Baseline Study for the USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions of Ethiopia (September 2024 – December 2029)

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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

1. This baseline study was commissioned by the WFP Ethiopia Country Office for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition project in Ethiopia, which runs from September 2024 to December 2029. The evaluation cycle contains three exercises, this baseline study (2025), a midterm evaluation (2027) and a final evaluation (2029), which will cover the full project duration.

2. **Objectives**. The baseline and subsequent evaluations serve the dual purpose of accountability and learning objectives. The baseline focuses on answering the key evaluation questions, establishing baseline values of outcome indicators and informing USDA learning questions:

- What community-level systems of governance and management are required for the successful implementation and sustainability of the school meals project?
- What are the long-term impacts (five or more years) of school meal programs on local agriculture production and food safety and what variables affect these changes?
- What types of private sector or government partnerships most effectively support program sustainability? Who are the key actors and their roles in successful partnerships? In which contexts do these partnerships thrive, and where are they more challenging?

3. **Context**. Ethiopia, a landlocked country in the Horn of Africa with 135.5 million people, ranks 180 out of 193 on the Human Development Index.[1] Poverty has worsened since 2016, with 32 percent of the population living below USD 2.15 per day and 68.7 percent classified as multidimensionally poor as of the most recent reporting.[2] An estimated 15 million people face food insecurity in 2025 due to failed harvests, internal conflict, and weather-related shocks, with households spending on average 63 percent of their expenditures on food.[3] Malnutrition is widespread, particularly in Afar where Global Acute Malnutrition exceeds 20 percent, and disease outbreaks such as cholera, malaria, measles, and dengue are compounded by displacement, poor sanitation, and limited access to treatment.[4] Education indicators remain low, with particularly poor pre-primary enrollment in Afar and Oromia. While primary enrollment exceeds 100 percent nationally due to over- and under-age learners, rates are far lower in Afar.[5] Girls face barriers from domestic work and early marriage, contributing to dropout rates above 20 percent in some areas. Children with disabilities have extremely low participation, with pre-primary enrollment rates below 2 percent in both regions. Learning environments are affected by high pupil-section ratios in Oromia, limited access to electricity, and shortages of teaching materials. WASH coverage is limited, especially in rural areas and Afar, with high rates of open defecation and low access to basic sanitation and hygiene facilities. Among schools, only about one-third have functional water supply and most lack adequate handwashing facilities.

4. The national school feeding project reaches about one quarter of school-aged children through home grown, in kind, and emergency modalities, supported by strong policy commitments in the Ten-Year Development Plan, the National Food and Nutrition Strategy, and the Seqota Declaration. The 2021 National School Feeding Policy and Strategy formally integrated meals into the education system, with implementation led by a dedicated School Feeding Directorate, regional agencies, and links to school health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition education. Agricultural development priorities, including the Agricultural Growth Programmes and the Digital Agriculture Roadmap, aim to improve smallholder productivity and strengthen farmer linkages for local procurement. International assistance from the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education, and UNICEF complement these national efforts by improving education quality, nutrition, and resilience. Within this framework, the McGovern-Dole project is designed to expand access to education for girls and students with disabilities and to strengthen agricultural and food security by using school meals to catalyze local procurement, improve household diets, and build resilient local food systems.

[1] UNFPA World Population Dashboard. Accessed 5 August 2025. and UNDP. 2025. Human Development Report.

[2] World Bank. 2025. Ethiopia Macro Poverty Outlook. and UNDP. 2024. Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024.

[3] Food Security Information Network. 2025. Global Report on Food Crises. and FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2023. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023

[4] FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2023. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023

[5] Ministry of Education. 2023. Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2022/2023.

5. **Project scope and subject of the evaluation.** The FY24 McGovern-Dole project (2025-2029) builds on prior USDA support in Ethiopia for pre-primary and primary school children in 343 schools in Afar and 157 schools in Oromia continuing from the FY18 project. The study covers all project activities in all targeted areas; project activities include school feeding, WASH, health and nutrition, literacy, and smallholder farmer activities. The study gives particular attention to children's access to education and health, nutrition, and reducing disparities between women, men, girls, and boys. The project aims to strengthen government capacity to manage and sustain a nationally owned school meals project school meals project, with the goal of transitioning USDA-supported schools to full government ownership by the end of the project.

6. **Intended users and audience.** The expected users of the evaluations include USDA and other donors; WFP stakeholders at national, regional, and corporate levels; governmental and non-governmental partners; and communities and beneficiaries the project is intended to serve. Primary users of the baseline findings are WFP Ethiopia, the Regional Office in Nairobi, and WFP headquarters units for School Meals, Social Protection, and Evaluation. The Ministry of Education and regional education bureaus will also use the findings to guide project management and policy alignment. Other key stakeholders include implementing partners, local government, and community representatives. Findings will inform operational and strategic decisions, strengthen accountability, and support learning for the school feeding sector in Ethiopia.

7. **Methodology**. The baseline study employed a mixed-methods approach combining desk review of secondary sources with primary data collection via three surveys (at school, student and parent level) and an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) administered to students in grades 2 and 3. The quantitative and qualitative analysis drew on data from a representative sample of 56 schools across Afar and Oromia, targeting pre-primary and primary school children through school feeding, WASH, health and nutrition, literacy, and smallholder farmer support. The methodology was informed by inception phase consultations and an evaluability assessment and is summarized in an evaluation matrix detailing the data collection methods, tools, sources, analysis and validation techniques. The baseline also examined the validity of the assumptions and intended pathways of the project theory of change, which will serve as a theoretical basis for the midterm and final evaluations. The study engaged a wide range of beneficiaries, including students, school staff, cooks, administrators, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and school committees, ensuring diverse perspectives across stakeholder groups. The evaluation questions and tools examined how the project addressed disparities between girls and boys, women and men, and persons with disabilities, assessing differences in participation and outcomes and identifying contextual barriers.

8. The study was timed to enable the finalization of baseline findings and reporting ahead of the 2025-2026 school year. This required that the surveys and qualitative fieldwork be conducted in parallel in order to complete data collection before the conclusion of the current school year. Survey fieldwork took place between June 18-July 4, 2025; remote qualitative interviews by the core team extended into mid-August up to the submission of the first report draft and are spilling over into the review phase in order to inform the report revision process.

9. **Findings: Relevance.** *Contextual fit and local context.* The project focuses on *woredas* (districts) with severe food insecurity, low enrollment, and conflict- or weather-related shocks, integrating school meals with literacy, WASH, and community engagement. Separate transition plans, locally relevant menus, and materials in local languages ensure activities are tailored to regional contexts. The project builds on community participation in school feeding while addressing risks of overburdening low-income households. Capacity strengthening for government and direct procurement from farmer cooperatives help reinforce local food systems and program sustainability. The collaborative design process enabled alignment with the needs of target communities through school meals with complementary activities in literacy, WASH, infrastructure improvements, and smallholder farmer support.

10. *Quality education programming*. School feeding increases girls' school participation and retention and supports attendance for children with disabilities by reducing cost- and stigma-related barriers. Remaining challenges include inaccessible infrastructure, insufficient trained staff, lack of adapted facilities and materials, incomplete participation data, and social norms that discourage full participation.

11. *Alignment with National Policies and Strategies*. The design aligns with national education, nutrition, and school feeding frameworks, advancing objectives on dropout reduction, WASH integration, and institutional capacity strengthening. It supports the National HGSF Implementation Guidelines through government-led training, technical assistance, and infrastructure upgrades.

12. *Integration of Lessons from Previous Phases and Adaptability.* Design improvements draw on prior evaluations, including actions to strengthen menus, expand complementary literacy and WASH interventions, and improve monitoring. Flexibility is embedded through region-specific transition approaches, continued technical secondments, and procurement models adaptable to operational or contextual changes. Lessons integrated from earlier phases include strengthening the supply chain, improving monitoring systems, and enhancing commodity management and food safety. While there is a strong commitment to school feeding, previous evaluations found gaps in financing, coordination, procurement systems, and capacity to support school feeding without external support. The FY24 project design addresses financing and coordination gaps through technical support with targeted activities such as strengthening national and regional capacity to implement the school feeding program.

13. **Findings**: **Coherence**. *Alignment with other programs and partners.* The project is designed to complement and coordinate with other nutrition, education, and resilience initiatives in Afar and Oromia. Alignment is achieved through integration with regional school feeding plans, partnerships with UN agencies and NGOs, and joint capacity strengthening for government counterparts. Ongoing coordination mechanisms and information sharing are in place, though their effectiveness will depend on consistent engagement from all actors over the project cycle. The project's local procurement approach is also consistent with WFP's wider Local and Regional Food Procurement (LRFP) strategy, which engages processors, aggregators, and institutional buyers to strengthen value chains. LRFP interventions complement the project's focus on increasing smallholder farmer participation in school feeding.

14. **Findings**: **Effectiveness**. *Stakeholder perspectives on implementation readiness.* Regional stakeholders were confident in achieving planned nutrition and education outcomes; the evaluation team recommends adjustments to only one of the Life of Project targets in response to baseline results (see Annex 11 for full results). While the new partnership with Imagine1Day was expected to strengthen delivery, stakeholders stressed the need for balanced attention to literacy alongside school feeding and flagged risks to achieving local procurement objectives. Baseline indicators confirm that project schools are ahead of non-project schools in teacher training, infrastructure, and sanitation, supporting that planned outcomes are realistic. FGDs highlighted that stakeholders view school feeding as essential for improved learning and attendance, reinforcing expectations that outcomes are achievable.

15. *Teacher training and capacity development.* Teacher capacity in project schools is relatively strong with around 80 percent of teachers in both Afar and Oromia having received training in the past three years, according to head teacher reports. This foundation supports delivery of planned education quality interventions, interviews noted that these trainings are valued by teachers but emphasized the need for sustained follow-up and refresher trainings to maintain quality over time.

16. *School infrastructure for meals and learning.* Project schools are generally better equipped than non-project schools in food storage and preparation facilities, with significantly higher access to separate storage rooms and kitchens. However, covered eating areas are present in only one-third of project schools, and libraries remain limited at 20 percent, with no statistically significant difference from non-project schools.

17. *Sanitation, hygiene, and water facilities.* Project schools have higher coverage of improved latrines and separate facilities for boys and girls compared to controls. Access to improved water sources is also greater, with the largest gap in Afar. However, some schools still lack functional latrines, and over half have no electricity, limiting hygiene and food safety systems.

18. **Findings**: **Impact**. *Present state of educational outcomes and participation.* The study collected baseline measurements of outcome indicators for comparison at midterm and endline. At baseline, student attendance is roughly 76 percent overall, with similar rates between project and non-project schools. Qualitative data links the provision of school meals to more regular attendance, while cultural norms were frequently cited as impacting student enrollment. Roughly 80 percent of surveyed students between Grades 2 and 8 had passed their class, with little difference between project and non-project schools or across regions. Teachers perceived student performance and concentration to be positive overall, with only minor differences between project and non-project schools. Community support for girls' education is closely linked to the immediate benefits of school meals. While differences in enrollment between boys and girls were not statistically significant, stakeholders indicated enrollment disparity. Persistent gaps in adapted infrastructure, specialized support, and cultural attitudes continue to affect attendance and retention for these groups. Student enrollment, particularly in some project schools in Oromia, has been impacted by ongoing conflict

where some schools have been destroyed or rendered non-functional, disrupting education for these students.

19. *Agricultural production and food safety capacity*. Baseline evidence shows limited contribution of local agriculture to school feeding, particularly in predominantly pastoralist areas where extreme weather, infertile land, and low engagement in farming constrain production. Planned activities in FY24, such as conservation agriculture in Afar and expanded pulse production in Oromia, aim to increase local supply for school meals. Stakeholders expressed that it is unrealistic to expect significant contributions from pastoralist communities, though smallholders have expressed interest in increased participation in future school feeding efforts. Food safety capacity needs strengthening, with gaps in monitoring, infrastructure, and training, and school-level standards hindered by infrequent refresher trainings and high cook turnover, as school observations raised concerns about the cleanliness of food preparation areas.

20. **Findings: Sustainability**. *Government leadership and institutional capacity.* Government commitment to school feeding is increasing, with budget allocations set to expand under the FY24 project. Dedicated staffing structures, cross-ministry coordination, and phased transition plans in Oromia are strengthening institutional capacity. In Afar, reliance on seconded staff and limited district-level resources continue to hinder transition. Coordination is a key gap, with interviews identifying weak multi-sectoral engagement and an unclear division of roles at the national, regional, and district level. The FY24 design aims to strengthen coordination at these levels through the National Food and Nutrition Technical Committee. The sustainability plan addresses gaps identified in the 2021 SABER assessment.

21. *Financial commitment and resource mobilization*. Government financial contributions are growing but remain insufficient to cover full operational costs and are susceptible to shifting priorities. Delays in disbursement and limited cost-sharing mechanisms reduce project reliability, requiring stronger budget predictability and diversified financing models. Government and WFP stakeholders identified the lack of a dedicated national budget line for school feeding as a major constraint. Without a dedicated budget, they noted that in the past government school feeding funds have been reallocated to issues seen as more pressing, such as for emergency response.

22. *Community engagement and local governance.* School feeding committees and PTAs are essential to long-term sustainability, supporting mobilization, oversight, and local problem-solving. Capacity varies by socio-economic context, with weaker structures in low-income areas. Regional informants shared concerns that pastoralist communities especially would be able to mobilize and sustain school feeding, whether contributions are monetary or in-kind. The project focuses on strengthening these systems to improve resource management, performance monitoring, and accountability.

23. *Local procurement and supply chain systems.* Direct procurement from farmer cooperatives supports sustainability and local economic development. Significant contributions from smallholders are viewed as unrealistic as participation is constrained by low production, bundled tenders, and payment delays. Stakeholder noted challenges such as extreme weather, infertile soil, and low engagement in farming as pastoralism is primarily practiced in the target areas. The project aims to improve cooperative capacity, streamline procurement, and address storage and transport challenges, targeting identified challenges such as poor food safety capacity, weak infrastructure, and insufficient refresher trainings for staff

24. *Partnerships and multisector collaboration*. Ethiopia's membership in the Global School Meal Coalition and co-chairing of the East Africa Regional Network create opportunities for peer learning, advocacy, and technical exchange. Strengthened collaboration between the Ministry of Education, other ministries, and development partners will be critical to meeting national targets for universal school feeding, locally sourced commodities, and improved monitoring systems. Feedback from smallholder and government stakeholders indicated that strengthening partnerships with farmers is necessary for improved and sustained school feeding. Smallholders noted several gaps in resources and training that need to be addressed for effective procurement but expressed interest in future partnerships with the national school feeding project.

25. **Conclusions**: *Relevance.* The McGovern-Dole project is strongly aligned to national priorities and tailored to the complex socio-economic and cultural contexts of Afar and Oromia, targeting woredas with high food insecurity, low enrollment, and the compounded effects of extreme weather and conflict. Its design, developed collaboratively with government stakeholders, integrates school feeding with literacy support, WASH promotion, health and hygiene interventions, and agricultural activities, including support for smallholder farmers and school gardens. Strategies address barriers for girls and students with disabilities

through teacher training and community sensitization. Region-specific transition strategies, locally appropriate menus, and seconded school feeding staff further strengthen contextual fit. Interventions particularly consider pastoralist families and children facing challenges such as mobility and migration, and are consistent with the National Pastoralist Education Strategy. However, government systems still lack the capacity to independently implement adaptive measures without WFP support.

26. **Conclusions:** *Coherence.* The project exhibits strong internal and external coherence, aligning with WFP's broader education, nutrition, and resilience portfolio, and complementing government-led initiatives and donor-funded programs. Engagement in coordination platforms, such as the Education Technical Working Group, ensures alignment with national priorities, minimizes duplication, and supports integration with complementary sector plans. Mapping and planning processes strengthen synergies with WFP's other interventions, while partnerships with NGOs and community actors in WASH, nutrition education, health, and school gardens create an enabling environment for improved education and nutrition outcomes. This coordinated approach enhances efficiency and reinforces the foundations for sustainable school feeding.

27. **Conclusions:** *Effectiveness.* At baseline, the project's design and planned interventions position it to address key challenges in education, health, and nutrition, though measurable outcomes will depend on overcoming systemic and contextual constraints. Collaborative targeting, access measures for girls and students with disabilities, and integration of complementary activities are expected to enhance learning environments and attendance. Stakeholders expressed confidence in achieving outcomes but highlighted potential barriers such as reduced WFP staffing and procurement challenges. Baseline results show that project schools are better equipped in areas such as teacher training, infrastructure, and sanitation facilities compared to non-project schools. Effective delivery will require continued capacity building for government and community actors, strengthened monitoring systems, and timely resource flows, with close monitoring of new partnerships in the initial stages. Early implementation will be critical in demonstrating progress toward the project's intended results.

28. **Conclusions:** *Impact.* At baseline, a comparison of education indicators such as attendance, concentration and performance between project and non-project schools revealed that FY24 project schools, which have already received support in previous project phases, present better educational indicators on average. Teachers also reported generally higher engagement in project schools. Literacy outcomes are low at baseline, with over 65 percent of project and non-project school students classified as non-readers. Interviews revealed that school feeding often receives greater emphasis compared to literacy interventions, highlighting a gap in literacy efforts. Community support for girls' education is closely tied to the immediate benefits of food provision, and promotion of improved education access for students with disabilities remains limited due to infrastructure gaps, low awareness, and cultural barriers. While community perceptions on the importance of education have begun to shift, progress is limited. Project interventions target community interventions and aim to strengthen local ownership, promote participation for both girls and boys, and enhance commitment to education for all learners. Local agricultural contributions to school feeding are minimal in pastoralist areas, constrained by low productivity, environmental challenges, and weak food safety systems. Planned FY24 activities aim to improve smallholder production, strengthen food safety capacity, and address gaps, but sustained investment will be necessary for lasting impact.

29. **Conclusions:** *Sustainability*. Ethiopia has made progress toward sustainable, government-led school feeding through increased financial commitment, emerging institutional structures, and regional innovation, but transition readiness varies by region. Despite recent budget growth, the absence of a national budget line, weak cross-sector coordination, and unclear governance frameworks continue to hinder sustainability. Community-level structures such as PTAs and school feeding committees are critical but require capacity building and consistent integration into formal systems. The FY24 project's phased graduation plan, alignment with SABER-identified capacity gaps, and participation in the Global School Meals Coalition position it to strengthen the enabling environment for long-term sustainability beyond external support. However, challenges in capacity and resource limitations make full handover unrealistic for the FY24 project.

30. **Lessons**:

- School feeding improves access to education, but pairing it with strong literacy interventions, supported by a literacy-focused partner, will be key to achieving learning outcomes in a challenging context.

- Successful transition to government ownership requires not only local capacity but also fiscal space, budget lines, and coordination, underscoring the importance of clear transition pathways in project design.
- Future midterm and endline analyses would benefit from advanced statistical software such as Stata, SAS, or R, which provide stronger capabilities for complex analysis than SPSS.
- Data collection should be scheduled at least one month before final exams to avoid attendance disruptions and ensure sample targets are met. Allowing a minimum of four weeks for data collection would also provide time to verify teacher-reported information against school records without overextending resources.

1. Introduction

1.1. Study features

1. **Purpose and rationale.** This is a report for the baseline study for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition project, implemented by World Food Programme (WFP) in the Afar and Oromia regions of Ethiopia from September 2024-December 2029.[6] WFP aims to strengthen government capacity to oversee, manage, and sustain a nationally owned school meals project, with the goal of gradually transitioning USDA-supported schools to full government ownership by the end of the project.

2. **Objectives.** The baseline study served dual and mutually reinforcing purposes of accountability and learning. Its objectives were to:

- provide a situational analysis of the pre-project context;
- establish baseline values for outcome indicators, and inform the design and implementation of monitoring activities;
- revisit and confirm the suitability of project targets; and
- answer the evaluation questions, including USDA Learning Agenda Questions outlined in Section 2.2.

3. **Subject and scope.** The USD 27.5 million FY24 McGovern-Dole project builds on prior USDA support in Ethiopia to deliver school feeding, WASH, health and nutrition, literacy, and smallholder farmer activities, targeting pre-primary and primary school children in Afar and Oromia. The baseline study covers all programmatic activities funded by USDA's McGovern-Dole funding in the two target geographic areas. The study considered issues focusing on access to education and health, including nutrition, and the reduction of disparities between women, men, girls and boys.

4. **Stakeholders.** The expected users of the evaluations include WFP stakeholders at national, regional, and corporate levels; USDA and other donors; governmental and non-governmental partners; communities and beneficiaries the project is intended to serve.

5. **Evaluation timing and approach.** The baseline study took place at the beginning of the 5-year project lifespan (2024–2029) and in the context of decreasing humanitarian and development funding globally.[7] The baseline study was the first exercise in the evaluation cycle; a midterm evaluation is planned for 2027, followed by a final evaluation in 2029. The report was informed by a remote inception mission, evaluability assessment, secondary literature and desk review, and primary qualitative and quantitative data collection. The methodology and study approach were first documented in an inception report, which was reviewed and quality assured by WFP evaluation officers. Survey fieldwork took place between June 18-July 4, 2025, at the very end of the 2024-2025 school year.[8] Remote qualitative interviews by the core team extended into mid-August up to the submission of the first report draft.

6. **Evaluation team.** The baseline was commissioned by the WFP Ethiopia Country Offices as a decentralized evaluation and was conducted by TANGO International, Inc. and its local partner in Ethiopia, Hermon Research Ltd.

1.2. Context

Overview

7. Ethiopia is a large, landlocked country in the Horn of Africa with a population of 135.5 million.[9] Despite an estimated economic growth of 8.1 percent in 2024, it remains one of the world's poorest countries.[10] Growth averaged 11 percent annually in the decade prior to 2019 but slowed in recent years due to overlapping shocks including internal conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, droughts, crop pests, and global

[6] NB: While funding falls under fiscal year 2024, implementation is expected to start only in September 2025.

[7] The evaluation timeline is presented in Annex 1.

[8] The last day of the 2024/2025 school year was July 7, 2025.

[9] UNFPA World Population Dashboard. Accessed 5 August 2025.

[10] World Bank. Last accessed June 2025. Ethiopia Country Overview.

disruptions linked to the Ukraine crisis.[11] A combination of rapid population growth and heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture leaves the economy highly susceptible to drought and other extreme weather-induced shocks. As of 2025, Ethiopia ranks 180 out of 193 in the Human Development Index.[12]

8. Poverty in Ethiopia has increased in recent years, with the share of the population living below the international poverty line (USD 2.15/day) increasing from 27 to 32 percent from 2016 to 2021.[13] The inflation rate has stabilized and foreign exchange conditions have improved since macroeconomic reforms were initiated in 2024. However, overall inflation is still high and weakened livelihoods continue to decrease household purchasing power. Ethiopia's multidimensional poverty index classifies 68.7 percent of the population as multidimensionally poor, with an additional 18.4 percent classified as susceptible to multidimensional poverty.[14]

9. The Ethiopian birr depreciated by 30 percent following the Government's adoption of a more flexible exchange rate policy in 2024.[15] Ethiopia remains in significant debt, with public and publicly guaranteed debt totaling USD 28.6 billion. While debt as a share of GDP declined from 49 percent to 40.2 percent by June 2023, overall debt levels remain high and continue to strain the country's fiscal outlook.

Food security, nutrition and health

10. **Food security.** Ethiopia is facing worsening food insecurity with 15 million people projected to be acutely food insecure and in need of emergency food assistance in 2025.[16] This reflects a broader trend, with the three-year average of 72.8 million people (2021–2023) in moderate to severe food insecurity, up from 69.9 million in the previous period.[17] On average, 63 percent of total household expenditure is spent on food, reflecting high levels of vulnerability.[18] Households face increased food insecurity due to the failed 2023 *kiremt (meher[19])* harvest, conflict-related livelihood disruptions, and extreme weather brought by the El Niño weather pattern during the 2023 *meher* season further contributing to crop failure, water shortages, and reduced livestock in Afar and Oromia.

11. **Nutrition and health.** In 2024, five million people in Ethiopia required nutrition assistance, including 28 percent of women, 72 percent of children, and 17.6 percent of people with disabilities.[20] An estimated 2.4 million children under five require treatment for moderate acute malnutrition, while an additional 942,000 children need treatment for severe acute malnutrition. Malnutrition rates exceed emergency thresholds in parts of Afar, with proxy Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates reaching over 20 percent among children under five. Nationally, malnutrition rates are high among pregnant and breastfeeding women and children, with 4.4 million in need of treatment as of 2025.[21] The prevalence of anemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) has risen substantially since 2012, reaching 23.1 percent in 2023.[22]

12. Beginning at the end of August 2022, Ethiopia was experiencing its longest recorded cholera outbreak with over 33,000 cases nationwide, including in the project regions; as of February 2024, Oromia was among the five regions with an active outbreak.[23] In 2023, the country recorded 3.7 million malaria cases, 30,389 measles cases, and 21,489 dengue cases. These outbreaks have been intensified by displacement, poor sanitation, and high levels of malnutrition. Access to treatment remains constrained due to conflict, damaged health infrastructure, and resource shortages.

[11] FAO. 2025. FAO in Ethiopia.
[12] UNDP. 2025. Human Development Report.
[13] World Bank. 2025. Ethiopia Macro Poverty Outlook.
[14] UNDP. 2024. Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024.
[15] World Bank. 2024. Africa Group 1 Constituency Annual Report.
[16] Food Security Information Network. 2025. Global Report on Food Crises.
[17] FAO. 2024. FAOSTAT - Ethiopia
[18] FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2023. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023
[19] The main harvest season, running from May to September.
[20] Ibid.
[21] WFP. 2025. WFP Warms of Rising Hunger and Malnutrition as Humanitarian Needs Outpace Resources.
[22] FAO. 2024. FAOSTAT - Ethiopia
[23] Ibid.

Education

13. **Access and enrollment.** Gross enrollment in pre-primary education remains low in Ethiopia, with national rates in 2022/23 at 48.8 percent for girls and 51.4 percent for boys, and a related sex parity index of 0.95.[24] There has been improvement in the gross enrollment ratio (GER) in pre-primary education, improving from 40:41 (female:male) in 2018/19 to 48.6:51.4 in 2022/23, although this still fell short of the target of 60. Regional disparities are significant; pre-primary enrollment is just 22.5 percent for girls and 24.1 percent for boys (GPI: 0.93) in Afar, and 44.9 percent for girls and 48.8 percent for boys in Oromia (GPI: 0.92).

14. At the primary level, national gross enrollment exceeds 100 percent due to over-age and under-age learners, with female and male enrollment at 100.6 and 110.0 percent, respectively. However, in Afar, primary enrollment remains low at 62.9 percent for girls and 75.1 percent for boys, while Oromia reports higher coverage with 110.6 percent for girls and 124.1 percent for boys. Social norms and stereotypes of boys and girls, including traditional expectations of domestic work and early marriage, limit girls' education, particularly in rural areas. This leads to reduced investment in schooling, driving high dropout rates during the transition from primary to secondary school.

15. **Repetition and drop-out rates.** At the national level, the primary school dropout rate is 16.0 percent (boys: 16.9 percent; girls: 14.6 percent).[25] Afar has the highest primary dropout rate at 20.5 percent (boys: 20.4 percent, girls: 20.7 percent). In Oromia, the primary dropout rate is 19.4 percent (boys: 19.8 percent, girls: 18.9 percent). Repetition rates remain low, at 2 percent in primary and 3 percent in middle school.

16. **Children with disabilities.** Children with disabilities in Ethiopia have extremely low participation in education across all levels.[26] Nationally, the gross enrollment rate for pre-primary education among children with disabilities is just 3.4 percent (3.8 percent for boys and 3.1 percent for girls). This represents an increase from 2018/19 when the rates were 1.5 percent of boys and 1.2 percent of girls. Regional disparities remain significant, with the pre-primary gross enrollment rate at only 1.5 percent in Afar (boys:1.5 percent; girls: 1.4 percent), while Oromia records an even lower rate of 1.1 percent (boys: 1.2 percent; girls: 1.0 percent). At the primary and middle school levels, national gross enrollment is 11.8 percent for children with disabilities, with 13.0 percent for boys and 10.5 percent for girls. Gross enrollment rates are especially low in Afar and Oromia, with rates of 6.0 percent (boys: 6.9 percent; girls: 5.1 percent for girls) and 6.2 percent (boys: 7.0 percent; girls: 5.4 percent), respectively.

17. **Learning environment and quality.** While most regions achieved a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) below 50, including Afar, Oromia exceeded this threshold at the primary level.[27] Nationally, the pupil-section ratio (PSR) for Grades 1–8 stands at 50.1, an improvement from 53.5 the previous year. PSR is higher in primary (51.5) than middle (44.3), with Oromia showing the largest variation between levels. The PSR for Afar was 29.1 for primary and 19.7 for middle school. Electricity access remains limited, with only 27.7 percent of primary and middle schools reporting availability; among those, 85.6 percent use hydropower. Persistent gaps in teaching and learning materials remain, as student textbooks and teachers' guides for the new curriculum were not printed or distributed during the reporting year.

WASH

18. Access to WASH services in Ethiopia remains limited. Nationally, 50 percent of households have access to basic water services, but coverage is less than 50 percent in Afar.[28] Moreover, only 40 percent of rural households have access, compared to 90 percent in urban areas. Just 6 percent of households use a basic sanitation facility. One in three households practice open defecation, with rates exceeding 50 percent in Afar. Basic hygiene access is also low: only 8 percent of households have a handwashing facility with soap and water, and over 70 percent of households in Afar and Oromia have no facility at all. Among primary and middle schools that responded to WASH-related questions, 36.2 percent reported access to a functional

[24] Ministry of Education. 2023. Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2022/2023.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. Progress in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Service Coverage in Ethiopia: What More Do We Need to Do and Why?

water supply, with piped water most common.[29] Of schools that reported on sanitation, 92.5 percent had functional toilets, 72 percent of which were improved. Additionally, 69 percent reported having functional toilets for teachers. In Afar, 42 primary and middle schools had separate toilets for boys and girls, compared to 5,546 schools in Oromia.[30] At the national level, 11,012 schools had separate toilets for boys and girls.

Government policies and priorities relevant to the project

19. **Overall.** Ethiopia's Ten-Year Development Plan (2021–2030)[31], which builds on the First and Second Growth and Transformation Plans (GTP I: 2010–2015[32] and GTP II: 2015–2020[33]) emphasizes agricultural transformation, human capital development, and food and nutrition security as key drivers of growth. School feeding is recognized as a critical intervention across multiple policy frameworks, including the National Social Protection Policy (2012), the Education Sector Development Plan (2020–2025), and the National Food and Nutrition Strategy (2021). The Seqota Declaration, a government-led commitment to end stunting among children under two by 2030, reinforces these efforts by accelerating implementation of the nutrition strategy through phased, multisectoral interventions.[34] As of 2023, Ethiopia's national school feeding project has expanded to cover approximately 25 percent of school-aged children through home grown, traditional (in-kind), and emergency modalities.[35]

20. **Commitments to the well-being of children.** The Government of Ethiopia has made wide-ranging commitments to the well-being of children through the ratification of key international and regional human rights instruments, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), both of which are incorporated into the Ethiopian Constitution.[36] The National Children's Policy (2017), affirming children's rights to survival, development, protection, and participation, and outlines mechanisms for safeguarding children from violence, neglect, and exploitation. The National Early Childhood Development and Education Policy Framework further highlights the need to protect susceptible children from harmful practices and abuse, strengthen child protection systems and ensure all children grow up in nurturing and responsive environments.

21. The Education Act (2024) states that primary education is free and compulsory, and that any child of school age has the right to free pre-primary, primary, and middle level education in public schools. The Ethiopian Constitution (1994) affirms girls' rights, including to education, while the revised Family Code (2000) enshrines equal rights in marriage and raised the legal age of marriage from 15 to 18. Education policies, including the Education and Training Policy and the Education Sector Development Program V, aim to increase access and retention for girls. Additional national frameworks, including the National Social Protection Policy (2015),[37] the Education and Training Policy (2023), and the Food and Nutrition Policy (2018),[38] emphasize children's rights to quality education, health care, and adequate nutrition. School feeding is positioned as a key intervention to support child development, reduce vulnerability, and uphold children's rights to food, education, and protection.

22. **Education.** The Education and Training Policy (2023), the Education Act (2024), and the Education Sector Development Programme VI (2020–2025)[39] outline the Government of Ethiopia's commitment to expanding access to quality education through the education system, aiming to improve foundational learning, reduce dropout and repetition rates, and enhance access for all learners. They also emphasize the integration of school health, nutrition, and WASH into the learning environment to support student wellbeing and improve educational outcomes. The Special Needs/Inclusive Education Strategy (2022/23–2029/30) reinforces these priorities by focusing on equitable access for children with disabilities and those with special

[29] Ministry of Education. 2023. Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2022/2023.
[30] Ministry of Education. 2023. Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2022/2023.
[31] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. Ten Years Development Plan (2021-2030) A Pathway to Prosperity.
[32] Government of Ethiopia. 2010. Growth and Transformation Plan (2010/11 – 2014/15).
[33] Government of Ethiopia. 2016. Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) (2015/16-2019/20).
[34] Government of Ethiopia. 2024. Seqota Declaration Resource Mobilization Plan.
[35] FAO. Last accessed June 2025. School food global hub: Ethiopia.
[36] Government of Ethiopia. 2023. National Early Childhood Development and Education Policy Framework.
[37] Government of Ethiopia. 2012. National Social Protection Policy.
[38] Government of Ethiopia. 2018. Food and Nutrition Policy.
[39] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. Education Sector Development Programme VI (ESDP VI) 2013 – 2017 E.C. 2020/21 – 2024/25 G.C.

educational needs.[40] The strategy promotes accessible infrastructure, adapted curricula, specialized teacher training, and resource centers, along with coordinated monitoring to support implementation across all education levels.

23. **School feeding policy and strategy.** In 2021, the Ministry of Education endorsed the National School Feeding Policy and Strategy, supported by a ten-year strategic plan to institutionalize school feeding within the national education system.[41] A dedicated School Feeding Directorate was established to lead implementation, and some regional governments, such as the Addis Ababa City Administration, have created independent school feeding agencies with budget lines to ensure localized ownership. The policy situates school feeding within broader school health and nutrition objectives, including creating child-friendly learning environments, promoting skills-based health and nutrition education, and increasing access and completion rates by reducing dropout and absenteeism in food-insecure areas.[42] Within this framework, WFP's structured local procurement from organized smallholder cooperatives complements the food basket provided through project resources, while voluntary community contributions from individual smallholders serve as occasional support mechanisms. Ethiopia has also engaged with the School Meals Coalition (SMC) to strengthen national school feeding efforts and align with international standards.[43]

24. National School Health and Nutrition Strategy (2012) promotes school feeding as an essential nutrition intervention to address malnutrition, improve attentiveness, and support better educational outcomes by alleviating short-term hunger and micronutrient deficiencies.[44] It calls for linkages between schools and health services, including regular nutritional monitoring, referral of malnourished children to appropriate care, and school-based delivery of micronutrient supplementation. Specific objectives under this strategy include nutrition education, school gardens, food standards, and community participation, prioritizing delivery in food-insecure areas. To ensure sustainability and ownership, schools and communities are encouraged to engage in planning and management of feeding projects, supported by coordination among the Ministries of Education, Health, and Agriculture.

25. **Smallholder farmer linkages and agricultural development.** Ethiopia's Ten-Year Development Plan (2021–2030) sets priorities for agricultural development, including expanding irrigation, improving mechanization, supporting horticulture and animal husbandry, and building institutional capacity in the sector.[45] Its objectives include improving rural livelihoods, increasing agricultural productivity and competitiveness, enhancing food and nutrition security, supporting agro-industrial linkages, and expanding value-added exports. Over the past three decades, the Government of Ethiopia has prioritized agricultural development as a key driver of economic growth.[46] It has introduced a series of policies and programs aimed at transforming the sector. These include:

- the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (2003–2005);
- the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (2006–2010);
- the Agricultural Sector Policy and Investment Framework (2010–2020), which emphasized smallholder capacity building, food security, crop diversification, and support for pastoral communities;
- the Revised Agriculture and Rural Development Policy, updated April 25, 2024 for the first time in over two decades;
- the Digital Agriculture Roadmap (2025–2032), which aims to transform the agricultural sector by leveraging digital technologies to improve productivity, resilience, and sustainability;
- the Agricultural Growth Programs (AGP) I and II (2011–2020), which focused on improving productivity and market access for key agricultural products, with AGP II expanding support for research, irrigation, marketing, and value chain development; and

[40] Government of Ethiopia. 2022. Special Needs/ Inclusive Education Strategy.
[41] Global Child Nutrition Foundation. 2021. Global Survey of School Meal Programmes: Ethiopia.
[42] School Meals Coalition. 2023. School Meals Case Study: Ethiopia.
[43] School Meals Coalition. 2023. SMC First Global Summit- Investing in Future Generations: Human capital, sustainable food systems and climate change action through school meals.
[44] Government of Ethiopia. 2012. National School Health and Nutrition Strategy.
[45] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. Ten Years Development Plan (2021-2030) A Pathway to Prosperity.
[46] Government of Ethiopia. 2020. Ethiopia's Long-term Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development Strategy (2020-2050).

- the Gender Equality Strategy for Ethiopia's Agriculture Sector (2017), introduced to enhance women's participation and empowerment in agricultural development.[47]

26. **Capacity building and project monitoring.** The Ten-Year Development Plan (2021–2030) highlights the need for strengthened institutional and human resource capacity to support monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems across sectors, including education and nutrition.[48] Priorities include equipping staff with relevant skills, integrating MRV with national data systems, enhancing coordination across administrative levels, and improving data accessibility through technology. Complementing this, the National School Health and Nutrition Strategy emphasizes the need for systematic capacity building at all levels to support the implementation of school health and nutrition activities.[49] The strategy focuses on equipping coordination staff with technical knowledge, promoting stakeholder engagement, and enabling regular data collection to support monitoring and evaluation.

27. **Administration.** The Ministry of Education is responsible for education policy, planning, and coordination.[50] Regional education bureaus are responsible for curriculum development and teacher training from pre-primary to middle school. They are responsible for the management of general education including recruitment of teachers. Oversight and decision-making are supported by a National Steering Committee, chaired by the Minister of Education, which brings together senior officials from federal and regional institutions, as well as representatives from civil society and development partners. While this structure is organized for the implementation of Education Sector Development Plans (EDSPs), it is not active in practice. The federal Government is responsible for higher education and general education falls under regional states. At the regional level, Regional Steering Committees serve as platforms for collaboration between government stakeholders, with Regional Education Bureaus acting as secretariats. Technical coordination and monitoring are carried out by the Technical Monitoring Group, which convenes federal and regional planners to assess progress, recommend actions, and coordinate review missions. Joint Consultative Meetings, held regularly, facilitate dialogue among national and regional education actors. Planning and implementation are guided by annual operational plans developed across all administrative levels.

Other international assistance in Ethiopia relevant to the project

28. Ethiopia has received international assistance from a number of organizations to support their education system. Between 2018 – 2025, international assistance from the World Bank aimed to improve general education in Ethiopia through partnership with the Ethiopian government and multiple donors, reaching 24 million students and training 102,117 teachers.[51] The Government of Ethiopia has partnered with the Global Partnership for Education since 2008 to enhance access and learning outcomes in education.[52] UNICEF also has a long history of working with the Ethiopian Government to strengthen education systems, improve child health and nutrition, and support susceptible communities across the country.

Other WFP Ethiopia Activities

29. Under its current Country Strategic Plan, WFP Ethiopia implements a range of activities in addition to the McGovern-Dole project.[53] Strategic Outcome (SO) 1 focuses on meeting the basic food and nutrition needs of crisis-affected populations and refugees through unconditional, nutrition-sensitive, cash-based and in-kind assistance, including school feeding and nutrition support. SO2 aims to build resilience among susceptible and food-insecure populations by providing daily school meals, nutrition-sensitive social protection, and support for smallholder farmers and pastoralists susceptible to extreme weather shocks. SO3 promotes improved consumption of high-quality, nutrient-dense foods among nutritionally susceptible groups through extreme weather-sensitive cash transfers, behavior change communication, and capacity building for government and private sector actors. SO4 provides advisory and technical services to strengthen national and regional systems in social protection, early warning, and emergency preparedness. SO5 offers

[47] Government of Ethiopia. 2017. Gender Equality Strategy for Ethiopia's Agriculture Sector.
[48] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. Ten Years Development Plan (2021-2030) A Pathway to Prosperity.
[49] Government of Ethiopia. 2012. National School Health and Nutrition Strategy.
[50] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. Education Sector Development Programme VI (ESDP VI) 2013 – 2017 E.C. 2020/21 – 2024/25 G.C.
[51] World Bank. 2024. Equitable access to quality education in Ethiopia.
[52] Global Partnership for Education. 2023. Ethiopia and GPE Partnership Compact.
[53] WFP. 2025. Ethiopia Country Brief April 2025.

logistics and aviation services to government and humanitarian partners to support effective and cost-efficient operations.

30. Between 2020 and 2024, WFP and partners supported HGSF and nutrition programs in across Ethiopia. France has funded HGSF projects with local procurement and support to farmers; Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) has provided funding for HGSF in southern Ethiopia; Save the Children implemented a school feeding project funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) across five regions, including Afar. [54] In 2024, WFP received international support through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative.[55] Through this initiative, WFP actively participated in the SUN UN Network, contributing to joint planning and performance reviews and advocating for the integration of nutrition programming into social protection projects.

[54] WFP. 2024. Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern - Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Programme's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions in Ethiopia (2019 to 2025).
[55] WFP. 2024. Ethiopia Annual Country Report.

2. Subject of the baseline

2.1 Subject of the baseline, theory of change, activities and intended outputs/outcomes

31. **Project design.** The FY24 USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition project (2024-2029) in the Afar and Oromia regions of Ethiopia will support school meals in Ethiopia to improve access to and quality of education and address health and nutrition needs of pre-primary and primary school children. In addition to the provision of school meals, the project will provide a comprehensive set of WASH, literacy and smallholder farmer support activities to improve access to and quality of education, as well as address the health and nutritional needs of pre-primary and primary students.

32. The FY24 project will have a focus on strengthening government capacity to oversee, manage and implement the national school meals project. Project schools will gradually transition to government ownership, with the full transition of all USDA-supported schools expected by the end of the FY24 project. [56] In Oromia, schools will receive USDA-funded, locally procured beans and complementary literacy and WASH interventions as part of the final stage of a gradual transition to full government ownership of the project. In Afar, WFP will begin the FY24 project by supporting schools with U.S.-provided commodities and will gradually hand over schools to the Government over four years.

33. To achieve this, WFP's strategy is structured around the following objectives[57]:

- Support the Government to develop and institutionalize an innovative, credible financing strategy that will ensure the national school feeding project is adequately resourced to reach all Ethiopian school children with nutritious, daily school meals by 2030.
- Strengthen institutional capacity at the federal, regional, and local levels to ensure efficient, effective, and quality implementation of the national school feeding project.
- Implement a holistic school-based project that advocates for embedding complementary literacy and child health interventions into the framework of the project national school feeding project to contribute to human capital development.

34. **Funding.** The McGovern-Dole award provides USD 27.5 million for the five-year project. The project builds on national education priorities and is intended to complement other ongoing investments in the sector, including a USD 107.59 million Global Partnership for Education grant and a USD 19.6 million Education Cannot Wait grant.[58] A subset of the schools targeted in the FY18 McGovern-Dole project will receive continued support in the FY24 project.[59]

35. **Geographic scope and beneficiary selection**. School feeding activities will be implemented in 500 schools in 32 *woredas* (districts) in Afar and Oromia, which are a subset of the schools which participated in the FY18 project.[60] This includes 343 schools in the Afar region and 157 schools in Oromia, with the goal to reach 153,439 pre-primary and primary students, taking into account the specific needs of boys and girls. A majority of woredas in Afar that received support under the FY18 project will continue to receive support in

[56] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[57] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

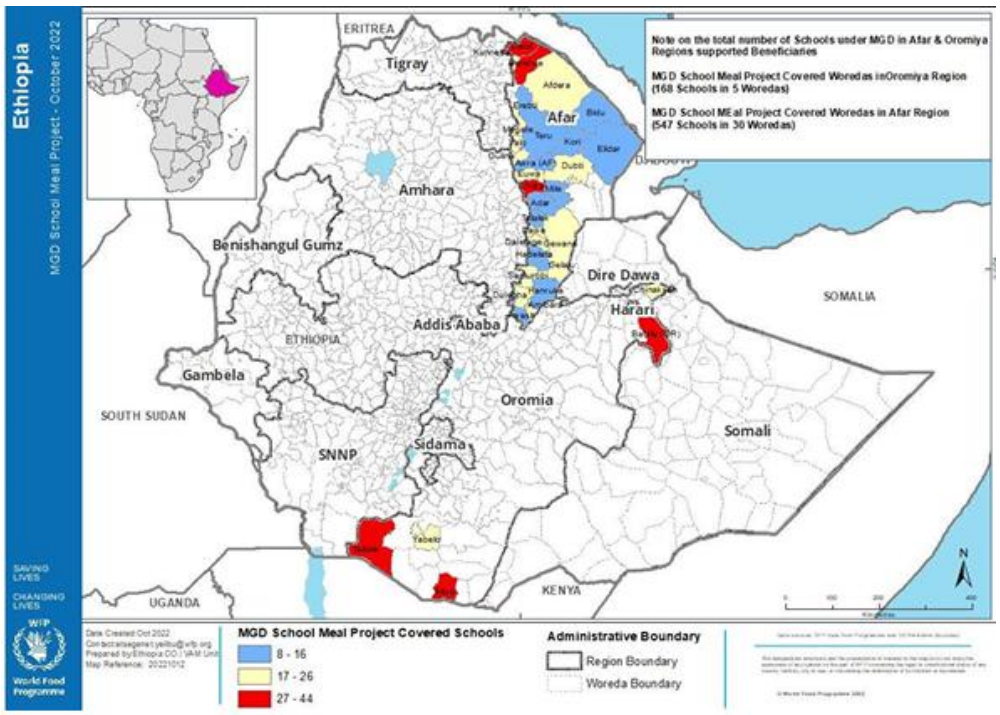
[58] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[59] WFP. 2025. Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference: Evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia regions of Ethiopia (September 2024 – December 2029). April.

[60] WFP. 2025. Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference: Evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia regions of Ethiopia (September 2024 – December 2029). April.

the FY24 McGovern-Dole project (i.e., 27 out of the 32 woredas supported under FY18). The woredas in Afar that were selected for the FY24 project continue to experience chronic food insecurity, as well as poor enrollment and retention.[61] The number of schools in Afar receiving support will be scaled down each year. In Oromia, the McGovern-Dole project will continue support in the same five woredas: Baabilee and Cinaaqsan in East Hararghe and Miyoo, Taltallee and Yaaballoo in Borana Zone.[62] By Year Four (2028-2029 school year), all schools in Oromia will transition to the Government's school feeding program.[63]

Figure 1: Map of project area



Source: WFP Ethiopia Country Office

36. **Partners**. The primary implementing partners for the McGovern-Dole project include the Ministry of Education, regional bureaux of education, finance and agriculture, and Imagine1Day.[64] [65]Additional partners for HGSF include FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNICEF, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other members of the United Nations Country Team. Partners which support the project, or other actors in the education sector, include Creative Associates, EDC, World Vision, Save the Children and other partners under the Education in Emergency Cluster.

37. **Theory of change**. The project's theory of change posits that *if* WFP provides targeted technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia, *then* the Government will be equipped to scale and sustain its

[61] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[62] At this time, the evaluation team does not have additional details about how support to schools will be scaled down across the life of the project.

[63] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[64] WFP. 2025. Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference: Evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia regions of Ethiopia (September 2024 – December 2029). April.

[65] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

home-grown school feeding project (HGSFP).[66] Further, *if* WFP and partners provide intensive training in evidence-based literacy teaching methods, equip communities and the Government to build and sustain school infrastructure, and increase community and government understanding of the importance of health and dietary practices, *then* the Government will be equipped to sustain the integrated literacy and WASH interventions that the McGovern-Dole investment has implemented. Ultimately, these interventions can increase enrollment and attendance of children, especially girls; improve literacy (MGD SO1); increase use of health, nutrition and dietary practices (MGD SO2); and improve effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional procurement (LRP SO1). WFP makes three general assumptions about the context needed for the project to achieve results: (1) schools remain accessible, (2) there is no war or conflict, and (3) the Government maintains its commitment to school feeding. The project theory of change is represented graphically in Annex 4.

38. The evaluation team finds that the logic of the results framework (Annexes 2 and 3) and the pathways as presented in the project theory of change (Annex 4) are valid. However, the associated assumptions are appropriate but incomplete. The explicit assumptions do not include specific reference to the necessary resourcing required to sustain school feeding, including government, partner and community funds or in-kind contributions, community uptake or the reliability of local and regional food supply, nor do they sufficiently address market volatility, extreme weather shocks, and subnational capacity constraints. The evaluation team recommends that specific reference be made to these additional assumptions, to ensure these are considered and addressed during the FY24 project. Table 19 in Annex 4 discusses the TOC assumptions in greater detail. The evaluation team used the results frameworks (Annexes 2 and 3) and theory of change (Annex 4) as the analytical framework for interpreting baseline data and for presenting insights as lessons to consider for implementation.

39. **Project activities.** The FY24 McGovern-Dole project in Ethiopia will implement a comprehensive set of school feeding activities, to include school meals, literacy, WASH, health and nutrition, smallholder farmer support and capacity strengthening activities.[67] A detailed overview of project activities is outlined in Annex 5. The main activities, in summary, are:

- Providing nutritious school meals;
- Strengthening national and regional capacity to implement the national home-grown school feeding project;
- Providing literacy instructional materials and promote usage;
- Providing training, professional development, and incentives to teachers and school administrators;
- Promoting improved health, hygiene, and dietary practices;
- Promoting importance of education;
- Supporting improved school infrastructure;
- Promoting safe food preparation, handling, and storage;
- Supporting improved production and market access for smallholder farmers; and
- Supporting school gardens.

40. **Enhancing access**. The project supports equal participation of girls, boys, women, and men, through school feeding interventions that promote access and agency. A WFP analysis conducted in Afar (Zone 1) and Oromia (Borena Zone) in Ethiopia found that the school feeding programming contributes to reducing disparities between girls and boys in school enrollment, attendance and drop-out rates.[68] Study participants also affirmed that the project increased girls' agency and self-confidence. However, it also found that that social norms continue to impede girls' advancement in education, and the school feeding project needs to make a more concentrated effort to engage women and girls at a level equal to men and boys. It highlighted the need for improved sex-disaggregated data and to strengthen the school feeding project's alignment with

[66] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[67] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[68] MoE, WFP, and UNICEF. 2024. Gender Analysis of School Feeding Programme in Selected Locations of Ethiopia.

national policies. These findings informed recommendations for increased collaboration across stakeholders and efforts to promote more accessible programming.

41. Additionally, the project design includes plans to integrate content addressing specific concerns and teaching practices related to instructing students with disabilities into teacher training materials.[69] Planned project activities include sensitizing teachers to help students with disabilities during mealtimes and sensitizing the community to the importance of education for students with disabilities. Moreover, the project plans to address some of the accessibility barriers to students with disabilities' learning, by providing items such as wheelchairs and ramps.

42. **Previous evaluations and reviews.** The FY24 project design was informed by FY13 and FY18 project evaluations,[70] a Value for Money study (2024) and the 2024 analysis of the school feeding program. The FY13 final evaluation found the project design relevant and effective in improving education indicators, but highlighted logistical challenges, limited community capacity, and unclear financing as barriers to sustainability.[71] Key recommendations included improving coordination, funding, monitoring, and equal access, and conducting needs assessments for future projects.[72] The FY18 midterm evaluation reaffirmed the relevance of school feeding, particularly for girls, and commended the program's adaptive responses to COVID-19, despite disruptions.[73]

43. The FY18 final evaluation confirmed positive impacts on education outcomes and raising community awareness of health and hygiene, but also noted shortcomings, including weak educational quality, challenges in meeting the target number of meals, largely due to COVID-19 disruptions, and frequent shortages of cooking and eating utensils. Despite improvements in staffing and data collection, the evaluation found persistent weaknesses due to an initially weak monitoring plan and limited follow-up on earlier recommendations. Key recommendations included strengthening M&E, building capacity, and applying lessons to the broader design and implementation of school feeding programs in Ethiopia.

44. In addition to the evaluations of previous McGovern-Dole project in Ethiopia, WFP supported a value for money study of school feeding programs. The value for money study, funded by NORAD and the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition of the School Meals Coalition, was published in October 2024.[74] It concluded that school feeding programs in Ethiopia are associated with substantial impacts on all sectors. School feeding beneficiaries would achieve an extra 2.3 years of education and would experience cumulatively 5 additional years lived in good health, compared to students who did not receive school feeding. School meals would replace 5 percent of annual food expenditures for the poorest households and equate to USD 50 million per year to Ethiopian smallholder farmers through local procurement. However, the study noted that more precise quantification of the value of school feeding could be assessed if data collection and management information systems related to school feeding were improved.

45. The FY24 baseline and subsequent evaluations assess how recommendations from these evaluations have informed the FY24 project design and implementation. Annex 6 provides a more detailed overview of previous evaluations and reviews.

2.2 Baseline study questions and criteria

46. The key criteria and questions for the baseline study adhere to the TOR; there have only been small changes in wording to improve clarity. While the TOR had listed questions on learning separately, the

[69] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007).

[70] Quantitative fieldwork for the FY18 endline evaluation took place from 18 November – 20 December 2024 followed by qualitative fieldwork from 3-28 February 2025. This baseline report refers to an advance internal copy (03 July 2025) of the final evaluation report.

[71] WFP Ethiopia. 2018. Final Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Somali Regions in Ethiopia 2013-2017: Evaluation Report – Final. June 15.

[72] As the FY13 project was implemented in different areas than the FY18 or FY24 project, the FY13 project only minimally informed the FY24 project design.

[73] WFP. 2024. Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern - Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions in Ethiopia (2019 to 2025).

[74] NORAD and Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition. 2024. Value for Money of School Feeding Programs in Ethiopia: Research Working Paper – October 16, 2024.

evaluation team addressed these questions with the findings from other study criteria (see Table 1 below). The extent to which FY18 midterm evaluation recommendations (highlighted in Annex 6, Table 20), have been incorporated into the FY24 project design are explored in the baseline findings under relevant evaluation questions. The evaluation questions (EQs) are shown below, categorized by DAC criteria.

Table 1: Baseline study questions and associated OECD criteria

Focus Area	Key Questions
Relevance	**EQ1.** Is the project design contextualized to reach the right target beneficiaries and meet their needs, especially women, girls and students with functional impairments? **EQ2.** To what extent does the project design align to national education and food security policies and strategies? **EQ3.** To what extent does the project align with the local socio-economic and cultural context of the targeted areas of the Afar and Oromia regions?[75] **EQ4.** How is the project relevant/aligned to the current food security and educational challenges in the targeted areas of the Afar and Oromia regions? **EQ5*.** What lessons from the previous project were considered in the FY24 project design and implementation plan? **EQ6.** Is the project adaptable to changing conditions and emerging needs in the target regions? Does the project have mechanisms in place to respond to unforeseen challenges/changes in the local context?
Coherence	**EQ7**. To what extent is the project coherent internally and with other projects in the target areas?
Effectiveness	**EQ8**. To what extent are planned outputs and outcomes realistic and achievable in the context of the target regions?
Impact	**EQ9**. What is the status of enrollment, attendance, attentiveness, literacy, retention, drop-out rates at baseline? **EQ10**. What is the status of community perceptions on the importance of inclusive education for girls and students with functional impairments? **EQ11*.** What are the long-term impacts (five or more years) of school meal programs on local agriculture production and food safety and what variables affect these changes?
Sustainability	**EQ12.** To what extent are the project arrangements, national capacity and context likely to sustain the implementation and results of the project, focusing on the context and the factors that may affect sustainability of the project, especially national government capacity for WFP to transition schools? **EQ13***. What kinds of partnerships (with the private sector and/or the Ethiopian Government) are the most effective at ensuring program sustainability? Among successful partnerships, who are the key players and what are their roles? In what contexts do private sector and/or government partnerships work best, and which contexts may be more challenging? **EQ14***. What community-level systems of governance and management are required for the successful implementation and sustainability of the school meals programme? **EQ15**. Are structures in place for transition to Government ownership of the programme?

[75] Adjusted EQs from TOR wording to specify "*targeted areas* of the Afar and Oromia regions," given the variable food security profile within the regions (especially Oromia, where the intervention area is pastoralist and highly food-insecure relative to other areas in the region).

Focus Area	Key Questions
	EQ16. What is the quality of the project's graduation timeline and sustainability plan?
* These questions were listed as separate questions on lessons and learning in the TOR,[76] but were incorporated into the discussion of evaluation criteria in this report. The baseline report has a separate lessons section related to findings around learning from the baseline study.	

3. Study approach and methodology

3.1. Study approach and methodology

47. The baseline study employed a mixed-methods approach to gather primary and secondary data. All data were triangulated across multiple sources of information to ensure and enhance the validity, reliability and credibility of findings. The data collection activities combined the following methods:

- Structured desk review of program information (such as project monitoring data and reports), relevant national policies, and previous evaluation reports.
- In-person quantitative surveys, including surveys with i) school staff and administration, ii) students, and ii) parents.[77]
- Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) with students in Grades 2 and 3.
- Qualitative fieldwork including semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with key informants (head teachers, grade teachers, government staff, WFP staff), and direct observation of school feeding and WASH infrastructure.

48. The methodological approach was developed to respond to the evaluation questions and to the required methodological principles listed in the TOR.[78] The selection of qualitative and quantitative methods complements the approach used in previous evaluation cycles to ensure comparability of results and was further tailored based on the results of the final evaluability assessment.[79] The study also examined the validity of the assumptions and intended pathways of the project theory of change, which will serve as a theoretical basis for the midterm and final evaluations.

49. The baseline study evaluation matrix, detailed in Annex 9, outlines evaluation questions and corresponding performance indicators, specific areas of inquiry, data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis and triangulation methods. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of primary data draws from a representative sample of 56 schools across Afar and Oromia. These approaches and sampling strategy are described in the following sections and detailed in Annex 7.

50. **People-centered programming**. The baseline study design included specific considerations to evaluate the project's people-centered programming and to consider the wide range of experiences among stakeholders and participants. The evaluation questions and tools explored where the project has made an effort to reduce disparities between girls, boys, women and men; successes and challenges; how the project affects boys and girls differently; and how the project has incorporated persons living with disabilities or functional impairments. The study assessed the project's people-centered programming in terms of the design, identified the contextual constraints and opportunities to achieving equal outcomes for girls and boys and reviewed how well the main actors have reached out to girls, boys, women, men, and persons with disabilities or functional impairments. The study adhered to the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) and considered the project's efforts to meet UN-SWAP requirements.

[76] The evaluation questions are taken from the Terms of Reference (Annex 8).

[77] School and parent surveys contained Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) questions.

[78] WFP. 2025. Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference: Evaluation of the United States Department of Agriculture McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia regions of Ethiopia (September 2024 – December 2029). April.

[79] Results of the final evaluability assessment are presented in Annex 9: Baseline study evaluation matrix.

51. **International humanitarian principles**. The study assessed the extent to which the FY24 project design adheres to the core humanitarian standards of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. The study team reviewed and evaluated project documents to assess 1) the project's use of context analysis and vulnerability assessments to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities of communities and participant groups, and 2) integration of protection measures into project design, implementation and monitoring. The baseline also collected stakeholder perspectives regarding WFP's adherence to humanitarian standards.

3.2. Methods and tools

52. **Data collection overview**. To provide baseline values for project performance indicators,[80] the study collected primary data through three quantitative surveys (at school, student and parent level) and administered an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) to students in grades 2-3. In each of the 56 sampled schools (28 project schools and 28 non-project schools), the following activities were conducted: 1 school survey, 20 student surveys, and 12 EGRAs. The parent survey was conducted with 10 parents in each of the project schools; it was not conducted in control school communities, as outcome indicators assessed through the parent survey were specific to the McGovern-Dole intervention. The study also involved a desk review of secondary sources (e.g., government policies, project planning documents, and outside sources for contextual information).

53. The school survey was administered with the head teacher in each of the 56 sample schools and included direct observation of school feeding and WASH infrastructure. For the student survey, 20 students were randomly selected from grades 2 through 8. An additional 12 students per school were selected from grades 2 and 3 to complete the EGRA. Given that students were selected using random sampling, the proportion of girls and boys and students with disabilities in the sample is determined by chance; the sample was statistically representative.

54. As noted in Sec. 1.2, sex-based parity sein enrollment is 0.93 in Afar and 0.92 in Oromia at primary level (high in Ethiopia),[81] which allowed for adequate proportional representation of both boys and girls in the sample. However, enrollment of students with disabilities is extremely low in the country and especially in Afar and Oromia. As a result, few students with disabilities were expected to appear in the sample, suggesting the need for a separate thematically focused study to fully address this theme.

55. In project schools, the parent survey was conducted with parents and/or caregivers of students attending the sampled schools, giving preference to: (i) parents/caregivers of students engaged in the student survey, then (ii) parents/caregivers of any student attending the sampled schools.

56. **Data collection tools.** The data collection tools were based on the tools used in evaluations of previous phases and modified to adjust for the evaluation questions specific to the baseline, drawing also from baseline tools used in similar McGovern-Dole school feeding evaluations. To ensure no previous exposure to the EGRA reading material, the reading content was updated at a comparable skill level. The tools were not tested in any sampled schools to avoid student exposure to the material in advance of the assessment. The survey tools were translated from English to Afar and Oromo languages prior to data collection. The translation was conducted by bilingual/multilingual researchers from Hermon, the local research firm, with back-translation to ensure translation accuracy and use of correct terminology. Translated versions of the tools were closely reviewed during the enumerator training and pilot testing of tools to ensure the questions were framed and worded to yield appropriate responses. Data collection tools are presented in Vol. 2, Annexes 11 (qualitative), 12 (quantitative), and 13 (EGRA).

57. **Training and piloting of tools.** Training was conducted for all field data collection staff, including enumerators and supervisors, prior to data collection. TANGO consultants (led by the Team Leader) provided training to Hermon supervisors on all quantitative and qualitative tools. Hermon supervisors then trained field enumerators in the local languages, as required, for the data collection activities. Training for enumerators took place between 15 – 17 June 2025, immediately prior to field work. The Hermon field teams conducted a pilot survey immediately after the training and adjusted the survey tools as necessary.

[80] See Annex 10 for Performance Indicator Overview.

[81] As noted in Section 1.2, national enrollment in 2022/23 was 48.8 percent for girls and 51.4 percent for boys, and the GPI is 0.95. Ministry of Education. 2023. Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2022/2023.

Sampling

58. **Quantitative sampling.** The study team considered the use of FY18 endline data, as suggested in the ToR, but conducted a new baseline survey for the FY24 project due to various methodological considerations. First, endline data collection for FY18 was completed in January 2025, which is a mid-school year measurement whereas the McGovern-Dole indicators call for measurement at the completion of the grade; this indicator is thus satisfied via baseline data collection in July, at the end of the school year. Second, only three of the ten logframe outcome indicators carry over from the FY18 to the FY24 cycle: while FY18 endline data can serve as the baseline for these three indicators, a new baseline survey remains necessary for the remaining seven. A hybrid approach was deemed inefficient, as the FY18 and FY24 surveys used different methodologies and formats and could not be easily reconciled. Third, the sampling design required to perform the Difference-in-Difference (DiD) analysis from baseline to endline must remain consistent across all survey rounds; again, the data management required if we had used FY18 endline data would be time-consuming due to differences in data formats between the FY18 endline and the FY24 baseline.

59. Primary data were collected from a representative sample of 56 schools, 28 each from the Afar and Oromia regions. In each region, 14 project and 14 non-project schools were sampled. As described above, the data collection team administered one school survey, 20 student surveys, 12 EGRAs, and 10 parent surveys in each school.[82] Comparison schools were selected from nearby woredas with similar socio-economic, demographic and cultural characteristics. See Annex 7 for information on sample weighting and other technical details of the sampling methodology.

60. **Qualitative sampling.** During the data collection phase, the study team conducted remote interviews with 15 key informants (14M, 1F) comprised of government officials (national and bureau-level) involved in the project and WFP staff.[83] The latter were selected based on their roles in project design, management and implementation, and purposively selected in collaboration with the WFP evaluation manager. The field team conducted an additional 20 interviews (18M, 2F) with woreda and school-level informants, as well as 21 focus group discussions (136 total participants; 95M, 41F). See Annex 12 for a summary of people interviewed, by stakeholder category, in the inception and data collection phases.

Data analysis

61. **Overview.** TANGO combined several analytical approaches aligned with the study design and data collection methods, namely semi-structured thematic literature review, qualitative iterative analysis, and structured quantitative analysis. The team adopted a strategy of triangulation by examining the evaluation questions through various lenses and perspectives represented in the qualitative and quantitative data, with close coordination of qualitative and quantitative analysts via frequent sensemaking consultations.

62. **Quantitative analysis.** Baseline data analysis involved computing composite indicators and generating descriptive statistics. The descriptive analysis included composite scoring of survey/EGRA data, as well as calculations of mean values and percentages. Results were disaggregated across groups (i.e., project versus control), regions, and, if applicable, by sex. The differences between project and control were tested for statistical significance. In some cases, the regional difference was also tested for statistical significance. Statistical significance of the differences was tested at three levels: *** P<0.01 (1 percent), ** P<0.05 (5 percent), and * P<0.10 (10 percent). Each table and figure presented in the findings notes which differences were tested. In general, comparisons are discussed in the narrative selectively based on relative importance and interest, and only in cases where the difference is statistically significant.

63. The statistical software SPSS was used to analyze the indicators and sub-indicators. Data were collected using ODK Collect and Tangerine survey tools and exported as CSV files from ODK Central. These raw data files were converted into STATA format for further analysis; the datasets are thus available in both SPSS and STATA formats. The STATA datasets will be particularly useful for conducting robust outcome and impact analyses during the midterm and endline evaluations.

64. **Qualitative analysis.** Semi-structured thematic analysis was applied to the literature review, which focused primarily on contextual analysis relevant to the baseline questions. Primary data/information

[82] The parent survey was only administered in project schools. See also discussion under "Data collection overview."

[83] While the team attempted to interview a proportional number of men and women, key informants in positions interviewed by the evaluation team were predominantly men.

collected from KIIs and FGDs was organized using an Excel-based analysis process. The notes were structured using review templates that aligned with the topical outlines; this facilitated the identification of emerging themes and also enabled systematic and efficient triangulation across sources.

65. **Examining needs and opportunities across groups.** The baseline study assessed the extent to which WFP has integrated recommendations from previous evaluations related to the different needs of girls, boys, women and men into project design and how it has considered the needs of students with disabilities in project design.

66. The baseline study adhered to United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (UNSWAP) Criteria 2c by integrating a wide range of methods and tools in the data sources and processes to guarantee access, accuracy and credibility. The evaluation methods and sampling were designed to address stakeholder differences and participation of those at risk of exclusion, per UNSWAP Criteria 2d. The quantitative data were sex disaggregated. Topical outlines incorporated questions on both boys' and girls' experiences. Focus groups were disaggregated by sex, where feasible. The field team had male and female evaluators, which facilitated same-sex assignments for KIIs and FGDs.

67. **Triangulation and validation.** From the start of the analysis and reporting phase, TANGO organized regular triangulation and sense-making meetings of the baseline team to review analytical progress and discuss highlights and emerging themes. Unless otherwise stated, all information in the report has been triangulated, either using different methods (e.g., survey results and qualitative data) or multiple data sources (e.g., multiple stakeholders), and between evaluators to ensure that findings are both accurate and robust.

3.3. Limitations

68. **Baseline study timeframe.** The short timeframe for data collection and analysis was challenging but necessary to ensure data collection was complete before the end of the school year and that FY24 project activities could begin in September 2025 as planned.

69. **Anthropometric measurements.** McGovern-Dole Custom Indicator 15, "Percent of children without normal Middle Upper-Arm Circumference (MUAC)" requires the collection of anthropometric measurements. However, due to the shortened timeframe for baseline data collection, anthropometric measurements were not planned for baseline. The collection of MUAC measurements requires approval by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and additional training of field team members to ensure the reliability of data, as well as additional time and specific measurement tools during data collection. Anthropometric indicator data will be collected at midterm and endline. The baseline reports proxy rates from the December 2025 Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Survey.[84]

70. **Limited engagement of people with disabilities**. It was not within the scope of this study to include data collection activities specifically targeting students, parents/caregivers, or stakeholders with disabilities beyond what might surface in the sampling approach agreed at inception. The study team primarily interviewed WFP staff and stakeholders in specific roles and conducted interviews within the school community (i.e., teachers, administrators, students), where participation of people with disabilities may be limited. Data collected at baseline indicates that the percentage of the sampled student population who reported a disability is less than 1 percent; therefore, it is possible that the perspectives of people with disabilities are underrepresented in the study findings. We have included findings on disability themes as possible within this limited scope and taking advantage of the opportunities that arose.

71. Section 5.2 offers comments on methodological aspects that are less limitations per se than observations suggesting how some aspects of methodology can be improved in future evaluation exercises.

3.4. Quality assurance

72. The study adhered to the standards and processes established by the WFP Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS). This includes engagement at key points with the Evaluation Committee and Evaluation Reference Group, bodies specific to each evaluation that are established by WFP to ensure the independence and impartiality of the evaluation at all stages. TANGO's internal quality assurance measures span all study/evaluation phases and include the designation of a quality assurance manager, team orientation and training on quality standards and reinforcement of those standards throughout

[84] Proxy rates are presented in Annex 11.

study/evaluation phases, internal review of deliverables, validation/triangulation processes and activities, communication, and related elements. These measures and processes are further elaborated in Annex 7.

3.5. Ethical considerations

73. The baseline study team certifies that the baseline study has conformed to WFP ethical standards and norms and the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines. TANGO International, Inc. takes responsibility for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities. Annex 7 provides more details on the ethical considerations and safeguards relevant to this evaluation.

4. Baseline findings and discussion

4.1 Relevance

EQ 1. Is the project design contextualized to reach the right target beneficiaries and meet their needs, especially women, girls and students with functional impairments?

Finding 1	The project is in alignment with the education, health, and hygiene needs of men, women, boys, and girls, as well as the needs of smallholder farmers.

74. Students in Afar and Oromia face multiple, overlapping barriers to education, as demonstrated by previous evaluations as well as baseline findings. These include food insecurity, barriers to attendance, poor learning outcomes, and unique challenges faced by girls and children with disabilities. To address students' needs, the project design integrates school feeding with complementary interventions in education, health, and hygiene. These include school meals, literacy support, WASH promotion, and community engagement activities that aim to improve student learning, attendance, and well-being.[85] Project interventions will also promote education for students with disabilities by providing items such as wheelchairs and ramps. Infrastructure improvements, such as the rehabilitation of kitchens and storerooms, will support schools to deliver meals and maintain a healthy learning environment for students. The project will strengthen smallholder farmers' production capacity through inputs, training, and technical assistance. Project plans to support smallholders and increase production are further outlined in Finding 18. In addition to smallholder farmer support, WFP will support schools to establish school gardens to promote improved agricultural practices and dietary diversity. To further enhance the project's relevance, key informants outlined how WFP will implement mitigation measures as a response to past programmatic challenges. Lessons learned from previous projects, and discussion around the extent to which lessons have been integrated into the FY24 project design, are outlined in Finding 7.

75. The McGovern-Dole project design reflects a strong alignment with the needs of targeted communities in the Afar and Oromia regions due to its collaborative design. Project documentation states that project areas were selected due to ongoing challenges including chronic food security, poor school enrollment and retention, and the compounded effects of extreme weather events and conflict.[86] This evidence-based targeting was complemented by a collaborative design process involving government stakeholders. Stakeholders reported that they were engaged in selecting target woredas, reviewing the proposal, and contributing to the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the project. This collaborative

[85] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[86] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

design process helped ensure that the McGovern-Dole project aligns to local needs and is better positioned for more effective implementation.

76. Stakeholders also noted that close collaboration was necessary to ensure the proper depth and breadth of activities: essential needs in project areas are met, while allowing for the greatest number of schools to be reached. Similarly, the depth of interventions is necessarily balanced against available resources. While project activities align with community needs, the scale of support (such as literacy interventions and learning materials) remains more limited than the breadth of challenges faced by project schools and communities. This suggests the extent of change achievable within one project cycle will likely be dependent on the depth of prioritized activities, given the extent of students' and communities' needs in project areas.

Finding 2	School feeding is highly relevant to address the unique challenges faced by girl students, including access and retention in education.

77. At baseline, school feeding was widely recognized by stakeholders as an important factor in improving girls' access and retention in education. Stakeholder feedback noted that in schools with feeding programs, enrollment parity between girls and boys is nearly equal, while in schools not participating in the McGovern-Dole project, boys are enrolled at significantly higher rates than girls. However, at baseline sampled project and non-project schools had roughly the same distribution of male and female students, with slightly more boys enrolled (Finding 13: Table 7; 57 percent male students compared to 43 percent female students). Informants shared that school feeding gives parents incentive to keep their girls in school, even when there are shocks such as drought. In contrast, when food is scarce and there are no school meals, qualitative data suggests some parents are more likely to keep girls at home or even take them out of school to help with domestic work.

78. As part of the project design, efforts to promote girls' education include plans to train PTAs, *kebele* (ward) Education and Training Boards, clan and religious leaders, and *woreda* education office heads on the importance of girls' education, accessibility and participation in schools, and community involvement to empower girls.[87] Additionally, the project will support clubs to facilitate group-based discussions on social and cultural expectations, strengthen female teachers in preventing early marriage, and support community dialogues on the importance of education for girls.

79. These findings are consistent with wider analysis of the barriers impacting girls' education, which highlighted that school feeding programs have contributed to improved enrollment and attendance for girls, supported academic performance, and helped increase girls' agency and confidence.[88] However, the 2023 SFP analysis also underscored persistent norms related to the roles of girls and boys. Stakeholders confirm this, stating that cultural and social norms discourage girls from expressing hunger or eating. Informants shared that school meals allow girls to receive the same nutritional benefit as boys.

Finding 3	The FY24 project is designed to respond to some of the accessibility issues for students with disabilities.

80. The McGovern-Dole project considers all students eligible for school feeding regardless of their sex or ability status. Stakeholders highlighted that before the introduction of school meals in the area, low-income families would not send their children with disabilities to school due to financial hardship and food insecurity; respondents also reported that parents of children with disabilities are sometimes reluctant to send them to school due to stigma and fear of community judgement. They noted that after the school feeding project started, the participation of these children improved. It was also reported that while prolonged droughts and food shortages have disproportionately affected children with disabilities, those who were able to attend school and access school feeding faced fewer challenges and showed recovery from previous malnutrition. School meals, then, remain an important part of the project designed to encourage students with disabilities' enrollment and attendance.

[87] Ibid.

[88] WFP. 2023. Gender Analysis of School Feeding Programmes in Selected Locations of Ethiopia. Note: The SFP analysis included schools targeted under the McGovern-Dole project as well as schools in other regions of Ethiopia.

81. At baseline, most sampled schools reported at least one student with a disability enrolled (77.4 percent of project schools and 84.0 percent of non-project schools; Annex 13, Table 32). However, the overall percentage of students with one or more disabilities, as identified by teachers, was less than 1 percent: 0.12 percent in project schools and 0.05 percent in non-project schools. It is important to note that these percentages translate to very small numbers relative to the total sample. For example, 0.12 percent of students with disabilities out of the total 16,418 students in project schools translates to about 20 students total.[89]

82. The qualitative data confirm that students with disabilities face several accessibility challenges, including long distances to school and a lack of adapted, disability- sensitive facilities. To address these gaps, the FY24 project includes a sub-activity to procure assistive devices and make small infrastructure improvements for students with disabilities. Activities will also include community sensitization on the importance of education for both girls and students with disabilities.[90]

EQ 2. To what extent does the project design align to national education and food security policies and strategies?

Finding 4	The project is highly aligned with national policies and strategies in education, food security, nutrition, health, and school feeding.

83. **National education policies and strategies.** The project is well aligned with the Government's key education policies and strategies. The Education and Training Policy (2023),[91] the Education Sector Development Plan VI (2020–2025),[92] and the Ethiopian Education Transformation Plan (2023)[93] emphasize equitable access to quality education, reduction of dropout and repetition rates, and the integration of school health, nutrition, and WASH to improve student wellbeing and educational outcomes. The project supports these goals through school feeding, WASH improvements, and activities that promote enrollment and retention such as community engagement. School feeding was initially included in the draft Education Act (2024), however, stakeholders noted that it was removed from the final version due to affordability concerns.

84. **National food security, nutrition, and health policies and strategies.** The project is closely aligned with national food security and nutrition strategies, including School Health and Nutrition Strategy (2012),[94] the Seqota Declaration (2015), the Food and Nutrition Strategy (2021),[95] and the National School Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy and Implementation Action Plan (2017).[96] These frameworks promote school feeding, improved nutrition, and healthy learning environments, particularly in food insecure areas.

85. The project's design reflects these national priorities through school feeding, using local procurement and U.S. in-kind commodities. Review of project documentation and interviews with national stakeholders indicate that menus are aligned with national standards and are designed to meet a significant share of students' daily energy, protein, and micronutrient needs.[97] School feeding is further supported by health and nutrition promotion efforts such as MUAC screenings, hygiene training for WASH committees and cooks, improved WASH infrastructures in schools, and increased health and hygiene awareness campaigns. The project also supports the establishment of school gardens and links to smallholder farmers to improve dietary diversity and promote local procurement.

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[89] Figure rounded because the application of sampling weights does not result in whole-number values

[90] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[91] Government of Ethiopia. 2023. Education and Training Policy.

[92] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. Education Sector Development Programme VI (ESDP VI) 2013 – 2017 E.C. 2020/21 – 2024/25 G.C.

[93] Government of Ethiopia. 2023. Ethiopia Education Transformation Plan.

[94] Government of Ethiopia. 2012. National School Health and Nutrition Strategy.

[95] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. National Food and Nutrition Strategy.

[96] Government of Ethiopia. 2017. National School Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (SWASH) Strategy and Implementation Action Plan.

[97] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

86. **National school feeding strategy.** The McGovern-Dole project is strongly aligned with Ethiopia's national school feeding policies, including the National School Feeding Policy Framework and Strategy (2021)[98]. Qualitative data indicated that the project's targeting aligns with these goals, particularly through beneficiary targeting and government capacity building efforts. Stakeholders also noted that WFP has been supporting national school feeding strategies since 1994, through operational, technical and capacity strengthening support. These activities were seen as highly consistent with national priorities for a progressive school feeding project. Additionally, the project is aligned with the reform idea of Homegrown School Feeding where the government and community members are expected to take the main responsibility and reaching self-reliance in school feeding. Project activities are also aligned the National HGSF Implementation Guidelines (2024) by capacitating federal and regional governments through trainings, workshops, and technical assistance to help school infrastructure meet the minimum standards set in the guidelines.[99]

EQ 3. To what extent does the project align with the local socio-economic and cultural context of the targeted areas of the Afar and Oromia regions?

Finding 5	The project is well-aligned to the local socio-economic and cultural contexts of the targeted areas in the Afar and Oromia regions.

87. **Area-specific implementation.** The McGovern-Dole project design reflects a deliberate effort to address the socio-economic and cultural contexts of the targeted areas in Afar and Oromia through tailored activities. A review of project documents revealed alignment with local contexts in its plans to support the Bureau of Education to develop school meal menus that use locally available and culturally relevant food items.[100] The project also plans to revise instructional materials and supplemental reading materials to ensure they are culturally appropriate and available in the local languages, which will enhance student learning as well as meet government requirements. Separate regional strategies will be developed for the transition of project schools to Government ownership and will be adapted to the project areas in each region to ensure relevance. Furthermore, WFP will continue to second technical school feeding staff to both the Afar and Oromia BoE, which will not only ensure management capacity,[101] but continue to ensure that programming is appropriately contextualized. Government stakeholders noted that there was close collaboration between regional bureaus and WFP to ensure that the local context was thoroughly considered in the project's design. For example, though government stakeholders acknowledged that there is a need for school feeding in all schools, targeting was done in close consultation to select woredas and schools with the greatest need. Stakeholder interviews have also highlighted that the implementation of the new local procurement model will focus on direct collaboration with farmer cooperatives, building on the localized approach to expand school feeding at the woreda level.

88. **Socio-economic and cultural context.** The project design appropriately recognizes targeted communities' value of school feeding, as well as communities' capacity to support implementation. The project design acknowledges the active involvement of Ethiopian communities in school feeding management, including through voluntary financial and in-kind contributions.[102] While community involvement in school feeding is deeply embedded in Ethiopian culture, with stakeholders reporting strong commitment from the community, it also poses potential risks. Informants noted concerns that in the absence of sufficient support, and given limited operational capacity at the community level, self-reliance and community mobilization could place additional strain on low-income households. To mitigate these

[98] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. National School Feeding Policy Framework and Strategy.
[99] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007
[100] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007
[101] The staffing structure available to support school feeding in Ethiopia is further discussed under Section 4.5: Sustainability, Finding 19.
[102] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

challenges, the McGovern-Dole project plans to advocate for and leverages increased government support, as well as provides direct capacity-enhancing interventions to community stakeholders engaged in project implementation.

89. Stakeholder feedback highlighted the project's relevance to meet the food security needs of students in pastoralist communities, whose socio-economic status is shaped by low household income, seasonal mobility, and weather events such as drought. Respondents stated that the program emerged as a response to the socio-economic contexts, citing prolonged drought conditions and frequent conflicts in Oromia, such as between the Oromo and Somali communities, which has led to displacement and significantly affected students in the area. In project areas in both regions, respondents noted that many families rely on their children to herd livestock and described this as a barrier to school attendance, particularly during drought due to increased migration. They emphasized that school feeding during these periods is critical for retention in school. However, while the project directly addresses food insecurity, adaptation to pastoralist mobility is only partial. For instance, the design does not yet fully account for seasonal absences when families migrate with livestock, nor does it include alternative delivery models (such as community-based learning support) that might better maintain children's access to education during migration. This creates a risk that the project's relevance is strongest in settled periods but less responsive to the full range of pastoralist livelihood patterns. However, WFP staff emphasized that without a well-structured mobile learning system, it would be difficult for the FY24 project, or the school feeding program more broadly, to design alternative delivery mechanisms. While stakeholders noted that school feeding is still relevant in pastoralist areas, they also noted that it will be a challenge for smallholders in the pastoral community to supply schools with food (discussed under Finding 18).

EQ 4. How is the project relevant/aligned to the current food security and educational challenges in targeted areas of the Afar and Oromia regions?

Finding 6	The project is strongly aligned with the intersecting food security and education challenges in project areas in Afar and Oromia.

90. **Food security and educational challenges.** Project areas in Afar and Oromia face severe and intersecting food security and education challenges, driven by chronic vulnerability and systemic under-resourcing.[103] In the five project districts in Oromia (i.e., in Borena and East Hararghe zones), five consecutive failed rainy seasons and ongoing conflict have left targeted woredas in a state of persistent food insecurity. In Afar, prolonged drought has resulted in the loss of livestock, the primary livelihood source, and increased dependence on humanitarian assistance. The targeted 27 woredas in Afar are among the most drought-affected in the region, with high rates of acute malnutrition and food insecurity. Targeted districts also experience longstanding issues of low school enrollment and high dropout, particularly among pastoralist communities, where mobility, food insecurity, and economic pressures often limit access to education. These conditions create compounded barriers for children to regularly attend and succeed in school. The project is well aligned with these urgent needs, targeting interventions that address both the immediate and underlying drivers of food insecurity and educational exclusion, as described below.

91. **School meals to address food security and educational outcomes.** As outlined in the results framework (Annex 2), the provision of nutritious school meals is positioned as a foundational activity to improve the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of food assistance, strengthen local and regional food systems, and ultimately support improved utilization of nutritious foods. This chain of results reflects the strong intersection between food security and education, where regular school meals contribute to higher attendance, enrollment, and attentiveness, which in turn can lead to improve learning outcomes and student well-being.

92. The McGovern-Dole project is widely recognized by informants in both Afar and Oromia as relevant to the food security and education challenges facing susceptible populations. Teachers and parents reported that children concentrate better and show improved academic performance when fed at school, with some describing the project as essential for student well-being and learning. In areas frequently affected by

[103] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

drought and food shortages, the availability of school meals serves as a strong incentive for parents to send their children to school. Qualitative interviews have noted that the project also supports educational continuity for children affected by displacement, such as those from flood-affected areas like East Hararghe and has contributed to increased participation among girls who would otherwise be kept at home due to food scarcity or household responsibilities.

93. In Afar, where pastoralist livelihoods often require children to herd livestock or engage in casual work, school feeding has helped reduce child labor by enabling children to remain in school. By ensuring that meals are available daily, the program offsets the need for children to contribute to household income and strengthens parental motivation to prioritize education despite economic and climatic pressures.

94. **Other project activities to respond to educational challenges.** In addition to school feeding, the project is designed to include a package of strategies to improve teaching quality, student learning, and access to education. Central to this is the evidence-based "Teaching at the Right Level" approach, which strengthens foundational literacy and numeracy, supported by localized teaching materials, education supports, performance-based teacher incentives, and reinforcement of libraries, reading clubs, and community-level engagement. In targeted Oromia districts, these activities build on regional efforts to increase participation in underserved pastoralist areas, pairing targeted literacy initiatives with teacher incentives to improve quality in remote schools so that gains from increased attendance are matched by improvements in learning. In Afar, the approach aligns with efforts to expand Alternative Basic Education and multi-grade teaching to reach mobile populations, with localized materials and flexible delivery ensuring continuity of learning despite mobility requirements. Community participation in the project's design further supports these activities; stakeholders noted that parents actively raise awareness, encourage others to enroll their children, and highlight the availability of food as a key motivator for attendance.

EQ 5. What lessons from the previous project were considered in the FY24 project design and implementation plan?

Finding 7	The FY24 project incorporates key lessons from earlier project phases into its design but lessons related to delays and resourcing gaps are not fully addressed.

95. Many of the lessons from the FY18 project are clearly integrated into the FY24 project design and implementation plan. Government stakeholders emphasized their strong collaboration with WFP to ensure that lessons and ideas are reflected in the project design, and government counterparts reviewed the project proposal and provided feedback to inform the design. For example, the project is designed to respond to recommendations to strengthen the entire supply chain, through measures on transport contracting, supply chain risk management, and real-time monitoring.[104] The FY24 project will emphasize the role of school gardens as educational tools through weather-smart practices and integration into the curriculum.

96. The FY24 design also reflects a more realistic understanding of community contributions, acknowledging both their importance and the limited resources available to families affected by poverty and crisis.[105] Stakeholders suggested that some adaptations began before the close of the FY18 project, such as strengthening the accountability structure for commodity management at the school and community levels, and will continue as part of the FY24 project design..

97. Gaps noted at the FY18 endline, such as food safety risks, inadequate cook training, and limited dietary diversity, are addressed through explicit food safety measures, strengthened training commitments, and improvements to menu variety in the FY24 project design.[106] Broader recommendations on working through government systems, strengthening monitoring, improved water infrastructure, and expanded

[104] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[105] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[106] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

literacy programming are also included. Operational challenges from the midterm, including delays in transport contracting and weaknesses in supply chain oversight, continue to be acknowledged through commitments to strengthen transport contracting and enhance supply chain risk monitoring in the FY24 design. The project design also includes an M&E framework developed during the FY18 McGovern-Dole cycle. The framework aims to support strengthened data collection, monitoring, and reporting on school feeding, aligning with the Ministry of Education's Education Management Information System. Project results will also be tracked against performance indicators that are disaggregated by sex.[107]

98. Community stakeholders identified key lessons from the previous phase that informed expectations for the FY24 project. Stakeholders emphasized the need for more diverse and nutritionally balanced meals, noting that when students are served the same meal without variation, students report less interest and satisfaction. The inclusion of nutritionally balanced foods, such as mineral-rich cereals and fresh items like eggs and vegetables, was cited as essential to children's health. The provision of fresh food was piloted using complementary funding under the FY18 project; respondents advocated for the continued inclusion of fresh foods in the FY24 project through regional government and community contributions. In line with stakeholder priorities, the FY24 menu includes an improved food basket with fortified commodities and locally sourced foods, providing significant gains in iron and vitamin A in Afar while meeting protein and energy needs in Oromia. WFP also plans to enhance dietary diversity through additional fortification, school gardens, and community contributions, while strengthening government capacity through a phased handover strategy, procurement system improvements, and a costed transition plan in Afar. In Oromia, WFP is further investing in procurement processes, food safety standards, monitoring systems, school gardens, and menu design to reinforce government-led implementation and long-term stability. FY24 design also calls forward U.S. in-kind commodities twice per year specifically to manage the timeline for imported food and the short shelf-life of some items.

99. **Potential gaps**. Some lessons which were recognized in the previous phase are not directly addressed by the FY24 project design. For example, delays in the regional government budget approval which impact the first delivery of commodities are not directly addressed in the FY24 design. Similarly, neither the project nor the regional governments compensate school cooks for their work in schools, which was raised as a major concern by school-level informants. Stakeholders noted that most cooks work unpaid unless supported by social protection projects or, in some schools, through community contributions. A minimum payment of 500 birr per month was proposed to improve retention and morale. Stakeholders also noted the absence of proper storage and kitchen facilities, recommending construction of ventilated standard infrastructure, some of which has begun through WFP funding.

100. Additionally, some of the unintended results of the FY18 project are not explicitly addressed in the FY24 project design. These include:[108]

- Extended mealtimes leading to unintended loss of instructional time. This may potentially impact literacy outcomes if the loss of classroom time is frequent or prolonged.
- The graduation of FY18 project schools in Afar may have reduced the regions' school feeding support to informal schools (Alternative Basic Education Centers or ABECs) that serve the pastoralist community. Previous evaluations have revealed that stakeholders anticipate that limited regional funding will be prioritized to previously supported project schools over ABECs after the project's close. While school meals contribute to increased student attendance, ABECs are designed to provide flexible, community-based education to rural children, and may better respond to pastoralist needs.
- The broad scope of PTAs' work makes it more difficult for the participation of women, who must balance committee responsibilities with household and childcare responsibilities. At baseline, PTA members interviewed were predominantly men, demonstrating that this may remain a constraint.

101. The FY18 endline found that while the Government and communities demonstrated strong commitment to school feeding, handover to government systems was limited, and significant gaps remained in financing, procurement systems, coordination, and institutional capacity to sustain the programme without external support. Efforts to transition to a home-grown school feeding model were in the early

[107] Monitoring capacity is discussed in greater detail under Findings 9, 20 and 23.

[108] WFP Ethiopia. 2025. Endline Evaluation of the USDA McGovern-Dole International Food For Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions in Ethiopia (2019-2025).

stages, highlighting the need for strengthened supply chain management, realistic expectations for community contributions, and increased government capacity to management and finance school feeding. Further discussion of how the FY24 project builds on these lessons to strengthen sustainability is provided in Section 4.5.

EQ 6. Is the project adaptable to changing conditions and emerging needs in the target regions? Does the project have mechanisms in place to respond to unforeseen challenges/changes in the local context?

Finding 8	The project demonstrates adaptability to changing conditions and emerging needs in Afar and Oromia such as extreme weather events, conflict, and inflation.

102. The McGovern-Dole project demonstrates adaptability to changing conditions and emerging needs in project areas in Afar and Oromia. Stakeholders have identified challenges such as recurring weather shocks (e.g., drought), conflict-related disruptions, rising food and fuel prices, receipt of expired food or food near expiry date, limited monitoring capacity, and migration. In response, the project has incorporated several operational improvements in the FY24 project cycle, drawing on lessons from previous project cycles (see Finding 7). Project documentation also outlines mitigation measures to address these challenges, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Project responses to programmatic challenges

Challenge	Discussion	Mitigation measures
Insecurity and conflict	Access to schools and warehouses was intermittently interrupted by conflict, leading to delays in food delivery and the migration of students and communities.	WFP coordinates with other UN agencies to monitor security and adjusts warehouse locations as needed, with 24/7 security in place.
Weather shocks	Frequent droughts and floods have led to migration, loss of livestock, and exacerbated food insecurity. A lack of potable water prevents school meal preparation.	WFP is prepared to shift to take-home rations with USDA approval and will promote sustainable agriculture to enhance smallholders' resilience and ability to supply school feeding.
Food misuse	Unauthorized THRs and a pause in relief programming led to early stock depletion and misuse of school feeding food, particularly in Afar.	WFP implemented the Assurance Project to strengthen the supply chain through GPS tracking, bag marking, third-party monitoring, and improved community feedback mechanisms for reporting. Measures also included increased accountability for both government and NGO partners, capacity building, and increased engagement with schools and the Government.
Delayed commodity transportation	Transport shortages and road accessibility issues delayed school meal delivery, leading to excess stock at the end of the semester.	WFP partnered with an NGO in Afar to facilitate the transportation of commodities, resulting in improved coordination between school feeding teams.
Commodity best-use-by date (BUBD) management	Delays and interruptions led to increased THR requests, menu changes, and food disposal for expired commodities.	WFP is shifting to a biannual call forward schedule and increasing its use of digital technology to improve stock management.
Inflation	High inflation impacted WFP's ability to deliver on all project targets.	WFP accounts for inflation in annual budgets and includes local procurement to improve the cost-effectiveness of food assistance.

Source: WFP Ethiopia. 2024. USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program: School Meals for Improved Learning and Empowerment (SMILE) Project Proposal.

103. **A note on take-home rations.** The draft FY18 endline noted that take-home rations (THR), while intended for use as an incentive for upper-primary student attendance, were primarily used as an efficiency mechanism.[109] First, THR were used as an alternative to school meals during pandemic school closures. Once schools re-opened, a greater proportion of THR was distributed than planned in order to avoid waste and distribute commodities that were approaching their expiry date. The overuse of unintended distribution of THR resulted in challenges assessing the effectiveness of THR as an incentive. The study team notes that WFP intends to improve stock management in FY24, thereby reducing the need to use THR to avoid commodity spoilage. The project's use of THR may be relevant to respond to pastoralist communities' needs and incentivize students to regularly attend school, but WFP and partners should ensure that THR are predominantly used for their intended purpose.

Finding 9	The Government's capacity to adapt to changing conditions without WFP support is limited.

104. While the McGovern-Dole project has measures in place to adapt to challenges in the local context (such as those outlined in Finding 8), stakeholder feedback indicates that the Government's systems are not sufficiently structured to implement these adaptations without WFP support. Stakeholders also noted that across regions school feeding is managed by one or two focal persons without dedicated units, clear policies, or strong institutional structure. Weak systematic structure limits the Government's ability to respond to emerging needs independently. The FY24 project is designed to respond to these gaps through technical support and by leveraging existing coordination platforms.[110] As one example, WFP will organize experience-sharing visits for a multi-sectoral group of regional government officials from Afar and Oromia to exchange best practice with other regions in Ethiopia where school feeding has been successfully implemented. WFP will also second technical staff to further bolster regional and national capacity.

105. Stakeholders also highlighted the need for stronger data systems and monitoring capacity so that challenges can be identified and addressed. WFP respondents noted reduced capacity for monitoring activities compared to previous project phases, limited budgets for capacity building, and gaps in tracking intermediate indicators. This raised concerns among stakeholders regarding the program's long-term adaptability. Stakeholders highlighted the need for strengthened local capacity and more effective monitoring, as the project may not be able to identify emerging challenges and changes in local context in a timely manner. The study team identified several structures that must be strengthened for the Government to adapt to emerging challenges without WFP support, as outlined in Finding 4. The FY24 project design includes technical and financial support to the Ministry of Education to operationalize and institutionalize the National Home-Grown School Feeding Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.[111] The project plans also include support to strengthen the existing Education Management Information System, through digitization and training on the system.

4.2 Coherence

EQ 7. To what extent is the project coherent internally and with other projects in the target areas?

Finding 10	The project demonstrates strong internal coherence across WFP's programming and aligns well with complementary initiatives in the target areas.

106. The project demonstrates strong internal coherence through its alignment with WFP's broader resilience, nutrition, and education portfolio in Ethiopia. It is designed to operate in synergy with ongoing school feeding efforts funded by USDA, the EU, and other donors, while also linking to complementary interventions that build smallholder farmer capacity to supply the home-grown school feeding project. WFP's Ethiopia portfolio links relief and resilience, with school meals serving as an entry point to human capital and

[110] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007).
[111] Ibid.

livelihood support. Under the 2025-2030 CSP, school feeding connects to the Productive Safety Net Programme through expanded safety nets, while nutrition synergies are achieved through joint wasting management with UNICEF, combing food-based transfers with WASH and health interventions. Education outcomes are reinforced through school meals in refugee camps, complementing USDA-funded projects in host communities.[112]

107. The FY24 project's approach to support school feeding through local procurement aligns with WFP's wider Local and Regional Food Procurement (LRFP) strategy. While the project focuses on strengthening smallholder farmer capacity through cooperative unions, LRFP also engages processors, aggregators, and institutional buyers to build inclusive value chains.[113] Through LRFP, WFP connects farmers with market actors, improves post-harvest and contract management capacities, and supports government-led efforts to advance sustainable food system transformation. These broader LRFP interventions integrate multiple actors across the value chain and complement this project's more targeted focus on enabling smallholder farmers to participate effectively in local procurement for school feeding.

108. Coordination mechanisms are in place with multiple education sector actors, including UNICEF and the World Bank, to ensure complementarity with large-scale education grants such as the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait.[114] While these grants currently do not overlap with the target areas, WFP and Imagine1Day plan to share lessons and coordinate if geographic convergence occurs. The project is also integrated with government-led initiatives such as the One WASH project, aligning its sanitation and hygiene investments with national strategies and ensuring coordination with line ministries and partners at regional and woreda levels. Through participation in sector coordination platforms like the Education Technical Working Group, the project will reinforce alignment with national priorities and avoid duplication across its education, nutrition, and WASH components. More broadly, planning and mapping exercises have sought to strengthen synergies between WFP interventions, aiming to maximize efficiencies in communities where school feeding operates alongside activities such as nutrition or emergency response.

109. While WFP plays a central role in supporting school feeding in the target areas, the McGovern-Dole project operates within a broader ecosystem of complementary programming. In Oromia, government resources contribute substantially to the food basket in McGovern-Dole-supported schools, with USDA funds primarily covering beans. Stakeholders have shared that during periods when WFP programming was not present, local government and community actors made intermittent efforts to provide food in schools, though these contributions were limited in quality and sustainability. Qualitative interviews have noted that other NGOs, including IRC, CRS, World Vision, and Imagine1Day, support schools through parallel interventions in WASH, health, infrastructure, nutrition education, and protection, but not food provision. Action for Social Development and Environmental Protection Organization (ASDEPO), for example, contributes through training on proper meal preparation, nutrition, hygiene, and the establishment of school gardens, towards strengthening food safety, healthy eating, and environmental cleanliness.[115] These efforts reinforce the enabling environment for school feeding and align with the project's broader objectives of improving education, nutrition, and inclusion outcomes.

4.3 Effectiveness

110. *Note*: Each table and figure presented below notes which differences were tested. In general, comparisons are discussed in the narrative only in cases where the difference is statistically significant.

[112] WFP. 2025. Draft Ethiopia country strategic plan (2025-2030)

[113] WFP. 2023. Update on the implementation of the local and regional food procurement policy.

[114] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[115] ASDEPO. 2025. ASDEPO NGO. Accessed August 2025.

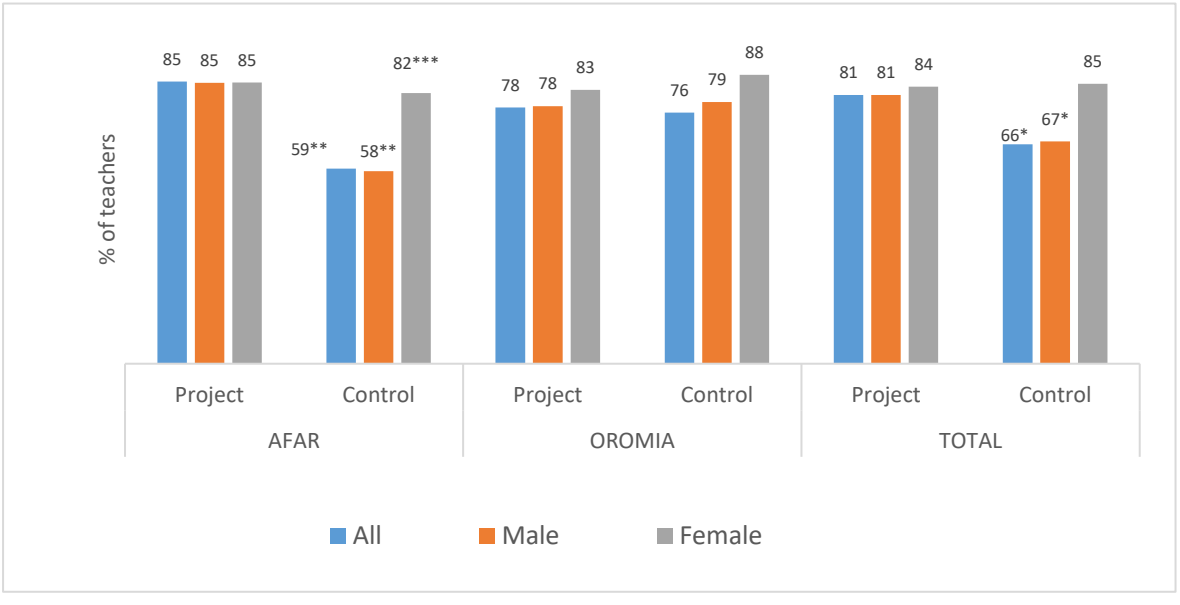
EQ 8. To what extent are planned outputs and outcomes realistic and achievable in the context of the target regions?

Finding 11	Overall, stakeholders are confident that planned outputs and outcomes are achievable and LOP targets are achievable given actual baseline values. Baseline indicators related to teacher training, and school and sanitation facilities demonstrate that project schools are starting "ahead" of comparison schools.

111. At baseline, regional stakeholders were confident that nutrition and education outcomes could be achieved through proposed project activities. Informants also noted that restructuring within regional WFP sub-offices could hinder efficiency, as staffing levels will be reduced. WFP staff were hopeful that the outsourcing of educational interventions to Imagine1Day would further contribute to project results. Given that it is a new partnership, WFP staff noted that implementation will be closely monitored, particularly at the start of the project. Stakeholders also emphasized that literacy outcomes should receive equal attention as school meals; government officials felt that sometimes school feeding is given a heavier focus than education outcomes. The main concern was that the project's objective to strengthen local procurement would be unrealized (Finding 16). The evaluation team recommends that five LOP targets be re-evaluated based on actual baseline values; one which is discussed under Section 4.4 and four indicators which do not yet reflect the revision of targeted schools from 573 to 500. Annex 11 presents the complete list of indicators and recommendations for target adjustment. Baseline values for select output indicators are included below, which will be used as benchmarks to assess project effectiveness at midterm and endline.

112. **Teacher training.** Figure 2 shows the percentage of teachers who reported receiving any teacher training in the last three years, as reported by head teachers. In both the Afar and Oromia regions, close to or more than 80 percent of teachers in project schools were reported to have received training. However, teachers in non-project schools reported significantly less teacher training in the past three years compared to teachers in project schools. This difference was most pronounced in Afar, where only 59 percent of teacers in non-project schools reported training in the past three years, compared to 85 percent of project school teachers. This is likely the result of project support to schools during the FY18 cycle of the McGovern-Dole project.

Figure 2: Teachers who received training in the past three years (%)



Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

113. **School facilities.** Table 2 shows the percentage of schools with libraries and different types of meal facilities. The results indicate that overall, project schools are better equipped than non-project schools in terms of food storage and preparation. However, only about one-third are reported by head teachers to have

a covered eating area or dining room. Overall, only 20.0 percent of project schools had a library compared to 7.7 percent of non-project schools, but this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 2: Schools with reading and meal facilities, by region (%)

% of schools that have ...	Afar			Oromia			All		
	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Library	28.6	7.7		12.5	8.3		20.0	7.7	
Separate food storage room	85.7	35.7	**	87.5	75.0		86.7	56.0	**
Kitchen for food preparation	78.6	35.7	**	93.8	83.3		86.7	60.0	**
Covered eating area or dining room for the children	28.6	14.3		37.5	16.7		32.3	15.4	
Sample size (n)	*14*	*14*		*14*	*14*		*28*	*28*	

Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

114. **Improved sanitation facilities.** Table 3 reports on the presence and type of improved latrines in the sample schools. Overall, 93 percent of project schools have improved latrines constructed with concrete slabs, with a notable 100 percent coverage in the sample project schools in Oromia, and significantly higher than the coverage in non-project schools overall (73.1 percent). Additionally, 6 percent to 8 percent of both project and non-project schools in the Oromia region had an earth pit latrine alongside the improved latrine. Most project schools (85.7 percent in Afar and 100.0 percent in Oromia) have separate latrines for boys and girls, whereas the proportion was significantly lower among non-project schools across all regions and in the overall sample.

Table 3: Schools with improved sanitation facilities, by region (%)

% of schools that have ...	Afar			Oromia			All		
	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Type of latrines:									
None/Not in use (Broken)	14.3	42.9	*	0.0	0.0		6.7	23.1	*
Earth Pit	0.0	0.0		6.3	8.3		3.3	3.8	
Concrete Slab	85.7	57.1	*	100.0	91.7		93.3	73.1	**
Flush Toilet	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	
Separate latrines for boys and girls	85.7	50.0	**	100.0	83.3	*	93.3	68.0	**
Sample size (n)	*14*	*14*		*14*	*14*		*28*	*28*	

Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

115. Table 4 reports the presence of improved sources and electricity supply in the sampled schools. The most common water storage system in both regions was the *rotto*. In Oromia, over 90 percent of both project and non-project schools had access to an improved water source. In contrast, the Afar region showed a significant disparity: only 35.7 percent of non-project schools had improved water sources compared to 85.7 percent of project schools. Overall, 53 percent of project schools lacked access to electricity from any source, whether generator, solar, or main grid. This percentage was even higher among non-project schools, at 69 percent. Schools in Oromia, both project and control, had better access to electricity compared to Afar.

Table 4: School water sources and access to electricity, by region (%)

% of schools that have ...	Afar			Oromia			All		
	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Water storage system									
Container	0.0	21.4	*	12.5	0.0		6.7	11.5	
Drum	6.7	21.4		0.0	8.3		3.3	15.4	
Rotto	50.0	21.4		62.5	91.7	*	58.1	56.0	
Tank	21.4	7.7		18.8	0.0		22.6	3.8	**
Well	14.3	21.4		0.0	0.0		6.7	11.5	
Other	6.7	7.7		0.0	0.0		3.3	3.8	
Improved water sources	85.7	35.7	***	93.8	91.7		90.0	64.0	**
Hand-carry	6.7	42.9	**	68.8	58.3		40.0	50.0	
Tanker	0.0	7.7		18.8	8.3		10.0	7.7	
Rainwater	6.7	7.7		68.8	91.7		40.0	48.0	
Well Stream	6.7	21.4		6.3	0.0		6.7	11.5	
Borehole	50.0	21.4		12.5	16.7		32.3	19.2	

% of schools that have …	Afar			Oromia			All		
	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Piped water	35.7	7.7	*	18.8	25.0		29.0	15.4	
Other	0.0	7.7		0.0	0.0		0.0	3.8	
Electricity supply									
None	64.3	85.7		43.8	50.0		53.3	69.2	
Generator	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	
Solar	6.7	7.7		31.3	25.0		19.4	15.4	
Main grid	28.6	7.7		31.3	25.0		29.0	16.0	
Sample size (n)	*14*	*14*		*14*	*14*		*28*	*28*	

Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

KAP findings

Finding 12 Baseline KAP indicators related to student nutrition, hygiene, and education access reveal that project schools demonstrate some advantages over non-project schools, particularly in Afar, while attitudes toward education priorities are broadly similar.

116. **Breakfast, snacking, and concentration**. The KAP survey highlights important links between eating habits and students' concentration levels. Table 5 presents results from the student survey relevant to this theme. In Afar, students in project schools were more likely to identify low concentration and an inability to study when children do not eat before coming to school compared with students in non-project schools – a small but statistically significant difference. In Oromia, more non-project-school students identified low concentration when children don't eat before school, compared to project-school students. The survey revealed that students in Afar project schools were significantly more likely to report eating between meals than those in Afar non-project schools, while no significant differences were observed in Oromia.

Table 5: Student perceptions on eating and its relationship to schoolwork by region and sex

Indicator	Afar			Oromia			All			Boys			Girls		
	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Cont	Sig.	Proj	Cont	Sig.	Proj	Cont	Sig.
Percent of Student that ate something between the meals	61.3	53.2	**	39.6	43.8		49.8	48.7		51.4	46.3		47.9	52.3	
Average number of school days in a week a student eats a snack after returning from school	1.99	2.79	***	1.95	1.5	*	1.97	2.11		1.93	2.17	**	2.03	2.03	
Percent of students that think it is good to have breakfast before school	97.2	97.4		98.4	98.3		97.8	97.8		98.1	97.7		97.5	98	
How difficult is it for you to have breakfast before going to school?															
Not difficult	83.9	83.8		64.9	73.6	**	74	79	**	72.6	78.5	*	75.4	79.7	
Somewhat difficult	9.5	12.7		28.2	21.1	**	19.4	16.5		20.6	16.7		18	16.2	
Difficult	6.3	3.7		6.9	5.4		6.5	4.5		6.5	4.5		6.7	4.1	
Student Identified problems if children don't eat before going to school?															
Children have short attention	72.6	70		66.1	67.8		69.2	69		70	70.4		68.3	66.5	
Children have low concentration	83.9	78.2	*	69.6	78.2	**	76.4	78.2		76.6	79.7		76.3	75.6	
Children cannot study well	63.9	55.8	**	61.4	64.9		62.6	60		64.4	60.1		60.6	60.1	
Sample Size (n)	*273*	*278*		*280*	*281*		*553*	*559*		*294*	*342*		*259*	*217*	

Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***).
Source: FY24 KAP Student Survey

117. **Hygiene and nutrition knowledge.** Table 6 presents the findings on KAP indicators in the student survey relating to their knowledge of positive hygiene and nutrition practices. Nearly all students self-report understanding the importance of handwashing, with no significant differences observed between project and non-project schools.[116] However, in Afar, students in project schools were significantly more likely to identify critical moments for handwashing such as before eating and when caring for sick individuals compared to non-project schools, while no differences were observed in Oromia for this question.

118. The KAP survey also examined students' exposure to nutrition and health-related activities in schools (these results are included in Table 6). Project schools reported greater access to school-based nutrition and health activities compared to those in non-project schools, with 23.2 percent of students in non-project schools reporting no nutritional activities for the 2024-2025 school year, compared to 16.6 percent in project schools. While differences between regions were not assessed for KAP survey results, only 12.3 percent of students in project schools in Afar reported receiving direct food assistance (corn soya blend) compared to 78.3 percent of students in Oromia project schools. This difference likely reflects the one-year pipeline gap between the FY18 and FY24 projects, as no students in either region received a full meal from USDA commodities since July 24. The baseline results suggests that, as the Oromia regional government is expected to contribute all but locally procured beans for the food basket in the FY24 project, schools in Oromia are already integrating these other commodities (such as CSB) into school meals. Similarly, over 50 percent of students in Oromia project schools reported deworming, compared to roughly 15 percent in Afar project schools.[117] However, 27 percent of students in Afar project schools reported the presence of nutrition and health clubs, compared to only 5 percent in Oromia project schools.

119. In addition, students' ability to recognize signs of insufficient food intake was assessed. In Afar, students in project schools were significantly more likely to identify growth faltering as an indicator of malnutrition compared to students in non-project schools. In contrast, students in Oromia non-project schools were more likely to recognize weight loss and growth faltering as a sign of insufficient food intake compared to students in Oromia project schools.

Table 6: Student perceptions on hygiene and nutrition, by region and sex (%)

Indicator	Afar			Oromia			All			Boys			Girls		
	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
% of students who feel it is important to wash your hands	98.9	100		100	100		99.7	100		99.7	100		99.6	100	
Student recognition of when to wash their hands (% of students identifying each option):															
After you use the toilet/ latrine	66.8	61.4		64.5	59.6		63.1	62.9		64.8	64.3		60.9	60.9	
Before you prepare food	55.1	56.2		43.9	39.3		49.2	48		38.6	41.5		61.3	58.4	
Before you eat	94.8	91.4	*	97.5	98.8		96.2	94.9		96.6	93.6	*	96.1	96.5	
After you eat	81.4	82.3		78.6	76.4		80	79.6		81.2	77.2		78.4	83.8	*
If you have taken care of someone who is sick	18.9	12	**	1.9	3.7		9.9	8.1		11.8	8	*	7.7	8.1	
After you touch animals	15	19.1		12.5	16.1		13.7	17.7	**	16.6	19.6		10.2	14.6	*
School health and nutrition activities (student recall) (% of students identifying each option):															
None	29.5	32.7		5	12.8	***	16.6	23.2	***	15.6	22.8	**	18	23.9	*
Vitamin A supplementation	10.9	7.9		11.9	6.6	**	7.3	11.3	**	11.6	8.7		10.6	5.1	**
Deworming	15.4	7.5	***	52.8	42.1		35.1	24	***	33.8	23.1	***	36.6	25.4	***
Direct food assistance (CSB)	12.3	18	**	78.3	75.2		47.2	45.2		46.6	48.4		47.7	40.1	*
Nutrition and health club	27	26.3		5.3	5.4		15.6	16.3		15.3	16.4		15.8	16.2	
COVID prevention	3.2	3		0	0		1.5	1.6		1.6	1.9		1.4	1	

[116] This question was maintained to allow for comparison to previous evaluation cycles. However, the study team notes that this question was somewhat leading, as it was phrased "Is it important to wash your hands?" (yes/no) This likely impacted the high percentage of students who reported "yes."

[117] The Government provides deworming based on the STH rates in each woreda, which varies greatly among project regions based on the vastly different climates.

Indicator	Afar			Oromia			All			Boys			Girls		
	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Student recognition of signs of missing breakfast (% of students identifying each option):															
Lack of energy/weakness	71.6	69.7		87.5	86		80	77.6		81.9	76.6	*	77.7	78.8	
Weakness of the immune system	72.6	74.4		54.5	55.8		63.1	65.6		65.9	66.3		59.9	64.5	
Loss of weight/ thinness	58.4	53.2		48.6	57	**	53.1	55		55.2	55		51.2	55.1	
Children do not grow as they should (growth faltering)	27.7	16.5	***	6.3	15.7	***	16.6	16.1		16.9	17.6		16.2	13.7	
Sample size (n)	*273*	*278*		*280*	*281*		*553*	*559*		*294*	*342*		*259*	*217*	
Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 KAP Student Survey															

4.4 Impact

120. *Note*: Each table and figure presented below notes which differences were tested. In general, comparisons are discussed in the narrative only in cases where the difference is statistically significant.

EQ 9. What is the status of enrollment, attendance, attentiveness, literacy, retention, drop-out rates at baseline?

Finding 13 Enrollment does not differ significantly between sampled project and comparison schools, or between sampled schools across regions.

121. **Enrollment**. The most recent data available from UNESCO (2023) indicates that primary school net enrollment rates in Ethiopia are 76.2 percent (boys: 78.7 percent, girls: 73.59 percent).[118] At baseline, total enrollment in sampled project schools was 16,418 (56.6 percent boys and 43.4 percent girls). Total enrollment in sampled non-project schools was 13,237 (57.1 percent boys, 42.9 percent girls). Fieldwork in the Afar region, in particular, suggested that student enrollment has declined in some schools due to ongoing conflict and challenging living conditions. Some schools have been destroyed or rendered non-functional, which has disrupted education for students.

122. While there were not statistically significant differences in enrollment between regions or between project and non-project schools, interviews indicate that enrollment patterns differ for boys and girls. In instances of drop out, girls are more likely to leave school in upper grades due to household duties, while boys are often withdrawn to support family livelihoods, resulting in high levels of dropout or non-enrollment. Other factors influencing enrollment include underage marriage, seasonal migration among pastoral families, and the need for children to care for livestock, which often took precedence over schooling particularly where families place lower value on formal education.

Table 7: Student enrollment, by region

Indicators		Afar			Oromia			All		
		Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Number of students enrolled in the 2024/2025 school year	All	5,635	3,486		10,783	9,751		16,418	13,237	
	Boys	3,129	2,008		6,157	5,556		9,286	7,564	
	Girls	2,506	1,478		4,626	4,195		7,132	5,673	
Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***) and shown in the SIG column. Difference between regions (i.e., comparing Afar project to Oromia project, and										

[118] UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2025). Data browser: Total net enrolment rate, primary, both sexes (%), male (%) and female (%).

comparing Afar controls to Oromia controls), tested for statistical significance at same levels but shown within the column containing the value. ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

Finding 14 There are regional differences in the average student attendance rate, with greater attendance in Afar at the time of the baseline survey. Student passing rates are similar across regions and in all sampled schools.

123. **Student's attendance rate**. Table reports the average student attendance rate, calculated as the proportion of students present on the day of the survey relative to the total number of students enrolled in the 2024/2025 school year; the data were taken from school records. Average attendance for the sample overall was around 76 percent for both project and non-project schools, and similar for boys and girls. Possible factors accounting for less than full attendance rate are the coincidence of the survey with the end of the school year and final examinations. While there are some project-versus-control differences by region and grade, none of these are statistically significant. In non-project schools, attendance was significantly lower in Oromia (59.1 percent) than in Afar (84.4 percent) overall and across most grade levels (some differences statistically significant, some not); this observation merits the project's future investigation and verification during routine monitoring activities, so that activities can be appropriately contextualized – for example, with a better understanding of what may account for this disparity. Qualitative findings reveal that there is noticeably low student attendance during the first month after reopening, when school feeding has not started yet, and delays in project start or resource delivery further reduce attendance. Interviews also emphasized that continuous provision of meals is closely linked to regular attendance, with disruptions in feeding leading to sustained absenteeism. The proposed LOP target of 88 percent is suitable for this indicator, based on previous trajectory during the FY18 project, though there were some concerns raised in the FY18 project regarding the accuracy of recorded data.[119]

Table 8: Average attendance rate on the day of the survey, by region, sex and grade (%)

Indicator		Afar			Oromia			All		
		Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Average attendance rate by sex	All	67.8	84.4		72.7	59.1**		75.4	77.1	
	Male	68.1	83.7		73.8	62.8*		75.8	78.4	
	Female	73.6	86.1		71.8	63.1		78.5	79.3	
Average attendance rate by grade	Grade 1	84.4	85.1		71.8	59.4		79.6	78.0	
	Grade 2	88.8	82.7		66.8	89.1		80.5	81.2	
	Grade 3	94.4	86.7		71.8*	96.2		85.9	87.4	
	Grade 4	94.5	91.9		68.6**	83.4		84.7	91.2	
	Grade 5	82.4	89.4		70.5	60.3*		77.7	77.7	
	Grade 6	78.4	88.2		86.4	0.0		79.2	88.2	
	Grade 7	84.0	91.6		75.9	54.1***		81.2	77.5	
	Grade 8	86.9	93.5		86.4	0.0		86.8	93.5	

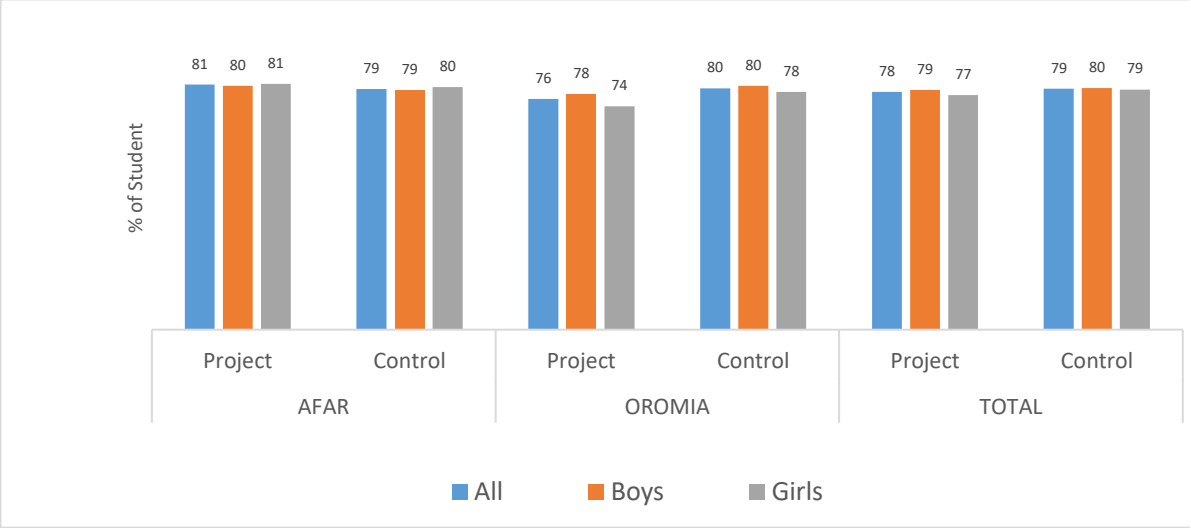
Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***) and shown in the SIG column. Difference between regions (i.e., comparing Afar project to Oromia project, and comparing Afar controls to Oromia controls), tested for statistical significance at same levels but shown within the column containing the value. ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

124. **Passing rate**. Figure 3 shows the pass rate from the 2023/2024 to the 2024/2025 school year, as reported by students.[120] Overall, more than three-quarters of students passed to the next grade. This outcome was consistent across both regions and all categories of schools. The differences across groups are de minimis and not statistically significant.

[119] Discussed in further detail in Annex 11.

[120] Pass rates from 2024/2025 – 2025/2026 are not available because the data were collected during final examinations of the 2024/2025 school year.

Figure 3: Students (grades 2-8) who passed from their current grade to the next grade (2023/2024 - 2024/2025), percent



Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

Finding 15 At baseline, teachers perceived student performance and concentration to be positive overall, with minor differences between project and non-project schools.

125. Table 9 reports student survey results regarding teachers' perceptions of student performance and concentration. These questions were administered to the classroom teacher at the beginning of the student survey that was administered to 20 randomly sampled students from grades 2-8. The teacher was shown the list of the 20 students and answered questions if they had one or more of those students in their classroom; a teacher may have known zero, a few or several students on the list; the n for each column reflects the number of students known to the teacher and therefore differs by category (i.e., by region and sex). The teacher answered questions in reference to the students they knew).

126. Teachers rated most student performance as *satisfactory, good* or *very good*, with statistically meaningful differences between project and non-project schools at these three levels. The greatest difference was found at the *satisfactory* level: 32.4 percent of students in project schools were rated as having satisfactory performance, versus only 22.8 percent in non-project schools; this nearly 10 percentage-point difference will need to be taken into account at midterm and final evaluations, given the disparity in the starting points of these two groups. There are also different starting points at the *good* and *very good* levels, but the disparity is less (~6 percentage points or less). Performance in Oromia was generally rated higher than in Afar. Interviews with school staff indicated that school meals contributed to improved performance, with improvements especially seen among girl students as school meals enabled timely arrival to school and higher concentration in class.

127. Teachers' ratings of student concentration were primarily good or excellent, with 58.5 percent of students (47.7 + 10.8) in project schools and 67.5 percent of students in non-project schools (53.9 + 13.6) rated as *good/ generally attentive* or *excellent/ highly attentive.* Around a third of students in both project and non-project schools received *adequate/ not very good* or *poor/ inattentive* ratings.

128. Feedback from school staff in both Afar and Oromia indicated challenges in performance for students facing additional barriers. Students from low-income families were reported to lack learning materials as well as uniforms. For students with disabilities, school staff reported a lack of appropriate learning materials and infrastructure to support their participation fully, hindering their performance in class.

Table 9: Teacher perceptions of student performance and concentration (%)

Indicator	Afar			Oromia			Total			Boys			Girls		
	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.
Student performance															
Poor	11.9	8.3		3.9	7		8	7.7		7.8	7.5		8.9	8.1	
Satisfactory	35.8	26.8	*	27.6	17.4	**	32.4	22.8	***	27.5	19.4	*	37.8	27.7	*
Good	41.9	50	*	48	51.8		44.6	50.7	*	46.1	52.2		43	48.6	
Very good	10	14.6		19.7	24.3		14.3	18.8	*	17.1	20.6		10.4	15.3	
Student concentration															
Inattentive, poor	13.1	7.6	*	1.6	3.5		8	5.9		8.5	6.2		8.1	5.4	
Adequate, not very good	32.1	28		33.9	24.6	*	32.8	26.8	*	27.6	24.8		38.8	28.8	*
Good, generally attentive	45.3	53.5	*	50.8	53.9		47.7	53.9	*	49	53.4		46.3	55	
Excellent, highly attentive	9.4	10.8		12.5	17.4		10.8	13.6		13.7	15.5		7.4	10.8	
Sample Size (n)	*160*	*157*		*127*	*115*		*287*	*272*		*153*	*161*		*134*	*111*	

Difference between project and control schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***).
Source: FY24 Baseline Student Survey

129. The school survey provides an additional view on student concentration. This survey asked the same question about student concentration as in the student survey and used the same categories (inattentive, adequate, good, excellent) but posed the question to the head teacher (or their designee) regarding the concentration of the student body as a whole, rather than with reference to individual students in the sample. The indicator value is calculated using the sum of "good, generally attentive" and "excellent, highly attentive" responses. Head teachers also rated overall students' concentration as good or excellent, with results in the 60-70 percent range, similar to the student survey results. The school survey finds no statistically significant difference between project and non-project schools. The school survey did additional analysis to test for regional differences and found that a higher percentage of teachers from non-project schools in both Afar and Oromia perceived students to have greater concentration than did teachers in project schools. However, the differences were statistically insignificant. Consistent with these perceptions, results from the KAP survey shows that students reported lower concentration and difficulty studying when they do not eat before school, with significant differences between project and non-project schools in Afar (for both concentration and ability to study) and in Oromia (for concentration only), while no statistical difference was observed between boys and girls.

130. Table 10 presents the student and school survey results for the student concentration question together, to compare the results from the two measurement methods. The results are highly compatible regardless of how concentration was assessed, with the largest differences of perception in Afar.

Table 10: Good and excellent student concentration, student and school survey (%)

	Afar		Oromia		All	
Notes	Project	Control	Project	Control	Project	Control
Student survey: Classroom teacher perceptions of known students in sample	54.7%	64.3%	63.3%	71.3%	58.5%	67.5%
School survey: Head teacher perceptions of all students	64.3%	71.4%	62.5%	75.0%	64.5%	72.0%
Absolute percentage point difference	9.6	7.1	0.8	3.7	0.2	0.7
Source: FY24 Baseline Student Survey, FY24 Baseline School Survey						

Finding 16 Baseline results show low reading proficiency and comprehension, with Oromia generally outperforming Afar.

131. **Student's oral fluency**. The oral reading fluency (ORF) analysis uses benchmarking that was validated in a 2015 January workshop held by the former U.S. Agency for International Development and the Ministry of Education and implemented since then by subsequent EGRAs and detailed in the midterm and endline evaluation reports of the FY18 project. The following ORF categories/benchmarks are used in this FY24 baseline EGRA:

- **"Non-readers"[121]:** Students who fail to register a positive score on the ORF test: if the student does not correctly read aloud the first five words of the passage, the test is stopped.
- **Level 1: Reading with limited fluency and comprehension:** Students scoring above zero but at the lower end of the reading fluency score distribution (labelled in this report as "limited proficiency").
- **Level 2: Reading with increasing fluency and comprehension:** Students who have some reading fluency but have not yet reached Level 1 fluency and comprehension (labelled in this report as "increasing proficiency").

[121] In previous reports this category was named "Zero Readers."

- **Level 3: Reading fluently and with full comprehension:** Students achieving the level of reading fluency that the data indicate corresponds with full or almost-full comprehension (labelled in this report as "full proficiency").

132. The ORF benchmarks differ slightly by language and are detailed in Table .

Table 11: Standard set of benchmark levels, by language

Language	Limited proficiency	Increasing proficiency	Full proficiency
Afan Oromo			
Grade 2	1 to 19	20 to 47	48 and above
Grade 3	1 to 29	30 to 57	58 and above
Afar Af			
Grade 2	1 to 18	19 to 45	46 and above
Grade 3	1 to 23	24 to 50	51 and above
Source: Adapted from Annex 6, Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern - Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions in Ethiopia (2019 to 2025) Decentralized Evaluation Report, Volume 2 – Light Touch Early Grace Reading Assessment (EGRA) (original citation: EGRA 2021 Report (NEAEA, 2022)			

133. Table 12 presents the baseline values for each proficiency level defined above. The percentage of non-readers was markedly high, with 57.2 percent of students in project schools unable to read the first five words of the test story, and an even higher percentage (59.7 percent) in non-project schools. Again, the disparities between the Afar and Oromia regions are evident, with Afar having a strikingly high percentage of non-readers – over 65 percent in both project and non-project schools. Most students in the overall sample are either non-readers or have only limited proficiency. There are some statistically significant differences in the project-control comparisons; most do not follow a clearly discernible pattern. Statistical comparisons between girls and boys were not conducted; however, in both project and control schools, a higher percentage of girls were classified as non-readers compared to boys (roughly 68 percent of girls compared to 60 percent of boys). Similarly, a higher percentage of boys read at Level 2 ("increasing proficiency)" compared to girls in both project and control schools.

Table 12: Reading and comprehension proficiency levels, by region and sex (%)

Indicator		Afar			Oromia			Total			Boys			Girls		
		Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.
Non-readers	Grade 2	80.8	70.3	*	44.4	55.4	*	64.3	64.8		60.2	60.8		68.5	68.5	
	Grade 3	65	58.1		32.5	43.9		43.4	50		34.7	43.6		57.4	57.8	
	All	77.1	67.1	**	39.3	50.4	**	57.2	59.7		50.7	54.8		65.2	65	
Level 1: Limited proficiency	Grade 2	14.6	23.5		37.3	50.5	*	30.7	28.5		31.5	31.4		30.4	26.4	
	Grade 3	30.8	39.5		61.4	45.6	**	52	43		59.2	45.5	*	40.4	40	
	All	18.3	27.8	**	40.9	55.2	***	38	33.4		41.9	36.3		33.3	30.9	
Level 2: Increasing proficiency	Grade 2	3.8	6.7		5.6	6.8		4.6	6.7		7.8	7.8		0.9	5.5	*
	Grade 3	2.5	2.3		3.6	10.5		3.3	7		5.3	10.9		0	2.2	
	All	3.5	5.6		4.7	8.4		4.2	6.8	*	6.9	8.9		0.6	2.2	**
Level 3: Full proficiency	Grade 2	0.8	0.8		0.9	0		0.5	0.8		1.6	0		0	1.1	
	Grade 3	0	0		1.2	0		1	0		0	0		2.1	0	
	All	0	0.8		1.1	0		0.8	0.3		0.5	0		0.7	0.6	

Difference between project and comparison schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***).

Source: FY24 Baseline EGRA

134. Table 13 (next page) presents the results for the main McGovern-Dole literacy indicator and related sub-indicators. Standard Indicator 1 is a composite indicator that indicates the percentage of students who reach two benchmarks: they must read a short passage aloud within 60 seconds and have a reading comprehension score of three or more correct answers to five questions about the passage. Based on this measure, reading and understanding is extremely low across project and non-project schools in both regions: less than one percent of both project and non-project schools meet this standard.

135. Table 13 also reports the results for four sub-indicators. For the letter name recognition assessment, students are shown 100 letters or symbols and asked to read them aloud. The number reported in the table is the average number of letters or symbols correctly identified. On average, students in project schools recognized 26.2 letters/symbols; in non-project schools, 23.9. The analysis indicates no significant differences between project and non-project schools. While the analysis did not statistically compare Oromia and Afar schools, it is clear that Oromia has higher performance on this measure relative to Afar.

136. For word recognition, students were shown 50 words and asked to read each word aloud. The number reported is the average number of words read correctly. Again, performance here is low, with students in project schools reading 9.1 words on average, and students in non-project schools reading 7.8 words. Again, this was not a statistically significant difference.

137. The next sub-indicator is reading comprehension. As discussed above, students are asked five questions about a short text they read aloud and must answer at least three questions correctly to meet the reading comprehension benchmark. Performance in the overall sample was low for this indicator, with no significant difference between students in project schools (where 12.5 percent of students met the benchmark) and non-project schools (11.3 percent). Again, while the analysis did not statistically compare Oromia and Afar schools, students in Oromia had a stronger result on this measure, with about 21-22 percent of students in both project and non-project schools meeting the benchmark, whereas in Afar, performance ranged from 1.3 – 3.1 percent.

138. Oral reading fluency is a measure of reading speed. This indicator measures the percentage of students who demonstrate reading aloud 48 or more correct words per minute. Scores are low here, with only about 5 percent of the overall sample meeting the benchmark. The analysis indicates no significant differences between project and non-project schools.

139. Overall, few students performed well on this set of indicators. The analysis also surfaces regional disparities, with stronger results for students in Oromia on most sub-indicators (NB: though the regional comparison was not statistically tested, the disparity is evident based on the magnitude of the difference alone). The analysis did not include statistical comparisons between boys and girls, but on all sub-indicator measures, boys appear to outperform girls. This observation is consistent with school staff interviews, which highlighted that girls especially benefit from school meals as support for improving their academic outcomes and performance, suggesting that girls may face greater challenges in achieving academic outcomes compared to boys. Given the low baseline literacy scores, the LOP target of 43.70 percent is ambitious and should be adjusted downwards to reflect baseline findings.

Table 13: Reading comprehension and fluency, by region and sex (%)

Indicator		Afar			Oromia			Total			Boys			Girls		
		Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.	Proj	Contr	Sig.
Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Grade 2	0.8	0.8		0.9	0		0.5	0.8		1.6	0		0	1.1	
	Grade 3	0	0		1.2	0		1	0		0	0		2.1	0	
	All	0	0.8		1.1	0		0.8	0.3		0.5	0		0.7	0.6	
A. Students in timed fluency																
Letter name recognition (mean score; max score 100)	Grade 2	11.5	17.1	***	39.5	32		24.2	22.8		27.3	25.5		20.6	19.9	
	Grade 3	11.9	12.8		38.7	36.6		30.1	26.1		35	30.2		22.6	21.2	
	All	11.7	15.7	***	39.1	34.2		26.2	23.9		30.2	27.1		21.7	20.3	
Familiar word reading (mean score; max score 50)	Grade 2	4.3	4.8		14.2	10.6		8.6	7.1	*	10	9.6		7.2	4.1	***
	Grade 3	2.8	2.4		13.2	14.2		9.8	9.2		13	12.4		4.9	5.27	
	All	3.9	4.2		13.9	12.1		9.1	7.8		11.1	10.6		6.5	4.5	***
Reading Comprehension Scores (more than 3 correct comprehension questions) (percentage of students)	Grade 2	2.3	4.2		21.3	16.2		10.9	8.8		12.5	11.9		10.4	4.4	
	Grade 3	0	2.3		22.9	28.1		15.6	16		20	27.3		16.3	17	
	All	1.3	3.1		22	21.4		12.5	11.3		17.3	15.3		12.7	11.6	
Oral reading fluency (mean score; out 48 Afar/50 Oromia)	Grade 2	2.6	3.5		8.6	7.4		5.3	5		6.9	6.1		3.5	3.2	
	Grade 3	3.2	2.3		8.9	9.5		7	6.4		9	9		4	3.2	
	All	3.1	2.7		8.1	8.7		5.5	5.9		7.6	7.1		3.7	3.6	
Sample size (n)	*Grade 2*	*125*	*124*		*95*	*86*		*220*	*210*		*118*	*111*		*102*	*99*	
	Grade 3	*38*	*45*		*73*	*66*		*111*	*111*		*68*	*61*		*43*	*50*	
	All	*163*	*169*		*168*	*152*		*331*	*321*		*186*	*172*		*145*	*149*	

Difference between project and comparison schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***).
Source: FY24 Baseline EGRA

EQ 10. What is the status of community perceptions on the importance of inclusive education for girls and students with functional impairments?

Finding 17	Community support for girls' education remains driven by the immediate benefits of school meals and the promotion of education for students with disabilities is limited.

140. **Girls' education.** Community perspectives on girls' education, as reflected through the lens of the school feeding project, suggest early signs of shifting attitudes, though motivations remain largely pragmatic. Results from the KAP survey found that there was no difference among students in the perception that boys are more of a priority than girls, which may indicate changing attitudes around the value of education. Stakeholders frequently emphasized that school meals give families a reason to let girls attend regularly, especially in contexts where girls are otherwise kept at home to manage domestic responsibilities or due to food scarcity. While many stakeholders stated the project benefits both boys and girls equally, several recognized that girls face additional barriers and that school meals help remove these, allowing girls to arrive at school on time, participate actively, and focus on learning. These statements reflect an emerging awareness of the structural disadvantages girls face and recognition of the program's role in increasing their participation in education. However, there is limited evidence to suggest a deeper transformation in how communities value girls' education long-term; most support appears linked to the immediate practical benefits of food provision rather than an explicit shift in beliefs about the intrinsic importance of girls' learning or continued schooling. There is also limited evidence on the perceived importance of education for girls and boys from pastoralist households.

141. **Students with disabilities**. Interviews with school administrators, teachers, principals, and PTA groups suggest that community members are less aware of the importance of education for children with disabilities, however, there is some recognition of the unique barriers students with disabilities encounter. Stakeholders noted challenges such as inaccessible infrastructure, lack of adapted learning materials, limited professional support, and stigma, that contribute to families keeping children with functional impairments out of school. While some positive measures were reported—such as assigning special-needs teachers, seating students with hearing or vision impairments at the front, or providing a wheelchair, these accommodations were isolated rather than systematic. At baseline, mental and cognitive disabilities requiring special provisions was the most frequent type of disability reported in project schools, followed by hearing impairments and difficulty in movement, though the actual prevalence was still low (0.29, 0.19 and 0.15 percent, respectively). Observations from Afar and Oromia confirmed that teachers and students were described as generally supportive of children with disabilities, although there was little indication that school-level systems are equipped to address their needs. These findings suggest that while disability access is nominally affirmed, deeper understanding and commitment to addressing the educational needs of children with disabilities remain limited. Moreover, there was little evidence that communities actively value or prioritize education for these children.

142. **FY24 project response.** Looking forward, the project design includes dedicated measures to deepen community engagement and promote more accessible educational environments. The project design includes support to train and equip clubs in 573 schools to lead awareness-raising activities on girls' participation in education.[122] Community leaders, including PTAs, kebele education boards, and religious and clan leaders, will also receive training to promote the importance of girls' education, the participation of students with disabilities, and active community involvement. These efforts are designed to foster stronger local ownership, enhance school practices which respond to students' with disabilities needs, and reinforce the value of equitable access to school meals and education for all learners.

[122] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program: School Meals for Improved Learning and Empowerment (SMILE) Project Proposal

EQ 11. What are the long-term impacts (five or more years) of school meal programs on local agriculture production and food safety and what variables affect these changes?

Finding 18 At baseline, local agriculture production is insufficient to sustain school feeding.

143. One objective of the McGovern-Dole project, as well as the homegrown school feeding strategy, is that a portion of school feeding commodities would be locally or regionally procured (LRP SO1). Table presents the project's local procurement targets. While project documents indicate that smallholder farmers[123] contribute over 95 percent of national agriculture production and note Oromia, Amhara, and SNNPR as major supply regions for red beans,[124] government stakeholders emphasized that although pastoralist communities are slowly becoming more agropastoral, engagement in agriculture is still limited in project areas. Government staff in both Oromia and Afar the regional and national level believed it is overly ambitious and unrealistic to expect predominantly pastoralist communities to contribute significantly to school meals. Despite qualitative evidence of regional procurement, key informants noted that extreme weather (i.e., drought and flooding) and infertile land have limited productivity and discouraged further agricultural development. Overall, regional government staff believed benefits to smallholder farmers resulting from school feeding were limited and there had been minimal impact on local agriculture production. Instead, stakeholders proposed that WFP should support schools, or even regions (in the case of Afar) to harvest land assigned by the regional government.

Table 14: Locally procured commodities

Commodity	Total Quantity	Estimated Arrival to Target Country
Red kidney beans	295 MT	August 2025
Red kidney beans	295 MT	January 2026
Red kidney beans	277 MT	August 2026
Red kidney beans	277 MT	January 2027
Red kidney beans	50 MT	August 2027
Red kidney beans	50 MT	January 2028
Fortified Corn-Soya Blend	200	August 2028
Red kidney beans	35 MT	August 2028
Red kidney beans	35 MT	January 2029

144. To support improved production by smallholder farmers, and in turn supply school feeding, the FY24 project will implement targeted and contextualized activities in each region.[125] In Afar, this will include training on improved crop production, conservation agriculture, and post-harvest loss management. Activities in Oromia will focus on increasing pulse production, with the specific intent to supply 100 percent of pulse requirements for school feeding by year three. These activities respond to concerns regarding local communities' ability to supply school feeding. The endline evaluation will assess the extent to which the project has contributed to increased agricultural production.

[123] The 2021-2023 LRFPP Programmes in Eastern Africa evaluation found that definitions of smallholder farmers are not sufficiently standardized across countries in the region. The McGovern-Dole project documents also do not define smallholders for the area.

[124] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program: School Meals for Improved Learning and Empowerment (SMILE) Project Proposal

[125] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

Finding 19	Regional food safety capacity requires additional strengthening, and school-level food safety has been negatively impacted by infrequent training, insufficient infrastructure, and high cook turnover.

145. Government stakeholders expressed that regional capacity to prepare foods to standards, including fortification, requires additional support and consistent monitoring. Regional staff noted that, at baseline, much of the food that is used in school feeding is imported. While key informants agreed that the shift in the FY24 project phase to more locally prepared foods was relevant and aligned with the national framework, there was recognition of the need for increased training and technical support to ensure adequate food safety and quality. Stakeholders also highlighted the need to build food safety monitoring at the regional level, to mitigate food safety and quality incidents.

146. In schools, school administration and staff shared concerns regarding food safety, stemming from poor infrastructure and unmet training needs. Poor infrastructure and space constraints often require kitchens to double as storage areas, creating unhygienic conditions. Observations by the study team also noted unwashed dishes and disorganized ingredients, raising concerns about the cleanliness of food preparation areas. While some cooks had received initial training, others, particularly newly hired staff, relied on informal guidance from peers due to a lack of structured onboarding. Stakeholders explained that most cooks had been trained only once, often years prior, and that no formal system existed for refresher trainings. High turnover among kitchen staff further exacerbates the gap in knowledge and practice. Respondents emphasized the need for recurring, practical training to reinforce food safety protocols and maintain minimum hygiene standards across schools.

4.5 Sustainability

EQ 12. To what extent are the project arrangements, national capacity and context likely to sustain the implementation and results of the project, focusing on the context and the factors that may affect sustainability of the project, especially national government capacity for WFP to transition schools?

Finding 20	The Government has demonstrated increasing financial commitment to school feeding, though there is no dedicated national budget line and there are notable differences between regions.

147. Between 2021 and 2023, the total allocation for school feeding in Ethiopia increased from approximately USD 45.4 million to USD 83.6 million.[126] [127] Out of the total USD 83.6 million allocated in 2023, project documents indicate that Oromia and Afar regional government allocated USD 4.7 million and USD 355,000, respectively.[128] Despite this growing financial commitment from regional governments, a main constraint to the sustainability of school feeding in Ethiopia, as identified by government and WFP stakeholders, is the lack of a dedicated national budget line for school feeding. Without a dedicated school feeding budget, government staff noted that regional government school feeding funds have traditionally been reallocated for emergency response to earthquakes and conflict. Both government and WFP stakeholders emphasized the necessity of additional resourcing at the national level in order for the Government to meet its goal to reach universal school feeding by 2030.

148. Continuing sustained advocacy, WFP plans to support the Government in developing and institutionalizing a financing strategy.[129] Project design documentation indicates that the financing strategy will be designed to account for both public and private resourcing and cover 30 percent of the national school

[126] Global Child Nutrition Foundation. 2021. Global Survey of School Meal Programs (2020-2021).
[127] Global Child Nutrition Foundation. 2023. Global Survey of School Meal Programs (2022-2023).
[128] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007
[129] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

feeding program's budgetary requirements, to supplement regional allocations. Interviews and the project award agreement also suggest that capacity strengthening to mobilize domestic and alternative financing for school feeding is an explicit focus of the FY24 design to expand coverage by 2030. The project design plans for continued advocacy through workshops and policy dialogues, which government stakeholders emphasized is imperative to materialize a dedicated national budget line.

149. Even with dedicated national school feeding resources, there remain considerable differences between regional budgets. To address these regional disparities, WFP plans to further support the Afar government to develop a region-specific school feeding roadmap and resource mobilization strategy. Alternatively, WFP will support the Oromia government to develop legislation to institutionalize and finance the school feeding project, building off strong regional commitment to date.

Finding 21	Stakeholders reported coordination among ministries and across sectors, as well as a dedicated staffing structure, as key areas for government capacity strengthening.

150. **Coordination.** Government stakeholders revealed that coordination remains a main capacity gap at baseline, including both inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination. Multi-sector coordination was previously identified as a gap in the 2021 SABER assessment,[130] which government staff confirmed continued to be a challenge at baseline. Additionally, the FY18 draft endline evaluation noted gaps in coordination, stating that improved coordination and partnerships are essential for achieving project results. Though interviewed government staff noted that there is recognition across sectors of the importance of school feeding, informants noted that there is not a strong or functional working committee or unit to coordinate activities. Furthermore, district-level stakeholders in both Afar and Oromia reported limited clarity around the roles and responsibilities of district versus regional or national structures, and the distinction between WFP and the government roles and responsibilities.

151. The FY24 design includes plans to strengthen coordination at both the federal and regional levels through the National Food and Nutrition Technical Committee, which is chaired by the Ministry of Health and co-chaired by the Ministries of Education and Agriculture. Per project documentation, this committee is the main coordination platform for the National Food and Nutrition Strategy and the Seqota Declaration. In addition to planned muti-stakeholder visits, WFP plans to also support both Bureaus of Education to establish regional School Feeding Steering Committees, with the goal of improving coordination among sector bureaus and school feeding stakeholders.

152. **School feeding staffing structure.** According to federal government stakeholders, the current staffing structure supporting school feeding is insufficient, both at the federal and regional levels. Federal staff noted that school feeding is managed by one to two focal persons in the Ministry of Education. Similarly, federal staff reported most regional governments only have focal persons managing school feeding, rather than a dedicated unit. In interviews, federal government staff believed that Oromia (and Addis Ababa) had a relatively better structure for managing school feeding, compared with other regions in Ethiopia. Stakeholders believed that, due to the scope of school feeding work, a dedicated school feeding unit would be able to better manage and implement school feeding, rather than focal points.

153. The FY24 project is designed to directly address these concerns regarding staffing: the project design includes advocacy for regional Bureaus of Education to establish dedicated units that will be responsible for the oversight of school feeding planning, budgeting, management, and monitoring.[131] WFP will support the Bureaus in each region to develop Terms of Reference for staff and guidance on the unit's functions and roles. The regional units will not be funded by the project, however; the cost of establishing regional school directorate will be the responsibility of the Bureaus of Education. Furthermore, WFP will continue to second technical school feeding staff to the Ministry of Education and Bureaus of Education in Afar and Oromia, which will ensure regional management capacity to strengthen planning, implementation and monitoring.

[130] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[131] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

Finding 22	Stakeholders noted additional contextual and operational barriers to sustainability of project results related to community capacity.

154. **Community mobilization.** Regional informants expressed skepticism that pastoralist communities could be sufficiently mobilized to sustain school feeding. Government staff note that resources in pastoralist communities are extremely limited, and food security remains a serious problem. As such, it is unexpected that pastoralist households would be able to make sufficient contributions to sustain school feeding in area schools—whether contributions be monetary or in-kind. Additionally, concerns around land productivity in targeted areas make it unlikely that the Ministry of Education's goal to "ensure a minimum of 85 percent of the food items supplying the national HGSF program are locally sourced," at least in most communities targeted by the McGovern-Dole project. Stakeholders noted that regional procurement of food items could likely sustain the national HGSF program, however.

155. The FY24 project design includes support to address restraints related to community contributions. In Oromia, the project is designed to support the regional government to develop a school feeding policy and proclamations.[132] Once ratified, WFP will support the Oromia regional government to draft legislation that would establish a regional school feeding tax, to ensure the sustainability of school feeding in Oromia. In Afar, the project will support the development of a costed transition plan to prepare the Afar regional government for the full transition of schools by 2029.

EQ 13. What kinds of partnerships (with the private sector and/or the Ethiopian Government) are the most effective at ensuring program sustainability? Among successful partnerships, who are the key players and what are their roles? In what contexts do private sector and/or government partnerships work best, and which contexts may be more challenging?

Finding 23	Government involvement plays a key role in ensuring program continuity, but weak multi-sectoral coordination has limited progress towards long-term sustainability.

156. Stakeholder feedback from Afar and Oromia emphasized the importance of government involvement in ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the program. In Afar, efforts to improve sustainability include allocating land for school meal food production, with some schools receiving three to five-hectare plots. Respondents noted that these initiatives require the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Bureau of Agriculture to be sustained. In Oromia, when the Government learned of the project gap anticipated between the FY18 and FY24 projects, the Government took proactive measures by mobilizing food from the community through the Buusaa Goonofaa financial institutions and allocating resources from its regular budget, allowing the school feeding program to continue.

157. Both national and regional government stakeholders also stressed that the program cannot rely solely on external donors or donor-funded projects. Instead, they require both government and community support. They further emphasized the need for the Government to treat school feeding as a permanent initiative rather than a temporary project. Respondents described the Government's role as promoting a strong work culture within the community, mobilizing local resources, and ensuring that the SFP is expanded.

158. While the Government plays a central role in program sustainability, stakeholders reported challenges in achieving the multisectoral coordination needed for sustainable school feeding. Recent efforts under the HGSF program have connected the education sector with the Bureau of Agriculture, the Animal and Fish Bureau, and the Land Administration Bureau, however, these relationships are not yet systematized. Qualitative data indicates that coordination among the agriculture, health, water, and education sectors remains limited. At the national level, there is documented guidance that outlines roles and responsibilities, however stakeholders noted that in practice there is little participation from ministries other than the Ministry of Education and limited shared understanding of school feeding as a responsibility across sectors.

[132] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

Finding 24	Partnerships with farmers was identified as necessary for improved and sustained school feeding, with many farmers expressing interest in participation in the program.

159. Stakeholder feedback from smallholders indicate that partnerships can help to improve and sustain school feeding. Respondents noted that links between smallholders and schools would help provide schools with more consistent access to fresh foods and reduce price fluctuations. Smallholders noted that their effectiveness in supplying schools through procurement could be maximized if provided with training, improved plant varieties, information on what crops to plant for the next season, and other resources. Respondents also noted that improved access to loans from the Government to finance equipment such as tractors, combines, and solar-powered water pumps, and labor costs would support linkages between smallholder and schools. FGDs with government staff similarly pointed to the need for increased training and facilitating access to loans.

160. While feedback from smallholders showed that membership in cooperatives is not widespread, many farmers expressed strong interest in participating in school feeding in the future. Interviews also indicated that the opportunity to supply to schools motivates smallholders to transition from pastoralism to agropastoralism, further supporting the sustainability of the program. Overall, farmers viewed participation in the government- and donor-funded school feeding programs as profitable, noting that while they may face relative losses when market prices are high, the contracts provide stability and profitability when prices are low. WFP's broader LRFP strategy in Ethiopia includes working with farmer cooperatives, processors, and aggregators to strengthen local value chains and improve market integration. While this project focuses primarily on supporting smallholder farmers to supply school feeding, there are opportunities to leverage these wider LRFP partnerships in the future to enhance sustainability and diversify local sourcing options.

EQ 14. What community-level systems of governance and management are required for the successful implementation and sustainability of the school meals programme?

Finding 25	Poverty, low agricultural production, and weak coordination impact the ability of School Feeding Committees and PTAs to support the implementation and sustainability of the project.

161. In project areas, school feeding committees and PTAs manage food stocks, oversee meal preparation, maintain records, and mobilize contributions such as firewood, water, and cooks' salaries. They also raise awareness among parents and local leaders about the value of education, particularly for girls, and the importance of maintaining school feeding. WFP, through regional education bureaus, supports the creation of school feeding committees composed of members from different sectors, which stakeholders in Afar and Oromia described as strong and effective in mobilizing community support. WFP sub-offices and regional bureau staff monitor committee activities and report challenges to inform project improvements.

162. However, the ability of these committees to fulfil their roles is heavily constrained when communities lack the capacity to contribute. In project areas, widespread poverty, low agricultural production, and the impacts of recurrent weather events limit what households can provide. Even in schools with strong local ownership, committee members emphasized that additional and ongoing government support is necessary to sustain school feeding. Most committees operate without targeted capacity strengthening or formal training for members, and their ability to coordinate with other stakeholders varies widely. Links between committees, local government, and broader support networks are often weak, reducing opportunities for joint planning and problem-solving. High turnover among members reduces continuity and institutional memory, and in some schools, a small group of active individuals dominates decision-making, limiting broader participation. These factors, combined with the voluntary nature of committee membership, require targeted capacity building, broader participation, and stronger integration into local governance structures to maintain these vital committees.

EQ 15. Are structures in place for transition to government ownership of the programme?

Finding 26	Current structures to support transition to government ownership are emerging; the project is designed to strengthen these structures, to support the transition.

163. To assess structures supporting the transition of school feeding to government ownership in project areas, the study team would expect established systems in the following areas: 1) policy and governance, 2) financing and budgeting, 3) procurement and supply chain systems, 4) monitoring and evaluation, 5) community engagement and ownership and 6) partnerships and communities of practice.[133] While government and WFP stakeholders have noted progress in some of these areas, significant gaps remain. In order to ensure a smooth transition to government ownership, it will be imperative that the project strengthens these structures prior to the transition.

164. **Policy and governance.** As previously discussed under Relevance EQ 2, the Government of Ethiopia has developed a clear national school feeding policy and strategy, and school feeding is aligned across relevant sector development plans and objectives. However, stakeholders have reported that cross-sector coordination needs further strengthening and roles and responsibilities are not clear at all levels. The FY24 project design appropriately includes advocacy for a national school feeding law and support to strengthen multi-sectoral coordination.

165. **Financing and budgeting.** While the FY24 project design includes advocacy and support for a dedicated budget line, school feeding is not currently included in the national budget. Furthermore, regional budgets vary, impacting local implementation. The project appropriately includes plans to support the development of multi-year financing plans in both regions, and support for a national financing strategy to diversify funding streams.

166. **Procurement and supply chain systems.** At baseline, government stakeholders reported that procurement laws are in place and that food items for school meals are procured within Ethiopia, as well as imported. While the National School Feeding Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy promotes decentralized procurement,[134] including procurement directly from farmers to schools, stakeholders noted that procurement processes are weak throughout Ethiopia and that procurement laws do not allow for such arrangements, though this is not specific to the project. Table 15 outlines the school feeding procurement system from the 2021 strategy. To support the Government's goal for 85 percent of school meal items to be sourced locally, the project works within emerging institutional structures designed to manage procurement and strengthen supply chains. A dedicated School Feeding Unit within the Ministry of Education is responsible for coordinating planning, oversight, and monitoring of the national programme, while regional Bureaus of Education oversee implementation and procurement at the subnational level. In addition, the National Food and Nutrition Steering and Technical Committees, co-chaired by the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, are intended to improve multisectoral coordination and align food production, nutrition, and procurement systems with school feeding needs. Together, these structures provide the framework for gradually increasing local sourcing by linking farmers to markets, supporting extension services, and integrating local production into supply chains. However, as previously discussed, government stakeholders expressed caution in raising expectations for farmers in project areas to be able to sufficiently produce to supply school feeding.

Table 15: Summary of school feeding procurement system

School Feeding Program Procurement System
The national school feeding program follows a decentralized system, promoting local sourcing from smallholder farmers, cooperatives, larger dairy and poultry farms, and pastoralists to be purchased by schools and other smaller organized groups. Under this framework, centralized procurement is applied in areas with weak capacity where food is purchased through federal and regional governments.

[133] This aligns with the 2021 SABER assessment gaps and planned FY24 project activities for sustainability and government transition.

[134] Government of Ethiopia. 2021. National School Feeding Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy.

School Feeding Program Procurement System
Source: Government of Ethiopia. 2021. National School Feeding Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy.

167. **Monitoring and evaluation.** Government stakeholders in both regions reported strong information sharing and monitoring capacity of WFP sub-offices and regional bureaus of education. A few stakeholders believed additional training on reporting and monitoring mechanisms, as well as greater digitization of the school feeding tracking system would further improve monitoring capacity. Moreover, informants noted that with the Government's goal to increase the local procurement and preparation of food items, the national school feeding program will require enhanced monitoring of activities to ensure food safety and quality are maintained. As part of the FY18 project, WFP supported the Ministry of Education to develop and National HGSF Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Lessons from the FY18 draft endline evaluation highlighted weaknesses in reporting against McGovern-Dole indicators, particularly in sex-disaggregation and data quality assurance, underscoring the importance of strengthening monitoring systems at baseline. The project FY24 design appropriately includes support to the Ministry of Education to operationalize and institutionalize the framework to strengthen data collection, monitoring and reporting on school feeding to enhance evidence-based decision-making.[135] Further digitalization is planned through support to strengthening the Education Management Information System. WFP will ensure appropriate use and sufficient understanding of these frameworks and systems through training to education officials, cluster supervisors and school officials who are responsible for using and monitoring school-level data.

168. **Community engagement and ownership.** As discussed under EQ14, school feeding committees and PTAs serve as essential mechanisms for community engagement and ownership. However, communities' ability to contribute to school feeding is limited in highly food insecure, pastoral communities. The project is designed to address this limitation by increasing government financial support for school feeding and strengthening capacity of community stakeholders to implement and manage school feeding.

169. **Partnerships and community of practice.** The Government of Ethiopia joined the Global School Meals Coalition (SMC) in 2021 and currently serves as co-chair of the Regional SMC Network in East Africa.[136] With technical support from WFP during the FY18 project, the Ministry of Education has worked to endorse a set of national commitments to the SMC.[137] This includes targets to achieve universal school feeding coverage by 2030, establish a federal budget line to support 30 percent of annual school feeding project costs, ensure that 85 percent of food supplied to the national school feeding project is locally sourced, strengthen federal and regional level multi-sectoral coordination platforms, improve and digitize data collection and monitoring systems to enable real-time access to school-level data on school health and nutrition, school feeding, and other educational outcomes. Furthermore, participation in the SMC allows Ethiopia to benefit from peer-to-peer learning and joint advocacy efforts. Ethiopia's commitments through the SMC and its participation in the regional network not only demonstrate strong support and buy-in at the national level, which is affirmed by stakeholders, but is also a structure that will support the sustainability of school feeding and a smooth transition to government ownership.

EQ 16. What is the quality of the project's graduation timeline and sustainability plan?

Finding 27 The project's sustainability plan aligns with gaps identified in the 2021 SABER assessment.

170. The FY24 project activities are closely aligned to current government capacity gaps, as identified in the 2021 SABER assessment and confirmed through stakeholder interviews. While the 2021 assessment found that overall, Ethiopia had improved from latent (2015) to emerging,[138] WFP and the Ministry of

[135] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[136] SMC. 2024. SMC. Accessed August 2025.

[137] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[138] GCNF. 2021. School Meals Programs: Ethiopia. Global Survey 2021.

Education agreed that the project capacity strengthening activities would focus on gaps identified during the 2021 SABER exercise to ensure sustainability of school feeding in project areas.[139] Table 16 lists key activities for each of the five SABER policy pillars: 1) policy frameworks, 2) financial capacity, 3) institutional capacity and coordination, 4) design and implementation and 5) community roles. In 2026, a Healthy SABER assessment will be conducted to evaluate government capacity. While these activities are well targeted to address critical bottlenecks, particularly in financing, institutional coordination, and policy frameworks, their adequacy in preparing for full handover remains mixed. Advocacy for a federal budget line, support to regional costed transition strategies, and secondment of technical staff are appropriate and necessary, yet progress in these areas is contingent on political will and budget prioritization at federal and regional levels. By contrast, activities under community roles and menu design, though important, are less directly linked to systemic capacity for long-term ownership. Taken together, the planned activities represent an appropriate and pragmatic step toward strengthening government capacity, but additional efforts—particularly sustained financial commitments and stronger cross-sectoral coordination—will be required to fully meet the ambitions of programme handover.

Table 16: Response to gaps identified during 2021 SABER assessment

Policy Pillar	FY24 project activities
Policy Frameworks	Advocacy for national school feeding law Advocacy for a national school feeding budget line Support to operationalize the National School Feeding Policy Framework and Strategy (2021) Support roll-out and dissemination of National HGSF Implementation Guidelines (2024)
Financial Capacity	Support development of diversified and sustainable resource mobilization strategies at national and regional levels Support legislation in Oromia mandating increased coverage of regional school meals program, including tax Support Bureau of Education in Afar to develop costed transition strategy Advocacy with Ministries of Health and Agriculture to establish co-financing mechanism Advocacy for dedication federal budget line for school feeding
Institutional Capacity and Coordination	Secondment of technical expert to Ministry of Education and Afar and Oromia Bureaus of Education Support increased use of National Food and Nutrition Steering and Technical Committees and establishment of similar structure at regional level Co-chair the School National School Feeding Project Network Multi-sectoral exchange visits
Design And Implementation	Support design of cost-effective, culturally appropriate and nutrition sensitive menus for each region Support to streamline procurement process and transportation Support to enhancing transparency and accountability Support to improve data management and monitoring systems Support on targeting, prioritization and adaptation Joint monitoring and review meetings

[139] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

Policy Pillar	FY24 project activities
Community Roles	Advocacy for increased government support Capacity strengthening interventions for community stakeholders (e.g., safe handling and storage of commodities, prevention of commodity misuse)

Finding 28 The project's graduation timeline accounts for differences in capacity and preparedness across the two targeted regions. However, stakeholders have concerns over communities' capacity to sustain school feeding after the transition.

171. The FY24 project's graduation timeline intentionally plans for a phased transition of project schools into the national HGSF program. Beginning with the previous project phase (FY18), 128 schools in Afar have already been handed over to the Government.[140] An additional 104 schools are planned to transition to government ownership before the start of the FY24 project. Support will be gradually scaled down: WFP will initially support 434 schools in Afar, scaled down to 320 schools in the second year of school feeding support, 224 schools in year three and 146 schools in year four (the final year). WFP and the Afar Bureau of Education will jointly select schools to transition based on complementarity with WFP's programming supporting smallholder farmers. In Oromia, while all 157 schools will receive project support for four years, they will only receive one USDA-funded commodity, in preparation for their full transition to government ownership in 2028. However, stakeholders in both Afar and Oromia shared concerns that communities may not have the capacity to sustain the program once transitioned. Evidence from other McGovern-Dole projects in the region suggests that even with policy improvements, sustainability can be undermined by gaps in financing, weak accountability mechanisms, and limited participation of women in decision-making, underscoring the need for robust risk mitigation in Ethiopia's plan.[141] The draft endline evaluation for the FY18 project cycle also noted concerns about the transition plan. At endline, handover was reported as limited, highlighting the gap between the project's level of provision and the Government's ability to support school feeding independently.

172. Per the FY24 project design, there are three major milestones projected before the full handover of all schools to the National HGSF program.[142] These include an Oromia regional school feeding policy and proclamation developed and ratified, an Oromia School Feeding Agency established, and the adoption of a national school feeding law. Additionally, WFP will support the development of a costed transition roadmap for the Afar region. By 2028, all project schools in Oromia will have transitioned to government ownership; all Afar project schools will transfer by 2029, the last year of the project. These differences between the two regions appropriately reflect contextual differences, including differing financial capacity between Afar and Oromia. Global experience indicates that while policy reforms are essential, long-term sustainability depends on timely and adequate financing, streamlined procurement systems, and strengthened local capacities.[143] Without these elements, risks such as delays in cash transfers, reduced feeding days, and weak coordination can undermine transition outcomes.

[140] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[141] WFP Kenya. 2023. Kenya USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program – Final Evaluation: 2016 to 2022. 31 January.

[142] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

[143] WFP Kenya. 2023. Kenya USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program – Final Evaluation: 2016 to 2022. 31 January.

5. Conclusions and lessons

5.1 Conclusions

Relevance

Conclusion. The project design is well contextualized to reach the right target beneficiaries, with strong alignment to national priorities and local challenges.

173. **Overall alignment.** The McGovern-Dole project is highly relevant to target beneficiaries as it was collaboratively designed with Government stakeholders and targets woredas in Afar and Oromia facing high rates of food insecurity, low enrollment and retention, and the compounded effects of extreme weather events and conflict, making it highly relevant to target beneficiaries. Targeting and design processes included collaborative selection of woredas, proposal review, and contributions to planning, monitoring, and evaluation. The design also incorporates mitigation measures drawn from past programmatic challenges, strengthening alignment with beneficiary needs. The project integrates school feeding with complementary interventions in education, health, and hygiene, including literacy support, WASH promotion, community engagement, and infrastructure improvements to kitchens and storerooms. It includes assistive devices for students with disabilities. Support to improve smallholder farmers' ability to supply to schools includes inputs, training, and technical assistance, and school gardens are planned to promote improved agricultural practices and dietary diversity. These interventions are highly aligned with national policies and strategies in education, food security, nutrition, health, and school feeding. This strong alignment indicates that the project's relevance is not in question; rather, its challenge will be ensuring that this integrated design translates into consistent and equitable results across highly diverse, shock-prone contexts, particularly for girls and children with disabilities whose needs are not always fully met by existing systems.

174. **Girls and students with disabilities.** At baseline, schools with feeding programs reported near enrollment parity between girls and boys, while non-participating schools had higher enrollment for boys. School meals were identified as an incentive for parents to keep girls in school during shocks. Planned activities include training of PTAs, kebele Education and Training Boards, clan and religious leaders, and woreda officials, provision of sanitary pads, support to clubs for discussion on social and cultural expectations, strengthened roles for female teachers in preventing early marriage, and community dialogues on girls' education. Participation of children with disabilities has reportedly improved with access to school meals, yet barriers persist, including distance to school, limited adapted facilities and latrines, and a lack of trained staff and special education programs. Further, data on students with disabilities are not systematically collected, limiting the ability to assess and address their needs. The design includes disability-sensitive interventions such as the provision of assistive devices and community sensitization on the importance of education for all children. However, the baseline study found that further efforts are needed to fully address the needs of children with disabilities. This highlights a cross-cutting risk for the project: unless these challenges are consistently prioritized, gains in attendance may not translate into consistent learning outcomes across student groups.

175. **Alignment with local contexts.** The project is well aligned with local socio-economic and cultural contexts in Afar and Oromia and the intersecting challenges of food insecurity and education. Interventions include locally appropriate menus, separate regional strategies for the transition to government ownership, and seconded school feeding staff. Education challenges are further addressed by strategies aiming to improve teaching quality, student learning, and access to education, including instructional materials in local languages, the "Teaching at the Right Level" approach, performance-based teacher incentives, and reinforcement of libraries and reading clubs, and flexible delivery modalities such as ABE and multi-grade teaching. These interventions are particularly relevant for pastoralist families and children who face barriers in education access such as mobility and migration. They are also consistent with the National Pastoralist Education Strategy, which aims to address the specific challenges pastoralist communities face.

176. The project has mechanisms in place to adapt to changing contexts and emerging needs, such as security coordination, take home rations and ready to eat foods, the Assurance Project for supply-chain controls, transport partnerships, efforts to enhance stock management, and local procurement, but Government systems currently lack the structure and capacity to implement these adaptations independently without WFP support. This adaptive design strengthens the project's resilience but also

underscores the importance of capacity-building for government systems if such adaptability is to be sustained.

Coherence

Conclusion. The McGovern-Dole project demonstrates strong internal and external coherence, aligning with WFP's broader portfolio, national priorities, and complementary partner initiatives to maximize synergies and strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable school feeding.

177. The McGovern-Dole project is highly coherent internally, aligning closely with WFP's broader education, nutrition, and resilience portfolio, and designed to complement government-led initiatives and donor-funded projects in the target areas. The project works with education sector actors to align with large-scale education grants, and with government-led projects to ensure sanitation and hygiene initiatives follow national strategies. Participation in coordination platforms such as the Education Technical Working Group helps align activities with national priorities and minimize duplication; while planning and mapping exercises strengthen links across WFP interventions to improve efficiency in communities where school feeding operates alongside other activities. Going forward, coherence could be further enhanced by ensuring that considerations related to girls' and students with disabilities' participation are consistently mainstreamed across sectoral coordination efforts, not treated as stand-alone elements.

178. Complementary activities by NGOs and community actors, including interventions in WASH, health, nutrition education, and school gardens, contribute to creating an enabling environment that is poised to advance the project's broader objectives of improving education and nutrition outcomes. This coherence provides a strong foundation for sustainability, but it also means that weaknesses in one area (e.g., agriculture or literacy) can constrain broader project impacts.

Effectiveness

Conclusion. Planned outputs and outcomes are largely considered achievable given proposed LOP targets. However, stakeholders noted challenges around staffing, procurement, and infrastructure gaps that may limit progress if not addressed.

179. Stakeholders indicated strong confidence in the project's ability to achieve nutrition and education outcomes through its planned interventions, although concerns were raised about a need to give literacy outcomes equal weight alongside school feeding, as school feeding is sometimes given greater priority. Stakeholders raised concerns about whether the project's procurement objectives would be realized due to challenges they identified in procurement processes as well as broader challenges faced by smallholders in the project areas such as recurrent drought and poor soil fertility ultimately limiting agricultural production.

180. Overall, LOP targets are feasible, though the evaluation recommends revisions to five indicators: the literacy LOP target should be adjusted downward due to actual baseline values, and the LOP targets for four additional indicators do not yet reflect the adjustment to the number of schools to be included in the project. Baseline results will provide benchmarks for assessing progress at midterm and endline. Together, these issues suggest that the project must rebalance attention between feeding and literacy and address operational bottlenecks if it is to meet its dual education and nutrition objectives and ensure that both girls and students with disabilities benefit equally.

181. **Teacher training and school facilities.** In both Afar and Oromia, around 80 percent or more of teachers in project schools had received training in the past three years. Project schools were also better equipped than non-project schools with food storage and preparation facilities. However, only one-third of schools were reported by head teachers to have a covered eating area or dining room for students, and few had a library, though these results were not statistically significant.

182. **Sanitation facilities, water access, and electricity.** Project schools had higher coverage of improved sanitation facilities compared to non-project schools, with over 93 percent of project schools having improved latrines constructed with concrete slabs. Additionally, most project schools have separate latrines for boys and girls (85.7 percent in Afar and 100 percent in Oromia). The proportion for these indicators was much lower in non-project schools. Access to improved water sources was also greater in project schools. While there were advantages for project schools in these areas, access to electricity was relatively low for both project and non-project schools, however results were not statistically significant.

Impact

Conclusion. At baseline, school meals drive attendance and community support, but weak literacy outcomes point to a need for greater attention to education interventions. Improved local agricultural production has been hindered by environmental and capacity challenges, limiting progress toward positive impacts related to increased productivity and integration of school feeding with local food systems.

183. **Baseline education outcomes.** Enrollment patterns were shown to differ between girls and boys, as stakeholders reported that girls are more likely to leave school due to early marriage and household duties. Average attendance is around 76 percent, with no statistically significant differences by region or grade. The passing rate was consistent across regions and all categories of schools, with more than three-quarters of students passing to the next grade. Most students were rated as satisfactory or good in concentration, with slightly higher performance ratings in Oromia and marginal differences between project and non-project schools. Over 65 percent of students in both project and non-project schools are non-readers, and most students in the overall sample are either non-readers or only have limited proficiency. Less than one percent of students meets the reading comprehension and fluency standard, including letter recognition, familiar word reading, reading comprehension, and oral reading fluency. While the baseline study considers outputs and outcomes to be achievable, education outcomes at baseline suggest that literacy outcomes need to be given equal weight to school feeding to ensure project objectives are realized. Interviews with WFP staff affirmed this, highlighting that school feeding often receives greater emphasis than literacy interventions, underscoring the need to focus attention on both areas. This finding connects directly to effectiveness and sustainability: without stronger progress on literacy, the project's long-term education objectives are unlikely to be achieved even if access improves.

184. **Community perceptions on importance of education.** Community perceptions of education for girls and students with disabilities show early but limited progress: while school meals are fostering greater attendance for girls and some recognition of the barriers they face, support is still largely tied to the immediate benefits of food provision rather than a deep-seated shift in attitudes toward girls' education. Moreover, awareness of the rights and needs of students with disabilities remains minimal. The FY24 project aims to address these gaps through targeted community engagement and training to strengthen local ownership, promote participation for girls and boys, and build commitment to education for all learners. The previous FY18 project made progress towards improving community perceptions of education and school meals have driven participation, but further efforts are needed to expand education access and increase attendance, especially for girls and students with disabilities. This points to the importance of shifting community engagement beyond food incentives toward lasting attitudinal change, critical for both impact and sustainability.

185. **Local agriculture production and food safety.** At baseline, the long-term potential of school meal programs to stimulate local agriculture and strengthen food safety systems is constrained by low agricultural engagement (particularly in pastoralist areas), limited productivity due to environmental and land challenges, and significant gaps in food safety capacity at both regional and school levels. While planned FY24 interventions aim to enhance smallholder production, and improve food safety through targeted training, infrastructure upgrades, and stronger monitoring, sustained investment and context-specific strategies will be essential for realizing these impacts over time. This highlights an interdependence between project outcomes: weak agricultural linkages may limit cost-effectiveness and sustainability, even if short-term feeding objectives are met.

Sustainability

Conclusion. Ethiopia has made progress toward sustainable, government-led school feeding through increased financial commitment and capacity gains before FY24. However, full transition is not achievable without establishing a national budget line, stronger cross-sector coordination, and a clear vision with resource mobilization to address capacity and funding gaps at all levels.

186. **Capacity to sustain school feeding.** Overall, baseline findings indicate that Ethiopia has made meaningful progress toward strengthening the foundations for sustainable, government-led school feeding, which will be further supported by WFP's targeted capacity-strengthening efforts under the FY24 project. The Government's financial commitment to school feeding has increased substantially in recent years, and regional initiatives in Oromia and Afar demonstrate political will and innovative approaches to sustaining projects during resource gaps. However, sustainability remains constrained by the absence of a dedicated

national budget line, uneven regional allocations, limited multi-sectoral coordination, insufficient dedicated staffing structures, and persistent challenges in system strengthening and resource generation and management at both the national and regional levels. Stakeholders emphasized the need for a clear structure, vision, and mission for school feeding, supported by corresponding and sustainable resource mobilization mechanisms. Community-level governance systems, particularly school feeding committees and PTAs, play a vital role in local implementation but face capacity and resourcing limitations, especially in food-insecure and pastoralist areas. This suggests that without a realistic financing pathway and stronger governance structures, gains in relevance, coherence, and effectiveness will be difficult to sustain.

187. **Transition readiness.** These capacity and resourcing limitations will make a full handover challenging and unrealistic without establishing a national budget line, addressing capacity and funding gaps at all levels, and improving coordination across sectors. The FY24 project's design is well aligned to these capacity gaps and incorporates a phased graduation timeline that accounts for contextual differences between Oromia and Afar. Its focus on strengthening policy and governance, diversifying financing, enhancing coordination mechanisms, improving procurement and monitoring systems, and building community capacity positions it to address the main barriers to sustainability. Ethiopia's commitments under the Global School Meals Coalition further reinforce the enabling environment for transition to full government ownership. Achieving this vision will require sustained advocacy for a national budget line, stronger cross-sector engagement, and systematic integration of community structures into formal governance systems—underpinned by a national framework that defines the project's structure, vision, mission, and resource mobilization strategies—to ensure that progress made under the McGovern-Dole project endures beyond external support. However, as reported in the draft endline evaluation, handover to date has been limited. At baseline, the school meals program is not yet positioned to be sustained without continued external support. This cross-cutting finding shows that sustainability is the most critical constraint: unless financing and governance gaps are resolved, progress in relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and impact risks being temporary.

Overall conclusion across evaluation criteria

188. Taken together, the findings point to a project that is strategically well-positioned but faces executional and systemic risks. The strengths in relevance and coherence provide a solid platform, but effectiveness and impact depend on rebalancing emphasis between feeding and literacy, addressing persistent barriers to the participation of girls and students with disabilities, and closing operational gaps. Sustainability will only be realized if these challenges are tackled alongside intensified efforts to secure national budgetary commitment and capacity at regional and community levels.

5.2 Lessons

Lesson: Balancing literacy and feeding interventions

189. Baseline findings and wider literature highlight that while school feeding effectively improves enrollment and attendance, meaningful gains in learning outcomes require equally strong literacy interventions. The addition of an implementing partner with specific literacy expertise is a valuable asset for the FY24 project, particularly given the challenging operating context. Future project designs should continue to ensure that feeding and literacy are integrated and prioritized together, so that gains in access are matched by improvements in learning outcomes.

Lesson: Transition and sustainability planning

190. Literature and baseline evidence show that transition to government ownership requires more than capacity-building at school or district level; it also depends on fiscal space, budget lines, and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms. Project designs should incorporate clear transition pathways from the outset, aligned with government financing and institutional structures.

Lesson: Analytical software

191. The baseline, midterm, and endline studies are designed to track performance as well as support impact analysis at the midterm and endline points of the program cycle. Upon request from the CO, the baseline study team used SPSS for data analysis, to align with CO capacity. While SPSS is useful for descriptive analysis, its capabilities are less efficient for more advanced tasks. Given these limitations, advanced statistical software such as Stata, SAS, or R should be used to enhance future analysis, as they have stronger interface and coding capabilities.

Lesson: Timing of data collection

192. Delays in launching the baseline study resulted in the need for significantly shortened and streamlined inception and data collection phases; this ensured data collection was completed before the end of the school year and that FY24 project activities could begin in September 2025 as planned. However, the tight timeframe resulted in data collection leading up to the exam period. As students tend to be absent during exam periods, or in the final month of the school year, which has the potential to impact teams' ability to reach the required sample size, the study team recommends that data collection should be scheduled at least one month prior to final exams as feasible.

193. Additionally, a short data collection timeframe restricts the teams' ability to verify teacher-reported information against records. While the size of the data collection team can be increased to mitigate this issue, this has resource implications. Instead, the study team recommends that a minimum of four weeks should be allocated for data collection for subsequent evaluations.

Annex 1: Baseline and evaluation timeline

Table 17: Baseline study timeline

Steps	By whom	Date (2025)	Description of deliverable
Inception (BASELINE)			
Desk review.	BT	Early June – throughout study	The inception report will follow the DEQAS template for decentralized evaluations: **Report body** (15,000 words) 1. Introduction 1.1 Evaluation features 1.2 Context 2. Subject of the evaluation 2.1 Subject evaluated 2.2 Scope of the evaluation 2.3 Stakeholder analysis 3. Evaluation approach, methodology and ethical considerations 3.1 Evaluability assessment 3.2 Methodological approach 3.3 Data collection methods 3.4 Data analysis 3.5 Ethical considerations 3.6 Risks and assumptions 3.7 Quality assurance 4. Organization of the evaluation 4.1 Roles and responsibilities 4.2 Timeline 5. Issues to be agreed and information required **Mandatory annexes** • Summary TOR • Detailed timeline • Methodology guidance • Evaluation matrix • Data collection tools • Evaluation field mission schedule • Reconstructed theory of change • Results framework/line of sight • Detailed stakeholder analysis • Updated internal reference group membership • Communication and knowledge management plan • List of people interviewed • Bibliography • Acronyms
TANGO submitted draft baseline inception report (IR)	BT	13 June	
EM sent WFP's initial feedback on baseline IR to TANGO	EM	14 June	
TANGO sent revised baseline IR based on WFP initial comments	BT	17June	
EM sent CO and RB/DEQAS comments	EM	9 July	
TANGO sent revised baseline IR based on CO and RB/DEQAS comments	BT	25 July	
EM sent ERG comments	EM	5 Aug	
TANGO sent revised and final IR based on ERG comments	BT	6 Aug	
Data collection (BASELINE)			
Survey team training	BT	15 – 17 June	

Steps	By whom	Date (2025)	Description of deliverable
Data collection/ fieldwork: school survey *Exam week 23-27 June; Students out of school the week of 30 June – 4 July*	BT	18 June - 8 July	
Analysis, validation workshop and reporting (BASELINE)			
TANGO submits draft baseline report	BT	Tue 12 Aug	The report will follow the DEQAS template for decentralized evaluations: **Executive summary** (2,500 words) **Report body** (30,000 words) 1) Introduction a) Evaluation Features b) Context c) Subject of the baseline d) Subject of the baseline, theory of change, activities and intended outputs and outcomes e) Evaluation questions and evaluation criteria 2) Evaluation approach and methodology for baseline data collection a) Evaluation approach and methodology b) Baseline data collection methods and tools c) Limitations d) Quality assurance e) Ethical considerations 3) Baseline findings and discussion 4) Conclusions and lessons a) Conclusions b) Lessons **Mandatory annexes**: (40,000 words) • Summary ToR • Baseline and evaluation timeline • Methodology • Evaluation matrix • Data collection tools • Review of project indicators at baseline • Confidentiality agreement and ethical pledge • List of people interviewed • Bibliography • Acronyms
CO and RB/DEQAS provide comments	EM CO RB	Fri 22 Aug	
TANGO submits revised report based on CO and RB/DEQAS comments; EM shares with ERG	BT	Fri 29 Aug	
Validation workshop with ERG (remote)	BT & ERG	TBD	
ERG provides comments	EM ERG	Mon 8 Sep (TBC)	
TANGO submits revised report based on ERG comments	BT	Tues 9 Sep (TBC)	
Final minor revisions if needed; EC approval	EM BT	Wed 10 Sep (TBC)	
EM sends report to USDA	EM	Wed 10 Sep (TBC)	
TANGO presentation to USDA	BT	mid-Sep	
EM sends TANGO USDA comments on baseline report	EM	mid-Sep	
TANGO sends final endline report in response to USDA comments	BT	late Sep	
USDA approval of baseline report	USDA	30 Sep	
Dissemination and follow-up			
TANGO submits a 2-3-page baseline study brief of study findings	BT	15 Oct	

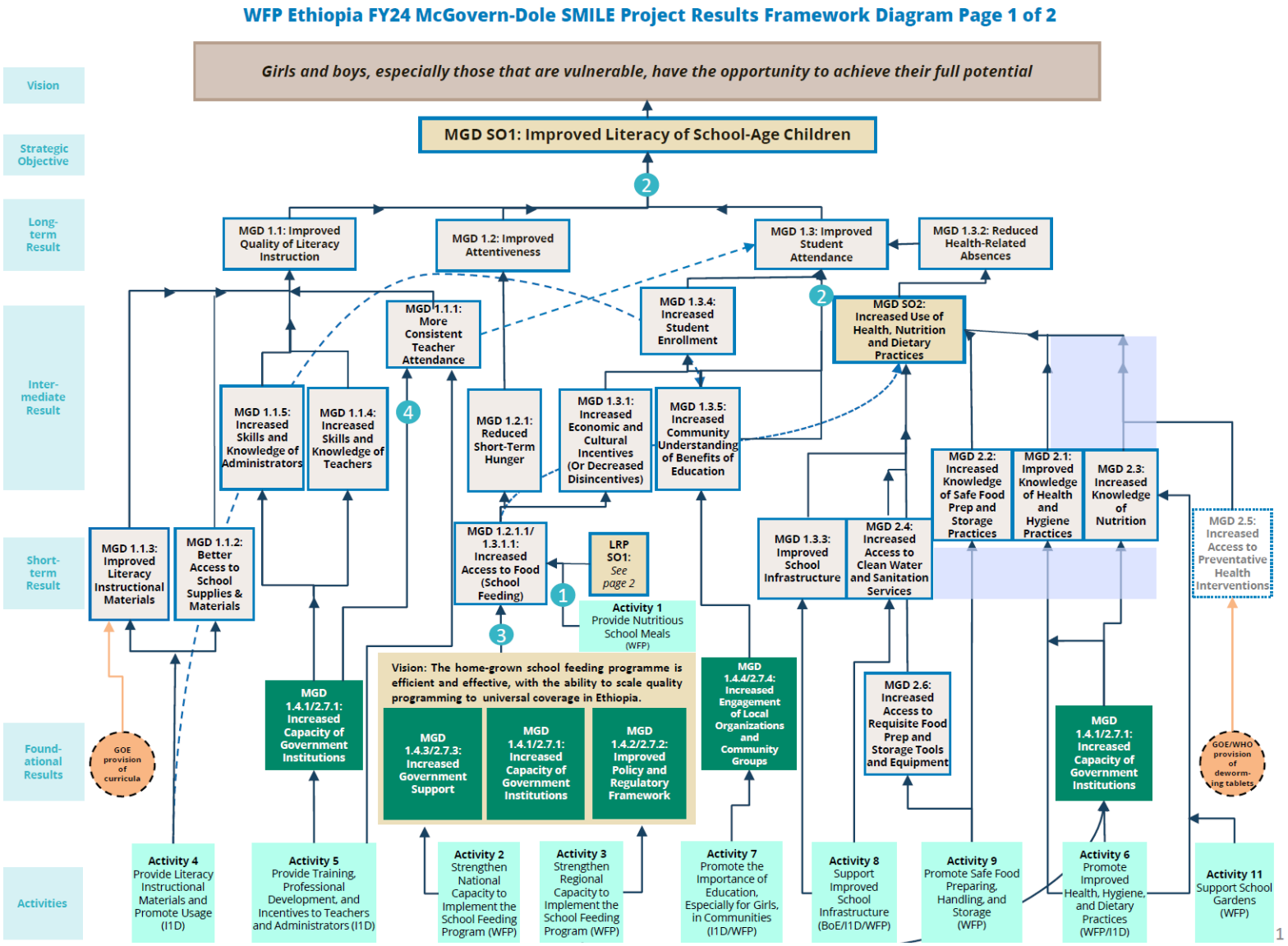
BT=baseline study team; EM=evaluation manager; blue font=deliverable

Table 18: Evaluation timeline 2025-2029

Date	Phases
PREPARATION PHASE FOR OVERALL EVALUATION	
From January – April 2025	Assign roles/responsibilities (WFP), Establish Evaluation Committee and Evaluation Reference Group
	Develop Terms of Reference (TORs) and budget (WFP)
	Procure independent evaluation firm (WFP)
INCEPTION PHASE FOR OVERALL EVALUATION	
April 2025	Desk review of key project documents (evaluation team)
	Inception mission (evaluation team and WFP)
	Prepare Inception Report including quantitative and qualitative data collection tools (evaluation team)
BASELINE STUDY	
From January – November 2025	Preparation of field visits (study team and WFP)
	Data collection (study team)
	Data analysis (study team)
	Prepare baseline study report (study team with inputs from ERG)
	Share final baseline study findings with ERG including USDA (study team)
	Prepare Management Response (WFP)

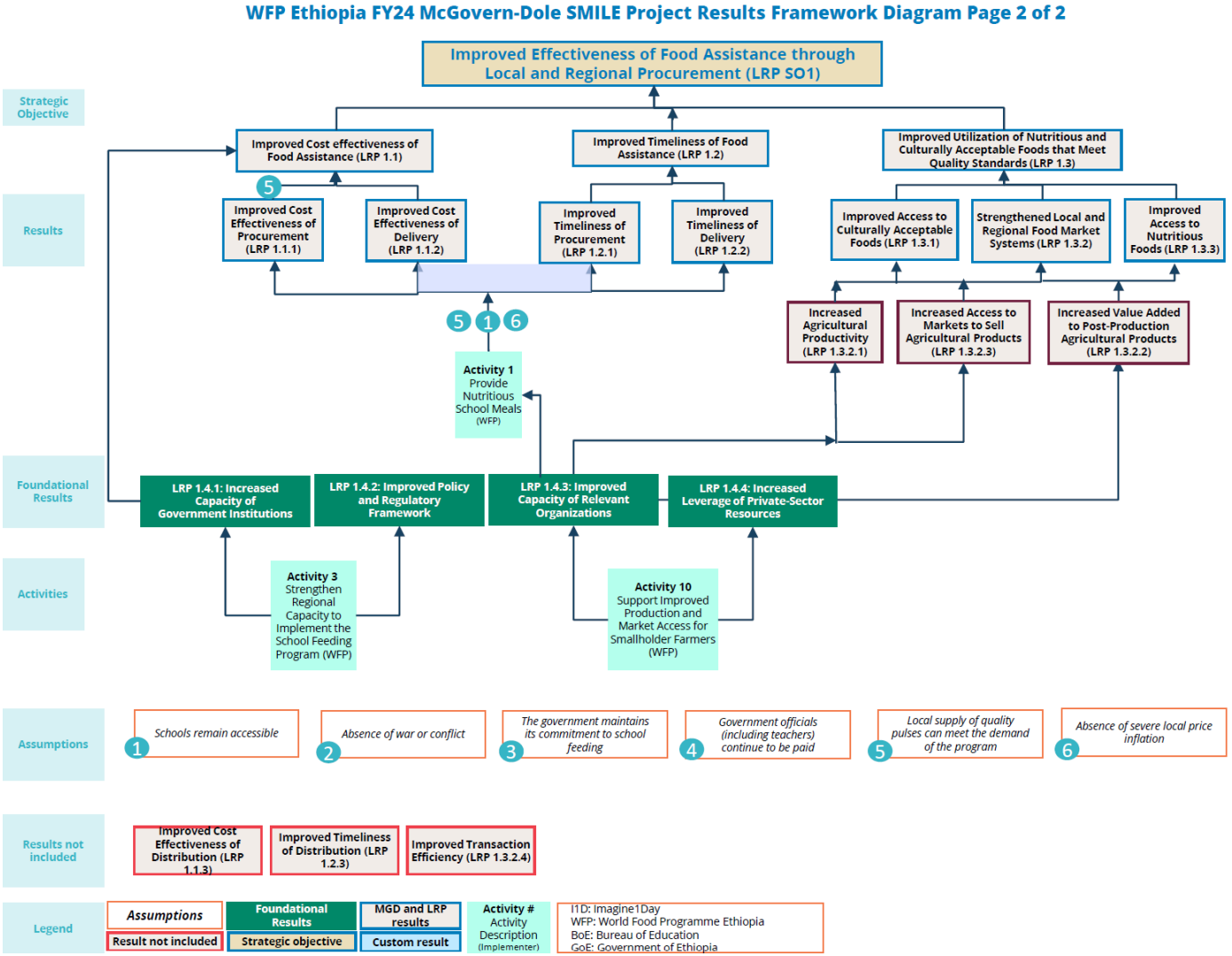
Date	Phases
MID-TERM EVALUATION	
From March – December 2027	Inception: Update to original Inception Report as required, review of desk documents (evaluation team)
	Preparation of field visits (evaluation team and WFP)
	Data collection (evaluation team)
	Data analysis (evaluation team)
	Draft and finalize Mid-term Evaluation Report (evaluation team with inputs from ERG through exit mission debriefing and commenting on draft evaluation report)
	Disseminate final evaluation findings to ERG members including USDA through workshop and/or other channels (WFP)
	Prepare Management Response (WFP)
FINAL EVALUATION	
From March – December 2029	Inception: Update to original Inception Report as required, review of desk documents (evaluation team)
	Preparation of field visits (evaluation team and WFP)
	Data collection (evaluation team)
	Data analysis (evaluation team)
	Draft and finalize final Evaluation Report (evaluation team with inputs from ERG through exit mission debriefing and commenting on draft evaluation report)
	Disseminate final evaluation findings to ERG members including USDA through workshop and/or other channels (WFP)
	Prepare Management Response (WFP)

Annex 2: Project results framework



Source: McGovern-Dole Results Framework shared by the WFP Ethiopia CO

Annex 3: LRP results framework



Source: LRP Results Framework shared by the WFP Ethiopia CO

Annex 4: Project theory of change

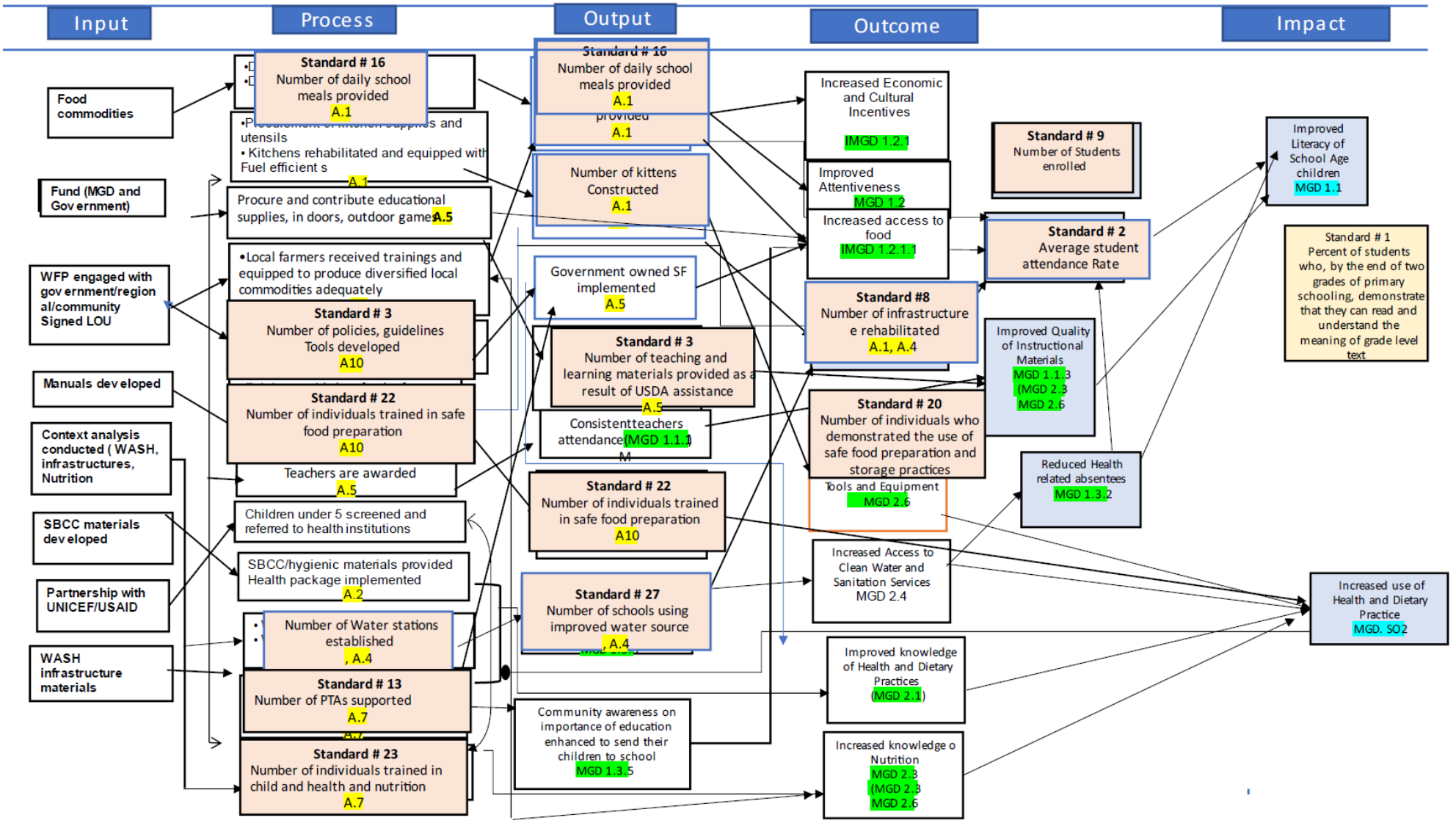
194. The following two figures were included in the Terms of Reference provided by the WFP Ethiopia CO. As some of the text is overlapping and not legible, the theory of change diagram could not be fully assessed. However, the theory of change narrative is as follows:

195. The proposed project's Theory of Change posits that *if* WFP provides targeted technical assistance to the Government of Ethiopia, *then* the Government will be equipped to scale and sustain its home-grown school feeding programme (HGSFP). Further, *if* WFP and partners provide intensive training in evidence-based literacy teaching methods, equip communities and the Government to build and sustain school infrastructure, and increase community and government understanding of the importance of health and dietary practices, *then* the Government will be equipped to sustain the integrated literacy and WASH interventions that the McGovern-Dole investment has implemented. Ultimately, these interventions can increase enrolment and attendance of children, especially girls; improve literacy (MGD SO1); increase use of health, nutrition and dietary practices (MGD SO2); and improve effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional procurement (LRP SO1).

196. WFP makes three general assumptions about the context needed for the project to achieve results: (1) schools remain accessible, (2) there is no war or conflict, and (3) the government maintains its commitment to school feeding.

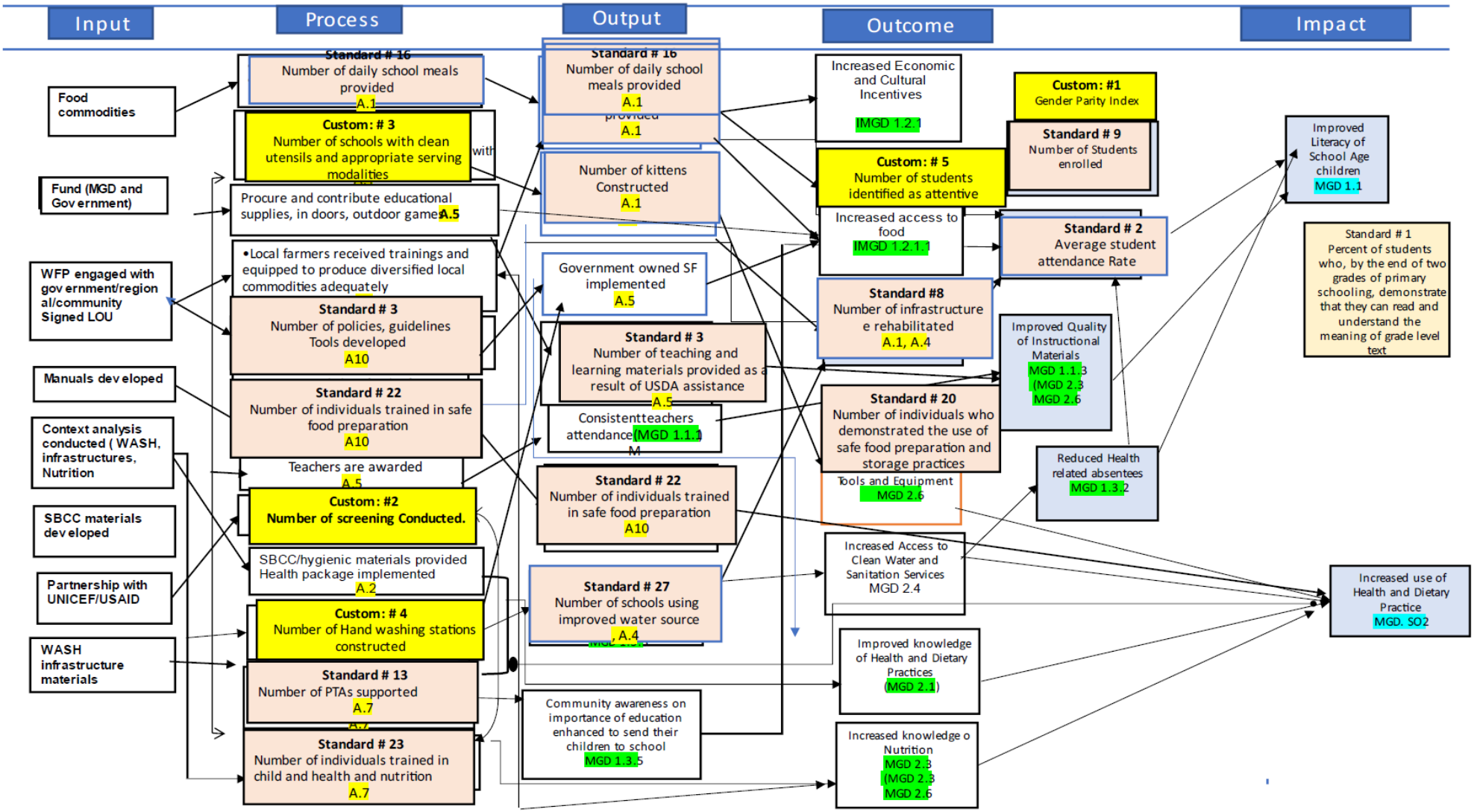
(see graphic, next page)

Figure 4: WFP Ethiopia Theory of Change (figure 1 of 2)



Source: Theory of Change diagram shared by the WFP Ethiopia CO

Figure 5: WFP Ethiopia Theory of Change (figure 2 of 2)



Source: Theory of Change diagram shared by the WFP Ethiopia CO

Table 19: Theory of change main assumptions

No.	Theory of change assumptions	Evaluation Team's Discussion
Explicit assumptions from the TOC narrative[144]		
1	Schools remain accessible.	The conflict in northern Ethiopia between the federal government and the Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF) has had a direct impact on schools in the affected regions. Data collection revealed that many schools were destroyed and rendered non-functional, disrupting education and essential services for countless students. Furthermore, data collection suggested student enrollment has been impacted by the ongoing conflict and challenging living conditions, especially in the Afar region.
2	There is no war or conflict.	
3	The Government maintains its commitment to school feeding.	This assumption should explicitly state that Government commitment includes both political will and financial commitment (see below). At baseline, stakeholders indicated there is strong political will to sustain school feeding programming. Moreover, the Government has demonstrated consistent financial support. However, stakeholders noted that funding support is constrained by competing demands.
Implied assumptions		
4	There is sufficient resources to sustain school feeding.	The current TOC assumptions do not include reference to the necessary resourcing required to sustain school feeding, including government, partner and community funds or in-kind contributions, community uptake or the reliability of local and regional food supply
5	Communities and parents will value and adopt improved literacy, WASH, and nutrition practices.	Evidence from Ethiopia and similar contexts shows that school meals, literacy materials, and WASH interventions can positively influence enrolment, attendance, and learning, *if* institutional and community adoption is consistent. However, teacher absenteeism, high turnover, and systemic underfunding have historically weakened sustainability, calling into question the full validity of the assumption that capacity strengthening and training alone will ensure long-term impact.
6	Teachers will apply training consistently and remain in classrooms.	
7	Local food systems will reliably supply nutritious commodities without major price spikes.	
8	Regional and woreda governments will have sufficient human and financial resources to take over program responsibilities.	
9	Communities and households support girls' and students with disabilities' continued enrollment and attendance despite social and economic barriers.	The TOC does not explicitly mention assumptions around barriers specific to girls and students with disabilities (e.g., cultural norms limiting girls' schooling, households' economic pressures on child labor), which are crucial given the project's focus on girls' enrollment and attendance.

[144] Explicit assumptions were written by WFP and included in the TOC narrative.

Annex 5: Project activities

197. This annex details the activities that will be implemented in the McGovern-Dole project.[145]

198. WFP will provide daily school meals to children in Afar and Oromia using USDA-donated commodities and locally procured beans. In Afar, meals will be served five days a week with a mix of Corn-Soy Blend Plus, fortified rice, vegetable oil, and beans. In Oromia, USDA funds will support bean procurement, while the regional government will provide the rest of the food basket. Community contributions and school gardens will supplement meals, and iodized salt will be added where possible.

199. To strengthen national capacity, WFP will conduct a SABER assessment and work with the government to develop a roadmap for universal school meals by 2030. Technical assistance will be provided to the Ministries of Education and Finance to improve budgeting and resource mobilization. WFP will advocate for a national school feeding law and support the digitization of the Education Management Information System. A technical assistant will be seconded to the Ministry of Education to support policy implementation.

200. At the regional level, WFP will conduct joint monitoring missions and support annual review meetings. Nutrition assessments will be carried out, and regional governments will receive support to develop and implement school feeding policies. Dedicated units and steering committees will be established to oversee program management, and transition plans will be developed to shift USDA-supported schools to government ownership.

201. WFP and its subrecipient Imagine1Day will adapt and distribute literacy materials, including the "Teaching at the Right Level" approach. Reading clubs and book banks will be established, and assistive devices will be provided to students with disabilities. Teachers and school administrators will receive training and ongoing coaching, and performance-based incentives will be awarded to educators.

202. Health and hygiene will be promoted through training and awareness campaigns. WASH clubs and local leaders will be engaged, and hygiene protocols will be rolled out in schools. School clubs will be trained to promote girls' education and inclusion, and community leaders will be sensitized to support these efforts.

203. School infrastructure will be improved through the construction and rehabilitation of kitchens, storerooms, and water systems. WFP engineers will work with regional governments to develop blueprints and provide technical support. Schools will receive non-food items to support safe food preparation and storage, and cooks and staff will be trained annually.

204. Smallholder farmers will be supported with agricultural inputs and training on improved practices to enhance their ability to supply school feeding. Women's groups will establish fruit nurseries, and farmers will be linked to school feeding programs. Extension workers will provide ongoing support and monitoring.

205. Finally, school gardens will be established or strengthened in selected schools. These gardens will serve as educational tools and sources of fresh produce. Training will be provided on drought resistant and good agricultural practices and nutrition-sensitive farming, and harvested crops may be used for student meals or income generation.

[145] WFP Ethiopia. 2024. Award Agreement Between the Foreign Agricultural Service and WFP for the Donation of Agricultural Commodities and Related Assistance under the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (FFE-633-2024/007

Annex 6: Previous evaluations and reviews

206. The design of the FY24 project was informed by the evaluations of the FY13 and FY18 programming, a Value for Money study (2024) and an assessment of the school feeding program's different impacts and considerations for girls and boys. [146] Key findings from each are summarized below.

207. **FY13 Endline Evaluation**: The final evaluation of the FY13 project confirmed the appropriateness and relevance of the project's design, and highlighted progress in enrollment, repetition and completion rates.[147] WFP's capacity strengthening efforts helped to launch the ESFP during the project implementation period, though the evaluation noted that challenges related to timely delivery of commodities to schools were still hindered by weak logistical and procurement processes. The final evaluation also noted that the sustainability of the project was reduced due to lower-than-anticipated capacity of communities to provide complementary inputs, unrealistic expectations (e.g., the establishment of school gardens in arid regions), and unclear long-term financing. Recommendations from the final evaluation included suggestions to address strategic and operational issues, including prioritizing funding, developing an advocacy strategy, further development of national strategies and policies, strengthening school feeding monitoring, and improving coordination across education sector stakeholders. The FY13 evaluation also made recommendations for future McGovern-Dole projects, including: 1) conduct an independent needs assessment, 2) continue investment in government technical capacity to manage school feeding at the national and regional levels, 3) ensure all school feeding interventions include multi-year evaluations, 4) ensure that future school feeding interventions include specific strategies, targets and indicators for increasing the participation of women and girls, and 5) ensure that project schools supported in future school feeding interventions are selected using a clustered approach to facilitate efficient monitoring. However, given that the FY24 project is to be implemented in different areas than the FY13 project, these recommendations only minimally informed FY24 project design.

208. **FY18 Midterm Evaluation:** At the midpoint of the FY18 study, the evaluation concluded that school feeding was a critical safety net for school children and their families, particularly for girls.[148] While the results at midterm were highly impacted by delays from the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict and other external factors, the evaluation found that the project design remained highly relevant and the project was able to make effective adaptations to programming to respond to student and community needs during the pandemic. Table 19 presents the recommendations from the FY18 midterm evaluation. This baseline study considers the extent to which these recommendations (and those from the FY18 final evaluation, when available) have been incorporated into the FY24 project design.

Table 20:Recommendations from the FY18 midterm evaluation

Strategic or Operational	No.	Recommendation
Operational	1	For the remainder of the project, WFP and partners should focus on maximizing the efficiency of the delivery of school meals and prepare for a smooth transition to successor projects. This should involve: a. Maximizing school feeding days to avoid the need for ad hoc take-home rations, b. Continuing to resolve shortages in NFIs,

[146] As of this draft, the final evaluation report for the FY18 project is not yet available. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the FY18 final evaluation will be considered for this baseline study when available.

[147] WFP Ethiopia. 2018. Final Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Somali Regions in Ethiopia 2013-2017: Evaluation Report – Final. June 15.

[148] WFP. 2024. Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern - Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions in Ethiopia (2019 to 2025).

Strategic or Operational	No.	Recommendation
		c. Addressing factors that may disadvantage girls, d. Strengthening the roll-out of nutrition screening in schools, e. Continuing to seek partnerships that can provide addition support for the final year of the project, and f. Contingency planning for the transfer of projects schools to the government projects in Afar and Oromia.
Strategic	2	Feed lessons from this project into the design of its successor and into the design and implementation of other school feeding projects across Ethiopia. Areas for learning include: a. The need to ensure project design is informed by comprehensive equality analyses and incorporating lessons from the recent analysis, b. The importance of working with broad coalitions across school health and nutrition to maximize school feeding complementarities, c. The value of community support, but also the need for realistic expectations regarding the level of community contributions that can be raised, d. The need to reinforce capacity strengthening elements of SFPs, with realistic expectations for timetables for handover to government project, and e. The need to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning (related to Recommendation 3 below).
Operational	3	Take short-term actions to strengthen the project's monitoring and evaluation. Priorities should include: a. Updating the Performance Monitoring Plan to provide rigorous guidance for the monitoring of McGovern-Dole indicators in compliance with USDA guidelines, b. Responding to the sex-disaggregation issues raised in the MTE, and c. Preparing for the endline evaluation (e.g., ensuring TOR are issued in good time, preparing the follow-up KAP survey, etc.).

209. **FY18 Endline Evaluation:** The FY18 final evaluation found that the project was successful in improving education outcomes and raising community awareness of health and hygiene. Both qualitative and quantitative data showed a positive association between school feeding and increased student enrollment, attendance, and grade completion. However, the evaluation also noted shortcomings, including weak educational quality, challenges in meeting the target number of meals, largely due to COVID-19 disruptions, and frequent shortages of cooking and eating utensils. While WFP had taken steps to strengthen monitoring and reporting, such as enhancing staffing, adopting electronic data collection, and clarifying roles, the evaluation found persistent weaknesses due to an initially weak monitoring plan and limited follow-up on earlier recommendations. These issues hindered both evaluability and the effective use of data for project management. The evaluation made the following recommendations: 1) strengthening monitoring and reporting from the outset and reinforcing ongoing learning, 2) ensuring real-time monitoring and use of data for improved efficiency, 3) prioritizing capacity-strengthening to address equalityand efficiency challenges, and 4) applying lessons learned to the broader design and implementation of school feeding projects in Ethiopia.

Table 21:Draft recommendations from the FY18 final evaluation

Strategic or Operational	No.	Recommendation
Operational and strategic	1	Strengthen monitoring and reporting of the successor project from the outset and reinforce analysis and learning as the project proceeds. a. Use the inception phase of the baseline study for the next McGovern-Dole project to agree a format for annual reporting that fulfils the requirements of all USDA and GoE mandated indicators. b. Revise the next project's PMP to reflect this format and agreed indicator specifications, and to ensure the use of correctly evidence-based baseline values for indicators. c. Ensure adequate sex-disaggregation of reporting. d. Strengthen the school feeding monitoring SOP in line with the improved indicator specifications e. Ensure that project records always include the EMIS IDs of project schools f. Ensure, wherever possible, separate data for Borana and East Hararghe, even if this is not specifically required for USDA purposes g. Ensure a timely mid-term evaluation and a rapid management response to its recommendations. **Rationale**: The project's initial PMP was weak, and this led to persistent weaknesses in reporting. Baseline and mid-term recommendations for strengthening monitoring and reporting were not well followed up. As well as hindering project evaluability, weaknesses in monitoring and reporting meant that available data (e.g. on attendance rates) was not well used for management of the project.
Operational	2	Ensure real-time monitoring of the successor school feeding project in Oromia and Afar and use management information to improve efficiency. a. Strengthen monitoring of school attendance rates and actual days of school feeding in project schools. (rationale: use monitoring data to tailor food deliveries to actual requirements and to help understand reasons for poor attendance and lost school feeding days) b. Continue to focus on resolving shortages of NFIs (rationale: shortages of NFIs have a disproportionate effect on the efficiency of the school meal service and associated loss of teaching time) c. Improve awareness of complaints and feedback mechanism (rationale: large gaps in CFM awareness found during school visits)
Strategic and Operational	3	For the successor project, prioritise capacity-strengthening measures to address issues in equality and efficiency. d. Focus on capacity-strengthening for procurement and delivery of HGSF commodities (Oromia). (rationale: important to address the problem of deliveries that are too late for school feeding to commence at the beginning of the first semester) e. Carefully monitor and learn from innovations in local procurement and the promotion of school gardens and farms in the project areas (rationale: important to learn what works and what doesn't in the variety of contexts across the project's target Zones)

Strategic or Operational	No.	Recommendation
		f. Encourage PSNP and community provision of staff housing, (rationale: staff housing can make a real difference to the recruitment, retention and attendance rates of teachers in remote schools, but important not to place excessive demands on communities).
Strategic	4	Feed lessons from this project into the broader design and implementation of school feeding projects across Ethiopia. Areas for learning and action include: a. Ensure project designs are informed by comprehensive social analyses in project areas; incorporate the lessons from recent social analyses to address critical gaps and barriers through context-specific programming that promotes girls' education and strengthens protection outcomes. g. The importance of working with broad coalitions to support education and school health and nutrition to maximize school feeding complementarities, and address weaknesses in school feeding theories of change. h. The value of community support, but the need to be realistic about the level of resources that can be raised from poor and crisis-stressed communities i. The need to reinforce capacity strengthening elements of SFPs, while also being realistic about timetables for handover to government projects. j. The importance of having effective monitoring and reporting systems in place from the outset of a SFP (as illustrated by Recommendation 1). k. The need for continued support to national efforts to develop and implement a resource mobilization strategy for school feeding.

210. **Other studies.** In addition to the evaluations of previous McGovern-Dole project in Ethiopia, WFP supported a value for money study and an analysis of school feeding projects. The value for money study, funded by NORAD and the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition of the School Meals Coalition, was published in October 2024.[149] The study estimates the costs and benefits of school feeding projects for primary school children across multiple sectors, including education, health and nutrition, social protection and the local agricultural economy. The report concluded that school feeding programs in Ethiopia are associated with substantial impacts on all sectors. School feeding beneficiaries would achieve an extra 2.3 years of education and would experience cumulatively 5 additional years lived in good health, compared to students who did not receive school feeding. School meals would replace 5 percent of annual food expenditures for the poorest households and equate to USD 50 million per year to Ethiopian smallholder farmers through local procurement. Overall, the monetary value of the impacts on children's health, nutrition and education alone mean that for every dollar invested into the school feeding program, there is an average benefit of USD 4. However, the study noted that more precise quantification of the value of school feeding could be assessed if data collection and management information systems related to school feeding were improved.

211. The qualitative analysis assessed school feeding project's contribution to improving access, agency, participation and power dynamics between girls and boys, men and women in in Afar (Zone 1) and Oromia (Borena Zone) in Ethiopia.[150] Results of the assessment indicate that the school feeding programming contributes to reducing disparities between girls and boys in school enrollment, attendance and drop-out rates. Study participants also affirmed that the project increased girls' agency and self-confidence. However,

[149] NORAD and Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition. 2024. Value for Money of School Feeding Programs in Ethiopia: Research Working Paper – October 16, 2024.
[150] MoE, WFP, and UNICEF. 2024. Gender Analysis of School Feeding Programme in Selected Locations of Ethiopia.

findings indicated that social norms continue to impede girls' advancement in education, and the school feeding project needs to make a more concentrated effort to engage women and girls at a level equal to men and boys. Moreover, the analysis noted gaps in sex-disaggregated data and the need to strengthen the school feeding project's alignment with national policies. The report lists a number of recommendations, including suggestions for additional studies, increased collaboration across stakeholders, steps to improve women and girls' participation in programming, and strategies to dismantle the social norms and structural barriers affecting the equitable delivery of inclusive programming.

212. The WFP Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy (LRFPP) pilot launched in 2021, aimed to test innovative procurement approaches to strengthen local food systems.[151] Its objectives included increasing the efficient supply of food, injecting cash into local economies, supporting value chain actors, raising smallholder incomes, and promoting resilient, nutrition-sensitive livelihoods. The pilot focused on both direct and indirect purchase tools, alongside related programming and operational systems. An evaluation of the LRFPP pilot found that when effectively integrated into broader programming, such as WFP's school feeding initiatives, LRFPP supports smallholder farmers by improving productivity, market access, and income.

213. A recent WFP summary of evidence report found that HGSF has been shown to help improve school attendance and enhance dietary diversity and nutritional outcomes for children.[152] It also stimulates local economies by creating stable markets for smallholder farmers. There are still some evidence gaps surrounding HGSF, such as the long-term impacts on learning outcomes, cost-effectiveness compared to other school feeding models, and the sustainability of supply chains under local procurement systems.

[151] WFP. 2024. Evaluation of the Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy.
[152] WFP. 2024. Summary of evaluation evidence: Home-Grown School Feeding.

Annex 7: Supplemental information on methodology

214. This annex is a supplement to Section 3 and describes in further detail key dimensions of the baseline study methodology: additional information about the data collection activities; sampling; ethical risks and safeguards; and quality assurance.

Data collection methods

Table 22 provides more detail on the data collection methods used to explore the evaluation questions and to triangulate findings. See the section on sampling below for details regarding how the sample was drawn and the breakdown of schools. The data collection tools mirror the approach used in previous evaluations to ensure maximum comparability of results when reporting on progress.

Table 22: Description of data collection tools

Data collection tool/method	Quantity	Type of data to be collected	Description
School Survey (ODK)	1 survey per school, **56 total**	McGovern-Dole Indicators Custom Program Indicators	The data collection team conducted school-level surveys consisting of questions for the principal/administrators, cooks, and teachers. The school survey collected statistical data commonly available on-site in school records/ledgers such as sex-disaggregated enrollment and attendance data, number of teachers, number of students, etc. Team members also observed the presence and quality of school facilities while touring the school with the school head, who were asked to provide further clarifications and insights. These surveys primarily collected data on McGovern-Dole indicators. This survey also served as an additional validation exercise for WFP's own data collection/profiling of a selection of schools. Key themes in the school survey are: 1. Current enrolment, attendance, and class repetition data 2. School facilities - particularly around key infrastructure for school feeding and water sources 3. Disability support and teaching 4. School feeding program information

Data collection tool/method	Quantity	Type of data to be collected	Description
			5. Staff capacity and knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) related to food safety, health and nutrition
Student Survey (ODK)	20 students per school, **1,120 total**	McGovern-Dole Indicators Custom Program Indicators	The national team conducted in-person surveys with students in Grades 1-8 in all sampled schools. These interviews collected data on the McGovern-Dole indicators and on selected questions relevant to the evaluation questions. These questions were administered via an ODK survey programmed on Android devices and recorded on those devices. The baseline student survey asked about the following themes: 1. Class instruction and literacy 2. Diet in the last 7 days 3. Knowledge and attitudes about food 4. Household environment as it relates to duties and ability to do homework and reading 5. School environment as it relates to encouraging reading and literacy The survey also included a small set of questions for their teacher, which asked about the students' performance in class and whether they repeated their current grade.
Literacy Assessment (EGRA) (Tangerine)	12 students per school, **672 total**	McGovern-Dole indicators	The Hermon Research team members administered the literacy assessment in-person to students in Grades 2 and 3. The EGRA was administered in the appropriate local language depending on the region/context (i.e., either Afar Af and Afar Oromia). Updates made to the literacy assessment (discussed above in Section 3.3) ensured students had no previous exposure to the material, which are of comparable skill level to past exercises. The data collection team members pre-tested the tools prior to data collection in June 2025. The specific components assessed by the literacy assessment are: 1. Letter name knowledge / Letter identification 2. Familiar word reading 3. Oral reading passage

Data collection tool/method	Quantity	Type of data to be collected	Description
			4. Reading comprehension
Parent Survey (ODK)	10 parents per project school, **280 total**	Custom Program Indicators	The data collection team conducted one-on-one surveys with parents of students who attended project schools. National team members worked with schools to identify and facilitate parents' involvement in this survey. The baseline tool explored specific themes related to the project, namely: 1. Child dietary diversity 2. Parents' knowledge and attitudes towards education, health and hygiene and school lunch
Qualitative topical outlines (interview guides) for KIIs and FGDs	15 national and sub-national stakeholders	**All:** Qualitative data on all evaluation questions and information to validate and help interpret indicator data	Topical outlines were designed for the following stakeholder groups: 1. School staff -administrators and teachers 2. Cooks 3. School children 4. PTA/Food Management Committees 5. Smallholder farmers/farmer organizations 6. Government personnel (national, regional and local levels) 7. WFP CO and field staff 8. International stakeholders [WFP, United Nations agencies, donors] Information from key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were recorded in written notes and analyzed using an Excel-based analysis process. Further details regarding the collection of qualitative data are included below this table.

KIIs and FGDs

215. KIIs and FGDs were guided by interview topical outlines which were tailored to consider new contextual information and modified as needed based on interviews and analysis across the data collection process.

216. Per standard practice, all KIIs and FGDs were conducted by a team of two people, with one leading the interview or focus group and the other taking notes. Efforts were made to assign team members KIIs and FGDs in accordance with sex, language, and cultural considerations. Phone interviews were conducted by only one person to simplify the scheduling, for technical ease, and to maximize the number of interviews. All KIIs and FGDs followed informed consent protocols.

217. Annex 12 summarizes the KIIs and FGDs conducted.

Sampling strategy and calculations

218. The McGovern-Dole 2024 School Feeding Project will support 343 schools in the Afar region and 157 schools in Oromia, benefiting a total of 153,439 students. WFP will strengthen the Government's capacity to sustain the school meals program, gradually transitioning schools to full government ownership nationwide by the project's conclusion in 2029. Due to the phased transition of schools during implementation, a longitudinal panel school sample selected at baseline will not remain balanced, as some schools will transition while others will not. Additionally, repeated interviews within the same schools may introduce response bias, as familiarity with the tools and questions after the initial round could influence participants' responses. Therefore, TANGO recommended a cross-sectional design using a new school sample in each survey round (i.e., baseline, midterm, and endline).

219. The FY18 baseline and midterm evaluation sampling design employed a multi-stage stratified approach, incorporating at least three levels of stratification: 1) region, 2) *woreda*, and 3) sex of the students. The woreda-level stratification was purposive, with two schools selected per woreda. This multi-stage stratification and purposive sampling may introduce biased estimates due to the unequal probability of selecting sampling units (i.e., schools or students) across different strata. To account for this imbalance, sampling weights can be applied at each stratification level. However, in both the baseline and midterm reports, these sample weights were not utilized in the data analysis for multi-stage stratification. Furthermore, multi-stage sampling (beyond two stages) is inherently complex and may result in a high design effect and increased sampling error, necessitating a larger sample size to ensure reliable estimates.

220. Given the circumstances outlined above, a quasi-experimental design with a comparison group and cross-sectional data collection (using a new school sample in each round) was used for the FY24 baseline and is proposed for the midterm and endline quantitative surveys.

221. The sampling method followed a stratified two-stage cluster sampling design, where the two regions - Oromia and Afar - served as strata, and schools were considered clusters. The required number of sample schools were selected from each stratum using the statistical sampling procedure Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) across the woreda. In PPS sampling, size was determined by the number of students in a school.

222. Since Ethiopia's male-to-female student ratio is near parity,[153] the random sampling process naturally yielded a balanced representation of boys and girls. As a result, additional stratification by sex was unnecessary.

223. The FY18 baseline and midterm reports (including the ToR) indicated that the literacy assessment (EGRA) was conducted for students in grades 2 and 3, while the student survey was conducted with students in grades 2 - 8, with 82 percent of participants drawn from grades 2 - 5. In alignment with previous evaluations and as suggested in the ToR, TANGO assessed the same grade levels for the FY24 evaluation series, with the EGRA conducted with students in grades 2 and 3 and student surveys covering grades 2 - 8.

[153] Ministry of Education. 2023. Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2022/2023.

224. TANGO estimated an equal sample size for each stratum (region) following the two-stage cluster sampling design to detect the extent of changes in the key outcome indicators using the statistical formula:[154]

$$Required\ Sample\ Size = D\left[\frac{\left[(z_\alpha + z_\beta)^2 * [P_1(1-P_1) + P_2(1-P_2)]\right]}{(P_2 - P_1)^2}\right]$$

225. Here, P_1 represents the survey estimate of the true population proportion at baseline or midterm, while P_2 represents the expected true population proportion at endline. The estimated sample sizes were statistically sufficient to ensure a **95 percent confidence level** (Z_α for one-tailed test) and a minimum of **80 percent statistical power** (Z_β) to detect the expected changes from baseline to midterm or midterm to endline. These estimates were also adjusted to account for a **5 percent non-response rate** and a **design effect (D = 2.0**). The sample size was estimated based on the specified outcome indicators in Table 23 presents the estimated sample sizes and the sample distribution by indicator and strata. The expected changes in these indicators from baseline to midterm or baseline to endline were determined using actual values from the FY18 baseline and midterm reports.

Table 23: FY24 key indicators and parameters for sample size calculations

Indicator #	Indicator	FY18			Expected change from BL to EL in FY24	Estimated Sample Size	Survey
		Baseline	MTE	% Point Change			
MGD S1	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	32%[155]	52%[156]	+20%	+20%	156	EGRA for students in grades 2 or 3
MGD S2	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	78%[157]	92%[5]	+14%	+15%	167	Students in grades 2 to 8
MGD C4	Percent of absent students who identified illness as the reason for school absence	50%[158]	35%[6]		-15%	279	Students in grades 2 to 8

226. Based on the parameters and the expected changes from baseline to endline (Table 23) the minimum required sample size was 279 (rounded to 280) for the student survey and 156 (rounded to 168) for the literacy assessment using EGRA tools.

227. Table 23 presents the sample sizes and sampling distributions for the McGovern-Dole project and the comparison group (control), stratified by the regions of Oromia and Afar. Equal sample sizes were

[154] Diana Maria Stukel. 2018. Feed the Future Population-Based Survey Sampling Guide. Washington, DC: Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project, FHI 360.

[155] Baseline and Endline Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern - Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia regions in Ethiopia 2019 to 2024 (pages 269 and 270)

[156] **Target 2023:** Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern - Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions in Ethiopia (2019 to 2025)

[157] Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP's USDA McGovern - Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Afar and Oromia Regions in Ethiopia (2019 to 2025)

[158] Assumed

estimated for each stratum, as sample weights were applied in the data analysis to adjust for unequal selection probabilities across the combined values of Oromia and Afar.

228. The Difference-in-Difference (DiD) analysis was planned exclusively from baseline to endline; therefore, data collection from non-project schools was not proposed for the midterm. Additionally, the community survey was not conducted in control school communities, as its outcome indicators are specific to the McGovern-Dole project intervention.

Table 24: Sample sizes and sampling distribution, by survey rounds, regions, and survey type

SURVEY TYPE	Baseline 2025						Midterm 2027			Endline 2029					
	Oromia		Afar		Total		Oromia	Afar	Total	Oromia		Afar		Total	
	MGD	Control	MGD	Control	MGD	Control	MGD	MGD	MGD	MGD	Control	MGD	Control	MGD	Control
Student survey: Grades 2 to 8)	280	280	280	280	560	560	280	280	560	280	280	280	280	560	560
Literacy assessment (EGRA): Grades 2 to 3	168	168	168	168	336	336	168	168	336	168	168	168	168	336	336
Community survey	140		140		280		140	140	280	140		140		280	
School survey	14	14	14	14	28	28	14	14	28	14	14	14	14	28	28

229. To implement the two-stage cluster sampling procedure, Stage 1 involved selecting a new sample of 14 schools for each survey round (baseline, midterm, and endline) across both school types (project and control). The selection was made from the list of project schools in Oromia and Afar, as well as non-project schools in the adjacent regions of Oromia and Afar, using the systematic random sampling method known as "Probability Proportional to Size (PPS)."

230. In Stage 2, a random sample of 20 students per sample school (14 schools) was chosen from the list of students in Grades 2 to 8 for the student survey.[159] Additionally, 12 students per school (from the same 14 schools) were randomly selected from Grades 2 and 3 for the EGRA assessment. Finally, 10 parents per school were randomly selected from the group of 20 students chosen for the student survey, limited to McGovern-Dole-supported 14 sample school communities.

231. The endline data collection for FY18 was completed in January 2025. According to the ToR, this endline data may be used as the baseline for FY24. Six out of sixteen logframe outcome indicators (Table 24) carried over from the FY18 to the FY24 cycle. While the FY18 endline data can serve as the baseline for these indicators, a new baseline survey was necessary for the remaining ten indicators. A quasi-experimental sampling design with a comparison group is proposed for the FY24 evaluations (baseline, midterm, and endline) to detect expected changes in the outcome indicators from baseline to endline. This design was intended to facilitate a DiD analysis from baseline to endline, as outlined in the ToR. To ensure consistency in data collection for reliable DiD analysis, the sampling design must remain consistent across all survey rounds.

[159] Depending on the grade levels available in the sample schools, if a school includes Grades 1 to 5, the student sample of 20 was drawn from Grades 2 to 5.

Table 25: FY24 logframe outcome indicators

Indicator #	Indicator	New 2024	Baseline
MGD S1	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Continuing	Yes
MGD S2	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	Continuing	Yes
MGD S4	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	New	Yes
MGD S6	Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	New	Yes
MGD S9	Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	Continuing	Yes
MGD S19	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	Yes
MGD S20	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD S10/ LRP S10	Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
LRP S7	Value of annual sales of farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	New	No
LRP S8	Volume of commodities sold by farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	New	No
LRP S12	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	New	No
MGD C2	Percentage of schools where teachers report higher concentration during the day	New	Yes
MGD C3	Average teacher attendance rates in USDA supported schools	New	Yes
MGD C4	Percent of absent students who identified illness as the reason for school absence	New	Yes
MGD C13	Percentage of students who pass the grade in USDA supported schools	New	No
MGD C15	Percent of children without normal Middle Upper-Arm Circumference	New	Yes

Quality control of quantitative data

232. The baseline study used ODK statistical software for the student, school and parent/community surveys, and Tangerine software for the EGRA. The TANGO team performed all technical adjustments to ODK programming and to the Tangerine software before data collection commenced. During the data collection process, the Hermon team conducted first-level daily quality control of the Tangerine data before forwarding to TANGO for second-level quality assurance, while the raw ODK data were forwarded to TANGO and managed and quality-assured by TANGO directly. This process involved daily data uploads from the field and real-time review and feedback by the TANGO lead analyst, in line with TANGO's internal procedures and controls for data protection and quality assurance.

Sample weights

233. A stratified two-stage cluster sampling design was implemented, with Afar and Oromia as the strata and schools as the clusters. Schools were randomly selected using probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) sampling method, where the size was the number of students enrolled in grades 2 through 8. The PPS procedure was applied independently within each stratum. Sample weights were necessary for data analysis to account for the stratified sampling design. When computing indicator values for the overall sample, sample weights were applied to adjust for unequal selection probabilities across strata. These weights are defined as the inverse of the probability of selection, calculated using the following equation:

$$W_s=(N_j/n_j)\times(n/N)$$

where, Nj: No. of students in jth stratum, nj : sample size of jth stratum, and n= ∑nj and N=∑Nj

234. Additionally, non-response weights were incorporated into the sample weights to further correct for potential bias due to non-participation, using this equation:

$$W_n=n_i/((n_i-n_ri))$$

where, ni : sample size for the ith cluster and nri : number of non-responses in ith cluster.

Protection and accountability to affected populations

235. The baseline study assessed the extent to which project design and implementation were aligned with WFP current protection and AAP guidance. This included review of i) the project's use of context analysis and vulnerability assessments to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities of communities and participant groups (e.g., students, smallholder farmers, etc.); ii) integration of protection measures into the project design, implementation and monitoring; iii) capacity building of project staff; and iv) community engagement.

Ethical considerations

236. In addition to following UNEG guidelines identified in Section 3.5, all baseline study staff and consultants have complied with TANGO's policies and procedures, including TANGO's Code of Ethics and Conduct. This includes ethical research safeguards, and child and youth protection protocols based on UNICEF guidance.[160]

237. The study team ensured ethical safeguards were in place for all interviews, focus groups and surveys, particularly for sensitive populations, through transparent practices including: informing all interviewees/respondents of the purpose and duration of the exercise, how they were identified to participate, informing participants of their rights, providing guarantees that specific findings will remain confidential and that all information provided will be used to assess the project – with no direct attribution to the interviewee/respondent. All interviewees/respondents were informed that they may choose not to participate; all prospective study subjects gave verbal consent before commencing the survey, key informant, or focus group questions. In the case of administering the EGRA and student survey to minors (students), consent was given by the head teacher.

238. The ethical and safeguarding protocols described above were monitored throughout the study process, including during fieldwork, by the team leader and TANGO quality assurance manager. No concerns arose during the study.

239. Regarding the protection of personally identifiable information (PII):

- *Quantitative data:* Includes school survey, EGRA, parent survey and student survey. At the end of the study, TANGO will submit raw and clean SPSS datasets and associated syntax files. The shared data will be stripped of personally identifiable information (PII) such as location, school/organization/committee name, name and title/position/role of respondent.
- *Qualitative data:* Includes FGD data only; TANGO will not provide KII data, to protect the anonymity of key informants. TANGO will prepare and submit summary notes of FGDs, stripped of PII such as

[160] https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/ethical-research-and-children/

location, school/organization/committee name, name and title/position/role of respondent. TANGO will not provide recorded audio recordings or transcripts of FGDs or KIIs.

240. Table 26 summarizes the relevant ethical issues and relevant risks to the baseline study, and corresponding safeguarding measures employed.

Table 26: Ethical considerations and risks; safeguards employed

Phase	Ethical issues	Risks	Safeguards
Inception	Sample design is inclusive and fair	Certain locations are not included	Random sampling was used to select schools and students to be surveyed
Data collection	Sample is inclusive and fair in representing all members of participant groups and stakeholders Survey information reflects a range of perspectives and present unbiased views Safe participation of girls, and of boys Participants give voluntary, informed consent before interviews Data collection is culturally sensitive and does not harm participants	Interviews do not reflect views of women, excluded groups, or other stakeholders Respondent bias Inappropriate behavior or intimidation of girls Participants do not know purpose of survey or participate unwillingly Conduct of interviewers or content of question may be upsetting or offensive to participants	Interviewers sought to include a range of beneficiaries through a combination of random sampling and purposive sampling Same-sex focus groups were arranged with same-sex interviewer to the extent possible; similarly, interviewers of girls and boys were of same sex to the extent possible Perspectives were solicited from a range of stakeholders and took anticipated bias into account Survey purpose, confidentiality and voluntary participation were explained prior to beginning interviews Data were collected by a local team sensitive to cultural norms and this reenforced in training
Data analysis	Data storage is secure	Unauthorized parties get access to data	TANGO maintains daily backup copies of all qualitative and quantitative data in a secure physical location, on site at TANGO headquarters as well as in separate secure locations on secure cloud servers that are only accessible to TANGO data managers. TANGO assignments that employ tablets for data collection use CAPI software. Data are uploaded daily from the field to secure cloud servers in an encrypted format. Data on the servers are only accessible to authorized TANGO data managers. The downloadable ODK software TANGO uses does not have any mechanisms that might allow ODK to access or control TANGO's devices or systems. TANGO contracts with an IT specialist who follows a protocol to ensure that TANGO IT systems (hardware and software) are equipped with current anti-virus, malware, and other relevant tools to ensure the maintenance and security of the data and information that TANGO collects and produces in the course of business.

Reporting	Participant confidentiality is maintained Generalizability of findings	Individuals and their views can be identified Resources and time determine the scope and how much the baseline team can cover	All identifying information is removed from study deliverables Any limitations to generalizability of findings are identified in the report

Annex 8. Summary terms of reference

241. The terms of reference include the baseline, midterm and final evaluations: Terms of Reference.

Annex 9: Baseline study evaluation matrix

OECD Criteria and Question				Quality of Evidence
Key Indicators	**Data collection methods**	**Sources of data/information**	**Data analysis methods/ triangulation**	
Relevance				
1. Is the project design contextualized to reach the right target beneficiaries and meet their needs, especially women, girls and students with functional impairments?				High
-Activity alignment with the needs and priorities of target beneficiaries (related to food security, education, health, etc.)	-Desk review -Quantitative surveys and EGRA -Semi-structured KIIs -FGDs	-WFP CO and field staff -Government ministries (esp. MoE) -Regional and woreda government officials -Donors, UN Agency Partners -Schools (administrators, teachers, students, cooks, PTA/Food Management Committees, etc.) -Smallholder farmers -Project proposal documents -Secondary research	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
2. To what extent does the project design align to national education and food security policies and strategies?				High
-Activity alignment with relevant national education and food security policies and strategies	-Desk review -Semi-structured KIIs	-Project proposal documents -National policies and strategies on school feeding, education, health and nutrition, etc. -WFP CO and field staff -National Government (ministries and government institutions)	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context and quick policy analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
3. To what extent does the project align with the local socio-economic and cultural context of the Afar and Oromia regions?				High
-Data/insight on local socio-economic and cultural context in Afar and Oromia -Alignment with local socio-economic and	-Desk review -Semi-structured KIIs -FGDs	-Project proposal documents - Schools (administrators, teachers, students, cooks, PTA/Food Management Committees, etc.) -Smallholder farmers -Secondary research on context in Afar and Oromia	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	

OECD Criteria and Question				Quality of Evidence
Key Indicators	**Data collection methods**	**Sources of data/information**	**Data analysis methods/ triangulation**	
cultural context in Afar and Oromia		-WFP and Government staff		
4. How is the project relevant/aligned to the current food security and educational challenges in the Afar and Oromia regions?				High
-Data on current food security and educational challenges in Afar and Oromia (e.g., literacy rates, attendance, drop-out rates, etc., rates of food security, etc.)	-Quantitative surveys and EGRA -Desk review -Semi-structured KIIs -FGDs	-Project proposal documents - Schools (administrators, teachers, students, cooks, PTA/Food Management Committees, etc.) -Smallholder farmers -Secondary research on context in Afar and Oromia -WFP and Government staff	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
5. What lessons from the previous project were considered in the FY24 project design and implementation plan?				High
-Findings and lessons from previous projects and activity alignment with these findings/lessons	-Desk review -Semi-structured KIIs -FGDs	-Project proposal documents -Previous project monitoring, evaluation and reporting documents -WFP CO and field staff -MoE Staff	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
6. Is the project adaptable to changing conditions and emerging needs in the target regions? Does the project have mechanisms in place to respond to unforeseen challenges/changes in the local context?				High
-Project proposal planning for adaptive management and data collection, management and analysis capacity -Data on current local context and potential emerging needs	-Desk review -Semi-structured interviews	-Project proposal documents and monitoring and evaluation plans - Past evaluations -CFM data and processes - Schools (administrators, teachers, students, cooks, PTA/Food Management Committees, etc.) -Smallholder farmers -Secondary research on context in Afar and Oromia	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	

OECD Criteria and Question				Quality of Evidence
Key Indicators	**Data collection methods**	**Sources of data/information**	**Data analysis methods/ triangulation**	
-Project plans account for contextual realities -Review of processes to identify and address inefficiencies		-WFP CO and field staff -MoE and other government staff		
Coherence				
7. To what extent is the project coherent internally and with other projects in the target areas?				High
-Alignment with ongoing or planned interventions, policies or initiatives in Ethiopia or in the education sector (by WFP and other stakeholders)	-Desk review -Semi-structured interviews	-Relevant WFP projects -Government policies, strategies or initiatives (e.g., School Meals Coalition)-Education sector project documents (e.g., READ II programme; Save the Children or Education in Emergency Cluster initiatives) -Project proposal documents -WFP CO and field staff -National, regional and woreda government staff -Education sector partners	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
Effectiveness				
8. To what extent are planned outputs, outcomes realistic and achievable in the context of the target regions?				Medium – The baseline did not collect anthropometric measurements to report on MGD Custom Indicator 15 (as discussed under limitations). This is planned for midterm and endline. At baseline, secondary sources can serve as
-Baseline values for MGD Standard and Custom Indicators (e.g., literacy, etc.) -Review of context and capacity at baseline; identification of gaps -Review of FY24 project design and alignment with international best practice and recommendations from	-Desk review -Semi-structured KIIs	-Past evaluations -Government policies, strategies or initiatives (e.g., School Meals Coalition) -Education sector project documents (e.g., READ II programme; Save the Children or Education in Emergency Cluster initiatives) -Project proposal documents -International best practices and standards (e.g., WFP school feeding guidance and global evaluations, SABER reports, etc.) -WFP CO and field staff -National, regional and woreda government staff	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	

OECD Criteria and Question				Quality of Evidence
Key Indicators	**Data collection methods**	**Sources of data/information**	**Data analysis methods/ triangulation**	
previous McGovern-Dole evaluations -Project plans account for contextual realities -Review of processes to identify and address inefficiencies		-Education sector partners		an indication of food security in target regions, though regional/woreda-level disaggregation, as well as disaggregation by sex and disability, is limited.
Impact				
9. What is the status of enrollment, attendance, attentiveness, literacy, retention, drop-out rates at baseline?				High
-Baseline values on student enrollment, attendance, attentiveness, literacy, retention, drop-out rates	-Desk review -Quantitative surveys and EGRA -Semi-structured KIIs -FGDs	-Schools (administrators, teachers, students, cooks, PTA/Food Management Committees, etc.) - Project proposal documents -Secondary research -WFP CO and field staff -Government ministries (esp. MoE) -Regional and woreda government officials	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
10. What is the status of community perceptions on the importance of inclusive education for girls, and people with functional impairments?				High
-Perceptions on the importance of inclusive education and changes in social norms related to girls' and children with disabilities' school attendance, enrollment, etc.	-Desk review -Semi-structured KIIs -FGDs	-Schools (administrators, teachers, students, cooks, PTA/Food Management Committees, etc.) -Smallholder farmers -Project proposal documents -Secondary research -WFP CO and field staff -Government ministries (esp. MoE) -Regional and woreda government officials	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
11. What are the long-term impacts (five or more years) of school meal programs on local agriculture production and food safety and what variables affect these changes?				Medium – information on the quantity and frequency of
-Perceptions on changes to local agriculture	-Semi-structured KIIs	-WFP CO and field staff -Government ministries records/statistics	-Semi-structured thematic literature review	

OECD Criteria and Question				Quality of Evidence
Key Indicators	**Data collection methods**	**Sources of data/information**	**Data analysis methods/ triangulation**	
production and food safety -Data on production changes, sales to schools, purchases by school from farmers, etc. -Data on instances of food safety issues -Perspectives on smallholder farmers' capacity to supply locally or regionally procured food commodities to schools	-FGDs -Desk review	-Agricultural cooperative partners -Project proposal documents -Data on sales to schools, agriculture production etc. -Other secondary research on food safety or agriculture production	-Qualitative iterative analysis -Structured quantitative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	smallholder farmers' sales to schools is limited. The study team instead relied on qualitative data to respond to this EQ.
Sustainability				
12. To what extent are the project arrangements, national capacity and context likely to sustain the implementation and results of the project, focussing on the context and the factors that may affect sustainability of the project, especially national government capacity for WFP to transition schools?				High
-Perspectives on Government capacity (technical, administrative, financial) to manage school feeding -Perspectives on how the context and other external/internal factors may affect project sustainability	-Semi-structured KIIs -Desk review	-WFP CO and field staff -National, regional and woreda government staff -Government policies, strategies or initiatives (e.g., School Meals Coalition) -Project proposal documents -Secondary research on Government capacity and local context (e.g., previous SABER reports, previous evaluations, etc.)	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	

OECD Criteria and Question				Quality of Evidence
Key Indicators	**Data collection methods**	**Sources of data/information**	**Data analysis methods/ triangulation**	
13. What kinds of partnerships (with the private sector and/or the Ethiopian Government) are the most effective at ensuring program sustainability? Among successful partnerships, who are the key players and what are their roles? In what contexts do private sector and/or government partnerships work best, and which contexts may be more challenging?				High
-Perspectives on which partnerships are most effective; strength of partnerships, coordination etc.; examination of partnerships in different/local contexts	-Semi-structured KIIs -Desk review	-WFP CO staff -National and regional government staff -MoU and other partnership agreements -Project proposal documents -Secondary research and/or partnership documentation (e.g., School Meals Coalition)	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Context analysis -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
14. What community-level systems of governance and management are required for the successful implementation and sustainability of the school meals project?				High
-Review of community-level governance capacity at baseline; identification of gaps -Review of FY24 project design and alignment with international best practice and recommendations from previous McGovern-Dole evaluations	-Semi-structured KIIs -Desk review	-WFP CO and field staff -MoE staff -School/community key informants (administrators, teachers, students, cooks, PTA/Food Management Committees, etc.) -Project proposal documents -International best practices and standards (e.g., from WFP school feeding guidance and global evaluations, etc.)	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	
15. Are structures in place for transition to Government ownership of the project ?				High
-Perspectives on Government capacity (technical, administrative, financial) to manage school feeding	-Semi-structured KIIs -Desk review	-Project proposal and transition planning documents -WFP CO and field staff -National, regional and woreda government staff -Government policies, strategies or initiatives -Secondary research on Government capacity (e.g., previous SABER reports, evaluations, etc.)	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	

OECD Criteria and Question				Quality of Evidence
Key Indicators	**Data collection methods**	**Sources of data/information**	**Data analysis methods/ triangulation**	
-Project alignment with Government capacity gaps and needs for transition				
16. What is the quality of the project's graduation timeline and sustainability plan?				High
-Graduation timeline and sustainability plan are realistic, comprehensive, and account for current Government capacity; anticipate capacity gaps; informed by research/evidence/ best practice	-Semi-structured KIIs -Desk review	-Project proposal and transition planning documents -WFP CO and field staff -National, regional and woreda government staff -Government policies, strategies or initiatives -Secondary research on Government capacity (e.g., previous SABER reports, evaluations, etc.) -International best practices and standards (e.g., from WFP school feeding guidance and global evaluations, etc.)	-Semi-structured thematic literature review -Qualitative iterative analysis -Triangulation across data collection methods and sources	

Annex 10: Performance indicators overview

Result	Indicator Type	Performance Indicator	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?
		McGovern-Dole and LRP Standard Indicators		
MGD Standard 1	Outcome	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Continuing	Yes
MGD Standard 2	Outcome	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	Continuing	Yes
MGD Standard 3	Output	Number of teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 4	Outcome	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	New	Yes
MGD Standard 5	Output	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	New	No
MGD Standard 6	Outcome	Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	New	Yes
MGD Standard 7	Output	Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	New	No
MGD Standard 8	Output	Number of educational facilities (improved water sources, kitchens, storerooms) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 9	Outcome	Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	Continuing	Yes

Result	Indicator Type	Performance Indicator	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?
MGD Standard 10, LRP Standard 10	Outcome / Output	Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 11, LRP Standard 15	Output	Value of new USG commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	New	No
MGD Standard 12, LRP Standard 14	Output	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance	New	No
MGD Standard 13	Output	Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar "school" governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 14	Output	Quantity of take-home rations provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 15	Output	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 16	Output	Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 17	Output	Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 18, LRP Standard 3	Output	Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 19	Outcome	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	Yes
MGD Standard 20	Outcome	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No

Result	Indicator Type	Performance Indicator	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?
MGD Standard 22	Output	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 23	Output	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 27	Output	Number of schools using an improved water source	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 28	Output	Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities	New	No
MGD Standard 29	Output	Number of students receiving deworming medication(s)	New	No
MGD Standard 30, LRP Standard 1	Output	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 31, LRP Standard 2	Output	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	Continuing	No
MGD Standard 32, LRP Standard 16	Output	Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	Continuing	No
LRP Standard 4	Output	Cost of transport, storage and handling of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity)	New	No
LRP Standard 5	Output	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (red kidney beans, locally procured)	New	No
LRP Standard 6	Output	Quantity of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (red kidney beans, locally procured)	New	No
LRP Standard 7	Outcome	Value of annual sales of farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	New	No
LRP Standard 8	Outcome	Volume of commodities sold by farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	New	No
LRP Standard 11	Output	Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance	New	No
LRP Standard 12	Outcome	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	New	No

Result	Indicator Type	Performance Indicator	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?
		McGovern-Dole Custom Indicators		
MGD Custom 2	Outcome	Percentage of schools where teachers report higher concentration during the day	New	Yes
MGD Custom 3	Outcome	Average teacher attendance rates in USDA supported schools	New	Yes
MGD Custom 4	Outcome	Percent of absent students who identified illness as the reason for school absence	New	Yes
MGD Custom 6	Output	Number of community members sensitized on importance of education for girls and students with disabilities	New	No
MGD Custom 7	Output	Number of government officials trained in school feeding project management	New	No
MGD Custom 8	Output	Number of individuals trained in improved WASH practices as a result of USDA assistance	New	No
MGD Custom 9	Output	Number of schools receiving NFIs due to USDA assistance	New	No
MGD Custom 10	Output	Number of TaRL guidelines distributed to schools	New	No
MGD Custom 11	Output	Average transport cost/MT for locally procured commodities purchased through USDA assistance	New	No
MGD Custom 12	Output	Number of schools receiving locally-procured food items in the first two weeks of the semester	New	No
MGD Custom 13	Outcome	Percentage of students who pass the grade in USDA supported schools	New	No
MGD Custom 14	Output	Number of school gardens supported	New	No
MGD Custom 15	Outcome	Percent of children without normal Middle Upper-Arm Circumference	New	Yes
MGD Custom 16	Output	Number of contracts signed with cooperative unions or private suppliers to supply the school feeding project through USDA assistance	New	No

Annex 11: Review of project indicators at baseline

The table below presents the estimated and actual baseline values for each performance indicator included in the PMP. Estimated baseline values and LOP targets are pulled from the award agreement, unless otherwise noted; these were the basis for WFP's initial LOP target setting. The actual baseline values are from the baseline survey unless otherwise noted; the baseline study team has assessed the appropriateness of the LOP targets in light of the actual baseline values. The evaluation team recommends that five LOP targets be re-evaluated based on actual baseline values and/or the revision of targeted schools from 573 to 500.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Standard 1: Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	**Total**: 21.3%[161] (Boys 26.5%; Girls: 16.3%)	**Total**: 0.8% (Boys 0.5%; Girls: 0.7%)	43.7%	Continuing	Yes	Given previous trajectory during the FY18 project, the proposed LOP target of 43.7 percent appears ambitious. Suggest revising target downwards.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
	Grade 2: 18.5%	**Grade 2**: 0.5% (Boys: 1.6%; Girls: 0.0%					

[161] The FY18 endline evaluation used reading comprehension scores only, while the baseline study uses a composite score. The composite score requires students to both finish the story and answer a certain number of reading comprehension questions correctly. This is the reason that baseline scores are lower than endline scores. Using reading comprehension scores only (Table 13), the actual baseline values are as follows: Total: 12.5 percent (Boys: 17.3 percent, Girls: 12.7 percent); Grade 2: 10.9 percent (Boys: 12.5 percent, Girls: 10.4 percent); Grade 3: 15.6 percent (Boys: 20.0 percent, Girls: 16.3 percent). However, the proposed LOP target is too ambitious, whether referring to the reading comprehension score only or to the composite score.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
	Grade 3: 22.3%	**Grade 3**: 1% (Boys: 0.0%, Girls: 2.1%)					
MGD Standard 2: Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	91.5%[162] (Boys: 92%; Girls: 90%)	**Total**: 75.4% (Boys: 75.8%; Girls: 78.5%)	88%	Continuing	Yes	Given the FY18 evaluation series concerns regarding the quality of attendance data, it is difficult to comment on the LOP compared to previous trajectory. However, the LOP target appears suitable, based on the evaluation team's experience evaluating other school feeding projects.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 3: Number of teaching and learning	0	0	114,600	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and

[162] This is the attendance rate reported in the FY18 endline evaluation report. However, the endline evaluation report notes that reporting on attendance rates has not been consistent with the McGovern-Dole Indicator Handbook and is likely higher than actual attendance rates (i.e., reported rates are region-wide as collected by the Regional Education Bureaus and were not specific to project schools).

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
materials provided as a result of USDA assistance							frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 4: Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	0	0; *Note*: As FY24 project activities have not begun, this value is 0.	2,269	New	Yes	LOP target is suitable.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 5: Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	2,521	New	No	LOP target is suitable.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 6: Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	0	0; *Note*: As FY24 project activities have not begun, this value is 0.	1,244	New	Yes	LOP target is suitable.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 7: Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	1,555	New	No	LOP target is suitable.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Standard 8: Number of educational facilities (improved water sources, kitchens, storerooms) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	260	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 9: Number of students enrolled in school receiving USDA assistance	154,439	*Note*: The evaluation team only collected enrollment data in sampled schools. Total enrollment across all project schools will be monitored by WFP. Enrollment in baseline schools at baseline are as follows: **Sample Total**: 16,418 Boys: 9,286 Girls: 7,132	185,327	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on projected trajectory.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 10/LRP standard 10: Number of policies, regulations, or administrative procedures in each of the following stages of development as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	4	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Standard 11/LRP Standard 11: Value of new USG commitments, and new public and private sector investments leveraged by USDA to support food security and nutrition	0	0	USD 8,841,652.00	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 12/LRP Standard 14: Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	9	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 13: Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar "school" governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	573	Continuing	No	LOP target should reflect actual number of schools (500).	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 14: Quantity of take-home rations provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	0	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Standard 15: Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	0	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 16: Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	58,886,080	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 17: Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	165,119	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 18/LRP Standard 3: Number of social assistance beneficiaries participating in productive safety nets as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	165,119	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 19: Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices	0	0; *Note*: As FY24 project activities have not begun, this value is 0.	1,575	Continuing	Yes	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
as a result of USDA assistance							monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 20: Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new safe food preparation and storage practices as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	2,942	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 22: Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	3,461	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 23: Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	1,853	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 27: Number of schools using an improved water source	302	In year 1, school-level infrastructure assessment to be done by WFP and I1D	462	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Standard 28: Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities	383	In year 1, school-level infrastructure assessment to be done by WFP and I1D	383	Yes	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 29: Number of students receiving deworming medication(s)	0	0	30,109	Yes	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 30/LRP Standard 1: Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	0	0	179,235	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 32/LRP Standard 2: Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	0	0	660,476	Continuing	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Standard 32/LRP Standard 16: Number of	0	0	573	Continuing	No	LOP target should reflect actual number of schools (500).	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
schools reached as a result of USDA assistance							monitoring are suitable.
LRP Standard 4: Cost of transport, storage and handling of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity)	0	0	USD 649,061.00	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
LRP Standard 5: Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (red kidney beans, locally procured)	0	0	USD 1,793,271.00	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
LRP Standard 6: Quantity of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (red kidney beans, locally procured)	0	0	1,514	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
LRP Standard 7: Value of annual sales of farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	USD 5,710,200.00	Reports from FCUs/suppliers for baseline value	USD 38,347,476.00	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable. Noting, however, that data reliability and data

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
							validity are often challenges for indicators regarding sales, income, etc., due to issues with recordkeeping, numeracy, and reluctance to share this information.
LRP Standard 8: Volume of commodities sold by farms and firms receiving USDA assistance	9,156	Reports from FCUs/suppliers for baseline value	61,489	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable. Noting, however, that data reliability and data validity are often challenges for indicators regarding sales, income, etc., due to issues with recordkeeping, numeracy, and reluctance to share this information.
LRP Standard 11: Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural sector	0	0	1,932	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
productivity or food security training as a result of USDA assistance							monitoring are suitable.
LRP Standard 12: Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	0	0	1,642	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
Custom indicators							
MGD Custom 2: Percentage of schools where teachers report higher concentration during the day	45%	58.5%	85%	New	Yes	LOP target is suitable based on actual baseline value and anticipated change.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 3: Average teacher attendance rates in USDA supported schools	80%	*Note*: Data for this indicator was not collected as part of the baseline survey; it will be collected at midterm and endline. Monitoring data may be used as a baseline value.	92%	New	Yes	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Custom 4: Percent of absent students who identified illness as the reason for school absence	15%	*Note*: Data for this indicator was not collected as part of the baseline survey; it will be collected at midterm and endline. Monitoring data may be used as a baseline value.	10%	New	Yes	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 6: Number of community members sensitized on importance of education for girls and students with disabilities	0	0	3,470	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 7: Number of government officials trained in school feeding programme management	0	0	931	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 8: Number of individuals trained in improved WASH practices as a result of USDA assistance	0	0	1,853	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Custom 9: Number of schools receiving NFIs due to USDA assistance	0	0	573	New	No	LOP target should reflect actual number of schools (500).	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 10: Number of TaRL guidelines distributed to schools	0	0	2,292	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 11: Average transport cost/MT for locally procured commodities purchased through USDA assistance	0	0	356	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 12: Number of schools receiving locally-procured food items in the first two weeks of the semester	0	0	573	New	No	LOP target should reflect actual number of schools (500).	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 13: Percentage of students who pass the	78%	EMIS data to be used for reporting (not available to baseline team)	84%	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans and the evaluation team's	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
grade in USDA supported schools						experience in other school feeding settings.	monitoring are suitable.
MGD Custom 14: Number of school gardens supported	0	0	78	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Custom 15: Percent of children without normal Middle Upper-Arm Circumference[163]	20%	*Afar:* 12.6% *Oromia:* 8.6%	15%	New	Yes	Monitoring survey data suggest that the prevalence of children without normal MUAC may be lower than the proposed LOP target of 15 percent. However, as these estimates are derived from proxy monitoring data, which do not use a comparable methodology to the baseline (e.g., different sample and timing of data collection), they do not provide sufficient justification for revising the LOP target. The target remains reasonable, but should be reviewed at midterm.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

[163] *Note*: Anthropometric measurements were not planned for baseline due to the shortened inception and data collection phases. Instead, the baseline values detail the proxy malnutrition prevalence observed during the December 2025 Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Survey. See Limitations section for additional discussion.

Indicators	Estimated Baseline value	Actual Baseline value	Life of project target	New to FY24 project?	Baseline data collection?	Suitability of targets given previous trajectory and baseline situation	Suitability of collection and analysis methods and frequency of collection to measure project results
MGD Custom 16: Number of contracts signed with cooperative unions or private suppliers to supply the school feeding programme through USDA assistance	0	0	18	New	No	LOP target is suitable based on project plans.	The proposed data collection and analysis methods and frequency of monitoring are suitable.

Annex 12: Summary of people interviewed

Table 27: Stakeholders consulted, by category

Name	M	F
Inception Phase		
WFP Ethiopia Country Office		
Staff	3	--
WFP Sub-offices		
Staff	5	2
Total inception phase consults	**8**	**2**
Data Collection Phase		
WFP Ethiopia Country Office		
Staff	2	--
WFP Ethiopia Sub-offices		
Staff	3	--
WFP HQ		
Staff	--	1
National and Regional Government		
National and regional government staff/officials	9	--
District (woreda) Government		
District staff/ officials (education and agriculture)	8	--
School-level informants		
School administrators, Grade 2 and 3 teachers, cooks	10	2
Total data collection phase consults	**32**	**3**

Table 28:Stakeholders interviewed, by category

Key informant category	#KIIs	M	F
WFP Ethiopia			
WFP Ethiopia staff	6	5	1
National and Regional Government			
National and regional government staff/officials	9	9	0
District (*woreda*) Government			
District staff/ officials (education and agriculture)	8	8	0
School-level informants			
School administrators, Grade 2 and 3 teachers, cooks	12	10	2
TOTAL	**35**	**32**	**3**

Table 29: School-level KIIs and FGDs in Afar

Categories	#FGDs	M	F
Grade 2 or 3 teacher	2	10	0
Cook	1	0	3
President of PTA / Food Management Committee members	4	18	7
Grade 2 and up students	2	9	5
Smallholder farmers	2	10	1

TOTAL	**11**	**47**	**16**

Table 30: School-level KIIs and FGDs in OromiaTable 31: School-level KIIs and FGDs in Oromia

Categories	#FGDs	M	F
Grade 2 or 3 teacher	1	7	3
Cook	1	0	7
President of PTA / Food Management Committee members	4	22	4
Grade 2 and up students	2	9	9
Smallholder farmers	2	10	2
TOTAL	**10**	**48**	**25**

Annex 13: Supplemental tables

Table 32: Percentage of students with disabilities, by region (%)Table 33: Percentage of students with disabilities, by region (%)

Indicators		Afar			Oromia			All		
		Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.	Project	Control	Sig.
Percentage of schools that have any children with disabilities needs to make special provisions		100.0	92.3		56.3***	75.0		77.4	84.0	
Sample size (n)		*14*	*14*		*14*	*14*		*28*	*28*	
Percentage of students with **any** disability	**All**	0.13	0.04		0.11	0.07		0.12	0.05	
	Boy	0.11	0.07		0.10	0.11		0.11	0.09	
	Girl	0.14	0.00		0.11	0.01		0.13	0.01	*
A. Percentage with serious visual impairment or who are blind	All	0.11	0.32		0.07	0.06		0.09	0.13	
	Boys	0.06	0.30		0.08	0.09		0.08	0.15	
	Girls	0.16	0.34		0.06	0.02		0.10	0.11	
B. Percentage with serious hearing impairment or deafness	All	0.28	1.09	**	0.14	0.15		0.19	0.40	
	Boys	0.32	1.00		0.11	0.16		0.18	0.38	
	Girls	0.24	1.22	*	0.17	0.14		0.20	0.42	
C. Percentage with significant difficulty in movement	All	0.32	0.95		0.06	0.08		0.15	0.31	
	Boys	0.48	1.34		0.08	0.11		0.22	0.44	
	Girls	0.12	0.54		0.04	0.05		0.07	0.18	
D. % with significant mental and cognitive disabilities	All	0.71	0.40		0.06	0.12		0.29	0.20	
	Boys	0.67	0.45		0.08	0.13		0.28	0.21	
	Girls	0.76	0.34		0.04	0.12		0.29	0.18	
Number of students enrolled in the 2024/2025 school year	*All*	*5,635*	*3,486*		*10,783*	*9,751*		*16,418*	*13,237*	
	Boys	*3,129*	*2,008*		*6,157*	*5,556*		*9,286*	*7,564*	
	Girls	*2,506*	*1,478*		*4,626*	*4,195*		*7,132*	*5,673*	

Difference between project and comparison schools tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***) and shown in the SIG column. Difference between regions (i.e., comparing Afar project to Oromia project, and comparing Afar controls to Oromia controls), tested for statistical significance at same levels but shown within the column containing the value.
Source: FY24 Baseline School Survey

Table 34: Student home environment, by region (%)

INDICATOR Question / Responses	AFAR	OROMIA	Sig.	TOTAL	HH HEAD's SEX			HH HEAD's DISABILITY		
					Male	Female	Sig.	No	Any	Sig.
Student Home Environment										
At home, do you or someone in your family read stories to the child	43.6%	31.4%	**	38.3%	38.2%	30.7%		37.5%	43.7%	
At home, do you or someone in your family help the child in studies or completing the schoolwork?	63.6%	43.6%	***	55.0%	53.2%	60.7%		54.4%	58.3%	
What, according to you, are the benefits of primary education?										
Improves literacy rate	79.3%	95.7%	***	86.4%	86.1%	88.5%		87.8%	77.5%	*
Improves future opportunities of work for children	73.6%	59.3%	***	67.4%	66.5%	73.1%		66.4%	73.7%	
Helps child's skill development	70.7%	70.7%		70.7%	70.1%	74.6%		71.8%	64.3%	
Helps girls to remain in school and delay early marriage	26.4%	20.0%		23.7%	24.5%	16.2%		23.6%	24.1%	
Helps children from different social and ethnic groups to bond	39.3%	15.7%	***	29.1%	30.4%	23.0%		30.9%	18.2%	*
Helps children learn more about the world	30.7%	22.1%		27.0%	26.2%	30.7%		27.6%	23.3%	
Helps break the cycle of poverty	25.0%	26.4%		25.6%	24.7%	36.1%		23.1%	40.8%	**
Others (specify)	2.1%	0.7%		1.5%	1.8%	0.0%	**	1.8%	0.0%	**
Don't know	5.7%	0.0%	***	3.3%	3.4%	3.1%		2.8%	5.8%	
Refused to answer	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%	
n	159	121		280	236	37		241	39	

Difference between Afar and Oromia tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). Difference between male and female household head tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). Difference between household heads with and without a disability tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

Table 35: Learning assistance for students, by region, as reported by parents

INDICATOR Question / Responses	AFAR	OROMIA	Sig.	TOTAL	HH HEAD's SEX			HH HEAD's DISABILITY		
					Male	Female	Sig.	No	Any	Sig.
Have your children received any assistance to meet their educational/ learning needs?	25.3%	48.6%	***	35.0%	33.5%	41.4%		35.4%	32.1%	
Type of assistance student received										
Reading materials	81.6%	86.8%		84.6%	84.3%	89.4%		84.3%	86.3%	
Online counselling	2.6%	2.9%		2.8%	2.1%	0.0%		1.3%	13.7%	**
Online teaching	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%	
Parent Tutoring- assisting with homework, counselling (HH member or Parent)	47.4%	25.0%	**	34.5%	35.9%	27.9%		35.8%	24.9%	
Private Tutoring- assisting with homework, counselling (other than a HH member or parent)	5.3%	1.5%		3.1%	2.8%	5.3%		3.5%	0.0%	*
Any other (specify)	2.6%	13.2%	**	8.7%	9.8%	5.3%		9.0%	6.8%	
Don't know	2.6%	1.5%		2.0%	2.4%	0.0%		2.2%	0.0%	
Refused to answer	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%	0.0%	

Difference between Afar and Oromia tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). Difference between male and female household head tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). Difference between household heads with and without a disability tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

Table 36:Parent contributions, as reported by parents

Parent Contributions	AFAR	OROMIA	Sig.	TOTAL	HH HEAD's SEX			HH HEAD's DISABILITY		
					Male	Female	Sig.	No	Any	Sig.
Percent of Parents that think household costs on food will reduce if a school lunch program starts	66.0%	65.0%		65.6%	66.6%	70.3%		65.7%	64.9%	
Percent of households that can contribute to the school for the school lunch program in some way (In-kind or Cash)	49.3%	77.1%	***	60.8%	61.8%	54.4%		58.4%	76.7%	**
If yes, then how do you think you can contribute?										
In kind, by providing vegetables	39.2%	14.8%	***	26.4%	23.3%	42.6%	*	26.0%	28.5%	
In kind, by helping in cooking the school meal	54.1%	52.8%		53.4%	55.3%	36.0%	*	52.4%	58.1%	
In kind, by providing labour in the school garden	59.5%	30.6%	***	44.3%	42.4%	56.0%	*	42.5%	53.3%	
In cash, by giving a fixed amount to school	50.0%	46.3%		48.1%	45.3%	66.6%	*	50.1%	38.1%	
Others	4.1%	1.9%		2.9%	3.4%	0.0%	**	2.7%	3.8%	
Average cash amount that parents would be willing to contribute to a school lunch program (Ethiopian Birr)	297.77	192.63		242.59	233.43	291.46		243.76	236.87	
n										

Difference between Afar and Oromia tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). Difference between male and female household head tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). Difference between household heads with and without a disability tested for statistical significance at p-values <10% (*), <5% (**) and <1% (***). ***Source***: FY24 Baseline School Survey

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Acronyms

ABECs	Alternative Basic Education Centers
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CCS	Country capacity strengthening
CFM	Community Feedback Mechanism or Complaint and Feedback Mechanism
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
CO	Country Office
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAC	Development Assistance Commission
DEO	District Education Officer
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DiD	Difference-in-difference
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HGSF	Home Grown School Feeding
HQ	Headquarters
LRP	Local and Regional Procurement
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification
NAR	Net Attendance Rate
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODK	Open Data Kit
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OEV	(WFP) Office of Evaluation
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PPGS	School Meals and Social Protection Service
PPS	Probability-proportional-to-size
PSR	Pupil-Section Ratio
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
RO NAIROBI	(WFP) Regional Office Nairobi
SEO	Sector Education Officers
SFP	National School Feeding Project
SHN	School Health and Nutrition
SI	Survey Instrument
SMC	School Meals Coalition
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples
SO	Strategic Objective
SUN	Scaled Up Nutrition
THR	Take home ration
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United National Children's Fund
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

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