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# Evaluation of Guatemala WFP Country Strategic Plan 2021–2025

## Context

Guatemala is a middle-income country with approximately 17 million inhabitants of which 56% live in poverty. Close to half of the population identifies as indigenous Maya, Xinka or Garífuna, with these populations facing intersecting inequalities and discrimination affecting women and girls in particular.

It ranks number 10 globally among the countries with highest risk of extreme climatic events. The rates of malnutrition are among the highest in the Central and Latin America region, as 45.8 and 47.1 percent of under-5 girls and boys, respectively, suffer from stunting, with a prevalence of 61.2 percent in indigenous girls.

From January 2024 the newly elected government set its commitment to combat malnutrition through the General Government Policy for 2024–2028 in line with the National Food Security and Nutrition Policy.

## Subject and focus of the evaluation

The Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for Guatemala (2021–2025) was originally planned for the period from 2021 to 2024 but was extended until 2025 to align with the UNSDCF and the Government administration cycles.

The CSP was designed to continue the shift from direct emergency assistance to strengthening national systems for food security and nutrition, initiated during the first CSP. It was approved at USD 158 million, but increased to USD 438 million, mainly to respond to typhoons Eta and Iota, the Covid pandemic and Government's request for support from WFP's procurement and logistics services for national food security and nutrition programmes. As of July 2024, the CSP was funded at 55 percent, with on-demand services as the only fully funded component, constituting more than half of the total allocated resources.

## Objectives and users of the evaluation

The evaluation served both accountability and learning purposes to inform new programming of the next CSP, to be presented at the first regular session of the Executive Board in 2026.

The main users of the evaluation are the WFP Country Office (CO) in Guatemala, the Government of Guatemala, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO), various divisions at WFP headquarters in Rome, the Executive Board of WFP, CSP beneficiaries and WFP partners such as non-governmental organizations, those in the private sector and academia.

## Key evaluation findings

### Relevance and adaptability

The CSP model was appropriate and relevant to the context and people's needs, and it was aligned with national policies on food security and nutrition. WFP demonstrated the ability to adapt to a dynamic context, adjusting its operations to ensure the continuity of assistance and expanding its coverage in response to emerging needs, namely during the typhoons Eta and Iota and the Covid-19 pandemic 2019–2021.

### Effectiveness and sustainability

The CSP responded both to immediate needs and long-term structural challenges, by strengthening national social protection programmes and addressing resilience at community level, for instance by improving smallholder farmer's position in the supply chain and ability to protect against climatic events. Effectiveness and sustainability of results were negatively affected by insufficient integration of activities during implementation, limited institutional anchorage within the Government, and decreasing funding.

Notably, WFP contributed to ensuring food security during crisis by complementing the Government response with cash-based transfers and country capacity strengthening interventions. Due to the funding shortage from 2022 and onwards, WFP balanced the coverage of assistance with maintaining a sufficient transfer value per person to ensure meaningful contributions to food security.

In terms of nutrition, WFP complemented national nutrition interventions, playing a key role in the provision of on-demand services to procure and distribute Fortified Complementary Food (FCF), and to generate evidence that helped Government track progress and adjust its programmes. Integrated health and nutrition brigades were launched during the pandemic by UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and the EU reaching between 3,000 and 20,000 people annually (2021–2023). These were an effective way to improve nutrition, although coverage and continuity of interventions were negatively affected by funding constraints.

From 2021, WFP has been procuring and transporting most of the Ministry of Agriculture food for its national food assistance programmes to over 300 municipalities. WFP's services have improved the efficiency and transparency of national programmes. On average cost reduced by 29% for key food products between 2020 and 2024 and availability of food and non-food items increased by 14%. The evaluation identified sustainability limitations and potential reputational risks as agreements did not include capacity strengthening elements, and WFP lacked visibility of the final distribution point of the items procured.

### **Cross-cutting issues**

WFP has well-established and effective protection and accountability mechanisms, including strong field staff engagement. However, more accessible channels for vulnerable groups to provide feedback remain a challenge.

WFP Guatemala has implemented the corporate and regional gender and inclusion strategies, with particular focus on economic empowerment. Likewise, WFP promoted cultural appropriateness of its programmes, by ensuring the translation of materials into indigenous languages.

Efforts to promote equal opportunities for persons with disability were less evident, and WFP could have made more use of prior consultation and indigenous knowledge in programme design.

In terms of climate change mitigation and environmental protection, these were key elements of the farmers' training under the resilience component. However, the evaluation found challenges in beneficiaries' access to climate information.

### **Efficiency of WFP operations**

The evaluation observed general efficiency in the implementation of the CSP activities, except for slow execution of resilience activities, which could be attributed to constrained WFP staffing and organisational arrangements.

WFP has optimized the use of its resources through strategic partnerships with government counterparts, local NGOs, academic institutions, and the private sector, which helped ensure cost-efficient and timely delivery of crisis response, procurement, and logistics.

To respond to emerging needs, over the CSP, the CO grew from 30 to 140 staff, with new specialized profiles in key areas such as resilience, adaptive social protection, and logistics created. This helped strengthen WFP's operational capacity, competence, and efficiency, though not without challenges to coordination and strategic alignment.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

### **Overall assessment**

The evaluation concludes that the CSP 2021–2025 was appropriately designed in relation to needs, and coherent with government aims, to support national policies and programmes with the purpose of improving food security and nutrition, respond to climate related shocks and build community resilience. Overall WFP Guatemala performed efficiently and effectively, although funding levels and the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down execution of the resilience work in the first years of the CSP. The most significant results achieved are 1) food assistance for more than half a million people in 2021 in the aftermath of the typhoons and the pandemic, 2) increased incomes for smallholder farmers, 3) increased economic empowerment of thousands of indigenous women through savings groups, and 4) improved economy, efficiency and transparency for national social protection programmes supported by WFP services.

### **Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1.** Strengthen coherence and effectiveness of the CSP by defining a strategy that articulates the combination of strengthening national and local institutional capacities with interventions at the local level.

**Recommendation 2.** In dialogue with the national counterparts, define a strategy for ensuring the sustainability of the improvement in the procurement and distribution processes through capacity strengthening in the relevant institutions.

**Recommendation 3.** Strengthen the capacities of WFP and its partners at the local level.

**Recommendation 4.** Maintain and reinforce a culturally appropriate and inclusive approach to implementation of the CSP.

**Recommendation 5.** Further strengthen the implementation of the regional gender policy and strategy, challenge gender stereotypes and encourage shared responsibility for domestic and care tasks in all WFP activities.