

Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Country Strategic Plans

Terms of reference



World Food
Programme

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1. Background

1.1. INTRODUCTION

1. Policy evaluations focus on a WFP policy and the activities put into place to implement them. They evaluate the quality of the policy, its results, and seek to explain why and how these results were achieved, or not.
2. These Terms of Reference (ToR) are for the evaluation of the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) Policy, approved by Executive Board (EB) in November 2016 and included in WFP's Policy Compendium thereafter. As with all WFP policies issued after 2011, their evaluation is covered by the Policy Formulation arrangements¹, which include an evaluation four to six years from the start of policy implementation.
3. These ToR were prepared by Office of Evaluation (OEV) based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders. Their purpose is to provide key information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and specify expectations that the evaluation team should fulfil. The ToR are structured as follows: Chapter 1 provides introduction and information on the context; Chapter 2 presents the rationale, objectives and stakeholders of the evaluation; Chapter 3 presents an overview of the policy and defines the scope of the evaluation; Chapter 4 spells out the evaluation questions, approach and methodology; Chapter 5 indicates how the evaluation will be organized.
4. The CSP Policy outlines WFP's approach to strategic and programmatic planning at the country level. It introduced a unique programmatic framework to be based on coherent country portfolios, which replaced all previously existing programme categories and project documents.
5. The evaluation will cover the period from November 2016 when the WFP CSP Policy was approved to October 2022, with an emphasis on the 2017-2021 period. It will be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration in June 2023. It will be managed by OEV and conducted by an external evaluation team.

1.2. CONTEXT

External

6. In 2015, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations Members States convened on the centrality of effective partnership at global, regional and country level to achieve sustainable development.
7. The 2030 Agenda mainstreams the notion of sustainable development as a harmonious system of relations between nature and human beings, in which individuals are part of an inclusive society with peace and prosperity for all. In so doing, it conveys the global commitment to end poverty, hunger and inequality, encompassing humanitarian and development initiatives. Against this backdrop, the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development cannot be addressed in isolation from one another. This calls for a systemic approach to development policies and programme design and implementation, as well as for a systemic perspective in analysing development change.
8. In 2015, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda identified new partnership-based approaches to finance sustainable development, pointing to a wider range of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, private sector, civil society, and philanthropists.
9. In May 2016, the major donors and humanitarian organizations convened in the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing to find solutions to close the humanitarian financing gap. Their report suggested "a Grand Bargain between the big donors and humanitarian organisations in humanitarian aid".² During the same year, the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) reinforced the importance of shrinking

¹ "WFP Policy Formulation" (WFP/EB.A/2011/5-B)

² OCHA website. [Inter-Agency Standing Committee – About the Grand Bargain](#), visited 02.03.2022

humanitarian needs over the long-term to contribute to sustainable development and affirmed the need to integrate humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts.³

10. The 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) reinforced the need for simplified, inclusive and nationally owned programming processes with clear lines of accountability. It called upon the United Nations development system to pursue full alignment of operational activities for development at the country level under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The 2018 General Assembly resolution 72/279 introduced new measures to enhance the capacity of the United Nations development systems to better support countries' achievement of the SDGs. The UN reform agenda centres on three key areas: development, management, and peace and security and provides a framework for a new generation of country teams and resident coordinators. Key elements of the reform include:
 - The Funding Compact, adopted in 2019, which encourages countries to improve overall funding predictability within the United Nations Development System (UNDS) by increasing the amount of core resources and decreasing the amount of tightly earmarked funds.
 - The Management and Accountability Framework establishing the lines of accountability, roles and responsibilities for coherent management approaches within the UNDS at all levels.
 - The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) which replaces the former UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The UNSDCF is the key instrument for UN Country Teams and the Resident Coordinators to facilitate system wide coherent planning and implementation of interventions tailored to national development goals in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.
 - Resident Coordinators (RC), now delinked from UNDP, and UN Country Teams working collectively under the leadership of the RC
 - Strengthened Business Operation Strategies (BOS) to achieve greater coherence and value for money through endeavours such as common premises and local shared service centers.
 - Regional Collaborative Platforms entities, including the UN Sustainable Development Group and the Regional Commissions.⁴
11. In the fall of 2020, the General Assembly conducted a new QCPR which culminated in the adoption of a resolution [A/RES/75/233] on 21 December 2020 stressing the importance of leveraging partnerships and financing, including stronger collaboration with international finance institutions and multilateral development banks. The QCPR resolution also points to the need to shift from a traditional model of direct support and service provision towards a greater emphasis on integrated high-quality policy advice. The resolution reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as evidenced in a much stronger emphasis on disaster risk reduction, human rights, and countries in special situations as well as topics new to the QCPR, such as education, health, social protection, disability, science, technology and innovation.⁵
12. WFP alignment with Rome-based agencies (RBAs) is important for WFP strategic planning at country level. In 2018, the RBAs signed a five-year tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) setting out the objectives, principles and areas of collaboration among the agencies. At country level, they committed to systematically consult and engage when embarking on major country programming exercises, namely, FAO's Country Programming Framework, IFAD's Country Strategic Opportunities Programme and WFP's CSP. The MoU commits the agencies to joint efforts in: (i) data and analysis to understand country contexts, needs and capacities; (ii) accountability and reporting; and (iii) development of new outcome-based financing approaches.⁶

³ WFP. 2018. *WFP and the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus*

⁴ WFP. 2021. UN Development System Key Things to Know

⁵ ECOSOC website. 2020 QCPR, visited on 19.04.2022

⁶ WFP. 2021. *Joint Evaluation on the collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies*

Internal

Integrated Road Map (IRM)

13. In 2016 WFP designed and approved a package of actions that are part of an Integrated Road Map (IRM) to reformulate WFP strategy, programme, financial management and reporting in line with the sustainable development agenda. Particularly, the approach of the Integrated Road Map aims at helping WFP to design better programmes aligned with national priorities to:
 - Enable WFP to serve people in need more effectively and efficiently
 - Support government policies, actions and resource allocations for eliminating hunger in their countries
 - Clearly communicate what WFP is delivering and its distinct added value
 - Efficiently plan and implement WFP programmes for those in greatest need by being focused on the results WFP needs to achieve
 - Better allocate resources to achieve, measure and understand results and impacts
 - Learn from performance management and accountability systems to improve WFP programme design and implementation
 - Work in a flexible manner, responding to changing country needs while balancing addressing humanitarian needs and development
 - Move away from fragmentation in its work and therefore reduce transaction costs
 - Improve transparency in donor reporting
 - Harmonize with external partners in the public and private sectors as well as other United Nations agencies.
14. The architecture of the IRM included four components:
15. **Strategic Plan.** The Strategic Plan 2017-2021 provided the overall framework for WFP's contribution to the countries' achievement of the SDGs, aligning WFP objectives, results, outcomes to SDG 2 and SDG 17. In November 2021, the EB adopted the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. While overall maintaining the strategic direction of the previous Plan, the new Plan reaffirms WFP alignment to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the UN reform Agenda. It places emphasis on putting people at the centre and promoting the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and operational independence. It prioritizes working through national programmes and systems, while adapting to country context and needs. In this framework, WFP also commits to pursue integrated programming and collaborative partnerships, working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, adopt a risk-based approach to decision making and programming and use evidence to generate impact.
16. **Policy on Country Strategic Plans (CSP).** CSPs serve as vehicle for contextualizing and implementing WFP strategic plan at country level and define WFP's humanitarian and development portfolio within the country for a 5 years timeframe. CSPs are formulated in coordination with governments and relevant stakeholders, reflecting country-specific needs and priorities to eliminate hunger and malnutrition.
17. **Financial Framework Review (FFR).** The FFR introduced a country portfolio approach to implementation, budgeting and reporting to enhance results-based management. In line with country portfolio budget, all Country Offices (COs) for each CSP elaborate the line of sight which is meant to links strategy, planning and budgeting to implementation, resources obtained, and results achieved. In 2020–2021, WFP implemented a bottom-up strategic budgeting exercise (BUSBE) to determine the baseline budget for essential activities that contribute to the delivery of the annual implementation plan but that cannot be readily traced to individual CSPs. This exercise was also meant to identify the most appropriate funding sources for such activities. In 2022, the Executive Director approved a total baseline budget for 2022 of USD 648.3 million. In addition to the Programme Support and Administrative budget (PSA)⁷ of USD 496.1 million, the baseline budget will be funded through trust funds and special accounts that strengthen WFP's organizational capacity in specific thematic areas (climate change and disaster risk

⁷ The PSA budget is derived from amounts that are recovered from contributions to cover indirect support costs (ISC), in accordance with WFP's policy on full cost recovery.

reduction, critical services and supply chain activities for the pandemic response; health supply chains, school feeding and integrated resilience operations in the Sahel, United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot network, aviation services, humanitarian logistics and emergency telecommunications service).⁸

18. **Corporate Results Framework (CRF).** The CRF lays out results and indicators to monitor and report WFP's programmes and measure management performance. The CRF 2017-2021 was built around two Strategic Goals reflecting the focus of the Strategic Plan towards SDG 2 and SDG 17 and supported by five Strategic Objectives and eight Strategic Results. In addition, strategic outcomes, outputs and activities are drafted at the country level in line with the CRF. In the CRF 2022-2025, strategic objectives have been removed and the strategic outcomes have been reduced from 19 to 5 to simplify indicators selection and reporting. The new framework encompasses greater United Nations alignment through the formulation of corporate-level outputs, the selection and identification of common and complementary indicators and the integration of quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) mandates and guidance.

Policy Framework

19. Beyond the IRM, WFP policy on Country Strategic Plans is conceptually and operationally linked to a wider and evolving policy framework as described in the paragraphs below.
20. The policy on CSPs refers to the **2013 policy on WFP's role in peacebuilding** as foundation of the humanitarian-development-peace-building nexus (tripe nexus). This policy introduced three main directions of WFP work in peacebuilding in transition settings: (i) investing in institutional capacity in risk analysis (ii) using conflict-sensitive programming and (iii) engaging with peacebuilding partners. An OEV evaluation of the policy is currently on-going, and the findings will be available in April 2022.
21. The policy on CSPs also refers to the Gender Policy (2015-2020) and related updates for mainstreaming women empowerment into CSP formulation. In fact, the 2015 Gender Policy provided WFP with a corporate framework for gender-sensitive planning at global, regional and country level as well as an implementation toolkit for mainstreaming women empowerment in WFP operations. An update of the **Gender Policy (2022-2026)** was approved by the Executive Board at the first regular session in February 2021. This update presents good practices from the field and innovative gender-transformative approaches, developed in coordination with local actors to respond to the differentiated needs of women and girls, including during COVID-19 emergency. The policy update has an explicit reference to the CSPs.
22. The CSP policy states that "under the management of the Office of Evaluation, all CSPs, other than Interim CSPs, will undergo country portfolio evaluations towards the end of their implementation period, to assess progress and results against intended CSP outcomes and objectives, including towards gender, equity and other cross-cutting corporate results; and to identify lessons for the design of subsequent country level support".⁹ It further states that "for all CSPs, decentralized evaluations of selected CSP components and appropriate decentralized reviews will be managed by WFP at the country level with support of the relevant regional bureau as needed"¹⁰. In this connection, the 2015 Evaluation Policy (2016-2021) affirmed WFP's commitment to international evaluation principles, norms and standards, and set the normative framework for centralized and decentralized evaluations. In February 2022, the EB approved the updated **Evaluation Policy 2022-2030**, which builds on the previous policy to ensure that the evaluation function continues to mature, particularly at the decentralized level and that the evaluation evidence is integrated in WFP planning and decision making while also contributing to global knowledge.
23. The introduction of CSPs and the prioritization of WFP support to governments in designing and managing nationally-owned hunger solutions, induced WFP to equip country offices with new information, skills and capacities in line with the WFP People Strategy 2014-2017. In June 2021, the EB approved the **WFP's People Policy** which initiates the process to systematically integrate workforce planning and organization alignment reviews into country strategic plans' formulation.

⁸ WFP management plan (2022-2024) (WFP/EB.2/2021/5-A/1/Rev.1*)

⁹ "Policy on Country Strategic Plans" (WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1*) p. 19.

¹⁰ Idem p.19

24. The country strategic planning process is aligned with **WFP's Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017)**, which defines partnership as “Collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people we serve by: combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds; working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; and sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability, to achieve objectives that could not be achieved as efficiently, effectively or innovatively alone, and where the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved”.¹¹ The planning process also includes identification of new funding models and sources able to leverage domestic and international, public and private resources. In doing so, the policy on CSPs contributes to the WFP's Private-Sector Partnerships and Fundraising Strategy (2013–2017).
25. WFP policies approved after 2016 have been formulated based on the country strategic planning framework. The key highlights of these policies are briefly presented below.
26. The **2017 Environmental Policy** commits WFP to developing mechanisms for identifying and managing environmental risks arising from WFP's operations. The policy establishes that interim risk screening and categorization processes will be systematically integrated into the design of activities under CSPs.¹² In 2017, the EB approved the Climate Change Policy, which defines how WFP will contribute to national and global efforts to prevent climate change from undermining work to end hunger and malnutrition. The policy identifies entry points to guide country offices in integrating climate change issues into WFP operations and establishes the three main objectives to be incorporated into CSPs. OEV is currently managing an evaluation of the climate change policy which will be presented to EB in June 2023.
27. The **2018 Emergency Preparedness Policy** reinforces WFP's approach to treat each emergency context and response as unique. It emphasizes the need to set up tools and processes able to ensure a higher level of success at preparedness and response level. The country strategic plans are the programmatic vehicles for integrating preparedness tools and actions into longer-term planning. Furthermore, as funding of preparedness actions is always challenging, multi-year preparedness planning through the CSPs represents an opportunity for a revised internal funding model for such type of activities.¹³
28. The **2019 Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy** sets out guiding principles for progressively increasing WFP's purchase of food at the local and regional levels. The policy promotes further integration between WFP's procurement and programme functions, highlighting that local and regional procurement strategies and modalities should be integrated into the design and implementation of CSPs when relevant, especially in countries in which WFP procures or is planning to procure significant quantities of food over time.¹⁴
29. The **2020 Protection and Accountability Policy** is framed under three pillars: human rights, peace and security and development and seeks to integrate protection considerations with accountability to affected populations. The policy states that accountability to affected population should be the centre of programme planning and delivery to make sure that beneficiaries' voices influence WFP decisions and actions. Furthermore, the country strategic planning process is seen as an opportunity to increase investment in protection at the country level.¹⁵
30. The **WFP's School Feeding Strategy (2020-2030)** lays out how WFP advocate globally, and work in partnership, to address gaps in guaranteeing an integrated school-based health and nutrition response for children. By leveraging on six decades of experience supporting school health and nutrition, WFP aims to work with more than 100 countries on sustainable national school feeding programmes. It is estimated that WFP will hand over school feeding programmes in 20 countries by 2030. To do so, transition strategies should be negotiated and integrated into CSPs, ensuring that national resources are committed.¹⁶

¹¹ idem

¹² “Environmental Policy” (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-B/Rev.1)

¹³ “Emergency Preparedness Policy” (WFP/EB.2/2017/4-B/Rev.1)

¹⁴ “Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy” (WFP/EB.2/2019/4-C)

¹⁵ “Protection and Accountability policy” (WFP/EB.2/2020/4-A/1/Rev.2)

¹⁶ WFP. 2020. *A chance for every schoolchild. Partnering to scale up School Health and Nutrition for Human Capital. WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020-2030.*

Evidence on IRM Implementation

31. The implementation of the IRM has been assessed through a body of OEV global and country level evaluations and through audits.
32. In 2018, WFP Office of Evaluation conducted a **Strategic Evaluation of the CSP Pilots** that looked at progress towards the intended organizational change set out in the CSP policy and the other documents of the IRM, covering 14 pilot CSPs and I-CSPS¹⁷.
33. The evaluation concluded that adopting CSPs as the framework for planning, managing and delivering WFP's contributions to the achievement of zero hunger was a significant step forward for the organization. The contribution of the CSP to the intended changes was found to be, on balance, positive, but has varied significantly across the organizational outcomes reviewed and across country contexts. By building on a comprehensive review of national needs, the CSP has often been a catalyst for helping WFP move to from 'deliverer' to 'enabler' (and back again when necessary) and to develop better conceptual links between humanitarian and development work.
34. However, the evaluation noted that the CSP had not yet resulted in the expected gains from the increased transparency and accountability that the framework offers, specifically a move to more flexible and predictable funding. Earmarking of resources has not been reduced and the move to more multi-year funding as the result of the CSP was found to be limited.
35. It further noted that the development of an effective performance management system has not kept pace with the other components of the IRM. There have been delays in revising the initial corporate results framework to support these intentions. Longstanding challenges were found to persist in the development of, and training on, appropriate indicators for qualitative matters such as capacity strengthening. Such a system was found to be necessary if WFP is to demonstrate the benefits of the CSP approach with a view to influencing donor behaviour in the long term.
36. The ability to better align to national priorities, in line with Agenda 2030 was identified as a key positive feature of the CSP process, but operational and administrative standardisation around core systems and procedures was also found to be essential, and not yet fully achieved.
37. The CSP Pilot evaluation made five groups of recommendations:
 - i. **Management of the CSP framework:** Strengthen existing management structures and the system of systematic learning; undertake a comprehensive review in 2020;
 - ii. **CSP processes and guidance:** Complete simplification process; develop and update existing guidance; address cross-cutting issues;
 - iii. **UN reform:** Continue engagement in UN reform process; develop strategies to align CSPs with UNDAF cycles;
 - iv. **Monitoring and reporting performance:** Ensure that the comprehensive system of monitoring and reporting performance is aligned with the revised CRF; ensure a central role for Country Portfolio Evaluations;

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