



# Evaluation of Türkiye country strategic plans 2018-2025

## CONTEXT

Türkiye is a G20 member and upper-middle-income country, which has experienced continuous economic growth and made significant progress in reducing hunger of the past two decades.

Since 2014, Türkiye has hosted the world's largest refugee population, with 3.3 million refugees as of September 2024. Refugees face food insecurity due to limited employment, low incomes, and rising food prices.

Twin earthquakes struck southern Türkiye on 6 February 2023, directly affecting 9.1 million people across 11 provinces. The disaster claimed over 50,000 lives, injured over 100,000, and displaced 3 million individuals.

## SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The Turkey transitional interim country strategic plan (T-ICSP), Türkiye interim country strategic plan (ICSP) and Türkiye country strategic plan (CSP) were approved by the WFP Executive Board in February 2018, November 2019 and November 2022, respectively. These consecutive programming documents reflected strategic shifts aimed at adapting to the evolving needs of vulnerable populations, including Syrian refugees, host communities, and victims of the February 2023 earthquakes.

Under the T-ICSP, the original Needs-Based Plan increased to USD 1.67 billion following the third budget revision, with 1.1 billion allocated and over 1.7 million beneficiaries reached. Under the ICSP, the plan increased from USD 225 million to USD 250 million following the second budget revision and allocated resources reached 80 percent. Under the CSP, the plan increased from USD 95 million to USD 187 million following the second budget revision. As of September 2024, allocated resources were 63 percent, and over 2.2 million beneficiaries have been reached, most of them as part of the earthquake response.

## OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The main purpose of the evaluation was to provide evaluative evidence for accountability and learning to inform the design of the next CSP for Türkiye. The

evaluation covered interventions implemented under the three country strategic plans between January 2018 to mid-2024.

The evaluation assessed: WFP's strategic positioning and the extent to which the organization made the shifts expected under the CSP; WFP's effectiveness in contributing to strategic outcomes; the efficiency with which the CSP was implemented; and factors explaining WFP's performance.

The main intended users of the evaluation are the WFP country office, and technical divisions at headquarters, the Government of Turkey, the WFP Executive Board, partner United Nations entities, and donors.

## SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHTS

### 1. Strategic relevance and coherence

WFP's work in Türkiye has been largely responsive to national priorities, notably through cash-based transfer assistance for refugees and earthquake response. However, its transition to development-oriented interventions following the handover of the emergency social safety net (ESSN) to partners faced significant hurdles and challenges to WFP's internal coherence due to inconsistent strategic planning, an underdeveloped intervention logic, limited engagement with government institutions, and external socio-economic and political factors.

While the country strategic plans demonstrated contextual relevance, being aligned with Türkiye's migration management strategies, a lack of strategic progression and weak integration with national systems hindered WFP's ability to leverage its comparative advantages and fully embed itself within Türkiye's development framework.

### 2. Evidence-based and adaptive planning

WFP remained aligned with its mandate by employing an evidence-based approach under all three country strategic plans. The organization adapted its programmes through

timely adjustments and budget revisions in response to evolving needs and major shocks such as the economic downturn, COVID-19 pandemic, and the February 2023 earthquakes, demonstrating contextual sensitivity and flexibility in its humanitarian approach.

### 3. Results and sustainability of emergency programmes

WFP's humanitarian and emergency responses were generally effective, meeting immediate needs and managing crises successfully. WFP's refugee and emergency programmes helped stabilize living conditions and improved access to essential needs and services. For example, the e-voucher programme in camps enhanced autonomy, dignity and psychosocial well-being, though the assistance amount often failed to meet basic needs, especially for vulnerable groups like refugees with disabilities, elderly individuals, and single-headed households. In addition, the earthquake response stood out for its rapid and large-scale delivery.

Efforts such as capacity strengthening of the Turkish Red Crescent for the management of the ESSN contributed to some progress toward sustainability.

### 4. Results of livelihoods and development programmes

Development-oriented activities such as livelihoods support and technical assistance yielded individual short-term gains, particularly in beneficiary employability and social cohesion by including vulnerable host populations. However, inconsistent integration with national frameworks hindered their potential for expansion and sustainable outcomes at scale. Contributing factors included legal and social barriers for refugees, economic shocks, and internal planning gaps that limited WFP's ability to bridge the gap between short-term relief and long-term development.

Early recovery interventions after the earthquake response showed mixed results due to limited scale, funding constraints, and resource-intensive design.

### 5. Cross-cutting themes: Inclusion, accountability to affected people, gender, and environment

WFP's programmes upheld humanitarian principles, providing impartial and needs-based support to vulnerable groups. However, limited direct engagement with affected populations, some temporal gaps in feedback and complaints mechanisms, and weak integration of environmental considerations diminished WFP's performance in this regard. While notable efforts and progress on disability inclusion and gender equity were made, systemic barriers and inconsistencies across CSP activities remained present.

### 6. Resourcing and efficiency

WFP effectively used flexible donor funding and advance financing to sustain critical operations like the ESSN and earthquake responses. Nevertheless, the absence of a resource mobilization strategy, over-reliance on short-term funding, and the high cost per beneficiary in livelihood programmes restricted scalability and cost-efficiency in

interventions. The ESSN programme utilized 99 percent of its budget and adapted quickly to inflation.

### 7. Factors affecting performance: Partnerships, human resources, and monitoring

Strong partnerships enabled robust delivery in key areas such as ESSN and earthquake response, but overall effectiveness was constrained by limited strategic engagement, low visibility, and inconsistent coordination. Internally, WFP lacked strategic workforce planning and inadequate retraining, which led to skill mismatches. Several workforce reductions over the years further weakened institutional capacity.

Finally, WFP Türkiye maintained a strong monitoring system, adhered to corporate monitoring standards and produced quality, disaggregated data, while its knowledge management system remained underdeveloped, limiting organizational learning.

#### Lessons learned

- Integrating humanitarian programmes into national social protection systems boosts scalability, efficiency, and sustainability;
- Cash transfers yield higher benefits if better tailored to individual needs of beneficiaries (e.g. women, persons with disabilities, etc);
- A proactive integration of protection into cash-based assistance programmes enhances their capacity to identify and address vulnerabilities among beneficiaries;
- For broader results in a development-oriented programme in a middle-income context, a stronger integration in government-led processes is essential;
- Flexible overhead rates may make WFP more competitive to secure funding in development-focused settings; and
- Economic competition between host communities and refugees can intensify social tensions, making it critical to design livelihoods programmes that emphasize mutual benefits.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1.** Strategically reposition WFP in Türkiye considering WFP's recognized global comparative advantages and establish contingency plans to ensure programme viability under the low-funding context.

**Recommendation 2.** WFP should develop a strategic framework for its support to community resilience in alignment with national priorities.

**Recommendation 3.** Support the government's efforts to enhance emergency preparedness and response capacities in areas prone to shocks and stressors, particularly at subnational level.