



WFP EVALUATION



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Evaluation of WFP's Corporate Emergency Response to the Sudan Regional Crisis 2023–2025

Centralized evaluation report – Volume I

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Key personnel for the evaluation

OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Anne-Claire Luzot	Director of Evaluation
Julia Betts	Deputy Director of Evaluation
Wilson Kaikai	Evaluation Manager
Julie Thoulouzan	Evaluation Manager
Isabella De Cesaris	Evaluation Research Analyst
Micheál Ohiarlaithe	Evaluation Research Analyst
Alessandro Cassinadri	Evaluation Research Analyst

EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM

Charlotte Lattimer	Team Leader
Hisham Khogali	Team Leader Inception/Quality Assurance
Jacqueline Frize	Deputy Team Leader
Hannah Vaughan-Lee	Senior Evaluator
Abdel Rahman El Mahdi	Senior National Evaluator
Nuha Abdelgadir	Senior National Evaluator
Thomas Debandt	Supply Chain expert
Margie Buchanan Smith	Humanitarian Principles Advisor
Arianna Aimar	Research Assistant and Project Manager
Izzeldien El Alfaki	National Consultant
Nuha Mohamed	National Consultant
Sewar Consulting	Company team
Leyla Adam Ibrahim	National Consultant
Mahamat Abakar	National Consultant
Oumar Mahamat Djibrine	National Consultant
Noha Hassan	National Consultant
Bassem Adly	National Consultant
Rania Ahmed	National Consultant

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Executive summary

Introduction

Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of WFP's response to the Sudan regional crisis from 2023 to 2025¹ was conducted from November 2024 to August 2025, covering WFP strategy and operations between April 2023 and August 2025 in the Sudan, the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan and Uganda. The evaluation had the dual purpose of supporting accountability to WFP stakeholders and providing learning about WFP's performance during the emergency operation with the aim of improving WFP's ongoing response to the Sudan crisis as well as its response to other future complex emergencies.
2. The evaluation assessed the appropriateness of WFP's response to the food security and nutrition needs of the people most affected by the crisis; the effectiveness and efficiency of the response in the Sudan and in neighbouring countries affected by the crisis; the internal and external factors influencing the overall coherence and results of WFP's response; and the prospects for a gradual scale-down of the response.
3. The evaluation used a theory-based and mixed methods approach as well as contribution analysis to answer the evaluation questions. It used evidence from sources including document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and surveys. Three thematic workshops were organized on findings related to internal coordination, the humanitarian principles and duty of care. Two stakeholder workshops (one internal and one external) yielded inputs that informed the conclusions of the evaluation and the formulation of its recommendations.

Context

4. Despite its regional significance, the Sudan has been consistently ranked among the world's top 10 most fragile states and has struggled with persistent poverty, economic challenges, political instability and humanitarian crises.² The current conflict was triggered by a 2021 military coup,³ resulting in a severe humanitarian crisis, with 30.4 million people in need of assistance as of December 2024, and the world's largest displacement crisis, with 11.3 million people displaced internally and 4.3 million displaced to neighbouring countries. Women and girls make up 54 percent of those displaced and have been disproportionately affected by the conflict.⁴
5. Although the Sudan has long faced food security issues, they intensified with the onset of the conflict. As of December 2024, 24.6 million people were expected to face acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 3 or higher) in the first half of 2025. Moreover, famine was confirmed in North Darfur in August 2024, and subsequent assessments have revealed that five additional areas are experiencing famine and that 17 others are at risk of famine.⁵ The economy has also been severely disrupted, with livelihoods, healthcare access and public health all affected. As for healthcare, only 16 percent of primary care facilities are operational, and the system is overwhelmed by recurring disease outbreaks, including outbreaks of cholera, dengue and malaria.⁶
6. Access to humanitarian assistance has been impeded throughout the response due to insecurity, including attacks on aid workers and convoys, bureaucratic and administrative impediments and logistical and environmental challenges. Additional operational challenges include poor network connectivity, limited cash liquidity and insufficient technical and humanitarian staff on the ground. Funding is another critical

¹ The present document is a summary report on the evaluation. The full evaluation report and all related documents are available on WFP's website.

² Fragile States Index. 2025. [Country Dashboard](#).

³ World Bank Group. [Sudan](#).

⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. 2024. [Initial Gender Assessment: Sudan](#).

⁵ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2024. [Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation – Updated Projections and FRC conclusions for October 2024 to May 2025](#).

⁶ World Health Organization. 2025. [Health Cluster Bulletin: Sudan, October – November 2024](#).

challenge. The humanitarian response plan for the Sudan regional crisis was only 51.5 percent funded in 2023, 70.1 percent funded in 2024 and 25 percent funded as of September 2025.⁷

7. The conflict has had far-reaching consequences beyond the borders of the Sudan, affecting surrounding countries including the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan and Uganda. The crisis has led to high levels of cross-border displacement, including influxes of both refugees and returnees into countries already hosting large numbers of refugees and suffering from their own food insecurity and displacement stemming from conflict and natural disasters.

⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Financial Tracking Service: Sudan 2023; country snapshots for [2023](#), [2024](#) and [2025](#).

TABLE 1. SUDAN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN, PEOPLE IN NEED: OVERALL, FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS AND NUTRITION								
	Total	Internally displaced persons	Host community	Non-hosting community	Refugees	Sex	Age	Persons with disabilities
Overall	30.4 million	8.9 million	6.4 million	14.3 million	892 000	Female: 57.7% Male: 42.3%	Children: 51.4% Adults: 43.3% Older persons: 5.3%	4.6 million
Food security and livelihoods	25.1 million	7.5 million	5.4 million	12.1 million		Female: 57.7% Male: 42.3%	Children: 50% Adults: 44% Older persons: 6%	3.8 million
Nutrition	3.7 million	984 400	618 500	2.2 million		Female: 57.7% Male: 42.3%	Children: 86.32% Adults: 13.68%	

Source: The Sudan humanitarian response plan.

TABLE 2. EFFECT OF THE SUDAN REGIONAL CRISIS

Country	Refugees from the Sudan since 2023	Sudanese refugees prior to the crisis
Central African Republic	45 386	282
Chad	878 002	409 819
Egypt	1 500 000	60 799
Ethiopia	76 085	48 964
Libya	337 000	20 000
South Sudan	400 648	289 797
Uganda	86 947	3 431

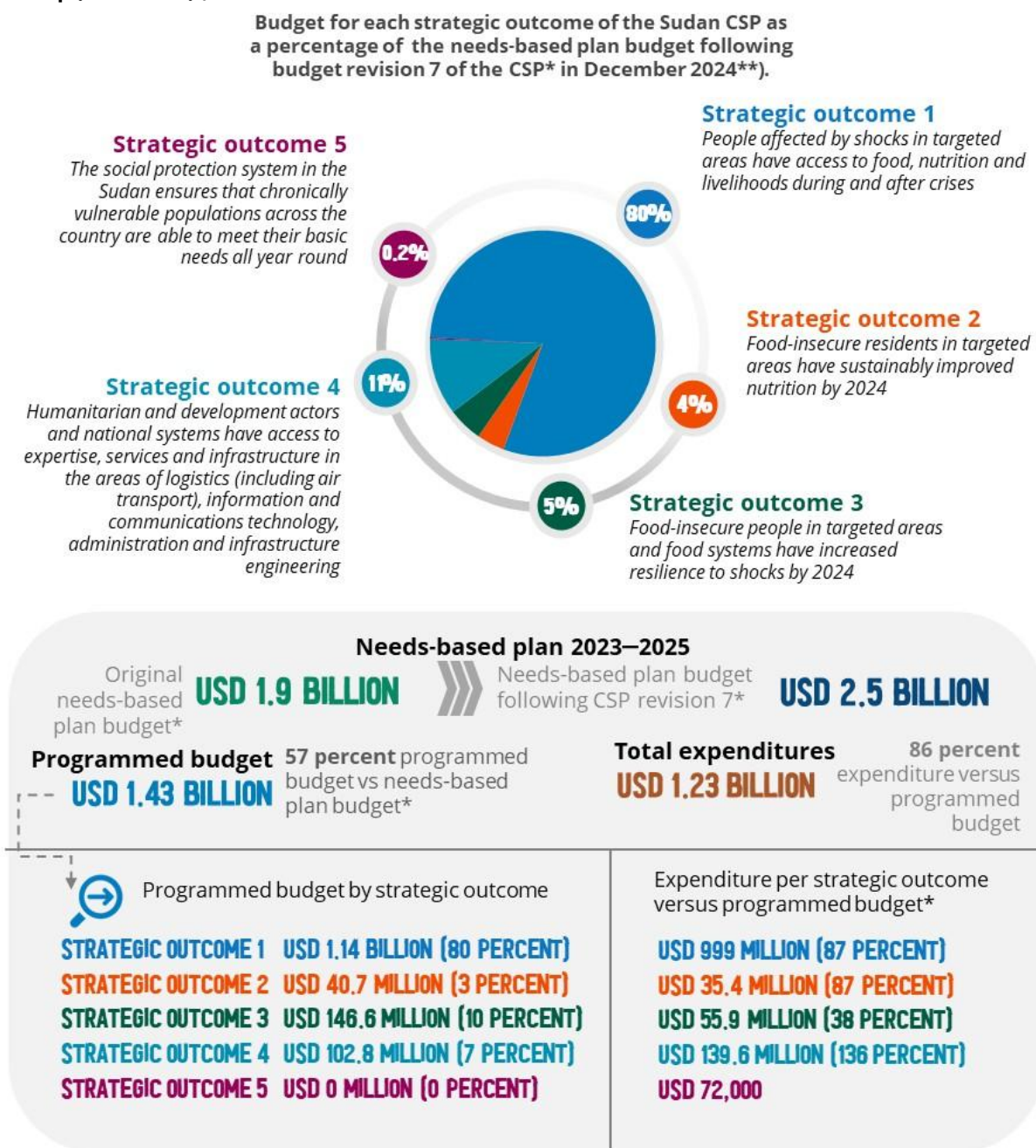
Source: WFP country office annual country reports.

Overview of the Sudan country strategic plan and the response in neighbouring countries

8. WFP's country strategic plan (CSP) for the Sudan for 2019–2026, approved in 2018 with a budget of USD 2.27 billion for assisting 6.25 million people, underwent significant expansion over the course of its implementation. By April 2023 the plan had already been revised four times, increasing the budget to USD 3.42 billion. Following the onset of the conflict, it was further revised, extending it to February 2026 and scaling it up to reach 27.68 million people with a budget increased to nearly USD 6 billion.

9. The original CSP strategic outcomes focused on responding to emergencies; reducing malnutrition and its root causes by building the resilience of food-insecure households and strengthening food systems; strengthening systems and structures in the provision of common humanitarian and development services; and making humanitarian and development actors more efficient and effective. Due to the escalating conflict and humanitarian crisis, however, the focus of the CSP shifted from development-oriented goals to urgent crisis response, with the latter accounting for approximately 90 percent of country portfolio needs, programmed budget and expenditure.

Figure 1: Budget and financial dashboard of the Sudan country strategic plan during the Sudan corporate scale-up (2023–2025)^{8, 9}



* Values include total transfer and implementation costs but exclude direct and indirect support costs.

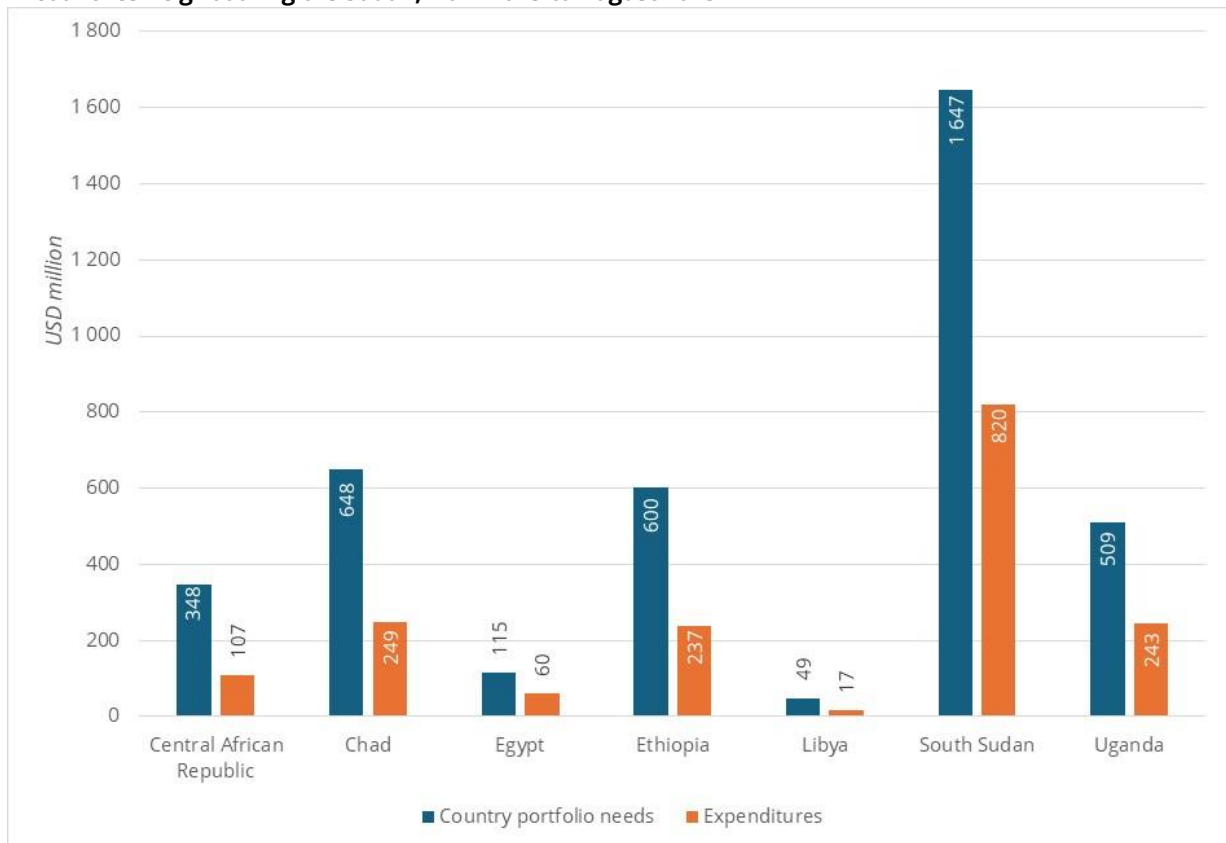
** Two revisions of the CSP have been approved since the end of the evaluation, in July 2025 and February 2026.

Source: EV_CPB_Resources_Overview, extracted on 25 September 2025.

⁸ All values are as they were following the seventh revision of the plan in December 2024; they include total transfer and implementation costs but exclude direct and indirect support costs.

⁹ Two additional budget revisions were approved subsequent to the end of data collection for the evaluation, in July 2025 and February 2026.

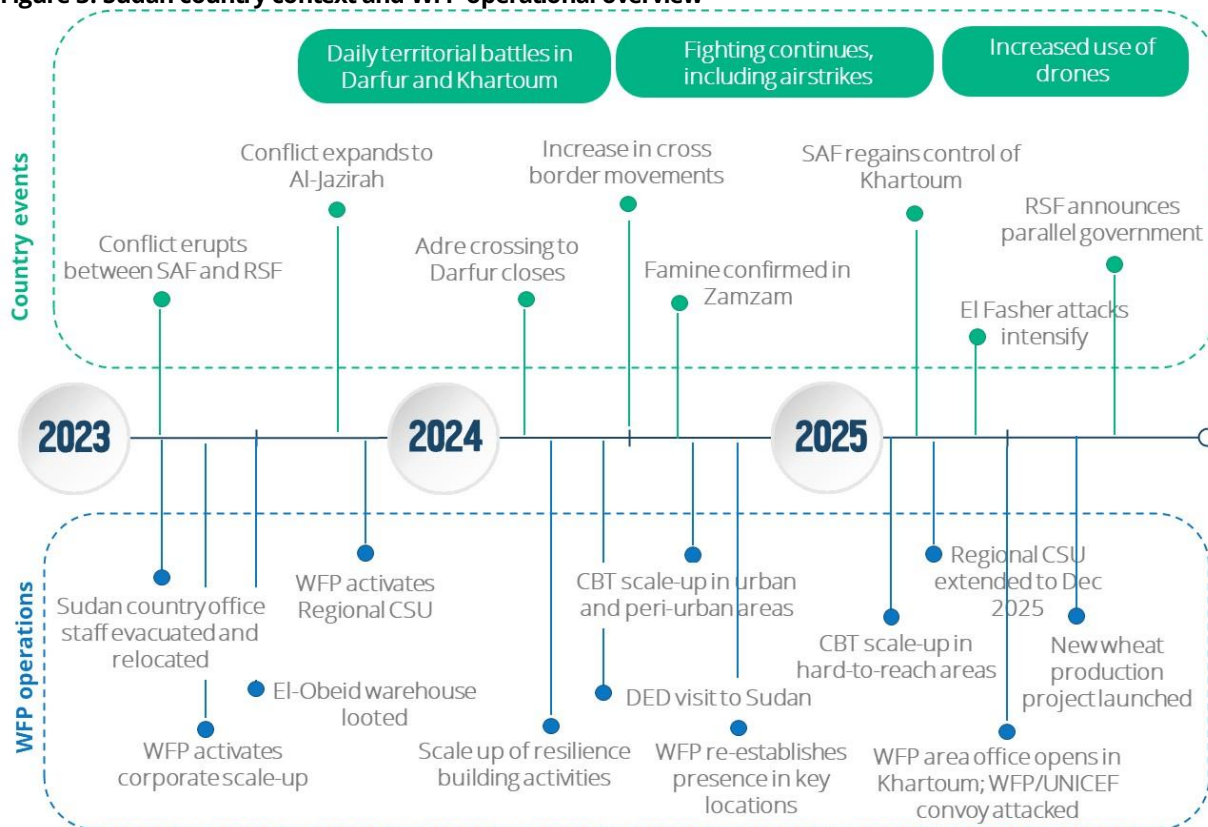
Figure 2: Estimated budget and expenditures for the Sudan corporate scale-up in countries neighbouring the Sudan, from 2023 to August 2025¹⁰



Source: WFP Chief Financial Officer funds management reports – country portfolio budgets vs. actual expenditures 2023–2025 (by country).

¹⁰ Country portfolio needs and expenditures for the unconditional resource transfer activity under each country's country strategic plan from 2023 to August 2025.

Figure 3: Sudan country context and WFP operational overview



Abbreviations: CBT = cash-based transfer; CSU = corporate scale-up; DED = Deputy Executive Director; RSF = Rapid Support Forces; SAF = Sudanese Armed Forces; UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund.

10. The countries neighbouring the Sudan hosted refugees and returnees and provided supply corridors into the Sudan. Under strategic outcome 1 of their respective CSPs, the WFP country offices in the neighbouring countries delivered food, nutrition assistance, cash transfers and school meals to refugees fleeing the crisis; they also provided air services and capacity support under strategic outcome 4. All the neighbouring countries enacted substantial CSP budget revisions during the period 2023–2025. These budget revisions were mainly to adjust caseloads and integrate Sudanese refugees into existing country frameworks. The number of people assisted in relation to the Sudan response varied widely between the country offices in the neighbouring countries, ranging from 2 percent to 100 percent of the number of people planned to receive assistance under strategic outcome 1 of their CSPs.

11. Funding needs, implementation plans and actual expenditures for the regional response varied across the Sudan and its neighbouring countries. The United States of America was the leading donor in all countries. In all countries, WFP experienced increasing funding challenges. In the Sudan, for example, only 54 percent of the funding required for the CSP between 2022 and 2025 was received, and the funding received was highly earmarked at the activity level (76 percent on average, and up to 84 percent in 2025).

Key evaluation messages and conclusions

Conclusion 1: WFP's early understanding of the impact of the crisis was limited, but it progressively filled data gaps and thus improved its ability to determine priority needs and locations.

12. **Gaps in up-to-date assessment data, initially significant, were mostly addressed over time.** The outbreak of conflict in the Sudan quickly rendered existing needs assessments obsolete, and access constraints left gaps in WFP's early understanding of food security needs in affected areas. Rapid population movements and insecurity hindered data collection, resulting in substantial information gaps. These gaps were filled over time through several emergency food security assessments, although gaps remained in some insecure locations. In the seven neighbouring countries, WFP quickly assessed the immediate needs of new Sudanese refugees and returnees and incorporated those populations into periodic food security and nutrition vulnerability assessments.

13. WFP used its assessment data and analysis to inform its own responses in the Sudan and its neighbouring countries and to support a shared understanding of food insecurity across the humanitarian system. In 2025, WFP introduced new approaches designed to enhance the timeliness and usability of its assessment data in the Sudan. WFP assessments and surveys were well regarded and used by other stakeholders, although there were requests for more consistent and timely sharing of information.

14. The suspension of the IPC process in the Sudan in 2024 left a considerable gap in system-wide analysis and advocacy on food insecurity. While WFP continued to engage in global IPC processes, it kept some distance from country-level IPC work in order to protect its operational space. Instead, under WFP's leadership, the food security and livelihoods cluster conducted country-level analysis to determine which localities were in most urgent need of food security assistance; WFP also engaged in a multisector needs assessment led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

15. In the countries neighbouring the Sudan, **assessments were used to inform geographic prioritization but did not always sufficiently inform the adaptation of programmes to the profiles of refugees and returnees.** Rapid assessments supported targeting or prioritizing geographic areas where relevant (e.g. in the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya and South Sudan).¹¹ However, while assessments determined that refugees and returnees in the Sudan were generally more professional and urban or peri-urban than other refugee populations (e.g. in Uganda) or host populations (e.g. in Chad and South Sudan), resilience building programming was limited because it was primarily designed for those from a farming background (e.g. in Uganda). Assessments in neighbouring countries informed assistance modality choices for the Sudan response in Chad, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda. In Libya, however, government policies restricted the use of cash-based transfers (CBT) to host communities only. In the Sudan, early assessments of the feasibility of CBT did not result in their rapid scale-up.

Conclusion 2: WFP assistance was quickly targeted to reach newly displaced populations seeking refuge in neighbouring countries and fleeing conflict-affected locations inside the Sudan, but those who remained in inaccessible areas were initially underserved. Over time, WFP sharpened its focus and found creative ways to prioritize the most vulnerable people, including those in persistently inaccessible locations. Pressure to respond quickly and at scale with limited resources affected the quality of WFP's response, resulting in shortcomings in inclusivity, accountability and conflict sensitivity.

16. **WFP employed a multi-layered targeting approach in line with corporate guidance.** All country offices defined clear targeting strategies in line with corporate guidance, and in the neighbouring countries, new arrivals from the Sudan were included in pre-existing emergency response targeting strategies.

17. **Targeting became increasingly granular as the crisis evolved.** In the Sudan, geographic targeting initially focused on relatively accessible parts of the country in the east but progressively shifted to areas of active conflict where affected people were the most food insecure; some hard-to-reach areas nevertheless remained underserved. From November 2024, the concept of self-targeting and registration was introduced; this resulted in more detailed targeting but also heightened the risk of inclusion and exclusion errors, particularly in hard-to-reach areas.

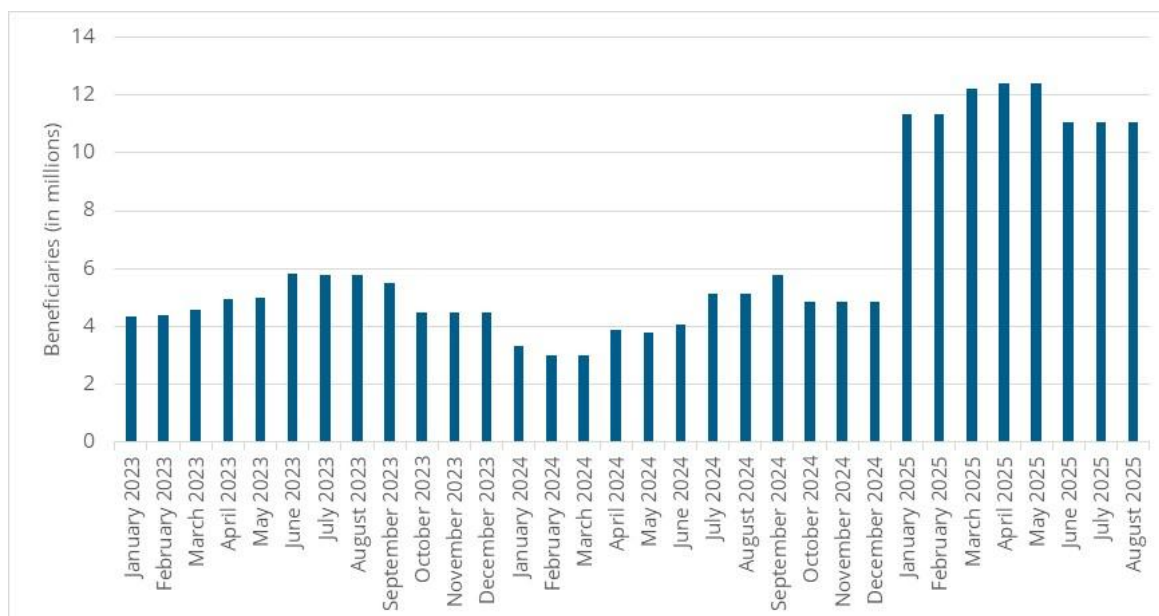
18. **WFP operations in neighbouring countries consistently targeted new arrivals.** New Sudanese arrivals in neighbouring countries were consistently targeted for assistance using pre-existing targeting strategies focused on refugees and returnees, although reliance on registration as a prerequisite for the receipt of WFP assistance increased exclusion risks. In response to the influx of refugees from the Sudan, country offices in neighbouring countries targeted geographic areas with refugees and returnees, starting with cross-border or transit centre assistance and following up with assistance in settlements, camps and host communities, depending on the context and available registration information.

19. **Prioritization efforts in the Sudan saw numbers vary considerably over time.** With the number of people in severe need increasing from April 2023 onwards, and constrained by internal and external factors such as limited access and lack of flexible funding, the Sudan country office was faced with difficult prioritization decisions, including the reduction of ration sizes in line with available resources. Prioritization

¹¹ Country offices responding in government-designated areas (e.g. in Uganda and Ethiopia) and highly mobile populations (e.g. in Egypt) did not have the same need for assessment-informed geographic targeting.

was also reflected in overall targeting numbers, which varied considerably over time and only stabilized and began to steadily increase in line with needs from January 2025 onwards, as shown in figure 4.¹²

Figure 4. Numbers of people planned to receive assistance in the Sudan, 2023–2025



Source: WFP's COMET system (January 2023 to August 2025) - Data on country strategic plan beneficiaries extracted on 6 October 2025.

20. Driven by funding shortfalls, country offices engaged in prioritization exercises during the period under evaluation, initially in order to achieve breadth over depth (e.g. reducing ration sizes to reach more individuals) but later reducing both breadth and depth. The Uganda country office, for example, reduced the number of refugees it assisted by approximately 1 million. Most Sudanese refugees, however, were largely insulated from these prioritization processes as they were classified as new arrivals, receiving either full rations or the maximum possible rations (e.g. in Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda) and/or retaining the status of people assisted by WFP in cases where long-term refugee status became an exclusion criterion (e.g. in Uganda).

21. **Prioritization rationales were not always understood.** Despite efforts to communicate prioritization decisions to affected people, many communities did not seem to understand WFP's rationale for deciding who should receive assistance. The evaluation revealed that in the Sudan some affected people felt that such decisions were unfair. Complaints regarding exclusion from assistance accounted for 48 percent of all recorded communications with the community feedback mechanism in the Sudan in 2023.

22. **Considerable efforts were made to ensure protection but uptake of conflict analysis was limited.** Early in its response, across the Sudan and its neighbouring countries, WFP established measures to ensure the protection of people receiving its assistance and later introduced a more systematic strategy for integrating protection and conflict sensitivity into its operations. However, there was limited uptake of the conflict analysis that was conducted, primarily because of capacity constraints and time pressure.

23. **Equality considerations were integrated.** Despite the lack of a dedicated gender strategy in the Sudan, WFP factored equality between women and men into its targeting and mainstreamed it into its protection and conflict sensitivity strategy. Women accounted for more than half of all planned and actual people reached in the Sudan in 2023 and 2024. Persons with disabilities were underrepresented among the people that WFP assisted, and while there were examples of WFP tailoring its assistance to and reaching particularly vulnerable groups, the organization did not systematically incorporate broader inclusivity into

¹² These shifts illustrate WFP's approach to prioritization in other countries, as highlighted in a [January 2026 strategic evaluation of WFP's approach to targeting and prioritization](#).

its activities. In Chad and Egypt, special considerations and flexible arrangements for older adults and persons with disabilities in connection with general food assistance were lacking.

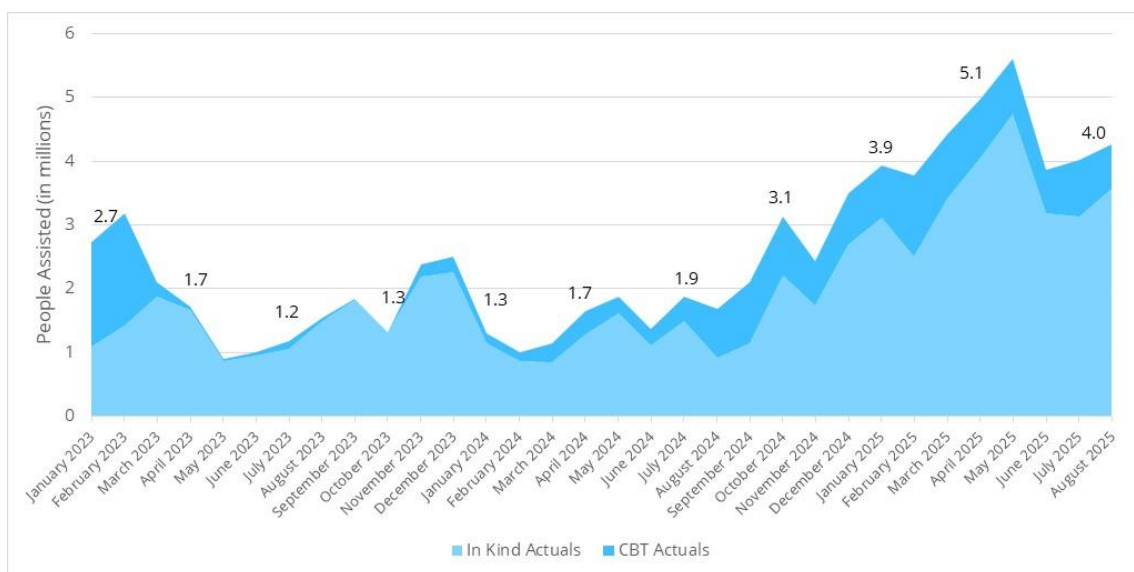
24. **Accountability mechanisms were in place but there was a lack of community awareness about how to use them.** Community feedback mechanisms were in place and operational in all countries, including in the Sudan following a period of disruption caused by the conflict. However, people were often unaware of how to get information on or complain about WFP assistance, and processes for managing feedback were lacking in some cases.

Conclusion 3: WFP delivered vital humanitarian assistance to millions of people, with some food security benefits realized despite extraordinary operational challenges in the Sudan and neighbouring countries.

25. **Assistance was delivered on a large scale despite operational challenges.** WFP faced significant barriers in the delivery of its humanitarian assistance inside the Sudan, including resource shortages, pipeline breaks, logistical challenges and security constraints. In some neighbouring countries, refugees receiving WFP assistance experienced delays due to supply chain, insecurity and funding constraints (e.g. in Chad, Ethiopia and Libya), but WFP and cooperating partner staff described immediate blanket in-kind emergency assistance as vital for new arrivals.

26. In the Sudan, the number of people reached with general food assistance fluctuated considerably but increased significantly overall, from 0.9 million people in May 2023 to 5.6 million people in May 2025 (figure 5). Despite its increased reach, however, WFP did not provide general food assistance or in-kind or CBTs to as many people as it intended. Food security and nutrition outcomes also fluctuated, including a decline in food consumption scores, particularly for women; improvement in dietary diversity scores; and a decline in the use of consumption-based coping strategies.

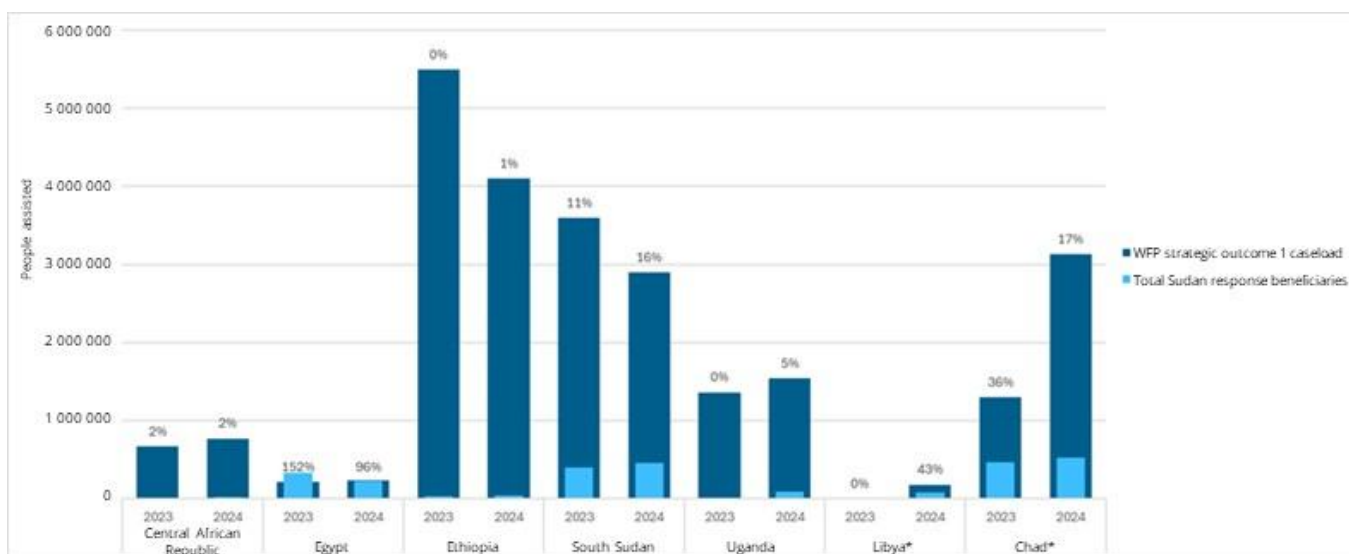
Figure 5. Number of people assisted in the Sudan with in-kind and cash-based transfers, January 2023–August 2025



Source: WFP COMET system-Jan 2022-Aug 2025 – Data on country strategic plan beneficiaries extracted on October 6 2025.

27. WFP caseloads in the countries neighbouring the Sudan varied, and the respective country offices addressed emergency response needs by providing unconditional resource transfers (in-kind and/or CBT). The most common example of such assistance was blanket in-kind support provided through ready-to-eat rations in border areas (e.g. in Chad, Egypt, Libya and South Sudan), followed by in-kind, CBT and hybrid assistance for subsequent support as appropriate. The number of people receiving such assistance, and their proportions relative to overall caseloads under strategic outcome 1 of the respective CSP for those countries (i.e. including beneficiaries not related to the Sudan response), varied considerably among the country offices (figure 6).

Figure 6. Number of people assisted by WFP through the Sudan response compared to total caseloads under strategic outcome 1, in countries neighbouring the Sudan, 2023–2024



Source: Country office data on people receiving assistance through WFP’s Sudan response, by year.

*Libya data include host communities; Chad data include host communities and returnees.

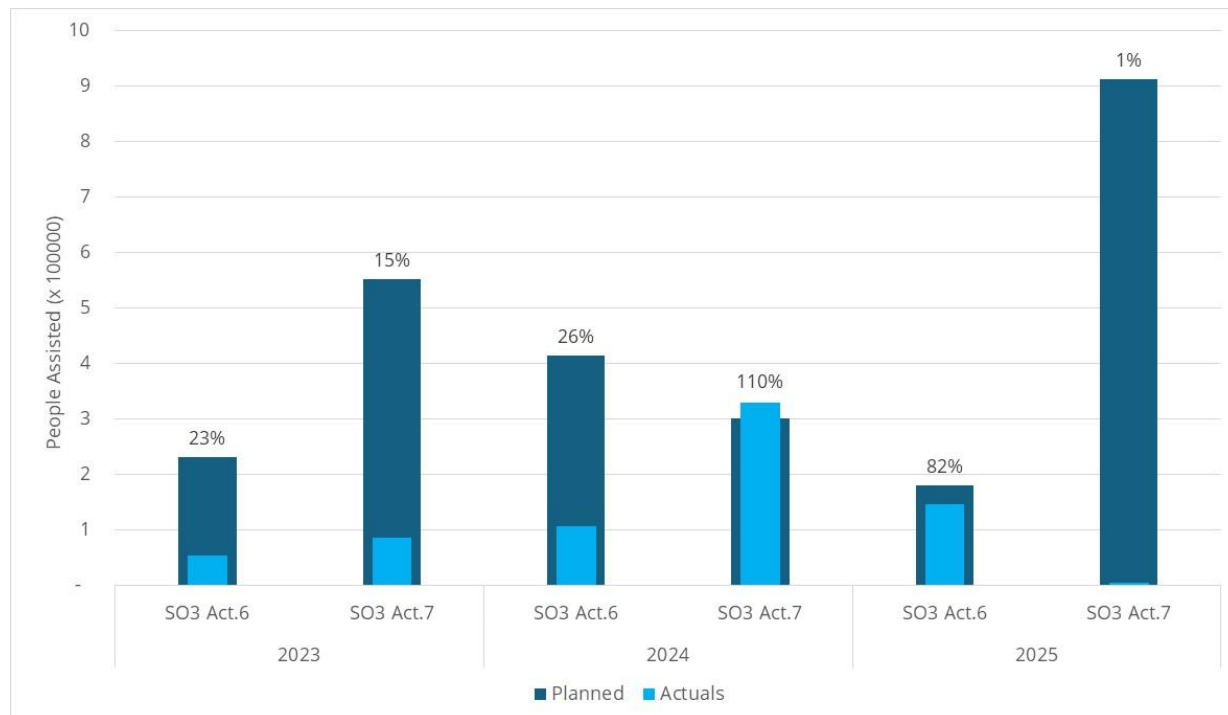
28. **Nutrition.** In 2023 WFP reached more people inside the Sudan with nutrition activities than planned, but in 2024 it reached just 37 percent of those targeted and in the first half of 2025, just 18 percent. **While moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) mortality rates remained at zero and MAM treatment rates reached close to the original CSP target, MAM treatment default rates were poorer than hoped for and MAM recovery rates declined over the period.** There were considerable external constraints (resource gaps, insecurity and harsh climatic conditions), and WFP’s own planning and prioritization were insufficient to mitigate their impact; this led to pipeline breaks in 2024 and early 2025 and ultimately to unused stocks in mid-2025. This had a negative knock-on effect on other organizations’ supply chain planning, on WFP’s reputation and ultimately on vulnerable people urgently in need of nutrition support.

29. **School feeding.** **School closures following the conflict disrupted WFP’s school feeding activities in some areas of the Sudan, leading to a reduced number of feeding days and the number of children WFP assisted falling short of targets.** Take-home rations resumed in March 2024 in more stable parts of the country, and the programme shifted to a home-grown school feeding model, thus supporting smallholder farmers with local procurement. Although formal outcome monitoring data on school enrolment, attendance and retention rates were not available after 2022, discussions with communities in areas where schools had reopened suggested that there were fewer school dropouts in areas where school feeding had resumed.

30. **Resilience.** Despite fewer people being reached in the Sudan than planned (figure 7), mainly due to the suspension of some activities following the conflict, **WFP’s resilience programming enhanced smallholder productivity and national food systems, even during the ongoing crisis.** This was achieved notably through the continuation and expansion of large-scale agricultural support, which significantly boosted local production and provided immediate economic relief to affected communities and internally displaced persons. Due to the nature of the work and the preferences of donors, however, resilience activities tended to be concentrated in more stable locations in the east of the country. Women’s food consumption scores increased among those participating in resilience activities, although men’s did not.

31. Some country offices in neighbouring countries (e.g. Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan) leveraged emergency nutrition and/or emergency school feeding activities to complement general food assistance. In Egypt, people benefited from food assistance for training and food assistance for assets activities as well as innovative approaches to vocational training, with positive impacts on living conditions.

Figure 7. Sudan planned vs. actual number of people assisted through food assistance for assets and smallholder agricultural market support activities, 2023–2025



Source: WFP COMET system – January 2022 – August 2025 country strategic plan beneficiaries_06-10-2025.

Abbreviations: SO = strategic outcome.

Note: Activity 6 relates to asset creation and technical assistance through safety nets and activity 7 to capacity strengthening relevant to agricultural value chains.

32. Common services. In the Sudan and neighbouring countries, WFP's support for common services enabled access to isolated populations, restored emergency connectivity, provided shared logistics services and sustained cross-border aid when in-country access failed.

33. In the Sudan, United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) airbridges enabled rapid access to isolated populations, restored emergency connectivity and sustained cross-border aid when in-country access failed. Despite clearance challenges and security risks, UNHAS met the critical function of evacuating humanitarian actors from the Sudan, primarily through airbridges connecting Port Sudan with Nairobi and Amman.¹³ The number of passengers, organizations and flights served by UNHAS declined in 2023 and 2024 but rose in 2025 due to increased demand. Internal access for UNHAS was constrained by insecurity, bureaucratic impediments and spiralling costs. The logistics cluster supported system-wide efforts to reach vulnerable people in need. In 2024, for example, it stored more than 27,700 m³ of humanitarian supplies for 22 partners, more than double the amount in 2023. The emergency telecommunications cluster contributed to restoring or maintaining essential communications in locations affected by the conflict, enabling field teams to coordinate distributions and scale assistance.

34. In neighbouring countries such as the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt and Ethiopia, common services added value to the Sudan response by supporting access for the wider humanitarian response. For

¹³ In 2024, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service organized 507 flights to transport 8,063 passengers and 31 mt of cargo on behalf of 80 humanitarian organizations: WFP. 2025. *Sudan Annual Country Report 2024*.

example, WFP's country office in Chad expanded UNHAS flight provision to meet the surge in humanitarian actors in the country due to the Sudan crisis.

Conclusion 4: WFP's adherence to the humanitarian principles in the Sudan was challenged by the highly politicized aid environment and hampered by insufficient corporate leadership and learning from other complex humanitarian contexts. In neighbouring countries, WFP's commitment to the principles was visible but not specific to the Sudan response.

35. **Wider challenges impeded WFP's efforts to adhere to humanitarian principles.** The Sudan response took place amid global challenges to (and dilution of) the international humanitarian law that underpins the normative framework of the humanitarian principles. This had implications for advocacy for a principled approach.

36. The challenge to the perceived neutrality of the United Nations once it recognized the Transitional Sovereignty Council led by the head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) as the sovereign authority of the Sudan impeded WFP's ability to negotiate access to areas not controlled by the SAF. Its perceived operational independence was also compromised. This was an especially acute dilemma, given that humanitarian needs were consistently high and, at least in the early phase of the response, poorly met in parts of the country not controlled by the SAF, including in the regions of Darfur and Kordofan.

37. The access constraints and the pressure to reach large numbers of people with WFP assistance meant an initial focus on locations that were relatively easy to reach. This operated against the principle of impartiality. However, WFP gradually found more creative ways of reaching areas not controlled by the SAF. WFP also initially missed opportunities to work more closely with donors to advocate for principled access, although this improved over time as WFP progressively increased its political analysis, engagement and humanitarian diplomacy with high-level representatives of various stakeholders (including donors) to secure access and open corridors.

38. Delayed engagement with and support for local front-line civil society actors leading the response, such as mutual aid groups, compromised the principle of humanity. Moreover, some of WFP's partner requirements limited partners' ability to make their own decisions on the most effective ways of following the principles of humanity and impartiality, for example whether to reduce ration size in order to increase the number of people assisted. With time, however, WFP did find ways to support these local partners, although concerns that national partners were not adequately supported by WFP in negotiating access with armed groups, such as the Rapid Support Forces, persisted.

39. **Greater corporate support and guidance were needed.** Overall, there was a high level of understanding of the humanitarian principles among WFP staff, at both the middle and senior leadership levels. However, translating this knowledge into practice and adhering to the principles in the highly politicized context of the Sudan was extremely challenging. Constraints included a lack of escalation pathways and senior management support when dilemmas arose; unclear strategic guidance, analysis and leadership for country-level staff with regard to the principles; siloed ways of working; and limited application of learning from WFP's experience in other emergency settings. This resulted in a piecemeal approach to applying the principles, particularly on challenging issues such as engagement with the SAF.

Conclusion 5: The early efficiency of the response in the Sudan was hampered by preparedness gaps and risk aversion, yet positive improvements were achieved over time. Country offices in countries neighbouring the Sudan managed risk successfully during the response. However, despite WFP initiatives designed to strengthen risk management, such as the global assurance project, a lack of clarity regarding corporate risk appetite left the Sudan country office exposed and uncertain regarding acceptable levels of risk.

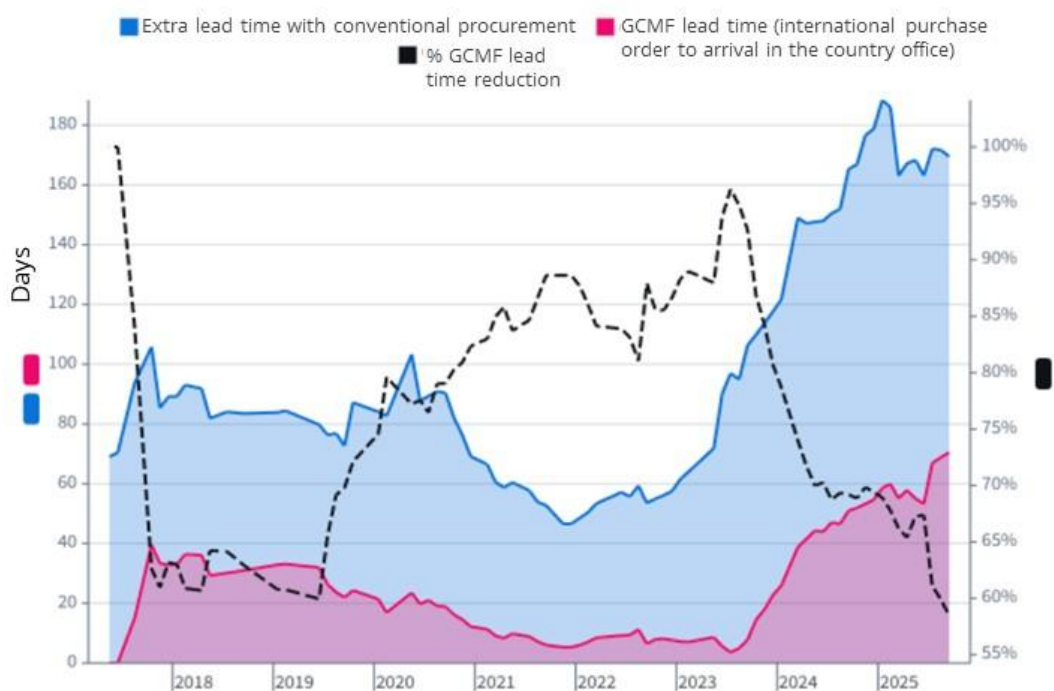
40. **In the Sudan, neither WFP nor the broader United Nations system anticipated the scale or complexity of the conflict, which led to a lack of early warning and contingency planning.** Gaps in pre-crisis preparedness included the late development of a critical staff list, insufficient use of the United Nations warden system, inadequate numbers of drivers and lack of access to emergency rations. WFP did, however, play a key role in the evacuation of United Nations staff from Khartoum, as well as in other measures such as the use of the surge capacity of the WFP-led emergency telecommunications cluster to facilitate the quick resumption of WFP and system-wide humanitarian operations.

41. Supply preparedness actions such as pre-positioning were largely reactive in the Sudan, which delayed the initial scale-up of the response. As the conflict evolved, WFP continued to follow a predominantly responsive supply chain approach. Country offices in neighbouring countries with longstanding emergency experience and capacity for pre-positioning, such as those in Chad and South Sudan, were more readily able to integrate influxes of Sudanese refugees and returnees and respond efficiently than others such as the Libya country office, which was scaling down at the time of the crisis.

42. **Timeliness improved as the crisis evolved.** Timely delivery of in-kind assistance in the Sudan was hampered by factors such as denial of access, security challenges, liquidity shortages for transporters, seasonal inaccessibility and weather-related infrastructure failures. Timeliness improved as the crisis response evolved, however, except in some hard-to-reach areas. The response in neighbouring countries was generally timely, but various country offices faced specific challenges such as CBT disbursement delays in Egypt, security-related access constraints in Ethiopia and bureaucratic impediments in Libya.

43. The use of cross-border corridors to boost WFP's reach in the Sudan was mostly limited to the east and west corridors, which impeded overall response coverage and timeliness. Despite the existence of other corridors with the potential to facilitate a timely response, diversification was limited, resulting in inefficient logistics arrangements and extended dispatch routes. WFP used the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) to support the scale-up of its activities in the Sudan, but optimal utilization of the GCMF was impeded by a range of complex factors such as challenges with demand visibility, management issues, shelf-life restrictions and, in particular, a lack of financial risk appetite; this led to increased lead times and missed opportunities to achieve cost-efficiency (figure 8).

Figure 8. Lead time from international purchase order (via GCMF) and GCMF lead time reduction (as a percentage)



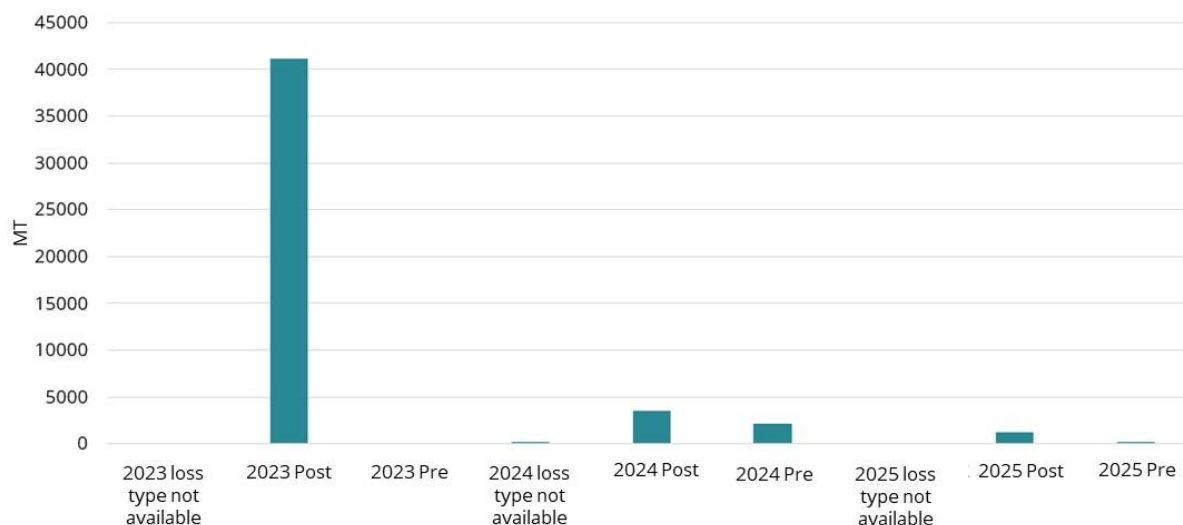
Source: Sudan Lead-Times and Cost Evolution, Supply Chain Planning and Optimization Unit, September 2025.

44. **There was potential to improve cost-efficiency.** High transport costs and dependence on corridors with long supply routes drove up costs in the Sudan until 2025, when lower-cost corridor options were also utilized. Earlier and more decisive supply chain management, including with regard to the use of corridors, conflict-appropriate transport options and the use of the GCMF, could have improved the cost-efficiency of the response in the Sudan.

45. Food losses in the Sudan were significant following the outbreak of conflict, mainly due to looting and violence, with 2023 losses accounting for 79 percent of WFP's global food losses that year. However,

the stocks that remained in 2023 were quickly distributed and significant improvements were made from early 2024, with minimal losses reported in 2024 and 2025 (figure 9).

Figure 9. Pre- and post-delivery losses in the Sudan, 2023–2025



Source: Food loss report, accessed on 19 May 2025.

46. The cost efficiency of commodities compared with CBT in the Sudan varied, with high transport costs for commodities affecting their cost-efficiency and the comparatively high cost of commodity vouchers driving up the costs of CBT overall. However, the speed and flexibility of CBTs made them the most appropriate modality in certain areas, while in-kind assistance was considered appropriate in areas at risk of famine, given pipeline availability and weak local markets. In neighbouring countries there was a general shift towards CBTs, including for cost-efficiency reasons.

47. **There were gaps in risk management but also good examples of innovation.** There was considerable pressure on the Sudan country office to scale up in order to maximize the number of people assisted, using a “no regrets” approach, yet a lack of clarity on corporate risk appetite and limited internal capacity on risk management left the office uncertain about acceptable levels of risk. The challenging environment drove innovations such as the “B2B” model, which leveraged the procurement of food from local Sudanese producers and traders, thus supporting the local economy, as well as support for community-led “emergency response rooms”,¹⁴ which proved crucial for gaining access to hard-to-reach areas in the Sudan but also posed additional risk for the organization.

48. **Security risk in the Sudan was high and tools for managing risk were insufficient.** Security risk in the Sudan was acute, and WFP tragically lost six staff members and five contractors over the period covered by the evaluation. It was also forced to suspend operations during times of extreme insecurity. WFP flexibly adapted its operations to address security challenges as they arose, but the Sudan country office lacked reliable tools for assessing security readiness, prioritizing mitigation actions and demonstrating accountability.

49. In countries neighbouring the Sudan, security was likewise a substantial factor in risk management structures and processes, although this was not entirely due to the Sudan crisis. Donor trust and risk sharing regarding the response in the Sudan increased over time thanks to greater transparency and more regular and open communications.

¹⁴ Emergency response rooms were established through a community-led initiative funded by communities and external donors. They played a crucial role in providing humanitarian aid from the outbreak of the conflict in April 2023.

Conclusion 6: WFP played a key role in the inter-agency response to the regional crisis, leveraging its strengths for the benefit of the wider humanitarian system. However, despite the fact that significant funding was channelled through local organizations, genuine localization as envisaged by WFP's 2025 localization policy was limited.

50. **WFP effectively led and participated in clusters and inter-agency forums.** WFP's leadership of clusters and its provision of common services in the Sudan benefited humanitarian actors, as did its active engagement in other inter-agency forums. One exception was work on cash coordination, in which its participation was limited. In the neighbouring countries WFP was viewed as an effective and influential humanitarian partner, and its positive engagement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration was particularly valued.

51. **There was scope for greater localization with regard to cooperating partners.** Cooperating partners were instrumental to the delivery of WFP assistance in all countries affected by the Sudan crisis. WFP increased partnerships with local and national NGOs, but localization tended to focus on operational delivery rather than the fostering of strategic partnerships, and local partners were particularly negatively affected by operational and bureaucratic processes within WFP.

52. **WFP leveraged the private sector to implement operations.** WFP's engagement with the private sector was also vital to the response, particularly with regard to CBTs and logistics. Engagement with financial service providers enabled WFP to scale up cash assistance in 2024 and shift towards digital cash transfers between 2023 and 2025. In neighbouring countries, WFP private sector engagement included third-party monitoring firms, and the Egypt country office also innovatively engaged with vocational training partners.

53. **Engagement with government actors was mixed.** WFP's engagement with government actors in the Sudan was strained by political tensions. However, WFP maintained technical engagement with various government institutions, including line ministries at the federal, state and local levels. In neighbouring countries, the relationship with host governments regarding the refugee response was largely constructive.

Conclusion 7: The scale-up of the emergency response lacked coherence as a unified regional response and did not consistently receive the corporate attention it deserved. WFP's response came at a time when the organization faced competing demands for resources, putting country offices in the difficult position of scaling up their responses while simultaneously cutting personnel and managing funding gaps. This also negatively affected staff wellness and morale, particularly in the case of national staff, despite WFP's efforts to fulfil its duty of care responsibilities.

54. The Sudan crisis coincided with competing crises elsewhere and internal organizational changes. While the relevant emergency management structures were established to provide oversight for the operational and strategic aspects of the response, corporate attention to the crisis proved difficult to sustain at a strategic level.

55. **Emergency activation (corporate scale-up) yielded benefits for the countries covered.** WFP's regional corporate scale-up increased resource mobilization efforts for the countries that it covered, including by mobilizing support from global headquarters offices, but it left other countries unsupported. Overall, the regional dimension of the crisis did not receive sufficient attention, and WFP's response was managed primarily as a series of country office responses with varying degrees of regional and global support and reporting expectations. There were also several important deviations from emergency activation protocols, including with regard to the level at which decisions were made and the deployment of a large regional emergency coordination team. The latter yielded several benefits, including strengthened donor liaison, coordination of joint appeals and proposals, stronger advocacy for cross-border operations and more emphasis on protection during the response, but also resulted in unclear accountability and the creation of an additional management and reporting layer.

56. **Human resource gaps impeded the response.** Frequent staff rotations and staffing cuts affected WFP's ability to deliver a strong response at scale in all countries affected by the crisis. In the Sudan, WFP had a vacancy rate of at least 34 percent from January 2022 onwards, rising to 44 percent throughout 2024. Concurrently, realignment exercises in 2024 and 2025 reduced staff capacity at a time when the country office was under pressure to achieve ambitious targets. Short-term deployments in the Sudan added value but undermined the consistency and sustainability of operations.

57. **Events in the Sudan took a severe toll on staff wellbeing and morale.** The conflict itself and the subsequent evacuation and displacement of staff and families traumatized many staff. WFP acted on its duty of care in accordance with the United Nations staff rules and regulations,¹⁵ but staff questioned their adequacy for national staff, who were particularly affected by the crisis.

58. **Funding was a challenge throughout the response.** Available resources for the Sudan exceeded budgetary requirements in 2023 and 2024, and internal advance financing mechanisms were critical in allowing WFP to initiate and scale up aspects of the response in the Sudan and its neighbouring countries. Resource gaps and strict donor earmarking nevertheless constrained aspects of WFP's response in all countries, limiting its reach – in particular its ability to reach vulnerable populations with CBTs.

59. **Some corporate systems had to be adapted.** In the Sudan the standard field-level agreements for work with cooperating partners had to be adjusted to facilitate work with emergency response rooms. The conflict disrupted WFP's monitoring systems in the Sudan, but monitoring coverage and quality were subsequently strengthened; in neighbouring countries, monitoring data that were not disaggregated by caseload made it difficult to pinpoint progress towards goals for new Sudanese refugees and returnees compared to other people receiving WFP assistance. Lessons were learned, but follow-up on recommendations was not systematically tracked or documented.

Conclusion 8: While there was no indication of an imminent return to peace in the Sudan at the time of the evaluation, country offices were already looking ahead to the scale-back and transition of operations, driven in large part by dwindling humanitarian funding. WFP's ongoing portfolio of resilience activities in the Sudan will be an asset in a future transition, providing that it can be leveraged to also foster stability and offer hope to those in perennially insecure locations.

60. **An overall scale-back of operations in the Sudan is not yet appropriate but there is scope for a transition from emergency assistance to resilience activities in some areas.** Given the ongoing conflict in the Sudan and worsening food insecurity in conflict-affected areas in the west of the country, there is consensus that the time is not yet right to begin scaling back WFP's emergency assistance country-wide. However, dwindling humanitarian funding has driven WFP to reprioritize and conduct retargeting exercises to reach the most vulnerable populations.

61. Where conditions are conducive in more peaceful parts of the Sudan, predominantly in the east, there is scope to begin planning and implementing transition activities and continuing resilience-building efforts where feasible. WFP's pre-conflict resilience portfolio, which is ongoing, provides a solid foundation for transition planning. However, funding shortages remain a key factor driving the scale-back of WFP activities.

62. **There are diverse approaches to the long-term transition of operations in neighbouring countries.** In countries hosting Sudanese refugees and returnees, a lack of sustained funding has been a major driving factor in discussions on prioritization and possible scale-back, including the need to avoid the protracted operation of camps. While some country offices have included newly arrived Sudanese refugees and returnees in resilience activities and transition planning, others have not yet integrated them into long-term programming. Moreover, in some countries, such as Uganda and South Sudan, resilience-oriented work focused on rural livelihoods and was therefore its relevance to predominantly urban Sudanese people was questionable.

Recommendations

The evaluation presents five recommendations for WFP's consideration at various levels. They are set out in the table below.

¹⁵ Measures included special arrangements for staff to work remotely, efforts to improve working and living conditions (particularly living conditions for female staff), appointment of a dedicated staff counsellor (with a second, Arabic-speaking staff counsellor due to come on board at the time of the evaluation), creation of a network of trained wellness volunteers for the country office and field offices and the establishment of a medical centre at the country office. Specific actions for national staff included setting up a national staff help desk and the adoption of measures such as termination indemnities for national staff and consistent rules regarding remote working.

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 1: Enhance WFP's understanding of the effects of the Sudan crisis and its ability to prepare for and respond to that crisis as well as other large-scale emergencies, including those that affect more than one country or region.</p> <p>Linked to conclusions 1, 2, 5 and 7.</p>				Medium	
<p>1.1. Institutionalize rapid adaptation of assessment and analysis processes and products to ensure that the relevance of the ongoing Sudan regional response is supported by timely data and new vulnerability assessment and mapping tools and methodologies. Ensure that this includes up-to-date market assessment data and cost-efficiency analysis to enable WFP to adapt assistance modalities in a timely and relevant manner.</p>	Operational	Country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda) vulnerability assessment and mapping and research, assessment and monitoring units	Programme units in country offices; Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters; Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service at global headquarters; Supply Chain and Delivery Division; Delivery Assurance Service	Medium	December 2026
<p>1.2. Institutionalize scenario-planning and simulation exercises at country offices implementing the Sudan response (with the participation of global headquarters) to strengthen country, multi-country and multi-region preparedness as a key part of ongoing readiness for the evolution of the crisis and in anticipation of other emergencies.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	Medium	December 2026

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>1.3. Agree on ways to ensure that the country office staff implementing corporate scale-ups have adequate skillsets, particularly for those in key leadership roles, programmatic functions (including nutrition), vulnerability assessment and mapping, supply chain, cash-based transfers and cross-cutting functions such as access, protection, working with vulnerable groups experiencing greater barriers to access, and conflict sensitivity.</p>	Strategic	Workforce Planning and Strategy Branch at global headquarters		Medium	March 2027
<p>Recommendation 2: Strengthen the way in which WFP manages the dilemmas inherent to implementing a principled humanitarian response in the Sudan.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 4.</p>				High	

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>2.1. Establish formal escalation pathways for country office and global headquarters staff to assist them in navigating the dilemmas and trade-offs related to humanitarian principles in the Sudan (e.g. neutrality vs. access), preventing reliance on fragmented, localized solutions. Such pathways should be informed by relevant WFP policies, procedures, communications and lessons learned from other comparable settings, adapted to the situation in the Sudan.¹⁸⁸</p> <p>— ¹⁸⁸Recommendation 3 resulting from the evaluation of WFP's emergency response to the prolonged crisis in the Sahel and other countries of Central Africa, covering the period from 2018 to 2023, called on WFP to establish a protocol to allow country offices to request support from headquarters in Rome when handling sensitive and high-risk dilemmas. The management response to that recommendation stated that WFP's senior management would issue a communication on the need to follow already established risk escalation protocols. Recommendation 2.1 here builds on that and seeks to ensure that existing processes and communications are formalized and routinely followed in the Sudan country office.</p>	Operational	Sudan country office	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office; Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	High	December 2026
<p>2.2. Coordinate internally and with the international humanitarian system at the highest level to allow simultaneous corporate support for international processes in the Sudan, such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, while protecting the country office from backlash.</p>	Strategic	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service at global headquarters	Sudan country office	High	April 2027

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 3: Strengthen approaches to protection, conflict sensitivity, inclusivity and accountability to affected people during WFP's response to the emergency to ensure that they are central to the design, implementation, monitoring and oversight of activities.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 3.</p>				High	
<p>3.1. Ensure that protection, including for vulnerable groups, and accountability to affected people move from being secondary tasks to core operational responsibilities. At the same time, ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are included as a core design element of emergency programming by allocating resources for accessibility.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	Gender, Protection and Inclusion Unit at global headquarters	High	December 2026
<p>3.2. Collaborate with other United Nations entities on registration processes in countries neighbouring the Sudan to facilitate the active targeting of vulnerable unregistered populations and reduce exclusion risks.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, Uganda)	Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	High	June 2027

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 4: Reform approaches and systems to enable more meaningful localization of WFP's assistance in the Sudan and neighbouring countries. Use the Sudan experience of working with emergency response rooms to inform more efficient and effective ways of partnering with community-based organizations in the Sudan and in other contexts.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 6.</p>				High	
<p>4.1. Reform partnership management processes to reduce administrative burdens, including by shortening the time required to process invoice payments and approve proposals, thereby supporting local actors and enabling localized decision-making. Ensure that partner management processes enable WFP to directly partner with community-based organizations, including through the adaptation of the current field-level agreement delivery model and flexible use of United Nations partnership portals.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	<p>Delivery Assurance Service; Operational Partners Unit at global headquarters</p> <p>Gender, Protection and Inclusion</p>	High	December 2026
<p>4.2. Schedule discussions with local cooperating partners on risk sharing to address financial risks (e.g. the implications of the slow payment of invoices) and roles and responsibilities related to access negotiations.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)		High	June 2026

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 5: Adapt programming and planning for scale-down and a shift towards durable solutions and resilience.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 8.</p>				Medium	
<p>5.1. Determine the criteria for transitioning from emergency to recovery and resilience activities in the Sudan and neighbouring countries and the scale-up of livelihood and resilience support, maximizing opportunities to layer and sequence life-saving and life-changing activities, including in conflict-prone localities.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	Climate and Resilience Service at global headquarters	Medium	December 2026
<p>5.2. Incorporate tailored urban resilience models (e.g. vocational training) into the country strategic plans for the countries neighbouring the Sudan in order to align programming with the predominantly urban profile of the Sudanese refugees, rather than defaulting to rural livelihoods programming.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, Uganda)	Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	Medium	June 2027

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation features

1. Corporate emergency evaluations (CEE) have a dual purpose: (i) accountability towards WFP stakeholders; and (ii) learning about WFP performance during the emergency operation to improve both the operation itself and provide broader learning on WFP's complex emergency responses. Commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV), this evaluation was conducted in accordance with the WFP Evaluation Policy, which asserts that all crises classified as "corporate scale-up (CSU)" and "corporate attention" will be subject to evaluation, with the Office of Evaluation determining if a corporate emergency evaluation is the most suitable option.

2. The evaluation covers WFP strategy and operations related to the Sudan Regional Crisis from April 2023 until the end of the evaluation data collection in August 2025. This includes WFP operations implemented in Sudan, South Sudan, Chad, Egypt, the Central African Republic (CAR), Uganda, Libya and Ethiopia. For the neighbouring countries, the evaluation focuses on refugees and returnees who fled Sudan following the outbreak of hostilities in April 2023 and related host communities. It also examines how the WFP response to the Sudan crisis was initiated, coordinated and undertaken at corporate and regional bureau levels to support scale-up of the operations.

3. Framed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) evaluation criteria,¹⁶ the evaluation addresses five evaluation questions (EQs):

EQ1 - How appropriate was the WFP response to the food security and nutrition needs of people most affected by the crisis in Sudan, as needs evolved over time and in each specific context?

EQ2 - How effective was the WFP response in Sudan and other countries affected by the crisis?

EQ3 - How efficient was the WFP response in Sudan and other countries affected by the crisis?

EQ4 - What are the internal and external factors that influenced the overall coherence and results of WFP's response?

EQ5 - To what extent do the conditions and prospects for a gradual scale-down of the WFP regional response exist?

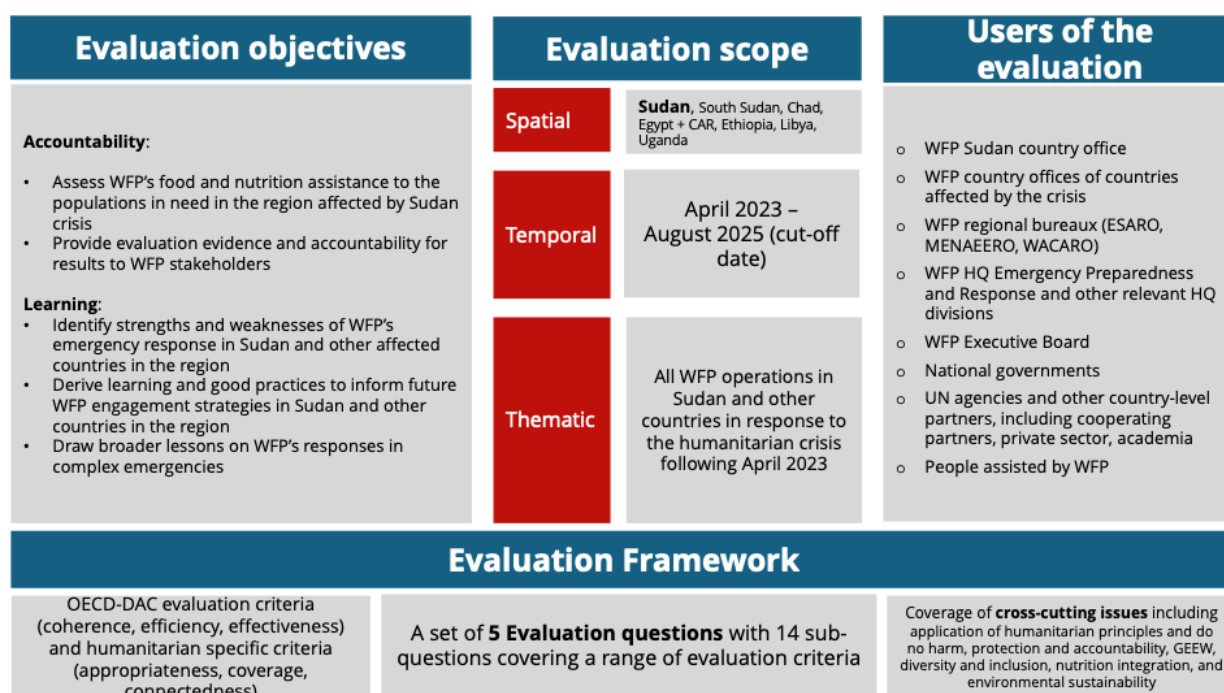
4. The evaluation integrated key cross-cutting themes: the application of humanitarian principles (HPs) and "do no harm" approaches; protection and accountability to affected populations (AAP); equality between women and men, diversity and inclusion; nutrition integration; and environmental sustainability.

5. The intended users of this evaluation are expected to learn from this evaluation to improve preparedness and response to the current and future crises, within countries and corporately across the organization. It was conducted by a team of eight independent experts. It began with an inception phase in March 2025, followed by data collection from June to August 2025. A detailed timeline of the evaluation is provided in Annex 3.

6. Figure 1 provides an overview of the evaluation objectives, scope, users and framework; see Annex 2 for the summarized terms of reference (ToR).

¹⁶This includes recent adaptations to the [OECD DAC evaluation criteria for the evaluation of humanitarian action](#).

Figure 1 – Evaluation objectives, scope, users and framework



Source: Evaluation team based on ToR

1.2. Context

General overview

7. Despite its regional significance, the country has been consistently ranked among the world’s top 10 most fragile states and has struggled with persistent poverty, economic challenges, political instability and humanitarian crises.¹⁷

8. The population is predominantly young, with 37 percent under 15 and 60 percent aged 15–64.¹⁸ Life expectancy is around 66 years, with a total fertility rate of 4.32 and an adolescent birth rate of 67 per 1,000.¹⁹ As of 2018, adult literacy was 61 percent (men 65 percent, women 56 percent), with low secondary education completion and school enrolment rates.²⁰ As of 2022, poverty rates were 66.1 percent and unemployment was 20.6 percent (40 percent for youth).²¹ The country’s Human Development Index score of 0.516 and comparative ranking of 170/193²² underscore these challenges. Sudan also ranks 176/193 on the Gender Inequality Index (, score: 0.511 for 2023),²³ with rising gender-based violence, early marriage and limited access to reproductive services. These data pre-date the outbreak of war in April 2023, which has dramatically worsened conditions.

9. The current conflict was triggered by unresolved disputes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) following the 2019 ousting of long-time President Omar al-Bashir and a 2021 military coup.²⁴ Initially centred around the capital, Khartoum, the conflict spread nationwide, involving a growing number of non-state armed actors, ethnic militias and alliances.²⁵ Sudan’s strategic

¹⁷ Fragile States Index. 2025. [Sudan Country Dashboard](#).

¹⁸ UNSD. [Demographics and Social Statistics](#).

¹⁹ World Bank. [Data – Life Expectancy](#).

²⁰ World Bank. [Data – School Enrollment](#).

²¹ AfDB. 2024. [Sudan Economic Outlook](#).

²² UNSD. [Demographics and Social Statistics](#).

²³ UNDP. [Gender Inequality Index](#).

²⁴ World Bank. [Sudan Overview](#).

²⁵ Kiros, K. October 2024. [The Ongoing War in Sudan and Its Implications for The Security and Stability of The Horn of Africa and Beyond](#). Policy Center for the New South.

position and resources – for example agriculture, oil, trade – have also intensified regional instability, raising concerns that the conflict could escalate.²⁶

10. Despite SAF’s recapturing of Khartoum in March 2025, the intensity of the conflict has continued, and control of the country remains divided (Annex 4).

11. The United Nations (UN) Security Council approved several resolutions in response to the conflict, including calls for immediate ceasefire (S/RES/2724) and de-escalation of the conflict in and around El Fasher (S/RES/2736).²⁷ The UN General Assembly also issued statements urging action on Sudan²⁸ and the UN Secretary-General issued a statement on the second anniversary of the Sudanese conflict with a call to end the violence.²⁹

Humanitarian situation in Sudan

12. Sudan is experiencing a severe humanitarian crisis, with 30.4 million people in need of assistance as of December 2024 (Table 1; see also Annex 4 – Figure 3), and the world’s largest displacement crisis, with 11.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs) (Figure 2) and 4.3 million displaced to neighbouring countries (Annex 4 – Figure 4).³⁰ Women and girls make up 54 percent of those displaced, and have been disproportionately affected by the conflict in Sudan.³¹ Natural hazards have worsened displacement and highlight the affected population’s extreme vulnerability.³² Of particular recent concern is El Fasher, which has been under siege and with attacks against civilians worsening.³³

Table 1 – Sudan’s Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: People in need: Overall, food security & livelihoods and nutrition

	Total	IDPs	Host Community	Non-Hosting Community	Refugees	Sex	Age	Persons with Disabilities
Overall	30.4m	8.9m	6.4m	14.3m	892K	F – 57.7% M – 42.3%	Children - 51.4% Adult - 43.3% Older persons - 5.3%	4.6m
Food Security & Livelihoods	25.1m	7.5m	5.4m	12.1m	---	F – 57.7% M – 42.3%	Children - 50.0% Adult - 44% Older persons - 6%	3.8m
Nutrition	3.7m	948.4K	618.5K	2.2m	---	F – 57.7% M – 42.3%	Children - 86.32% Adult - 13.68%	---

Source: [Sudan HNRP 2025 Dashboard](#) (data as of December 2024)

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ [UN Documents – Sudan](#).

²⁸ See for example Mishra. 2024. [General Assembly President urges collective action on Sudan as crisis deepens](#).

²⁹ UN Secretary General. April 2025. [Secretary-General's statement on the second anniversary of the Sudanese conflict](#).

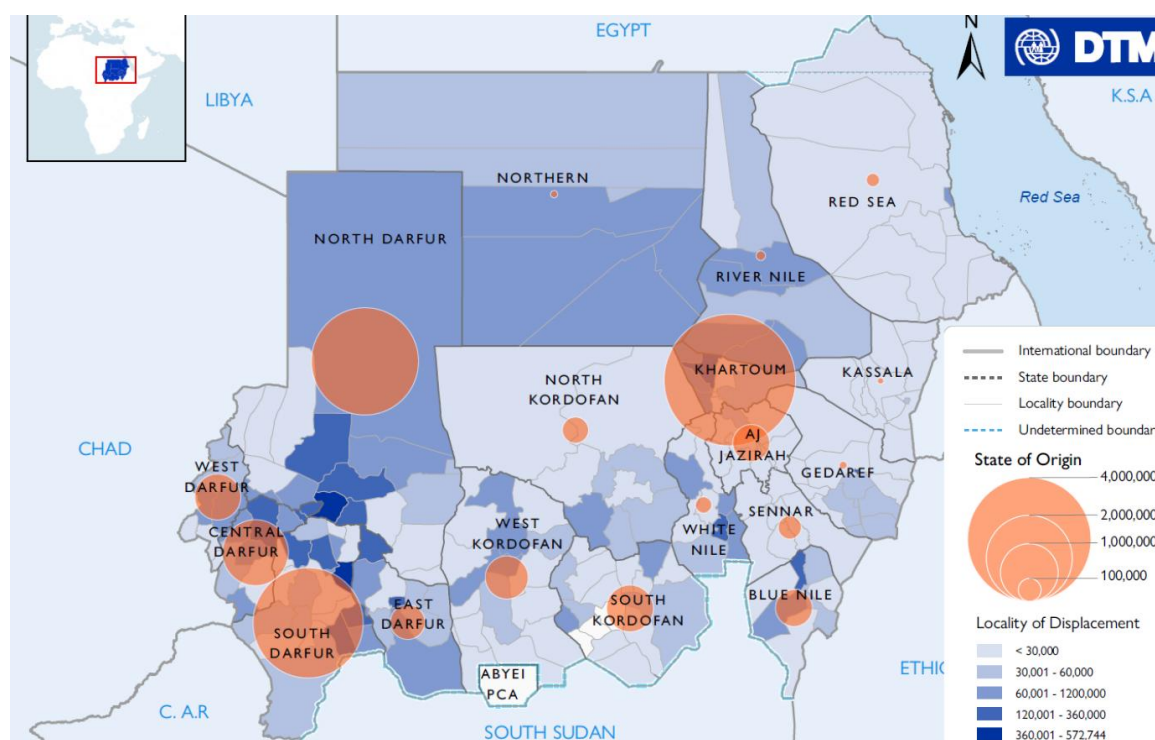
³⁰ OCHA. December 2024. [Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025](#).

³¹ UN Women. 2024. Initial Gender Assessment Sudan.

³² UN News. 15 September 2025. [Deadly attacks and collapsing services push Sudan closer to catastrophe](#).

³³ UN News. 21 September 2025. [UN chief sounds alarm over worsening crisis in Sudan's El Fasher](#)

Figure 2 – Internal displacement by location as of August 2025



Source: [Sudan Mobility Update \(DTM\) 21](#)

Note: this map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by WFP.

13. Although Sudan has long faced food security issues, these have spiralled since the onset of the conflict. As of December 2024, 24.6 million people were expected to face acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Insecurity Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or higher) in the first half of 2025. Moreover, famine was confirmed in North Darfur in August 2024, and projections have since expanded famine to at least five areas, with 17 additional areas as “at risk of famine”.³⁴ Annex 4 (Figures 2 and 3) provides an overview of worsening food and nutrition insecurity across Sudan.

14. The economy has also been severely disrupted, impacting on livelihoods, healthcare access and public health (for example, only 16 percent of primary care facilities are operational, and the system is overwhelmed by recurring disease outbreaks, including cholera, dengue and malaria).³⁵

Access to humanitarian assistance

15. Access has been a significant obstacle throughout the response due to insecurity including attacks on aid workers and convoys,³⁶ as have bureaucratic and administrative impediments (for example, visa delays, lack of official approval for humanitarian hubs)³⁷ and logistical and environmental challenges. Additional operational challenges include poor network connectivity, cash liquidity issues and limited technical and humanitarian staff on the ground.³⁸

16. Funding is another critical challenge. The Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) was only 51.5 percent funded in 2023, 70.1 percent in 2024, and only 25 percent funded as of September 2025.³⁹ With the

³⁴ IPC. December 2024. [Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation - Updated Projections and FRC conclusions for October 2024 to May 2025](#).

³⁵ WHO. January 2025. [Health Cluster Bulletin, October – November 2024](#).

³⁶ UN Secretary General. April 2025. [Secretary-General's statement on the second anniversary of the Sudanese conflict](#); UNICEF. 21 August 2025. [UN / Sudan Update](#).

³⁷ OCHA. November 2024. [Sudan Humanitarian Access Snapshot](#).

³⁸ See for example OCHA. January 2024. [Sudan Humanitarian Update](#).

³⁹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) financial tracking system (FTS). 2023, 2024, 2025.

United States of America (USA) as Sudan's largest humanitarian donor in 2024 (providing approximately 45 percent of all humanitarian funding), large-scale grant terminations by the USA in 2025 significantly impacted humanitarian operations, triggering the suspension of essential programmes and the closure of services.⁴⁰

Neighbouring countries

17. The conflict has had far-reaching consequences beyond Sudan's borders, affecting surrounding countries including South Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia and Uganda (hereafter collectively referred to as "neighbouring countries"). The crisis led to high levels of cross-border displacement including influxes of both refugees and returnees into countries already hosting large numbers of refugees and suffering from their own conflict and natural hazard-induced food insecurity and displacement (Annex 4). See Annex 14 for dedicated individual country overviews for Chad, South Sudan, Egypt, CAR, Uganda, Libya and Ethiopia.

National, regional and international response plans and approaches

18. In SAF-controlled areas, humanitarian assistance is overseen by the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, while in RSF-controlled areas, aid administration is managed by the Sudanese Agency for Relief and Humanitarian Operations (SARHO). Access to affected populations depends on permissions from these authorities, complicated by the United Nations' recognition of SAF as the sovereign authority of Sudan. This has also contributed in part to the restriction of United Nations and other agencies operating out of Port Sudan and delivering aid to Darfur from Chad.⁴¹

19. An Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up for Sudan was activated on 29 August 2023 and extended to 31 December 2025.⁴² Regional coordination occurs through response plans managed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) respectively.⁴³ For Sudan, the IASC and partner response is summarized within the Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan.⁴⁴

1.3 Subject being evaluated

20. Following the outbreak of conflict in April 2023, WFP activated a corporate scale-up in May 2023 and later a regional corporate scale-up for Sudan, South Sudan, and Chad (Nov 2023–Dec 2025).⁴⁵

21. An overview of the country strategic plan (CSP) cycles across countries is shown in Figure 3. In line with the terms of reference, the evaluation team reconstructed two theories of change (ToCs) (see Annex 5). For Sudan, the evaluation covers all strategic objectives (SOs) within the CSP; for the neighbouring countries, it primarily covers SO1 and to a lesser extent SO4.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ ACAPS. March 2025. [Implications of the US AID funding cuts](#); Sudan Tribune. March 2025. [U.S. funding freeze forces closure of health centers in East Sudan](#).

⁴¹ See for example Al Aswat. January 2024. [Agencies Consider New Aid Route into Sudan as Humanitarian Crisis Worsens](#).

⁴² IASC. December 2024. [IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activations and Deactivations](#).

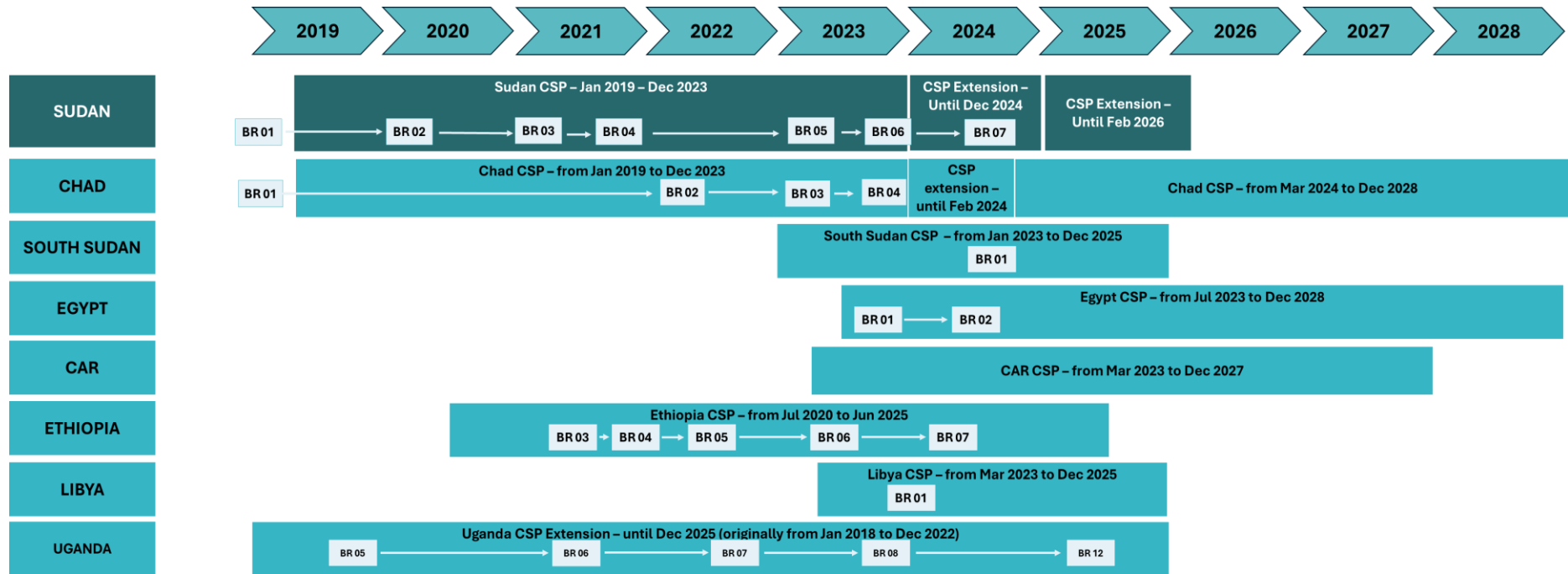
⁴³ IOM. 2024. [Sudan and Neighboring Countries Crisis Response Plan 2024](#); UNHCR. February 2024. [Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan January - December 2024 - at a glance](#).

⁴⁴ OCHA.

⁴⁵ Extended to 31 December 2025 with the WFP ED Decision Memorandum of 1 July 2025.

⁴⁶ SO4 is addressed where there is evidence related to the Sudan response. The ToC for the neighbouring countries includes SO5; however, no relevant information to the Sudan response was available.

Figure 3 – Overview of country strategic plan cycles across countries

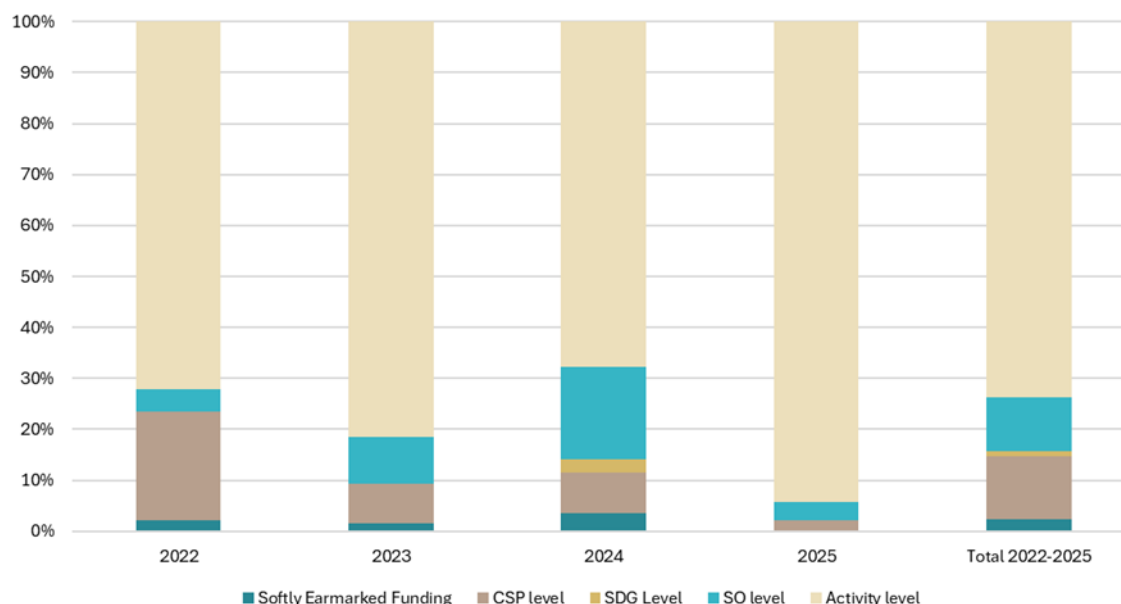


Source: WFP, distribution contribution and forecast stats, extracted on 25 September 2025

Budget analysis

22. The Sudan CSP, approved in 2018 with a budget of USD 2.27 billion for 6.25 million people, underwent significant expansion. By April 2023, four budget revisions (BR) had already taken place, raising the budget to USD 3.42 billion in BR4. Following the onset of the conflict, BR7 further extended the CSP until February 2026 and scaled up reach to 27.68 million people with a revised budget of nearly USD 6 billion.

Figure 4 - Level of earmarking of funding received by WFP Sudan, 2022-2025



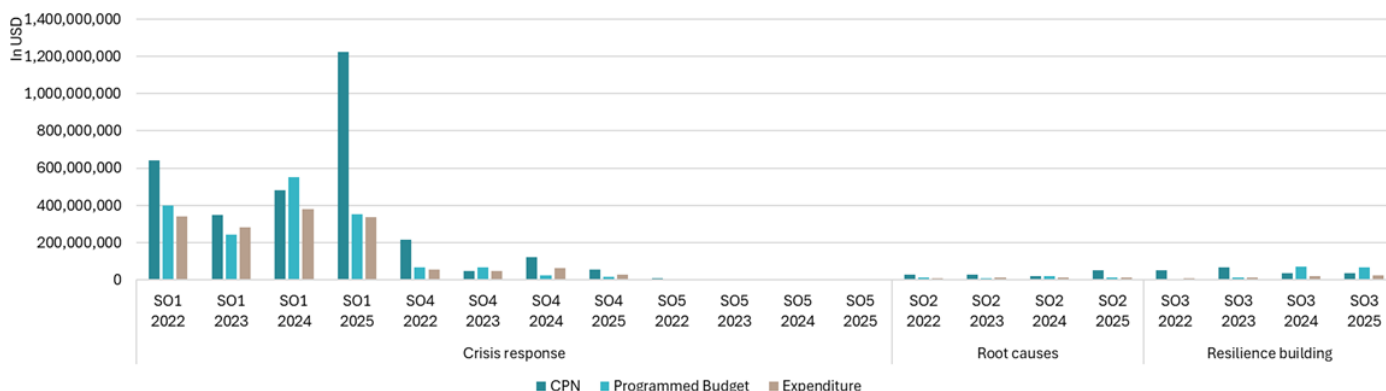
Source: WFP, distribution contribution and forecast stats, extracted on 25 September 2025

23. Overall, between 2022 and 2025, the CSP received only 54 percent of requirements, with funding highly earmarked at the activity level (76 percent on average and up to 84 percent in 2025) (Figure 4). This limited flexibility to reallocate resources constrained WFP Sudan's ability to adapt to evolving priorities.

24. The USA, World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Commission and Germany have been WFP Sudan's main donors. Despite this, in 2025 a USD 500 million funding gap threatened emergency food and cash assistance. The USA has also been the leading donor across all seven neighbouring countries, all of which have also experienced increasing funding challenges resulting in adjustments to ration sizes and caseloads. See Annex 17 for further details on donors for Sudan and Annex 18 for neighbouring countries.

25. The Sudan CSP has been heavily focused on crisis response-related activities since 2022 (Figure 5), accounting for approximately 90 percent of the country portfolio needs (CPN), programmed budget and expenditure from 2023 onwards. Funding coverage averaged 46 percent during 2022 to 2025 and expenditure rates ranged from 70 to 90 percent of allocated resources.

Figure 5 – Share of funding allocated per focus area, strategic outcome and year, 2022-2025

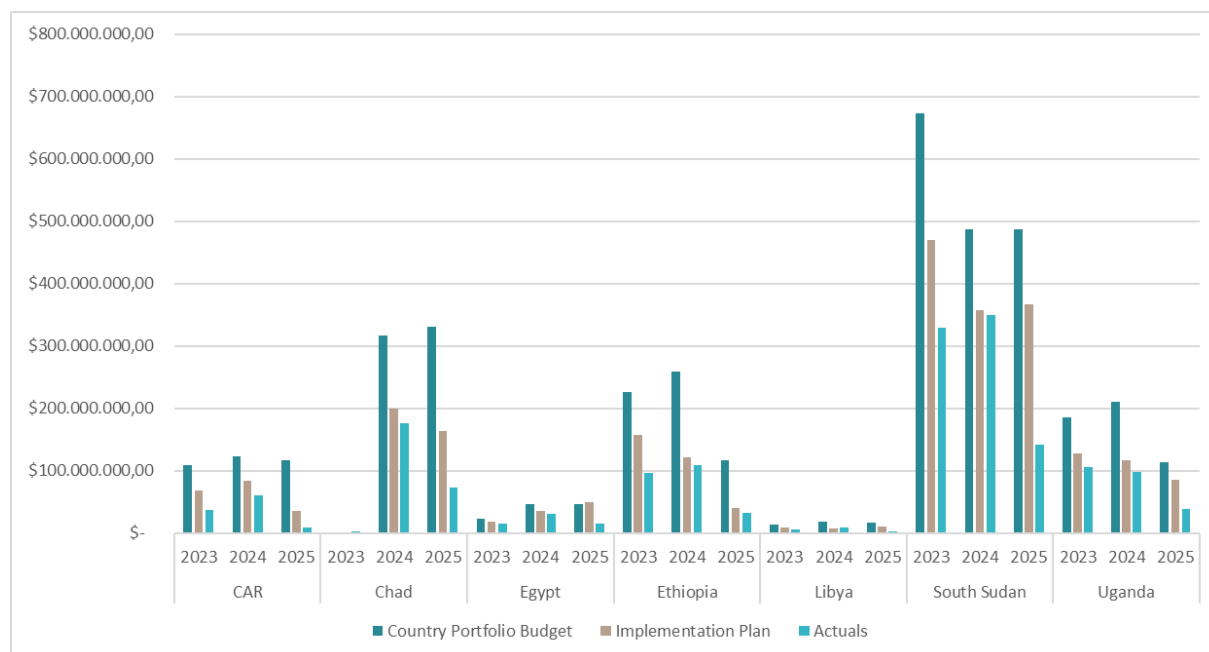


Source: EV_CPB_Resources_Overview, extracted on 25 September 2025

Neighbouring countries

26. Funding needs, implementation plans and actuals for the regional response varied across countries (Figure 6). However, the data available do not provide disaggregated figures for the Sudan response specifically.

Figure 6 – Country portfolio needs versus implementation plan versus actual for neighbouring countries



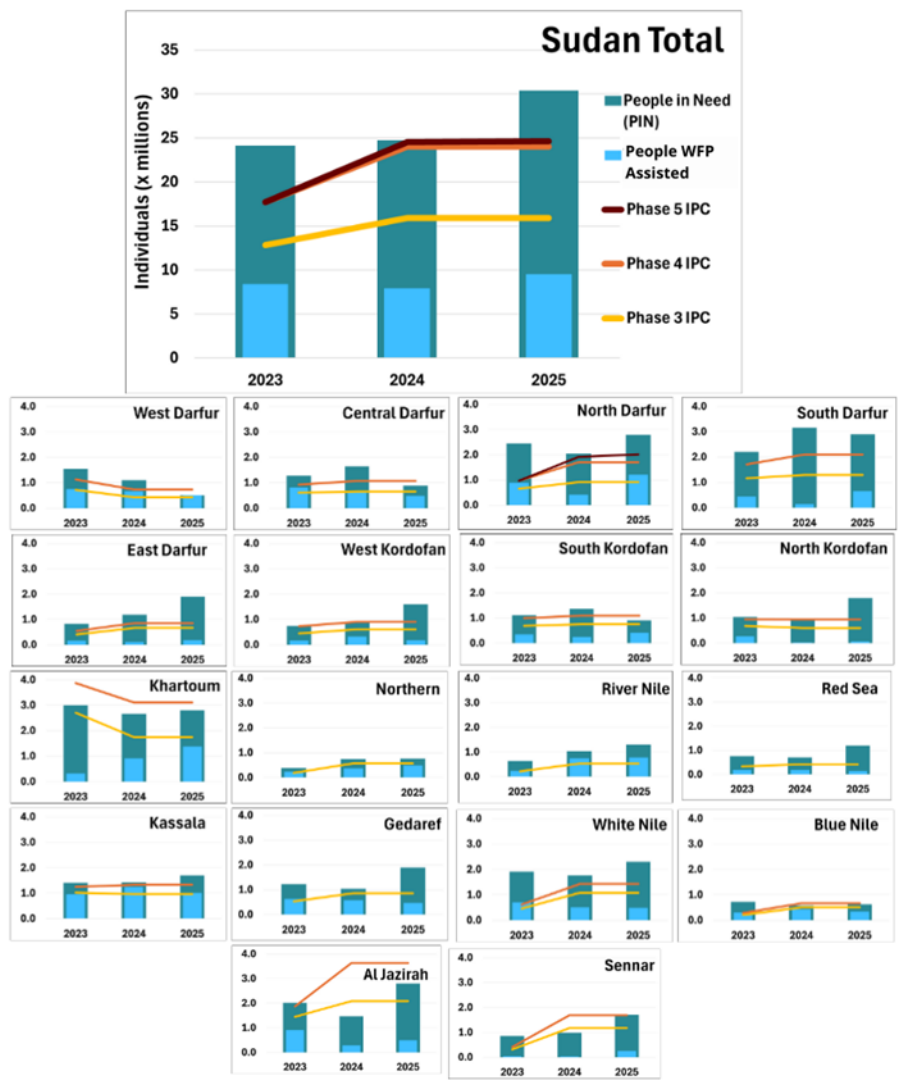
Source: WFP Chief Financial Office's funds management reports - CPB plan vs actual 2023-2025

Analysis of people who receive WFP assistance

Sudan

27. Figure 7 shows the total numbers for people in need, the number of people WFP assisted and IPC levels over time (2023-August 2025) in Sudan.

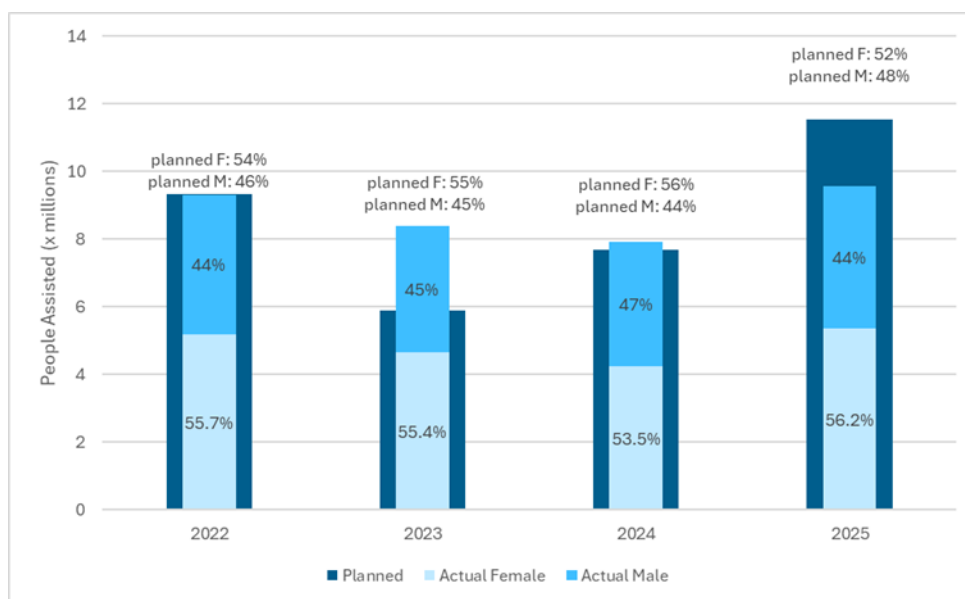
Figure 7 – Total numbers for people in need, numbers of people WFP assisted and Integrated Phase Classification levels, 2023-2024



Sources: [Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation - Updated Projections and FRC conclusions for October 2024 to May 2025](#); [HNRP 2023](#), [HNRP 2024](#), [HNRP 2025](#); [Summary HRP & RRP](#)

28. Figure 8 shows that WFP consistently met or exceeded planned numbers of people to receive WFP assistance in Sudan. Women and girls consistently surpassed men and boys.

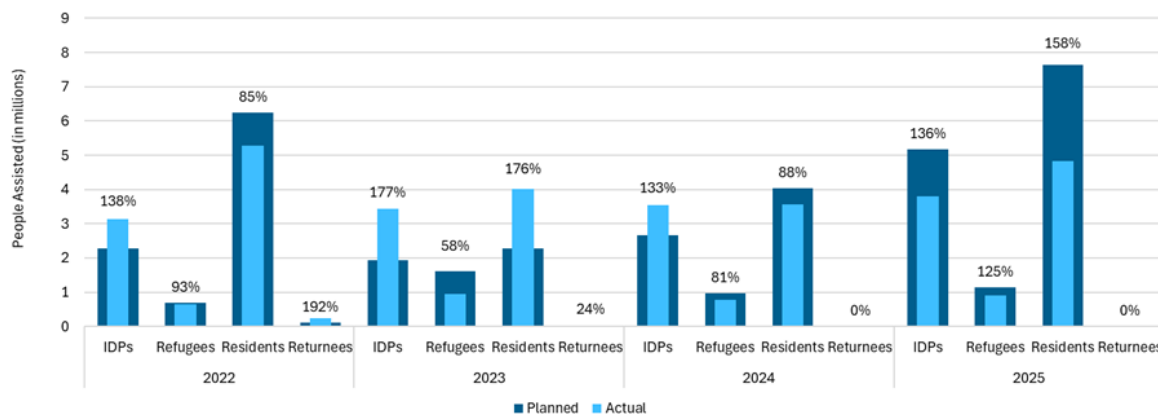
Figure 8 – Yearly people assisted by gender in Sudan, planned versus actual, 2022-2025



Source: WFP COMET system - Jan 2022 - Aug 2025 CSP beneficiaries _06-10-2025

29. The April 2023 conflict caused a spike in needs, leading to an adjustment of planned target numbers, particularly for internally displaced people. As shown in Figure 9, about half of those assisted were residents, with refugees and returnees forming a smaller share.

Figure 9 – Yearly people assisted per residence status and transfer modality, planned versus actual, 2022-2025

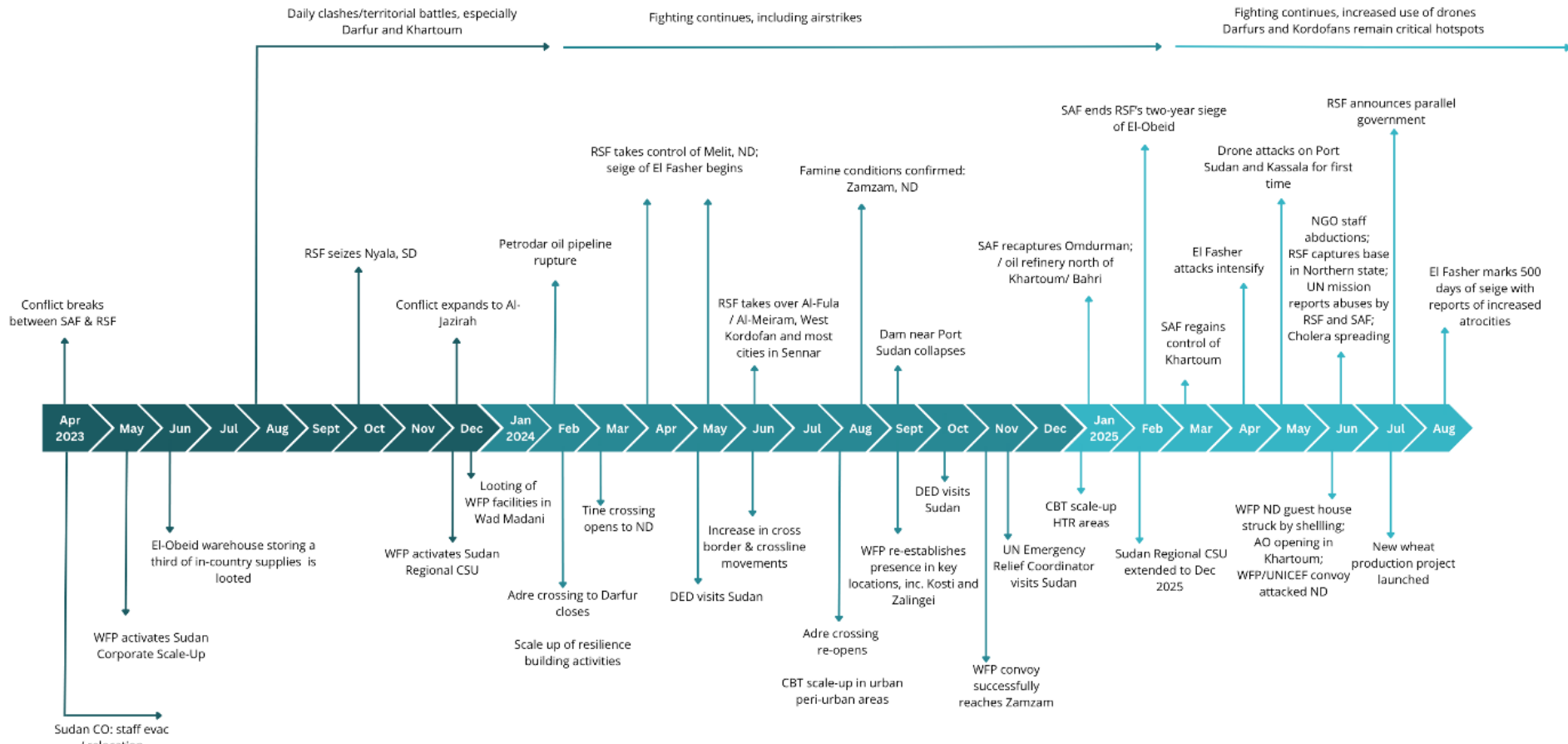


Source: Sudan annual country reports (ACRs) 2022-2024

30. Annex 22 provides an overview of outcomes and expected outputs and Annex 16 shows further details on the budget and performance analysis.

31. The WFP response evolved over the course of the conflict and was characterized by different phases between April 2023 and August 2025. These are broadly illustrated in the timeline in Figure 10.

Figure 10 – Conflict and WFP Sudan country office operations’ timeline: Key events

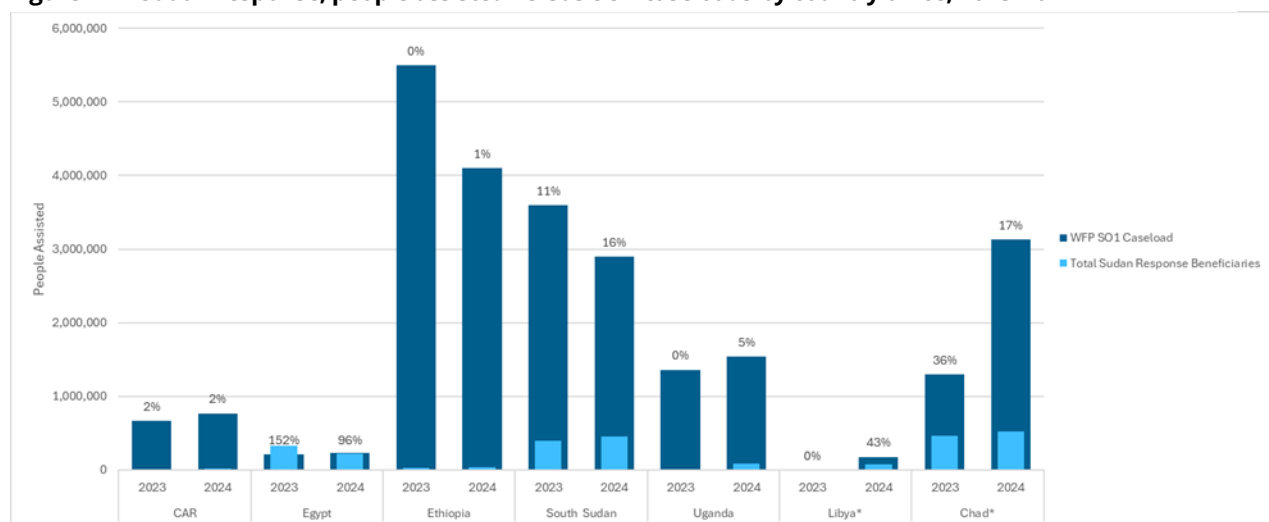


Source: Evaluation team

Neighbouring countries

32. Neighbouring countries hosted refugees and returnees and served as supply corridors into Sudan. Country offices delivered food, nutrition, cash transfers and school meals under SO1 within their CSPs and provided air services and capacity support under SO4. Where budget revisions were approved, these were mainly to adjust caseloads and integrate Sudanese refugees into existing country frameworks. Caseloads related to the Sudan response varied extensively between country offices, ranging from 2 to 100+ percent of country offices' SO1 people assisted (Figure 11); see Annex 15 for primary locations of WFP support in neighbouring countries).⁴⁷

Figure 11 – Sudan response, people assisted versus SO1 caseloads by country office, 2023-2024



Source: country office data on Sudan-specific people assisted by year

*Libya data include host communities; Chad data include host communities and returnees

Overview of the country office structure: location of sub-offices, basic staffing data

33. WFP maintains country offices in Sudan (Port Sudan after the closure of the office in Khartoum in April 2023), Egypt (Cairo), Chad (N'Djamena), Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), Libya (Tripoli), Uganda (Kampala), South Sudan (Juba), and the Central African Republic (Bangui). In Sudan, there are 24 WFP offices including area offices and sub-offices (see Annex 15 for further details of WFP's areas of operation in neighbouring countries).

1.4. Methodology, limitations and ethical considerations

Methodological approach

34. The methodology follows a theory-based, mixed methods approach and a contribution analysis that integrates the latest guidance and good practices from recent Office of Evaluation evaluations. Figure 12 summarizes the main data sources for the evaluation. The methodology builds on the two theories of change reconstructed by the evaluation team (Annex 5), an evaluability assessment and the evaluation matrix (Annex 6). Annex 7 presents the methodology in detail.

35. Through the reconstruction of the two theories of change, the evaluation team outlined the expected causal pathways of change and positioned these within a wider set of contextual factors and assumptions and validated them with country offices. A review of causal chains within the theories of change helped identify key assumptions and change pathways for further investigation during data collection.

⁴⁷ As data on people WFP assisted in Chad for 2025 were not available, the figure does not include 2025 for the neighbouring countries.

36. The evaluation matrix guided the overall evaluation process. Lines of inquiry and indicators were developed for each evaluation question and tied to data sources, data collection tools and analysis methods.

37. The desk review was structured using inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify a final set of 1002 documents (global, regional and country office documents, relevant WFP evaluations and external documents).⁴⁸ Documents were imported into and coded deductively and inductively in MAXQDA using a coding tree grounded in the evaluation questions.

38. In-person data collection was conducted through country visits to Sudan, Chad and Egypt. Chad and Egypt were selected as the two “neighbouring countries” for in-person data collection based on a range of criteria (including the number of Sudanese refugees and the status of country offices under the WFP Corporate Alert System classification). The team leader also undertook a five-day mission to Nairobi. Interviews for CAR, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan and Uganda were conducted remotely. Key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussion (FGD) notes were imported into MAXQDA and coded under the same structure as the desk review.

39. Two online surveys were conducted: one targeting WFP staff and a second targeting partners (cooperating partners and United Nations agencies). To improve the number of responses, the survey was kept short, focusing on select questions and was circulated by WFP rather than the evaluation team.

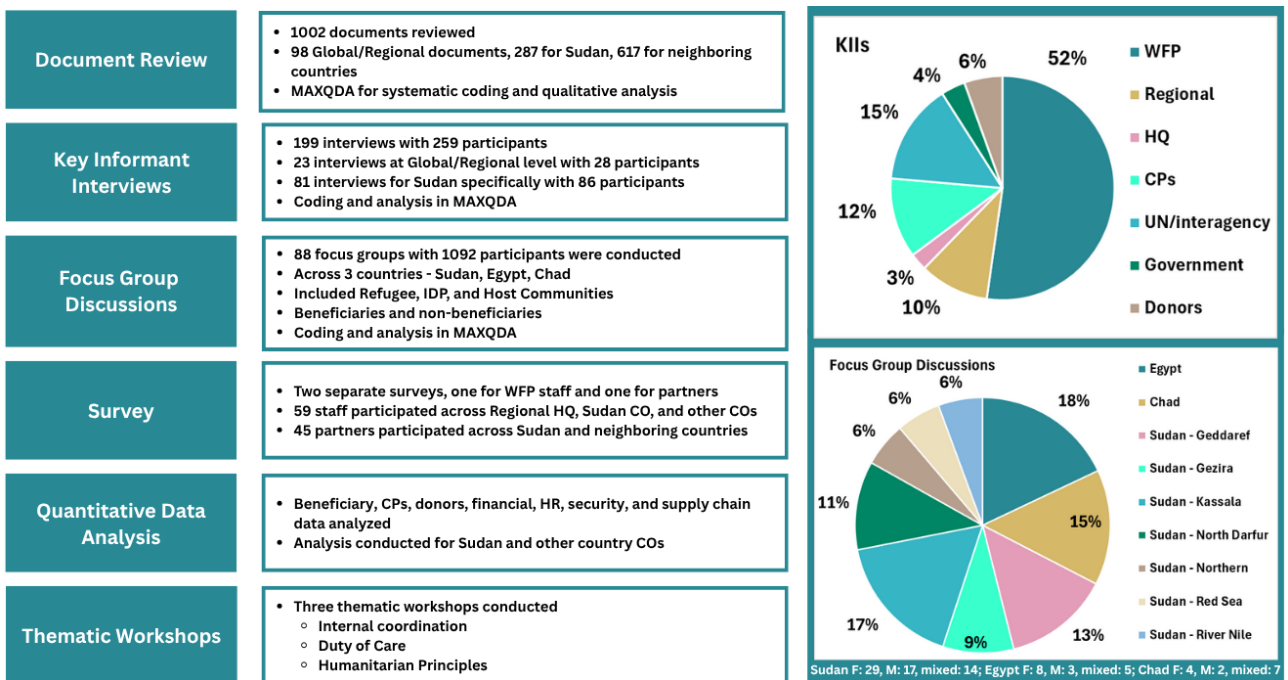
40. For all eight countries, extensive quantitative analysis of WFP financial, performance and other datasets was conducted. Secondary data collected at the country level were integrated and analysed jointly with global level data.

41. Remote workshops were conducted with WFP staff on prioritized learning themes: internal coordination, humanitarian principles and duty of care. The findings related to these topics are integrated into the overall evaluation findings.

42. Findings and conclusions were developed following the data collection phase and based on analysis, synthesis and triangulation. A “preliminary findings” debrief session was organized with the country offices, regional offices and relevant global headquarter (GHQ) divisions. A stakeholder workshop (December 2025) solicited inputs on the findings to inform finalization of the conclusions and formulation of the recommendations.

⁴⁸ Other relevant WFP evaluations included: the [Evaluation of WFP's Emergency Preparedness Policy \(2025\)](#), [Strategic Evaluation on WFP's support to refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants \(2025\)](#), [Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition \(2023\)](#); [Evaluation of WFP's Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Climate Change Policies \(2023\)](#).

Figure 12 – Evaluation data sources



Source: Evaluation team

43. The 2024 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Guidance on the Integration of Humanitarian Principles in the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action was applied to this evaluation under the leadership of the humanitarian principles advisor.

44. The evaluation sought to ensure diverse voices were heard by prioritizing the inclusion of women, youth, elderly people, persons with disabilities, and marginalized ethnic groups. The evaluation matrix integrated gender and inclusion in specific evaluation questions and throughout. Data collection through focus group discussions captured perspectives of those receiving WFP assistance as well as those not receiving WFP assistance, with attention to exceptionally vulnerable groups and with separate men and women focus group discussions where appropriate.

45. The evaluation explored protection and accountability to affected people through focus group discussions, field observations and a review of WFP monitoring data.

Limitations

46. The evaluation faced several constraints related to timing, scope, access and data availability:
- Data collection was undertaken while WFP remained in crisis response mode, which increased the risk of findings becoming outdated and was further compounded by staff turnover. Moreover, data collection was conducted between July-August 2025, when some key staff were unavailable due to the reassignment changes and annual leave.
 - While the evaluation covered eight countries, it was not designed to deliver country-specific analysis for neighbouring countries. Moreover, the diversity of operational contexts and responses limited the scope for drawing generalized conclusions, underscoring the importance of context-specific analysis.
 - Travel restrictions – most notably in Sudan – limited in-person fieldwork, necessitating reliance on remote interviews and desk-based reviews.
 - Persistent data gaps were also observed, including incomplete disaggregation (most notably for neighbouring countries), limited supply chain information, and missing core datasets.

47. The impact of these limitations on findings is noted where relevant throughout the report but has not compromised the validity of the findings.

Ethical considerations

48. The evaluation conforms to the WFP and 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group ethical guidelines. ADE and the evaluation team ensured the application of ethical standards and safeguards at all stages of the evaluation process. This included obtaining informed consent, protecting the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity and respecting the autonomy of participants. ADE's Quality Assurance System provides adequate safeguards, processes and systems in this respect.

2. Evaluation findings

2.1. EQ 1: Relevance to the needs of affected people

2.1.1 Assessments of needs

Pre-existing assessments were outdated by the outbreak of conflict and access constraints resulted in significant gaps in WFP's early understanding of food security needs in conflict-affected parts of Sudan. These were progressively filled over time, albeit with remaining gaps in some insecure locations.

In neighbouring countries, WFP quickly assessed the immediate needs of new Sudanese refugees and returnees and then largely folded these populations into periodic assessments covering broader caseloads.

WFP used its assessment data and analysis to inform its own responses in all countries and to support an understanding of food insecurity across the humanitarian system. However, despite early evidence of the feasibility of cash in Sudan, WFP's scale-up of cash-based transfers (CBT) was slowed by contextual constraints; and assessments did not always inform adaptations of programmes to the profiles of refugees and returnees in neighbouring countries.

Other organizations saw WFP as a trusted source of evidence. In Sudan, the suspension of the nationally led IPC process resulted in different levels of engagement from WFP global headquarters versus the country office; balancing global-level engagement with country-level imperatives to retain operational space in a highly politicized humanitarian environment.

Timely and comprehensive understanding of needs

Sudan

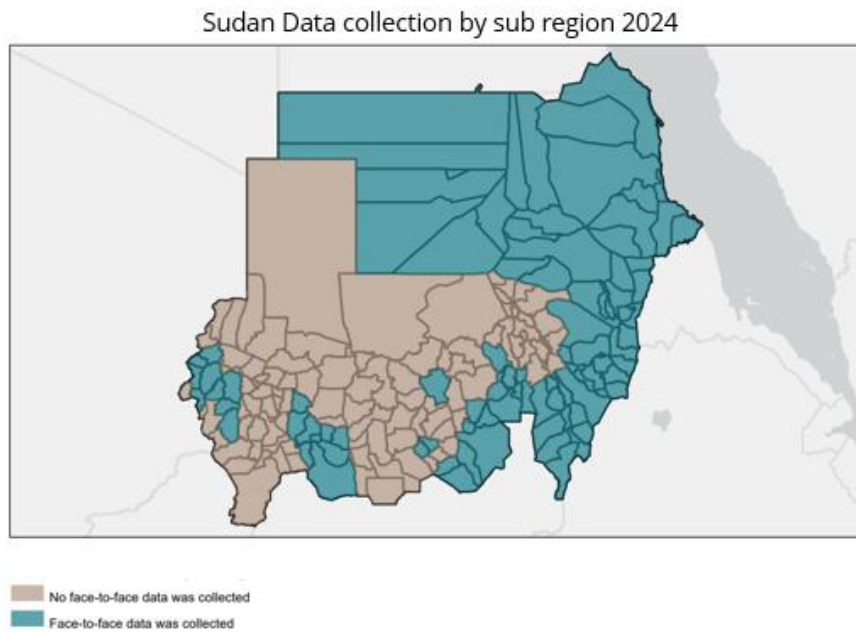
49. **Pre-existing assessments were quickly outdated by the outbreak of the conflict.** From April 2023 onwards, Sudan was characterized by rapidly changing needs between regions as populations were affected by, and fled from, the conflict, quickly outdated assessment evidence.

50. **There were significant gaps in up-to-date assessment data initially, but these were addressed over time, except in persistently hard-to-reach areas.** Insecurity and lack of access resulted in gaps in information on the food security situation for key localities throughout 2023-2025. The report of the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) conducted in the first quarter of 2024 notes that the assessment was only conducted in 13 out of 18 states of Sudan covering approximately half of the localities normally covered.⁴⁹ There were fewer data gaps in 2025; documents indicate that data coverage exceeded 90 percent in most localities and only six localities considered to be facing extremely high food insecurity were entirely unassessed (Figure 13).⁵⁰

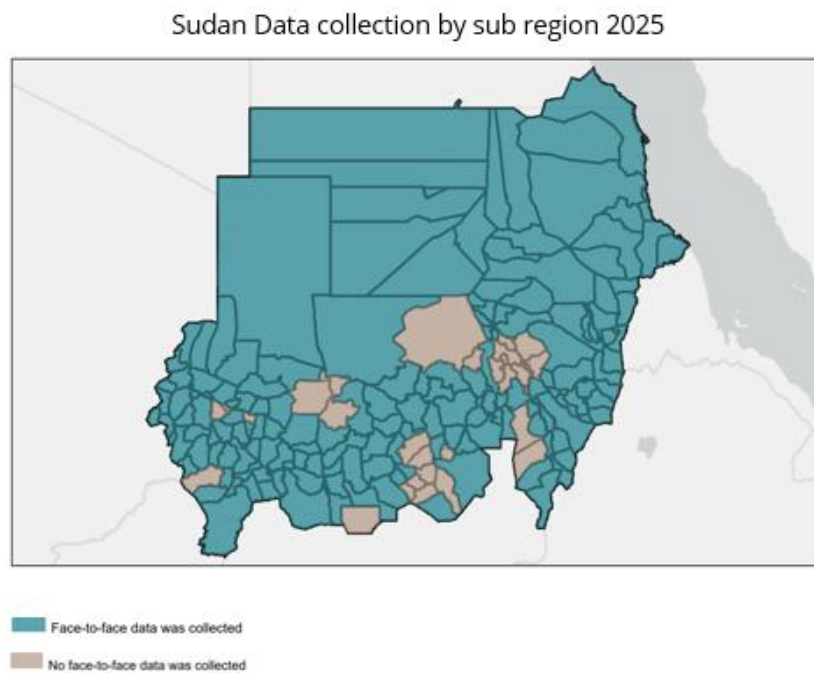
⁴⁹ WFP. May 2024. Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) – Sudan. Summary Report, Q1 2024.

⁵⁰ Presentations shared with the evaluation team containing details of the Q1 2025 CFSVA/FSMS data.

Figure 13 – WFP coverage of food security data through surveys, 2024 and 2025



Source: WFP CFSVA reports and presentation



Source: WFP CFSVA reports and presentations ⁵¹

51. Emergency assessments provided more timely evidence in specific localities. In response to rapidly changing needs in particular localities, WFP conducted several emergency food security assessments (EFSA) in 2023 and 2024, but these were also largely limited to accessible states. Post-harvest assessments were also conducted as part of the African-Development Bank Sudan Emergency Wheat Production Project, timed to coincide with wheat production seasons.

⁵¹ Data for 2025 are extracted from: WFP Sudan. June 2025. Presentation to an ad-hoc donor meeting, 17 July 2025.

52. WFP also contributed to, and relied on, inter-agency assessments in 2023 and 2024,⁵² as well as contributing to 33 SMART surveys between 2024 and 2025 in collaboration with other organizations to assess the prevalence of malnutrition.

Neighbouring countries

53. **Neighbouring country offices demonstrated rapid assessment capacity in response to the influx from Sudan.** WFP staff noted that assessing needs and responding to emergency influxes were both strengths,⁵³ though there were limitations in certain contexts, most notably in Libya, where external factors (for example, authorities in the east led the registration process rather than UNHCR) and internal capacity (for example, no nutritional technical capacity) constrained assessment capacity.

54. **Refugee and returnee caseloads and host communities were often folded into regularly planned WFP and joint assessments.** This included regular independent and joint food security assessments;⁵⁴ and, where cash-based transfer programming was being conducted, market assessments and monitoring. Interviews further indicated that vulnerability assessments with support from the Joint Targeting Hub⁵⁵ were underway in Egypt and Chad in 2025, although the extent to which they informed a comprehensive understanding of the needs and timely response for the Sudan crisis target population was unclear.

Use of assessments and analysis

Sudan

55. **WFP introduced new approaches to enhance the timeliness and usability of its assessment data in Sudan.** Recognizing the limitations of up-to-date and comprehensive assessment data to inform decision making, and to facilitate the use of evidence for adapting WFP's response in Sudan, the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit (VAM) introduced the "Drivers of Food Insecurity Indicator Matrix" in early 2025. The new tool used CFSVA data as a basis and layered on additional information monthly to track food insecurity data along with market information, population movement and displacement data, as well as other factors.

56. **WFP assessments and surveys were well regarded and used by other stakeholders in Sudan.** Most WFP and partner staff who participated in the online survey considered that assessments undertaken by WFP had informed decisions within its Sudan regional response, and WFP had shown agility in responding to newly addressed needs (see Annex 11 for survey results).⁵⁶ External stakeholders described WFP data as providing a solid and well-trusted information base for the food security sector, and CFSVA and food security monitoring system (FSMS) datasets supported several important system-wide processes and products. However, some external stakeholders highlighted the need for more consistent and timely sharing of WFP's assessment data to support a harmonized system-wide response.

57. **The suspension of the Integrated Food Insecurity Phase Classification (IPC) process in Sudan led to changed ways of collaborating to determine priority localities.** WFP assessments served as a major data source for the IPC process in Sudan; and in turn, the IPC was used as the "cornerstone of WFP's geographic prioritization", with localities in higher classifications prioritized.⁵⁷ The suspension of the IPC process in Sudan, following SAF's rejection⁵⁸ of the December 2024 IPC report, left a considerable gap for system-wide analysis and advocacy on food insecurity.

⁵² For example: OCHA. May 2023. Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment Report, Al-Gezira State (Greater Wad Medani, East Al-Gezira, Hassaheisa), 30-31 May 2023; WFP. August 2024. IA Assessment Report 2024, River Nile State, Abu Hamad Flash Flood, 11 August 2024. WFP data were also used to support the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Needs Overview between 2023 and 2025.

⁵³ WFP's ability to respond rapidly to the onset of the crisis in Chad and Egypt was also noted in [the Strategic evaluation of WFP's support to refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants \(2025\)](#).

⁵⁴ An exception here is Libya, for which larger assessments were not noted in available documents or interviews.

⁵⁵ [UNHCR and WFP Joint Programming Excellence and Targeting Hub](#).

⁵⁶ Of the Sudan country office staff who responded to the survey, 64 percent said that assessments had informed WFP's decisions "to a great extent" in Sudan. Of the staff, 57 percent considered that WFP had shown agility in adapting its response to newly assessed needs "to a great extent", compared to 46 percent of partners.

⁵⁷ WFP. December 2023. Executive Director's Assurance Exercise, Sudan report.

⁵⁸ Memo from the Republic of Sudan, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, dated 23 December 2024.

58. While WFP continued to engage in Sudan-related IPC processes at the global level,⁵⁹ at the country level, WFP maintained a distance to preserve operational space to negotiate with actors on the ground and continue collecting assessment data and accessing populations in need. Under WFP's leadership, the food security and livelihoods cluster conducted country-level analysis to determine which localities were in most urgent need of food security assistance, and WFP engaged in the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)-led multi-sector needs assessment process.

59. Early assessments of the feasibility of cash did not result in a rapid scale-up of cash-based transfers in Sudan. The conflict severely disrupted Sudan's banking infrastructure, telecommunication networks and markets. Despite prior experience of delivering cash-based transfers at scale prior to the conflict,⁶⁰ WFP initially prioritized in-kind assistance within its emergency response, while simultaneously conducting assessments and analysis on the feasibility of reaching people with cash-based transfers from as early as June 2023. By May 2024, the analysis showed that markets were largely functional across Sudan with limited exceptions and that WFP was using contracted financial service providers (FSPs) at only 11 percent of their potential.⁶¹ Thereafter, WFP did begin to progressively shift to cash-based transfers, although with delays, partially due to the decision to not only roll out cash-based transfers in stable areas, but also in hard-to-reach localities with continued security, infrastructure and financial service provider constraints, as well as continued liquidity challenges.

Neighbouring countries

60. Assessments informed geographic priorities but did not always inform adaptations of programmes to the profiles of refugees and returnees. Stakeholders described how rapid assessments supported targeting or prioritizing areas for geographic coverage where relevant (for example, CAR, Chad, South Sudan, Libya).⁶² However, while assessments and staff observations quickly identified the Sudan refugee and returnee profile as more professional and urban or peri-urban in contrast to wider refugee populations (for example, Uganda) or host populations (for example, Chad, South Sudan), for the most part the relevance of potential resilience-building programming was limited as it was primarily designed for those from a farming background (for example, Uganda). Divergent food preferences were also observed (for example, Uganda, South Sudan), though it was not always feasible to modify assistance.

61. Assessments in neighbouring countries informed modality choices. Cash feasibility assessments informed new expansion of cash-based transfer programming to geographical areas hosting Sudanese refugees (for example, CAR, Benishangul-Gumuz and Ethiopia), or the need to continue with in-kind (for example, Ahmara and Ethiopia). Market assessments informed continued use of cash-based transfers (Chad, Egypt, South Sudan, Uganda, Libya) and in determining when to prioritize food assistance (for example, Chad). In Libya, however, government policies restricted cash-based transfers to host communities only, irrespective of assessments indicating the potential to expand cash-based transfers to the refugee population.

2.1.2 Targeting and prioritization

All countries defined clear targeting strategies in line with corporate guidance, or, in the case of neighbouring countries, new arrivals from Sudan were included in pre-existing targeting strategies for emergency response.

⁵⁹ This included engagement in the IPC Steering Committee, which approved an interim alert on food insecurity in Sudan in July 2025 and oversaw IPC global-level analysis on Sudan.

⁶⁰ Prior to the conflict, a significant amount of WFP assistance was provided as cash (reaching a value of approximately USD 88 million in 2022). This dropped by around 85 percent in 2023 (to approximately USD 13.4 million between May 2023 and April 2024).

⁶¹ WFP Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) oversight report, May 2024.

⁶² Country offices responding in government designated areas (e.g. Uganda, Ethiopia) or highly mobile populations (e.g. Egypt) did not have the same need for assessment-informed geographic targeting.

In Sudan, geographic targeting initially focused on more accessible parts of the country in the east but progressively shifted to areas of active conflict where affected people were most food insecure, although some hard-to-reach areas remained underserved.

Risks of significant exclusion and inclusion errors were high, particularly in Sudan, where increased oversight and assurance efforts were insufficient to minimize risks. New Sudanese arrivals in neighbouring countries were consistently targeted, although reliance on registration as a prerequisite for receipt of WFP assistance increased exclusion risks.

Prioritization was consistently driven by severity of needs, access and a lack of flexible funding. Prioritization decisions resulted in fluctuating numbers of people receiving WFP assistance initially in Sudan, stabilizing over time. In neighbouring countries, Sudanese refugees from the current crisis were largely insulated from prioritization exercises due to their “new arrival” status.

Despite efforts to communicate decisions to affected populations across countries, many communities did not demonstrate an understanding of WFP’s rationale for deciding who should receive assistance.

Targeting⁶³

Sudan

62. WFP quickly articulated a multi-layered targeting approach in line with corporate guidance. Post-April 2023, WFP Sudan defined a revised targeting strategy to ensure that its assistance reached the most vulnerable.⁶⁴ Geographic targeting formed the first targeting layer, followed by different targeting approaches by area: blanket assistance in conflict-affected locations; and household or individual targeting, including status- and community-based targeting, in stable areas. The strategy and methodology aligned with corporate approaches and tools, including guidance on the targeting approaches by global headquarters several months earlier.⁶⁵

63. Targeting became increasingly granular as the crisis evolved. While the stand-alone strategy was not updated, subsequent planning documents⁶⁶ reiterated the targeting strategy and updated it in line with changing conditions and for new emergencies. The November 2024 standard operating procedure on targeting and prioritization introduced the concept of self-targeting and registration, and detailed WFP’s targeting approach for conditional assistance, nutrition interventions and school feeding.⁶⁷

64. The risk of inclusion and exclusion errors remained high despite increased oversight and assurance efforts, for example, as part of the Global Assurance Project (GAP) (see Section 2.4.2). The complexity and fast-moving nature of the context, and reliance on paper-based registration in areas rather than the use of corporate digital tools in conflict-affected areas, meant that some degree of inclusion and exclusion errors were to be expected,⁶⁸ particularly in hard-to-reach locations with limited to no WFP presence. An internal audit of WFP’s response in Sudan (backed up by interviews with internal stakeholders) considered that WFP did not have sufficient assurances that cooperating partners consistently used WFP-approved lists or that assistance was reaching those intended to receive support, although high levels of food insecurity in these same areas partially mitigated inclusion error risks.⁶⁹ Oversight and support from the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) and internal country office coordination demonstrated WFP’s awareness of targeting risks and efforts to strengthen its approaches to, and oversight of, cooperating partner targeting

⁶³ Targeting is defined as, “the process of selecting communities, households and individuals for assistance, based on programme objectives and needs assessments and with the participation of communities”. WFP. January 2026. [Strategic Evaluation of WFP’s Approach to Targeting and Prioritization for Food and Nutrition Assistance](#), which refers to WFP (2022) ED Circular Management of Targeting Processes by WFP Offices.

⁶⁴ WFP Sudan Targeting and Prioritization Strategy and Methodology Post 15 April 2023.

⁶⁵ WFP. 08 December 2022. Executive Director’s Circular, Management of Targeting Approaches by WFP Offices. OED2022/026.

⁶⁶ E.g. WFP Sudan Country Office. 2 January 2024. WFP Sudan Emergency Response Standard Operating Procedure; WFP. April 2024. Famine Prevention Plan for General Food Assistance, WFP Sudan.

⁶⁷ WFP Sudan Country Office. 1 November 2024. Standard Operating Procedure: Targeting and Prioritization.

⁶⁸ WFP Sudan GAP Report 2024; Report of ESARO oversight missions, 2023-2024; WFP Sudan High Risk Areas of Attention, July 2024.

⁶⁹ WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09](#).

exercises,⁷⁰ although significant risks remained, and oversight mechanisms were overall considered to be insufficient, particularly in hard-to-reach areas.⁷¹

65. **Some affected populations were unclear on WFP's rationale for targeting and felt that decisions were unfair.** Community feedback mechanism (CFM) data indicate that complaints regarding exclusion were the most numerous complaint type recorded, representing around 48 percent of all recorded CFM cases in 2023, falling to 26 and 21 percent in 2024 and 2025 respectively;⁷² and post-distribution monitoring in mid-2024, found that more than two thirds indicated that they were not aware of the selection criteria, although 78 percent of respondents did consider the process used to select households for assistance as fair.⁷³ Moreover, just over half of focus group discussions conducted in Sudan said they were unaware of how WFP selected people to receive its assistance and 65 percent said they considered the selection process as unfair (noting absences during registration processes, as well as non-transparent decision making processes by committees and other decision makers). This also reflects the experiences of affected populations elsewhere, who often did not understand the details of WFP's targeting processes, as highlighted in the WFP evaluation of targeting and prioritization approaches.⁷⁴

Neighbouring countries

66. **Neighbouring countries consistently targeted new arrivals** using a defined or pre-existing targeting strategy under SO1 focusing on refugees (for example, Chad, South Sudan, CAR, Uganda, Ethiopia, Libya, Egypt) and returnees (for example, Chad, South Sudan, CAR, Ethiopia),⁷⁵ as well as host communities. In response to the influx from Sudan, country offices targeted geographical areas with refugees and returnees, starting with cross-border or transit centre assistance, following up with assistance in settlements, camps and host communities, depending on the context and available registration information. Interviews across country offices described how host government and inter-agency arrangements influenced how country offices were able to identify, register and assist the intended caseloads. Mobile, non-camp caseloads (for example, in Egypt) presented the greatest challenges, managed through a system of extensive communication with registered refugees and Sudanese community leaders.

67. Registration requirements (primarily managed by UNHCR) were largely consistent, but **exclusion risks were highlighted by informants and people receiving WFP assistance.** In all countries except Libya, UNHCR registration was necessary to receive assistance, although some interviewees (for example, in Egypt) raised concerns regarding this practice. Other exclusion concerns were also prevalent: for example, in South Sudan, 2024 assessments found that coverage was much higher for refugees than for returnees.

68. Similarly to Sudan, focus group discussions in neighbouring countries showed that most people (77 percent of focus group discussions in Chad and 75 percent in Egypt) were unaware of the rationale for WFP's targeting.⁷⁶

Prioritization⁷⁷

69. Staff and partners perceived "severity of needs" as the key criteria informing WFP's prioritization, followed by "access", "residency status of affected people" and "donor earmarking" (see Annex 11). This was largely echoed across interviews and documentation.

⁷⁰ WFP. November 2023. 2023 Executive Director's Assurance Exercise. Sudan.

⁷¹ WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09](#).

⁷² WFP Sudan. CFM data, 2023-2025.

⁷³ WFP Sudan. August 2024. Sudan Country Office, Process Monitoring Biannual Report.

⁷⁴ WFP. January 2026. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Approach to Targeting and Prioritization for Food and Nutrition Assistance (draft).

⁷⁵ Select interviews mentioned the presence of returnees to CAR and Ethiopia but there was no further discussion on how they were targeted beyond being folded into the wider IDP population.

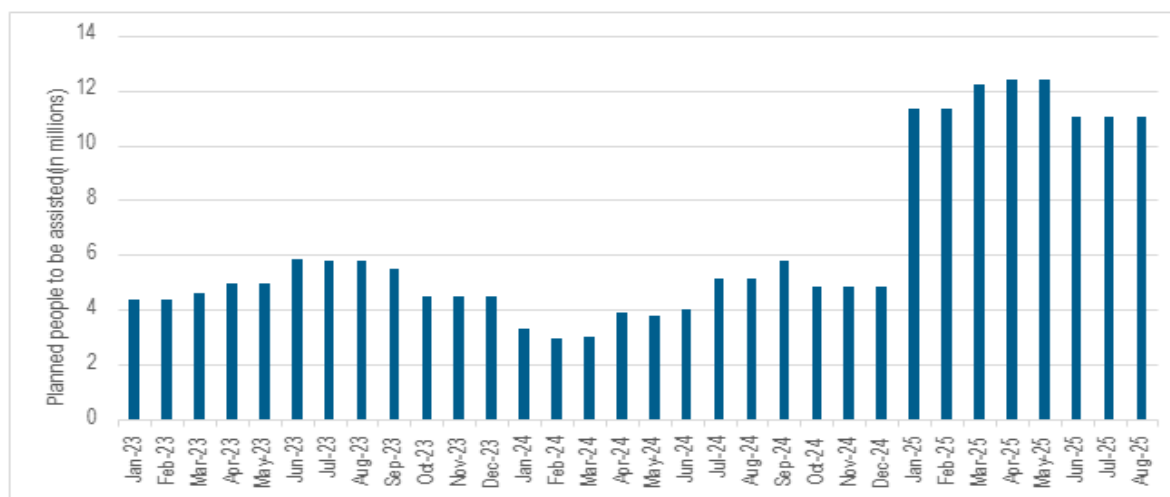
⁷⁶ See: WFP. January 2026. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Approach to Targeting and Prioritization for Food and Nutrition Assistance (draft).

⁷⁷ Prioritization is defined as, "deciding which people within a targeted population receive assistance when overall identified needs cannot be met, or when entitlements are reduced due to resource constraints". WFP. January 2026. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Approach to Targeting and Prioritization for Food and Nutrition Assistance (draft), which refers to WFP (2022) ED Circular Management of Targeting Processes by WFP Offices.

Sudan

70. **Prioritization efforts in Sudan saw numbers of people who receive WFP assistance vary considerably over time and in relation to identified needs.** With increasing numbers of people in severe need from April 2023 onwards but constrained by internal and external factors, WFP Sudan was faced with a series of difficult prioritization decisions, including adjustments to ration sizes in line with available resources. Prioritization decisions were also reflected in overall target numbers, which varied considerably over time and only stabilized and began to steadily increase in line with needs from January 2025 onwards, as shown in Figure 14.⁷⁸

Figure 14 – WFP planned people to receive assistance in Sudan, 2023-2025



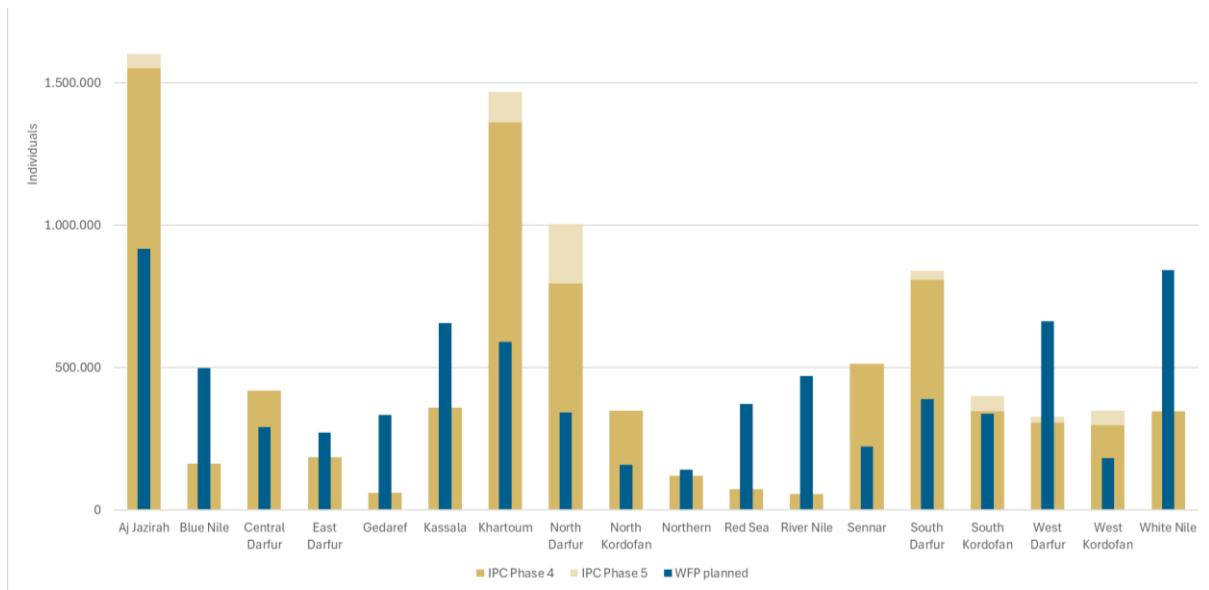
Source: WFP COMET system - Jan 2022-Aug 2025 CSP beneficiaries _06-10-2025

71. **WFP's emergency assistance initially prioritized more accessible localities but increasingly aligned with the areas in greatest need in hard-to-reach places.** A geographic analysis of WFP's target people to receive assistance shows a predominant emphasis on more stable localities during 2023 and for much of 2024. While there were also populations in severe need in the east of Sudan, particularly in places hosting internally displaced populations and refugees, the early prioritization focus was on more accessible localities, where WFP could more quickly and efficiently reach the greatest numbers of people in need. This came at the expense of hard-to-reach areas, primarily in the west of the country, where needs were more severe and populations were more vulnerable to the ongoing conflict. However, documents and interviews showed that the emphasis shifted from mid-2024 onwards as WFP reiterated the IPC as its main reference point for geographic prioritization and revised its implementation plans to target the most severely food insecure populations first (IPC4+).

72. Figure 15 and Figure 16 show the increasing alignment of WFP's geographic prioritization of localities categorized as IPC Phases 4 and 5 in December 2024 (reflected in data on people WFP assists for 2025), due to the increased vulnerability of populations in those areas. Many of these localities were also the most complex to access, although WFP's scale-up of cash-based transfers in 2025 partially enabled this more ambitious prioritization approach, using cash-based transfers to gain access to areas where distributing in-kind assistance was more constrained (Figure 17).

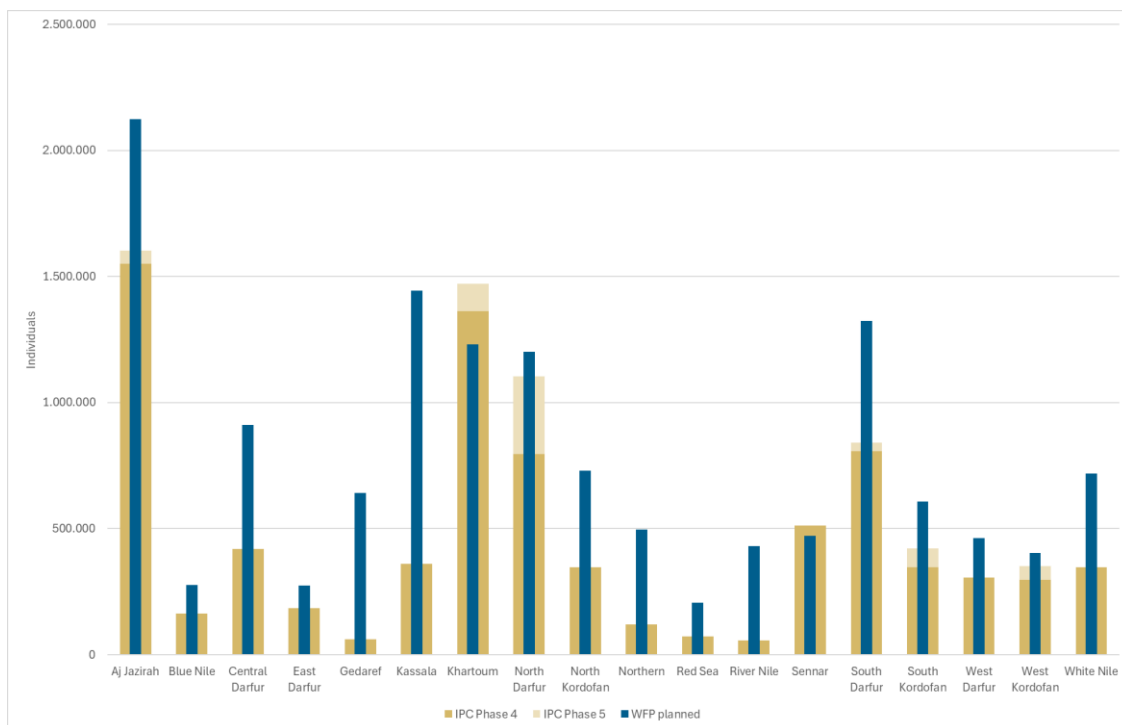
⁷⁸ These shifts are illustrative of WFP's approach to prioritization in other countries, as highlighted in the evaluation of WFP's approach to targeting and prioritization: WFP. January 2026. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Approach to Targeting and Prioritization for Food and Nutrition Assistance (draft).

Figure 15 – WFP planned people to receive assistance and Integrated Phase Classifications by locality 2024



Source: [Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation - Updated Projections and FRC conclusions for October 2024 to May 2025](#); WFP COMET system - Jan 2022-Aug 2025 CSP beneficiaries _06-10-2025

Figure 16 – WFP planned people to receive assistance and Integrated Phase Classifications by locality 2025



Source: [Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation - Updated Projections and FRC conclusions for October 2024 to May 2025](#); WFP COMET system - Jan 2022-Aug 2025 CSP beneficiaries _06-10-2025

NB: Figure 15 and Figure 16 represent the planned people to receive WFP assistance for all SOs. However, SO1 planned numbers were 44 percent of the total people assisted in 2023, 44 percent in 2024 and 61 percent in 2025.

Figure 17 – In-kind and cash-based transfer general food assistance reach to famine locations and risk-of-famine locations in Sudan, Jan-May 2025

	State	IPC4+ Population	Jan-25		Feb-25		Mar-25		Apr-25		May-25	
			GFA (In-Kind)	GFA (CBT)	GFA (In-Kind)	GFA (CBT)	GFA (In-Kind)	GFA (CBT)	GFA (In-Kind)	GFA (CBT)	GFA (In-Kind)	GFA (CBT)
Famine Areas	North Darfur	783,108	24,806	98,251	0	207,608	5,280	344,317	46,360	306,183	98,268	306,099
	South Kordofan	114,647	0	0	0	9,046	0	21,298	0	39,385	0	21,215
	West Kordofan	89,337	0	0	0	1,110	0	1,067	63,376	1,067	63,493	1,067
	Subtotal Famine Areas	987,092	24,806	98,251	0	217,764	5,280	366,682	109,736	346,635	161,761	328,381
Risk of Famine	North Darfur								335565		335565	
	North Darfur	8,117			11,642	75,220			17835	48,168		
	South Darfur	404,222	263,637	0	94,800	0	51,500	164,316	118,924	179,737	165,804	14,474
	Al Jazirah	343,389	20,954	45,076	107,727	45,055	107,727	45,032	95,771	44,948	132,031	0
	Khartoum	262,117		62,227		68,810		178,426	100000	186,061	100000	356,986
	South Kordofan	15,041						33,719	35,243			
	Subtotal Risk of Famine Areas	1,032,886	284,591	107,303	202,527	125,507	234,447	421,493	314,695	463,824	446,003	371,460
Grand Total:	2,019,978	309,397	205,554	202,527	343,271	239,727	788,175	759,996	810,459	943,329	699,841	

Source: WFP Sudan donor meeting presentation June 2025

Neighbouring countries

73. As new arrivals, Sudanese refugees were largely protected from wider funding-driven prioritization processes. Most neighbouring country offices underwent prioritization exercises (for example, CAR, Chad, South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Egypt); initially to maintain breadth over depth (for example, by reducing ration sizes) but latterly reducing both breadth and depth. Driven by funding shortfalls, prioritization exercises affected country offices during the 2023-2025 timeframe, and increasingly so during 2025 (for example, Uganda reduced their refugee caseload by approximately 1 million). Most Sudanese refugees were largely insulated from these prioritization processes as “new arrivals”, benefiting from either full or maximum possible ration sizes (for example, Ethiopia, Uganda, Chad, South Sudan) or retaining the status of people WFP assists where long-term refugee status became an exclusion criterion (for example, Uganda). In Egypt, vulnerability criteria were already applied to qualify a reduced caseload for cash-based transfer assistance and documents indicate that further prioritization was expected.

2.2. EQ 2: Effectiveness of the response

2.2.1 What difference the response made

WFP provided vital assistance to millions of people and made some progress towards delivering food and nutrition security benefits in Sudan. However, monitoring data showed a worsening of food insecurity against some indicators, particularly for women.

Neighbouring country offices met emergency response objectives and leveraged emergency nutrition and emergency school feeding activities to complement general food assistance.

Nutrition activities were scaled up in Sudan and school feeding programmes were adapted. Results for nutrition were particularly compromised, however, due to both external factors and a lack of sufficient mitigation measures.

WFP’s resilience programming in Sudan enhanced smallholder productivity and national food systems, even during the ongoing crisis. Limited data showed above target scores for acceptable food consumption among women and girls participating in resilience activities in 2024, but not for men and boys, or for people assisted overall.

Across countries, WFP’s support for common services enabled access to isolated populations, restored emergency connectivity, provided shared logistics services and sustained cross-border aid when in-country access failed.

Results achieved and unintended outcomes

Sudan

SO1: Meeting the food and nutrition needs of crisis-affected populations

74. Under SO1, the outbreak of conflict severely disrupted activities, drove up the number of people targeted to receive WFP assistance, as more people were in urgent need of assistance, and necessitated significant programmatic adaptations to deliver results.

75. Overall, **general food assistance fell short of output targets**, both in terms of the number of people receiving WFP assistance (Annex 16 - Figures 10, 11, 12) and planned versus actual in-kind and cash-based transfer distributions (Annex 16 – Figures 13, 14). The number of people reached with general food assistance fluctuated considerably over the period of the evaluation, but overall, the increase was significant, from 0.9 million people in May 2023 to a high of 5.6 million people in May 2025 (Annex 16 - Figure 10).

76. **Despite its increased reach, food consumption scores declined markedly, particularly for women.** WFP data show a slight decline in food consumption scores overall in 2023, worsening considerably by the end of 2024. The decline was particularly severe for women between the years covered by the evaluation: from 46 percent of women with acceptable food consumption scores in 2023 to 34 percent in 2024 (Table 2).

Table 2 – Sudan food consumption scores, general food assistance, 2022-2024

Outcome indicators	M/F/overall	2022	2023	2024
Food Consumption Score: Percentage of households with Acceptable Food Consumption Score	Female	45	46	34
	Male	50.1	48	46
	Overall	47.9	47	42
Food Consumption Score: Percentage of households with Borderline Food Consumption Score	Female	35.5	32	42
	Male	35.1	37	27
	Overall	35.3	34	38
Food Consumption Score: Percentage of households with Poor Food Consumption Score	Female	19.5	15	17
	Male	14.8	22	26
	Overall	16.9	19	20

Source: Sudan ACRs 2022-2024

77. **Conversely, dietary diversity scores improved** between 2022 and 2024 for both women and girls and men and boys and **consumption-based coping strategies showed a marked improvement between 2022 and 2023, before declining slightly for women and girls in 2024** (Table 3 and Table 4). Outcome monitoring reports suggested that people increasingly resorted to harmful coping strategies, such as skipping meals, borrowing and eating less preferred foods.⁷⁹ There was insufficient evidence for the evaluation to determine a link between WFP assistance, for example, ration sizes and duration of assistance to either improvements or declines in results.

⁷⁹ Sudan ACRs 2023 & 2024.

Table 3 – Sudan consumption-based coping strategies, 2022-2024

Outcome indicators	M/F/overall	2022	2023	2024
Consumption-based coping strategy index (average)	Female	5.5	14.6	12.88
	Male	4.7	10.6	11.97
	Overall	5	12.8	12.29

Source: Sudan ACRs 2022-2024

Table 4 – Sudan dietary diversity scores, 2022-2024

Outcome indicators	M/F/overall	2022	2023	2024
Dietary Diversity Score	Female	3.3	3.03	4
	Male	3.4	3.17	4.7
	Overall	3.4	3.09	4.5

Source: Sudan ACRs 2022-2024

78. People who receive WFP assistance consulted for this evaluation generally stated that the assistance was insufficient to meet their needs; 22 of the 27 focus group discussions receiving general food assistance reported this insufficiency, and several groups specifically noted a lack of complementary services like milling tools or services for the sorghum distributed by WFP. They also highlighted several unexpected positive outcomes, including fostering community cohesion, enhancing household resilience and empowering women in some instances.⁸⁰

79. Under SO1, WFP aimed to reduce moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) through targeted supplementary feeding programmes and nutrition counselling. There was evidence that WFP planned to scale up its nutrition response,⁸¹ and focus group discussions in Sudan were generally positive about WFP’s nutritional support – citing better health and increased knowledge on nutrition as benefits. However, WFP reached significantly fewer people than planned for nutrition activities (Annex 16 - Figure 15), and **performance against outcome data showed declining results in nutrition prevention coverage and moderate acute malnutrition results (Table 5).**

⁸⁰ People assisted by WFP frequently noted that they independently shared assistance within communities, which simultaneously ensured that the most vulnerable members of communities were assisted and strengthened social cohesion. Some women noted that food assistance strengthened resilience within families, while reducing the burden on male breadwinners and enabling women to assume greater roles in food provision and financial decision making through participation in small income-generating activities. Other women reported that the assistance did not fundamentally alter deeply entrenched gender roles or fully alleviate their heavy reliance on aid for survival.

⁸¹ WFP. 2023. WFP Nutrition Programme Scale-Up Strategy in Sudan.

Table 5 – SO1 nutrition outcome indicators in Sudan, 2022-2024

	End CSP target 2024	2022 Results	2023 Results	2024 Results
Strategic Outcome 1, Activity 3: Provide preventative and curative nutrition activities to children aged 6-59 months and PLW/G in emergency context				
Proportion of target population that participates in an adequate number of distributions (adherence)	≥66	59	59	55
Proportion of eligible population reached by nutrition prevention programme (coverage)	=100	-	45	45
MAM Treatment Default rate, overall (%)	<15	6	3.6	6.4
MAM Treatment Mortality rate, overall (%)	<3	0	0	0
MAM Treatment Non-response rate, overall (%)	<15	3	1	1
MAM Treatment Recovery rate, overall (%)	>75	91	95	92

Source: Sudan ACRs 2022-2024

80. **There were multiple challenges that affected the delivery of SO1 activities in Sudan**, including resource shortages, pipeline breaks and security constraints leading to programme suspensions of up to five months in some instances. Internal stakeholders highlighted serious logistical problems, including instances where commodities remained in trucks for several months while waiting for documentation and approvals, expiring before they could be distributed, directly reducing the overall assistance delivered (see Section 2.3.2).

SO2: Improved nutrition

81. After reaching more people than planned in 2023, nutrition activities under SO2 then fell far short of targets, reaching 37 percent of those targeted in 2024 and just 18 percent by mid-2025 (Annex 16 - Figure 10). **Progress towards outcome-level results was mixed: mortality rates remained at zero and treatment rates reached close to the original CSP target; but default rates were poorer than hoped for and recovery rates declined over the period of the evaluation** (Table 6).

Table 6 – SO2 nutrition outcome indicators in Sudan, 2022-2024

	End CSP target 2024	2022 Results	2023 Results	2024 Results
Strategic Outcome 2, Activity 4: Provide curative and preventative nutrition activities to children aged 6-59 months and PLW/G and capacity strengthening to national and state health institutions				
Proportion of target population that participates in an adequate number of distributions (adherence)	≥66	29	14	54
Proportion of eligible population reached by nutrition prevention programme (coverage)	=100	-	180	100
MAM Treatment Default rate, overall (%)	<15	6	16.4	24
MAM Treatment Mortality rate, overall (%)	<3	0	0	0
MAM Treatment Non-response rate, overall (%)	<15	3	0	1
MAM Treatment Recovery rate, overall (%)	>75	91	83	76

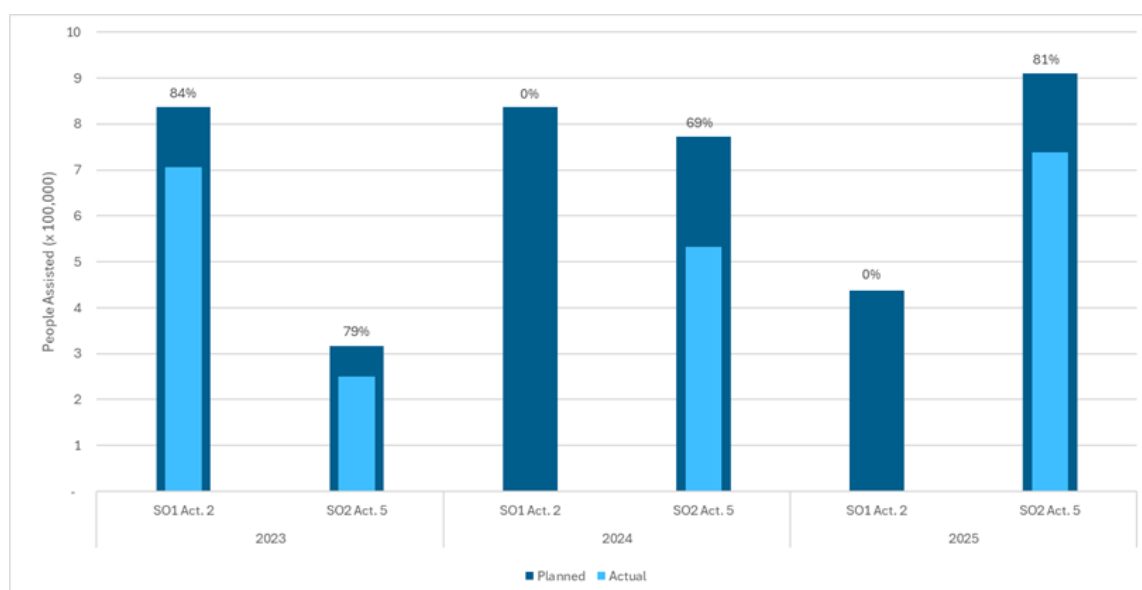
Source: Sudan ACRs 2022-2024

82. While the external constraints were clearly considerable – including major resource gaps, insecurity, harsh climatic conditions and inadequate storage and high risk of food losses – there was a degree of consistency across external and internal interviews that **WFP's own planning and prioritization of its nutrition response in Sudan was also insufficient** to mitigate the external challenges. Despite scale-up plans being in place, inadequate projections of needs and pre-positioning compounded the external constraints reportedly leading to pipeline breaks in 2024 and early 2025; and a lack of absorption capacity (as well as logistical bottlenecks and bureaucratic delays) led to unused stocks in mid-2025. Combined, this had a negative knock-on impact on other organizations' supply chain planning,⁸² on WFP's own reputation, and ultimately on vulnerable people in need of urgent nutrition support.

83. School closures following the conflict disrupted WFP's school feeding activities in some areas, leading to a reduced number of feeding days and the number of people WFP assisted falling short of targets (Figure 18). A resumption of take-home rations took place in March 2024 in more stable parts of the country and the programme shifted to a home-grown school feeding model, supporting smallholder farmers with local procurement. Outcome monitoring data on school enrolment, attendance and retention rates were not available after 2022. However, in areas where schools had reopened, focus group discussions noted fewer school dropouts as an unexpected positive outcome.

⁸² Interviews and Sudan nutrition cluster meeting minutes indicated widespread instances of the distribution of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in place of missing MAM commodities in some localities.

Figure 18 – School feeding planned and actual people assisted Sudan, 2023-2025



Source: WFP COMET system - Jan 2022-Aug 2025 CSP beneficiaries-_06-10-2025

NB: Activity 2: Emergency school feeding. Activity 5: home-grown school feeding including capacity strengthening

SO3: Increased resilience

84. The number of people reached with WFP livelihoods and resilience support mostly fell short of targets (Annex 16), mainly due to suspension of some activities following the conflict. Data on progress towards outcomes for people participating in resilience programmes were patchy, but by 2024, the **percentage of acceptable food consumption scores was considerably above the target for women and girls, yet fell short of targets for men and boys and for people assisted overall** (no data were available for 2022 or 2023) (Table 7). WFP reporting does not provide an explanation for this difference between outcomes for males and females, nor was it apparent to the evaluation team during data collection.

Table 7 – Sudan food consumption scores, resilience 2024

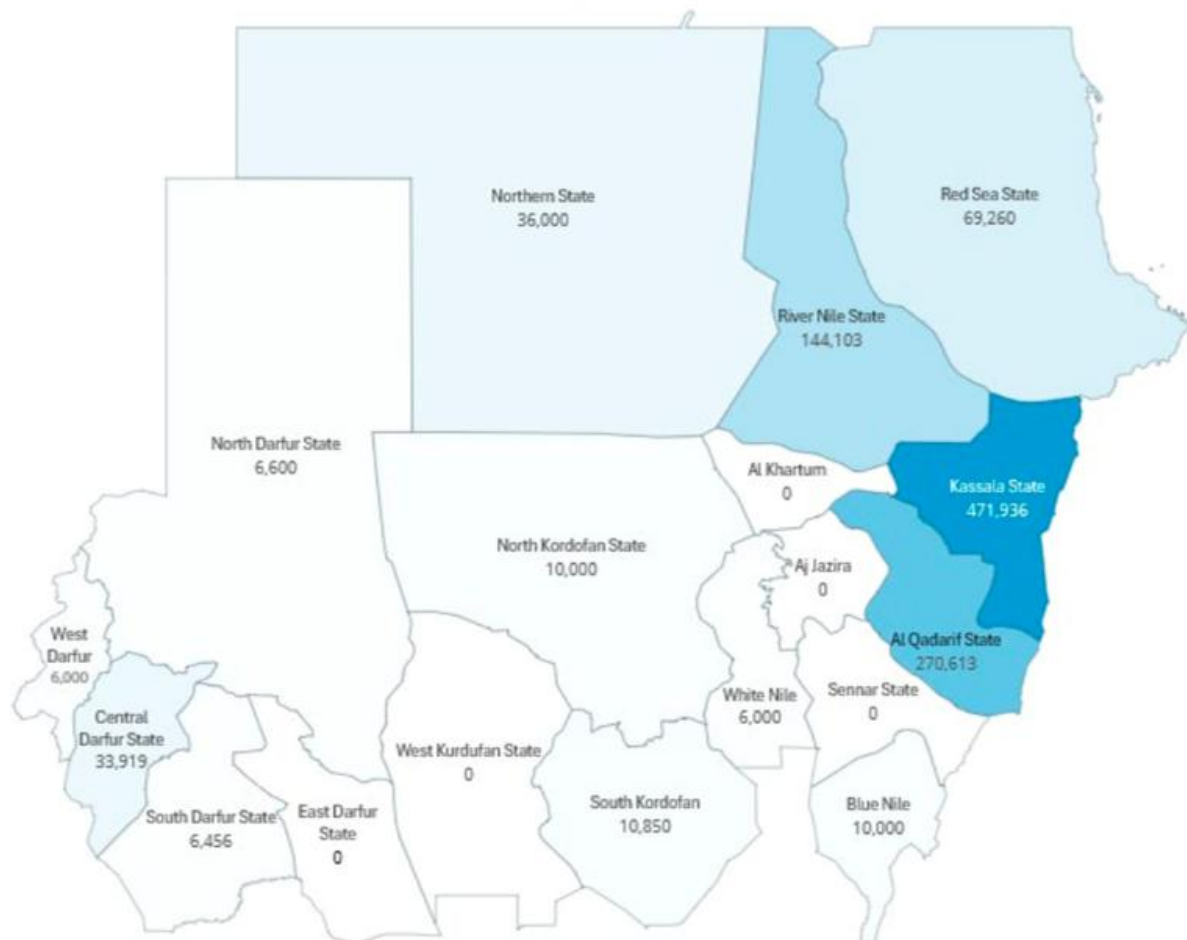
Outcome indicators	M/F/overall	End CSP Target	2024 Results
Food Consumption Score: Percentage of households with Acceptable Food Consumption Score	Female	>54	81
	Male	>79	58
	Overall	>76	65
Food Consumption Score: Percentage of households with Borderline Food Consumption Score	Female	<30	9
	Male	<14	24
	Overall	<16	20
Food Consumption Score: Percentage of households with Poor Food Consumption Score	Female	<16	11
	Male	<7	18
	Overall	<8	26

Source: Sudan ACR 2024

85. **WFP’s resilience programming enhanced smallholder productivity and national food systems, even during the ongoing crisis.** This was notably through the continuation and expansion of large-scale agricultural support, which significantly boosted local production and provided immediate economic relief to affected communities and internally displaced people. The Sudan Emergency Wheat Production Project (SEWPP) delivered 9,088.2 metric tons (mt) of wheat seeds to 170,926 smallholder farmers across five states in 2023,⁸³ and the 2023/2024 season saw a dramatic increase in total production, meeting approximately 22 percent of Sudan’s annual requirements.⁸⁴ Focus group discussions in Sudan confirmed that food assistance for assets and productive safety net interventions provided households with productive safety nets, additional income, and helped smallholder farmers cope with the conflict-induced economic crises.

86. **Due to the nature of the work and the preferences of donors, resilience activities tended to be concentrated in more stable locations in the east of the country** (Figure 19). Not all, however – the Joint Resilience and Social Cohesion project, implemented with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) with funding from Germany’s KfW, was implemented in the North Darfur State, despite considerable insecurity in the area.

Figure 19 – Resilience reach in Sudan, May 2023–June 2025



Source: WFP Sudan donor meeting presentation June 2025

87. Unanticipated positive results included the strengthening of community solidarity and the empowerment of women, especially through asset-creation activities such as home-based farming. Focus group discussion participants noted that this had fostered mutual support and allowed women to take on greater responsibility for household livelihoods.

⁸³ WFP. February 2024. Sudan Country Office Annual Performance Plan 2023.

⁸⁴ WFP. September 2024. Sudan Country Office Annual Performance Plan 2024, Mid-year Review.

S04: Common services

88. United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) airbridges enabled rapid access to isolated populations, restored emergency connectivity and sustained cross-border aid when in-country access failed. Despite clearance challenges and security risks, UNHAS met the critical function of evacuating humanitarian actors out of Sudan, primarily through airbridges connecting Port Sudan to Nairobi and Amman.⁸⁵ As shown in Table 8, performance figures for 2023 and 2024 show a notable decline in passenger and flight numbers and organizations served, rising again in 2025 in response to increased demand. Internal access for UNHAS was constrained by insecurity, bureaucratic impediments and spiralling costs, yet partners appreciated efforts to move out beyond Port Sudan and service hubs (for example Kassala and Dongola), particularly from late 2024 onwards.

Table 8 – UNHAS performance figures, 2023-2025⁸⁶

	2023	2024	2025
Number of Aircrafts	2	2	2
Passengers transported	10,900	8,063	8,601
MT of humanitarian cargo transported	36,2	31,2	36,8
Destinations reached	33	8	7
Flights performed	1,430	507	591
User organizations served	104	80	92
MEDEVACs performed (patients)	20	24	23
SECVACs performed (passengers)	586	0	0

Source: UNHAS annual reviews 2023, 2024

89. The logistics cluster supported system-wide efforts to reach vulnerable people in need. In 2024, it stored more than 27,700 m³ of humanitarian supplies for 22 partners, more than doubling its performance in 2023 (see Table 9). While some external key informants reported uneven coordination in the beginning of the crisis and limited convening power of the logistics cluster, this improved over the course of the response.

Table 9 – Logistics cluster performance figures, 2023-2024

	2023	2024
Critical Storage capacity (m3)	13000	27700
Relief Cargo (m3)	16000	27700
Humanitarian Partners	13	22

Source: Logistics Cluster Annual Report 2023, Logistics Cluster Annual Report 2024

90. The emergency telecommunications cluster contributed to restoring or maintaining essential communications in locations affected by the conflict, enabling field teams to coordinate distributions and scale assistance. While connectivity and power remained binding constraints in some locations, and funding shortages curbed ambitions to expand to additional locations, there was still notable progress between 2023 and 2024 (see Table 10).

⁸⁵In 2024, UNHAS organized 507 flights to transport 8,063 passengers and 31mt of cargo on behalf of 80 humanitarian organizations: WFP. 2025. [Sudan Annual Country Report 2024](#).

⁸⁶Data collection ended August 2025. However, the country office provided data for the full period January-November 2025; specific figures up to August only were not available at time of writing.

Table 10 – Emergency telecommunications cluster performance figures, 2023-2024

	2023	2024
Responders connected to ETC data network	700+	830+
Humanitarian partners supported	38	38
Operational sites across Sudan	30	70

Source: Emergency Telecommunications Cluster Annual Report 2023, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster Annual Report 2024

SO5: Country capacity strengthening

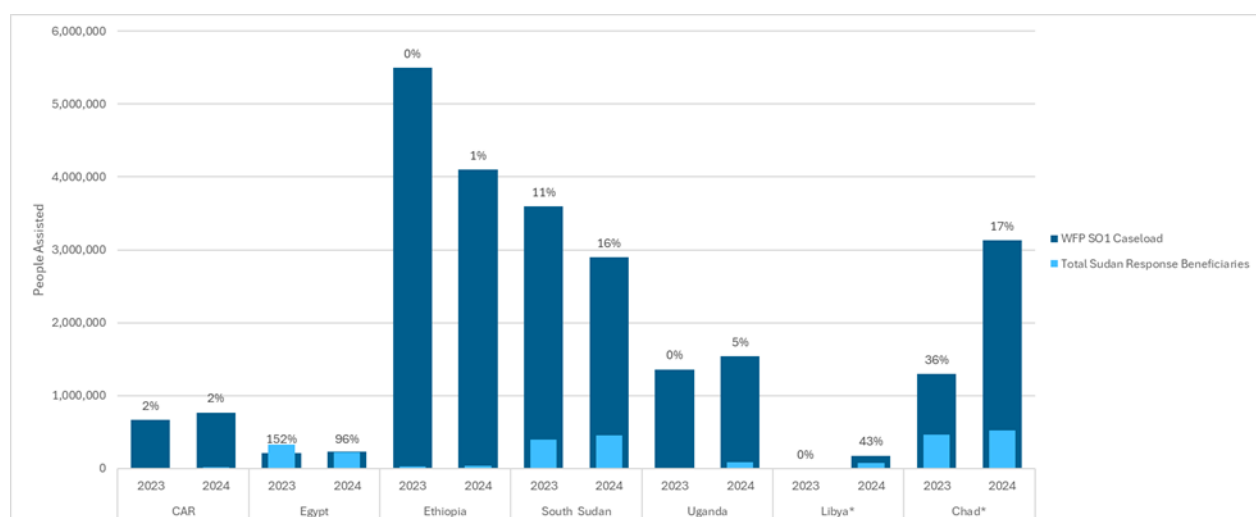
91. Pre-conflict efforts to address the social protection system gap in Sudan were halted by the conflict. However, a new collaboration with the World Bank was established on the Emergency Crisis Response Safety Net (SANAD) project in 2024 to provide cash transfers for immediate assistance and longer-term resilience.⁸⁷ Data on progress towards outcomes were not available for this strategic outcome.

Neighbouring countries

SO1: Meeting the food and nutrition needs of crisis-affected populations

92. **While caseloads varied, country offices met emergency response objectives and were responsive to needs through the provision of unconditional resource transfers (in-kind and cash-based transfers).** The numbers and proportions relative to overall SO1 caseloads (not exclusive to the Sudan response) varied extensively across country offices (Figure 20). While Chad, Egypt and South Sudan were the most notable in terms of numbers, Egypt was the only country where the Sudan response dominated its SO1 response.

Figure 20 – Sudan response, people WFP assists compared to WFP total SO1 caseloads, 2023-2024



Source: Country office data on Sudan-specific people receiving WFP assistance by year

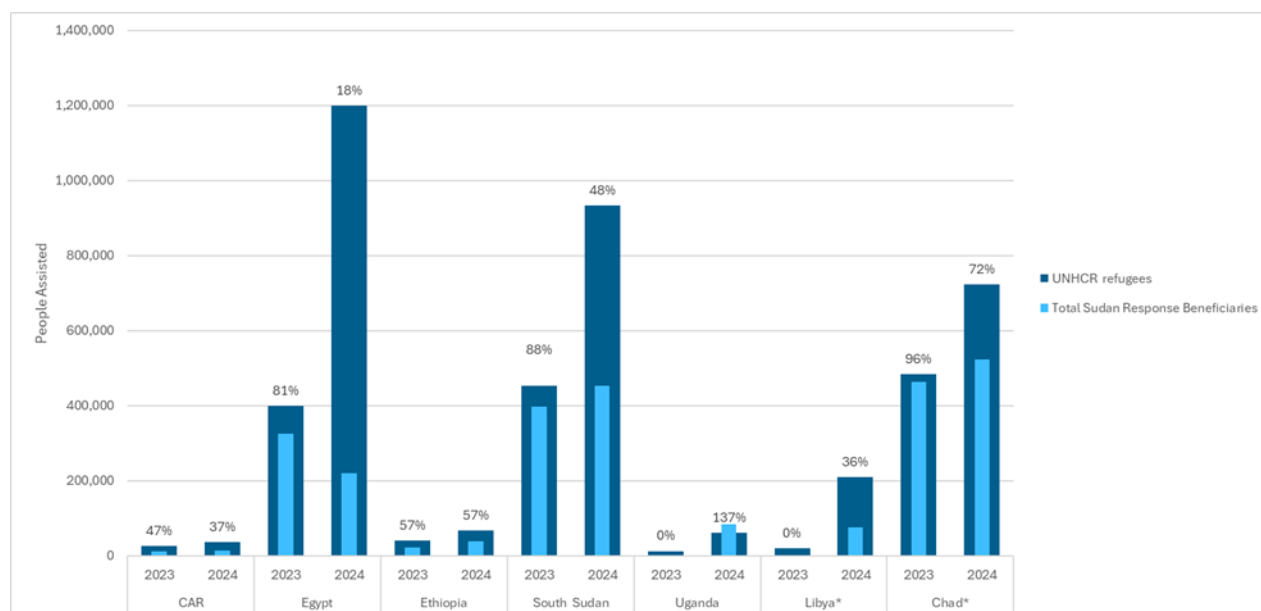
*Libya data include host communities; Chad data include host communities and returnees

93. A lack of planned versus actual data on people WFP assists for the Sudan response prevented a full analysis of the extent to which needs were met across countries. However, UNHCR data on registered refugees compared with WFP’s numbers of people assisted (Figure 21) show that, despite an increase in overall Sudanese and returnee numbers between 2023 and 2024, the proportion that this caseload

⁸⁷ WFP. [Sudan Annual Country Report 2024](#).

represented within the overall refugee caseload decreased across countries.⁸⁸ There was insufficient evidence to indicate whether this shift was linked to an inability to meet growing needs.

Figure 21 – Sudan response, people assisted as a proportion of registered Sudanese refugees by country, 2023-2024⁸⁹



Source: Country office data on Sudan-specific people assisted by year UNHCR Sudan situation datasets for the end of each year

*Libya data include host communities; Chad data include host communities and returnees

94. Sudan response-specific outcome data were not available, but other available evidence shows that **country offices were responsive to the refugee and returnee influx, delivering blanket in-kind support through ready-to-eat rations at the border areas (for example, Chad, Egypt, Libya, South Sudan), followed by in-kind, cash-based transfers or hybrid assistance for onward assistance as appropriate.** While those receiving WFP assistance in some countries experienced delays and months of missed assistance due to supply chain delays, insecurity and funding constraints (for example, in Chad, Ethiopia and most notably in Libya), staff and cooperating partners interviewed described immediate blanket in-kind emergency assistance as a vital form of assistance for people arriving from Sudan.

95. Internal informants interviewed were generally positive about WFP's ability to meet needs, while acknowledging delays (for example, Chad, Libya, Ethiopia, South Sudan). Yet those receiving WFP assistance consulted in Egypt and Chad largely did not feel their needs had been met (Table 11). While the assistance had made a difference to their lives, they said that it had not been sufficient.⁹⁰ In Egypt, focus group discussion participants described trade-offs between meeting shelter and nutrition needs with the cash received. It was noted that in April and again in May 2025, due to funding shortfalls, WFP reduced both the number of people to receive cash as well as the transfer value (which was cut by 33 percent in April);⁹¹ however, the extent to which this influenced the feelings expressed by the Egypt focus group discussion participants could not be determined.

⁸⁸ Except in Uganda and Libya, where WFP did not support this Sudan caseload in 2023.

⁸⁹ NB: Libya UNHCR data are estimated by adding UNHCR-registered refugees with refugees registered by local authorities. See for example [CORE Libya Sudanese Refugees and Asylum-Seekers - July 2025](#).

⁹⁰ It should be noted, however, that some FGD participants receiving CBT referred to needs beyond immediate food assistance (e.g., non-food items, school expenses).

⁹¹ WFP. 29 July 2025. Funding cuts to WFP Egypt refugee food assistance: Message, holding lines and Q&A.

Table 11 – Focus group discussion responses on needs met, Chad & Egypt

Country	Yes	No	Mixed	No Response	TOTAL FGDs
Chad - Has the assistance provided met your needs?	1	10	0	2	13
Chad - Has the assistance provided made a notable difference to your lives?	8	0	0	5	13
Egypt - Has the assistance provided met your needs?	0	9	5	2	16
Egypt - Has the assistance provided made a notable difference to your lives?	9	0	5	2	16

96. Beyond general food assistance, stakeholders described how some country offices (for example, Chad, Ethiopia, South Sudan) had **leveraged emergency nutrition and emergency school feeding activities to complement general food assistance**. In Egypt, people benefited from food assistance for training and for asset activities as well as innovative approaches to vocational training, and participants noted the positive impact this had on their living conditions, especially in Greater Cairo.

97. **SO1 activities generated unintended positive and negative outcomes**. In both Chad and Egypt, focus group discussions highlighted the positive effect assistance had on strengthening social ties and community solidarity, with assistance used to help others in the community and start small businesses. Vocational training participants in Egypt described a particularly positive emotional impact and increased confidence. In South Sudan, a dramatic positive expansion of the market economy in Renk was noted by internal stakeholders, although in Chad, while growth of the local economy was also attributed to the response with some positive effects, they were noted as uneven, with some benefiting more than others from the increased trade.

SO4: Common services

98. **Where common service activities specific to the Sudan response were raised or where they significantly contributed to the Sudan response (for example, Chad, CAR, Egypt, Ethiopia), they were highlighted as an added value**. For example, WFP Chad expanded and maintained its capacity in UNHAS flight provision to meet the new surge in humanitarian actors in the country due to the Sudan crisis.⁹² In CAR, UNHAS responded to the sudden increase in humanitarian needs at the eastern border following the Sudan crisis by amending flight schedules and positioning a helicopter in Bria.⁹³

2.2.2 Protection and accountability to affected people

People WFP assists in all countries reported that they felt safe when receiving WFP assistance, and staff and partners were generally confident that WFP had ensured protection within its response.

WFP’s response in Sudan was guided by an overarching protection and conflict sensitivity strategy, although the uptake of conflict sensitivity analysis was limited. The mainstreaming of protection was also evident in neighbouring countries, although it was not generally considered a priority.

WFP’s prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) measures and networks in Sudan were successfully reinstated after an interruption at the outset of the emergency response.

Accountability to affected population mechanisms were in place in all countries, including in Sudan, where systems and capacities were significantly disrupted following the conflict. While use of the community feedback mechanism increased over time in Sudan, except in some hard-to-reach areas, many people consulted said that they were unaware of how to get information and signal problems; and the same issue was also noted in some neighbouring countries.

⁹² WFP. 2024. [Chad Annual Country Report 2023](#).

⁹³ WFP. 2024. [CAR Annual Country Report 2023](#).

Protection

Sudan

99. **The majority of people supported by WFP in Sudan (almost 98 percent in 2023 and over 95 percent in 2024) reported that they felt safe when receiving WFP assistance.**⁹⁴ This was echoed by focus group discussions, where most groups who discussed this point said that they felt safe at WFP project sites. **Most WFP staff and partners in Sudan were also positive about WFP's protection of populations during the response:** 57 percent of staff and just under half of partners who responded to the online survey in Sudan said that WFP had ensured protection "to a great extent" (see Annex 11).

100. **WFP established measures to ensure the protection of people receiving its assistance early in its response and later introduced a more systemized strategy for integrating protection and conflict sensitivity.** Recognizing the significant protection risks for vulnerable populations in Sudan, WFP quickly produced guidelines, checklists and training for staff and partners, including on organizing safe distributions and conducting awareness-raising activities. A subsequent strategy and implementation plan set out WFP's more comprehensive approach to protection and conflict sensitivity.⁹⁵ Feedback from interviewees suggested that implementation of protection measures varied depending on levels of awareness and capacity of WFP staff and partners (see Section 2.2.3).

101. **Conflict sensitivity analysis informed WFP's ways of working, highlighting risks, but uptake was limited.** WFP conducted analysis of conflict sensitivity risks to its operations in Sudan and sought to integrate these into programming – for example, analysis of targeting challenges and conflict sensitivity identified risks and implications for WFP programmes; as well as identification of the potential conflict sensitivities related to WFP vendors, specific locations or the introduction of new modalities.⁹⁶ Despite strong examples such as these, as well as accounts of risk mapping exercises between the country office and area offices, there was no evidence of a significant demand within WFP to read and act on the analysis that was conducted, primarily due to capacity constraints and time pressures (according to interviews).

102. **WFP's prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) measures and networks in Sudan were reinstated, allowing the organization to assure its own approach to PSEA and contribute to inter-agency PSEA and wider protection efforts.** The crisis resulted in a breakdown of WFP's network of PSEA focal points and more limited access to people for awareness-raising. The subsequent recruitment of an inter-agency PSEA advisor and the reinstatement of the network of trained focal points in all WFP's offices in Sudan improved the organization's capacity in this area and led to greater engagement in inter-agency groups covering protection issues, including gender-based violence, and the inter-agency PSEA network. PSEA was also embedded within project approaches, such as the World Bank-funded SANAD. Indeed, WFP Sudan's PSEA self-assessment checklist completed at the end of 2024 shows that almost all the required actions were completed.

103. Data protection measures were in place but were insufficient given the volatility of the context and the predominance of paper-based registrations in conflict-affected areas (see Section 2.1.2) No data protection issues specifically related to the Sudan response in neighbouring countries were highlighted.

Neighbouring countries

104. **People WFP assists in Chad and Egypt generally said that they felt safe when receiving WFP assistance.** In several of the focus group discussions in Chad, people noted that law enforcement officers were present at distributions, contributing to feelings of safety. Also, according to interviewees, where there were specific cases of unsafe distribution sites (for example, Libya), these were quickly addressed by WFP and cooperating partners. **WFP staff were also strongly positive about WFP's protection of the people who receive its assistance** (73 percent of those who responded to the online survey in neighbouring countries said that WFP had ensured protection during the provision of assistance "to a great extent"), and partners were also overall positive (47 percent responded "to a great extent" and 41 percent responded "somewhat").

⁹⁴ WFP Sudan country office annual performance plans, 2023 and 2024.

⁹⁵ WFP. October 2024. WFP Sudan Protection and Conflict Sensitivity Strategy and Implementation Plan 2024-2027.

⁹⁶ Analysis documents shared with the evaluation team.

105. **Protection was mainstreamed in WFP's work but not viewed as a priority.** Interviewees indicated that protection was generally regarded as mainstreamed within WFP's response to Sudanese refugees and returnees. For example, in Chad one external informant described positioning a protection officer in the refugee camps, while in Egypt, risk screening was conducted. At the same time (and more pronounced), was the view that protection was not a priority and staff did not view WFP as a protection actor. Furthermore, perceptions of the degree of protection risks varied between countries (for example, higher in Chad and South Sudan and lower in Uganda, Ethiopia and Libya) and there were varying degrees of staff capacities on protection.⁹⁷

106. There was significant data sharing between UNHCR and WFP in most countries⁹⁸ and the available evidence indicated that country offices seriously engaged to ensure data protection, including through adaptation and use of the UNHCR-WFP 2018 global data sharing agreement addendum.⁹⁹ However, the evaluation team was unable to verify the comprehensiveness or implementation of these agreements due to lack of documentation.

107. PSEA measures were observed in general country office documents, but neither documentation nor interviews highlighted any PSEA measures or incidents specific to the Sudan response.

Accountability to affected populations

Sudan

108. **The community feedback mechanism (CFM) in Sudan was disrupted by the conflict, but CFM channels were re-established and diversified reasonably quickly.** While the conflict rendered WFP's centralized toll-free hotline in Khartoum offline for a period of four months, staff stressed that diversification of CFM channels thereafter was key to successes in communicating with communities. By the end of 2024, documented CFM channels included paid phonelines (later replaced by the reinstated free hotline), email communication, helpdesks in some distribution points, an internet-based chatbot, "click to call", digitalized community helpdesks and interoperability of WFP's CFM platform with those of other UN agencies. Despite diversification, helpdesks at project sites remained the most utilized form of CFM according to interviewees.¹⁰⁰

109. The use of WFP CFM channels increased over time, except in some hard-to-reach areas where the number of recorded cases remained low. The re-establishment of an effective CFM mechanism is reflected in its use, with the number of overall cases increasingly substantially from year-to-year – from 9,777 cases logged in 2023, rising to 25,435 cases in 2024 and reaching 47,576 cases by mid-2025. However, this positive trend was not consistent across localities. The number of CFM cases remained low in most of the Darfur and Kordofan states (except for Central Darfur). Overall, the data showed that only around 0.3 percent of people who receive WFP assistance used CFM channels between 2023 and 2025 (though with an upward trend, increasing from 0.1 percent of the total in 2023 to 0.5 percent in 2025). A significant proportion of CFM cases remained open (26 percent in 2024, 17 percent in 2024 and 51 percent to date in 2025), signifying difficulties with responding to and closing CFM complaints.

110. **Both staff and partners felt that WFP had somewhat ensured accountability to affected people within its response in Sudan.**¹⁰¹ Moreover, a dedicated country office plan set out how WFP should integrate community engagement into its operations to embed accountability to affected people as a foundational principle.¹⁰² Despite this, and regardless of the increased use of WFP and cooperating partner CFM platforms, **people were often not aware of how to get information or complain about WFP assistance.** More

⁹⁷ For example, KIIs referred to a protection unit (e.g. South Sudan) and protection officers (e.g. CAR, Chad).

⁹⁸ An exception is Libya where this was not raised during consultations, presumably due to the different relationship between WFP and UNHCR in this context.

⁹⁹ [Addendum on Data Sharing to the January 2011 Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and WFP](#). 2018.

¹⁰⁰ A WFP Sudan donor briefing, March 2024, claims that helpdesks were established at all distribution sites but interviews suggested that there were gaps in some hard-to-reach areas, notably in the Darfurs and Khartoum.

¹⁰¹ Most respondents selected "somewhat": 67 percent of staff in Sudan and 46 percent of partners.

¹⁰² WFP. 2024. WFP Sudan Community Engagement for Accountability to Affected People Strategy and Plan 2024-2026.

than half of the focus group discussions in Sudan said that they did not know how to get information, complain or provide feedback. WFP's own monitoring of its assistance showed variable levels of awareness and use of CFM: distribution monitoring in mid-2024 showed that two thirds of the people who receive WFP assistance interviewed knew how to make a complaint,¹⁰³ yet monitoring of WFP's hot meals assistance in Khartoum in November 2024 noted that feedback mechanisms were not clearly visible at any of the visited project sites and very few of the people consulted had used CFM channels.¹⁰⁴

Neighbouring countries

111. **CFMs were in place across neighbouring countries but challenges were noted** and evidence of CFM effectiveness specific to the Sudan response was limited. Challenges included issues with coverage (for example, Uganda), **awareness** of CFMs and how to engage with them (for example, Ethiopia) and **receiving and managing feedback** (for example, South Sudan), though the extent to which these impacted the Sudan response could not be determined. For Libya, where the Sudan response was the primary activity, the CFM hotline was active but only launched 5-6 months after the first distributions. Initially, WFP also had a helpdesk in place, but this was later transferred to UNHCR due to funding constraints.

112. Staff and partners in neighbouring countries generally felt that WFP's accountability to affected people was strong, although with considerable variability in survey responses between countries (see Annex 11). Feedback from focus group discussions on WFP's accountability was largely positive in Chad (broadly echoed in the 2024 annual CFM report),¹⁰⁵ although some participants stressed that, while they knew of the CFM and had used it, follow-up was lacking. In Egypt it was more mixed – focus group discussions stressed the need for clearer and easier feedback mechanisms, including but not limited to the cash-based transfer financial service provider, and some participants expressed a preference for channelling complaints through community leaders (Table 12).

¹⁰³ WFP Sudan. August 2024. Sudan Country Office, Process Monitoring Biannual Report. Reporting Period January-June 2024.

¹⁰⁴ WFP. November 2024. Third-Party Monitoring in Sudan. Khartoum Hot Meals Report.

¹⁰⁵ WFP. 2024. Community Feedback Mechanism Bureau Pays Tchad Rapport annual.

Table 12 – Focus group discussion perspectives on the community feedback mechanism in Chad and Egypt

Country	Yes	No	Mixed	No Response	TOTAL FGDs
Chad - Do you know how to get information and complain about WFP assistance?	12	0	1	0	13
Chad - Have you used complaints/feedback mechanisms?	12	0	1	0	13
Chad - Are the complaints/feedback mechanisms accessible to everyone?	6	4	0	3	13
Egypt - Do you know how to get information and complain about WFP assistance?	5	6	5	0	16
Egypt - Have you used complaints/feedback mechanisms?	7	3	5	1	16
Egypt - Are the complaints/feedback mechanisms accessible to everyone?	0	7	2	7	16

2.2.3 Equality between women and men and broader inclusion

Considerations about equality between women and men were generally taken into consideration in the response in Sudan. Limited available evidence for neighbouring countries showed a generally positive picture on equality between women and men.

Consistent attention to other vulnerable groups – including older persons and persons with disabilities – was lacking and most people supported by WFP did not consider that the assistance was tailored to enable greater inclusion.

Gaps in staff and partner capacities constrained WFP's ability to fully integrate protection, gender, broader inclusion and accountability to affected people considerations into its response in Sudan.

Equality between women and men

Sudan

113. **Despite the lack of a dedicated strategy on equality between women and men in Sudan, WFP factored gender considerations into the targeting of its assistance and made efforts to mainstream gender sensitivity into the design and implementation of its activities.** In September 2024, senior WFP leadership requested a dedicated Sudan protection and gender strategy.¹⁰⁶ Instead, WFP Sudan merged gender into its protection and conflict strategy (see Section 2.2.2), factoring gender-based vulnerabilities into its four broad objectives. Gender considerations also featured in various guidance on different aspects of WFP's project cycle and were mainstreamed in resilience activities: for example, WFP conducted assessments to identify barriers to women's participation, including gender norms, land ownership and financial constraints within the World Bank-funded Sudan Somoud project to enhance community resilience¹⁰⁷¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ WFP. Note for the Record, Sudan Regional Crisis Operational Task Force Meeting, 5 September 2024.

¹⁰⁷ WFP. 2025. [Sudan Annual Country Report 2024. Country Strategic Plan 2019-2026](#).

¹⁰⁸ [New World Bank Initiative to Strengthen Access to Basic Services, Boosts Food Security, and Builds Resilience for Sudanese Communities - Sudan | ReliefWeb](#)

114. Analysis of WFP’s data shows that women accounted for more than half of all planned and actual people reached in Sudan between 2023 and 2024 (Figure 8). Self-scoring of the gender and age marker indicated that WFP either fully or partially integrated gender and age within its activities (Table 6, Annex 21).

115. Of the staff in Sudan who responded to the online survey, 57 percent thought that WFP had considered equality between women and men “to a great extent” within the response, as did 46 percent of partners who participated (see Annex 11). Most people who participated in focus group discussions in Sudan said that there was generally equal access to assistance for men and women, but views were more critical on WFP’s tailoring of assistance to meet women’s needs (Table 13).

Table 13 – focus group discussion responses on gender inclusion

Country	Yes	No	Mixed	No Response	TOTAL FGDs
Sudan - Do women and men have equal access to WFP assistance?	25	1	2	32	60
Sudan - Has WFP's assistance been tailored to the specific needs of women?	10	22	1	27	60
Chad - Do women and men have equal access to WFP assistance?	7	0	0	6	13
Chad - Has WFP's assistance been tailored to the specific needs of women?	2	7	2	2	13
Egypt - Do women and men have equal access to WFP assistance?	7	0	0	9	16
Egypt - Has WFP's assistance been tailored to the specific needs of women?	6	3	1	6	16

Neighbouring countries

116. General country documentation (for example, annual country reports, CSPEs) showed that **activities considered equality between women and men**, although evidence specifically related to the Sudan response was limited. SO1 activities in neighbouring countries targeting refugee and crisis-affected populations mostly scored 3 or 4 for the gender and age marker, indicating that they either fully or mostly integrated gender and age (Table 7, Annex 21). While country offices reportedly prioritized women, including households headed by women and pregnant and breastfeeding women, figures of people WFP assists specific to the Sudan response by gender were not available.¹⁰⁹ For select countries where more evidence was available, the picture was mixed with chronic understaffing of women (or lack of staffing) at distribution points in Libya,¹¹⁰ perceptions of exclusion for women over 35 in food assistance for training opportunities and, more positively, the inclusion of women in feedback and distribution committees in Chad. Although general gender assessments were referenced, there was no evidence that country offices had conducted gender assessments focused on the Sudan response.

117. People who participated in focus group discussions in Chad and Egypt said that there was generally equal access to assistance for men and women, but those in Chad were less positive on tailoring of assistance to the specific needs of women (Table 13). Both staff and partners who participated in the online

¹⁰⁹ General numbers on people WFP assists by gender were available. However, in order to identify people assisted by WFP in the Sudan response, the focus was on locations at which level gender disaggregation was not available. Other datasets where disaggregation was available, they were not aggregated in a way where double-counting could be avoided and therefore not used.

¹¹⁰ Based on interviews and third-party monitoring (TPM) reports.

survey in neighbouring countries felt that WFP's response to the regional crisis had supported overall equality between women and men (60 percent of staff and 47 percent of partners responded highly positively) (see Annex 11).

Broader inclusion

118. In Chad and Egypt, participants notably described a lack of special considerations or flexible arrangements for older adults and persons with disabilities during distribution or accessing sites.

Sudan

119. **Persons with disabilities were under-represented among the people that WFP assists.** Data are scarce on vulnerable groups in Sudan, although the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) for Sudan estimated that persons with disabilities represented 15 percent of people in need (using a global estimate in lieu of more exact data) and older persons represented approximately 2.7 percent of the total.¹¹¹ WFP data show that 2 percent of WFP's caseload in 2023 were over 60 years old and 3 percent in 2024, aligning with their estimated representation of the total population; but only 2 percent of WFP's caseload in Sudan in 2023 and 2024 were persons with disabilities, falling well short of their estimated share of the total population.

120. The majority of people who participated in focus group discussions in Sudan said that they had not observed adaptations to WFP's assistance to allow particularly vulnerable groups, such as older persons and persons with disabilities, to receive assistance (Table 14). Staff and partner survey responses to questions on specific vulnerable groups were less positive on the inclusion of older persons, persons with disabilities, youth and other marginalized groups compared with survey responses on gender (see Annex 11).

Table 14 – Focus group discussion responses on adaptation to specific needs of vulnerable groups (for example, persons with disabilities, older persons, etc.)

Country	Yes	No	Mixed	No Response	Total FGDs
Sudan	17	25	1	17	60
Chad	1	8	1	3	13
Egypt	0	9	3	4	16

121. **There were examples of WFP tailoring its assistance and reaching particularly vulnerable groups, but the organization did not systematically incorporate broader inclusion into its activities.** Some evidence exists of WFP's efforts to understand and respond to the needs of particularly vulnerable groups and ensure their inclusion in WFP assistance. For example, within its work on protection and conflict sensitivity, WFP set out to increase its focus on disability inclusion and seek to understand barriers to accessing assistance (see Section 2.2.2). There were instances where this had been implemented – for example, messages targeting persons with disabilities in community sensitization efforts; analysis of tribal dimensions and other potentially marginalized or under-represented groups in conflict sensitivity work; and participation in an inter-agency process contributed to enforcement of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) in Sudan.¹¹²

122. These were isolated examples, however, and neither documents nor interviews suggested a more systematic approach to inclusive programming. WFP's monitoring report for the first half of 2024 stated that 29 percent of project sites did not cater to the needs of more vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and older persons, particularly project sites in West Darfur (55 percent), North Darfur (45 percent) and River Nile (38 percent);¹¹³ and a monitoring report of the hot meals activity in Khartoum in

¹¹¹ OCHA. December 2024. [Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025](#).

¹¹² WFP. 2024. [Sudan Annual Country Report 2023](#).

¹¹³ WFP Sudan. August 2024. Sudan Country Office, Process Monitoring Biannual Report. Reporting Period January-June 2024.

October 2024 noted that 88 percent of project sites lacked accessibility for persons with disabilities.¹¹⁴ Moreover, successive annual reports suggested that WFP was working towards, but had not yet met, UNDIS accountability framework standards.

Neighbouring countries

123. Internal interviewees in some countries noted a **lack of special attention to facilitate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in particular** (for example, South Sudan, Ethiopia). While some steps were taken to address this weakness in general (for example, engagement by the South Sudan country office with the non-government organization (NGO), Humanity & Inclusion), documents and interviewees could not provide details of special measures for persons with disabilities within the Sudan response specifically. Staff and partners in neighbouring countries who took part in the online survey were generally positive about the inclusion of older persons, persons with disabilities, youth and other marginalized groups (see Annex 11). However, feedback from people in Chad and Egypt during focus group discussions mostly indicated that WFP's assistance had not been adapted to meet the specific needs of particularly vulnerable groups (Table 14).

WFP capacity on protection, equality between women and men, and broader inclusion

124. **In Sudan, staff capacity as well as capacity gaps within cooperating partners constrained WFP's ability to fully integrate protection, gender, broader inclusion and accountability to affected people considerations into WFP's emergency response activities.** Staff capacity on these issues was disrupted by the conflict in April 2023 and further challenged by the cutting of positions: for example gender positions were lost during staff realignment exercises. Moreover, there were instances where late consideration of accountability to affected people in decisions and processes, including when important changes had been made to activities, left little time for WFP staff and partners to sensitize people to the changes that were about to happen, causing confusion and dissatisfaction within communities. WFP conducted training for staff in different field locations on gender, protection and conflict sensitivity, particularly during 2023. However, interviewees and documents indicated that staff remained overstretched, with aspects such as protection, accountability to affected people, GEEW and inclusion deprioritized in favour of more immediate operational priorities.¹¹⁵

125. **WFP did not partner with agencies with specific expertise on equality between women and men or other inclusion expertise in Sudan**, but all cooperating partners were expected to have gender policies and sufficient capacity in place to enhance women's participation in activities. Documents and interviews noted training on gender mainstreaming to bolster partner knowledge, but capacity remained inconsistent on cross-cutting aspects and WFP's oversight was considered insufficient.¹¹⁶

126. In neighbouring countries, except for severely constrained human resources in Libya and reports of additional protection staff being recruited in Chad and CAR, there was insufficient evidence specific to the Sudan response on this topic.

2.2.4 Humanitarian principles

WFP staff were aware of humanitarian principles but adherence to the principles was challenged by a lack of escalation pathways when dilemmas arose, siloed ways of working and limited application of learning from WFP's experience from other contexts.

WFP lacked consistent leadership and clear direction to address difficult and fundamental issues related to the humanitarian principles, such as engagement with SAF.

Opportunities to work with donors to advocate for principled access over time were increasingly capitalized on.

¹¹⁴ WFP. 21 October 2024. Third-Party Monitoring in Sudan. Khartoum Hot Meals Report.

¹¹⁵ For example: WFP. 6 December 2023. After-Action Review: Sudan; WFP. 22 May 2024. After Action Review: Sudan Regional Crisis. Key priorities, lessons learned and recommendations.

¹¹⁶ WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09](#).

Pressure to reach large numbers of people with WFP assistance and access constraints meant an initial focus on easier-to-reach locations, operating against the principle of impartiality. However, WFP gradually found more creative ways of reaching non-SAF controlled areas.

Delayed engagement with and support for mutual aid groups compromised the principle of humanity. Ways of working with local partners limited their flexibility to make decisions and left them exposed to high levels of risk.

Box 1: Statement of WFP's commitment to humanitarian principles

- **Humanity:** WFP will seek to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it is found and respond with food assistance when appropriate. WFP will provide assistance in ways that respect life, health, and dignity.
- **Impartiality:** WFP's assistance will be guided solely by need and will not discriminate in terms of ethnic origin, nationality, political opinion, gender, race, or religion.
- **Neutrality:** WFP will not take sides in a conflict and will not engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature. Food assistance will not be provided to active combatants.
- **Operational Independence:** WFP will provide assistance in a manner that is operationally independent of the political, economic, military, or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where such assistance is being provided.

127. This section focuses exclusively on the response inside Sudan. While WFP's commitment to humanitarian principles was visible in neighbouring countries, there was insufficient evidence on this topic specifically in relation to the Sudan response.

The use of humanitarian principles in decision making

128. **There was a high level of understanding of the humanitarian principles in theory among WFP staff, both at middle and senior leadership levels.** This was apparent from the interviews, reinforced by the results of the survey of WFP staff (just over 80 percent felt they had sufficient understanding of humanitarian principles).

129. Nevertheless, translating theory into practice and **adhering to the humanitarian principles in the highly politicized context of Sudan was extremely challenging.** This was recognized by a country office request for global headquarters support on humanitarian principles and a subsequent short-term deployment, which revealed gaps in staff understanding of the application of humanitarian principles to the Sudan operation: for example, confusion among staff about whether to engage with all parties to the conflict even if this was essential for negotiating access. It also revealed systemic weaknesses in pursuing a principled humanitarian approach: for example, a lack of escalation pathways when humanitarian dilemmas arose, and siloed escalation pathways for other issues, including supply chain and security. Having identified these and other gaps, global headquarters staff made recommendations to strengthen the country office's ability to follow a principled approach, although there was no evidence that recommendations were adopted or followed through. The training on humanitarian principles was welcomed and well attended, and, although senior leadership was supportive of the training, most did not participate.

130. **Country office staff reported that they did not feel well supported by senior management when facing dilemmas and difficult decisions related to principles and trade-offs.** Examples cited include making payments to local authorities for WFP trucks to pass. Although staff raised these issues, they noted a reluctance to discuss them, and an even greater hesitancy to agree on policy decisions to guide staff on the ground. As a result, decisions tended to be pushed down the management chain and localized solutions were found. This was more pronounced when there was high turnover in WFP's senior leadership team in-

country but was reported to have improved since the leadership team stabilized, accompanied by a greater willingness for more open discussion.

131. Dynamic and insightful conflict analysis was key to decision making in support of a principled humanitarian response.¹¹⁷ This appears to have been stronger at the local level and weaker at the macro level, with evidence of some basic errors (for example, sending transporters from east Sudan to west Sudan, assuming they would be accepted and allowed to pass across conflict lines).¹¹⁸

132. Overall, there was a **granular and piecemeal approach to applying humanitarian principles, lacking strategic guidance, analysis and leadership to address more challenging issues, such as engagement with SAF**. Consequently, the need to review and reorientate WFP's relationship with SAF – previously more collaborative and development focused, shifting to a relationship more appropriate to a context of violent civil war and guided by humanitarian principles – was slow to be acknowledged or acted upon.¹¹⁹

133. **There was little evidence of learning from WFP's operations in contexts with similar challenges regarding WFP's neutrality and operational independence**. Examples of missed opportunities to learn, cited in interviews, include Yemen and Libya, where early decisions to position the country office in the capital compromised WFP's perceived (if not actual) neutrality and independence in the same way as was done in Sudan. Other examples included Ethiopia, where pursuing a principled humanitarian response required a political pivoting of WFP's relationship with government.

134. WFP was involved in drafting and endorsing the Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) in July 2023 to provide a common and foundational framework for principled humanitarian action by the humanitarian community, especially the humanitarian country team. Some WFP practitioners found the JOPs to be a helpful guide. However, most saw the JOPs as a missed opportunity given the lack of follow-up and accountability, for example, when agencies deviated, and insufficient avenues or tools to discuss trade-offs between humanitarian principles. This was echoed by other humanitarian organizations in Sudan.¹²⁰

Advocacy for principled humanitarian access: Neutrality and operational independence

135. The Sudan response took place within a context of global challenges to (and dilution of) international humanitarian law, which underpins the normative framework of humanitarian principles.¹²¹ This is relevant to the limited international attention given to the humanitarian crisis in Sudan since war broke out and has had implications for advocacy for a principled approach.

136. **The challenge to the United Nations' perceived neutrality, having recognized SAF as the sovereign authority of Sudan, in turn impeded WFP's ability to negotiate access to non-SAF controlled areas**.¹²² Its perceived operational independence was also compromised. The issue is how WFP managed this trade-off between the principles of neutrality and independence, and the principles of humanity and impartiality, particularly as humanitarian needs were consistently high and poorly met (at least in the early phase of the response) in non-SAF controlled parts of the country, including in the regions of Darfur and Kordofan.

137. Some of the impediments to effective advocacy for humanitarian access originated beyond WFP; for example, weaknesses in inter-agency coordination to negotiate access. Perceptions of WFP's compromised

¹¹⁷ United Nations Evaluation Group. 2024. [Guidance on the Integration of Humanitarian Principles in the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action](#). New York: UNEG.

¹¹⁸ WFP Sudan's Transport Plan October 2024.

¹¹⁹ Some interviewees experienced concern about WFP being overly deferential to SAF rather than taking difficult decisions that would better uphold a principled response.

¹²⁰ HERE. April 2025. [Lost in Sudanisation? What it means to apply a principled humanitarian approach in the response to the crisis in Sudan](#); CSF. June 2025. [Sudan Joint Operating Principles \(JOPs\) Consultation Report](#).

¹²¹ D. McLean and M. Hofmam. 2023. [International humanitarian law, State sovereignty and the erosion of the humanitarian consensus: the end of humanitarianism?](#)

¹²² HERE. April 2025. [Lost in Sudanisation? What it means to apply a principled humanitarian approach in the response to the crisis in Sudan](#): "In recognizing the SAF as the government of Sudan, the UN took a political stance in opposition to certain humanitarian principles. As a result, UN humanitarian agencies are seen as partisan, and have not been able to secure a position that allows them to gain full humanitarian access to non-SAF-held areas".

operational independence and the absence of a unified corporate narrative on humanitarian principles within WFP in Sudan were also acknowledged as constraints.¹²³ Moreover, there was a lack of understanding early on that many of the obstructions to access were political rather than technical, requiring a more political response (see also Section 2.4.1 on WFP's engagement with government institutions on technical matters).¹²⁴

138. **WFP initially missed opportunities to work more closely with donors to advocate for principled access. This improved over time**, however, and interviewees indicated that WFP progressively increased its political analysis, engagement and humanitarian diplomacy with different stakeholders at senior levels (including donors) to secure access and open corridors.¹²⁵

Targeting and prioritization: Humanity and impartiality

139. As earlier sections have described, **WFP's programmes initially focused on more accessible areas early in the response** (Section 2.1.2), although the organization **gradually made a more concerted effort to reach non-SAF controlled areas** (Section 2.2.1).¹²⁶ Again, some internal stakeholders commented that WFP had been too slow to learn from other contexts where it had prior experience of working creatively across conflict lines (for example, Afghanistan and Syria), and challenges with ensuring a needs-based response continued, including as a result of expulsion of the IPC at the end of 2024 (Section 2.1.1). Moreover, throughout the response, interviewees stressed that the pressure on and within WFP to show that they had reached large numbers of people with assistance created a perverse incentive to deliver to easier-to-reach locations rather than where needs were greatest, thus operating against the principle of impartiality.

WFP partnerships: Implications for a principled approach

140. Much of the humanitarian response in Sudan was led and dominated by Sudanese mutual aid organizations, including the Emergency Response Rooms (ERR). However, WFP was slow to engage with these frontline civil society actors (although with time, did find ways to support them); and, like other international organizations, struggled to step outside conventional forms of partnership (Section 2.4.1).¹²⁷ As one of the largest humanitarian actors with constrained access, this **delayed engagement with, and support for, ERR had significant consequences in terms of alleviating human suffering**.

141. Some of WFP's partner requirements (for example, around accountability to affected people and inclusion and non-discrimination), are important to a principled humanitarian response in which affected people are treated with dignity. But the rigidity with which WFP has applied some of those requirements limited partners' ability and flexibility to make their own localized decisions on the most effective ways of following the principles of humanity and impartiality; for example, reducing rations to increase coverage. More concerning was reports that some **national partners were not adequately supported by WFP in negotiating access with armed groups**, for example with the RSF.

¹²³ WFP. December 2023. After-Action Review: Sudan, 6 December 2023.

¹²⁴ According to interviewees, this pivot eventually happened but took time.

¹²⁵ WFP. 22 May 2024. After-Action Review: Sudan Regional Crisis; WFP. October 2024. Lessons Learned: Sudan Regional Corporate Scale-Up.

¹²⁶ In North Darfur, for example, although famine was first declared in and around El Fasher in July and December 2024, WFP (and most other international humanitarian actors) could not provide adequate humanitarian assistance with the consequence that hunger and famine spread and deepened.

¹²⁷ M. Buchanan-Smith. August 2024. [The meeting of humanitarian and civic space in Sudan: lessons for localisation](#). HPN Network Paper.

2.3. EQ 3: Efficiency of the response

2.3.1 Preparedness to respond

Neither WFP (nor the broader UN system) anticipated the scale and complexity of the conflict, resulting in a lack of early warning and contingency planning.

WFP played a key role in the evacuation of UN staff from Khartoum and supported the quick resumption of system-wide humanitarian operations in Sudan, including through clusters and the provision of common services.

Gaps in pre-crisis preparedness actions hindered WFP Sudan's initial response, but subsequent contingency measures more effectively prepared the organization for the ongoing evolution of the emergency.

Supply preparedness actions remained largely reactive in Sudan, reducing WFP's ability to mitigate pipeline breaks and work effectively with cooperating partners, delaying the initial scale-up of the response.

In neighbouring countries, WFP country offices with previous emergency experience and greater capacity for pre-positioning were more readily able to integrate Sudanese refugee and returnee influxes and respond efficiently.

Early warning and contingency planning

Sudan

142. Scenarios predicting a potential deterioration in the Sudan context were first discussed by humanitarian agencies in early 2022.¹²⁸ However, interviews and documentary evidence demonstrated that **the likelihood of a potential outbreak of conflict was not heeded by WFP**, nor by the wider UN system,¹²⁹ despite WFP's engagement in discussion of various scenarios within the Sudan humanitarian country team in April 2022.

143. **Gaps in preparedness actions hindered WFP Sudan's ability to initially protect and evacuate its own staff.** Preparedness gaps – including the late development of a critical staff list,¹³⁰ insufficient use of the warden system, inadequate numbers of drivers and a lack of access to emergency rations – contributed to a chaotic lockdown and evacuation from Khartoum. Interviewees noted that the fact that Sudan was a family duty station at the time added to the stress and complexity of the evacuation.

144. **Subsequent contingency measures more effectively prepared the country office for the ongoing evolution of the crisis.** The Sudan country office developed a contingency and business continuity plan in December 2023 with clear scenarios and guidance from a gradual escalation to a complete halt of operations and staff evacuation.¹³¹ Interviewees suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic had provided relevant experience for aspects of preparedness, such as remote working.

145. The Sudan country office made use of surge capacity with several examples of temporary staff surged to fill required positions through temporary duty assignment (TDY) arrangements (see Section 2.4.3). This included deployment of an access officer to support in-country negotiations, and a fast information technology and telecommunications emergency and support team (FITTEST) deployment

¹²⁸ ACAPS Scenarios Report on Sudan, March 2022.

¹²⁹ A recent evaluation of UNICEF's L3 response indicated that "neither UNICEF nor the broader UN system anticipated the magnitude and complexity of the conflict and resulting operational disruptions. Lack of a UN system-wide early warning mechanism for conflict severely limited preparedness". (UNICEF. July 2025. [Evaluation of the UNICEF L3 Response in Sudan \(2023-2024\)](#)).

¹³⁰ This was only developed one week before the outbreak of hostilities despite the obvious build-up of armed RSF forces in Khartoum.

¹³¹ WFP. 2023. WFP Sudan Contingency & Business Continuity Plan.

through the emergency telecommunications cluster to support WFP and other organizations to set up offices and resume programming.

146. **WFP played a key role in the evacuation of UN staff from Khartoum and supported the quick resumption of system-wide humanitarian operations in Sudan, including through clusters and the provision of common services.** UNHAS quickly reconfigured its fleet to meet evolving demands, allowing for the evacuation of humanitarian staff and their dependents out of Sudan in April 2023, within which WFP played a key leadership role. WFP was the first organization to re-establish operational capacity in Port Sudan from May 2023, supporting other humanitarian organizations to do likewise, including through the provision of accommodation services (for example, early co-location of the UN Resident Coordinator's office with WFP). As the crisis in Sudan continued to deteriorate, humanitarian organizations resumed life-saving assistance in the country and UNHAS supported these efforts through its concept of operations (CONOPS) to provide regular air transport service to and from Sudan and access to humanitarian hubs within the country. WFP-led clusters conducted contingency planning, developed logistics capacity assessments and provided common services, including storage, transport, warehousing and health facilities in field locations and for evacuation.

Neighbouring countries

147. **Countries with previous emergency experience and greater capacity were more readily able to integrate Sudanese refugee and returnee influxes into existing response.** These countries already had emergency systems and capacity in place to respond, including the ability to re-deploy staff, capacity to manage service providers such as financial service providers, transporters and supply chain. For example, South Sudan expanded an existing Renk logistics and liaison office to a sub-office and re-deployed staff to support the Sudan response; the country office in Chad already had offices in key locations, which enabled the response; and in Chad and South Sudan, WFP had capacity to contract financial service providers and manage supply chain. This was in contrast with the capacity of the Libya country office, which was in the process of scaling down towards closure at the time of the crisis, including closing programmes and reducing staffing. The Egypt country office benefited from the relatively recent experience of responding to Syrian refugee arrivals and was able to apply lessons learned to the Sudanese crisis response, and documents show that the regional office support helped establish a cash-based transfer response and prepare for potential cross-border supply chain operations into Sudan.

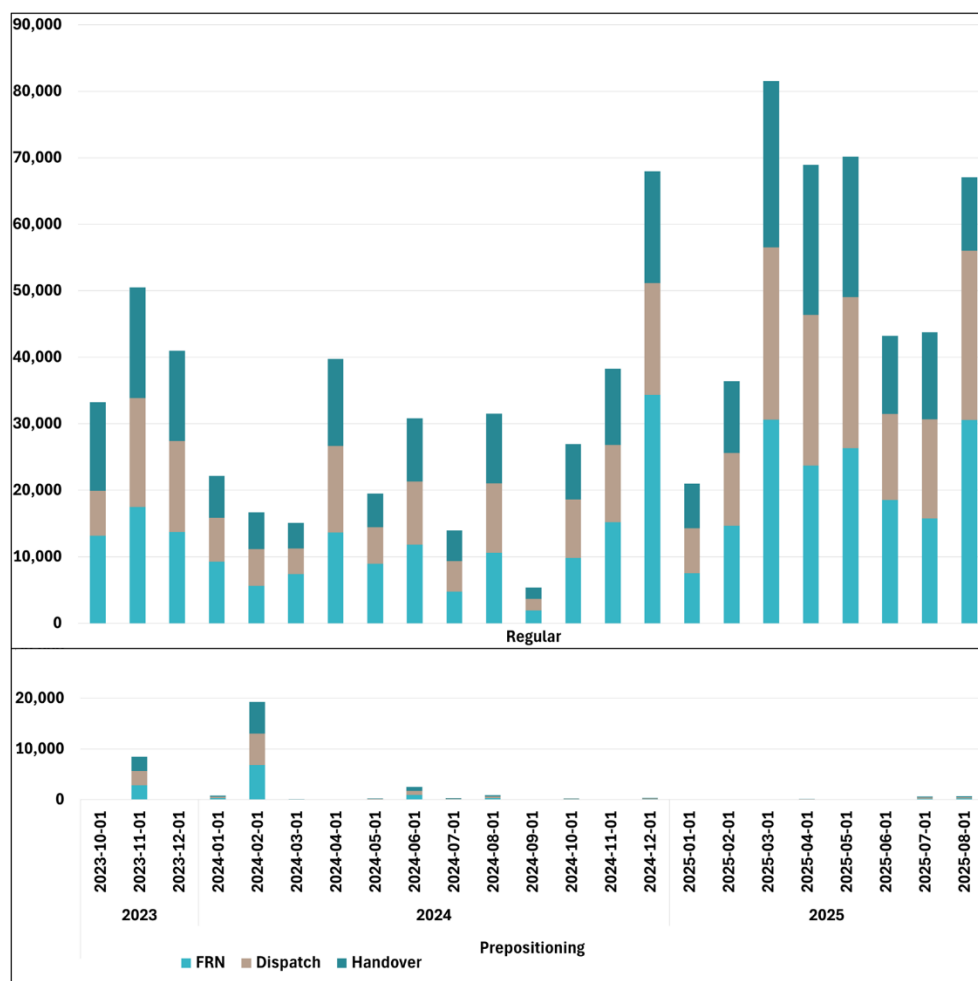
Pre-positioning of supplies and partnerships

Sudan

148. **Supply actions remained largely reactive, reducing WFP Sudan's ability to mitigate pipeline breaks and delaying the initial scale-up of the response in 2023 and 2024.** WFP Sudan had no clear pre-positioning strategy for the conflict, although pre-positioned supplies for the annual rainy season were seen as a key enabler of the immediate response.¹³² However, as the conflict evolved, WFP moved away from pre-positioning, to a predominantly responsive supply chain approach (Figure 22). Internal status documents from 2023-2024 show that supply chain preparedness was constrained by insufficient data on market capacity and limited strategies to improve access to essential food items. While WFP later conducted several risk and market assessments, there was no indication that these were systematically embedded into formal early warning or preparedness frameworks for supply chain decision making. CONOPs and sourcing plans existed, but there was limited evidence of their active use to trigger supply chain activation (for example, corridor prioritization, mobile storage unit deployment, and transporter contracting). Nor was there evidence of emergency preparedness simulations or field exercises targeting supply chain functions.

¹³² This pre-positioning was done on a "no regrets" basis and resulted in significant losses due to looting after the onset of the crisis.

Figure 22 – Food release notes, dispatched and handover: Pre-positioning and regular, October 2023–August 2025



Source: CEE food release note (FRN) fulfilment - contour-export-09-08-2025

149. Interviews indicated that the scale of needs combined with a lack of staff capacity and time pressures hindered the country office from early and effective pre-positioning. For example, stakeholders explained that, due to increasing needs in Darfur in 2025 and insufficient levels of available stocks, the focus was on urgent delivery to the population rather than pre-positioning. It was unclear if this was due to insufficient planning to meet needs, an inability to effectively mobilize supplies, or other constraints. However, available information suggests a lack of capacity within the country office to handle both immediate response needs and pre-positioning requirements. Moreover, efforts to renew pre-positioning in 2025 (for example, setting up new warehouses) were hampered by bureaucratic impediments. WFP staff also reported lacking a tool to assess the pros and cons of pre-positioning.¹³³

150. Cooperating partner preparedness capacity was insufficient at the start of the crisis, without systematic pre-selection for large-scale emergency activation. Interviews highlighted that capacity strengthening exercises were not conducted in 2022 with partners, owing to the political instability in the country and a shift in donor priorities and constraints regarding working with the government.

Neighbouring countries

151. **Countries where pre-positioning of supplies was a key approach and where in-kind general food assistance activities were already functioning were better prepared to respond.** While a significant scale-up was required for Egypt, stakeholders reported that lessons learned from the Syrian refugee crisis had benefited their response to the Sudan crisis. Similarly, countries regularly facing recurrent crises (for

¹³³ WFP KIIs from the Sudan Case Study of the 2024 Evaluation of WFP's Emergency Preparedness Policy.

example, Chad, South Sudan and CAR) adapted and drew on earlier efforts to strengthen early warning systems, though the impact on existing operations was noted by WFP staff in CAR, despite the small Sudan caseload. Data on WFP's supply chain preparedness in neighbouring countries were lacking, beyond qualitative information shared during interviews.

2.3.2 Timeliness

Timely delivery of in-kind assistance in Sudan was hampered by both external and internal constraints, but improved as the crisis response evolved, except in some hard-to-reach areas.

People receiving WFP assistance consulted in Sudan, Chad and Egypt generally said that WFP's response had not been timely.

The use of cross-border corridors to boost WFP's reach in Sudan was mostly limited to the east and west corridors, with a negative impact on coverage and timeliness.

Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) use supported the scale-up in Sudan, but minimal financial risk appetite and a lack of GCMF uptake for corridors hindered its added value.

Responses in neighbouring countries were generally timely, but context-specific challenges resulted in periodic delays.

152. **In Sudan and Chad, most focus group discussions said that the provision of WFP assistance had not been timely.** In Egypt, focus group discussion responses were more mixed, though approximately half of the groups said that WFP's response was not timely.

The timely delivery of assistance and supplies

Sudan

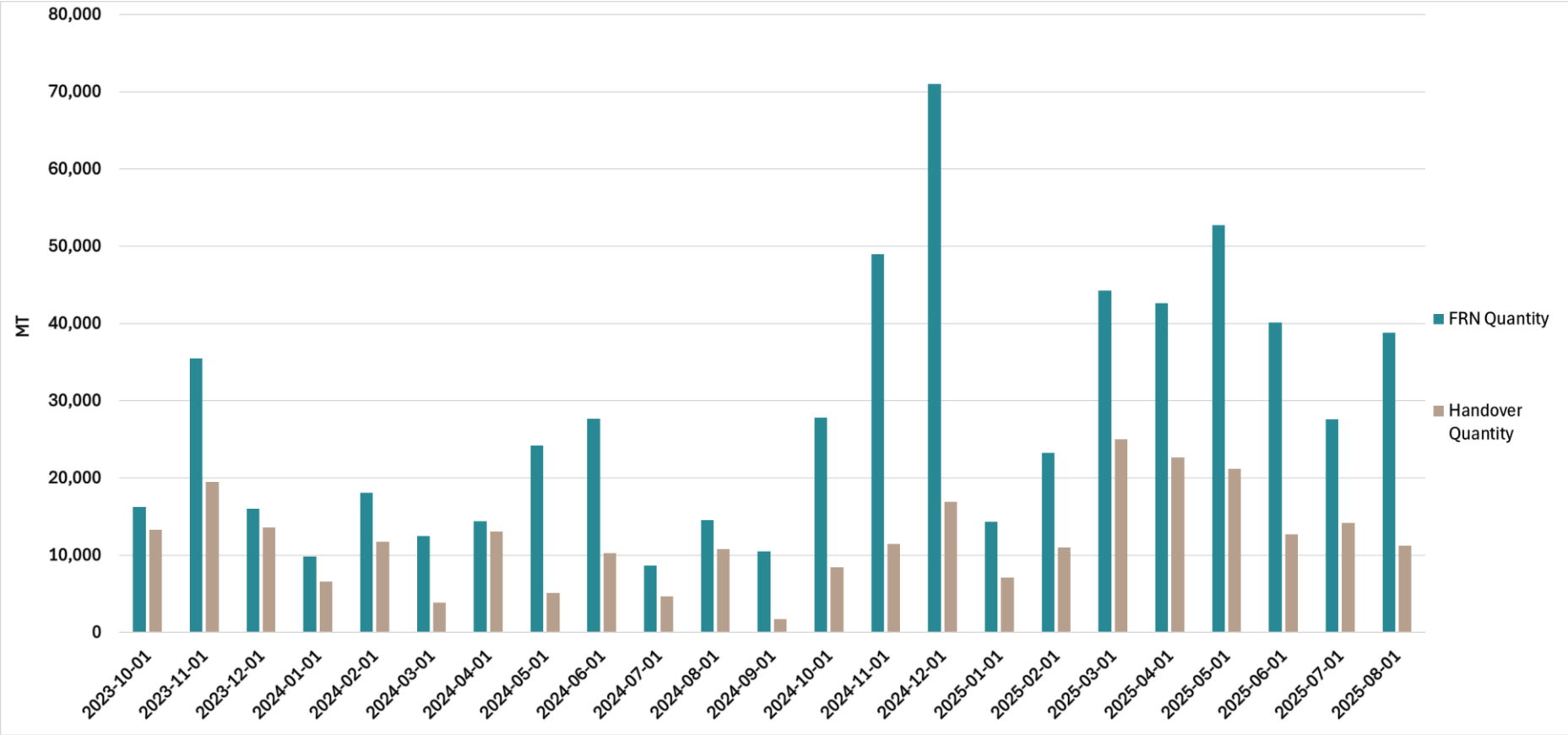
153. **Timely delivery of in-kind assistance, while hampered by both external and internal constraints, improved as the crisis response evolved.** Interviews and documents showed that access denials, security challenges, liquidity shortages for transporters, and seasonal inaccessibility and weather-related infrastructure failures repeatedly delayed or reduced monthly in-kind deliveries. Logistics reports also indicate late submission of food release notes (FRN), revisions and last-minute changes making "it difficult to meet the monthly handover target".¹³⁴ Focus group discussions in Sudan also noted delays to the delivery of assistance, commenting that the schedule of distributions was unreliable and distributions often arrived considerably later than planned.

154. Data showed significant challenges in the handover of commodities in 2024 in particular. These challenges were visible in the difference between food release notes¹³⁵ and dispatched commodities (Figure 23). An examination of late receipt days shows a similar pattern (Figure 24), with sustained improvements only visible from early 2025 onwards. Operational updates and interviews indicated that this positive shift was partly due to improvements such as hybrid convoys (commercial and WFP trucks travelling together) with GPS tracking, third-party monitoring of convoy movements, enhanced clearance protocols and increased mobile storage unit storage. Combined, these contributed to reduced approval-to-dispatch times.

¹³⁴ Sudan Operations Logistics Overview February 2025.

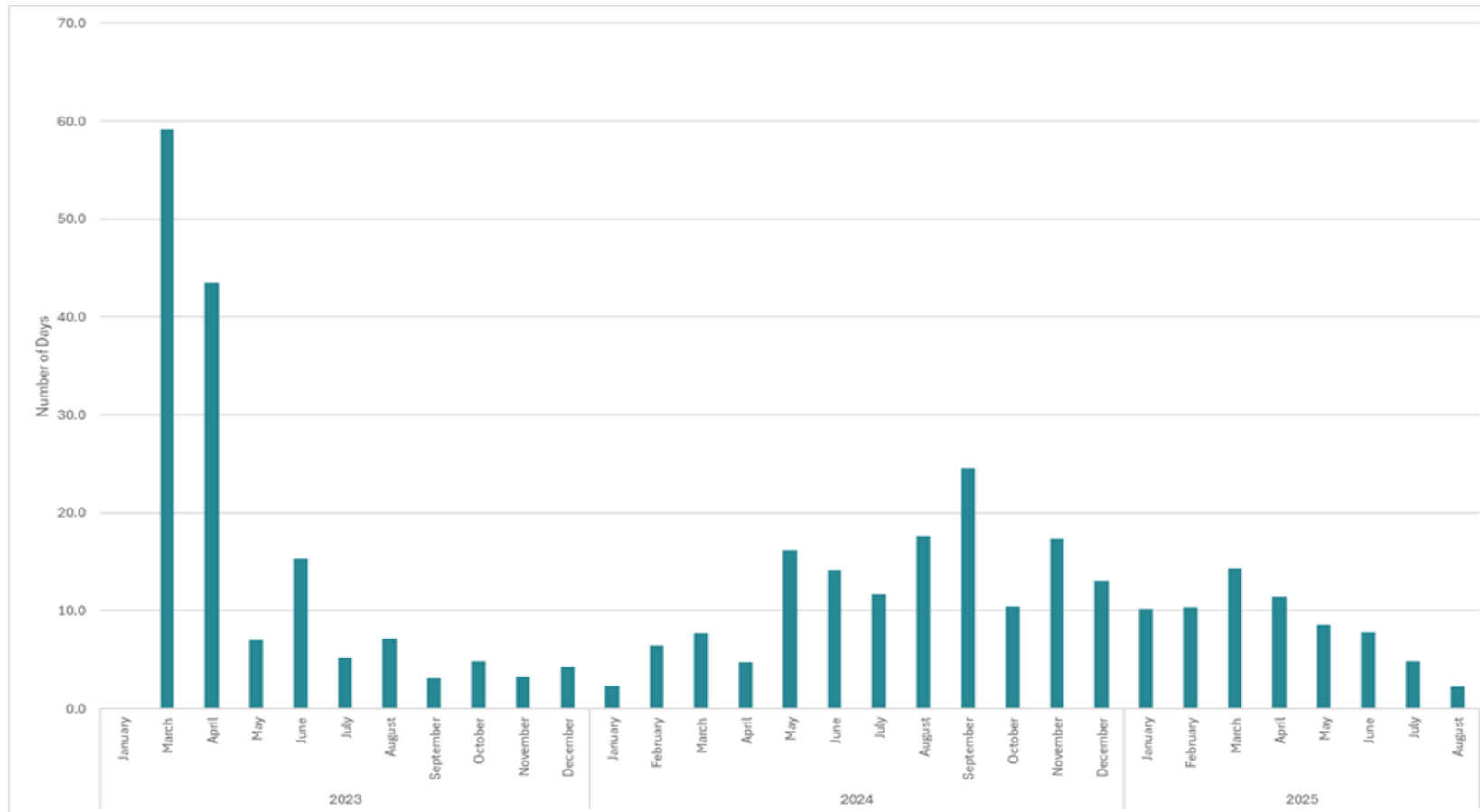
¹³⁵ Differences were more pronounced for unprocessed FRNs (processed FRNs have moved from "pending to process" to *at least* "pending to dispatch" in the supply system, and processed FRNs have a "pending to process" status in the supply system. When reviewing the FRN status, supply includes both processed and unprocessed (see for example Logistics RD Presentation - 02 Feb 2025).

Figure 23 – Food release notes versus dispatched versus handover, October 2023–August 2025 (processed & unprocessed combined)



Source: CEE FRN Fulfilment - contour-export-09-08-2025

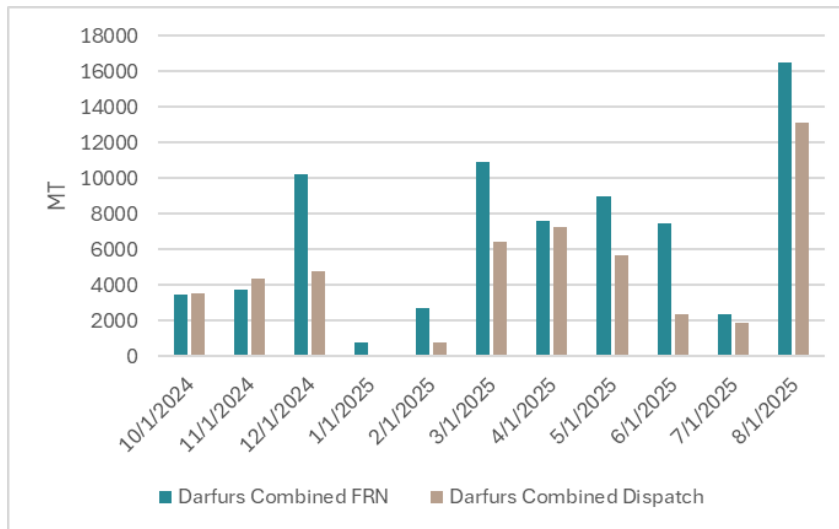
Figure 24 – Average number of late days for receipt of dispatch, 2023-August 2025



Source: CEE Consolidated Transport Report - contour-export-09-08-2025

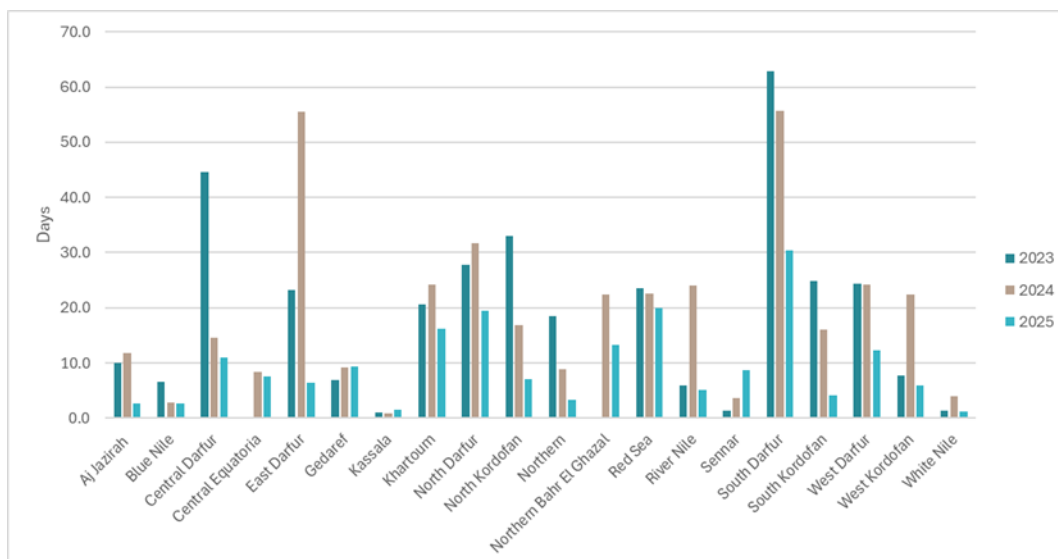
155. **The timeliness of dispatches was further particularly compromised in hard-to-reach areas.** Planning for cross-border movements from Chad to Sudan noted requirements of 10,000mt per month for all the Darfurs.¹³⁶ However, this threshold was only met three times between October 2024 and August 2025 for food release notes and only once as dispatched (in August 2025) (Figure 25). Late receipt was particularly high in 2024 in hard-to-reach areas, especially in East, North and South Darfur; and, while there were improvements in many areas in 2025, late days remained high in South Darfur (Figure 26).

Figure 25 – Food release notes versus dispatch Darfurs combined, October 2024–August 2025 (processed food release notes)



Source: CEE FRN Fulfilment - contour-export-09-08-2025

Figure 26 – Average number of late days for receipt of dispatch by admin level by year, 2023-August 2025¹³⁷



Source: CEE Consolidated Transport Report - contour-export-09-08-2025

¹³⁶ WFP. October 2024. Sudan Operations Planning Mission to Chad

¹³⁷ NB: The high late 2023 figures for Central and South Darfur are due to late dispatches in April and May of that year with limited activity the remainder of the year.

Neighbouring countries

156. Stakeholders described a **generally timely response but with country office-specific challenges** for example, cash-based transfer disbursement delays in Egypt, security access constraints in Ethiopia, bureaucratic and administrative impediments in Libya resulted in pipeline breaks. Discussions during 2024 within the operational task force indicated pipeline challenges for South Sudan, Chad and CAR. People receiving WFP assistance in Chad and Egypt also noted timeliness challenges: most focus group discussions in Chad said that the provision of WFP assistance had not been timely, as did approximately half of focus group discussions in Egypt.

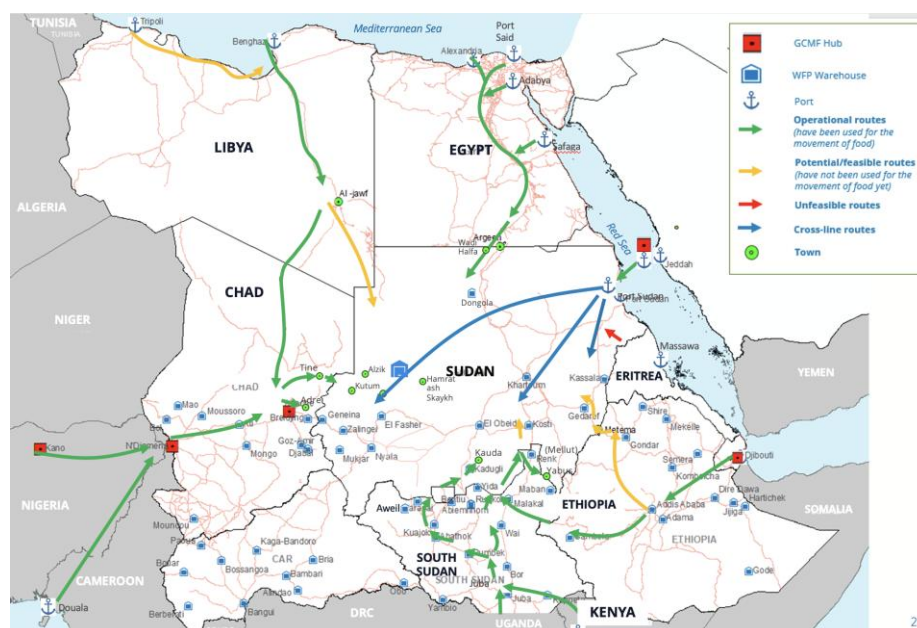
Coordination, internal planning and supply chain facilities

Sudan

157. This section focuses exclusively on Sudan (including cross-border corridors into Sudan) as there were insufficient disaggregated data to reach conclusive findings on coordination and internal planning (apart from Libya).

158. **Cross-border corridors were a critical element of the supply response but were largely limited to the east and west corridors in practice, restricting WFP's capacity and coverage.**¹³⁸ From the outset, it was recognized that Port Sudan, while operational, would not be sufficient as a standalone corridor and alternative or contingency corridors into Sudan were identified, including in the: west (Chad), north (Egypt and Libya) and south (South Sudan) as well as Ethiopia (Figure 27).

Figure 27 - Map of corridors for the Sudan response



Source: Sudan Operation Weekly Overview, 20 February 2025

159. **Despite early acknowledgment that other potential corridors would be critical for a timely response, diversification was limited in practice, resulting in inefficient logistics arrangements and extended dispatch routes.**¹³⁹ WFP's internal analysis characterized Port Sudan as having long lead-times and bottlenecks and with limited reach to the Darfurs. While other corridors were selectively activated, the bulk of stock continued to move through Port Sudan and Chad (for detailed analysis of the use of corridors see Annex 25).

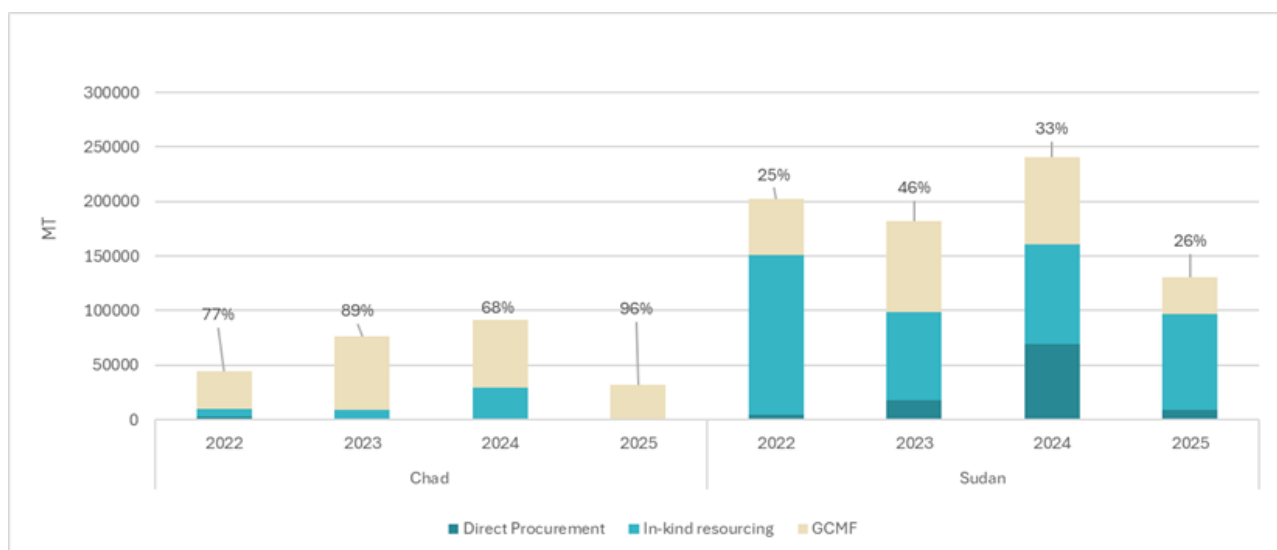
¹³⁸ For the evaluation, corridors refer to the channels directly into Sudan rather than the wider network of corridors that connect to these cross-border locations.

¹³⁹ WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09](#).

160. **The GCMF supported the corporate scale-up but was limited by a lack of financial risk appetite, resulting in delays.** The value of GCMF for a timely response was recognized in WFP’s Famine Prevention Plan for General Food Assistance (2024), noting that, while there may be subsequent clearance delays to enter Sudan, the shorter lead-times would allow “WFP to react in a more timely manner to anticipated bottlenecks in Cameroon and Chad”.¹⁴⁰ While the GCMF was used for the Chad corridor, including positioning GCMF stocks at hubs at N’djamena and Abeche and GCMF stocks for Sudan increased overall (Figure 28), their potential added value for the response was not maximized.

161. Interviews and documents suggest a complex range of issues impacted GCMF beyond contextual changes, including challenges with demand visibility, constraints from remaining shelf-life restrictions and complex management issues.¹⁴¹ However available evidence suggests one of the most significant impacts came from WFP’s “zero risk” financial risk appetite, which, while “not clearly defined at corporate level”, informed the position that no local procurement through the GCMF should be allowed, and no unsold stocks should be sent to the country unless approved by multiple directors within headquarters.¹⁴² This resulted in a significant increase in lead times and missed cost efficiency opportunities. Specifically, the inability to send unsold GCMF stocks to Sudan or to undertake local procurement of GCMF in Sudan (as was previously prominent, but no longer viable at scale during the conflict, see Figure 30) “led to a drastic deterioration of the lead-time gain”, increasing from approximately 10 days between 2021 and mid-2023 to 71 days in 2025 (Figure 35).¹⁴³ Linked to this, an internal WFP analysis found that “in the case of Sudan, a buffer of just 750mt would already be enough to reduce the lead-time by 15 days, while 2,000mt would bring it close to zero”.¹⁴⁴

Figure 28 – Global Commodity Management Facility versus direct procurement and in-kind donations for corporate scale-up countries by year, November 2023–August 2025¹⁴⁵



Source: GCMF vs Other Sudan RC POs 20250917

Note: The percentage represents GCMF as proportion of the whole. For Chad, the majority but not all the GCMF stocks were reported to be for the response.

¹⁴⁰ WFP. 2024. Famine Prevention Plan for General Food Assistance.

¹⁴¹ For example: Operational and strategic task force records; annex 002 Sudan Rapid Supply Chain market assessment for Corridor Teams; Sudan Crisis – Regional Response Overview November 2023.

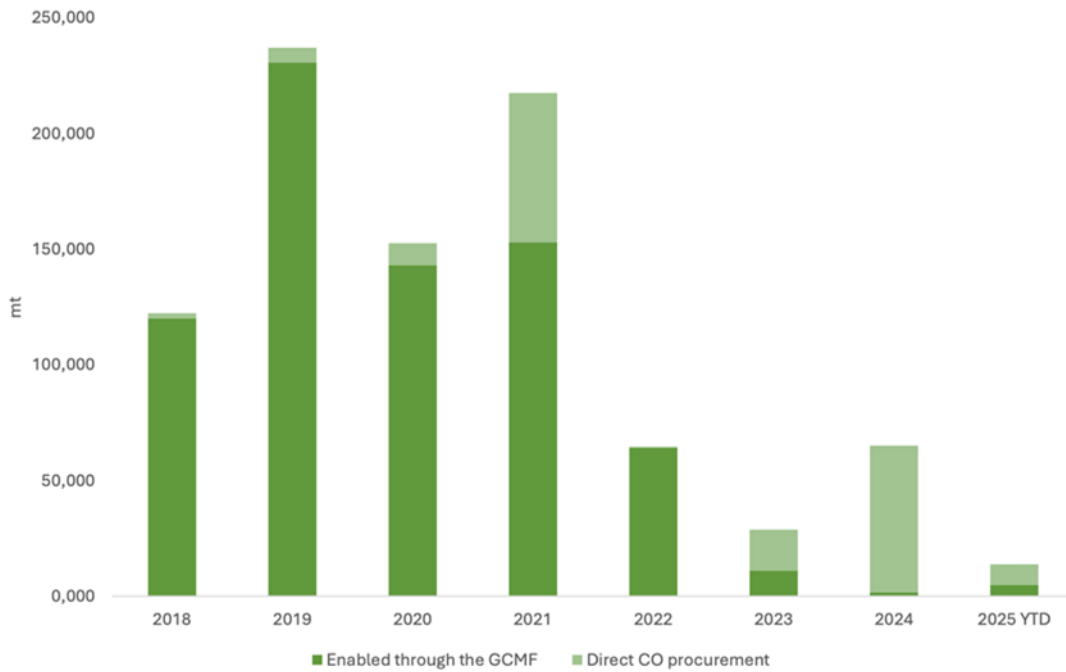
¹⁴² Sudan Lead-Times and Cost Evolution, Supply Chain Planning & Optimization Unit, September 2025.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

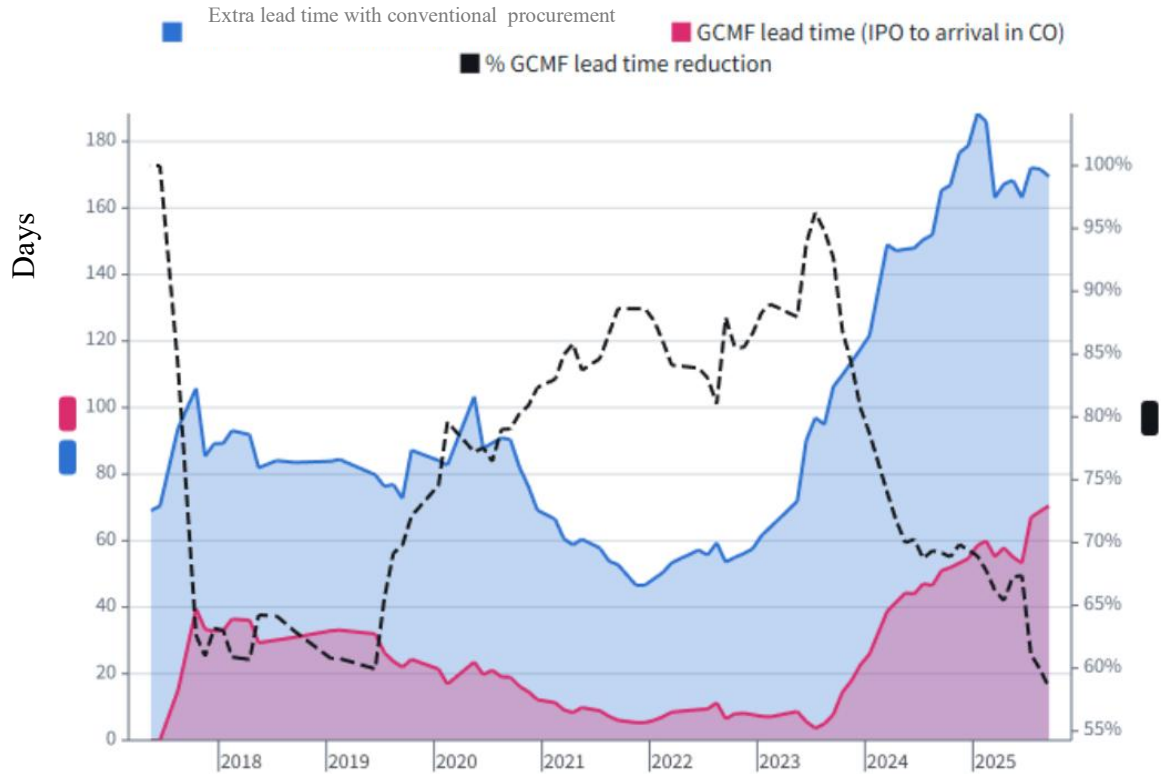
¹⁴⁵ South Sudan has not been included due to the low amount for the Sudan response.

Figure 29 – GCMF support to local procurement in Sudan, 2018-2025 year to date



Source: Sudan Lead-Times and Cost Evolution, Supply Chain Planning & Optimization Unit, September 2025

Figure 30 – Lead time from international purchase order (via GCMF) and full Global Commodity Management Facility lead time reduction percentage for Sudan



Source: Sudan lead-times and cost evolution, Supply Chain Planning & Optimization Unit, September 2025

162. **Efforts to use GCMF for increased pre-positioning were also hampered by risk concerns.** The October 2024 country office transport plan included scaling up the South Sudan supply corridor through Aweil with the ambition of reaching 9,000mt per month.¹⁴⁶ Notably, despite strategic task force approval in November 2024 to pre-position commodities (25,000mt, later reduced to 10,000mt) in South Sudan,¹⁴⁷ the decision was not acted on.¹⁴⁸ Available data suggest that cross-border movements from South Sudan continued to fall below targets throughout the response.

2.3.3 Cost efficiency

Earlier and more decisive supply chain management could have improved the cost efficiency of the response. High transport costs and dependence on corridors with long supply routes drove up costs in Sudan until 2025 when lower cost corridor options were also utilized.

Minimal losses were reported in 2024 and 2025. However, WFP suffered significant losses at the outset of the emergency due to looting and violence in Sudan, mitigated by quick distribution of remaining stocks to prevent further losses.

The cost efficiency of in-kind versus cash-based transfers in Sudan varied and the high costs of commodity vouchers drove up the costs of cash-based transfers overall. However, WFP also considered the speed and flexibility of cash-based transfer, making it the more appropriate modality in certain areas, regardless of cost.

Neighbouring country offices reviewed and implemented cost efficiency measures and there was a general shift towards cash-based transfer, including for cost efficiency reasons.

Supply chain optimization

Sudan

163. **Supply chain budgets were heavily impacted by transport costs.** Documents and data show that WFP Sudan's 2023–2024 supply chain budgets and expenditures were notably skewed toward transport and access management, including convoy escorts and commercial fleet mobilization (with the WFP fleet accounting for 48 percent of utilization for 2024), as illustrated in budget revisions (Figure 31).¹⁴⁹ This is further reflected in the implementation plan versus actual supply-related expenditures for food (Figure 33, further below), with transport costs exceeding anticipated costs. Data beyond May 2025 were not available, but documents indicate that increasing transport costs for in-kind assistance were a persistent challenge.

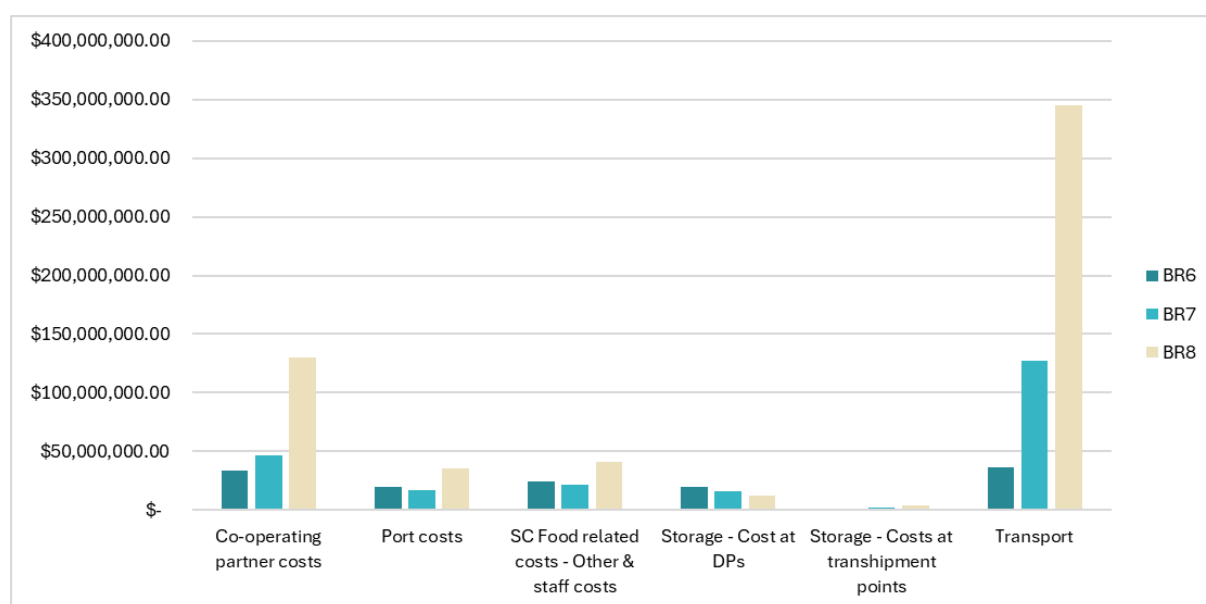
¹⁴⁶ WFP. October 2024. WFP Sudan Transport Plan.

¹⁴⁷ Record of the meeting of the strategic task force, November 2024.

¹⁴⁸ According to interviews, GCMF cited financial risk concerns as this involved unsold GCMF stock and the corridor had not been officially approved by the relevant authorities. Eventually, 10,000mt were pre-positioned at Gulu (half a day from Aweil) with the intention that they would be purchased by Sudan with advanced financing. However, as the corridor did not open, the stocks remained unsold.

¹⁴⁹ Sudan Operations Logistics Overview February 2025.

Figure 31 – Sudan supply chain budget revisions 2024



Source: Supply chain budget revisions 2024 Nos. 6, 7 and 8

164. **Variations in the cost of transporting commodities into Sudan using different corridors impacted on costs, with reductions from 2025 only.** As explored in more detail in Annex 25, the lack of diversification in supply corridors had significant implications for cost efficiency. WFP’s supply chain for the Sudan response relied primarily on the east and west corridors (Table 15), with the west corridor serving as the key alternative route into Darfur. However, the dependence on the west corridor came with high costs, where long supply chains, security fees, and prolonged checkpoint delays drove up costs, and alternative trials via Libya proved even more expensive. Although efficiency measures and increased cross-border movement from Chad helped in 2025, major projected cost reductions only emerged once analysis in mid-2025 confirmed the Egypt corridor as a more efficient, scalable and faster option than Chad, as well as being competitive with Port Sudan. Stakeholders noted that Egypt was not considered earlier because Sudan had not recognized it as a humanitarian corridor. However, with no supporting assessments available, it remains unclear whether using it sooner would have improved cost efficiency.

Table 15 – Corridors for the Sudan response (metric tons)

Corridor		Actuals			Planned monthly
		2023	2024	2025 (August)	2025
East	Port Sudan	67315	240494	130828	29000
West	Chad	8000	30000	51100	11000
North	Egypt	No data	No data	202	17000
North	Libya	No data	529	1250	N/A
South	South Sudan	No data	4840	No data	2000

Sources: East: GCMF vs Other Sudan RC POs 20250917; West: CEE Consolidated Transport Report - contour-export-09-08-2025; North: RBC Egypt shipments to the corridor GR qty_2025 - North and email exchange country office Libya; South: Logistics RD Presentation - 02 Feb 2025.

165. Beyond the corridor challenges and transport costs, late introduction of context-appropriate supply chain strategies and weaknesses in internal coordination further impacted the response in 2023-2024, with improvements from 2025. Notably, it was not until October 2024 that a conflict-sensitive transport plan was introduced, limiting geographic reach. At the same time, factors such as staffing gaps, weak coordination

across units, limited assessments and fragmented convoy management constrained WFP's cross-border and crossline operations in 2023–2024, with corrective actions only beginning to take effect from late 2024 into early 2025 (see Annex 25 for further details).

166. The findings above suggest potential areas for improvement in supply chain optimization, both for cost efficiency and effectiveness. WFP's Sudan supply chain operation was highly complex, with many challenges beyond the control of the country office. However, while definitive evidence is lacking, available information indicates that **cost efficiency and effectiveness may have been improved through earlier, more decisive and more strategic decision making on supply chain management**, including on the use of corridors, conflict-appropriate transport options and GCMF use.

167. Supply chain optimization data specific to the Sudan response in neighbouring countries were not sufficiently available to determine findings.

Food losses and assurance measures

Sudan

168. **Losses were significant following the outbreak of conflict, but WFP quickly improved controls in 2024 and 2025.** The country office suffered significant losses at the outset of the emergency, with 2023 losses accounting for 79 percent of WFP's global food losses that year. Of the 41,455mt of post-delivery losses for Sudan in 2023, 39,463mt (95.2 percent) was attributed to “loss during civil strife”, primarily looting and violence.¹⁵⁰

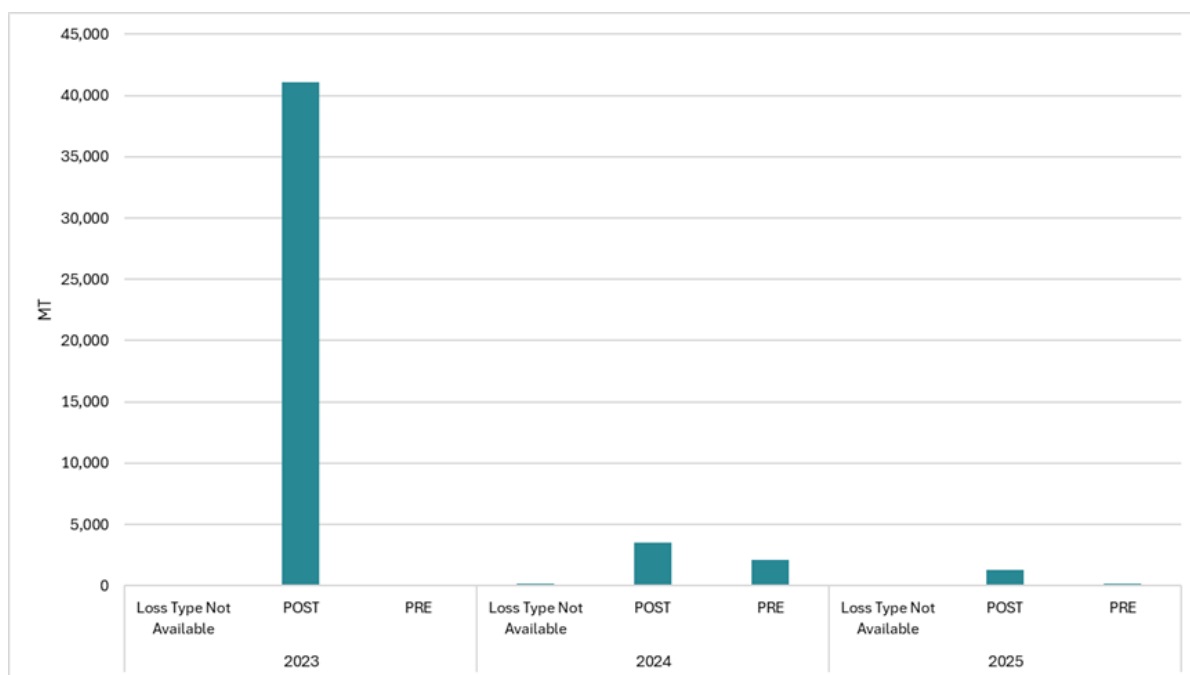
169. **The stocks that remained in 2023 were quickly distributed and significant improvements were made from early 2024, with a notable reduction in post-delivery losses thereafter** (Figure 32). Convoy assurance was further strengthened by staff-led convoy models with WFP trucks leading, GPS tracking and escorts, which reduced immobilization risk costs and raised truck-day productivity, while extended delivery points were suspended until mid-2025 due to looting risks (though this measure also reportedly increased costs).¹⁵¹ Strengthened field-level agreement (FLA) clauses and scaling of last-mile implementation in 2024–2025 further improved overall food loss and reduced unaccounted discrepancies. In parallel, operational updates for cross-border movements indicated improved storage control in Chad over the period between 2024 and 2025, with the introduction of GPS-monitored mixed convoys and stricter staging procedures, contributing to reduced pilferage and handling losses.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ WFP. 2024. [Report on global losses for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023](#).

¹⁵¹ Sudan Country Office Operational Brief April 2025, p. 1.

¹⁵² Chad Weekly Briefing, 26 Sept 2024, p. 2

Figure 32 – Pre- and post-delivery Sudan losses, 2022-2025



Source: Food loss report_2025-05-19

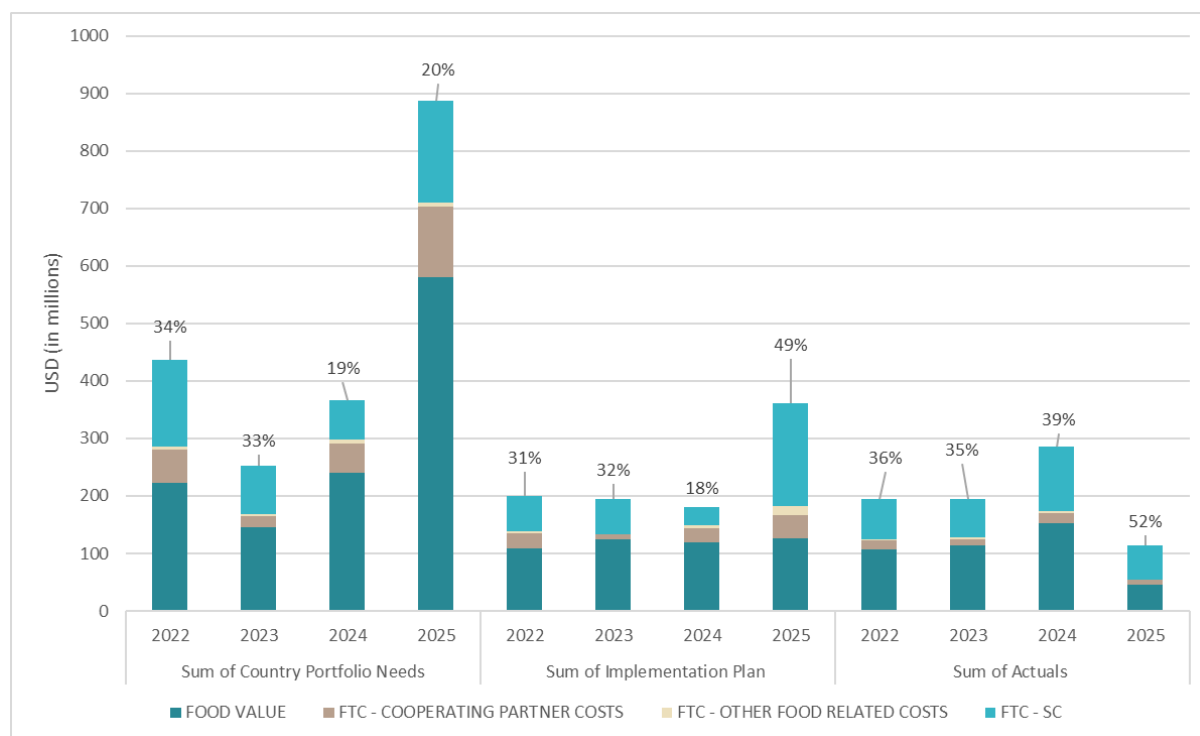
170. Sudan-response specific datasets and relevant documents were limited for neighbouring countries. However, where they were available (for example, Libya, Egypt), no significant food losses were noted in relation to the Sudan response.

Expenditure and cost comparative analysis by modality

Sudan

171. Analysis of expected versus actual supply-related expenditures shows that for 2023–2025, **the transfer costs relative to costs for food were consistently higher than planned, while there was little change for cash-based transfer:** supply chain-related transfer costs for in-kind activities accounted for 18 percent of the total 2024 implementation plan (largely linked to transport costs) (Figure 33), compared with 12 percent delivery and management costs for cash-based transfer in the same year (Figure 34).

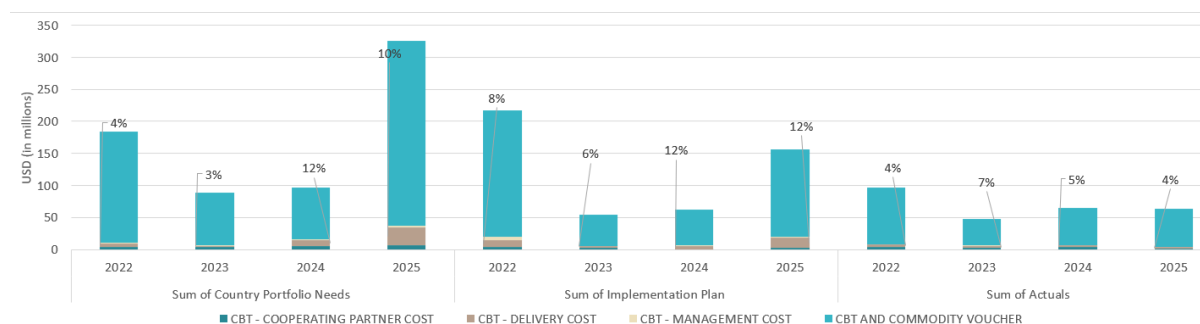
Figure 33 – Sudan country portfolio needs versus implementation plan versus actuals for food: Supply chain transfer costs 2022–May 2025



Source: CPB_Plan_vs_Actuals_Report_v2.1 (SD02)

Percentages reflect the combined supply chain food transfer costs (SC FTC) relative to the total cost

Figure 34 – Country portfolio needs versus implementation plan versus actuals for cash-based transfer: Detailed breakdown 2022–May 2025



Source: CPB_Plan_vs_Actuals_Report_v2.1 (SD02)

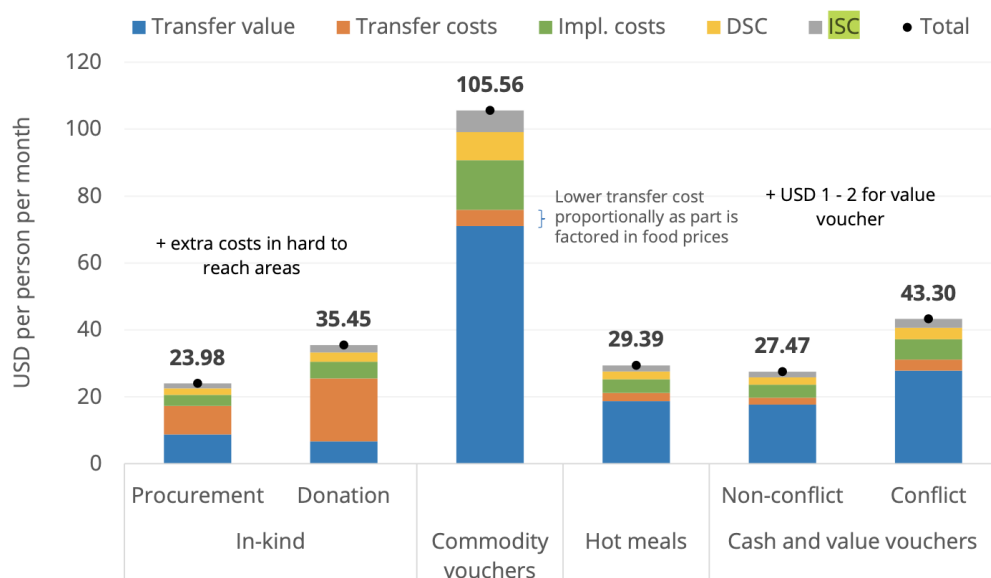
Percentages reflect the combined delivery and management costs relative to the total cost including transfer value

172. **In contrast, using a different set of metrics, WFP's own analysis of costs found that in-kind assistance was more cost efficient.** In-kind was predominant in famine-risk areas of Sudan and seen as the more cost-efficient modality given pipeline availability and weak local markets.¹⁵³ Moreover, a cost efficiency analysis conducted by WFP in October 2024 found that, while the transfer costs were higher for in-kind (and more costly with donated food compared with food procured by WFP), the cost of the transfer value at full ration was lower compared with "other modalities".

¹⁵³ See for example Chad Upstream Stocks Overview October 2024.

173. **This cost comparison was heavily influenced by commodity vouchers (CVs)** (Figure 35).¹⁵⁴ Commodity vouchers were used between August and December 2024 to target specific locations in North Darfur and North Kordofan and implemented through the business to business (B2B) initiative, whereby WFP contracted a supplier to use its networks to purchase, transport and distribute food to be purchased using commodity vouchers, reaching over 135,000 people.¹⁵⁵ Despite the success of the pilot initiative, commodity vouchers were approximately 143 percent more expensive than other forms of cash-based transfer in conflict areas and considered unsustainable in the long-term. Evidence was not available from external sources to confirm the lack of alternatives to commodity vouchers, which justified this high-cost, short-term approach.

Figure 35 – Comparison of costs per modality per person as of October 2024



Source: Sudan Country Office Cost Efficiency Analysis October 2024

174. **Despite varying views on cost efficiency, cost was not the only determining factor and speed and flexibility of cash-based transfer made it a more appropriate modality in certain areas.**¹⁵⁶ However, given the greater cost efficiency in cash and value vouchers compared with donated in-kind and given the earlier point (see Section 2.3) that cash-based transfer was being under-utilized, this suggests a loss for cost efficiency, at least in part.

Neighbouring countries

175. Qualitative data on **modality choices in neighbouring countries demonstrated a mixture of in-kind and cash-based transfer**, with a shift towards cash-based transfer where feasible and permitted by authorities. Cash-based transfer played a particularly prominent role in Egypt and Uganda and was expanded in other countries in 2025 (for example, Ethiopia and Chad). **In specific contexts (for example, Uganda), the trend was consciously driven by cost efficiency imperatives.** In South Sudan, while cash-based transfer was introduced in response to feedback from people WFP assists, market assessments and the mobile nature of the response, cost efficiency was constrained by the country's "limited financial infrastructure, transfer fee costs including the private sector and banking environment".¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Sudan Cost Efficiency Analysis - Preliminary analysis for discussion (October 2024).

¹⁵⁵ WFP. [Sudan Annual Country Report 2024](#); [Country Strategic Plan 2019-2026](#).

¹⁵⁶ Sudan Country Office Cost Efficiency Analysis October 2024.

¹⁵⁷ WFP South Sudan Donor Briefing NFR 8 November 2023.

2.4. EQ 4: Internal and external factors that influenced the overall response

2.4.1 Partnerships

WFP's leadership of clusters and its provision of common services benefited humanitarian actors in Sudan. Its active engagement in other inter-agency forums also added value, except for engagement on cash coordination, which was limited.

WFP was viewed as an effective and influential humanitarian partner in neighbouring countries, where positive engagement with UNHCR and IOM were particularly valued.

Cooperating partners were instrumental to the delivery of WFP's assistance in all countries. While WFP increased partnerships with local and national non-governmental organizations, localization tended to focus on operational delivery rather than the fostering of strategic partnerships.

WFP's engagement with the private sector was vital to the response, particularly its partnerships with financial service providers.

Engagement with government actors was mixed – characterized by tensions and obstacles in the case of Sudan, except for engagement on technical issues; and more active and constructive in most other countries.

Inter-agency leadership and coordination

Sudan

176. WFP demonstrated crucial and effective leadership in supporting the humanitarian response through providing common services and coordinating the clusters it is mandated to lead. WFP effectively led the logistics cluster, the emergency telecommunications cluster and UNHAS (see Section 2.2.1). After a late start, WFP also provided a cluster coordinator to work alongside the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) coordinator for the food security and livelihoods cluster. Feedback from partners on WFP's cluster leadership and the provision of common services was generally positive, although some noted that coordination could be improved – citing missed opportunities to organize convoys on a cost-recovery basis making them more cost efficient, and a tendency for WFP to prioritize its own operations first within joint convoys before offering opportunities to partners.

177. **WFP effectively participated in other clusters and inter-agency forums, though there were weaknesses in some areas, including coordination of cash.** Documents and interviews confirmed that WFP played an active role in several key inter-agency groups and processes beyond the clusters that it leads, including the nutrition cluster, the protection sector working group, and the access working group. However, internal and external stakeholders noted insufficient coordination with other cash actors (for example, on transfer values and systematic information sharing on geographic prioritization), which impeded de-duplication efforts and joint planning, despite donor and other partner pressure to ensure better harmonization and interoperability of cash assistance across agencies.

178. There were several positive examples of WFP's engagement in joint and complementary programming. Stakeholders noted positive bilateral coordination, for example, on support for refugees with UNHCR, although some tensions were noted regarding WFP's mandate and expertise with regards to other UN agencies (including with OCHA on coordination and agricultural livelihoods and resilience with FAO).

Neighbouring countries

179. **WFP's positive engagement with UNHCR and IOM enabled the response.** UNHCR was considered the overall lead in neighbouring countries for refugee coordination and registration and, except for Libya and South Sudan, WFP targeting was based on UNHCR registration data. WFP was seen as playing a strong role in inter-agency forums (for example, working and technical groups). Moreover, with its significant footprint, WFP was viewed as critical to the overall response. An exception to this was in Libya, where WFP had played an important role, but internal and external stakeholders described it as less prominent and influential, compared with its role in other countries.

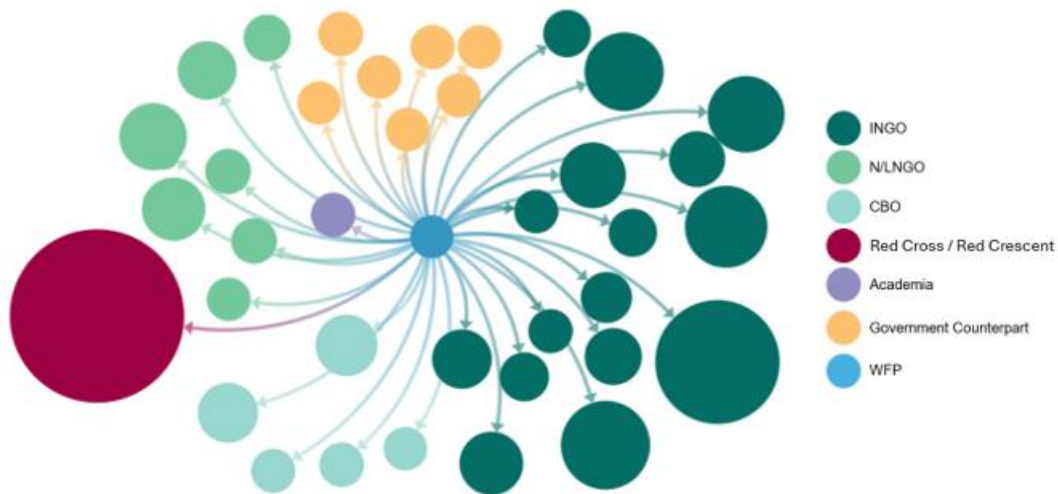
180. In countries with experience of supporting protracted refugee caseloads, WFP advocated for vulnerability-based targeting as a way of prioritizing emergency support within limited resources. In Chad, the country office actively participated in United Nations coordination forums in 2025 to shift from status-based to vulnerability-based targeting as a way of managing to respond to the scale of the refugee caseload with limited humanitarian funding. Stakeholders in neighbouring countries, including in Egypt and South Sudan, highlighted similar in-country discussions and noted that the Sudan crisis had renewed interest in joint processes to reprioritize those targeted to receive WFP assistance.

Cooperating partner partnerships

Sudan

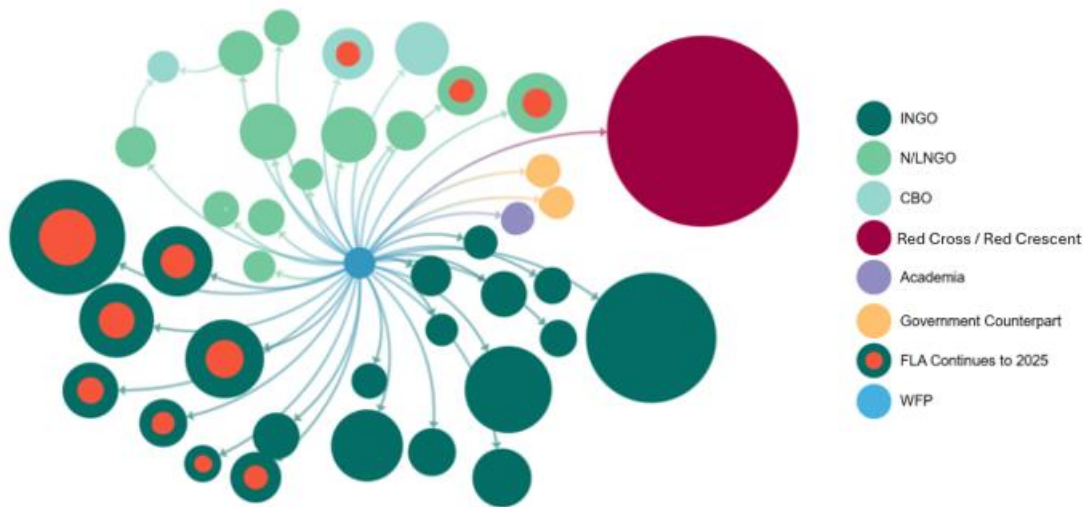
181. **Much of WFP’s response in Sudan was delivered by cooperating partners, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were scaled up and diversified.** As illustrated in Figures 36-38, WFP moved away from government partners (prominent in 2023) and increasingly partnered with INGOs, national and local NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), including working through NNGOs to reach community-based organizations such as ERR in Khartoum. The shift included an increase in the number of cooperating partners in most locations, including in hard-to-reach areas with limited or no WFP presence (see Annex 24 - Table 11). The Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) remained a significant partner throughout, also supporting WFP to obtain necessary security permits and fee exemptions to deliver timely results.

Figure 36 – WFP Sudan cooperating partners 2023



Source: WFP Sudan country office FLA tracker 2023

Figure 37 – WFP Sudan cooperating partners 2024



Source: WFP Sudan country office FLA tracker 2024

Figure 38 – WFP Sudan cooperating partners 2025 (up to March)



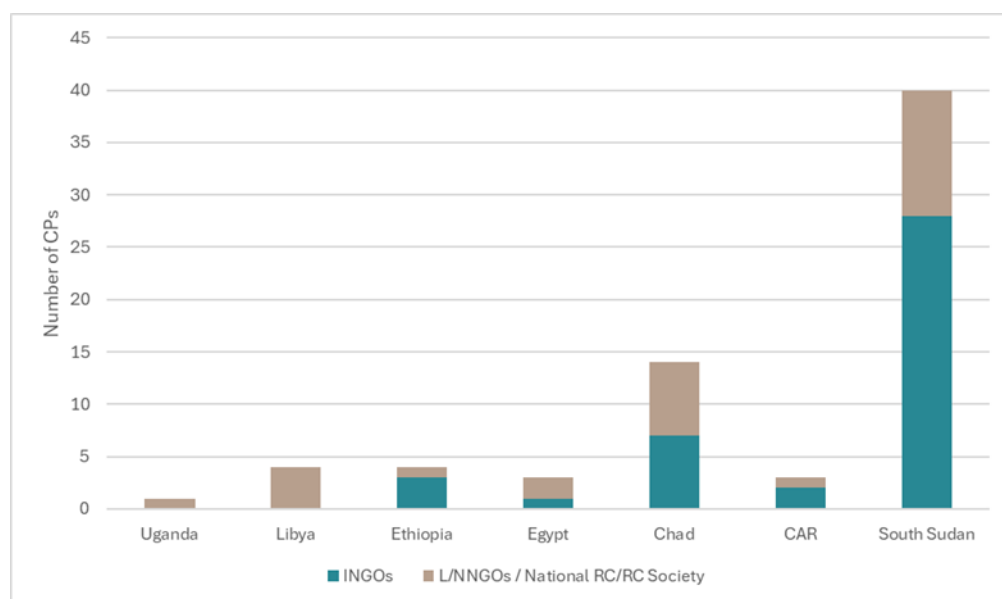
WFP Sudan country office FLA tracker 2025

182. Interviewees described how cooperating partner partnerships were hindered by systemic operational and bureaucratic inefficiencies within WFP, including prolonged project proposal approval processes (of up to six months) and delays in payment processing (for example, three to four months for payment of invoices), leading to financial instability and fund devaluation for local partners that lacked upfront capital. Cooperating partners also raised issues with the transfer of significant security and operational risks from WFP to national NGOs. WFP's engagement with ERR was positive, although with significant delays due to the need to work through intermediary organizations (see Section 2.2.4).

Neighbouring countries

183. **Cooperating partners were the primary implementers of the response in neighbouring countries.** Interviewees spoke to the strong emphasis on local partners, especially in Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and Uganda (Figure 39).¹⁵⁸ In Egypt and Libya in particular, stakeholders described how local partners had a critical advantage in facilitating access: for example, in Egypt, WFP instigated a new partnership with the Egyptian Red Crescent to increase access to affected populations crossing into the country (although in Libya, it was noted that access was sometimes prioritized over capacity). In CAR, Chad and South Sudan, INGOs were perceived by WFP as being more reliable and likely to deliver and therefore played a more dominant role.

Figure 39 – Neighbouring countries’ international and local cooperating partners for the Sudan response



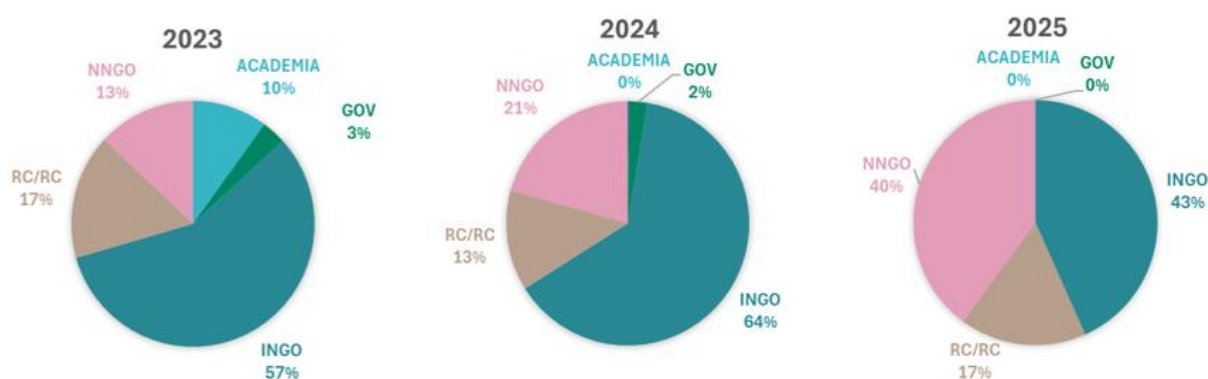
Source: WFP COMET system - CM-A003 2023-2025

Localization

Sudan

184. **WFP demonstrated a strong operational commitment to localization, most notably through increased partnerships with local and national NGOs,** increasing its proportion of national cooperating partner field-level agreements from 29 to 57 percent between 2023-2025 (Figure 40).

Figure 40 – Cooperating partners’ field-level agreement values by cooperating partner type, 2023–2025



Source: WFP Sudan country office FLA trackers 2023–March 2025

¹⁵⁸ It should be noted that for Uganda and Ethiopia, WFP worked with a range of international and local partners, though this finding was not specific to the Sudan response.

185. Annual reports show that WFP invested resources in technical assistance and training for local partners, covering areas such as targeting, PSEA, gender and protection mainstreaming. However, **broader localization aspirations¹⁵⁹ were still only nascent and WFP's engagement with cooperating partners remained largely transactional**, with local organizations seen primarily as implementers rather than strategic partners.¹⁶⁰ Systemic barriers, including rigid UN Partner Portal requirements and donor reluctance to formalize risk-sharing, also limited WFP's ability to engage more directly and formally with community-based organizations.

Neighbouring countries

186. **Localization was primarily limited to the proportion of activities delivered through local partners in neighbouring countries.** Despite some variation (especially for CAR, Chad and South Sudan), the emphasis on local partners was strong. Stakeholders also reported good engagement with community leaders and national actors and, in Chad especially, interviews with various stakeholders indicated a commitment to localization through capacity building. Furthermore, across countries, WFP and partner stakeholders highlighted effective collaboration on communication with communities.

187. However, **partners reported only being brought in once key decisions had been made on issues related to targeting and prioritization, and their role was largely focused on communicating decisions to affected populations rather than contributing to decision making.** This was echoed in the survey results, where there were mixed views among partners on collaboration with WFP during the design and implementation of activities (see Annex 11). It is possible that country offices made progress towards other aspects of localization, but evidence related specifically to the Sudan crisis response was lacking.

Private sector partnerships

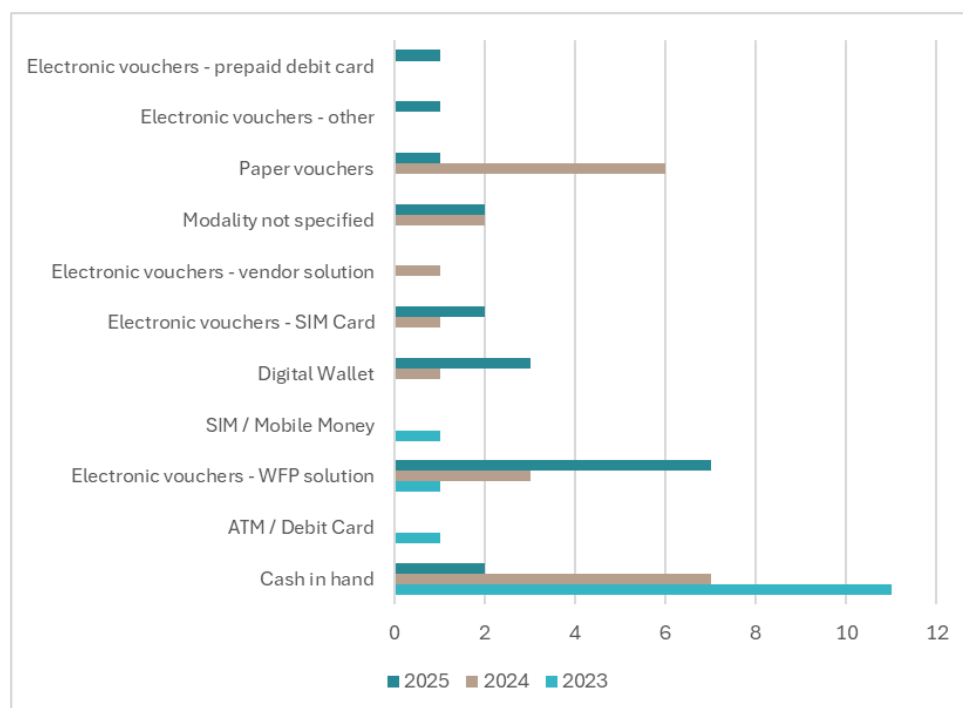
Sudan

188. **WFP leveraged the private sector to deliver results, especially for cash-based transfers and logistics.** Engagement with financial service providers enabled WFP to scale up cash-based transfer assistance in 2024 and shift towards digital cash-based transfers between 2023 and 2025 (Figure 41). This was enabled by a major financial service provider's switch to a digital payment application post-April 2023, facilitating solutions (WFP-owned wallets) that bypassed "know your customer" requirements for people lacking national identity documents (IDs).

¹⁵⁹ WFP's [2025 Localization Policy](#) identifies four main objectives: "i) Progress from transactional to collaborative partnerships with local and national non-state cooperating partners. ii) Strengthen engagement with CBOs as technical partners in food security and nutrition. iii) Increase the roles of local entrepreneurs and small enterprises in supply chains and markets. iv) Strengthen the influence of local and national actors in shaping policies, operations and coordination spaces" (p. 7).

¹⁶⁰ Based on internal and external KIIs, including descriptions of how WFP discussed the scope of partnerships with local cooperating partners and how localization was described.

Figure 41 – Sudan financial service provider agents by modality, 2023–2025



Source: WFP COMET system - CM-A004_Actuals_-_CBT_and_Vouchers_(Detailed)_v4.08¹⁶¹

189. However, negative aspects of extensive private sector engagement in the delivery of cash-based transfers were also noted by people receiving WFP support, including concerns that suppliers were charging prices well above market rates, potentially distorting local markets and adversely affecting people’s purchasing power.

190. To a lesser extent, WFP also partnered with private sector actors to deliver resilience and nutrition-related objectives. The emergency response was prioritized, however, potentially limiting WFP’s engagement with private sector actors to support food systems strengthening and longer-term food security. Funding modalities and donor restrictions were also raised as limiting WFP’s ability to engage the private sector in broader agricultural initiatives.

Neighbouring countries

191. Interviews and documents indicated that for the Sudan response specifically, WFP private sector engagement was limited to financial service providers and to a lesser extent third-party monitoring firms in neighbouring countries. For financial service providers, increased engagement in cash-based transfers expanded the scale of pre-existing service relationships (for example, Ethiopia, South Sudan) or added new cash-based transfer providers (for example, Uganda); and for third-party monitoring services, country offices in Chad and Libya shared experiences. As a positive outlier, the Egypt country office innovatively engaged with vocational training partners – similar in nature to WFP’s engagement with cooperating partners but formalized using long-term service-level agreements.

Coordination with governments

Sudan

192. **WFP’s engagement with authorities was severely strained by political tensions.** Coordination with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and its associated bodies, such as the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), was consistently hampered by significant bureaucratic hurdles, including lengthy approval processes for distributions, visas and office registrations.

¹⁶¹ FSPs could deliver CBT through more than one modality. It should also be noted that the dataset categorizations by type includes cooperating partners, not just banks and retailers.

193. Despite these difficulties, **WFP maintained technical engagement with various government institutions, including line ministries at federal, state and local levels**, supporting nutrition programming and capacity strengthening and collaboration with government personnel for field-level execution, particularly in conflict areas. For example, in Central Darfur, 40 medical staff from the Ministry of Health were seconded and incentivized to work in mobile clinics after receiving specific training in community-based management of acute malnutrition and infant and young child feeding. In several states, the Wali's (Governor's) office was a key partner for resolution of practical matters, such as access disputes and waiving of taxes for WFP operations. Formal coordination with local authorities and line ministries, including the Ministry of Social Welfare and HAC were also essential for registering internally displaced people, coordinating assessments and planning distribution.

194. WFP's engagement with other authorities, particularly the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), was characterized by significant political tension and limited direct cooperation to minimize tensions with SAF. Although interviewees did provide examples of WFP engaging in "quiet negotiations" with the RSF and other actors to secure humanitarian access.

195. WFP walked a fine line between engaging with government institutions for the purposes of technical coordination, securing access and retaining neutrality. As described in more detail in Section 2.2.4, it took a predominantly case-by-case approach and there was a lack of overall strategic guidance and leadership on the implications of engaging with government institutions on humanitarian principles.

Neighbouring countries

196. Overall, **the relationship with host governments and administrations was viewed as key counterparts and largely constructive across countries in the refugee response**. For example, the relationship was generally described as very good with strong collaboration and fostering a well-coordinated approach with UNHCR and implementing partners. In South Sudan the Government adapted to allocate land for returnees enabling them to resettle in communities, as well as supporting efforts for the movement of food from South Sudan into Sudan. In other contexts (for example, Chad, CAR) governments played an important role, including reinforcing field-level security, which enabled the response. However, interviewees raised context-specific challenges related to Libya and to a lesser extent Egypt and Ethiopia, reflecting survey findings from WFP staff (see Annex 11). WFP faced obstacles in Libya in particular, where the country was divided between two authorities (West, and East and South), one of which was unrecognized by the United Nations. This resulted in administrative and bureaucratic constraints, especially for supply chain, and a lack of approval for refugees to receive cash-based transfers.

2.4.2 Managing risk

Pressure to scale up in Sudan, but a lack of clarity on corporate risk appetite left the Sudan country office uncertain about acceptable levels of risk.

The challenging context drove innovations in Sudan but also presented challenges to deliver at scale while simultaneously complying with global assurance commitments. There were several good practices as well as challenges in the use of risk management tools by other country offices.

Safety and security were key components of WFP's approach to risk management in all countries and the organization flexibly adapted to address security risks that affected operations. In Sudan, contextual challenges hampered operations and insufficient tools hindered the country office's ability to weigh up dilemmas and prioritize mitigation measures.

Donor trust and risk-sharing for the response in Sudan increased over time due to greater transparency and more regular and open communications.

Risk analysis and decision making

Sudan

197. The country office developed a corporate scale-up risk register in June 2023¹⁶² and conducted assessments of risks between 2023 and 2024 (see Figure 26, Annex 20). However, the country office's risk and oversight committee no longer met regularly after the outbreak of conflict and decisions were not well documented. Documents show that the country office conducted risk assessments of new initiatives, balancing new and untested approaches with the risk of not responding to people in need and sought clarification from global headquarters on acceptable levels of risk. However, both internal and external constraints limited the country office's ability to meet GAP benchmarks. For example, targeting approaches varied across localities and were often led by community leaders, local authorities and cooperating partners, with increasingly limited WFP capacity to conduct independent verifications of lists of people receiving assistance. Partial progress in digitalizing identity management for distributions and a fragmented approach to identity management also hindered progress towards GAP targets. Overall, a recent audit concluded that oversight mechanisms were insufficient to ensure targeting integrity, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, where WFP presence and third-party monitoring reach was limited.¹⁶³

198. **Overall, there were significant gaps in WFP's risk management, including a lack of clarity on corporate risk appetite, which left decision making on appropriate levels of risk to the country office.** From the outset, there were high expectations on the Sudan country office to increase the number of people affected reached using a "no regrets approach".¹⁶⁴ However, insecurity and the increased politicization of humanitarian assistance in Sudan meant that WFP Sudan was regularly faced with difficult decisions about how to reach vulnerable people in a safe and principled manner, including practical decisions about whether to use armed escorts or pay to pass checkpoints (Section 2.2.4). At the same time, staff capacity on risk management was limited;¹⁶⁵ and groups such as the operational task force were not well set up to provide direction, and meetings of the strategic task force were infrequent (Section 2.4.3), leading to uncertainty about risk appetite.

199. **Donor trust and risk-sharing increased over time.** Donors increased their scrutiny of WFP's management of risk during the immediate scale-up of the response in 2023. Stakeholders described an initial lack of transparency on the part of WFP, which impacted on donor trust. This improved over time, however, with more open and regular communications with donors, including on sensitive issues, resulting in increased trust and greater risk-sharing. There were also instances where WFP had sought to leverage bilateral donor influence to improve its access and reach people in particularly hard-to-reach areas. Donors appreciated this level of engagement and noted that the improving quality and coverage of WFP's data on people in need in Sudan had helped to build confidence.

Neighbouring countries

200. **Neighbouring country offices consistently and appropriately managed risk using risk management tools. There were several good practices as well as challenges in the application of the tools.** Country offices generally completed risk registers for countries (for example, in South Sudan, Chad, Egypt and Libya), highlighting and addressing issues such as fraud and corruption, targeting and identity management, monitoring, supply chain and security management. Interviews highlighted the use of digital tools to reduce duplication: for example, SCOPE for biometric registration of returnees to South Sudan, and digital cash-based transfers in Chad to reduce the risks associated with handling cash. Elsewhere, documents show that WFP improved its targeting and oversight, for example, in Libya; and in Egypt, lessons learned from the Syria response on the need for extensive needs assessments to reduce inclusion or exclusion errors and address resource constraints informed the Sudan response. In Ethiopia, the Sudan response began at a time when the country office was focused on rebuilding donor trust following the May 2023 suspension of general food assistance.

¹⁶² Records of meetings of the operational task force, May 2024.

¹⁶³ WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09](#).

¹⁶⁴ WFP. 24 February 2023. WFP Emergency Action Protocol, OED2023/003.

¹⁶⁵ For example, the dedicated risk officer position has been vacant since February 2025.

201. Despite good practice, there were gaps in some areas and country offices were not always clear on when to escalate risk. This confusion was echoed in a recent evaluation of WFP’s Enterprise Risk Management Policy, which highlighted that WFP did not clearly distinguish between risk appetite (before mitigation), and tolerance to residual risks (after mitigation).¹⁶⁶

Safety and security

Sudan

202. **Safety and security were key components of WFP Sudan’s risk management, although contextual challenges continued to hamper operations**, including looting, preventing movement of supplies and ultimately the tragic loss of staff life. Security was a key risk throughout the evaluation period, hindering access, transport of food and non-food items and impacting on staff safety. Figure 42 shows the overall increase of incidents between April 2022 and July 2025 (see Annex 20 for a breakdown of the types of threats and their frequency over time for Sudan); and Table 16 illustrates the extreme humanitarian access constraints in Sudan and in neighbouring countries. WFP lost six staff members and five contractors over the period covered by the evaluation,¹⁶⁷ and was forced to suspend operations during times of extreme insecurity.

Figure 42 – Evolution of the number of aid worker security incidents in Sudan from April 2022 to July 2025



Source: The aid worker security database, 1997-present

¹⁶⁶ WFP Evaluation of Enterprise Risk Management Policy draft report shared for comments, p. 43.

¹⁶⁷ Six WFP staff lost their lives following an ambush in North Darfur in April 2023 and an airstrike in Blue Nile State in December 2024. In addition, an ambush on a joint UNICEF-WFP convoy resulted in the death of five contractors working for UNICEF and WFP in June 2025.

Table 16 – Index of humanitarian access

Country	June 2023	Dec 2023	June 2024	Dec 2024	June 2025
Sudan	5	5	5	5	5
South Sudan	4	4	4	5	4
Chad	3	3	3	2	3
Uganda	2	2	3	3	2
Libya	3	4	4	3	3
Egypt	2	2	2	2	3
CAR	4	4	4	4	3
Ethiopia	4	5	4	4	4

Source: The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) index of humanitarian access

203. The WFP Sudan Access Strategy highlighted the importance of community engagement and acceptance as crucial for negotiating security assurances and facilitating broader access by leveraging local governance structures to support programme execution and acceptance. While difficult to implement in some hard-to-reach areas, reopening offices and re-establishing proximity with affected people was identified as critical to ensuring meaningful engagement.¹⁶⁸

204. **WFP flexibly adapted to address security challenges that impacted on projects.** For example, the SEWPP suffered from insecurity that required revisions to the strategy and suspension of operations until conditions stabilized.¹⁶⁹ Documents highlighted mitigation approaches for other activities, such as: flexibility to provide double rations (two month entitlements), locating distribution points in accordance with local conflict-sensitivity analysis; ensuring adequate provisions to offset the risk of diversion; and adapting the design of registration and identity management methods to different contexts. WFP also reviewed security provisions under field-level agreements and implemented joint monitoring plans to verify implementation of mitigation measures.

205. **The country office lacked reliable tools for assessing security readiness, prioritizing mitigation actions, or demonstrating accountability.** Contingency planning in 2024 considered the need for staff safety and security through scenario planning, remaining aligned with the UN common system where feasible.¹⁷⁰ However, while the country office adopted WFP's Framework of Accountability Compliance Tool (FACT), its use was suboptimal in that several important security risk management actions were either not completed or went unrecorded, resulting in inaccurate compliance rates and increased risk exposure for staff and commodities.¹⁷¹ Internal stakeholders noted that the volatile security environment and frequent staff relocation limited its ability to fully implement security measures.

Neighbouring countries

206. **Security also formed a substantial part of risk management structures and processes in neighbouring countries,** not all of which were specific to the Sudan crisis response. For example, in Egypt, WFP applied security measures recommended by its security team, such as informing stakeholders about cash-based transfers, respecting local laws and culture, and varying distributions sites to mitigate potential security risks. In Uganda, WFP paid particular attention to the potential security risks for both staff and affected populations in relation to a reprioritization exercise to significantly reduce the number of people supported by WFP. In Ethiopia, key informants described a process of security assessments and market feasibility assessments for cash-based transfers, which were a key driver in the decision to delay cash-based transfers in Amhara. A full security overhaul was recently conducted in Chad, which was credited with there being no major security incidents since its implementation.

¹⁶⁸ Sudan Access Strategy, Draft 2.

¹⁶⁹ SEWPP Quarterly Report_3rd Quarter - July-September 2023.

¹⁷⁰ This includes the UN Country Team Security Risk Assessment (SRA) and Programme Criticality (PC).

¹⁷¹ WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09.](#)

2.4.3 WFP systems and processes

The corporate scale-up brought benefits for the countries that it covered, but WFP was not seen as delivering a regional response and the multi-country and regional dimension of the crisis added confusion rather than enhancing operations.

The Sudan crisis coincided with competing crises elsewhere and internal organizational changes, overstretching resources and limiting corporate attention.

Frequent staff rotations and staffing cuts impacted on WFP's ability to deliver a strong response at scale in all countries.

Events in Sudan took a severe toll on staff wellness and morale. WFP acted on its duty of care responsibilities within the limits of UN-wide staff rules and regulations, although staff questioned their adequacy for national staff.

Internal advance financing mechanisms provided bridge funding, but resource gaps and strict donor earmarking constrained aspects of WFP's response in all countries, including the cash-based transfer scale-up in Sudan.

Corporate systems functioned but some had to be adapted to the context in Sudan and there were challenges with the use of corporate digital tools in neighbouring countries.

Internal coordination and leadership

207. Interviews consistently highlighted that **the emergency activation brought benefits for the countries that it covered – such as increased resource mobilization efforts and more support from regional and global offices - but left other countries unsupported.**

208. **The regional dimension of the response was lacking.** WFP's response to the crisis was not managed as a regional response, but rather a series of country-led responses with varying degrees of regional and global support and reporting expectations. While select countries highlighted ad-hoc regional support on specific issues such as supply chain (for example, Libya) or inter-country office communication on cross-border movements or security (for example, Ethiopia), there were important gaps, including the lack of an overarching regional leadership structure (covering all countries) to provide strategic direction across WFP-designated regions, and inter-country office communication and sharing of lessons.

209. **The multi-country and multi-region nature of the Sudan regional crisis added an additional layer of complexity to the usual emergency activation** and there were several important deviations from the protocols. Some actions deviated from corporate scale-up norms, including deferring certain key decisions related to assessing and boosting country capacity and the appointment of an emergency coordinator to the WFP Sudan country director (CD). This was perceived as delaying aspects of the scale-up, particularly the reconfiguration and strengthening of the Sudan country office to respond to a major, complex emergency.

210. Delayed deployment of a large regional emergency coordination team added some value but ultimately confused existing reporting lines and undermined existing country and regional capacities. A regional emergency coordinator was not appointed until June 2024, deploying to Nairobi shortly afterwards with a large multifunctional team.¹⁷² WFP's own reflections on the experience of the regional emergency coordinator indicated several benefits – including strengthened donor liaison, coordination of joint appeals and proposals, stronger advocacy for cross-border operations and more emphasis on protection within the response. On balance, however, according to documents and interviews, the regional emergency coordinator experience was generally considered flawed, resulting in unclear accountabilities and the

¹⁷² There was no documentary evidence of the size and composition of the regional emergency coordination team. However, interviewees shared that it was a 20+ strong team covering functions such as supply chain, communications, resource mobilization, etc.

creation of an additional layer that undermined rather than strengthened country office and regional capacities, structures and processes.¹⁷³

211. **Country leadership was challenged by frequent changes in senior personnel, but recent consolidation of the leadership team had brought stability.** Sudan country leadership initially provided continuity between pre- and post-April 2023, but there were delays and difficulties with establishing an appropriately skilled country office leadership team to manage the response. Frequent changes to the country director and deputy country director leadership team thereafter were described as disruptive to the response (interviewees noted that there had been seven or eight deputy country directors in position since April 2023), although the current leadership team has been widely credited with bringing stability and vision from early 2025 onwards.

212. Regional and global support for the response in Sudan and neighbouring countries was strong. Interviews and documents highlight strong gap-filling and expert advice from regional and headquarters in multiple areas, including emergency preparedness and response, supply chain, VAM, human resources (HR) and clusters and common services.

213. **Early and sustained corporate attention on Sudan was negatively affected by competing crises and organizational changes.** In line with corporate scale-up protocols, operational and strategic task forces were established to provide respective oversight for operational and strategic aspects of the response. Meetings of the strategic task force started late and were infrequent, indicating that sustained corporate attention on the regional Sudan crisis was compromised by competing crises and concurrent changes within the organization.¹⁷⁴ The operational task force met frequently, although documents and interviews indicated a tendency for the group to focus on information-sharing rather than critically analysing the response and addressing bottlenecks.¹⁷⁵ Interviewees also expressed frustration with the demands for constant information and data that cascaded from the operational task force; as well as sustained pressure from senior leadership to increase the number of people reached, with less attention to quality aspects of the response.

Staffing and duty of care

214. **Human resource gaps and staffing cuts impacted WFP's ability to deliver a strong response.** In Sudan, human resource data showed a minimum 34 percent vacancy rate from January 2022 onwards, rising to 44 percent throughout 2024 (see Annex 23 for a fuller analysis of human resource data). Moreover, realignment exercises in 2024 and 2025 reduced staff capacity during the corporate scale-up at a time when the country office was under pressure to achieve ambitious targets. Cuts to the number of national staff were particularly severe, impacting on the organization's institutional memory and local intelligence and by extension its effectiveness in a range of areas, including field-level advocacy for humanitarian access. As access reopened in certain locations, some pre-conflict national staff were rehired, improving staffing capacity overall and strengthening WFP's footprint in key locations, but creating uncertainty and resulting in human resource inefficiencies.

215. **Staff shortages did not significantly impact on the Sudan response in neighbouring countries;** except in Libya, where interviewees consistently raised human resources as a constraint, with some critical positions remaining vacant for long periods (for example, nutrition).

¹⁷³ WFP. October 2024. Lessons Learned: Sudan Regional Corporate Scale-up. Internal report; WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09.](#)

¹⁷⁴ Simultaneous, large-scale emergencies in Gaza and Ukraine were considered to have had a particularly negative impact on senior leadership attention for the Sudan crisis. Using the number of Executive Director (ED) or Deputy Executive Director visits to Gaza (1 ED visit in August 2025 and 4 DED visits between October 2023 and July 2025) compared with Sudan and neighbouring countries (1 ED visit to Sudan in October 2024, 1 DED visit to Sudan in May 2024, plus 1 DED visit to Chad in August 2024) as a proxy indicator of high-level senior leadership attention illustrates the disparity. WFP did not participate in an IASC Executive Directors Group (EDG) mission to Sudan in April/May 2024, leading to internal and external perceptions of a lack of senior leadership prioritization.

¹⁷⁵ WFP. December 2023. After-Action Review: Sudan, 6 December 2023; WFP. October 2024. Lessons Learned: Sudan Regional Corporate Scale-up. Internal report; WFP. September 2025. [Internal Audit of WFP Emergency Operations in Sudan - September 2025, AR-25-09.](#)

216. **Short-term deployments added value but undermined the consistency and sustainability of operations.** Between 2024 and mid-2025, 56 staff supported the Sudan response on temporary duty assignments.¹⁷⁶ Staff interviewed noted that, while helpful filling gaps in staff capacity, this took a toll on the consistent trajectory of WFP's response, due to successive incumbents (particularly senior staff) arriving with different priorities and working styles. Data for neighbouring countries indicate only five relevant deployments, all of which were for Chad, although interviews suggest the number was much higher.¹⁷⁷

217. **Events in Sudan have taken a severe toll on staff wellness and morale.** Both international and national staff interviewed stressed the trauma that they and other colleagues faced due to the conflict itself and the subsequent evacuation and displacement of staff and families. In addition, the ongoing insecure environment, job insecurity, difficult living and working conditions, and heavy workloads continued to negatively impact staff.

218. **WFP took steps to act on its duty of care responsibilities within the limits of UN-wide staff rules and regulations, although staff questioned the adequacy of the measures for national staff.** Despite duty of care measures in Sudan,¹⁷⁸ there was a strong sense that national staff were particularly negatively affected by the crisis and the disparity between WFP's treatment of international versus national staff was frequently highlighted in interviews. However, the evaluation notes that WFP operates within a common set of rules and regulations for all UN agencies, limiting its agency to extend the same benefits to both international and national staff.

Funding

219. **Funding was a constraint during specific periods of the response in Sudan and in neighbouring countries.** WFP data show the relatively slow pace of funding contributions for Sudan, with steep rises in contributions in the first quarter of 2024 and the first half of 2025 in particular (see Figure 17, Annex 17), although available resources for Sudan exceeded budgetary requirements by 147 percent and 128 percent in 2023 and 2024 respectively. By 2025, however, there was a gap of 22 percent between the needs-based plan and contributions. Country offices in neighbouring countries all experienced funding constraints. These were already prominent in several countries pre-2023 (for example, Uganda, Libya), becoming more pronounced after heavy USA funding cuts in early 2025.

220. **Strict donor earmarking of funds for the Sudan country office limited WFP's reach and in particular its ability to reach vulnerable populations with cash-based transfers.** Earmarked funding at strategic outcome and activity levels combined represented a significant and increasing proportion of WFP Sudan's available resources (81 percent in 2023, rising to 86 percent in 2025) (Figure 4). Tight earmarking limited WFP's flexibility to reallocate resources across its portfolio, particularly its ability to quickly scale up its crisis response work given high levels of earmarking for resilience work that rolled over following the outbreak of conflict. Interviewees indicated that earmarking also constrained WFP's ability to select which modalities to use, limiting its ambitions to scale up cash-based transfers in Sudan in particular. **Flexible and country-level earmarked funds were also extremely limited for neighbouring countries**, which used a mixture of advance financing mechanisms (primarily internal project lending) and SO1 funds (earmarked and unearmarked)¹⁷⁹ to support the response (see Table 18 and Annex 17), with some countries (for example, Ethiopia) especially dependent on internal project lending for the Sudan response.

¹⁷⁶ Data were not available for the period April to December 2023 or from June 2025 onwards.

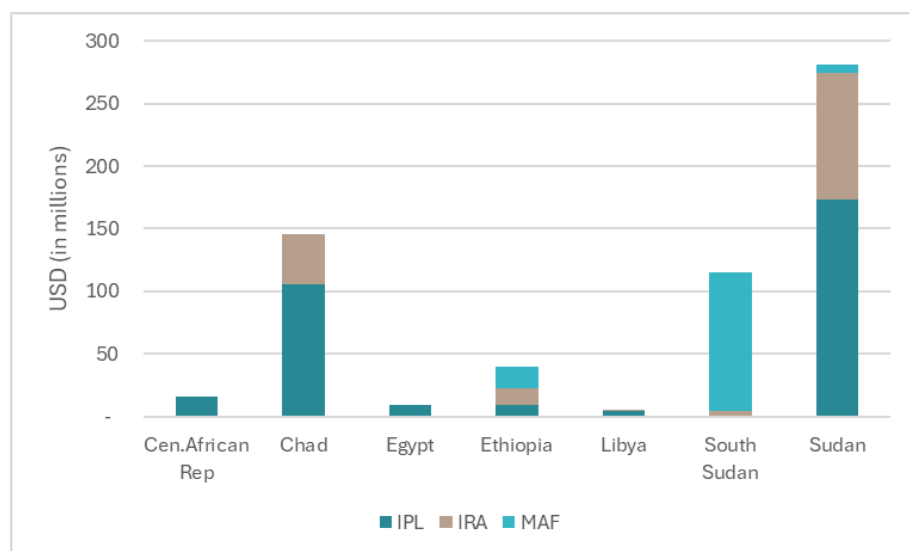
¹⁷⁷ Interviewees suggested there were up to 49 TDYs for Chad including programme and protection staff. However, TDY data are not consistently recorded making it difficult to accurately cite numbers.

¹⁷⁸ Measures included: special arrangements for staff to work remotely, efforts to improve working and living conditions (particularly living conditions for women staff), appointment of a dedicated staff counsellor (with a second, Arabic-speaking staff counsellor due to come on board at the time of the evaluation), creation of a network of trained wellness volunteers across the country and field offices and the establishment of a medical centre within the country office. Specific actions for national staff included setting up a national staff helpdesk and activation of special measures, such as termination indemnities for national staff and consistent rules regarding remote working.

¹⁷⁹ This refers to funds earmarked for crisis response but not specific to the Sudan response.

221. **Advance financing mechanisms allowed WFP to initiate and scale up aspects of the response in Sudan and in neighbouring countries.** WFP data show that allocations from WFP’s advance financing instruments – the immediate response account, internal project lending and macro-advance financing – provided bridge funding for the regional response throughout 2023 to 2025, with particularly large allocations in 2024, allowing WFP to start procurement processes ahead of the receipt of funds and kickstart and sustain emergency operations (Figure 43). Internal advance financing supported operations in all countries, with a particular focus on Sudan, which received 46 percent of the total. Larger WFP country offices such as South Sudan were also able to access significant amounts of funding from WFP’s advance financing mechanisms, linked to the scale of their existing programmes.

Figure 43 – WFP internal advance financing by country, 2023-2025



Source: 2023-2025 advance allocations to Sudan and Sudanese refugees

222. The diverse donor base supported the full spectrum of WFP’s work in Sudan, including donors willing to continue resourcing resilience-oriented work in Sudan during the emergency. However, high dependency on USA contributions left the organization vulnerable in the face of USA funding cuts (see Section 2.2). Of the total amount received, funding from the USA represented approximately 50 percent of overall contributions in Sudan (Table 17) and between 49 and 82 percent in neighbouring countries (Table 18).

Table 17 – Sudan contributions, 2023-2025 SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4

SUDAN	
Total Contributions 2023-2025 all SOs	USD 1.310.317.798
Total Contributions 2023-2025 SO1	USD 1.011.973.901
Total Contributions 2023-2025 SO2	USD 34.154.629
Total Contributions 2023-2025 SO3	USD 185.350.748
Total Contributions 2023-2025 SO4	USD 78.838.520
% contribution from Top Donor	49,5% USA

Source: Distribution Contribution and Forecast Stats 25-08-2025

Table 18 – Neighbouring countries SO1 contributions 2023-2025

	CAR	CHAD	EGYPT	ETHIOPIA	LIBYA	SOUTH SUDAN	UGANDA
SO1 Total Contributions 2023-2025 <i>(not Sudan response specific)</i>	USD 86,930,030	USD 492,486,848	USD 80,864,469	USD 718,247,400	USD 16,554,434	USD 575,435,962	USD 220,257,375
% contribution from Top Donor	82% USA	49% USA	73% USA	73% USA	56% USA	74% USA	60% USA
Sudan response earmarked funds	0	0	0*	3.8m USD (France) 1m USD (ECHO – 2025)	0*	0	1.35m USD (Germany – 2025)

*While no Sudan-specific earmarking, the bulk of SO1 funds were for the Sudan response

Sources: 2023-2025 contributions for each country office, inputs from country offices and 2023-2025 advance allocations to Sudan and Sudanese refugees

Corporate systems, guidance and tools

223. **Corporate systems functioned but were not always relevant to the Sudan response and had to be tailored.** In Sudan, for example: WFP’s standard field-level agreement had to be adapted for its work with ERR, causing significant delays; advancing payments to small organizations and financial service providers that were unable to self-finance was problematic (see Section 2.4.1); and the cross-border supply chain was complicated by a lack of common systems and approaches for commodity tracking and corridor management (see Section 2.3.2). In neighbouring countries, interviews and GAP reports indicated mixed experience with corporate digital tools (including SCOPE and SugarCRM)¹⁸⁰ during the response: some informants appreciated the shift towards accountability and efficiency (for example, South Sudan), others noted greater reliability and improved data reconciliation (for example, Chad), and elsewhere delays were attributed to the tools (for example, Egypt, South Sudan).¹⁸¹ In Uganda, there were “no smart corporate solutions” for triangulation between systems such as LESS and SCOPE.¹⁸² Challenges were also noted with the self-registration tool, which was described as inefficient and a work in progress with support from headquarters (for example, Egypt).

2.4.4 Monitoring and learning

WFP progressively filled gaps in monitoring coverage and quality following disruptions caused by the conflict in Sudan and improved the accessibility and use of its monitoring data.

A lack of disaggregated data by caseload and inconsistent use of monitoring indicators across countries hindered country offices (and the evaluation team) from determining progress towards results.

Lessons from WFP’s response to the crisis were identified – for application both within the ongoing response and as part of future scale-ups to new emergencies – but follow-up was not well documented. For countries outside the corporate scale-up, lessons learned processes related to the Sudan response were limited, including scope to adapt WFP activities to the specificities of the Sudanese refugee profile.

¹⁸⁰ SCOPE is WFP’s beneficiary management platform and SugarCRM is used for monitoring and feedback.

¹⁸¹ In South Sudan this was noted as due to poor internet connection.

¹⁸² WFP. November 2024. EDA Uganda. p. 2.

Monitoring

Sudan

224. **The conflict disrupted WFP's monitoring systems in Sudan, but monitoring coverage and quality were subsequently strengthened.** WFP's monitoring activities (including third-party monitoring services) were disrupted for several months from April 2023, rendering it unable to reach minimum mandatory monitoring requirements for much of that year, according to documents and interviews. Thereafter, once third-party monitoring services had been resumed, WFP continued to experience gaps in monitoring of targeting processes and post-distribution monitoring in access-constrained areas, and distribution monitoring was irregular due to late planning and tracking of distribution sites. Reports indicated concerns about WFP's own limited field monitoring capacity, and its ability to verify third-party monitoring activities due to a continued lack of staff presence in hard-to-reach localities. Assurance mechanisms were implemented from early 2024, including remote (phone) monitoring in place of on-site monitoring, but contextual constraints limited their effectiveness. For example, stakeholders noted that phone monitoring in the Darfur and Kordofan states resulted in response rates of less than 10 percent during 2023 and 2024 due to low connectivity and other challenges.

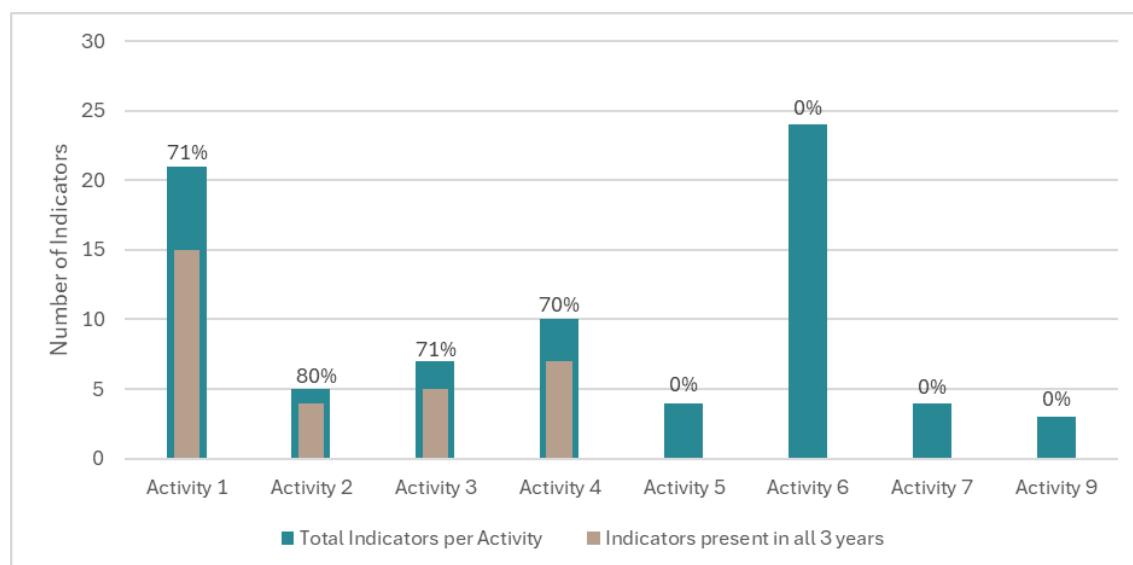
225. Recognizing the gaps, and with the support of the regional bureau in Nairobi, the country office developed a context-appropriate monitoring strategy and standard operating procedures for escalating monitoring issues, prioritized site visits based on a risk-based monitoring framework, built country office capacity on monitoring, and strengthened third-party and remote monitoring. These improvements were credited with improving WFP programmatic oversight in Sudan, including the use of monitoring data for decision making and corrective action. In addition, a second third-party monitoring service provider was brought on board from May 2025 to increase the country office's coverage of on-site monitoring, and process monitoring tools were harmonized to make them more relevant, less duplicative and to align with updated corporate tools. The country office also strengthened the use of monitoring for programmatic decision making by making monitoring reports more accessible and introducing a ticketing system and regular meetings with different technical units and management to address priority issues.

Neighbouring countries

226. Various challenges were identified with monitoring in neighbouring countries. Monitoring systems were not specific to the Sudan response, but available evidence identified challenges, including insufficient coverage (for example, South Sudan), weaknesses in cooperating partner monitoring capacities (for example, Ethiopia) and insufficient analysis of monitoring data to support performance improvements (for example, Uganda).

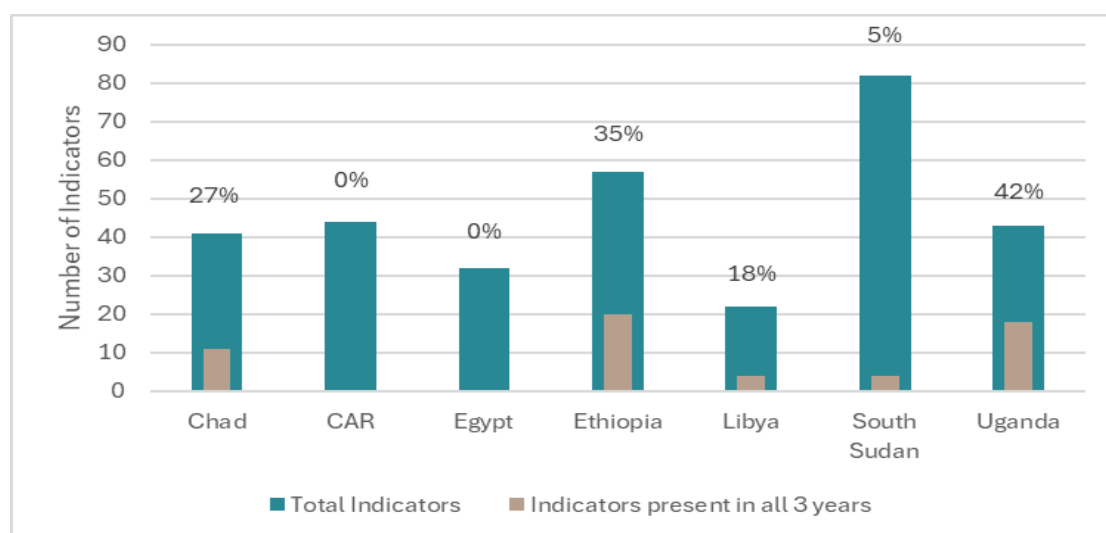
227. **Non-disaggregated monitoring data by caseload made it difficult for neighbouring countries (and for the evaluation team by extension) to pinpoint progress towards results for new Sudanese refugees and returnees** compared with other people receiving WFP assistance. The **lack of monitoring against a consistent set of indicators (in all countries) also limited the extent to which WFP and the evaluation team could assess progress or identify persistent challenges.** Figure 44 and Figure 45 provide an overview of the extent to which monitoring indicators changed during the evaluation timeframe (see Annex 22 for a more detailed overview of indicator changes for Sudan).

Figure 44 – Mapping of indicators Sudan, 2022-2024



Source: ACRs 2022-2024

Figure 45 – Mapping of indicators in neighbouring countries, 2022-2024



Source: ACRs 2022-2024

Learning and adaptation

228. **WFP sought to learn from its response to the crisis, including learning from implementation of pilot initiatives, but follow-up on recommendations was not systematically tracked or documented.** In line with emergency activation protocols, WFP conducted three comprehensive learning exercises: an after-action review focused on Sudan only in December 2023; an after-action review covering Sudan, South Sudan and Chad in May 2024; and a follow-up lessons learned exercise focused on the same three countries in October 2024. These processes identified recommendations for course corrections within the regional Sudan response and more generic, corporate action points to inform future WFP scale-ups. Communications from the headquarters-based emergency coordination team in January 2025 indicate tracking of recommendations from the October 2024 lessons learned exercise, but there was no evidence of further follow-up. WFP also sought to learn from the piloting of new initiatives and ways of working in Sudan: for example, annual reports described lessons learned processes conducted in 2024 of the B2B initiative and WFP’s support for ERR in Khartoum.

229. **For countries outside the corporate scale-up, lesson learning related to the Sudan response was limited.** Informants in Egypt, however, highlighted that they had been able to apply learning from the Syrian refugee response to the Sudan response. Furthermore, when asked to reflect on overall lessons from the Sudan response during interviews, some common themes emerged, including the importance of enhancing social cohesion (for example, Chad, Egypt), strengthening resilience for refugees (for example, Chad, Egypt, Uganda, CAR), and the need for improved internal coordination (for example, South Sudan, Libya).

2.5. EQ 5: Scale-down

A phase-down of WFP's emergency response was not considered appropriate, given rising humanitarian needs in Sudan and ongoing needs in neighbouring countries. Yet dwindling humanitarian funding drove reprioritization and retargeting of vulnerable populations.

There was no formal transition strategy for WFP in Sudan (or specifically for the Sudan response in neighbouring countries), but its pre-conflict resilience portfolio was seen as an asset and was already being scaled up in more stable parts of the country. Careful planning was needed to avoid further fragmenting east and west Sudan with an over-simplistic divide between WFP's emergency and resilience portfolios.

Some countries included new Sudanese and returnee arrivals in resilience activities and transition planning, while others had thus far excluded them from longer-term programming.

The emphasis of WFP's resilience work on rural livelihoods was not considered relevant for transition in some contexts, given the predominantly urban caseload.

Phase-down

Sudan

230. **Phase-down discussions were not considered appropriate in Sudan given continued and increasing humanitarian needs in parts of the country.** Given the ongoing conflict in Sudan and worsening food insecurity in conflict-affected areas in the west of the country, internal and external stakeholders agreed that the time was not yet right to begin phasing down WFP's emergency assistance country-wide. This aligns with humanitarian system-wide planning, which continues to describe the situation in parts of Sudan as "an escalating crisis".¹⁸³ Elsewhere, a transition to medium-term post-conflict recovery was considered feasible, for example in Khartoum; and longer-term resilience building was deemed possible in parts of eastern Sudan.

231. **Reduced humanitarian funding prompted thinking on the handover of some limited aspects of WFP's emergency work in Sudan.** Given the protracted nature of the emergency, combined with reduced humanitarian resources globally and for Sudan specifically, funding shortages were noted as a driver for phasing down specific aspects of WFP's activities. Within the emergency telecommunications cluster, for example, uncertainty about continued donor support had prompted thinking about phase-down and the transfer of the emergency telecommunications cluster systems to the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to ensure their continuity.

Neighbouring countries

232. **A lack of sustained humanitarian funding was a major driving factor in discussions on phase-down in countries hosting Sudanese refugees and returnees,** despite evidence of continued humanitarian need. Resource scarcity was noted in interviews as a key influencing factor driving general discussions on reprioritization and scale-down (for example, Chad, Ethiopia, CAR, South Sudan and Egypt); along with government responses to remain receptive to refugee populations, which was particularly noted as a key driver in Ethiopia. There was no evidence to suggest, however, that WFP was intending to phase-out its support for the post-April 2023 influx of Sudanese arrivals. Rather, the overall backdrop of dwindling humanitarian resources had prompted discussions on how to continue prioritizing support for refugees

¹⁸³ OCHA. December 2025. [Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025](#).

and returnees in many of these contexts, and how to avoid this new caseload remaining in camps for a protracted period (in contexts where camps were in place).

233. **Yet the continued humanitarian needs of Sudanese refugees and returnees limited the feasibility of an imminent phase-down of WFP's support in neighbouring countries.** Internal and external stakeholders stressed that the time was not yet right for phase-down planning in several contexts. This included Chad, where refugees were still crossing the border at the time of the evaluation; in Egypt, where there were low expectations of an imminent return for Sudanese refugees; and in Uganda, where there were questions about the likelihood of returns at all.

Planning for transition

Sudan

234. **Transition planning was already underway within the development of WFP's next CSP for Sudan.** While a country-wide phase-down of WFP's crisis response was not considered appropriate, external and internal stakeholders did acknowledge that conditions were already in place in more peaceful parts of the country (predominantly in the east) to begin planning and implementing transition activities and continue resilience-building efforts where feasible. WFP Sudan had not yet drafted a transition plan, but elements of transition and resilience in stable localities and support for areas of return are expected to be articulated within WFP's next interim country strategic plan (ICSP), with flexibility to accommodate transition programming where appropriate.

235. **WFP's pre-conflict and ongoing resilience portfolio was seen as an asset, providing a solid foundation for transition planning.** Large-scale resilience projects, with support from key donors have put WFP in a strong position to sustain and scale up its changing lives agenda where it can. Indeed, donors emphasized that they expected WFP to continue delivering on its dual mandate in Sudan, and increasing pressure on resources is likely to emphasize resilience-oriented work where feasible. Stakeholders stressed the benefits of continuing to scale up WFP's circular approach as a way of operationalizing a self-reinforcing resilience agenda in Sudan – boosting capacity for food production through resilience activities, buying locally through those producers for the emergency response, while simultaneously boosting livelihoods in peaceful parts of the country.

236. **Planning for transition was focused on stable localities, although the risk of creating further fragmentation of the country through a humanitarian-development divide was acknowledged.** Internal and external stakeholders cautioned against an overly simplistic fragmentation of WFP's programme in Sudan along east-west lines, noting the political sensitivities of such a divide and the accompanying risks of splitting the country further by providing humanitarian assistance only in the west contrasted with investments in economic development, safety nets and social cohesion in the east. Stakeholders stressed the need for continued risk-sharing with donors and a “no regrets approach” to development as well as humanitarian aid, recognizing the potential for conflict to undermine development investments in the future.

Neighbouring countries

237. **Country offices in neighbouring countries took different approaches to including or excluding the new influx of Sudanese refugees and returnees into longer-term transition activities and planning.** In South Sudan, WFP was engaged in breakthrough discussions with strategic partners on durable solutions, including the allocation of land to help refugees and returnees settle into their new location. In Chad, WFP had provided agricultural support for selected refugees (including new arrivals); and in Egypt, WFP was piloting a programme to improve livelihoods and social cohesion between refugees, Sudanese newcomers and host communities to inform transition.

238. **Elsewhere, however, new Sudanese arrivals were not included in transitional activities or approaches.** In Ethiopia, for example, WFP was exploring how to incorporate refugees into its resilience portfolio as part of its transition strategy, but this was largely focused on longer-term refugee caseloads. In

Libya, the country office had phased out its resilience-oriented work altogether to focus on emergency response only.

239. **The relevance of resilience-oriented work focused on rural livelihoods for a predominantly urban new Sudanese caseload was questionable.** Previous WFP evaluations have highlighted the limitations of organizational policies and approaches to resilience building beyond rural livelihoods,¹⁸⁴ and learning on this was highlighted again in this evaluation. In Uganda, for example, where the country office was exploring the expansion of the “self-reliance model”, stakeholders noted its limitations for the Sudanese refugees, who were generally not oriented towards farming activities. Similarly in South Sudan, many of the South Sudanese returnees were displaced from Khartoum and more used to urban livelihoods, calling into question the relevance of the Government’s consideration of providing land to facilitate their resettlement. In contrast, in Egypt, vocational training for Sudanese refugees originating from urban locations was considered highly appropriate, with a focus on training topics such as graphic design, social media management, tailoring and computer maintenance.

¹⁸⁴ For example: WFP. May 2023. [Evaluation of WFP’s Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition](#). OEV/2021/017.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1. Conclusions

WFP demonstrated agility and innovation in delivering life-saving assistance to millions affected by the Sudan regional crisis under severe constraints. The response expanded its coverage and brought a sharper focus on reaching those most in need over time. However, persistent external and internal challenges limited the effectiveness and efficiency of the scale-up in Sudan and to a lesser extent the response in neighbouring countries. The complexity of contexts in which WFP operated – the highly politicized aid environment in Sudan in particular – as well as systemic constraints, highlighted the need for strengthened governance and higher-level strategic clarity, particularly concerning risk, prioritization, efficiency and the implementation of principled, inclusive and equitable responses.

240. This evaluation makes eight overarching conclusions. The emphasis of the conclusions is on Sudan, but, where the strength of evidence allowed, conclusions drawn from experiences in neighbouring countries are also included.

Conclusion 1: WFP's early understanding of the impact of the crisis was limited, but it progressively filled data gaps to determine priority needs and locations.

241. In all countries, WFP relied on periodic assessments of needs, which provided important and well-trusted evidence. However, these were quickly outdated by the onset of the emergency and widespread displacement, and it took time for WFP to understand the impact of the crisis on vulnerable populations through more comprehensive and nimble needs analysis and timely monitoring data. With the expertise that WFP has accumulated on assessing, understanding and responding to needs, there is more that could have been done to rapidly adapt assessment and analysis processes to support the relevance of WFP's responses from the outset.

Conclusion 2: WFP assistance was quickly targeted to reach newly displaced populations seeking refuge in neighbouring countries and fleeing conflict-affected locations internally, but those who remained in inaccessible areas were initially underserved. Over time, WFP sharpened its focus and found creative ways to prioritize the most vulnerable people, including those in persistently inaccessible locations. Pressure to respond quickly and at scale with limited resources affected the quality of WFP's response and there were shortcomings in the consistent inclusivity, accountability and conflict-sensitivity of its programming.

242. In neighbouring countries, despite the strain on budgets and existing caseloads, WFP consistently expanded and adapted its crisis response operations to target new Sudanese refugees and returnees. In Sudan, pressure to deliver quickly and at scale initially incentivized the prioritization of people in more accessible areas, at the expense of those in greater need but in harder-to-reach localities. This dynamic changed as the response evolved and WFP progressively shifted its focus to reaching the most vulnerable in persistently hard-to-reach areas.

243. Overall, however, WFP struggled to translate corporate commitments on protection, inclusion (particularly for persons with disabilities) and accountability to affected people into tangible outputs for underserved and marginalized groups and to consistently conduct and act on conflict-sensitive analysis. Pressures to deliver quickly and at scale, as well as insufficient staffing and partner capacity, undermined programme quality, evidenced by the under-representation of persons with disabilities among those receiving WFP assistance and feedback indicating limited adaptation of assistance to specific needs.

244. WFP is under increasing pressure to use its limited resources well, but how "well" is defined is open to interpretation; as was also highlighted in the evaluation of WFP's approaches to targeting and

prioritization.¹⁸⁵ The organization needs to ask itself whether incentives to achieve quantitative targets and reach more people simultaneously hinder its efforts to target and reach the most vulnerable – those in hard-to-reach areas and marginalized groups – ultimately compromising the relevance, appropriateness, inclusivity and principled nature of its response.

Conclusion 3: WFP delivered vital, large-scale humanitarian assistance to millions of people, demonstrating progress towards results despite extraordinary operational challenges. However, the pace of the programmatic scale-up and the selection of appropriate modalities in Sudan were slowed by both external and internal challenges.

245. WFP successfully delivered vital, large-scale humanitarian assistance to millions of people, making some progress towards food and nutrition security benefits in a severely constrained operational context in Sudan and neighbouring countries. Contextual challenges constrained WFP's reach and effectiveness in Sudan, as did a degree of inertia within the organization, demonstrated by a slow emergency scale-up for some strategic outcomes and activities, particularly for nutrition programming, leading to pipeline breaks and compromised food security and nutrition results in some important areas, particularly for women and girls. Similarly, despite early evidence of cash feasibility in Sudan, WFP's cash-based transfer scale-up was delayed, indicating that the organization's decision making on appropriate modality choices is still not sufficiently agile.

Conclusion 4: WFP's adherence to humanitarian principles in Sudan was challenged by the highly politicized aid environment and hampered by insufficient corporate leadership and learning from other complex humanitarian contexts.

246. Adherence to humanitarian principles was extremely challenging in Sudan. A lack of clear direction and strong leadership on managing dilemmas inherent within humanitarian principles meant that decisions were pushed down the management chain and passed on to cooperating partners. There was little evidence that conversations on humanitarian principles systematically took place and that staff were consistently supported to make the best (or the least bad) decisions in constrained circumstances, resulting in incidences of fragmented and localized solutions rather than a cohesive, principled approach.

247. WFP walked a difficult line between engaging with government institutions to enable access and retaining operational independence and neutrality. Given the organization's extensive and hard-won experience of managing such trade-offs in other comparable contexts, there is more that could have been done to bring that learning to bear within the Sudan response.

Conclusion 5: The early efficiency of the response in Sudan was hampered by preparedness gaps and risk aversion, yet positive improvements were achieved over time. Neighbouring countries successfully managed risk within the response. However, despite initiatives designed to strengthen risk management, such as the Global Assurance Project, a lack of clarity on corporate risk appetite left the Sudan country office exposed and uncertain on acceptable levels of risk.

248. In neighbouring countries, country offices with pre-existing emergency experience were generally better prepared to integrate the influx efficiently, leveraging existing logistics capacity and financial service provider networks. However, the overall efficiency of the response was compromised by an initial lack of early warning and contingency planning, which failed to anticipate the conflict's scale and complexity. In Sudan, this led to largely reactive supply actions, which reduced WFP's ability to mitigate pipeline breaks and delayed the initial scale-up. A risk-averse supply chain approach hindered WFP from maximizing the GCMF's potential value and led to increased lead times and missed cost efficiency opportunities. Positive developments, such as conflict- and context-appropriate transportation approaches and diversification of corridors only emerged later, indicating that strategic supply chain decision making lagged operational demands.

249. In Sudan, innovative pilot approaches, such as the B2B model and supporting the community-led ERR, which were crucial for gaining access to hard-to-reach areas in Sudan, also carried additional levels of risk for the organization. While country offices in neighbouring countries appropriately managed risk and

¹⁸⁵ WFP. January 2026. Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Approach to Targeting and Prioritization for Food and Nutrition Assistance (draft).

made good use of risk management tools, the elevated level of risk in Sudan required greater clarity on corporate risk appetite and ultimately the country office was not sufficiently and consistently supported by WFP senior leadership to confidently pursue a no-regrets approach as set out in the emergency scale-up protocols, which inhibited bold and agile decision making.

Conclusion 6: WFP played a key role in the inter-agency response to the regional crisis, leveraging its strengths for the benefits of the wider humanitarian system. However, despite channelling significant amounts of funding through local organizations, genuine localization as envisaged by the new policy remains hampered.

250. WFP was a valued humanitarian actor in the response and played an important role in boosting the wider humanitarian response through its coordination of clusters and the provision of common services. Its lead role in facilitating the evacuation of UN staff and dependents from Khartoum following the outbreak of the conflict was widely appreciated. Moreover, WFP leveraged its comparative advantage by working at scale to improve food and nutrition security outcomes, and provided much-needed expertise in several important areas, including logistics, security and access, and generating foundational data to inform the collective understanding of food insecurity. However, WFP's distance from coordination on the use of cash in Sudan hindered attempts to deliver a harmonized, inter-agency cash response.

251. While local organizations delivered much of the emergency response, and WFP's support for local organizations was significant, WFP's mindset, systems and approaches caused delays and prevented a timely shift beyond transactional partnerships towards a more expansive interpretation of localization as set out in WFP's latest policy on localization¹⁸⁶ – supporting and empowering local actors to make their own decisions about the best ways of delivering the response and informed sharing of risk.

Conclusion 7: The scale-up lacked coherence as a unified regional response and did not consistently receive the corporate attention it deserved. WFP's response came at a time when the organization was faced with multiple competing demands for resources, putting country offices in the difficult position of scaling up their responses while simultaneously cutting personnel and managing funding gaps. This also impacted negatively on staff wellness and morale, particularly in the case of national staff, despite WFP's efforts to fulfil its duty of care responsibilities.

252. The internal coherence of WFP's response was hampered by the lack of a unified regional strategy and internal process ambiguities. Despite the crisis being multi-country and multi-regional in scope, WFP's response was executed as a series of country-led operations with insufficient overarching regional leadership or strategic coordination, partly due to competing crises occurring elsewhere, as well as internal organizational reconfigurations and cuts. This ultimately undermined, rather than strengthened, existing country and regional capacities.

253. Staffing cuts, short-term deployments (in all countries) and frequent changes in senior leadership (in Sudan) created instability and compromised the effectiveness and coherence of WFP's response. While WFP provided crucial duty of care measures, the disparity in benefits and support between international and national personnel concerned staff.

Conclusion 8: While there is no indication of a return to peace in Sudan for the moment, country offices were already looking ahead to phase down and transition, driven in large part by dwindling humanitarian funding. WFP's ongoing resilience portfolio in Sudan will be an asset to later transition, providing that it can be leveraged to also bring stability and hope to the lives of those in perennially insecure localities.

254. In Sudan, WFP maintained the relevance of its dual mandate, successfully continuing and expanding its pre-conflict resilience portfolio where possible (including in some insecure locations) – demonstrating a commitment to long-term systemic stability alongside emergency delivery, and serving as an asset as the organization defines its plans for both saving and changing lives within its next country strategic plan. The country office is already cognizant of the need for a conflict-sensitive approach to avoid fragmenting the country further and will need to find ways to effectively segway between crisis response and resilience programming. Continued humanitarian needs within the Sudanese caseload in neighbouring countries, but limited funding, incentivized country offices to prioritize among vulnerable populations for immediate assistance and in some cases to incorporate the new Sudanese and returnee arrivals into

¹⁸⁶ WFP. May 2025. Localization Policy. WFP/EB.A/2025/5-A. 29 May 2025.

resilience initiatives. As the crisis continues and as resources become increasingly scarce, these approaches will become ever more relevant.

3.2. Recommendations

255. The evaluation presents a series of recommendations for WFP's consideration at various levels. These address both the ongoing response to the regional Sudan crisis as well as corporate actions to improve future responses. While the recommendations are derived from the conclusions and findings of the evaluation, they are not intended to be fully comprehensive, noting that improvements in certain key areas (for example, risk management, accountability) are covered by recommendations and agreed actions contained in other relevant recent evaluations or internal audits.

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 1: Enhance WFP's understanding of the effects of the Sudan crisis and its ability to prepare for and respond to that crisis as well as other large-scale emergencies, including those that affect more than one country or region.</p> <p>Linked to conclusions 1, 2, 5 and 7.</p>				Medium	
<p>1.1. Institutionalize rapid adaptation of assessment and analysis processes and products to ensure that the relevance of the ongoing Sudan regional response is supported by timely data and new vulnerability assessment and mapping tools and methodologies. Ensure that this includes up-to-date market assessment data and cost-efficiency analysis to enable WFP to adapt assistance modalities in a timely and relevant manner.</p>	Operational	Country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda) vulnerability assessment and mapping and research, assessment and monitoring units	Programme units in country offices; Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters; Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service at global headquarters; Supply Chain and Delivery Division; Delivery Assurance Service	Medium	December 2026
<p>1.2. Institutionalize scenario-planning and simulation exercises at country offices implementing the Sudan response (with the participation of global headquarters) to strengthen country, multi-country and multi-region preparedness as a key part of ongoing readiness for the evolution of the crisis and in anticipation of other emergencies.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	Medium	December 2026

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>1.3. Agree on ways to ensure that the country office staff implementing corporate scale-ups have adequate skillsets, particularly for those in key leadership roles, programmatic functions (including nutrition), vulnerability assessment and mapping, supply chain, cash-based transfers and cross-cutting functions such as access, protection, working with vulnerable groups experiencing greater barriers to access, and conflict sensitivity.</p>	Strategic	Workforce Planning and Strategy Branch at global headquarters		Medium	March 2027
<p>Recommendation 2: Strengthen the way in which WFP manages the dilemmas inherent to implementing a principled humanitarian response in the Sudan.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 4.</p>				High	

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>2.1. Establish formal escalation pathways for country office and global headquarters staff to assist them in navigating the dilemmas and trade-offs related to humanitarian principles in the Sudan (e.g. neutrality vs. access), preventing reliance on fragmented, localized solutions. Such pathways should be informed by relevant WFP policies, procedures, communications and lessons learned from other comparable settings, adapted to the situation in the Sudan.¹⁸⁸</p> <p>— ¹⁸⁸Recommendation 3 resulting from the evaluation of WFP's emergency response to the prolonged crisis in the Sahel and other countries of Central Africa, covering the period from 2018 to 2023, called on WFP to establish a protocol to allow country offices to request support from headquarters in Rome when handling sensitive and high-risk dilemmas. The management response to that recommendation stated that WFP's senior management would issue a communication on the need to follow already established risk escalation protocols. Recommendation 2.1 here builds on that and seeks to ensure that existing processes and communications are formalized and routinely followed in the Sudan country office.</p>	Operational	Sudan country office	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office; Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	High	December 2026
<p>2.2. Coordinate internally and with the international humanitarian system at the highest level to allow simultaneous corporate support for international processes in the Sudan, such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, while protecting the country office from backlash.</p>	Strategic	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service at global headquarters	Sudan country office	High	April 2027

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 3: Strengthen approaches to protection, conflict sensitivity, inclusivity and accountability to affected people during WFP's response to the emergency to ensure that they are central to the design, implementation, monitoring and oversight of activities.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 3.</p>				High	
<p>3.1. Ensure that protection, including for vulnerable groups, and accountability to affected people move from being secondary tasks to core operational responsibilities. At the same time, ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are included as a core design element of emergency programming by allocating resources for accessibility.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	Gender, Protection and Inclusion Unit at global headquarters	High	December 2026
<p>3.2. Collaborate with other United Nations entities on registration processes in countries neighbouring the Sudan to facilitate the active targeting of vulnerable unregistered populations and reduce exclusion risks.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, Uganda)	Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	High	June 2027

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 4: Reform approaches and systems to enable more meaningful localization of WFP's assistance in the Sudan and neighbouring countries. Use the Sudan experience of working with emergency response rooms to inform more efficient and effective ways of partnering with community-based organizations in the Sudan and in other contexts.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 6.</p>				High	
<p>4.1. Reform partnership management processes to reduce administrative burdens, including by shortening the time required to process invoice payments and approve proposals, thereby supporting local actors and enabling localized decision-making. Ensure that partner management processes enable WFP to directly partner with community-based organizations, including through the adaptation of the current field-level agreement delivery model and flexible use of United Nations partnership portals.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	<p>Delivery Assurance Service; Operational Partners Unit at global headquarters</p> <p>Gender, Protection and Inclusion</p>	High	December 2026
<p>4.2. Schedule discussions with local cooperating partners on risk sharing to address financial risks (e.g. the implications of the slow payment of invoices) and roles and responsibilities related to access negotiations.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)		High	June 2026

Recommendation	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP offices and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
<p>Recommendation 5: Adapt programming and planning for scale-down and a shift towards durable solutions and resilience.</p> <p>Linked to conclusion 8.</p>				Medium	
<p>5.1. Determine the criteria for transitioning from emergency to recovery and resilience activities in the Sudan and neighbouring countries and the scale-up of livelihood and resilience support, maximizing opportunities to layer and sequence life-saving and life-changing activities, including in conflict-prone localities.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda)	Climate and Resilience Service at global headquarters	Medium	December 2026
<p>5.2. Incorporate tailored urban resilience models (e.g. vocational training) into the country strategic plans for the countries neighbouring the Sudan in order to align programming with the predominantly urban profile of the Sudanese refugees, rather than defaulting to rural livelihoods programming.</p>	Operational	Programme units in country offices (Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, Uganda)	Emergency Preparedness and Response Service at global headquarters	Medium	June 2027

Office of Evaluation

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy - T +39 06 65131

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