City as WFP negotiated improved control measures to prevent food assistance diversion. This long-standing concern about outdated beneficiary lists, last updated in 2018, was also raised by the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) conducted in 2021, which recommended ensuring collective efforts to target the most vulnerable by reviewing the targeting strategies.<sup>94</sup> In recent years, WFP has been under mounting donor pressure to enhance accountability and effectiveness of assistance in a context of deepening needs and tightening resources.

81. WFP has increasingly adopted a geographic targeting approach, using IPC and people in need

<sup>93</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/yem>

<sup>94</sup> UNOCHA. IAHE Yemen. 2022.

analyses, the presence of internally displaced people and food security monitoring data in collaboration with FSAC partners to identify priority districts and beneficiaries. Needs assessments and data enable WFP to present evidence-based cases when engaging with authorities, helping to mitigate the risk of interference in the selection of geographic areas. This geographic targeting is complemented by household-level targeting through the registration process, with efforts underway to harmonize approaches across the north and south. The prioritization strategy allocates resources to the most vulnerable beneficiaries, focusing on areas classified as IPC Phase 3 or above.

82. Consultations with authorities in IRG areas highlighted resistance to excluding certain areas due to the widespread vulnerability across Yemen. This highlights the critical need for robust data to clearly demonstrate differences in vulnerability and guide targeted interventions. However, this remains a significant challenge in Yemen, as concerns about data quality and access to communities were frequently raised by interviewees.

83. Despite resource intensity and challenges, WFP has made significant progress in its targeting and registration process in SBA areas. After several months of negotiations, a pilot project was launched in April 2024 across three districts,<sup>95</sup> using national identity documents and applying ten inclusion and nine exclusion criteria to target, register and prioritize the most vulnerable households. The process included enhanced data protection measures to protect personal data and involved both current beneficiaries and new households, addressing the outdated general food assistance list.

84. Lessons from the pilot informed plans to scale up the process to 70 districts, prioritizing areas with severe food insecurity (areas classified as IPC Phase 3 or above) and those most affected by the food assistance pause. While the approach has proven effective, scaling it up will require substantial resources and time. In SBA areas, current and potential beneficiaries must visit registration desks in person and provide evidence to support their eligibility.

85. In IRG areas, updating beneficiary general food assistance lists follows a distinct two-phased method as per the 2020 Guidelines for Beneficiary Selection in areas controlled by the IRG. The focus has been on updating the current beneficiary list to ensure only eligible individuals remain. In this process, current beneficiary households are required to provide supporting documents as evidence during registration, where applicable. In addition, all household members must attend the registration, except in specific cases where exemptions are granted (such as infants, elderly people, pregnant women and people with disabilities). Verification is conducted by third party monitors (TPMs) on a representative sample.

86. The eligibility assessment is based on consistent inclusion and exclusion criteria used in IRG and SBA areas. In both contexts, a two-pronged analytical approach combines food security outcome monitoring data with registration data collected using these criteria. WFP applies statistical modelling techniques to determine vulnerability levels, validated through community consultations and input from local key informants to ensure alignment with on-the-ground realities.

87. In the absence of an agreed overall retargeting and prioritization approach with the SBA, and given that resources were insufficient to maintain the general food assistance programme at full scale, WFP paused food assistance in the north of Yemen in late 2023. A general agreement was reached in December 2023 with SBA on an approach for reducing the general food assistance caseload from 9.5 to 6.5 million beneficiaries. A retargeting and prioritization process informed by updated vulnerability data and relevant assessments was successfully piloted in selected areas in 2024, which led to the resumption of food assistance in mid-2024 in these areas. However, subsequent developments prevented WFP from rolling out the retargeting and prioritization process to other areas under SBA control.

88. While the exercise represented a positive step toward a more principled and needs-based programming, such a prolonged interruption in WFP assistance was unprecedented and affected millions of people. Concerns have been raised about the feasibility of scaling up this approach to household targeting and registration in Yemen, where 17.6 million<sup>96</sup> people are food insecure. Another concern with the current approach is the requirement for all family members to visit the registration site physically. This raises a

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<sup>95</sup> The three districts are Ad Durayhimi, Bani Sa'd and Aflah Al Yaman.

<sup>96</sup> WFP. 2024. Emergency Appeal.

significant challenge for households headed by women without men or boy relatives, as movement restrictions on women in SBA areas may prevent them from reaching the registration site. Additionally, questions about whether this approach aligns with societal norms around sharing food supplies have emerged. While beneficiaries and authorities acknowledged that not all households in need were included, there was strong resistance to removing households that may no longer be eligible. This reflects a broader lack of acceptance of resource constraints and the necessity to prioritize assistance based on vulnerability. These observations underscore the importance of direct consultation with beneficiaries and communities to refine targeting methods that are both effective and culturally appropriate.

89. Reducing the number of beneficiaries has increased tensions within communities, placing cooperating partners and district-level authorities under significant strain. Effective communication with beneficiaries is crucial in this fragile context, requiring clear messaging about food assistance timing and timely distributions. During field visits in IRG areas, the evaluation team observed challenges in this regard, including food stored in villages without distribution and communities waiting for updates. Consultations with WFP and cooperating partners indicated that no comprehensive risk analysis has been conducted on the effects of beneficiary reductions on community dynamics, underscoring the need for a cohesive and transparent approach to targeting and prioritization.

90. This confusion was not limited to the community level but extended to local authorities, which expressed concerns about delays in receiving information from governorate-level offices, particularly when governors questioned the WFP approach.

91. In the case of livelihoods, WFP is transitioning toward geographic prioritization based on identified resilience and early recovery opportunities. Districts for food assistance for assets and food assistance for training are selected in coordination with local authorities and FSAC. Cooperating partners conduct community consultations in the selected districts to identify participants and community assets. Community assets for construction and rehabilitation are chosen based on assessed needs, while participants were targeted using vulnerability indicators primarily related to food security. Similarly, participants for training sessions are selected using the same standard food security vulnerability criteria.

92. Targeting for other activities is clearer than for livelihoods. For moderate acute malnutrition treatment, prioritization in IRG and SBA areas was guided by SMART surveys, IPC analyses, humanitarian response plans and humanitarian needs overviews and admissions data in the absence of recent assessments in the north. WFP reached approximately 50 percent of the children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls identified as needing moderate acute malnutrition treatment, based on humanitarian needs overviews and WFP data comparisons. WFP achieved higher coverage within its targeted caseload, reaching over two thirds of children and nearly all pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls. However, supply disruptions impacted the quantity of specialized nutritious food (SNF) provided in 2021 and 2022, a concern highlighted by stakeholders during consultations (see also EQ 1.2 and EQ 2.2). Children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls with moderate acute malnutrition are identified through health facilities, community health volunteers (CHVs) or screening campaigns organized by the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) using standard mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) or weight-for-height criteria.

93. For the school feeding programme (SFP), WFP uses a beneficiary selection and prioritization strategy to guide district-level targeting. Districts are categorized into three priority tiers based on indicators like education, food security, access and nutrition, with all schools in selected districts included in the programme. The selection of schools follows this strategy to ensure alignment with programme objectives. The choice of commodities, such as fortified date bars or “Healthy Kitchen” meals, depends on climatic conditions, local preferences and funding availability.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023; WFP KILs.

## EQ 2.2 To what extent and in what ways, has WFP contributed to the expected outcomes of the ICSPs? Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative?

SO1. Crisis-affected women, men, girls and boys across Yemen are able to meet their immediate food and nutrition needs all year.

### SO1 Overall achievement

**Summary Finding 6.** Following the successful scale-up of general food assistance during 2017-2019, WFP monitoring data showed improved food consumption patterns and reduced use of coping strategies; but these indicators worsened in subsequent years, primarily due to reduced funding, which led to reduced food rations, fewer food assistance cycles, and the impact of a deepening economic and financial crisis. WFP data also revealed a significant deterioration in food consumption patterns among former general food assistance beneficiaries following the general food assistance pause in 2024. For moderate acute malnutrition treatment, WFP largely met nutrition outcome targets, but challenges emerged in 2024 due to high defaulter rates among children, driven by supply breaks at health facilities. Systemic issues also contributed to relapse among treated children.

94. Life-saving assistance under SO1 represents the largest component of WFP support, reflecting high levels of vulnerability. Under the ICSP 2019–2022, SO1 focused on the provision of general food assistance to severely food-insecure households, while nutrition assistance (prevention and treatment) was delivered through SO2. Under the ICSP 2023–2025, the moderate acute malnutrition treatment programme was shifted from SO2 to SO1 to streamline crisis response. The moderate acute malnutrition prevention programme remained under SO2.

95. WFP activities aim to enhance food security and address malnutrition by providing adequate food to vulnerable populations, leveraging robust vulnerability data to ensure equitable assistance and supplying supplementary foods to treat moderate acute malnutrition (see theory of change). Monitoring data show that until 2021, WFP general food assistance contributed to reducing macro-level food insecurity, improving food consumption scores (FCS) and decreasing the proportion of people in IPC Phase 4.<sup>98</sup> However, after 2021, food consumption scores and food security indicators began to decline, reflecting funding challenges and rising needs.

96. Between 2019 and 2024, food security trends revealed initial improvements in consumption and coping strategies followed by significant deterioration, stabilization and eventual partial recovery. From 2019 to 2021, food security worsened due to rising food prices, currency fluctuations<sup>99</sup> and funding constraints; insufficient resources compelled WFP to reduce both the food basket composition and the number of distribution cycles, with poor food consumption doubling in some groups and increased reliance on negative coping strategies. Stabilization began in 2022 despite ongoing challenges, and by 2023-2024, food security improved, particularly for households receiving cash assistance, attributed to global price stabilization. However, gender disparities fluctuated, with households headed by women faring better initially but worse by 2023-2024 (see Annex VIII for a detailed overview of these trends).

97. Outcome data shows that cash-based transfers (CBT) beneficiaries achieve better food security outcomes in some contexts, while in-kind assistance proves more effective in others. This variation underscores the need for further analysis to identify the most effective approach based on specific contextual factors. Households headed by women initially fared better in food security; however, this trend reversed in 2023 as reduced food cycles and diminished food basket composition began to take a toll. This shift likely reflects a higher dependency of households headed by women on in-kind food assistance, coupled with fewer opportunities to access alternative income sources (see Annex VIII for detailed performance analysis).

<sup>98</sup> IAHE. 2022. P.65.

<sup>99</sup> While the official exchange rate from USD to Yemeni Rial remained stable during the period under evaluation, the parallel exchange rate shows an overall depreciation of the Rial against USD, with strong fluctuations in late 2021 and 2022 and an almost 100 percent loss in value in May/June 2024. Source: <https://dataviz.vam.wfp.org/the-middle-east-and-northern-africa/yemen/economic/exchange-rates>.



98. Nutrition outcome indicators, aligned with Sphere standards<sup>100</sup> for supplementary feeding programmes show that WFP comfortably met targets annually. However, discussions with mothers, caregivers, health staff, WFP staff and cooperating partners noted frequent relapses, with children recovering and being discharged only to return as new admissions due to unchanged home conditions. Relapse data are not systematically collected by WFP, preventing an accurate assessment of its scale. Respondents identified key drivers of malnutrition, including poor infant feeding practices, aggressive marketing of commercial milk formula (discouraging exclusive breastfeeding), poor hygiene and sanitation, and household food insecurity, contributing to repeated episodes of acute malnutrition.

99. Minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W) targets appear to be pitched at the same level as achievements, which suggests they were decided retrospectively and renders them unfit for purpose. Attainment of MDD-W dropped in 2020 to 34 percent from 46.6 percent in 2019, then improved to 67.9 percent in 2022 and 73.3 percent in 2023.<sup>101</sup> Without contextual information, such as the impact of seasonality, these trends are difficult to interpret. Health staff and beneficiaries noted that pregnant and breastfeeding women often share supplementary food with family members in food-insecure households, impacting their dietary intake.

### SO1/Activity 1 Life-saving food assistance

**Summary Finding 7.** As part of its humanitarian mandate, WFP has continued its efforts to meet rising needs by reaching as many people as possible through general food assistance. However, these efforts were severely constrained by reduced funding and a worsening economic situation. To maximize reach, WFP reduced both the food basket composition and the frequency of distribution cycles. The general food assistance pause brought distributions to a halt in SBA areas and disrupted assistance in IRG areas due to supply chain breaks.

100. General food assistance, primarily through in-kind food distributions, was the largest activity of WFP in Yemen from 2019 to 2024, directly supporting its mandate to achieve SDG 2 zero hunger. Focus group discussions with beneficiaries and cooperating partners emphasized general food assistance's critical role in addressing food insecurity for vulnerable families. General food assistance in the form of in-kind food, commodity vouchers and cash-based transfers, was delivered through 17 cooperating partners (8 international, 9 national) from 2020 to 2023 and expanding to 19 cooperating partners (8 international, 11 national) in 2024. In December 2023, WFP paused general food assistance for 9.5 million beneficiaries in SBA areas due to funding challenges and prolonged negotiations with authorities to address outdated beneficiary lists.<sup>102</sup> The 2024 general food assistance pause resulted in increased levels of severe food deprivation among households. To mitigate these effects, WFP conducted a one-off emergency food distribution in priority districts of Hajjah and Hodeidah governorates in May 2024, leading to a significant reduction in the prevalence of food insecurity amongst beneficiary households.<sup>103</sup> In-kind distributions continued in the IRG areas but were affected by supply chain breaks due to the pause in the SBA-controlled areas.<sup>104</sup> During 2024, WFP was only able to reach 7.2 million people (see Figure 18).

101. The performance of general food assistance must be assessed against the backdrop of a worsening food security situation and declining funding. Only in 2019 did the needs-based plan, implementation plan (IP), and available resources align, providing WFP with adequate funding to address the needs of food-insecure people. However, while available resources exceeded USD 1 billion on a yearly basis until 2022, a sharp decline began thereafter. In 2023 and 2024, the needs-based plan peaked, reflecting expected worsening food insecurity and acute malnutrition trends due to decreased purchasing power, increased food and fuel prices, and reduced assistance from FSAC partners in 2022 because of

<sup>100</sup> See Sphere Handbook 2018.

<sup>101</sup> ACRs 2019-2023. No figures available for 2024.

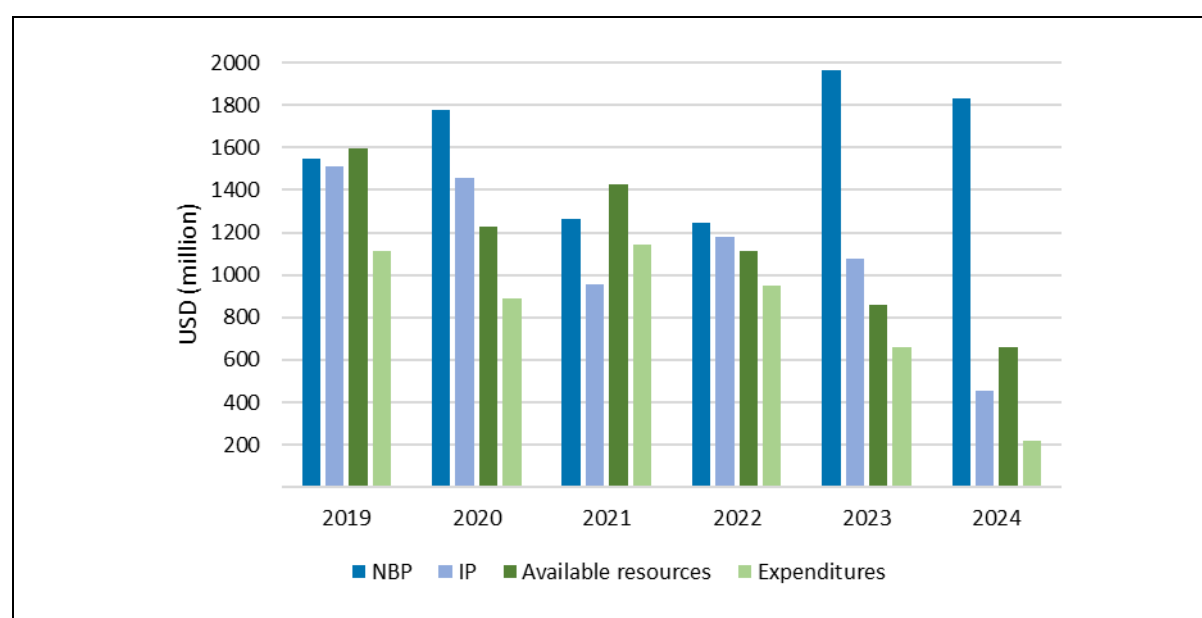
<sup>102</sup> WFP. April 2024. Assessing the Impact of the General Food Assistance Pause in Northern Yemen. Remote monitoring study.

<sup>103</sup> WFP. Assessing the Impact of WFP's One-Off Food Distribution in Hajjah and Al Hodeidah, Six Months after the Pause. July 2024.

<sup>104</sup> For example, the pause in the SBA-controlled areas led to delays in the delivery of commodities due to challenges in transporting commodities exclusively to the south.

funding shortfalls, as well as the strategic focus of WFP on IPC 4 and 5 areas to stabilize food security amid deteriorating conditions.<sup>105</sup> However, available resources reached their lowest levels during the review period, limiting the ability of WFP to fully implement its response strategy. Key informants attributed the funding decline to donor fatigue, reduced confidence in aid effectiveness, lack of peace prospects in Yemen, and shifting domestic priorities, compounded by over-reliance on a single donor for general food assistance (see EQ 4.2). Continued increase in food and nutrition needs (BR01) combined with the general food assistance pause in the SBA areas contributed to the sharp deterioration in food security, straining coping mechanisms of affected communities (BR01).

**Figure 17: SO1/Act 1 financial overview, 2019-2024**



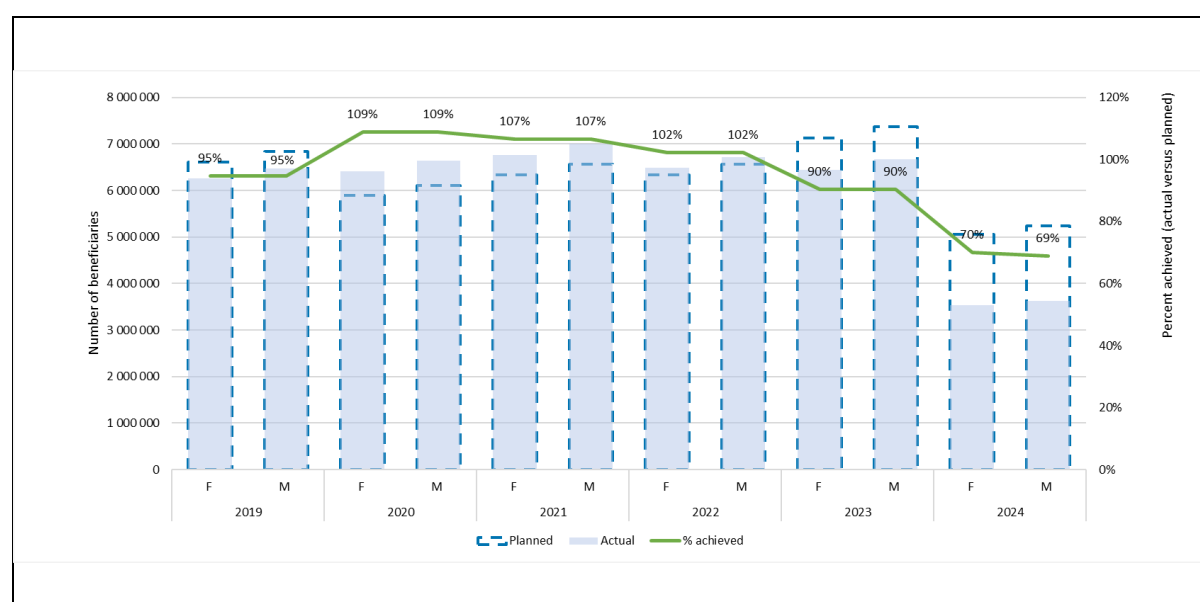
Source: WFP Yemen 2019-2023 ACRs. WFP Yemen 2024 ACR5A, extracted 09.10.2024.

Note: for 2024 data NBP, IP and available resources reflect the period up until 31.12.2024 while expenditures reflect the period up until 09.10.2024.

102. A comparative analysis of available resources and beneficiaries reached shows that in 2021, WFP had USD 1.4 billion, enabling assistance to 13.7 million people. By 2022, resources declined to USD 1.1 billion, yet WFP still reached 13.2 million people. This minor variation in overall beneficiary coverage happened at the detriment of the level of assistance provided, with significant cuts observed during the period in which funding decreased.

<sup>105</sup> WFP. ICSP 2023-2025. HNO Yemen 2023 pp.55-56.

**Figure 18: SO1/Act1 planned versus actual beneficiaries by gender, 2019-2024**



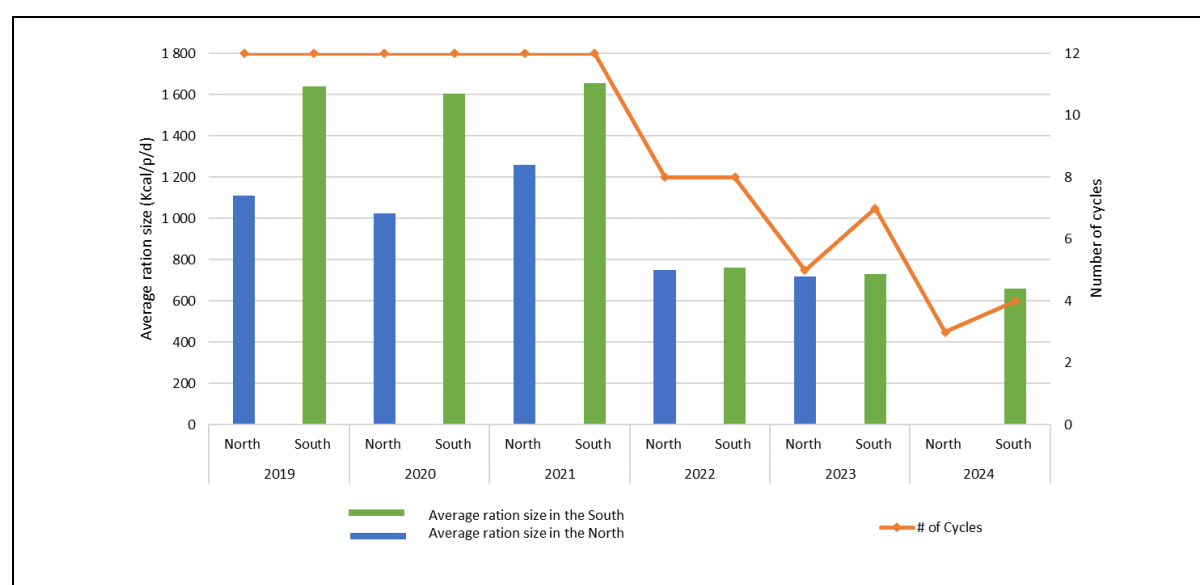
Sources: i) COMET Report CM-R020 (2019–2022); ii) ACR data (2023); iii) CM-P003 for planned beneficiaries in 2024; iv) CM-R030 for actual beneficiaries in 2024. Extracted on 18/02/2025

Note: Data on planned versus actual unique beneficiaries by gender for Act1 is not available in ACRs for the years 2019–2022. Gender-disaggregated data for most activities consistently shows nearly equal numbers of male and female beneficiaries, both planned and achieved. This raises questions about the accuracy and reliability of the data.

103. In order to maintain its reach despite reduced funding, WFP cut the food basket composition and reduced the number of distribution cycles (see Figure 19). The nutritional value of the food basket fell short of the planned 2,100 kcal that WFP aims to provide to individuals who are fully dependent on food assistance. Even when provided as a supplementary ration, the food ration in SBA areas also failed to meet the target of covering 74 to 78 percent of calorie needs. Under the ICSP 2023–2025, WFP planned to provide 1,770 kcal per person per day for general food assistance (full basket) and 1,083 (reduced basket) but was unable to meet these targets. In 2024, beneficiaries in IRG areas were provided a reduced ration of 661 kcal per person per day.

104. Furthermore, the number of distribution cycles was gradually reduced over time from 12 in 2021 to 4 in 2024 because of funding constraints. Figure 19 shows regional differences in ration sizes between IRG and SBA areas in 2019–2021, but those narrowed as ration cuts affected the whole country from 2022 onwards.

**Figure 19: Evolution of the food basket composition (kcal) and number of food distribution cycles, 2019-2024**



Source: GFA Summary (2019-2024), country office Yemen as of 23.02.2025. No data on average nutritional value was available for 2024 for the north.

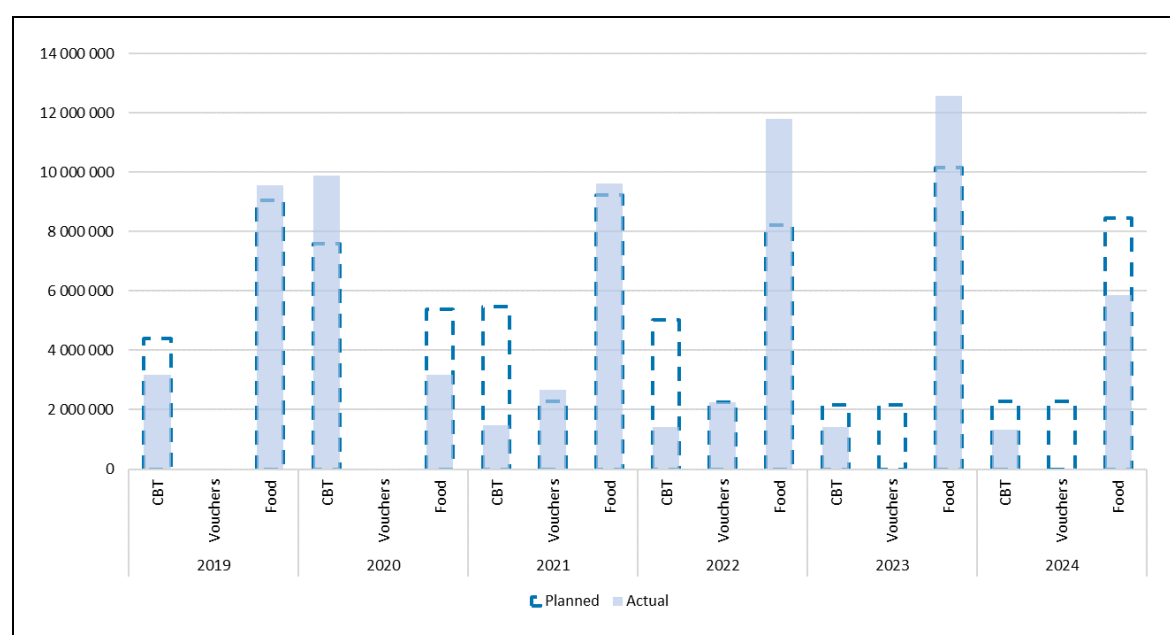
105. The decision to maintain the number of beneficiaries while reducing the level of assistance was considered the most acceptable approach by authorities interviewed. An important motivation was to prevent social tensions that could arise from excluding people from receiving aid. However, while this decision prevented shocks to households, focus group discussions revealed that beneficiaries needed more than the reduced food assistance to meet their needs. Across both urban and rural focus group discussions, beneficiaries expressed concern that the reduced in-kind food basket no longer met their needs. They reported that rations did not last the entire month, leading to frustration over decreased quantities and irregular distributions.

106. During focus group discussions in IRG areas, beneficiaries noted improvements in food quality in recent years but highlighted inconsistencies. Concerns were raised about products requiring longer cooking times, increasing household costs (for example, certain lentils or rice), and unfamiliar items that differed from customary diets.

107. Cash-based transfer assistance in Yemen faced important challenges. WFP expanded cash-based transfers in 2020, exceeding its target, but saw beneficiary numbers decline from 2021 due to funding constraints. Vouchers introduced in 2021 were discontinued by 2023 for similar reasons. Yemen's worsening financial crisis and inflation prevented WFP from sustaining increases in cash-based transfer value, and led to reverting to in-kind assistance. A 2024 FSAC assessment noted significant currency disparities between the SBA and the IRG areas, with exchange rates differing by nearly twofold, indicating a highly unstable financial environment.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Yemen Economic Monitor: Confronting Escalating Challenges. 2024.

**Figure 20: Number of general food assistance (food, cash-based transfers, vouchers) planned and actual beneficiaries by transfer modality, 2019-2024**



Source: WFP Yemen ACRs 2019-2022. For 2023 and 2024 planned and actual beneficiaries data, COMET reports were used<sup>107</sup>

108. In Yemen, over 90 percent of households surveyed in 2022 preferred cash-based transfers.<sup>108</sup> However, recent post-distribution monitoring data collected by WFP show that 59 percent of beneficiaries prefer cash-based transfers, while 41 percent prefer in-kind food assistance.<sup>109</sup> Beneficiary feedback during focus group discussions held by the evaluation team was also mixed and preferences for cash-based transfers versus in-kind assistance varied by location. Participants in urban areas favoured cash-based transfers, stating that "with cash, we can buy what our families actually need". In contrast, those in rural areas preferred in-kind support, stressing the importance of covering basic needs and expressing concerns about price volatility in local markets.

109. A preliminary analysis of the cost efficiency of in-kind assistance versus cash-based transfers conducted by WFP in 2024 showed that in the south, the cash-based transfer is as cost-efficient as in-kind assistance, while in the north, the cash-based transfer is more cost-efficient than delivering donated food but less cost-efficient than WFP-procured food.<sup>110</sup> A detailed cost effectiveness analysis comparing cash-based transfer and in-kind assistance has yet to be conducted. Key informant interviews with WFP staff revealed that the balance between cost, effectiveness and beneficiary preferences was not adequately assessed. Some interviewees noted that the choice of transfer modality was largely driven by funding modalities, with the main donor providing mainly in-kind contributions. In certain cases, WFP had to scale down cash-based transfers, reversing progress made and reverting to in-kind food assistance.<sup>111</sup> Others mentioned that WFP had not sufficiently advocated for cash-based transfers to donors but also highlighted the risks for the viability of the cash-based transfer modality given the sanctions and collapsing financial sector in Yemen.

<sup>107</sup> For 2023 and 2024 planned beneficiaries data, CM-R015a\_Adj\_Bens\_by\_Act\_Tag\_Ben\_Grp\_Age\_Grp\_(CSP)\_v2.2. For 2024 actual beneficiaries data: CMR015a\_. Adj\_Bens\_by\_Act\_Tag\_Ben\_Grp\_Age\_Grp\_(CSP)\_v2.2, extracted on 18/02/2025.

<sup>108</sup> Kreidler, C., and Rieger, N. 2022. Increasing the Use of Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance: Opportunities, Barriers and Dilemmas. USAID and CALP Network.

<sup>109</sup> WFP post-distribution monitoring data, December 2024 and January 2025. Shared by country office on 10/02/2025.

<sup>110</sup> WFP. November-December 2024. Cost Efficiency In-Kind vs CBT. Preliminary Analysis. Yemen country office unconditional resource transfers activity.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

## SO1/Activity 2 - Moderate acute malnutrition treatment

**Summary Finding 8.** WFP did not achieve moderate acute malnutrition treatment target numbers for children in any of the years under evaluation, while the target for the number of pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls was achieved between 2020 and 2023. The programme was hampered throughout by supply chain issues. However, its geographical coverage, strong integration with the Ministry of Public Health and Population and effective coordination with UNICEF were key strengths that contributed to programmatic reach.

110. Nutrition activities to prevent and treat malnutrition were conceived under the ICSP 2019-2022 as a coherent package to respond to a deteriorating nutrition situation. However, in the subsequent ICSP, the treatment element was moved to SO1 (together with general food assistance) and the preventative activities remained within SO2 (together with school feeding).

111. WFP implemented nutrition treatment and prevention activities<sup>112</sup> in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MoPHP) in Sana'a and Aden and 17 international and national non-governmental organizations. By 2024, MoPHP was implementing 70 percent of the treatment programme.<sup>113</sup>

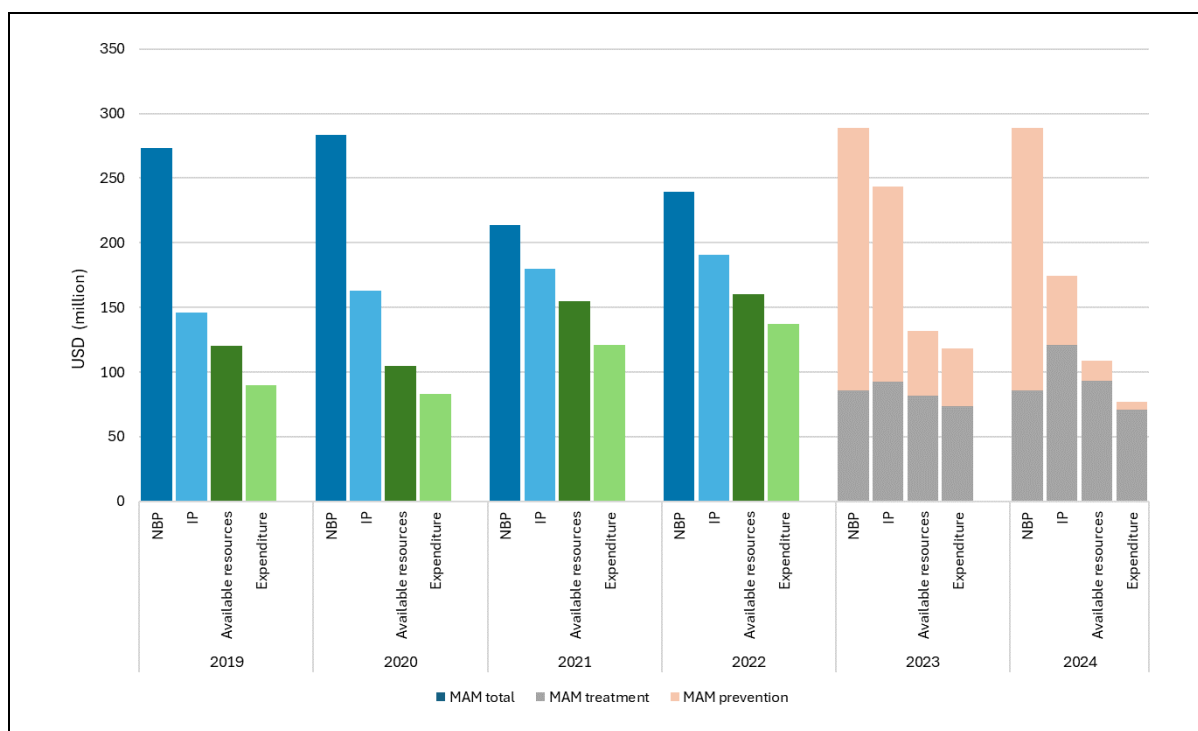
112. Financial data (see Figure 21) reveal significant funding shortfalls against the WFP needs-based plan in 2019 and 2020, reaching 55 percent and 47 percent respectively for treatment and prevention activities together; disaggregated data for the treatment programme specifically are not available for 2019-2022. Overall funding level for nutrition activities increased in 2021 and 2022 before decreasing in 2023-2024. Despite this overall trend, the needs-based plan for moderate acute malnutrition treatment was 95 percent funded in 2023 and 109 percent funded in 2024.

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<sup>112</sup> Following global standards, children receive a take-home ration of large-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplement providing 500 kcal per day for an average of 90 days and are discharged once they have reached a MUAC of >125 mm. PBWG receive a monthly ration of 6 kg of "SuperCereal", providing 820 kcal per day and micronutrients, from the beginning of the second trimester of their pregnancies until their infants are 6 months of age. Beneficiaries also receive information on healthy dietary habits and adequate feeding, hygiene and health practices to expand their knowledge and improve their nutrition and health status.

<sup>113</sup> ACRs 2019-2023 and consultations with WFP nutrition team.

**Figure 21: SO1/Act 2 and SO2/Act 3 financial overview, 2019-2024**



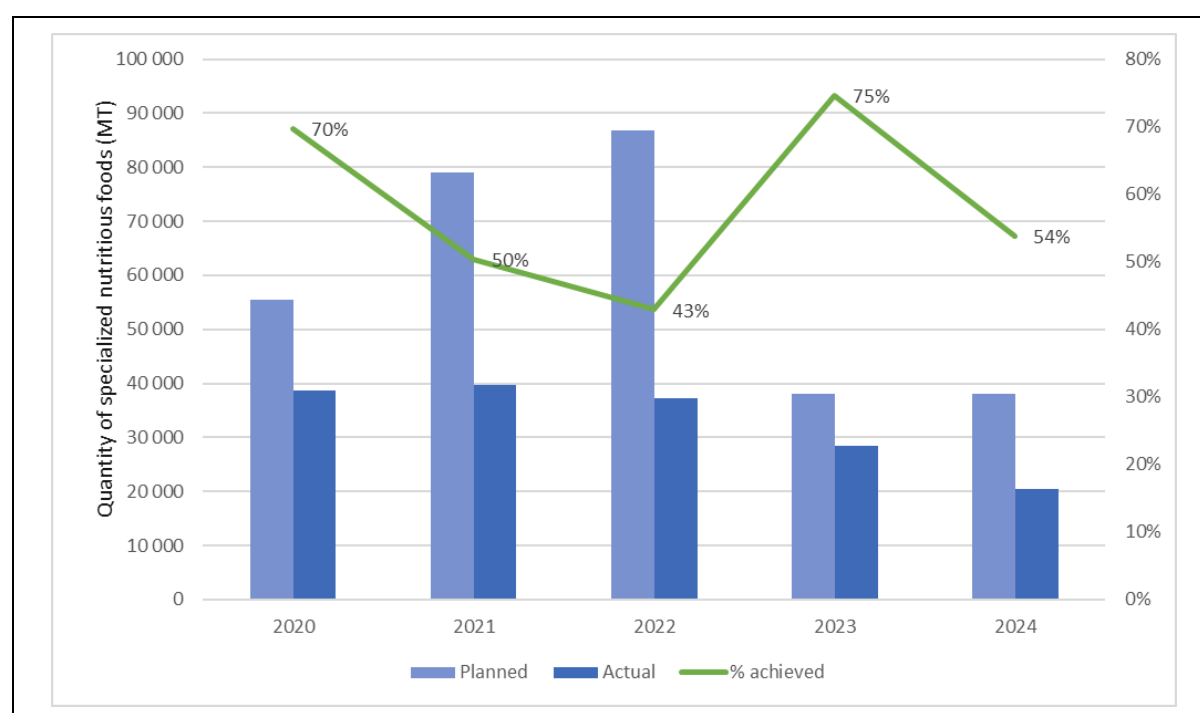
Sources: WFP Yemen 2019-2023 ACRs. WFP Yemen 2024 ACR5A, extracted 09.10.2024.

Notes: The NBP for 2019-2022 does not provide disaggregated figures for MAM treatment and prevention, while the NBP for 2023-2024 presents disaggregated figures; these are shown in different colours in the graph. 2024 NBP and implementation plan (IP) reflect the period up until 31.12.2024 while available resources and expenditures reflect the 01 January - 09 October 2024.

113. Figure 22 illustrates how available supplies fell well below requirements every year. In addition to funding shortfalls, this resulted from supply chain issues, including challenges of timely purchasing on the global market due to funding delays and, at times, obstacles faced with importing specialized nutritious products. Throughout the implementation timespan, supply chain issues have been the major constraint to achieving higher coverage (see also EQ 4.1).



**Figure 22: Moderate acute malnutrition treatment: Quantity of specialized nutritious foods provided (mt), 2020-2024**



Sources: WFP ACRs 2019-2023. No data of quantity of specialized nutritious foods provided (mt) available for 2019. CM-R014 Food and CBT for 2024 actuals as of 18.02.2025. CMR014 Food and CBT as of 26.09.24 for 2024 planned figures.

114. In 2019, moderate acute malnutrition treatment was provided through 3,422 health facilities in 318 of the country's 333 districts. Targeting focused on districts with global acute malnutrition prevalence above 8 percent or with high numbers of acutely malnourished children, in alignment with the nutrition cluster strategy. Each year, following the IPC, WFP engaged in a reprioritization exercise with nutrition cluster partners to remain responsive to the changing situation. In 2020, services reached 323 districts<sup>114</sup> and in 2021, 327 were reached thanks to improved funding.<sup>115</sup> In 2022, severe funding constraints and a shortage of nutrition supplies from July to August curtailed the ambition to expand further.<sup>116</sup>

115. In 2023 treatment services reached all 333 districts, expanding to 4,300 health facilities, combined with delivery through mobile clinics at sites for internally displaced persons and locations with limited access to health facilities.<sup>117</sup> During the first half of 2024, a significant pipeline break, resulting from delayed funding combined with impediments to customs release of the specialized nutritious food, meant that the majority of health facilities across the country had limited or no supplies for programming.

116. Figure 23 below illustrates the numbers of children under 5 years and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls reached with moderate acute malnutrition treatment during the evaluation period. Achievements in numbers reached mirror the funding pattern (see Figure 21 above), with low coverage (38 percent children under 5 and 39 percent pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls) in 2019, improving in 2020-2022 (averaging 71 percent for children and 100 percent for pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls), peak numbers reached in 2023 (926,291 children; 841,307 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls), and a slight decline in 2024. There were no significant differences in number of boys and girls admitted.

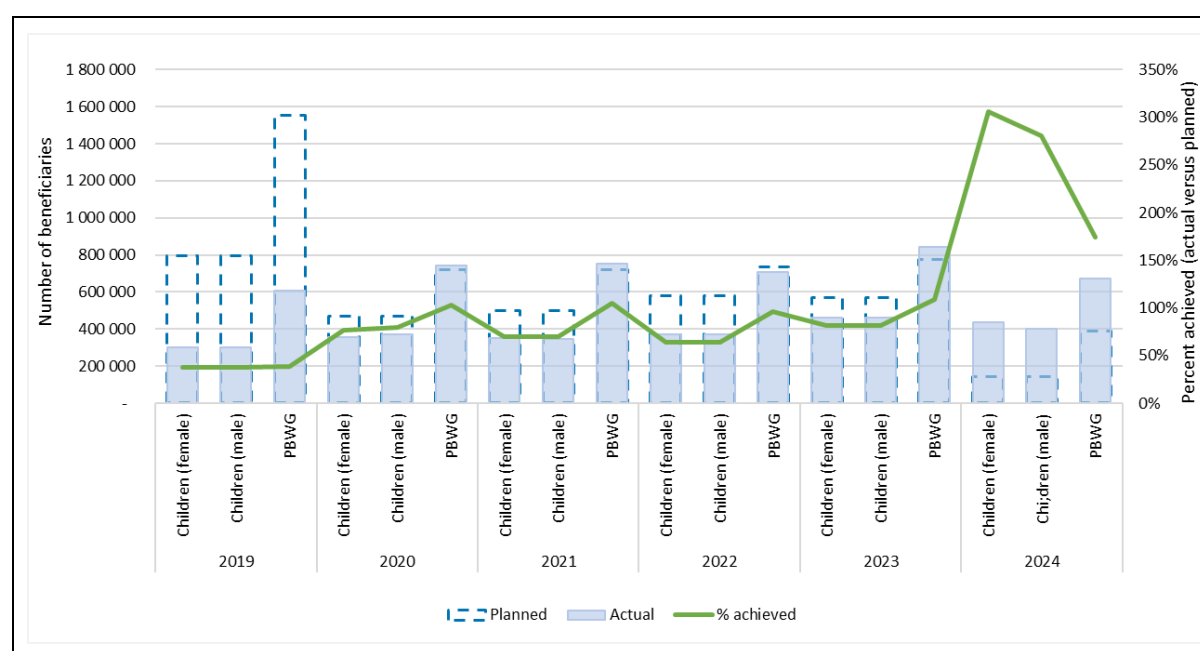
<sup>114</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2020.

<sup>115</sup> WFP. Yemen APP 2021.

<sup>116</sup> WFP. Yemen APP 2022.

<sup>117</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

**Figure 23: Moderate acute malnutrition treatment: Planned versus actual children under 5 years and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls reached, 2019-2024**



Sources: i) ACR data (2019-2023); ii) CM-P003 for planned beneficiaries in 2024; iii) CM-R030 for actual beneficiaries in 2024, extracted on 18.02.2025.

117. Moderate acute malnutrition treatment was effectively integrated into primary health care services at the health facility level. Across Yemen, there was a robust continuum of care between severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition programming implemented in the same facilities by the same health care teams, supported by UNICEF and WFP respectively, with WHO engaged in inpatient care for severe acute malnutrition. This is evidenced by the targeting and coverage data and by feedback from key informant interviews with health authorities and health staff and is a strong achievement of the programme. In addition, outreach through mobile teams was conducted jointly for severe acute malnutrition and moderate acute malnutrition. However, while WFP and UNICEF delivered some joint trainings on management of acute malnutrition, they have continued to use separate supply chain mechanisms and compensate health staff with incentives using different systems. There remains scope to streamline these activities to further improve programme coherence and avoid duplication of effort.

118. WFP provided technical assistance and training to MoPHP health workers in moderate acute malnutrition management, and to community health volunteers, responsible for screening for moderate acute malnutrition and delivering nutrition awareness and infant and young child feeding (IYCF) messages. Capacity development of programme staff fell short of the annual target of 3,806 each year<sup>118</sup> (See full details in Annex VIII).

119. In 2021, cancellations of training sessions due to COVID-19 contributed to the very low coverage of people trained. However, even fewer health workers were trained in 2022, despite training for community health volunteers rebounding. Limited training opportunities resulting in low capacity of staff was raised as a critical issue by local authorities and cooperating partners, while health staff in sites visited reported that only one to two people had been trained, often referring to the last training being around three years ago. WFP is aware of this issue and cited the high cost of conducting training to be a significant barrier, because the MoPHP requires a full ten-day community-based management of acute malnutrition (C-MAM) training to be conducted, rather than shorter, tailored courses; health staff engaged in the programme number more than 10,000.

<sup>118</sup> Source: WFP. Yemen ACRs 2019-2022 and data provided by the country office research and monitoring unit for 2023 and 2024 as of February 2025. \*No sex-disaggregated data provided.

120. WFP estimates that nutrition awareness activities reached increasing numbers each year, from 1.2 million in 2019 to 1.3 million in 2020 and 1.8 million in 2021, with community health volunteers screening over 1.5 million children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls annually and referring moderate acute malnutrition cases to the nearest health centres.

121. Technical and financial assistance was provided to governorate health offices, district health offices and health workers in 22 governorates to provide nutrition services on an annual basis. However, key informant interviews indicated that financial assistance was reduced along with reductions in WFP's overall funding for nutrition, making it more difficult for them to supervise and monitor the programme. Although screening of children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls is maintained, along with awareness-raising sessions, funding for supervision, training and monitoring is tied closely to the supply chain, rendering WFP's approach to programming overly supply-oriented rather than patient-focused.

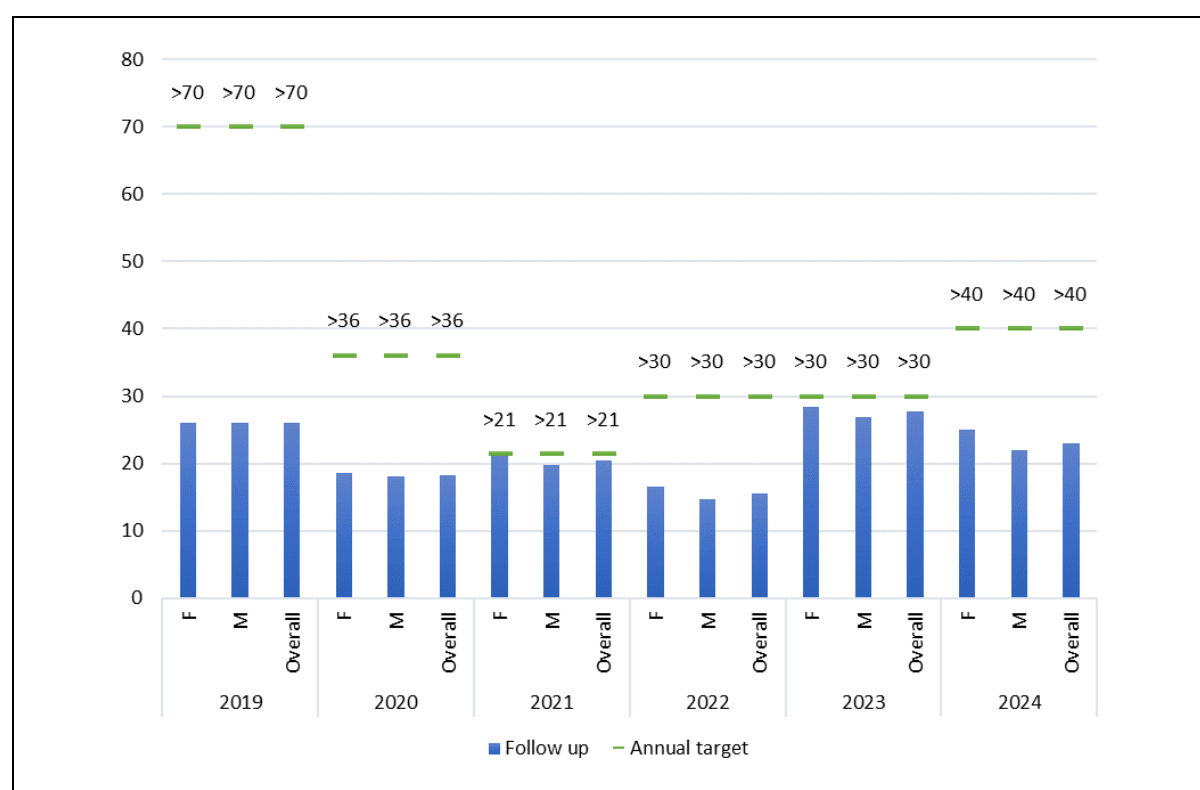
## **SO2. Targeted population groups across Yemen, including school-aged girls and boys, nutritionally vulnerable and at-risk groups, have access to basic services throughout the year**

### **SO2 Overall achievement**

**Summary Finding 9.** Although key informants among health staff noted the positive effect of blanket supplementary feeding to prevent malnutrition among targeted children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, this could not be confirmed based on the available outcome data. The potential effectiveness of the intervention was likely undermined by supply breaks, which disrupted the programme continuity, as well as the limited attention given to addressing households' capacities to provide improved diets to young children and pregnant women beyond the provision of food supplements. School feeding has had a positive influence on enrolment and retention, but significant barriers to school attendance persist.

122. The main indicator used to assess outcomes for prevention of malnutrition for children is the minimum acceptable diet (MAD). The targets for this indicator have changed each year and the achievements follow no discernible pattern, as can be seen in Figure 24. However, the highest minimum acceptable diet reached was 28 percent in 2023, which is a marginal improvement on the 26 percent of 2019. From 2020 onwards, girls are reported to have a slightly higher minimal acceptable diet than boys.

**Figure 24: Proportion of children 6-23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet, 2019-2024**



Source: i) ACRs 2019-2023; ii) CM-R010b, extracted on 18.02.2025 for 2024 data.

123. Noting the significant supply breaks, the data confirm that there has been no clear sustained improvement in the diets or nutrition of young children or pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls. There may have been temporary benefits when the programme was active. Key informant interviews in the IRG health sector believed that the programme helped prevent children becoming malnourished. However, key informant interviews also noted that, beyond the provision of food supplements, limited attention was given to addressing households' capacities to provide improved diets for their young children and pregnant women. Blanket supplementary feeding programmes (BSFPs) are usually designed for implementation alongside general food assistance, but data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions suggest that many BSFP recipients were from households not enrolled in general food assistance. Likewise, they were not benefiting from WFP livelihoods activities. Although the country office and Aden area office are considering how better to link nutrition beneficiaries and nutrition vulnerability criteria with general food assistance, these linkages have not been established in the programme to date.

124. The cash-based transfer-nutrition pilot study<sup>119</sup> reported that MDD-W increased from 16 to 74 percent over the course of the year in a context where the coping strategy index had worsened and there were improvements, though on a much more modest scale, in minimum acceptable diet for children aged 6-23 months. The data may not be reliable, particularly due to methodological differences in sampling between baseline and endline, but this initiative was deemed successful in improving IYCF practices and awareness.

125. Both indicators, MDD-W and minimum acceptable diet, are susceptible to seasonal fluctuations and are difficult to interpret without situating them with contextual information, especially when there is reliance on just one annual data point, rather than trend data. The addition of qualitative information would situate them within the evolving context to aid interpretation and ascertain programme contribution. For example, qualitative information can assist understanding the role of the specialized nutritious foods

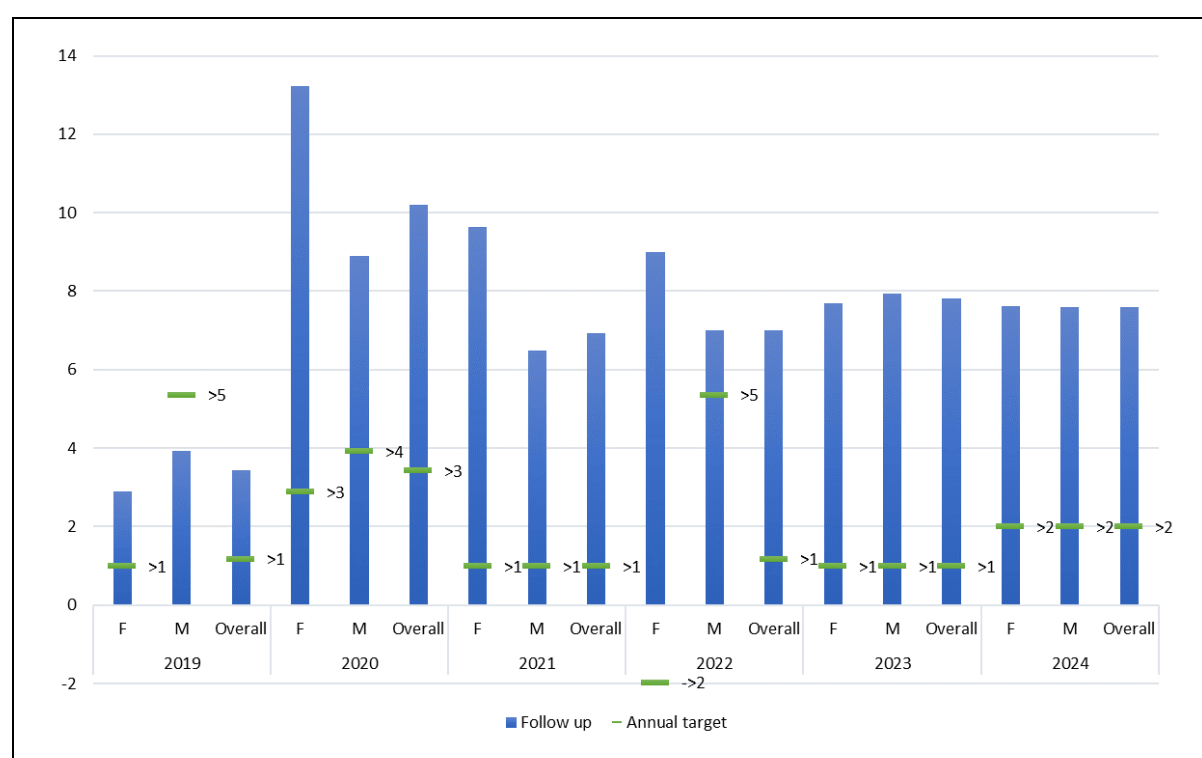
<sup>119</sup> Field Medical Foundation Endline Study Report, CBT, 'Cash-based transfer'. 30 March 2023.

provided by WFP, in the context of the locally accessible diet, and factors affecting feeding, eating and care practices at the time the indicator is measured.

126. An essential factor in sustainable prevention of undernutrition is addressing the key underlying determinants. Data from IPC and SMART surveys, related in key informant interviews, point to the role of contaminated water supplies, poor sanitation and low exclusive breastfeeding prevalence exacerbated by aggressive marketing of commercial milk formula as key determinants in Yemen. While nutrition messaging in the programme supported approaches to tackle some of these determinants, the prevention activities did not link strongly to activities specifically focused on addressing these critical factors.

127. For school feeding students, enrolment and retention targets were achieved throughout 2019-2024 except for boys in 2019 (see graphs below). Attendance targets were achieved all years except 2021 (for both boys and girls), likely due to COVID-19. Outcome data are not available per modality (date bars versus high-energy biscuits versus healthy meals). Various stakeholders reaffirmed the positive effect of the school feeding programme (SFP), notably the healthy school meals, on all three outcomes as well as on improved concentration.<sup>120</sup> These findings are in line with those of other emergency school feeding interventions.<sup>121</sup>

**Figure 25: Act 4 annual change in enrolment target - School feeding students, 2019-2024**

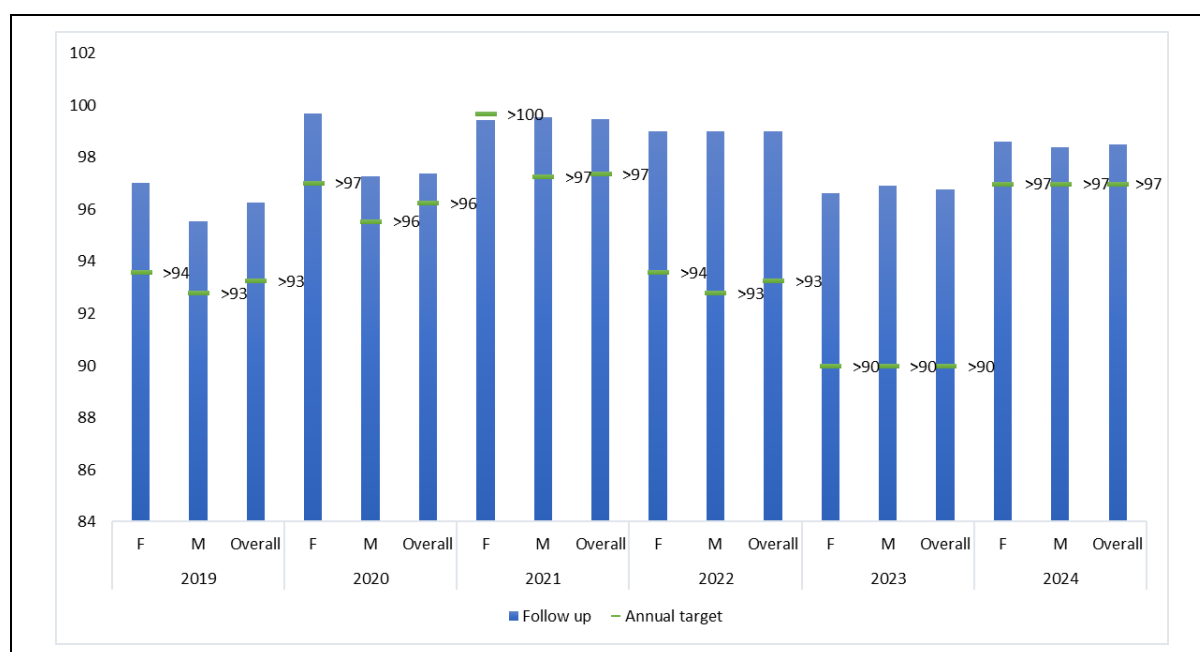


Source: i) ACRs 2019-2023; ii) CM-R010b, extracted on 18.02.2025 for 2024 data.

<sup>120</sup> Consultations with Ministry of Education, Al Makha authority, WFP SFP team.

<sup>121</sup> WFP. 2022. Synthesis of Evaluations. Evaluation Series on Emergency School Feeding in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, Niger and Syria (2015-2019).

**Figure 26: Act4 retention target - School feeding students, 2019-2024**



Source: i) ACRs 2019-2023; ii) CM-R010b extracted on 18.02.2025 for 2024 data.

128. Over 4.5 million children remain out of school in 2024, doubling since 2022<sup>122</sup> while the school feeding programme caseload dropped from its highest in 2022 at 2 million to 1.8 million in 2023.<sup>123</sup> This illustrates the increased gap between needs and assistance. No evidence is available on whether non-targeted school feeding programme districts lag with worse outcomes. Discussions with the regional bureau are taking place to support with building evidence on school feeding programme effectiveness.<sup>124</sup>

129. Regarding unintended outcomes, discussions with stakeholders (parents of in-school and out-of-school-children and teachers) suggest that the school feeding programme is insufficient to incentivize school enrolment. Poverty and the lack of cash assistance force families to withdraw their children as they cannot afford school fees, stationery, uniform or transportation expenses.<sup>125</sup> However, teachers in schools receiving Healthy Kitchen meals noted that the school feeding programme fosters equality among students, as all receive food, reducing conflicts that previously arose between children who brought food and those who did not.<sup>126</sup> They also reported that the school feeding programme protects girls from early marriage, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, and from conscription in military groups or child labour for boys.<sup>127</sup> However, this is based on anecdotal evidence, and no other data were available to confirm or inform this.

### SO2/Activity 3 Malnutrition prevention

**Summary Finding 10.** Numbers of children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls reached annually through prevention activities were near targets except for 2019 when targets were set much higher. In 2024, achievement rates dropped despite targets remaining at the same level as previous years, primarily due to reduced resources. However, supply chain and funding challenges meant that beneficiaries were not provided with consistent support in any year beyond 2019, with activities suspended for several months each year.

<sup>122</sup> Save the Children. 2024. Hanging in the Balance: Yemeni Children's Struggle for Education.

<sup>123</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2022 and 2023.

<sup>124</sup> KIIs with WFP school feeding team.

<sup>125</sup> Consultations with: i) mothers, teachers, and parents' committee members in Ta'iz; ii) CBT beneficiaries in Al Hamra camp and El Doubba community.

<sup>126</sup> Consultations with parents' committee and teachers in Aden.

<sup>127</sup> KIIs with WFP school feeding team.

130. This activity was health facility-based in 2019 but has increasingly aimed to engage communities to support children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls to prevent undernutrition (acute malnutrition and stunting), implemented by cooperating partners and community health volunteers. Through BSFP, WFP provides children aged 6–23 months with a monthly 1.5 kg ration of a medium-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplement that provides 281 kcal per day and essential micronutrients. Pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls receive a 3 kg ration of SuperCereal each month from the second trimester of pregnancy through six months of lactation.

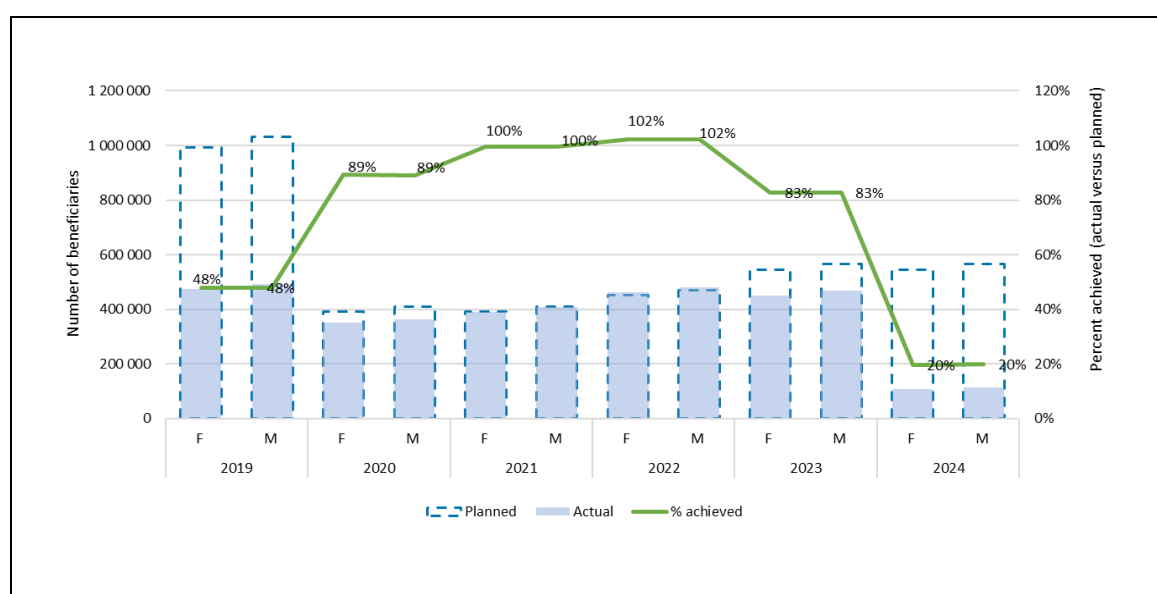
131. A complementary cash-based transfer-nutrition intervention, combined with social behaviour change and communication (SBCC) for the first 1,000 days was planned for the same target group but only attracted funding in 2022 for a pilot activity. The cash transfer was intended to increase households' access to fresh foods and support access to local health services. At the same time, the targeted beneficiaries received information on healthy dietary habits and adequate feeding, hygiene and health practices to expand their knowledge and improve their nutrition and health status.

132. In 2022, the country office engaged with the regional bureau in Cairo to conduct formative research for SBCC in Yemen and a more comprehensive SBCC strategy based on the findings is being developed. It is intended to improve context-specificity of nutrition messaging for various population groups and contexts within the country, as well as assist in expanding the individual-focused nutrition education and awareness provision to a more holistic family and community approach that facilitates behaviour change.

133. Funding was prioritized throughout the evaluation period of the treatment programme; funding allocated specifically to prevention activities is unclear in ICSP 2019–2022 due to the activities being combined under the same activity. Under the current ICSP, funding reached just 25 percent of needs-based plan in 2023 and 8 percent in 2024 (see Figure 21).

134. The highest numbers of beneficiaries were reached in 2019 (approximately 2 million under-2s and pregnant and lactating women and girls) and again in 2022 (1.8 million). Numbers reached fell short of the target in 2019 and 2023, but were achieved for children in 2021 and 2022, remaining below targets each year for pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls. In 2024, achievement rates dropped below 20 percent despite targets remaining at the same level as previous years, primarily due to reduced resources. However, these numbers conceal a more nuanced picture of a programme beset by supply breaks.

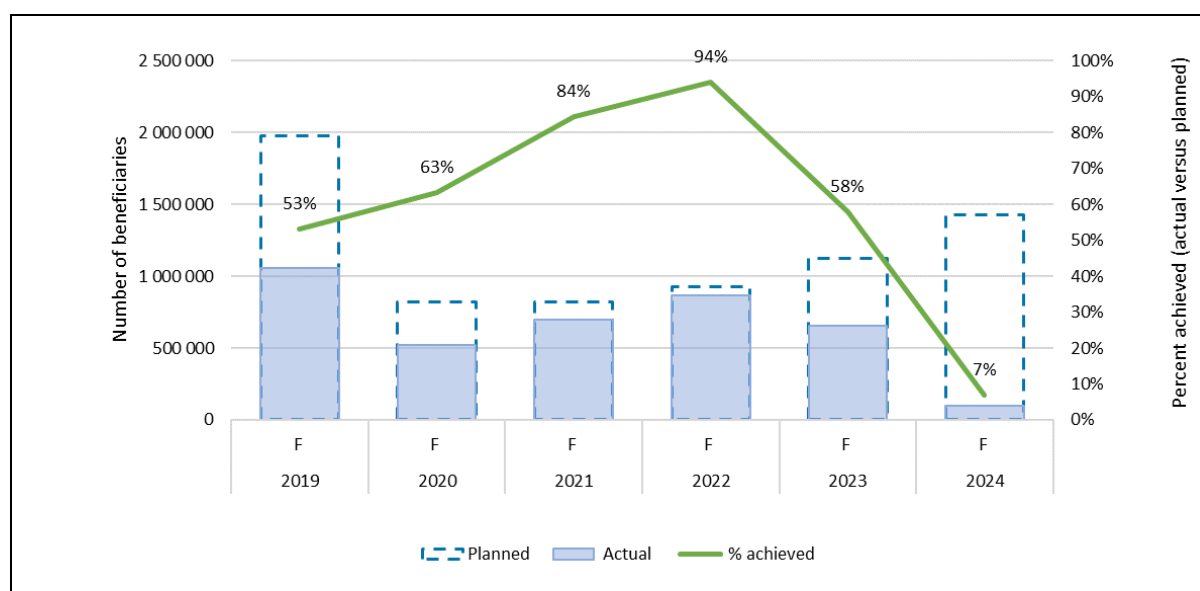
**Figure 27: SO2/Act3 planned versus actual children by sex, 2019–2024**



Source: i) ACRs 2019–2023; ii) CM-P003 for planned beneficiaries in 2024; iii) CM-R030 for actual beneficiaries in 2024 extracted on 18/02/2025.

Note: the prevention activity was part of Activity 2 in ICSP 2019–2022, and was moved to Activity 3 in ICSP 2023–2025.

**Figure 28: SO2/Act3 planned versus actual pregnant breastfeeding women and girls, 2019-2024**



Source: i) ACRs 2019-2023; ii) CM-P003 for planned beneficiaries in 2024; iii) CM-R030 for actual beneficiaries in 2024. Extracted on 18.02.2025.

Note: the prevention activity was under Activity 2 in ICSP 2019-2022, but was moved to Activity 3 in ICSP 2023-2025.

135. In 2019, BSFP was provided in 148 priority districts through 3,150 health centres<sup>128</sup> where UNICEF and WHO and other partners were also supporting an integrated health and nutrition package. In 2020, global supply chain challenges in the availability of commodities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, caused pipeline breaks. As a result, from August to December 2020, WFP prioritized available SuperCereal commodities for treatment, at the expense of the prevention programme, affecting approximately 790,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.<sup>129</sup> In 2021, based on the 2020 IPC, BSFP was scaled up to additional districts, reaching 179 districts with the highest malnutrition rates.<sup>130</sup> However, disruption to the global supply chain continued into February, affecting both children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls in the programme and resulting in expenditures falling below available resources. Prevention activities were gradually resumed in March 2021. In 2022, high numbers were again supported for prevention through 4,500 distribution points in 157 districts. However, from August, severe funding constraints and supplies shortages forced WFP to suspend the programme.<sup>131</sup> These data reveal that, despite WFP reaching the numbers targeted for enrolment in the programme, those children and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls did not receive the intended level of nutritional support.

136. The cash-based transfer-nutrition pilot intervention, implemented with European Commission Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) funding, demonstrated significant scaling-up of cash assistance for pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls in IRG-controlled areas. Despite initial challenges in covering both IRG and SBA areas, the pilot successfully extended from 2,180<sup>132</sup> to over 34,000 beneficiaries within one year, delivering cash transfers of USD 30 per month to improve dietary diversity and nutrition outcomes.<sup>133</sup> However, the intended integration with BSFP was limited due to the absence of BSFP at the start of the pilot and further suspension of BSFP services in most areas by mid-2023, except in a few locations supported by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).<sup>134</sup>

<sup>128</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2019.

<sup>129</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR and APP 2020.

<sup>130</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR and APP 2021.

<sup>131</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2021 and 2022.

<sup>132</sup> WFP. Yemen APP 2022.

<sup>133</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

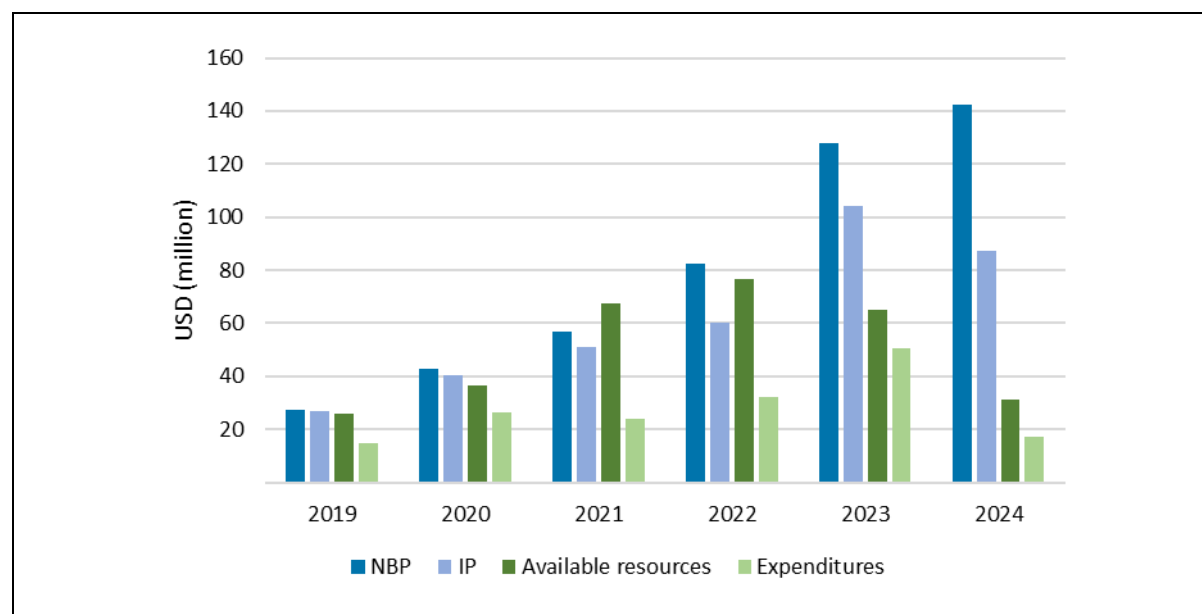


## SO2/Activity 4 School feeding

**Summary Finding 11.** Annual target numbers of school children were never achieved between 2019 and 2024, despite an increase in actual numbers benefiting from the school feeding programme between 2019 and 2022. Funding shortage is the main reason.

137. As shown in Figure 29, between 2019 and 2022, funding for the school feeding programme tripled, reaching over USD 76 million before declining in 2023 and 2024. While the funded portion of the needs-based plan budget reached 119 percent in 2021, available funding only met 22 percent of the needs-based plan in 2024.

**Figure 29: SO2/Act4 annual financial overview, 2019-2024**

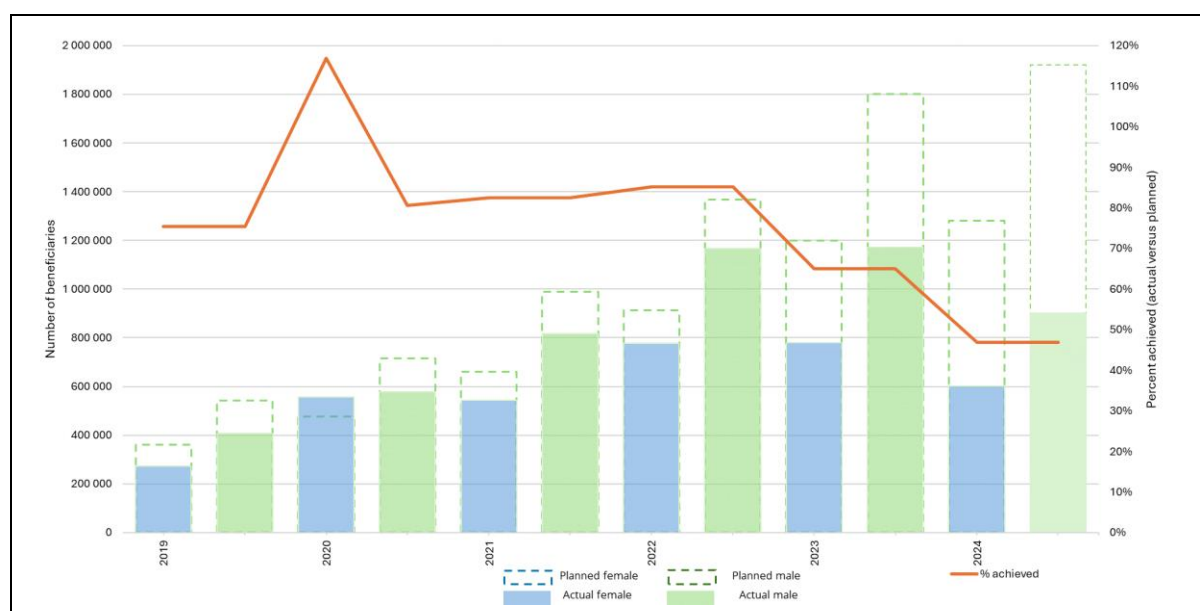


Source: WFP Yemen 2019-2023 ACR and WFP Yemen 2024 ACR5A, extracted 09.10.2024.

Note: for 2024 data: NBP, IP and available resources reflect the period up until 31.12.2024 while expenditures reflect the period up until 09.10.2024.

138. While the planned number of beneficiaries steadily increased from 2019 until 2023 reflecting increasing vulnerability, the target number of beneficiaries was never achieved (Figure 30). It reached its highest at 95 percent in 2020, likely due to the bulk distribution of take-home food rations during COVID-19. Its lowest was at 47 percent in 2024, impacted largely by funding shortfalls. It is worth noting, however, that between 2019 and 2023, WFP was able to increase the total number of beneficiaries reached, before it slightly declined again in 2024.

**Figure 30: SO2/Act4 school feeding planned versus actual beneficiaries (students), 2019-2024**



Sources: ACR data (2019-2022); ii) COMET Report CM-R015a (2023); iii) CM-P003 for planned beneficiaries in 2024; iv) CM-R030 for actual beneficiaries in 2024, extracted on 18.02.2025.

139. At the start of the programme, lack of knowledge about the nutritional value of the high-energy biscuits and date bars, as well as rumours and myths being spread through social media about them causing infertility were reported. Weak community-level communication by WFP to address these rumours and myths led schools to take the lead in countering the narrative.<sup>135</sup>

The school feeding programme is relevant to all students, many of whom leave home without breakfast. Stakeholders – parents, teachers, directors and local authorities – prefer healthy meals over date bars or high energy biscuits, for their nutritional balance, though further meal diversification is recommended.<sup>136</sup> Date bars were described as dry, making them hard to eat without liquids.<sup>137</sup> Consultations also revealed that students often share provided food at home, raising concerns about the school feeding programme's intended objective.

### **SO3. Food-insecure households and communities in targeted areas across Yemen, including those affected by climate shocks, benefit from more resilient livelihoods and food systems throughout the year**

#### **SO3 Overall achievement**

**Summary Finding 12.** WFP assistance has had limited effects on helping households move toward self-sufficiency or strengthening value chains. This was due to a lack of necessary resources to implement the required interventions, insufficient geographic prioritization and the absence of a coherent strategy. While WFP shifted its priorities under the current ICSP with a more pronounced emphasis on resilience, climate shocks adaptation and food systems, a well-developed area-based or localized food systems approach integrated with other WFP activities is still missing.

140. The previous ICSP (2019-2022) primarily focused on providing cash assistance to food-insecure households for rebuilding community assets, infrastructure and livelihoods. Under the current ICSP (2023-2025), WFP has started to put a stronger emphasis on livelihoods, resilience and food systems, aligning with a broader vision to support beneficiaries transition from general food assistance into sustainable

<sup>135</sup> Consultations with MoE, mothers, teachers and parents' committee members.

<sup>136</sup> Consultations with mothers, teachers, parents' committee members and Healthy Kitchen workers.

<sup>137</sup> Consultations with SFHRP and FGDs in schools.

livelihoods. Through its livelihood support, WFP aimed to promote gender-responsive asset creation and strengthen livelihoods, with the goal of building self-sufficiency and investing in value chains and food systems.<sup>138</sup>

141. Since 2019, the WFP livelihoods approach has shifted from community infrastructure projects prioritizing the immediate needs of communities (for example, rural roads, water harvesting schemes, schools and other essential assets) to a broader focus on resilience. By 2021, WFP began integrating agricultural interventions into its programming, implementing water harvesting and irrigation projects to boost agricultural productivity and food security. This marked a shift toward a more holistic approach, addressing rural food insecurity and resilience to environmental shocks.

142. From 2021 onward, WFP further expanded its focus to include resilience and disaster risk reduction. Initiatives such as solar-powered water pumps, flood protection embankments and grazing land management aimed to mitigate climate-related risks and strengthen community preparedness. By 2022, WFP adopted the “three-pronged approach” (3PA) to enhance local food systems and resilience systematically. This included asset-building projects under food assistance for assets, vocational training and small business support through food assistance for training, and targeted support for smallholder farmers to promote sustainable natural resource management. These activities prioritized sustainable water management, land reclamation and climate-sensitive solutions, reflecting WFP commitment to integrating immediate relief with long-term development goals.

143. While there is a noticeable evolution in the approach of WFP, on the ground, the emphasis remains on food assistance for assets or cash-for-work activities providing immediate relief to vulnerable households by temporarily improving their living conditions; however, they are inherently short-term and do not foster long-term economic self-reliance or sustainable livelihoods. Food assistance for assets typically involves engaging large numbers of workers at minimum compensation for brief periods, which does not generate sustainable livelihoods or open pathways to future longer-term opportunities. Furthermore, the nature of labour-intensive cash-for-work activities often restricts women's participation, limiting its inclusivity. Although some individuals engaged in livelihood projects may benefit from temporary financial support, there is limited evidence available on the effect of community-level infrastructure projects on the overall resilience of communities.

144. The evaluation team visited several community-level projects, which were well executed and selected by the communities. However, the connection of these projects to other interventions and their specific effects on community resilience or productivity was not always clear. Interviews with IRG central and local authorities revealed insufficient coordination to ensure alignment with a broader framework for economic or agricultural recovery.

145. Outcome data from 2024 indicated that 84.4 percent of the population in targeted communities benefited from an enhanced livelihood asset base,<sup>139</sup> showcasing the programme's effectiveness in contributing to building community assets and overall resilience. However, food security outcomes for beneficiary households deteriorated, possibly reflecting broader economic challenges in Yemen. The proportion of households with food consumption outcomes worsened, particularly among households headed by women, underscoring their vulnerability to shocks.<sup>140</sup> As shown in Figure 31, the acceptable food consumption score has consistently declined since 2020. This trend is also visible in the poor and borderline food consumption score data, which show an overall deterioration over the period under evaluation.<sup>141</sup>

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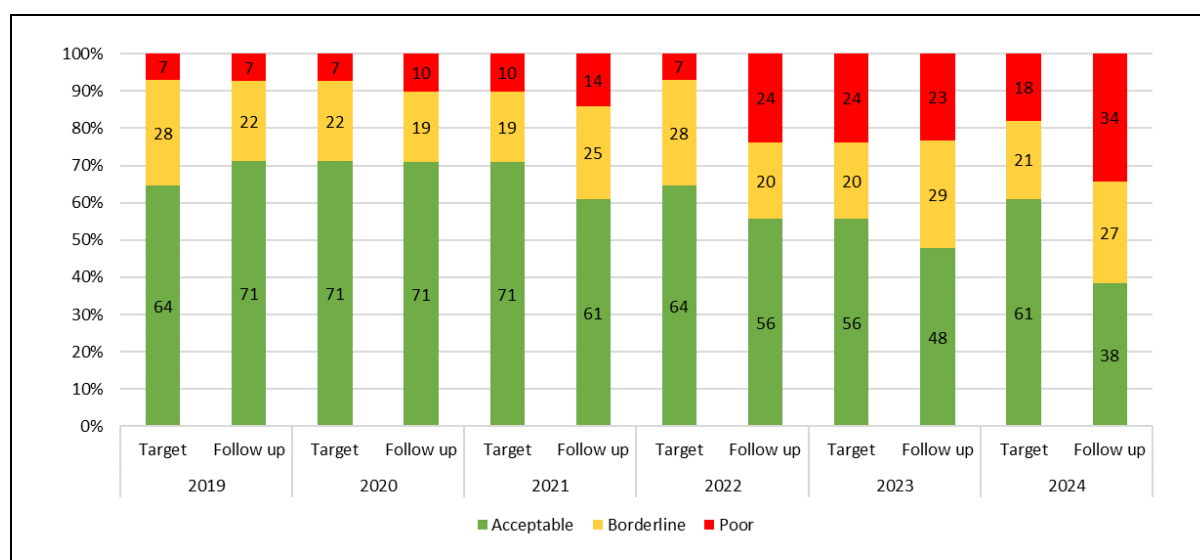
<sup>138</sup> WFP. ICSP 2023-2025, p. 14.

<sup>139</sup> CM-R010b, extracted 18.02.2025.

<sup>140</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2020, 2023.

<sup>141</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2019-2023.

**Figure 31: SO3/Act5 food consumption score (food assistance for assets modality), 2019-2024**



Source: i) ACRs 2019-2023; ii) CM-R010b, extracted on 18.02.2025 for 2024 data.

146. Beneficiaries interviewed by the evaluation team in Mukalla, Turbah and Al Makha had mixed views on the livelihood opportunities provided through the livelihood programmes. Overall, they appreciated skill development (food assistance for training) but expressed the need for additional support. Participants valued the essential skills gained but felt that additional support was necessary to utilize these opportunities fully. For example, they expressed the need for more resources to start their businesses after training and a longer duration for the training to ensure they reach the necessary skill level to start their own business. In Mukalla, participants consulted by evaluation team generally saw multi-year livelihood programmes as empowering, offering a chance for self-sufficiency, especially amid delayed and insufficient general food assistance. However, beneficiaries pointed out that the training options were limited and focused on traditional skills like sewing and embroidery. Younger women, particularly, desire modern, marketable skills that align better with their aspirations.

147. Beneficiaries transitioning from general food assistance to livelihood projects appreciated the opportunity but were dissatisfied with the low compensation and short-term nature of the interventions. They saw the work period as insufficient to develop the skills or income needed to move away from general food assistance. Beneficiaries also expressed concerns about the lack of clarity on what would happen after their engagement in the project ended, especially given their dependency on food assistance.

148. Overall, while livelihood interventions were valued for their potential to enhance self-reliance, beneficiaries highlighted the need for more comprehensive support, diverse training options and sustainable income opportunities to reduce dependency on food assistance. The feedback indicated that long-term dependence on food assistance makes people hesitant to transition to alternative livelihoods, especially if they are unsure whether these opportunities will provide a sustained minimum income.

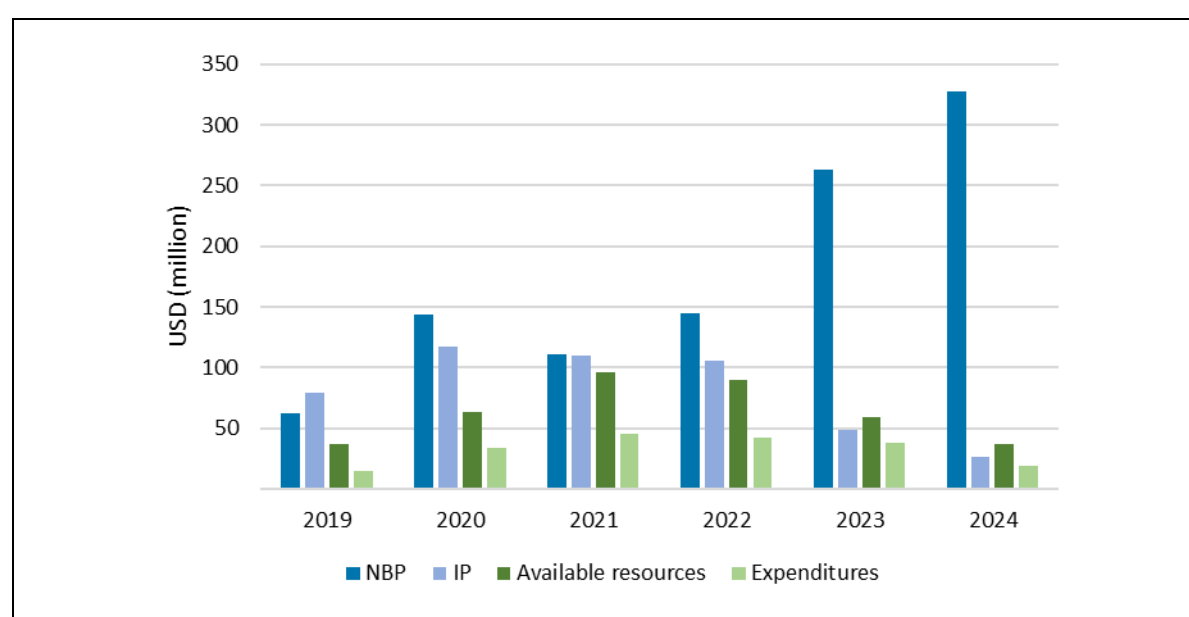
149. The evaluation team recognizes that only limited funding was available for resilience, and funding was not sufficiently forthcoming. However, donors felt that WFP had not maximized this funding to take initial steps toward a more tailored strategy to support resilience, including more sustainable livelihoods. Donors also observed that none of the United Nations agencies, including WFP, have been particularly effective in fostering resilience, noting that many programmes are often “resilience on paper” but essentially humanitarian practice.

### SO3/Activity 5 Early recovery and livelihoods

**Summary Finding 13.** Despite ambitious targets by WFP to expand support for sustainable livelihoods during the ICSP 2023-2024, severe funding constraints significantly hindered progress, with only 11 percent of the annual funding requirement secured in 2024.<sup>142</sup> As a result, less than 10 percent of the planned 2.5 million beneficiaries for 2024 were reached, reflecting a persistent gap between aspirations and resource availability.

150. During the ICSP 2023-2024, the needs-based plan was significantly increased to reflect the ambition of WFP to expand support for sustainable livelihoods. However, available resources fell far short of the needs-based plan targets and were lower than the funding levels in 2021 and 2022. The 2023 needs-based plan for Activity 5 was five times higher than in 2019, yet the actual resources remained at the same level as in 2019. Although there was an increase in resources in 2020 and 2021, this momentum was not sustained, with funding declining from 2022 onwards. Notably, actual expenditures on livelihoods were consistently lower than the resources available, primarily due to contributions being confirmed late in the calendar year, making them difficult to absorb before the start of the subsequent year.

**Figure 32: SO3/Act 5 financial overview, 2019-2024**



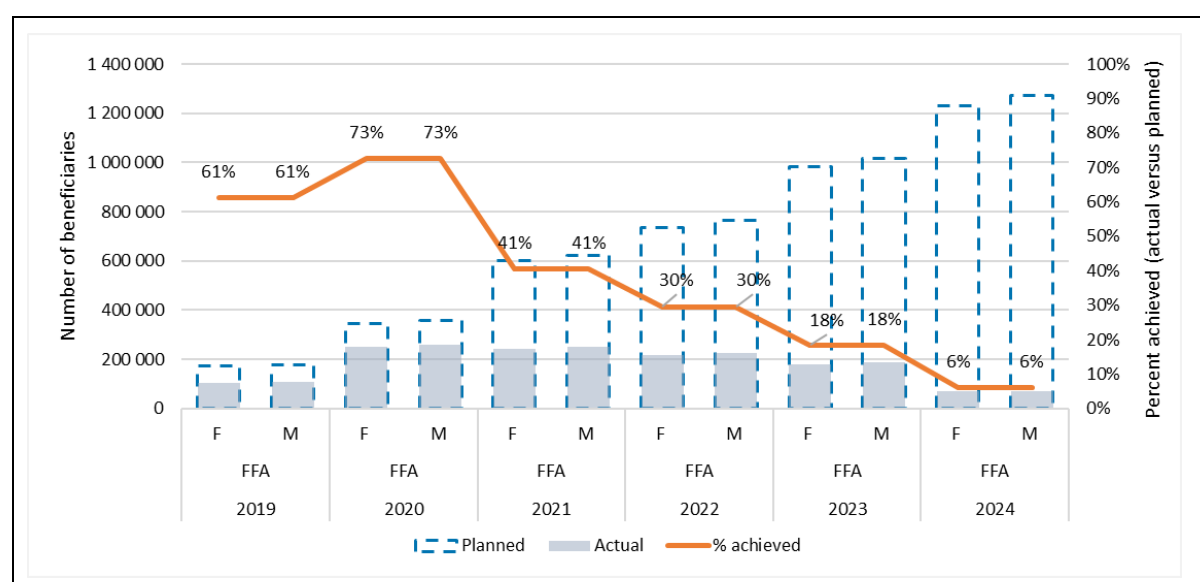
Source: WFP Yemen 2019-2023 ACRs. WFP Yemen 2024 ACR5A, extracted 09.10.2024.

Note: for 2024 data: NBP, IP and available resources reflect the period up until 31.12.2024 while expenditures reflect the period up until 09.10.2024.

151. WFP set ambitious targets to reach 2 million beneficiaries in 2023 and 2.5 million in 2024, a significant increase from the 350,000 planned beneficiaries in 2019. The highest number of actual beneficiaries reached was around 500,000 in 2020 and 2021. While acknowledging that the current ICSP was designed during a period of optimism, these figures raise questions about the realism of WFP planning. Throughout this period, WFP consistently aimed to achieve gender balance among both planned and actual beneficiaries. In 2023 and 2024, severe funding constraints affected the ability of WFP to fully meet its beneficiary targets. In 2023, only 23 percent and in 2024, 11 percent of the annual funding requirement was secured for the resilience and livelihoods activities, forcing a major reduction in the programme's planned coverage.

<sup>142</sup> WFP. ACR5 extracted on 09.10.2024.

**Figure 33: SO3/Act5 planned versus actual beneficiaries by gender, 2019-2024**



Sources: i) 2019-2023 ACRs; ii) CM-P003 for planned beneficiaries in 2024; iii) CM-R030 for actual beneficiaries in 2024, extracted on 18.02.2025.

152. The programme's initial scope covered three districts in three governorates but expanded to 39 districts across 11 governorates by year-end, marking a considerable geographic expansion. By 2021, it reached 108 districts in 18 governorates. Despite funding shortages, WFP expanded coverage to 131 districts in 20 governorates by 2023.

153. The steady geographic expansion, even in 2023, highlights WFP ambition to scale up livelihood support. However, funding constraints limited its capacity to meet beneficiary needs. While WFP succeeded in scaling up geographically, financial shortfalls impacted its goal of reaching 2.5 million beneficiaries, underscoring the need for stable funding. In both 2023 and 2024, less than 20 percent of the planned beneficiaries were reached.

#### **SO4. Humanitarian and development partners collaborate effectively to assist people in Yemen and to preserve critical services all year**

##### **SO4 Overall achievement**

**Summary Finding 14.** WFP was an important enabler for the collective humanitarian response by delivering United Nations-mandated common services, which helped strengthen inter-agency delivery platforms and coordination. Despite funding and operational constraints, United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), the logistics cluster and the emergency telecommunication cluster provided essential support, including air transport, logistics gap filling and communication services, though senior staff gaps impacted coordination. Additionally, the WFP bilateral service provision addressed key issues such as fuel shortages crucial for health services delivery, ensuring operational continuity for partner organizations.

154. During the evaluation period, inter-agency needs for common and on-demand services by WFP rose sharply due to limited availability of reliable and coordinated alternatives. Key informants deemed services under SO4 highly relevant.

155. **UNHAS operations:** The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) played a vital role in supporting humanitarian efforts, overcoming funding shortfalls and flight clearance challenges to transport over 13,000 passengers annually from 2020 to 2023<sup>143</sup> and facilitating cargo transport, medical and

<sup>143</sup> UNHAS annual reviews, 2020 to 2023. 2024 data were not available at the time of the report finalization.

emergency evacuations. In 2024, UNHAS downsized its fleet, significantly reducing costs.<sup>144</sup> Coordination with aviation authorities ensured flight safety despite limited operating windows, often restricted to two hours daily. The 2022 truce enabled Yemenia Airways' commercial flights from Sana'a to resume after six years, but WFP could not assess its safety due to lacking accreditations, limiting some organizations' reliance on the service.<sup>145</sup>

156. Despite funding challenges, with flight operations sometimes financed monthly,<sup>146</sup> services were successfully maintained.<sup>147</sup> The annual user survey showed an average satisfaction rate of 83.5 percent.

157. **Logistics cluster:** At its operational peak from 2018-2019 to 2022, the logistics cluster provided free "common services" to over 70 humanitarian organizations, including logistics gap needs analysis, warehousing, logistics information management and coordination. It also facilitated maritime transport via two WFP-chartered vessels between Djibouti, Aden and Hodeidah, as well as air transport support via UNHAS, and access to overland transport to 288 locations for cooperating partners and the inter-agency rapid response mechanism.<sup>148</sup>

158. The concept of operations for 2022 shifted the cluster's focus from facilitating common services to strengthening coordination and information management.<sup>149</sup> Despite reduced demand for services, requirement for logistics services coordination remained valuable for users.<sup>150</sup> For example, through the IMPACCT customs project with UNOCHA, the cluster partners' import processes were supported and customs sector capacity strengthening provided.<sup>151</sup> By late 2023, the cluster ceased free services as partners' capacity was generally regarded as sufficient. A key internal challenge faced by the cluster during the evaluation period was related to senior staff gaps that impacted coordination efforts and information management.

159. According to two user surveys conducted in 2021, 65 percent of participants noted that the logistics cluster added significant value to their operations during the crisis response.<sup>152</sup>

160. **Emergency telecommunication cluster (ETC):** The emergency telecommunications cluster was critical to the humanitarian community, delivering essential security telecommunications, power solutions and internet connectivity across five operational areas in Yemen (Sana'a, Sa'ada, Ibb, Aden and Hodeidah). Some support was also provided to the civil society, including universities.<sup>153</sup> Despite restrictions on importing and deploying telecommunications equipment and limited local information technology (IT) resources, the emergency telecommunications cluster ensured uninterrupted services using VSAT (satellite connectivity) systems to counter fibre-optic disruptions.<sup>154</sup> It provided vital support during COVID-19 and cholera outbreaks, establishing and maintaining public health hotlines in northern and southern Yemen. The cluster supported an average of 27 partners annually, with service availability varying by region.

161. Coordination activities were strengthened through over 200 monthly meetings, workshops and training sessions at emergency operations centres hubs.<sup>155</sup> User satisfaction remained consistently high during the evaluation period, reflecting the emergency telecommunications cluster's effective contributions to humanitarian operations in Yemen.<sup>156</sup>

162. **Bilateral service provision:** The WFP on-demand bilateral service provision (BSP) addressed fuel shortages critical to health, water and sanitation services. The bilateral service provision offered two key

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<sup>144</sup> Since 2022, the need for additional standby seating capacity (provided with the A320) reduced.

<sup>145</sup> Organizations that depend on airline industry accreditation for safe staff travel were not able to use Yemenia Airways.

<sup>146</sup> Based on key informant interviews.

<sup>147</sup> UNHAS annual reviews 2020 to 2023.

<sup>148</sup> The logistics cluster was a member of the inter-agency access working group.

<sup>149</sup> Logistics cluster Yemen. 2022. Concept of Operations.

<sup>150</sup> According to key informant interviews, the common storage mobile storage unit loan service was also well regarded by partners.

<sup>151</sup> UNOCHA, Presentation of the IMPACCT Project, Working Group on Customs and Humanitarian Relief.

<sup>152</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2021. Results from subsequent surveys were not available to the evaluation team.

<sup>153</sup> Key informants noted that the ETC also delivered projects under Services for Communities (S4C)

<sup>154</sup> Infrastructure damage, caused in 2024 by the bombing of a power station in north Yemen, underscored such risks.

<sup>155</sup> WFP. 2021. WFP Yemen BSP Factsheet.

<sup>156</sup> ETC Yemen, User Feedback Surveys.

interventions: the revolving fuel facility, importing duty-free fuel primarily to support WHO, UNICEF and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); and the small quantity fuel service (SQF) procuring fuel from the local market for partner operations.<sup>157</sup> Under the bilateral service provision, WFP also managed warehouses on behalf of partners and facilitated the transport of cargo (including personal protective and medical equipment and other non-food items) by sea and air. The EF Elena vessel charter was established, using Jeddah as a transit point to Hodeidah port, and this supported the sea and air transportation of non-food items from 2021 up to present day. Key informants highlighted the crucial role of WFP as provider of bilateral services during the conflict period and COVID-19 response, though cargo volumes declined from 2023 as inter-agency needs decreased.<sup>158</sup>

### **EQ 2.3. To what extent are conflict sensitivity, protection and accountability to affected people considerations mainstreamed into WFP response?**

#### **Gender and inclusion**

**Summary Finding 15.** Yemen is characterized by significant barriers undermining gender equality and constraining women's empowerment opportunities. Yet, the evaluation found that limited attention was given to gender and inclusion within WFP programme design and implementation. WFP overlooked opportunities for two-way capacity strengthening and learning with cooperating partners, leveraging local knowledge of local women-led organizations, as well as integrating robust approaches for women's socioeconomic advancement within WFP livelihood interventions.

163. WFP did not conduct a comprehensive gender analysis to inform the ICSP or current programming. A gender action plan, being drafted in 2024, outlines general steps toward gender-sensitive programming. The plan lacks specificity for Yemen's diverse contexts and does not fully leverage local knowledge. The country office recently initiated an integrated cross-cutting context analysis for resilience and livelihoods programming, but results were unavailable. The gender and age marker has been inconsistently applied, limiting learning on gender and inclusion.

164. WFP requests cooperating partners to integrate gender into their programming, allocating a small annual budget (USD 5,000).<sup>159</sup> In 2021, in IRG areas, some training was provided for WFP and selected cooperating partners on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), gender-based violence and gender in programming and vulnerability mapping.<sup>160</sup> However, national cooperating partners feel that they lack clarity on WFP expectations regarding the allocated gender budget line and on the WFP approach to gender integration. WFP has not sought out partnerships with women-led organizations in Yemen, despite their local knowledge of culturally sensitive and gender-responsive programming.

165. Engaging both men and women in community roles remains difficult, particularly in SBA areas due to *Mahram* (male guardian) requirements.<sup>161</sup> In nutrition programming, a challenge of ensuring adequate numbers of women staff at health facilities was reported by cooperating partners and local authorities, as a significant barrier to pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls accessing services. During general food distributions, separate queues are organized for women who are heads of households.

166. Food assistance for training, launched in 2023, aimed to target women who are heads of households to promote women's entrepreneurship, but reached slightly more men than women.<sup>162</sup> Beneficiaries appreciated the training, though some criticised its focus on traditional skills that reinforce gender roles, rather than modern, marketable skills that the younger women desired. This was a view reflected by some donors as well.

In 2019, WFP aimed for 20 percent women participation in food assistance for assets but achieved just 10

<sup>157</sup> BSP has worked to establish long-term local purchase agreements to diversify the fuel supply chain for the small quantity fuel service. BSP also facilitated the provision of aviation fuel for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the Special Envoy to Yemen, to ensure the continuity of humanitarian flights.

<sup>158</sup> WFP Yemen, Activity Factsheet – On Demand Services.

<sup>159</sup> Consultations with WFP staff.

<sup>160</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2022 and 2023.

<sup>161</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2019-2023.

<sup>162</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2022 and 2023.



percent, rising to 18.5 percent in 2020.<sup>163</sup> Low engagement was linked to social norms, infrastructure-focused activities and insufficient consultation with women. Cooperating partners also highlighted challenges in transitioning vulnerable beneficiaries – women, disabled and elderly individuals – from general food assistance to livelihoods due to resource and skill gaps.

167. The Healthy Kitchen project in Aden and Sana'a employs vulnerable women, providing income and skills in healthy diets and hygiene. WFP has attempted to disaggregate monitoring and programme data by sex but data accuracy is questionable, with men and women participation often reported as perfectly equal. There is little evidence that these data are used to adapt programming. Data on households where women make decisions on use of cash, food or vouchers show a peak in 2022 at 11 percent and then decrease in 2023 to just 8 percent for cash and 4.5 percent for food, with no evidence on adaptive responses. In 2024 this increased to 11.2 percent for cash and 6.4 percent for food.<sup>164</sup> WFP reporting lacks contextualization of these issues or adaptive responses to address them.<sup>165</sup>

168. Gender and inclusion remain under-resourced at WFP, with only one part-time international gender and protection officer; one gender officer and one protection consultant at the country office.<sup>166</sup> Beyond the country office, gender focal points take on additional duties, adding to their existing full-time job without additional remuneration or recognition in performance evaluations. Training for focal points is limited to online resources.

### Conflict sensitivity

**Summary Finding 16.** WFP has a strong understanding of the drivers of the conflict and through its network of area offices, field offices and cooperating partners has valuable insights into local dynamics. However, systematic conflict analysis has not yet been consistently conducted.

169. WFP has demonstrated a strong understanding of the conflict's drivers and complexities in Yemen, leveraging its extensive network of area offices, field offices, and cooperating partners to maintain a nuanced grasp of local dynamics. This network enables WFP to gather critical, on-the-ground insights into specific needs, challenges and security issues across different governorates. The WFP operational reach is further supported by strong monitoring of the evolving conflict and security situation, enabling it to navigate operational challenges and deliver assistance in areas with conflict risks. However, internal stakeholders noted that conflict analysis is not systematically conducted or fully consolidated to integrate the insights gathered through the WFP network.

170. While WFP strives to adapt to the different contexts in the north, south and various governorates, stakeholders identified the need for more tailored approaches to address geographic and contextual variations. Additionally, there is a lack of sufficient consideration of how events in SBA-controlled areas impact assistance in IRG-controlled areas. For example, the pause in food assistance in SBA-controlled areas significantly affected the delivery of assistance in IRG-controlled areas.

171. Data collected on instability, conflict and restrictions highlight the overall complex conflict situation in the country.<sup>167</sup> WFP aimed to deliver assistance through conflict-sensitive approaches by ensuring operational flexibility to safeguard personnel, assets and beneficiaries. This included modifying delivery routes and modalities to reach communities in need without increasing risks. However, key informant interviews with internal and external stakeholders highlighted that access constraints imposed by authorities such as the need for prior travel approvals, restrictions on direct data collection from communities and staff detentions in SBA areas, and the requirement for military escorts in IRG-controlled areas, undermine these efforts.

172. In Yemen, several stakeholders observed that targeting and aid distribution approaches often fail to fully account for local customs and cultural dynamics, particularly regarding the communal sharing of food aid. Given the scale of assistance and the need for prioritization, many interlocutors emphasized the

<sup>163</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2019 and 2020.

<sup>164</sup> CM-R009b extracted 18.02.2025.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> WFP country office organigram.

<sup>167</sup> ACLED. 2024. Yemen Situation Updates.

importance of reviewing and learning from other approaches to targeting and prioritization. They also highlighted the need to seek additional insights into local cultural and social norms to better align with community practices and enhance community acceptance.

## Protection

**Summary Finding 17.** WFP has implemented measures to ensure safe, dignified and accessible assistance for beneficiaries, though the *Mahram* (male guardian) requirement in the SBA areas raises concerns about potential limitations on women's access. While WFP has maintained data protection policies and ensured the confidentiality of beneficiary lists, sustained efforts are needed to further strengthen data protection measures and address emerging risks.

173. The WFP outcome indicators show almost consistently 100 percent of beneficiaries experiencing safety, dignity and unhindered access. For instance, in 2023, only 6 percent reported safety concerns. However, data on women's access in 2023 raise questions, as they indicate 100 percent safe and unhindered access despite the *Mahram* (male guardian) requirement, suggesting potential underreporting of challenges faced by women.<sup>168</sup>

174. WFP aimed to locate all final distribution points (FDPs) in locations accessible for vulnerable groups, including women, the elderly and persons with disabilities, with nine out of ten beneficiaries reporting travel times of less than one hour.<sup>169</sup> Focus group discussions with general food assistance and nutrition beneficiaries in IRG areas did not highlight any significant concerns regarding accessibility. The IAHE also found that WFP final distribution points were well-organized and provided a safe environment for beneficiaries.

175. In 2022, WFP strengthened its protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) efforts by finalizing standard operating procedures that integrate PSEA principles into its activities.<sup>170</sup> These procedures provide actionable guidance for responding to allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation against beneficiaries. Additionally, WFP established a PSEA network, assigning men and women PSEA focal points in all its offices in Yemen to facilitate reporting and follow-up. By the end of 2023, WFP had also conducted PSEA capacity assessments for all its cooperating partners, further embedding PSEA standards across its operations in Yemen. The community feedback mechanism (CFM) hotline also has a PSEA referral pathway (see also sections on accountability below).<sup>171</sup>

176. In line with the WFP Global Assurance Project,<sup>172</sup> the country office has further strengthened existing measures to protect the personal identifiable information of its beneficiaries. Cash-based transfer beneficiaries were registered in secure WFP information systems, enabling safe and reliable cash transfers while safeguarding personal data. Additionally, in 2023, WFP conducted privacy impact assessments for its general food assistance programmes in the IRG and SBA areas, ensuring that data handling practices aligned with privacy standards and addressed potential risks to beneficiary information security.<sup>173</sup>

177. While important efforts have been made, further expansion is needed to ensure that all agreements with cooperating partners, financial service providers and third-party monitors include specific clauses on beneficiary data protection, reinforcing WFP commitment to privacy across all partnerships. Conducting regular privacy impact assessments for activities processing sensitive personal data, would further support the country office in ensuring that protection and privacy risks are thoroughly assessed and effectively mitigated.

178. During its targeting and registration processes, WFP took all necessary steps to keep beneficiary lists private from authorities despite repeated requests. This approach is essential in a conflict-affected country, where protecting beneficiary information is critical. WFP demonstrated a solid commitment to data

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<sup>168</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

<sup>169</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2019.

<sup>170</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2022.

<sup>171</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

<sup>172</sup> WFP Global Assurance Framework. OED2024/004.

<sup>173</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

protection, maintaining strict confidentiality with authorities and other agencies.

179. Identity management goes beyond protecting beneficiary details to ensuring that the correct individuals receive the appropriate assistance. EQ2.1 (Coverage) addresses verifying that the right people are reached.

## Accountability to affected people

**Summary Finding 18.** Strengthening the community feedback mechanism has led to increased use of the hotline and more thorough follow-up on issues raised. However, direct community engagement and communication by WFP itself remain insufficient despite their critical importance, due in part to access constraints and operational challenges in many geographic areas.

180. Strengthening community feedback mechanisms and monitoring are priority areas for improvement under the WFP Global Assurance Project, and they were highlighted for enhancement in the IAHE 2022 recommendations and the WFP 2022 Yemen Internal Audit Report. The evaluation team found that WFP has made notable progress in improving the hotline as a key tool for community feedback. WFP has expanded the number of operators as well as implemented measures to improve the tracking and monitoring of calls made to the hotline and more effectively address beneficiary concerns, which primarily revolve around targeting, registration and the distribution process. A key improvement has been the integration of the community feedback unit within the research and monitoring unit, facilitating quick escalation to relevant units for follow-up and ensuring that beneficiary feedback informs programme adjustments. This integration has resulted in a higher number of complaints being addressed by cooperating partners or WFP directly.

181. Figure 34 shows a significant increase in the number of people reaching out with inquiries to the hotline since 2019, reaching 400,000 calls in 2024. This is the result of improved access to the community feedback mechanism but also of the food pause and the worsening food security situation, which triggered additional inquiries.

**Figure 34: Evolution in community feedback mechanism cases by number, priority, status and area office, 2019-2024**



Source: Yemen country office. In 2024, the country office changed its approach in reporting the number of cases logged. Only unique cases were counted, with follow-up calls updating existing cases instead of creating new ones. In 2024, the hotline received over 400,000 calls, including 169,000 unique cases and 239,000 follow-ups.

182. However, challenges remain. Focus group discussions revealed that many beneficiaries are still unaware of the hotline's existence. Monitoring and evaluation monthly and quarterly reports indicate that on average between 20 and 25 percent of callers are women. In one school visited by the evaluation team, nine mothers out of ten parents in a focus group discussion were unaware of the community feedback mechanism, while the man participant knew about the hotline number. This underscores the importance of making the community feedback mechanism more accessible to all demographics.

183. Furthermore, among beneficiaries – consulted during focus group discussions – who do use the hotline, some feel that operators are not always fully informed about programme implementation changes on the ground, particularly regarding distribution schedules for food or nutritional supplements. Addressing these issues is critical to further improving the community feedback mechanism's effectiveness and ensuring that beneficiary feedback is used to inform programme delivery.

184. While WFP has taken meaningful steps to enhance its community feedback mechanism, tools like hotlines and remote surveys cannot fully substitute for direct communication between WFP staff and beneficiaries. Direct contact still needs to be improved, where contextual conditions allow, highlighting the need for more robust, in-person engagement to better understand beneficiaries' concerns and perspectives.

185. Focus group discussions with beneficiaries of general food assistance and nutrition programmes revealed that they were not consistently consulted about the activities implemented in their communities. Some focus group discussions reported consultations regarding livelihoods activities, but satisfaction with and follow-up on these consultations appeared to depend largely on the cooperating partner. For example, feedback from communities was not always taken into account, such as their preferences for specific seeds and seedlings for agricultural activities.

186. The focus group discussions also underscored that communities can play an active role in preventing tensions around food distributions by offering their own solutions. However, this requires effective information sharing and two-way communication. Key informant interviews with WFP and cooperating partner stakeholders highlighted that community engagement often remains limited to information dissemination rather than meaningful involvement of communities in decision making processes.

187. While constraints in community engagement are more pronounced in SBA-controlled areas, the evaluation found that similar shortcomings were evident in the south, where direct access poses fewer challenges. This suggests a broader need to strengthen the approach by WFP to meaningful and contextualized community engagement across all regions.

#### **EQ 2.4 How well has WFP managed any challenges or trade-offs in adhering to the humanitarian principles and to which extent has it enabled or advocated for principled humanitarian access?**

**Summary Finding 19.** In Yemen's highly complex and restrictive operating environment, the operational independence of WFP has been threatened by a range of factors, including constraints imposed by authorities, access restrictions, staff detentions, bureaucratic impediments and geographic earmarking by donors. Despite those many challenges, WFP has demonstrated a commitment to upholding humanitarian principles and navigated external pressures and bureaucratic obstacles to maintain a principled response. However, the introduction of a food pause without adequate protections for the most vulnerable populations and the inability of WFP to resume food distributions due to funding shortfalls – during a period of regional turmoil – have negatively affected perceptions of WFP neutrality and independence in Yemen.

188. WFP operations have been shaped by bureaucratic obstacles, staff detentions and restrictive measures from SBA authorities and, to a lesser extent, from the IRG, as well as security risks and attempts by both authorities to influence the selection of geographic areas and households. Misinformation and gender-based discrimination create further challenges. Additionally, geographical preferences and conditions expressed by some donors have further constrained the operational independence of WFP, complicating efforts to prioritize assistance based solely on vulnerability assessments.

189. In order to safeguard its operational independence, WFP has taken clear steps to update beneficiary lists through negotiations with authorities in SBA and IRG areas. When progress stalled in SBA areas in late 2023, WFP, in consultation with key donors, suspended general food assistance in the north until conditions for vulnerability-based targeting and registration were met. WFP deemed this necessary, as reliance on outdated beneficiary lists compromised its ability to prioritize and reach the most vulnerable populations. However, the food pause in SBA areas potentially undermined the principle of humanity as stakeholders and beneficiaries expressed concerns that vulnerable populations were left unprotected and adopted negative coping strategies.

190. Upon completion of the pilot re-targeting and registration exercise in 2024, WFP provided assurance to its key donors that conditions were met for an impartial identification of the most vulnerable households. Yet funding was not forthcoming to allow WFP to resume general food assistance at scale across the whole country. This heightened negative perceptions among SBA authorities and communities regarding the operational independence of WFP and its neutrality of aid delivery in Yemen more broadly. The evaluation team recognizes that the continued use of outdated and unverified beneficiary lists, as highlighted in the IAHE, was unsustainable. Following unsuccessful negotiations, halting food assistance became the only remaining option. While clearer communication and targeted support for at-risk groups would have been ideal, WFP faced significant constraints, as the SBA did not authorize the necessary assessments to identify the most vulnerable. One potential alternative could have been to prioritize assistance for internally displaced persons, though this risked heightening tensions with local residents and may not have been approved by the SBA. These operational constraints highlight the difficult trade-offs WFP had to navigate. It is also important to note that targeted food assistance resumed in 2024, aiming to mitigate the impact of the pause on the most vulnerable populations. Consultations with external actors indicated that the food assistance pause could have been better coordinated and prepared in collaboration with the humanitarian country team.

191. Access remains a critical priority to ensure assistance reaches the most vulnerable populations, as highlighted in the IAHE. WFP has followed several strategies to secure access to those most in need, including in hard-to-reach or conflict-affected areas. This includes partnering with local cooperating partners and using third party monitors. However, support for access negotiations is not provided consistently, leaving cooperating partners to manage risks and conduct discussions with local authorities independently. Additionally, interviews with WFP staff and cooperating partners indicate that regular awareness training on humanitarian principles is lacking, with such training only referenced during onboarding. WFP has also actively engaged with authorities, local actors and stakeholders to navigate these barriers, but frequent changes in senior management have disrupted continuity and complicated efforts to maintain a principled response.

## **2.3. EQ3 How well has WFP worked in partnership both in the context of the humanitarian response and support to early recovery in Yemen?**

### **EQ 3.1 To what extent has WFP engaged in planning for the collective humanitarian and early recovery and development response?**

**Summary Finding 20.** WFP leadership and operational contributions are highly valued, but greater emphasis on inclusive coordination, strategic advocacy and alignment with resilience and recovery efforts is needed to enhance its role within the collective humanitarian and development response.

192. Overall, key informant interviews with external stakeholders highlighted that WFP is widely regarded as a strong and constructive member of the humanitarian country team, with a leading role in coordinating the response through several clusters. However, interviews and e-survey results indicated room for improvement in collaboration with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. Most respondents indicated that WFP collaborates with these partners only to some extent or a limited extent, particularly in designing its country strategic plan and programme interventions. Despite these concerns, the operational capacity of WFP and its technical expertise, especially in food security, nutrition, and school feeding, were highly valued by partner agencies.

193. WFP was particularly recognized for its leadership role in the FSAC, alongside United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and for its significant contributions to the annual humanitarian needs overview and humanitarian response plan. WFP was key in conducting the people in need analysis in SBA areas and the IPC food security analysis in IRG areas, informing the 2025 humanitarian response plan.<sup>174</sup> Ongoing WFP efforts to improve targeting were recognized by humanitarian country team members, enabling more focused assistance on the most vulnerable populations.

194. In the area of early recovery and development planning, consultations revealed a lack of strategic direction within the UNCT. Both interviews and the IAHE pointed to fragmented development efforts, with no structured plan to integrate early recovery or sustainable solutions into the humanitarian response. There has been a lack of coherence across approaches, with recovery and resilience planning remaining uncoordinated. While there is broad recognition among United Nations agencies of the need to move beyond a purely humanitarian approach and implement humanitarian interventions alongside localized recovery efforts, the resources available to the development actors present in Yemen remain insufficient, primarily due to limited donor interest in funding resilience and development interventions in Yemen.

195. United Nations agencies acknowledged the added value of WFP in supporting recovery and resilience, but stressed the need for stronger coordination and a clear resilience strategy from WFP. However, WFP is perceived as being entrenched in life-saving work and lacking a defined resilience framework (see EQ 1.3). United Nations agencies emphasized the importance of WFP leveraging its in-country knowledge and data to contribute meaningfully to the development of the next UNSDCF, which is expected to lay a stronger foundation for a nexus approach in Yemen. Effective engagement in this process could strengthen the role of WFP in promoting longer-term recovery and resilience efforts in Yemen.

196. The majority of external stakeholders consulted indicated that the planning of the WFP food pause could have been better communicated and coordinated. This lack of collaboration amplified the adverse impact on affected communities and increased their reliance on other organizations. Given that the food security sector represents a large portion of the humanitarian response plan and that the bulk of funding directed toward food security goes to WFP, the general food assistance pause created a ripple effect across the entire humanitarian response, affecting other programmes and partners. Stakeholders noted that WFP treated the food pause as a programmatic decision specific to its operations, rather than situating it within the broader collective humanitarian effort. A more inclusive and collaborative approach to planning and coordination was needed to mitigate the impact on other actors and beneficiaries.

### **EQ 3.2 To what extent has WFP worked in strategic and operational partnerships in Yemen, and to what extent have any such partnerships helped maximize programme results?**

**Summary Finding 21.** WFP demonstrated good collaboration across sectors through partnerships with United Nations agencies and cooperating partners. Key achievements included enhanced targeting in general food assistance and coordinated malnutrition care with UNICEF, WHO and MoPHP. However, challenges, such as limited information sharing and a lack of true joint programming in multi-partner efforts, were identified, impacting overall effectiveness.

197. WFP closely coordinated the implementation of general food assistance with FSAC. Feedback indicated that the co-leadership of WFP improved evidence-based targeting, ensuring assistance reached the most vulnerable geographic areas. However, some cluster agencies suggested that WFP could enhance information sharing to avoid duplication of assistance. WFP initiated collaboration with UNICEF, UNHCR and UNOCHA in Yemen to harmonize cash assistance programmes.<sup>175</sup>

198. On nutrition, WFP collaborated with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the MoPHP, United Nations partners and other stakeholders to develop the 2020-2023 Yemen Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan (MSNAP).<sup>176</sup> However, WFP support to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in Yemen since then has been inconsistent and it has played a limited role in development of the new MSNAP

<sup>174</sup> Yemen. FSAC. The 2025 Yemen FSAC PiN and Severity Classification. Endorsed in November 2024.

<sup>175</sup> UN Yemen. UNSDCF. 2022-2024.

<sup>176</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2019.



2025-2030. WFP partnered with MoPHP in IRG and SBA areas, and 17 international and national non-governmental organizations to deliver nutrition interventions, including community-based outreach activities, delivered in collaboration with UNICEF. WFP participated actively in the nutrition cluster, the SMART technical committee group, the strategic advisory group, the C-MAM working group and the IYCF technical group.<sup>177</sup>

199. The evaluation highlights the effective collaboration between WFP, UNICEF, WHO and MoPHP in delivering a continuum of care for acute malnutrition. This level of coordination is rarely achieved in other countries and serves as an exemplary model. The collaboration ensures technical alignment across the agencies, although operational approaches differ. For example, WFP and UNICEF employ separate methods for paying incentives to health facilities and use distinct supply chains for their interventions.

200. Partnerships with the MoPHP have fostered ownership by local authorities and strengthened the integration of moderate acute malnutrition treatment into primary healthcare systems. This joint approach also enables more effective strategizing to support the most vulnerable populations as targeting and response to deterioration or improvement in the nutritional situation are actively discussed within the nutrition cluster.

201. Under SO2, Activity 3, BSFP was initially implemented through health facilities before shifting to a network of community health volunteers, supported by health authorities under the umbrella of the MoPHP. However, the potential for sustainability of the community-based cash-based transfer-nutrition pilot and BSFP through community platforms remains unclear, particularly in light of funding constraints.

202. Under SO2, Activity 4, WFP implements school feeding in partnership with the Ministry of Education in IRG areas and with the School Feeding and Humanitarian Relief Project (SFHRP) in SBA areas on behalf of the Sana'a-based Ministry of Education. However, there is limited ownership and engagement from other education partners, such as those involved in the education cluster, reducing the broader strategic alignment of the programme. The Restoring Education and Learning Project, implemented since 2021, demonstrates a multi-year collaboration across WFP, UNICEF, and Save the Children, providing complementary support to schoolchildren, schools and teachers. Within this partnership, WFP delivers school feeding, UNICEF manages school rehabilitation, teacher incentives and supplies, while Save the Children focuses on teacher training and educational materials. The project highlights the importance of predictable, multi-year funding. Contributions from the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education enabled WFP to sustain school feeding in targeted schools, even amid broader funding shortages. This approach underscores the value of integrated and well-funded partnerships in supporting education and nutrition.

203. On resilience, WFP, in selected districts, implemented food assistance for assets as part of a joint inter-agency programme (Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY) I, II, III),<sup>178</sup> which was implemented with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO, and International Labour Organization (ILO) and funded by the European Union (EU). The joint programme provided a comprehensive package of assistance to targeted communities based on the comparative advantage of each agency. The objective was to support beneficiaries with a series of interventions to achieve sustainable food security.<sup>179</sup> Other multi-partner projects included the Food Security Response and Resilience Project (FSRRP) with the World Bank covering the period 2021-2025 and Joint Actions for Food Security and Nutrition in Yemen, with UNICEF and FAO, funded by the European Union covering the period 2021-2024. Feedback from donors indicates that these multi-year, multi-partner programmes did not achieve true joint programming. Instead, different agencies implemented separate interventions on the ground, undermining overall effectiveness and lacking a long-term vision.

204. WFP has been widely recognized by stakeholders for its leadership in the logistics cluster and its critical support to partners. One frequently cited example is the bilateral service provision for fuel, which has been essential in enabling UNICEF and WHO to deliver water, sanitation and hygiene support to health

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<sup>177</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

<sup>178</sup> ERRY I (2016-2018); ERRY II (2019-2021); ERRY III (2022-2025) funded by the European Union and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

<sup>179</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2019.

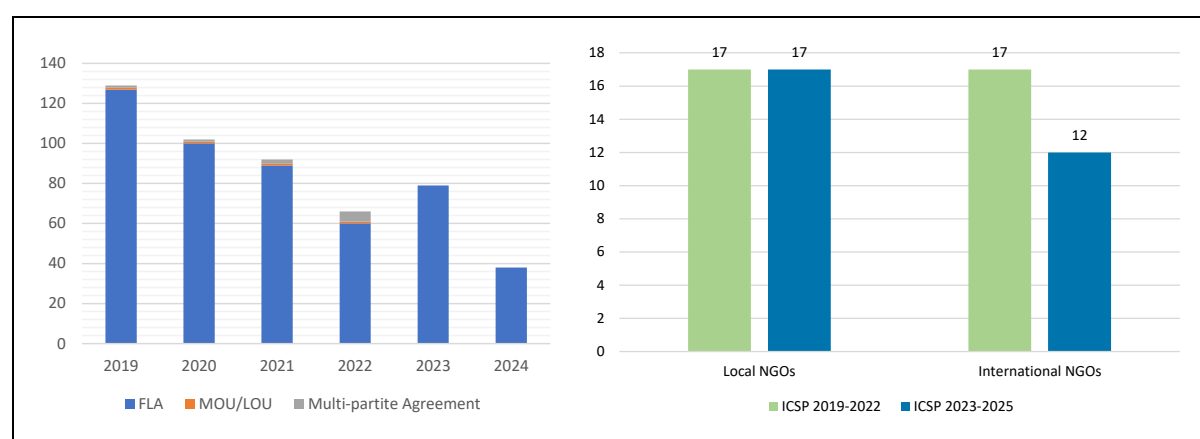
centres across all governorates. Additionally, the WFP small-quantity fuel provision mechanism has been instrumental in supporting the operations of non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, ensuring continuity of essential services in challenging circumstances. However, a lack of transparency regarding costs was frequently highlighted as an area needing improvement.

### EQ 3.3 To what extent has WFP engaged with local and national responders, and strengthened their capacity?

**Summary Finding 22.** WFP has engaged with local and national responders in Yemen and made efforts to strengthen their capacity, particularly in programme implementation areas. However, there are critical gaps in institutional development, financial support mechanisms, duty of care arrangements and longer-term planning. These challenges hinder the ability of local responders to operate effectively and sustainably.

205. WFP collaborates with various entities, including local and international non-governmental organizations, authorities, private sector actors, and United Nations agencies. Figure 35 shows an overall reduction in field-level agreements (FLAs), reflecting both a more focused approach and reduced funding and scale of WFP operations. In 2019, 127 field-level agreements were signed. This number has steadily declined over the years, with 79 signed in 2023 and further reduced to 38 in 2024. A comparison of field level agreements from 2019 till 2024 demonstrates increasing WFP prioritization of agreements with local non-governmental organizations over international non-governmental organizations. The number of memorandums of understanding (MoU) and multi-partite agreements (MPAs) signed with authorities and United Nations entities declined in 2023 and 2024. While acknowledging the importance of localization, WFP also highlighted some associated risks in a context such as Yemen with local partners being disproportionately exposed to pressure and interferences.

**Figure 35: Evolution in the number of cooperating partners by type and Interim Country Strategic Plan, 2019-2024**



Source: CM-S010 Partnership info, as of November 2024.

206. During meetings with cooperating partners at the local technical level in the IRG areas, WFP was recognized in Mukalla, Aden and Lahj for its flexibility in adapting approaches and treating cooperating partners as partners especially in the nutrition and school feeding sectors. This positive relationship was found to foster engagement and collaboration at the local level. However, this view was not consistently shared across all sectors and geographic areas. In focus group discussions with cooperating partner representatives from the main offices in Aden and Sana'a and through the e-survey, many cooperating partners expressed that WFP often treats them more as implementing agencies rather than strategic partners. Cooperating partners noted this is particularly evident during the planning and design phases, where there is significant room to strengthen their involvement and ensure their perspectives and expertise are incorporated. This feedback was further supported by the e-survey results.

207. Despite progress and positive feedback, consultations with cooperating partners and document



reviews highlighted several challenges that continue to hinder the effectiveness of WFP partnerships with local actors and are aligned with the findings from the WFP Synthesis Evaluation on Cooperating Partners.

<sup>180</sup> These include: cooperating partners' institutional capacity; follow-up and information-sharing mechanisms on security issues; staff retention and training; limited funding for monitoring by cooperating partners; funding cuts; and field-level agreement duration.

208. Collaboration with government actors primarily occurred in the nutrition and school feeding sectors, while WFP partnered with local and international non-governmental organizations for general feeding assistance and food assistance for assets activities.<sup>181</sup> For nutrition, the WFP treatment programme provided technical assistance and training in IRG and SBA areas to MoPHP health workers in the management of acute malnutrition, and community health volunteers, responsible for screening for moderate acute malnutrition and delivering nutrition awareness and IYCF messages in health facilities and final distribution points.

209. School feeding activities have been implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the south and the School Feeding and Humanitarian Relief Project (SFHRP) in SBA areas. The Healthy Kitchens project has been carried out by cooperating partners in collaboration with local education authorities. WFP has supported capacity strengthening but mainly at the technical level considering United Nations system-wide limitations for investing in broader country strengthening initiatives with de-facto authorities. For example, WFP in collaboration with UNICEF and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has also supported IRG and SBA ministries of education by developing the Education Management Information System to align with the Government's Transitional Education Plan. WFP has also provided technical capacity development and training to the IRG Ministry of Education's school feeding programme executive unit and to SFHRP in northern areas to improve monitoring and reporting. Further strengthening capabilities of IRG and SBA authorities is essential for fostering ownership and scaling up the school feeding programme into a national programme.

210. For supply chain, key informant interviews revealed that WFP undertook capacity strengthening activities for local partners – principally staff training;<sup>182</sup> some equipment was provided to food testing labs, ports, airports and customs authorities. Additional support and advice on business management, such as rate and tariff calculations, were offered to transport cooperatives. However, opportunities to develop national supply chain management capacity in a more holistic way were limited due to the operational context.

## 2.4. EQ4: What factors have influenced the efficiency and performance of WFP?

### EQ 4.1 To what extent have WFP activities and outputs been delivered within their intended timeframes while taking into account cost efficiency considerations?

**Summary Finding 23.** The overall timeliness of WFP operations throughout the period under evaluation has been significantly affected by delays caused by an uncertain funding environment, procurement challenges, bureaucratic hurdles and insecurity. Nonetheless, WFP was able to adapt its supply chain to the prevailing complex context, and WFP internal advance financing mechanisms were successfully used to partly mitigate procurement delays.

211. WFP Yemen supply chain (including procurement) faced unprecedented challenges posed by the sheer volume of food assistance required, security risks, access constraints, local bureaucracy and overlapping crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, a cholera outbreak and the country's north-south division. Supply chain risk assessments were supported through risk-based oversight plans implemented across functional units by the Office of Risk and Compliance in Sana'a. Due to the shifting and often

<sup>180</sup> WFP 2024 Synthesis of evidence and lessons on WFP's cooperating partners from centralized and decentralized evaluations.

<sup>181</sup> Cooperating partners Lists 2020-2024, country office Yemen.

<sup>182</sup> ACRs, logistics cluster and BSP reports.

unpredictable ports of discharge for international food shipments, the country office required additional support from the WFP global supply chain team, with adjustments needed to the logistics concept of operations to recognize both global and national requirements. Despite these complexities, during the evaluation period, over 5 million metric tons of food were delivered<sup>183</sup> through over 10,000 cooperating partners-supported final distribution points. Strong relationships with authorities in supply chain, port operations and checkpoints access were critical to operational success.

212. Predictable donor funding remained a major challenge for WFP timeliness in Yemen. The uncertain funding environment, including the late arrival of some donor contributions (see Figure 43 on grant duration under EQ4.2), have hindered the timely purchase of commodities for nutrition and school feeding, particularly since 2022. Funding shortages have led to the temporary suspension of nutrition and resilience activities in 2022. The late arrival of funding explains lower expenditures in some reporting years, as late incoming resources were carried over to the following years. This was particularly the case for school feeding and resilience.<sup>184</sup> Donors' extensive earmarking of their contributions limited the ability of WFP to optimize the use of funds for commodity procurement (see also EQ4.2).

213. The negative effects of uncertain and late funding were further exacerbated by long commodity procurement lead-times, procurement challenges due to currency fluctuations, and import and customs challenges. Key informant interviews noted that for large-scale food commodity delivery, Yemen could only be accessed by sea. In the first years of the period under review, the COVID-19 pandemic further impacted the import of commodities due to restrictions on international shipments and limited transport options<sup>185</sup> (see also EQ2.2).

214. Under general food assistance, a commodity voucher trader network (CV-TN) programme was initiated in 2016, which augmented the country office's capacity through large food importers that guaranteed uninterrupted food supply.<sup>186</sup> Beneficiaries could collect food rations from retailers in exchange for vouchers. The aim was to assist over 2.8 million beneficiaries in 56 districts in 11 governorates. Although the initiative initially was adaptable to needs, it was phased out in 2022 due to unforeseen market volatility (and supplier monopoly) that had emerged. In 2022, rising food and fuel prices combined with inflation<sup>187</sup> significantly increased the cost of general food assistance. As such, funding availability was insufficient to meet requirements, forcing WFP to reduce food rations and extend distribution cycles.<sup>188</sup>

215. In addition to funding constraints, timeliness of WFP activities was hindered by structural challenges due to the fragile context, security situation and stringent administrative procedures including extensive delays in field-level clearances causing unpredictable disruptions in operations, both in SBA and IRG areas.<sup>189</sup> Operational disruptions were frequently caused by food quality inspection delays, rejections<sup>190</sup> and local bureaucracy.

216. Nutrition interventions have been particularly affected by pipeline breaks resulting from a combination of the above-mentioned challenges: insufficient and late funding delayed purchase of specialized nutritious food products coming from international markets. Specialized nutritious food imports and distributions were delayed as local authorities required WFP and UNICEF to establish a cold chain through refrigerated trucks. Additionally, quality issues with specialized nutritious food caused further import challenges, including problems with packaging, insect damage and leaking shipping containers. In one case an entire shipment was recalled, leading the country office to minimize reliance on the Global

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<sup>183</sup> Food Purchase Order Item dataset, DOTS, accessed 15.10.2024.

<sup>184</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2022 and 2023.

<sup>185</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2020.

<sup>186</sup> WFP. June 2017. Press Release: World Food Programme Commodity Vouchers through Traders' Network.

<sup>187</sup> Between 2019 and 2024, the annual rate of change in Consumer Price Index (CPI) constantly increased from 15.4 percent in 2019 to 29.1 percent in 2024. Source: <https://www.focus-economics.com/country-indicator/yemen/inflation/>.

<sup>188</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2022.

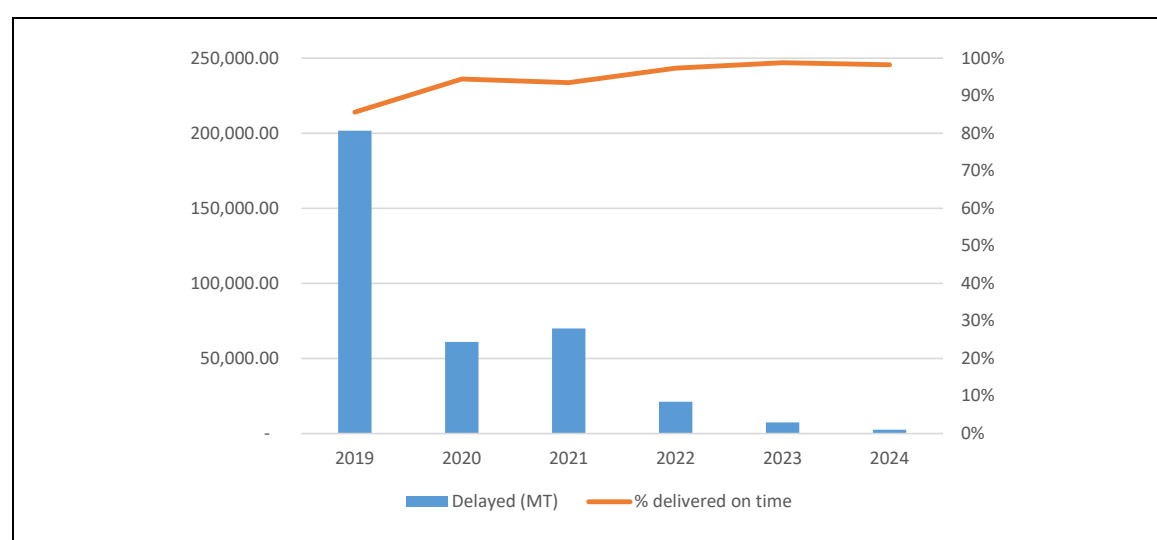
<sup>189</sup> For example, with delays in the import of equipment and the granting of operational clearances. (ACRs and KIIs).

<sup>190</sup> Food inspections occurred at vessel discharge ports both prior to unloading and at storage silos and mills. Based on KIIs, there were occasions when an entire shipment would be rejected for no clear reason, with the vessel having to be diverted; one GCMF food shipment destined for north Yemen was rejected as product packages were incorrectly branded.

Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) and favour procurement directly from lipid-based nutrition supplement (LNS) providers.<sup>191</sup> Furthermore, the implementation of nutrition activities was also hindered by the weak national health system, including infrastructure damage, lack of staff, poor coordination and irregular reporting.<sup>192</sup> According to key informants, many health facilities across the country had limited or no supplies to implement the programme. Significant pipeline breaks occurred in particular in 2024.

217. The supply chain team adapted to some of these challenges by strengthening their food quality and safety capability through hiring senior food safety and quality experts, and putting in place mechanisms to address transporter underperformance<sup>193</sup> and labour-related challenges with the transport unions in north and south Yemen. According to key informant interviews, the relationship with the transport unions was good with WFP providing support and advice for rate and tariff calculations. Aggregated data extracted from the holistic tracking system (HTS) shows a positive trend in the reduction of food delivery lead-time (see Figure 36). According to the annual country report 2019, WFP reduced local food procurement lead-times by signing non-committal food supply agreements with local suppliers under the CV-TN programme, improving the availability of commodities.

**Figure 36: Aggregated data on delays in delivery (mt) after 15 days of dispatch, 2019-2024**



Source: Consolidated Food Transport Report in DOTS, aggregated data by year and governorate. Data shared by the country office in January 2025.

218. With two operational zones (north and south), and no direct logistical connections between the two, supply chain management adjustments had to be made “upstream”. Two separate shipping supply chains were used, one for northern Yemen to the ports of Hodeidah and Saleef (used as a backup port), and one for the south to the port of Aden. As a contingency, a supply chain hub was established at the port of Salalah, Oman, but this facility was used only on a limited basis. With the recent escalation of hostilities, WFP has prepared contingency plans to maintain alternative entry points for humanitarian goods should Al Hodeidah port become inoperable. The in-country supply chain relied on large-scale bulk storage and milling operations for wheat grain imported at Hodeidah and Aden ports, which enabled the downstream supply chain to be adapted to the availability of transport and any access constraints. Ongoing milling and silo contracts were essential in supporting operations to scale up during the emergency and generally performed well throughout the evaluation period. According to key informant interviews, advance customs clearance of commodities was possible through good relationships with clearing and forwarding agents. When Hodeidah port was closed during the conflict, there were diversions to Aden with backup measures

<sup>191</sup> ACRs, consultations with WFP nutrition, supply chain and GCMF teams.

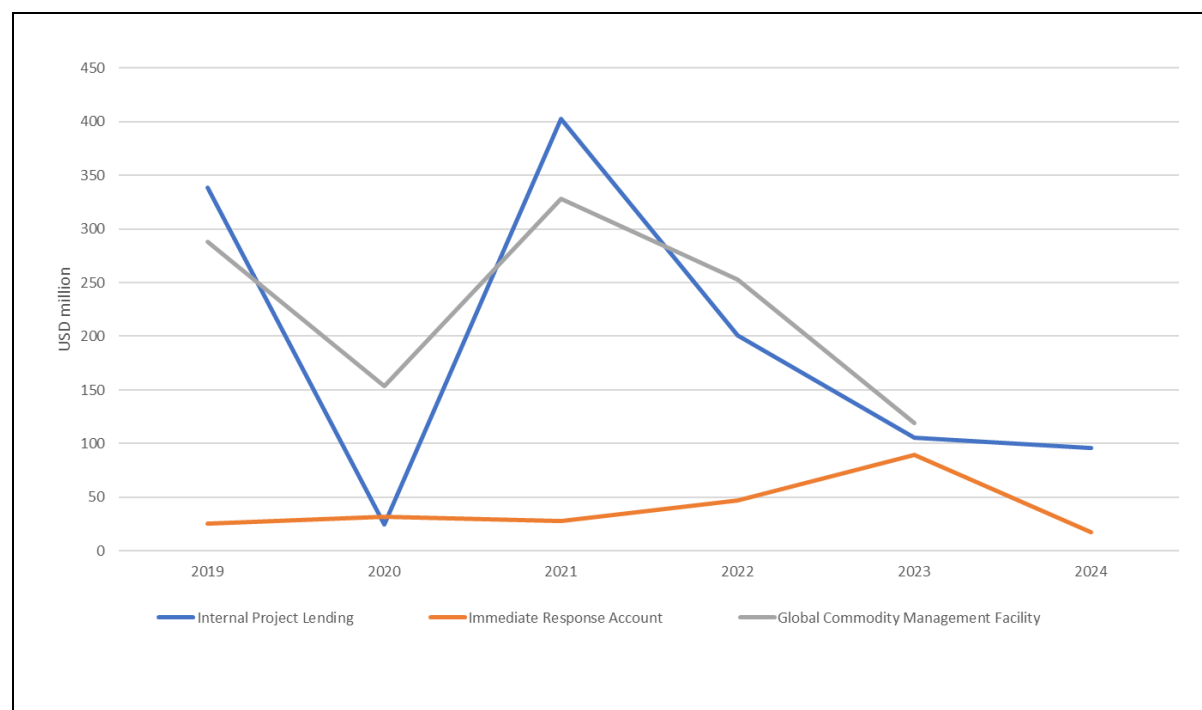
<sup>192</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2019.

<sup>193</sup> Supply chain initiated corrective action in Sana’a through contracting and competitive tendering arrangements which incentivized improved transporter performance. A policy for evaluating transport companies combined with strategic contracting helped to improve supply chain and transport adaptability.

implemented in Mukalla port.

219. The WFP internal advance financing mechanisms played a crucial role in mitigating assistance interruptions and allowing the country office to quickly scale up operations or minimize pipeline breaks. As part of the WFP corporate working capital management, advances from the internal project lending and other mechanisms enabled funds to be released before forecasted donor contributions were confirmed.<sup>194</sup> Overall, Yemen received large shares of advance financing throughout the evaluation period, except for 2020<sup>195</sup> (see Figure 37 below). In June 2021, the WFP Executive Board approved an increase in the strategic financing authority ceiling to address requests for funds to further support the unprecedented crisis and the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 worldwide including in Yemen and several other countries.<sup>196</sup>

**Figure 37: Use of WFP strategic financing mechanisms 2019-2023<sup>197</sup>**



Source: Based on data from reports on the utilization of WFP's strategic financing mechanisms 2019-2023. IRM Analytics- Advance Finance Report for 2024. 2024 Data for GCMF was not available at the time of the report finalization.

220. The Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) was also key to reduce food import lead times and avert or minimize pipeline breaks. Food commodities procured through the GCMF and allocated to Yemen country office between 2019 and 2023 valued at a total of USD 1.12 billion.<sup>198</sup> Until June 2023, WFP was able to deliver GCMF commodities directly to ports in north and south Yemen as the financing mechanism could be used flexibly.<sup>199</sup> With support from WFP headquarters, this approach reduced the lead time to approximately 15 days and helped to avoid pipeline breaks at critical periods during the conflict (see Figure 38). For example, with funding shortfalls at the start of 2022, the country office had planned a reduction in general food assistance, but by using advance financing it was able to procure GCMF stock to

<sup>194</sup> Internal project lending, macro advance financing, and immediate response account mechanisms enable country offices to act immediately by receiving corporate spending authority prior to contributions being confirmed or received.

<sup>195</sup> WFP. 2020-2024. Reports on the utilization of WFP's strategic financing mechanisms (2019-2023). This was due to "delays in contributions, lower than anticipated funding levels and visibility of funding forecasts." (ACR 2020).

<sup>196</sup> WFP/EB.1/2022/5-B/1 - Executive Board First regular session Rome, 28 February-2 March 2022.

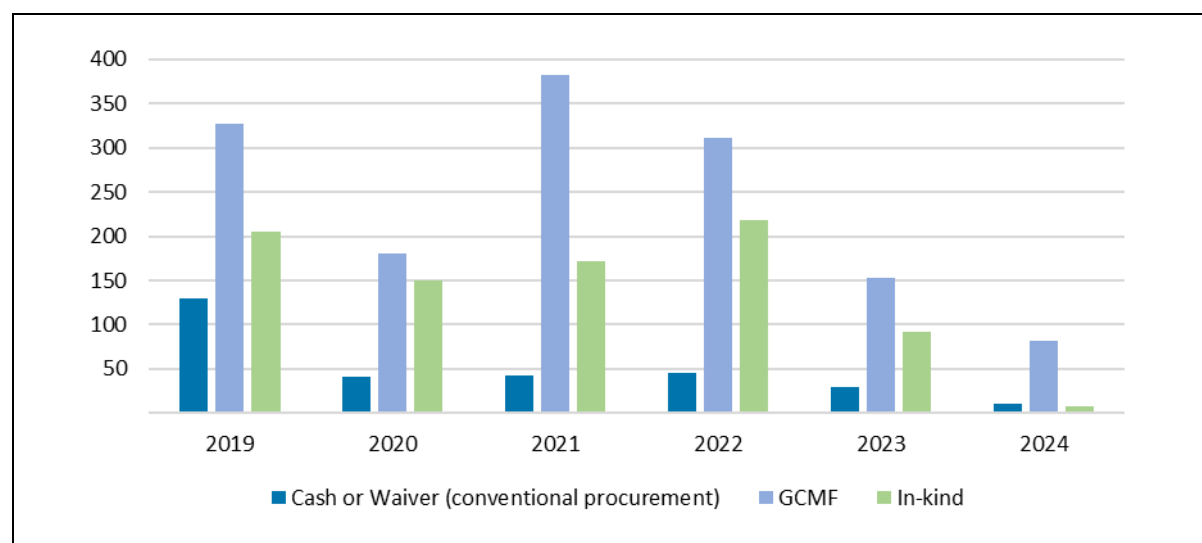
<sup>197</sup> Internal project lending also includes macro advance financing.

<sup>198</sup> Of this amount, 65 percent was used for international purchases and 35 percent for local and regional purchases. Source: WFP. 2020-2024. Reports on the utilization of WFP's strategic financing mechanisms (2019-2023).

<sup>199</sup> For Yemen, GCMF commodities (mainly wheat flour) were pre-positioned in Turkey but (according to KIIs) also in-country when operationally feasible.

cover the most imminent shortfalls, including for specialized nutritious food.<sup>200</sup> Following headquarters' decision of sending unsold GCMF stocks to intermediate trans-shipment locations (as opposed to sending them to Yemen directly), lead times have increased from 15 to 48 days. While this decision aimed to mitigate risks, it had a detrimental effect on the timeliness and cost of WFP operations in Yemen.

**Figure 38: Food procurement by source (USD million), 2019-2024**



Source: Food purchase order item dataset, DOTS, accessed 15.10.2024.

**Summary Finding 24.** The costs of WFP operations in Yemen have been high due to the country context, but WFP took steps where feasible to increase cost efficiency, notably by reducing food losses. However, recent changes in the approach by WFP headquarters to handling GCMF unsold stocks have had cost implications, as additional shipping legs increase overall expenses. A more systematic analysis of the cost efficiency of various programme modalities and supply chain adjustments would have provided opportunities for improving efficiency.

221. Assessing cost efficiency in the Yemen operation is extremely difficult. The diversity of WFP partner agencies, programmes and geographies make detailed comparisons difficult.<sup>201</sup>

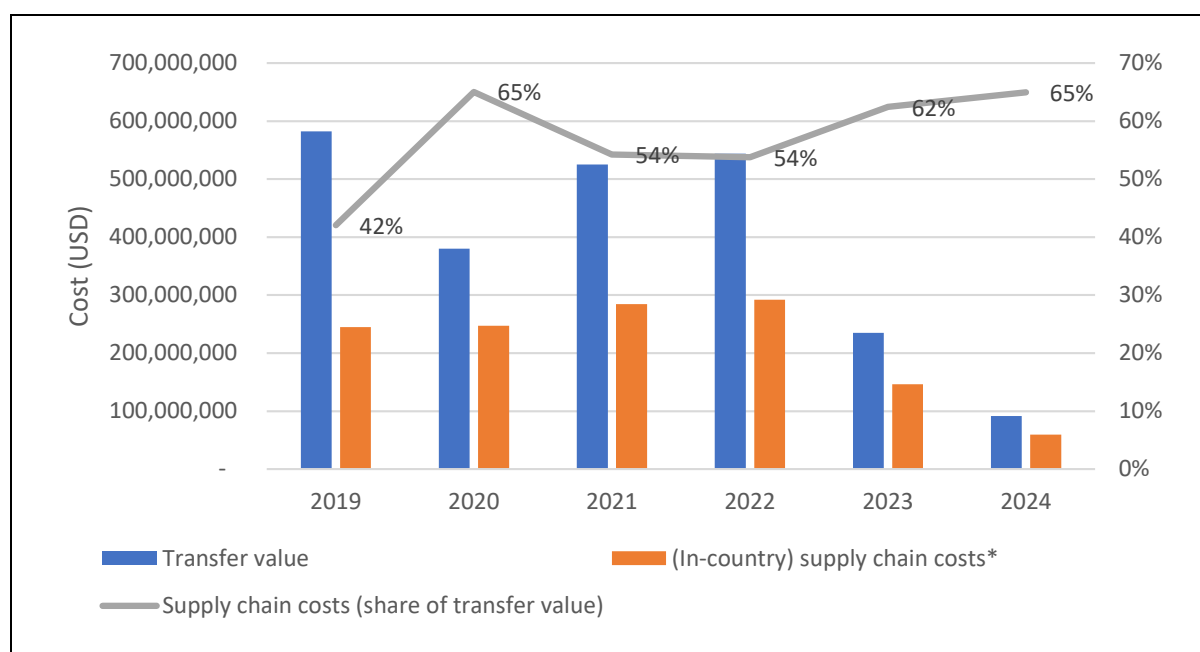
222. With a large proportion of costs related to food distribution (including general food assistance, nutrition and school feeding) being incurred in the supply chain, the adoption of tools and innovations has been essential to managing efficiency. For example, the Control Tower Dashboard (developed by the country office during the evaluation period) introduced a real-time tool for monitoring supply chain operations. Further, WFP monitoring of food transfer costs has been crucial to operations, with costs managed to ensure relative stability and alignment with supply chain matrix projections. The analysis of food distribution costs shows that the in-country supply chain costs, including transport, supply chain management, storage, port and other food related costs,<sup>202</sup> were proportionally higher in years with smaller food volumes distributed (for example, 2020 and 2023) - see Figure 39.

<sup>200</sup> WFP/EB.A/2023/6-B/1 – Report on the utilization of WFP's strategic financing mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2022).

<sup>201</sup> July 2022, Final Report, Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Yemen Crisis.

<sup>202</sup> Excluding what WFP categorizes as “cooperating partner costs”.

**Figure 39: Food transfer values versus transfer costs, 2019-2024**



Source: "Country Portfolio Budget Plan vs Actuals YE01 & YE02". Extracted on 23.09.2024.

\*including transport, supply chain management, storage, port costs, other food-related costs.

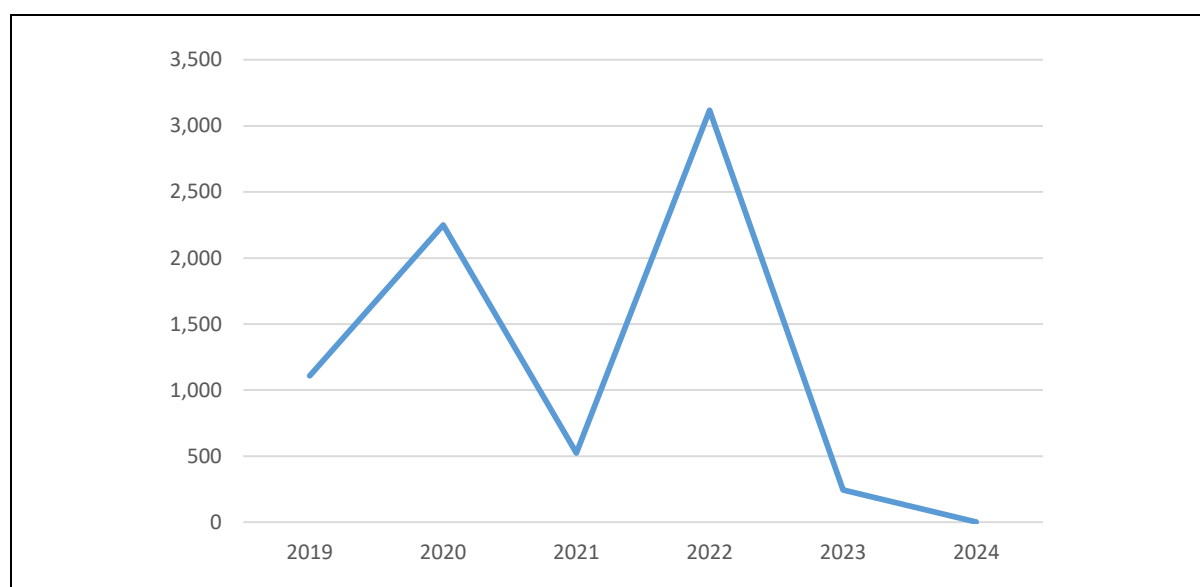
223. Another important cost factor relates to food losses. At the peak of emergency operations in 2021 and 2022, post-delivery food losses in Yemen were high in relation to the global operations, due largely to inadequate and overlong storage at milling and other facilities, as well as transport losses.<sup>203</sup> In later years, food losses data showed a positive trend, but this may have been related to the smaller amounts distributed in 2023 and 2024 (see Figure 40). Supply chain improvements, including the development and evolution of the holistic tracking system, have been essential for minimizing food commodity diversion and ensuring secure deliveries. Contractual provisions for recovering losses from service providers and the selection and review of service providers also helped to minimize such losses.<sup>204</sup> Based on WFP awareness of capability limitations among transporters, the WFP transport manual was updated to note that "the performance of inland transport service providers should be monitored for each contract in order to ensure a long-term transport capacity that can meet operational requirements".<sup>205</sup>

<sup>203</sup> Data extracted from LESS/HTS on post losses from 2019-2024.

<sup>204</sup> Executive Board: Reports on global losses 2020 to 2023.

<sup>205</sup> March 2020, Note for the Record: Food carriers' performance evaluation for general food assistance, deliveries to FDPs.

**Figure 40: Aggregated data on post-delivery and transport food losses (mt), 2019-2024**



Source: HTS, aggregated data by year and governorate on food losses (food received, dispatched, lost or unfit for consumption), as of December 2024.

224. Under SO2, WFP acknowledged the high cost of the Healthy Kitchen model and reduced costs per child by 50 percent between 2019 and 2024 (from USD 1.50 to USD 0.72 per day), aligning with cost models in other Middle Eastern countries.<sup>206</sup> While the Healthy Kitchen model continued to be more expensive than other school feeding models (such as for fortified snacks), it was retained due to its advantages (see EQ2.2).

225. In 2021, despite strong SO4 funding, the logistics cluster budget was reduced following a review by the Resident Coordinator's Office and the security management team of the sea transport standby capacity.<sup>207</sup> To improve cost efficiency, there was a reduction from two to one vessel chartered.<sup>208</sup> UNHAS faced funding gaps, with flights sometimes financed monthly.<sup>209</sup> Rising operational costs in 2022 (fuel, ground handling, insurance)<sup>210</sup> prompted cost-saving measures, including a USD 6 million<sup>211</sup> aircraft downsizing in 2024. In 2023, the emergency telecommunications cluster transitioned to a full cost-recovery model,<sup>212</sup> with expenses based on headcount and agency presence. Yemen's emergency telecommunications cluster is unique among global operations for its full cost-recovery approach and has reduced its budget from USD 3.7 million in 2023 to USD 2.4 million by 2025. The emergency telecommunications cluster has also focused on downsizing and nationalizing positions.<sup>213</sup> Bureaucratic delays in equipment imports and clearances hindered bilateral service provision execution, limiting the ability of WFP to fully utilize funds.<sup>214</sup>

<sup>206</sup> Stakeholder consultations with the country office nutrition team; the International Food Policy Research Institute. 2023. Assessing Feasibility of School Feeding Programme Models for Improving Children's Diets, Nutrition, and Education in Yemen. Cost reduction was achieved through process optimization and collaborative cost-saving measures with CPs. Procurement procedures were streamlined, and menus adapted to incorporate seasonal produce.

<sup>207</sup> From USD 16.3 million in 2021 to USD 6.7 million in 2022. Source: WFP Yemen ACRs.

<sup>208</sup> In 2022 the logistics cluster's operational activities were largely phased out.

<sup>209</sup> Based on KIIs

<sup>210</sup> Fuel costs decreased at the end of 2022 enabling prices to return to the levels registered before the conflict in Ukraine

<sup>211</sup> The UNHAS budget was typically about USD 32 million per year and operated on partial cost recovery since 2016.

Aircraft charter operations account for 80 percent of the budget.

<sup>212</sup> The ETC initially levied services charges for UN agencies. International NGOs will pay service fees from 2025.

<sup>213</sup> According to KIIs

<sup>214</sup> Additionally, BSP explored mechanisms to improve fuel management practices and sustainability. Installation of

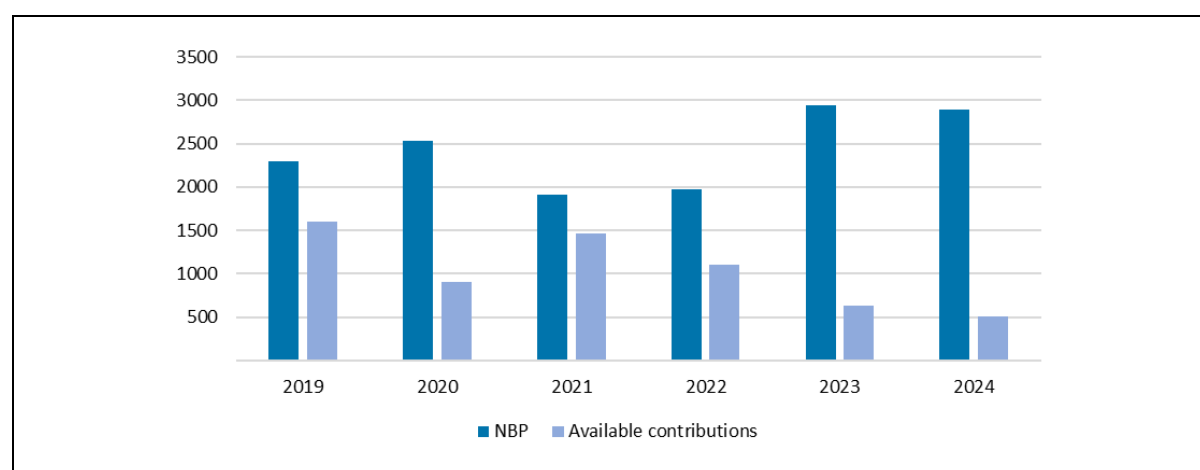


## EQ 4.2 To what extent has the funding profile and donor priorities allowed WFP to access adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources?

**Summary Finding 25.** WFP operations in Yemen have been significantly impacted by declining donor funding since 2021, a substantial reduction in the number of funding sources, and increased reliance on a few key donors. Additionally, increased earmarking for specific activities, transfer modalities or locations, along with the short-term nature of most grants, has further constrained WFP flexibility. These challenges have forced WFP to scale down general food assistance, nutrition and livelihoods programmes, and have hindered long-term planning.

226. WFP operations have been significantly impacted by fluctuations in donor funding, with funding peaks in 2019 and 2021 (Figure 41). However, since 2021, funding has steadily declined each year, even as the number of beneficiaries and the people in need identified in the humanitarian response plan have remained unchanged. This reduction in funding has constrained the ability of WFP to diversify its programming and provide adequate assistance to a sufficient number of people. Funding gaps forced WFP to reduce the quantity and frequency of its general food assistance. As funding dwindled, WFP was, in October 2023, forced to also stop life-saving malnutrition treatment to more than 200,000 malnourished children – one third of the targeted beneficiaries.<sup>215</sup>

**Figure 41: Evolution of available contributions compared to needs-based plan (USD million), 2019-2024**



Source: Source: Distribution Contribution and Forecast Stats 2024-09-16; WFP Yemen 2019-2023 ACR and WFP Yemen 2024 ACR5A, extracted 09.10.2024.

227. WFP has relied heavily on a single donor, the United States of America, which contributed USD 2.8 billion to Yemen crisis response during the evaluation period,<sup>216</sup> including general food assistance and malnutrition treatment. According to interviews with WFP stakeholders, such reliance on the United States of America for general food assistance funding is not uncommon but makes WFP vulnerable to shifts in donor priorities, directly affecting operations. This dependency contributed to the inability of WFP to secure sufficient funding to resume food distributions in SBA areas (see also Figure 9).

228. WFP faced challenges in diversifying its funding sources, with the number of funding sources decreasing from 31 in 2019 to just 18 in 2024. Based on key informant interviews with WFP staff the current focus is on maintaining existing partnerships and securing long-term funding for crisis response and resilience building.<sup>217</sup>

monitoring devices contributed to fuel quality and quantity control and helped mitigate the risk of fuel diversion. Solar panels were installed in 181 WHO-assisted hospitals.

<sup>215</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

<sup>216</sup> WFP. 2024. FACTory data - Distribution Contribution and Forecast Stats as of 16 September 2024.

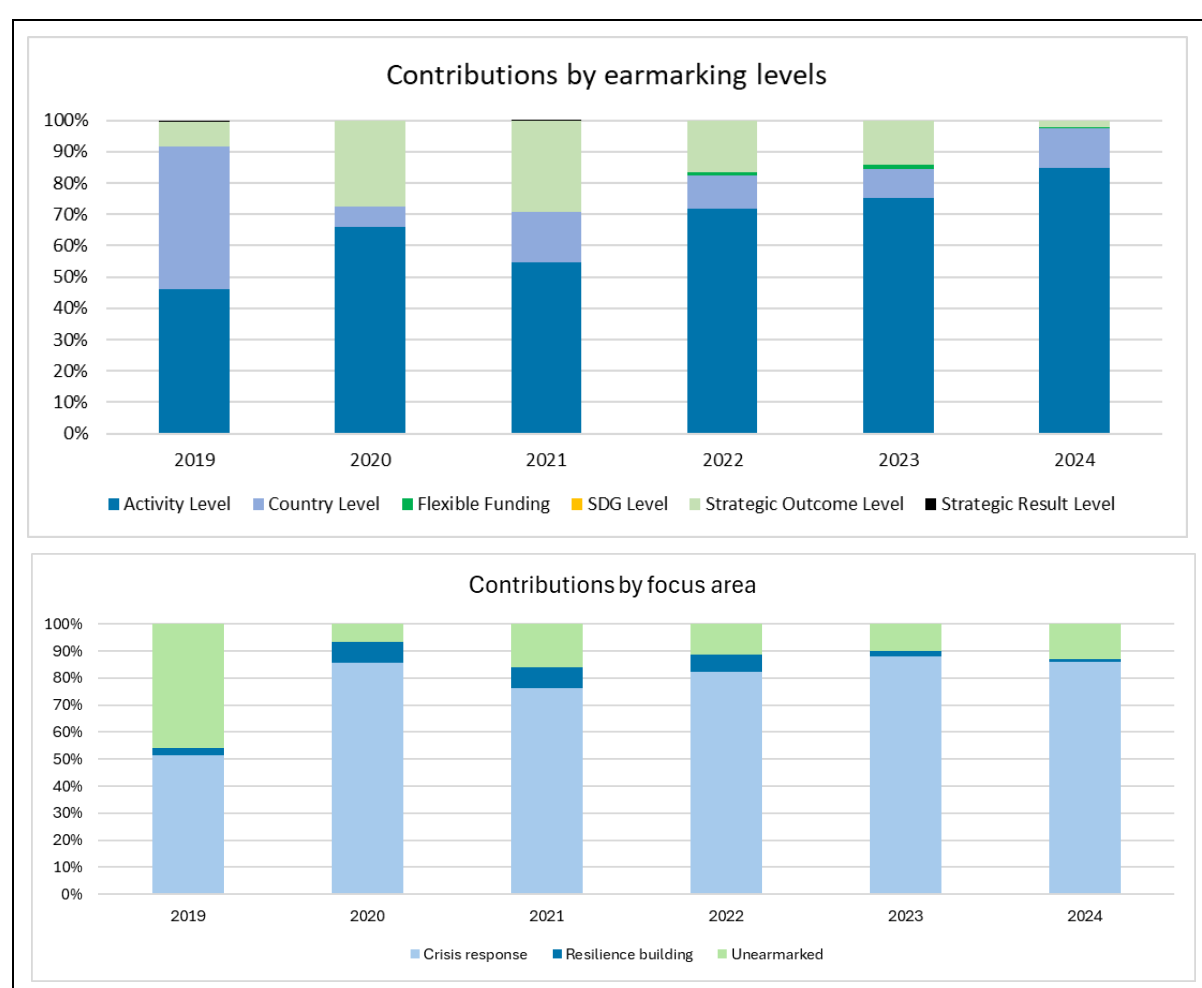
<sup>217</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.



229. Key informant interviews with donor representatives confirmed existing low expectations for significant increases in funding, given competing emergencies and humanitarian crises in the region and globally. Several donors also emphasized that addressing food insecurity in Yemen requires a strategy that goes beyond humanitarian response. However, funding data indicate that this perspective has not resulted in increased funding for resilience activities.

230. In addition to reduced funding and reliance on few donors, WFP has experienced a growing trend of earmarking either for a given activity, transfer modality or location, limiting its ability to dynamically re-direct resources to those most in need.<sup>218</sup> As shown in Figure 42, activity-level earmarking rose from 46 percent in 2019 to 85 percent in 2024. The positive progress toward strategic outcome-level earmarking in 2020-2021 were reversed starting in 2022. Contributions earmarked for a specific activity are primarily for the crisis response focus area. There has also been an increase in earmarking for a specific transfer modality, further restricting flexibility in resource allocation.<sup>219</sup> Funding shortages, combined with modality-level earmarking, contributed to WFP gradually transferring beneficiaries from cash-based to in-kind support to sustain assistance, reversing the progress of previous years.

**Figure 42: Contributions by earmarking levels and focus area, 2019-2024**



Source: WFP. 2024. FACTory data - Distribution Contribution and Forecast Stats as of 16.09.2024.

Note: flexible funding is where donors do not impose conditionalities, allowing WFP to determine the country programme or its activities in which the contribution will be used and how it will be used.

<sup>218</sup> WFP. Yemen ACR 2023.

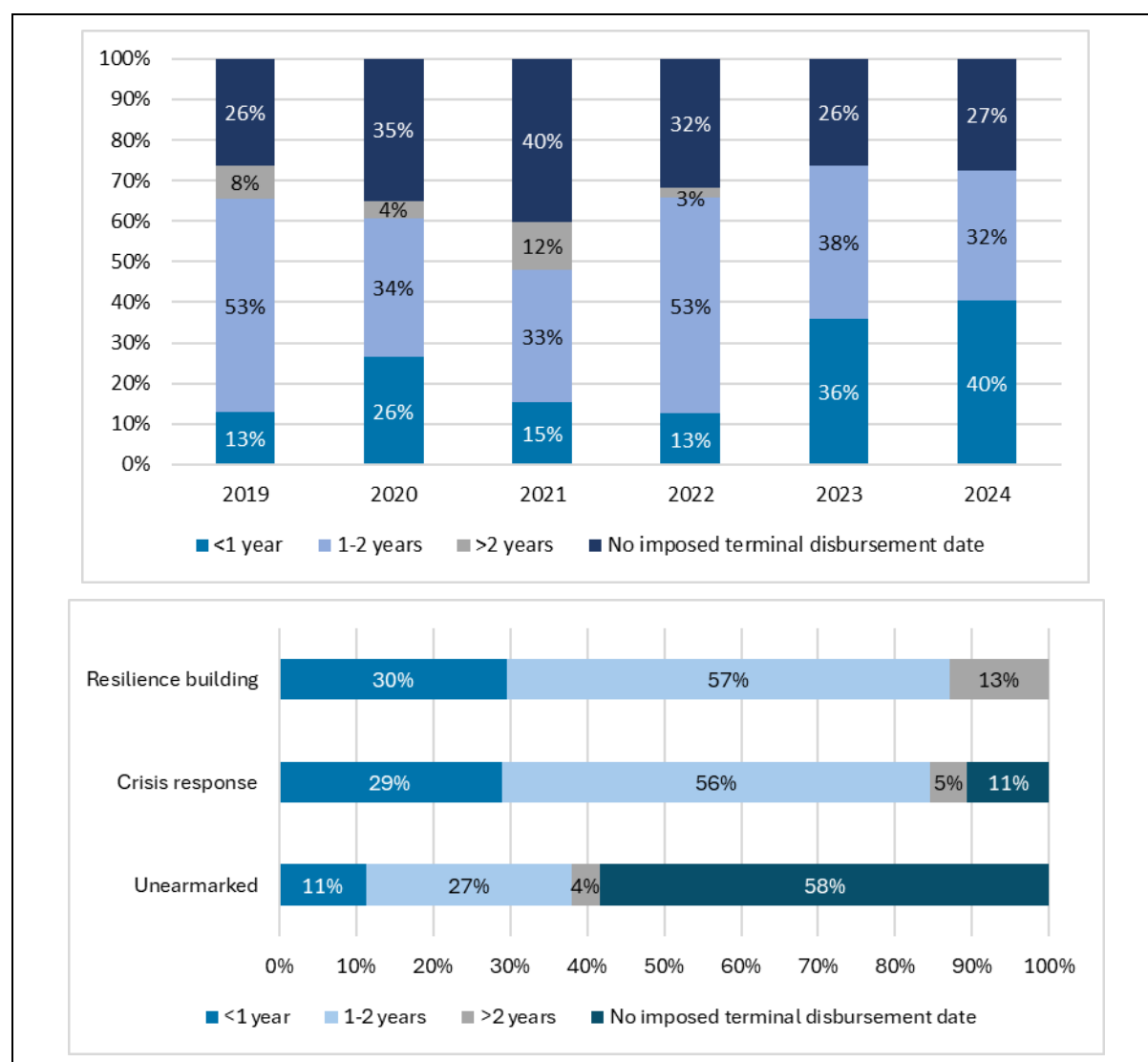
<sup>219</sup> WFP. Yemen ACRs 2022, 2023.

231. WFP has actively engaged with donors to promote flexibility in funding allocation; however, earmarking trends indicate that these efforts have had limited success. This outcome is not due to a lack of effort on the country office's part but is primarily influenced by donor decisions.

232. WFP has resisted the geographic earmarking of donors, as it contradicts the humanitarian principle of impartiality. However, these efforts have not been able to halt some donors restricting their funding to specific geographical areas.<sup>220</sup>

233. The short duration of grants has posed a significant challenge for WFP. Most funding is short-term rather than multi-year (Figure 43), which hampers the ability to plan and implement longer-term strategies. This affects not only livelihood interventions but also general food assistance, as multi-year funding would enable WFP to develop more sustainable responses to food insecurity.

**Figure 43: Grant duration by contribution year and focus area, 2019-2024**



Source: Distribution Contribution Forecast Stats as of 16.09.2024.

Note: Grant duration is calculated using the number of months between the grant valid from date and the grant terminal disbursement date stipulated by the donor.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

234. With limited donor presence in Yemen, the country office faces challenges in directly engaging with donors. Key informant interviews with WFP stakeholders revealed that, in such a challenging context, support from the regional bureau in Cairo and headquarters to strengthen donor engagement could have been more robust.

#### **EQ 4.3 To what extent has WFP institutional arrangements in Yemen supported its internal coherence, performance and operational effectiveness?**

**Summary Finding 26.** WFP made efforts to align staffing with operational priorities and funding realities, including a rightsizing initiative initially driven by financial constraints. However, gender, protection and accountability to affected populations remain under-resourced with no dedicated staff beyond the country office in Sana'a. Additionally, the low proportion of women staff limits the ability of WFP to engage with affected populations, particularly women, and limits gender inclusiveness in the country office. While a one-country set-up is appropriate for Yemen's divided context, ensuring adequate resources at field office and area office levels remains critical for operational effectiveness and engagement with beneficiaries and stakeholders.

235. Following an increase in total staffing from 2019 (814 staff) to 2022 (993 staff), supporting the scale-up of WFP operations in Yemen, particularly the expansion of general food assistance, WFP initiated a rightsizing exercise in 2023 and 2024. This effort aimed to align staffing levels with the priorities outlined in the ICSP 2023-2025 and to reflect the reduction in funding. The rightsizing initiative, launched in August 2023, sought to reduce staffing levels by 20 percent in terms of both headcount and budget allocation.<sup>221</sup> Interviews with WFP management indicated that the initial rightsizing was driven by funding cuts and further reflection is needed to ensure that the different units now have the appropriate number and profiles of staff.

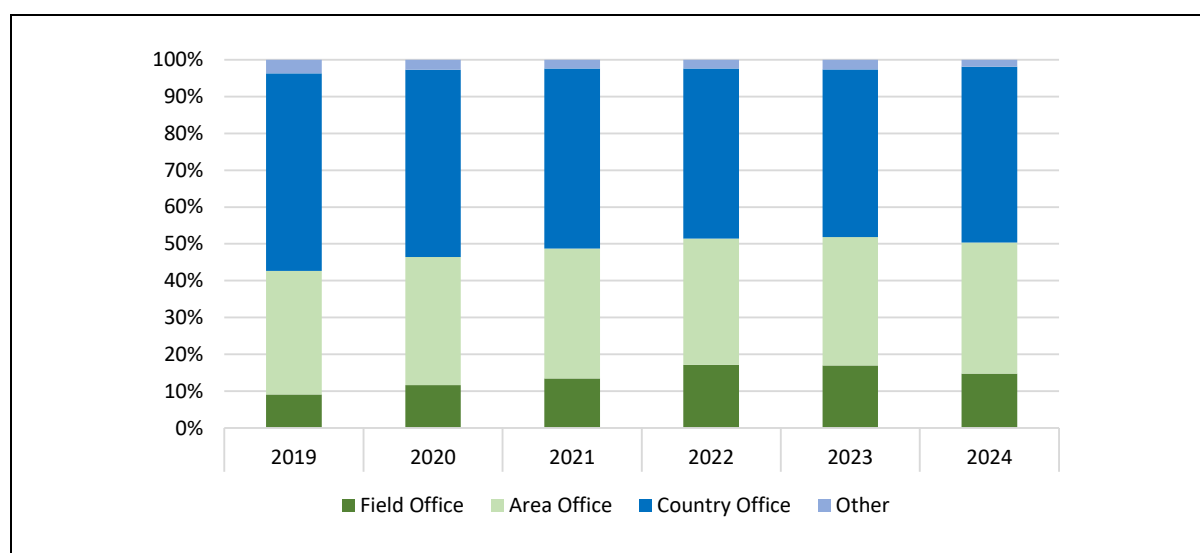
236. The evaluation team found that the unified, one-country approach is the most appropriate in Yemen's highly divided context. While the challenges in the north often absorb significant time and energy, senior management is acutely aware of the need for balance and is actively taking steps to ensure that the attention and approach in both the north and south are aligned.

237. During the period under review, staffing at field office level increased from 9 percent of the total workforce in 2019 to 15 percent in 2024. Currently, 36 percent of staff are based in area offices, while 48 percent are in the country office. Over the years, the number of field offices increased from three in 2019 to seven during 2020-2024, while the number of area offices remained constant with three offices. Based on consultations and observed operational challenges, the evaluation team found that increasing support for field offices, particularly through increased staffing and technical support, is essential, as field office staff are closest to the beneficiaries and cooperating partners, making them essential for effective programme delivery and community engagement.

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<sup>221</sup> WFP. 2023. Decision Memorandum. Rightsizing exercise. Final submission of deliverables.

**Figure 44: WFP Yemen staffing by office type, 2019-2024**



Source: WFP Yemen staff list, 2019-2024. Updated 2023 and 2024 data received from country office on 03.10.2024.

238. A comparison of the September 2024 and December 2023 organizational charts shows key changes. General food assistance staffing was reduced due to funding cuts, and the hotline team moved under research and monitoring to enhance responsiveness. The reduction of two operators is minor provided direct community engagement improves. However, gender, inclusion and accountability to affected people remain under-resourced, with no dedicated gender or protection staff beyond Sana'a. At area office and field office levels, focal points receive no extra remuneration or recognition, and training is limited to online resources. Key informant interviews indicate poor support, with the role seen as an additional burden. Women remain under-represented in WFP staff, despite reported efforts to increase women recruits. Barriers such as restrictive norms, the *Mahram* (male guardian) requirement, and limited access to education and professional opportunities persist. The 2020-2021 Human Resource Gender Parity Action Plan aimed for 30 percent women representation, but by 2024, it reached only 27 percent, consistent with past years. Disparities extend to international staff and senior management.<sup>222</sup>

239. Based on the analysis of staffing-related data and documentation and the interviews, the evaluation team found that no substantial efforts or investments were made to increase the recruitment of women staff. There was limited evidence of adaptations made by the country office to address concerns around women's employment and facilitate their recruitment through gender-responsive action, making WFP an employer of choice for both men and women. During in-country consultations, some staff members expressed concerns that insufficient attention was given to incorporating women's voices and suggestions within the office. Additionally, messaging around gender equality, women empowerment or PSEA was limited, highlighting a need for greater emphasis on this issue.

240. WFP has sought to improve staff retention by addressing the various types of contracts. Since 2019, the majority of staff have been employed under fixed-term contracts, with the remainder on service and short-term contracts and a small percentage on consultancies.<sup>223</sup> However, among WFP international staff, frequent rotations, rest and recuperation arrangements, visa approval waiting times or SBA visa cancellations affected operational continuity.

<sup>222</sup> WFP Yemen staff list, 2019-2024. Updated 2023 and 2024 data received from country office on 03.10.2024

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

#### EQ 4.4 To what extent have monitoring systems helped to enhance the performance of WFP?

**Summary Finding 27.** WFP Yemen has made substantial investments in strengthening its monitoring systems under the current ICSP, adopting a multi-source data triangulation approach to address access and data collection challenges, but a few areas for further improvement of monitoring remain. Qualitative assessments are limited but are being explored, acknowledging the challenges posed by Yemen's access constraints and societal restrictions.

241. WFP has invested in strengthening its monitoring systems with increased efforts under the current ICSP.<sup>224</sup> WFP has demonstrated transparency about the challenges and weaknesses in its monitoring systems and has taken regular steps to address these, as outlined in its Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy 2023–2025.<sup>225</sup> An example of this is the introduction of a real time community feedback mechanism dashboard showing cases as per severity. Data are being used to help the programme team and management at country office and area office levels to track critical cases and take action on a timely basis. These efforts aim to ensure that WFP does not rely on a single monitoring source but instead triangulates data from multiple sources. This approach is crucial where direct access and data collection limitations persist.<sup>226</sup>

242. The evaluation team found that, overall, the country office has made significant progress toward meeting the minimum monitoring requirements. However, several areas still require further attention. The challenges identified in the regional bureau in Cairo's monitoring oversight report align closely with the evaluation team's findings. The status update on the country office's progress against the augmented assurances<sup>227</sup> highlights the need to further strengthen monitoring of distributions and cooperating partners' warehouses. This includes revising the standard operating procedures for third party monitoring and enhancing the monitoring plan for distribution monitoring visits. The WFP minimum monitoring requirements are appropriate, even in challenging operating environments such as Yemen. However, it is crucial to consider the context and implement additional mitigation measures, especially in terms of access.

243. WFP and third party monitoring staff have faced growing challenges in conducting physical on-site monitoring visits, including delays in obtaining approvals, activity scheduling issues, and delays in receiving security clearances because of active conflict or no access due to road or weather conditions. For instance, while close to 21,600 physical monitoring visits were conducted in 2022, 14,100 visits were completed in 2023 and 12,200 in 2024.<sup>228</sup> The decrease in the number of monitoring visits is closely linked to challenges in programme implementation, including reduction in scale or suspension of several activities, which resulted in fewer monitoring visits for these activities. It should be noted that the majority of the monitoring visits are undertaken by third party monitors.

244. As part of its process monitoring, WFP uses the beneficiary verification mechanism to verify monitoring findings in high-priority locations. It also directly contacts beneficiaries affected by distribution irregularities or limited monitoring access. This approach allows WFP to confirm whether beneficiaries have received the correct quantity and quality of assistance.

245. WFP Yemen's monitoring system is aligned with the WFP Corporate Results Framework and includes performance measurement against various corporate outcome indicators. However, the evaluation team found that these indicators are not always the most relevant for identifying areas where programme adaptations are needed. Cross-cutting outcome indicators, where performance metrics often reach 100 percent, clearly illustrate this limitation. For instance, indicators such as beneficiaries reporting no barriers to accessing assistance or being treated with respect frequently show full compliance. However, when triangulated with data from sources like the hotline, it becomes evident that these outcome indicators do not always reflect the full reality of the challenges beneficiaries face.

<sup>224</sup> RBC Monitoring Oversight Report, Yemen country office – 2023.

<sup>225</sup> Although an M&E strategy is not a corporate requirement, it was recommended by the RBC oversight mission and was subsequently developed by the country office.

<sup>226</sup> WFP Yemen. Data shared in February 2025.

<sup>227</sup> Status Global Assurance Standards. Yemen country office. 2024.

<sup>228</sup> WFP Yemen. Monthly Monitoring Update – October 2023.

246. Interviews and document reviews indicate that WFP staff are aware of these limitations and make additional efforts to collect supplementary data to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the beneficiaries' realities. The evaluation team considers this a strength of WFP Yemen. However, this raises the question of whether the investment made in tracking all outcome indicators annually and reporting against those in the annual country reports are the most effective use of the country office's time and resources.

247. Interviews with WFP stakeholders confirm an overall agreement on the fact that quantitative data alone do not capture nuanced community-level insights and that further investment in qualitative assessment capacity is required, acknowledging at the same time the restrictive context.

248. Interviews and review of documents confirmed that outcome monitoring data have been instrumental in helping WFP prioritize interventions during periods of reduced funding, ensuring assistance reaches those most at risk. In the absence of other surveys, such as SMART surveys or IPC assessments, WFP has relied on its moderate acute malnutrition admissions data to identify areas of need, particularly in the north.

249. The majority of donors noted that WFP reporting and feedback are timely and thorough, with regular updates on challenges, progress and delays. While concerns were raised about the quality of data due to access limitations, donors generally acknowledged the significant efforts by WFP to gather accurate information through various mechanisms. However, donors felt that more qualitative and in-depth analysis on the underlying causes of food insecurity and the impact of assistance on addressing these issues was insufficient. The evaluation team acknowledges efforts have been made through the FSLA to undertake comprehensive qualitative data collection, providing important nuances to complement quantitative data, with plans underway to integrate this approach into regular monitoring activities.

#### **EQ 4.5 Which other internal and external factors have influenced WFP performance and in what ways?**

**Summary Finding 28.** Systematic learning from experiences in other countries has been lacking. However, where learning did occur, it contributed to strengthening WFP performance. Coordination between headquarters, the regional bureau in Cairo and the country office to maintain operational continuity and secure sustainable funding is critical.

250. Learning from other experiences improved Yemen's operations. The holistic tracking system, initially a commodity tracking tool, evolved to enhance dispatch tracking, decision making and supply chain reporting, reducing the risk of food diversion or unauthorized use.<sup>229</sup>

251. While lessons from other countries were utilized to strengthen supply chain performance, there was limited learning regarding multi-year livelihoods programming within the region. Countries like Syria and Lebanon have valuable experience in scaling up such programmes, which could serve as useful models.

252. Fundraising was crucial, especially when Yemen was a Level 3 emergency before its 2022 reclassification. Targeted donor engagement helped prevent pipeline breaks, but limited donor presence in-country constrained efforts. The emergency status, however, enabled stronger advocacy and regional support.

253. The WFP regional bureau in Cairo played a significant role during critical periods such as scale-ups and the food pause, providing support through supply chain assistance, temporary duty assignments and oversight missions. However, interviews highlighted that additional headquarters efforts were needed to bolster fundraising and avoid staffing gaps during pivotal moments. This underscores the importance of a coordinated approach across the regional bureau in Cairo, headquarters and in-country teams to sustain donor interest and ensure operational continuity.

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<sup>229</sup> A limitation of the holistic tracking system is that it was not integrated into other corporate platforms (such as DOTS).

### 3. Conclusions

254. The evaluation team has identified four overall conclusions related to operational and implementation aspects as well as strategic focus and effects of the WFP response in Yemen.

#### Cluster 1: Operational and implementation aspects

**Conclusion 1.** Through its operational capacity, WFP effectively navigated the complexities of the protracted crisis – marked by conflict, access limitations and funding constraints – to deliver a large-scale operation addressing acute humanitarian needs. Key enabling factors included the WFP proactive supply chain management and the use of advance financing mechanisms, which, together with effective use of monitoring data to inform decision making, have significantly enhanced WFP's operational responsiveness. However, WFP's adaptive capacity was increasingly constrained during the evaluation period by a deteriorating funding environment, which limited the WFP country office to plan for the longer term and ultimately forced a scale down of interventions. Furthermore, managing a large-scale humanitarian response has meant less attention and fewer resources were devoted to resilience-building efforts.

255. **WFP has faced significant challenges in its operations**, including protracted conflict, overwhelming humanitarian needs, access restrictions and reliance on a limited number of donors. The funding situation has further constrained efforts to diversify its programming (see Cluster 2 conclusions).

256. **WFP has demonstrated adaptability to evolving contexts in areas under IRG and SBA control.** This adaptability has been further strengthened under the current ICSP, notably through the use of monitoring data to inform targeting, and proactive supply chain management to navigate a challenging operational environment. These efforts have enabled WFP to prioritize geographic areas, scale up interventions as needs increase, respond to new shocks and sustain assistance despite funding constraints over recent years. WFP demonstrated flexibility and adaptability in delivering life-saving interventions under one of the largest humanitarian operations globally. However, managing this large-scale humanitarian operation required significant resources and meant less attention and resources could be allocated toward developing a resilience framework. Additionally, the limited interest from donors in supporting recovery and resilience efforts further constrained WFP efforts in these areas.

257. **The current setup, with one country office overseeing IRG and SBA areas, was the most appropriate. However, post-rightsizing concerns exist regarding the adequacy of resources at the field office level** to support sufficient direct engagement with beneficiaries and local authorities. Staff rotation and changes in senior management during the introduction of the food pause were seen as having a negative effect on the ability of WFP to negotiate effectively with authorities, undermining continuity and consistency in its approach. WFP has undertaken a rightsizing process driven primarily by cost considerations due to the current funding situation. While the number of staff was reasonable from a financial perspective following the organizational alignment, the process was primarily driven by budget constraints and is not yet fully aligned with programmatic needs.

258. **The WFP internal advance financing mechanisms combined with the use of GCMF played a key role in minimizing procurement delays and preventing major pipeline breaks during the peak of the emergency response.** While WFP improved food delivery timelines, reduced losses and enhanced cost efficiency in some areas, important supply chain challenges persisted, particularly for specialized nutritious food, even when funding was available. Additionally, WFP did not sufficiently analyse the cost effectiveness of its various programme modalities, limiting opportunities for further optimizing programme efficiency and advocating for certain modalities.

**Conclusion 2.** Although WFP has been recognized for its cluster leadership role and has made progress in fostering partnerships, greater emphasis should be placed on strategic engagement, complementary and joint programming and the strengthening of local capacity.



259. **WFP has strengthened partnerships, but further improvements in communication and coherence were needed to maximize their effectiveness.** WFP has increasingly prioritized partnerships with national responders and United Nations agencies recognizing their critical role in fragile contexts with high humanitarian and early recovery needs, and constrained resources. While WFP has strengthened its partnerships, untapped opportunities remain to align efforts and seek complementarities with other agencies to maximize programmatic results and minimize resource duplication, ultimately improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. Strengthening these alignments is not solely the responsibility of WFP; opportunities also exist for United Nations agencies and international finance institutions to ensure coordination and mutually reinforce interventions, such as those related to social protection and cash transfers.

260. External stakeholders acknowledged the support of WFP to the humanitarian community and its significant role in the collective response. However, gaps remain in communication and coordination within the humanitarian country team. For example, the lack of clear communication around critical operational decisions, such as the food pause, underscored the need for stronger engagement, transparency and information sharing.

261. **There has been progress toward localization, but strategic engagement was not sufficiently emphasized.** WFP has a strong network of cooperating partners, is engaged with local and national responders in Yemen, and has taken steps to strengthen their capacity, particularly in programme implementation. However, significant gaps remain in institutional development, financial support mechanisms and long-term planning, which limit the ability of local responders to operate effectively and sustainably. Engaging with local and central authorities across all sectors is necessary to build a more comprehensive and inclusive approach. There were mixed perceptions and experiences regarding the quality of partnerships. While WFP has made progress toward more equal partnerships in some geographic areas and sectors, these varied experiences highlight the need for more systematic and improved strategic engagement, with a stronger emphasis on shared ownership. WFP has not adequately strengthened its duty of care for local partners, despite the significant security risks those partners face as primary interlocutors with community beneficiaries and stakeholders, especially during periods of heightened tension.

## Cluster 2: Strategic focus and effects

**Conclusion 3.** WFP played a critical role in addressing widespread food insecurity and malnutrition in a highly challenging operational context, delivering essential assistance and helping to avert a significant deterioration in food security. However, several factors constrained overall effectiveness, including insecurity, restricted humanitarian access, declining funding levels and the irregular and short-term nature of assistance provided to beneficiaries. The evaluation also found that limited geographical prioritization for resilience-building interventions and weak integration across activities resulted in missed opportunities for the creation of synergies that could have strengthened programme outcomes. The intense focus on successfully delivering general food assistance in a challenging operational context has constrained WFP's ability to adopt a more strategic and integrated approach across its portfolio.

262. **General food assistance: Large-scale food assistance in Yemen has been critical in preventing a significant decline in food security for many vulnerable populations. However, its effectiveness has diminished over the past two years due to severe funding shortfalls.** WFP has increasingly been unable to provide full entitlements to all beneficiaries and was forced to reduce assistance levels for many. Progress in expanding cash-based assistance has also been reversed, due to funding constraints, donor earmarking for in-kind food assistance and the inability to keep pace with inflation, which have collectively undermined its effectiveness. Furthermore, the 2024 general food assistance pause resulted in increased levels of severe food deprivation among households, which was partly mitigated through a one-off emergency food distribution in priority districts.

263. **Nutrition: Although WFP achieved strong results in malnutrition treatment, it has struggled to deliver consistent support for malnutrition prevention.** While WFP treatment and prevention



programmes have delivered strong short-term results, the absence of a strategic, integrated approach has limited the sustainability of these gains. Efforts to ensure that interventions are nutrition-sensitive and to establish synergies between moderate acute malnutrition management and other activities are acknowledged but remain insufficient. Collaboration with partners to address the underlying determinants of malnutrition, including through the nutrition cluster and the SUN framework, was not sufficiently strong, as treatment and response efforts dominated the discourse. Additionally, the WFP corporate outcome performance measurement did not adequately capture progress, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and areas for improvement.

264. **School feeding: The WFP school feeding programme contributed to maintaining attendance and retention rates.** The provision of date bars and high-energy biscuits contributed to educational outcomes but faced challenges with acceptability in many communities. The shift towards Healthy Kitchen models in urban areas with high population density shows promise. Still, the cost efficiency and feasibility of school feeding models for rural areas require further assessment. The programme's integration with livelihoods, nutrition awareness and girls' empowerment initiatives is insufficient, limiting its potential for transformative change.

265. **Livelihoods: WFP faced challenges in achieving sustainable livelihoods.** Its livelihood approach and interventions had mixed effectiveness in supporting households' self-sufficiency and showed limited success in strengthening value chains and food systems. Beneficiary targets were not met, mainly due to limited funding; the geographical coverage was found to be scattered, which reduced the interventions' efficiency and effectiveness. While community assets created through these interventions are considered beneficial, insufficient evidence demonstrates their effectiveness. Additionally, the interventions did not adequately consider women's needs and preferences, limiting their potential to contribute to gender-sensitive and inclusive outcomes.

266. **Logistics of common and bilateral services: The core comparative advantage of WFP in logistics and response capacity has allowed it to make vital contributions to the broader humanitarian effort in Yemen.** This has been achieved particularly through its leadership in the logistics cluster and the provision of critical on-demand bilateral services. Its engagement has contributed to preserving critical services delivery.

267. **Cross-cutting issues: Progress on cross-cutting issues has been mixed.** WFP has made noticeable improvements in its community feedback mechanism, demonstrating efforts to enhance accountability to affected people. Reliance on the hotline limits direct community engagement, which is essential to ensuring that beneficiaries' perspectives inform programme design, receive timely information about distribution schedules and programmatic changes. However, progress on gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive actions remains limited. The strong understanding by WFP of Yemen's conflict dynamics is supported by its extensive network and reflected in its operational adaptability, but the absence of systematic conflict analysis limits the integration of local insights into its assistance strategies. WFP has increasingly incorporated considerations linked to the environment and climate shocks into its operations, particularly in selecting and implementing livelihood activities.

268. **Humanitarian principles: WFP has largely upheld humanitarian principles despite operating in a highly complex and challenging environment.** The food pause, implemented without adequate measures to safeguard the most vulnerable, alongside funding shortfalls during a period of regional turmoil, has negatively affected perceptions of the neutrality and independence of aid in Yemen, including the role of WFP. While WFP has made significant efforts to engage authorities and implement innovative approaches to access hard-to-reach areas, persistent security challenges and restrictions from authorities have hindered these efforts.

**Conclusion 4.** The general food assistance programme has remained static for too long, with extended periods without updates to beneficiary lists. This led to the exclusion of some vulnerable groups including people newly displaced from the front lines. WFP engaged in complex negotiations with IRG and SBA authorities on a retargeting exercise to ensure that assistance reached those most in need but encountered persistent barriers. A pause of general food assistance in the north in late 2023 affected millions of people. While the exercise represented a positive step toward a more principled and needs-

based programming, the evaluation found that the effects of such a prolonged interruption in WFP assistance could have been better mitigated. Progress in transitioning to resilience and more sustainable solutions where feasible has been limited, further challenged by Yemen's complex context of political and economic instability. This has increased the risk of dependency on food assistance, highlighting the need for careful planning and sensitization to shift away from the status quo.

269. **While WFP intended to scale up its resilience efforts under the 2023–2025 ICSP, these efforts remain at a nascent stage and lack a comprehensive framework.** There is growing awareness at the country office level of the fact that a fully integrated nexus approach will require: a more granular understanding of the environment and climate risks and agricultural opportunities at the local level; robust planning; and sufficient funding, expertise and careful implementation to address immediate needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable recovery and resilience in targeted communities and local food systems.

270. **The findings underscore the critical importance of adaptability – not only to maintain life-saving assistance but also to transition toward resilience-building. However, supporting these efforts will necessitate a coordinated approach by the UNCT.** The absence of a comprehensive UNCT-level resilience strategy presents a significant barrier, as effective resilience building typically depends on multi-partner and multisectoral collaboration. Developing such a strategy is essential to ensure cohesive, strategic and impactful interventions that bridge humanitarian assistance and long-term development goals in Yemen.

271. **The lack of regular updates of beneficiary lists in both IRG and SBA areas since 2018 undermined the capacity of WFP to prioritize and reach the most vulnerable.** As beneficiaries remained on the general food assistance list for years without providing evidence of continued eligibility, this created a sense of entitlement and a risk of dependency. However, important progress was made in 2023 and 2024 with the registration and targeting processes in both IRG and SBA areas, combining household vulnerability data with IPC and people in need assessments to prioritize assistance in a resource-constrained environment. This progress was the outcome of a long and complex negotiation process with IRG and SBA authorities that began several years ago.

272. Given the scale of WFP operations and the large number of beneficiaries covered, updating the registration, targeting and prioritization process has been a complex and resource-intensive effort. While significant progress has been made, this remains an ongoing process that will require continuous refinement and adaptation in both IRG- and SBA-controlled areas. Ensuring accurate and up-to-date targeting and registration will necessitate sustained financial and human resources, as well as ongoing engagement with authorities, beneficiaries and communities. The scale of effort, societal practices and community-level tensions present challenges that must be proactively managed. Continued investment in data management, communication strategies and sensitization efforts will be critical to addressing gaps, reducing miscommunication and fostering trust in the process.

## 4. Recommendations

273. The evaluation makes six recommendations.

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p><b>Recommendation 1. Considering the fluid operating environment and the unpredictability of funding, ensure that future programming in Yemen retains a strong focus on implementing an agile and scalable humanitarian response while seizing opportunities to support resilience where conditions are favourable. Promote greater coherence and synergies across activities to enhance overall performance and reduce humanitarian needs.</b></p>	Strategic	Country office	Global headquarters including the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe Regional Office (MENAEEERO) (Functions: Programme Policy and Guidance Division (PPG); Analysis, Planning and Performance Division (APP); Partnerships and Innovation Department (PI))	High	November 2026
1.1. Ensure that the GFA programme is delivered with a clear focus on the most vulnerable people, maintaining adequate transfer levels through dynamic targeting and prioritization that adapts to changing needs and funding levels.					
1.2. Develop and implement a comprehensive and localized resilience strategy using area-based approaches that leverage complementarities and the respective comparative advantages of partners (see recommendations 2 and 3).					
1.3. Support greater integration and linkages across programme components to ensure that interventions complement and reinforce each other, contributing to a reduction in humanitarian needs.					
1.4. Improve nutrition integration across programme activities and support joint and context-specific approaches to prevent malnutrition.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
1.5. Adopt a resource-informed approach based on rigorous forecasting and analysis of funding prospects to ensure that future programmes are grounded in realistic ambitions.					
<b>Recommendation 2. Strengthen, where the context allows, partnerships with authorities, including relevant line ministries, and local actors and expand direct engagement with communities in the design and implementation of WFP programmes.</b>	Operational	Country office	Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PPG; APP) and local actors in Yemen	High	June 2026
2.1. Foster more regular engagement with authorities, including relevant line ministries, local actors and community representatives, ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups in the design of activities to better align with national and local priorities.					
2.2. In line with principled humanitarian action, establish clearer and more transparent and consistent communication with local authorities, communities and cooperating partners about resource constraints, targeting and prioritization decisions, and eligibility criteria.					
2.3. Expand direct community engagement and increase awareness-raising efforts in relation to feedback mechanisms, with a particular focus on women and underrepresented groups, to enhance the inclusivity, responsiveness and effectiveness of the community feedback mechanisms.					
2.4. Continue efforts to ensure that feedback collected from both women and men is systematically analysed and used to inform timely adjustments to programmes.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<b>Recommendation 3. Foster stronger partnerships with other United Nations entities, the World Bank, donors and other international actors to promote greater complementarity and synergies supported by predictable and flexible funding.</b>	Strategic			Medium	December 2027
3.1. Strengthen and expand partnerships with other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and other international actors to support greater complementarity and synergies across interventions in various sectors and geographical areas (e.g. resilience-building, cash transfers, identity management, shock-responsive social protection, management of malnutrition).		Country office	Other partners at the country level; global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PI; Supply Chain and Delivery Division (SCD); PPG)		
3.2. Provide corporate support to WFP Yemen in conducting resource diversification analysis and support donor engagement efforts to broaden the donor base while advocating for predictable, multi-year and flexible donor funding.		Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Function: PI)	Country office		
<b>Recommendation 4. Better tailor activities to local realities by continuously investing in context analysis, including conflict dynamics and the root causes of food insecurity, and adopting evidence-based approaches.</b>	Operational	Country office	Partners at the country and global headquarters levels including MENAEERO (Functions: APP, PPG)	High	December 2027
4.1. Complete the re-targeting and registration process and regularly update GFA lists, taking into account operational constraints, prioritizing the inclusion of marginalized groups, and considering local social norms to enhance community acceptance.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.2. Deepen WFP's understanding of natural resources, agricultural opportunities and climate risks in order to identify geographic priority areas and design a focused and scalable programme supporting environmental restoration, sustainable local food systems and resilience.					
4.3. Leverage the country office's vulnerability analysis and mapping, monitoring and evaluation capacity to stay responsive to evolving needs and highlight lessons learned and results from the whole portfolio in order to adapt programming accordingly.					
4.4. Work with partners to enhance the joint analysis of malnutrition and food insecurity, promoting shared understanding that informs more targeted, complementary and effective interventions.					
<b>Recommendation 5. Integrate gender equality and women empowerment, protection and inclusion considerations in all activities. Set achievable and context-sensitive objectives for WFP interventions to support the meaningful participation and inclusion of women and other marginalized people.</b>	Strategic	Country office	Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PPG; APP)	High	December 2026
5.1. Strengthen and systematically conduct gender analysis, in collaboration with women organizations, recognizing differences across Yemen, to ensure WFP activities are guided by a comprehensive understanding of the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls, and barriers faced by different population groups.					

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2. Enhance efforts to empower women and other marginalized groups by increasing their participation in WFP activities, including decision-making processes. Promote their leadership and economic empowerment through specific interventions – e.g. in the areas of malnutrition prevention, school feeding and livelihood support – with clear benchmarks for participation, leadership roles and economic empowerment within each intervention.					
5.3. Ensure proactive and sustained senior management leadership at the country office, area offices and field offices on gender equity, protection, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Further strengthen WFP staff capacity in this domain and support partners in upholding gender and protection standards.					
<b>Recommendation 6. In collaboration with relevant partners, identify and implement a set of measures to resolve the recurring supply chain challenges that have impacted the timely availability of specialized nutritious foods and disrupted nutrition interventions.</b>	Operational	Specialized nutritious foods working group and country office	Global headquarters including MENAEERO (Functions: PPG; Supply Chain Planning and Optimization Unit)	High	June 2026
6.1. Strengthen joint demand/supply planning and align with longer-term funding forecasts for specialized nutritious foods at the country office, regional office and WFP headquarters levels and develop contingency plans to mitigate supply disruptions.					
6.2. Invest in pre-positioning specialized nutritious foods (ideally inside Yemen or else in the region, depending on risks and funding) and ensure robust quality control processes, especially in light of the long lead-times for those foods, while considering regulatory constraints specific to Yemen.					

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>3PA</b>	Three pronged approach
<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to affected populations
<b>ACR</b>	Annual Country Report
<b>AO</b>	Area office
<b>APP</b>	Analysis, Planning and Performance Division
<b>BR</b>	Budget revision
<b>BSFP</b>	Blanket supplementary feeding programmes
<b>BSP</b>	Bilateral Service Provision
<b>CBT</b>	Cash-based transfer
<b>CCCM</b>	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
<b>CEE</b>	Corporate Emergency Evaluation
<b>CERF</b>	Central Emergency Response Fund
<b>CFM</b>	Community feedback mechanism
<b>CHV</b>	Community health volunteer
<b>CO</b>	Country Office
<b>C-MAM</b>	Community-based MAM
<b>CP</b>	Cooperating partner
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistical Organization
<b>CSP</b>	Country Strategic Plan
<b>CV-TN</b>	Commodity Voucher Trader Network
<b>EB</b>	Executive Board
<b>DG ECHO</b>	European Commission Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Question
<b>ETC</b>	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
<b>FAO</b>	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FCS</b>	Food consumption score
<b>FDP</b>	Final distribution point
<b>FFA</b>	Food assistance for assets
<b>FFT</b>	Food assistance for trainings
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussion
<b>FLA</b>	Field-level agreement
<b>FO</b>	Field office
<b>FSAC</b>	Food Security and Agriculture Cluster
<b>FSLA</b>	Food security and livelihood assessment
<b>FSRRP</b>	Food Security Response and Resilience Project
<b>GCMF</b>	Global Commodity Management Facility
<b>GFA</b>	General food assistance
<b>GPC</b>	Global Partner Countries Division
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian country team
<b>HNO</b>	Humanitarian Needs Overview
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters

<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>HTS</b>	Holistic Tracking System
<b>IAHE</b>	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
<b>ICA</b>	Integrated context analysis
<b>ICSP</b>	Interim Country Strategic Plan
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>IFI</b>	International financial institution
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IP</b>	Implementation Plan
<b>IPC</b>	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
<b>IRG</b>	Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen
<b>IYCF</b>	Infant and young child feeding
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview
<b>MAD</b>	Minimum acceptable diet
<b>MAM</b>	Moderate acute malnutrition
<b>MDD-W</b>	Minimum dietary diversity for women
<b>MoPHP</b>	Ministry of Public Health and Population
<b>MPC</b>	Multilateral and Programme Country Partnerships Division
<b>MSNAP</b>	Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan
<b>MUAC</b>	Mid-upper arm circumference
<b>mVAM</b>	mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping
<b>NBP</b>	Needs-based plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OECD DAC</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OSESGY</b>	Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen
<b>PBWG</b>	Pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls
<b>PCS</b>	Private Partnerships Division
<b>PiN</b>	People in need
<b>PPG</b>	Programme Policy & Guidance Division
<b>PSEA</b>	Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>RBC</b>	Regional Bureau in Cairo – for the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe
<b>RRM</b>	Rapid response mechanism
<b>SAM</b>	Severe acute malnutrition
<b>SBA</b>	Sana'a-based authorities
<b>SBCC</b>	Social behaviour change and communication
<b>SCD</b>	Supply Chain & Delivery Division
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SFHRP</b>	School feeding and humanitarian relief project
<b>SFP</b>	School feeding programme
<b>SNF</b>	Specialized nutritious food
<b>SO</b>	Strategic Outcome
<b>SUN</b>	Scaling up nutrition
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of change
<b>TPM</b>	Third party monitoring or monitors

<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHAS</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>US</b>	United States of America
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VAM</b>	Vulnerability analysis and mapping
<b>WASH</b>	Water, sanitation and hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>YAR</b>	Yemen Arab Republic

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