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Management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan for Ethiopia (2020–2025)

Background

This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of the country strategic plan (CSP) for Ethiopia for 2020–2025. The evaluation covered CSP activities implemented between 2019 and March 2024. Taking a utilization-focused, consultative approach, the evaluation served accountability and learning purposes and informed the preparation of the CSP for 2025–2030.

The evaluation made six recommendations, three of which are strategic and three operational. This management response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations and presents the planned (or completed) actions, responsibilities and timelines for their implementation.

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Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
Priority: High Deadline: June 2025 Recommendation 1: Ensure that the next CSP identifies and explicitly addresses areas of uncertainty to ensure that its strategic direction remains relevant over time.	Country office management	Agreed				
1.1 When designing the new CSP, WFP should adopt a scenario-based planning approach with baseline, downside and upside assumptions on both external and internal conditions.		Agreed	1. Adopt a scenario-based planning approach for the 2025–2030 CSP.	Country office programme, research, assessment and monitoring (RAM) and risk units	June 2025	Ongoing
			2. Develop Ethiopia country office baseline, downside and upside scenarios based on internal and external risks and assumptions to inform the development of the next CSP.	Country office programme, risk and RAM units	March 2025	Completed
1.2 The CSP should include a better assessment of risks and explicit measures to avoid and mitigate them.		Agreed	3. Develop a risk register highlighting relevant risks and closely monitor the implementation of mitigation measures.	Country office risk unit	June 2025	Ongoing, yearly
			4. Conduct a self-assessment of controls to ensure timely improvement of the risk control environment.	Country office risk unit	December 2024–June 2025	Ongoing, yearly

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
Priority: High Deadline: End 2027 Recommendation 2: Continue to pursue the shift from a “saving lives” to a “changing lives” agenda.	Country office management and programme, partnerships, evaluation and RAM units	Agreed				
2.1 WFP should ensure that its future strategy for Ethiopia is based on realistic resourcing forecasts.		Agreed	1. Review resource forecasts based on the latest programme and funding trends.	Country office programme, and budget and programming units	May 2025	Ongoing
2.2 The shift needs to be underpinned by a better ability to demonstrate results for various groups of beneficiaries and a demonstrated comparative advantage.		Agreed	2. Focusing on WFP's comparative advantages, strengthen monitoring and reporting activities to generate evidence from targeted beneficiary groups and rights holders, including refugees, internally displaced persons, women, young people and persons with disabilities.	Country office programme and RAM units	June 2027	Ongoing

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
2.3 Resilience and livelihoods activities will require stronger operational plans and closer integration with relief activities to achieve scale and scope.		Agreed	3.a Implement an operational plan for undertaking more focused, prioritized and integrated programmes underpinned by joint planning, targeting (including geographic convergence of programmes) and the effective layering of interventions to generate high-level results to show communities moving from reliance on relief assistance to more sustainable livelihoods. 3.b Diversify evidence, including disaggregated qualitative data demonstrating the integration and results of relief, livelihoods and resilience activities, in order to improve and integrate outcome monitoring.	Country office programme and RAM units	June 2030	Ongoing

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
Priority: High Deadline: End 2026 Recommendation 3: In the area of humanitarian assistance, take steps to ensure that there is a conducive environment for principled responses to humanitarian needs	Country office management and partnerships unit, supported by headquarters programme staff (Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer)	Agreed				
3.1 WFP should address its overdependence on one donor.		Agreed	1. Diversify the country office donor base and reduce its dependence on one major donor. The country office is proactively engaging with its donors to explain why WFP should be their partner of choice. Beyond traditional donors the country office is looking to expand its relationship with international financial institutions and increase joint programmes with other United Nations entities in order to mobilize complementary resources; a dedicated partnerships officer is working to this end.	Country office management and partnerships unit	June 2030	Ongoing

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
3.2 WFP should maintain operational independence from the Government based on strategic engagement through relevant coordination platforms, including the humanitarian country team and the United Nations country team. In conjunction with its partners, it should establish red lines.		Agreed	2. In coordination with other United Nations entities (including through the United Nations country team and humanitarian country team), raise the awareness of stakeholders, including donors, the Government, communities and humanitarian partners with regard to humanitarian principles, especially those that constitute clearly defined red lines for WFP.	Country office programme unit	June 2030	Ongoing
3.3 WFP should continue to improve programme quality by further strengthening the implementation of protection, accountability to affected people and gender-based approaches, including by improving the user-friendliness of feedback mechanisms and enhancing case management and follow-up.		Agreed	3. Continue to provide cooperating partners and WFP staff with capacity strengthening and technical guidance on the mainstreaming of people-centred programming, conflict sensitivity and accountability to affected people (AAP), with particular emphasis on doing no harm and leaving no one behind.	Country office programme, gender, protection and inclusion, AAP and RAM units	June 2030	Ongoing

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
			4. Launch the framework on accountability for results tool in order to strengthen monitoring and reporting mechanisms and processes so that they effectively capture the results of WFP's efforts to mainstream people-centred programming, conflict sensitivity and AAP at the community, operational and strategic levels.	Country office programme and RAM units	June 2030	Ongoing
3.4 WFP should carefully document and assess the achievements (and shortcomings) of the assurance project and ensure transparent communication on residual operational risks.		Agreed	5. Commission a review of the assurance project to assess how well it has been implemented and take corrective action as recommended.	Country office management, programme and RAM units	December 2026	Not started

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Priority: High Deadline: End 2026 Recommendation 4: Improve the ability to demonstrate results, in particular in terms of increased resilience, including the “graduation” of beneficiaries from relief to resilience support, and progress in cross-cutting areas.	Country office programme, RAM and evaluation units	Agreed				
4.1 Quantitative monitoring should be complemented with qualitative monitoring and evaluations to contextualize and explain findings and support learning.		Agreed	1.a Diversify and integrate evidence generation systems, platforms and mechanisms to improve qualitative outcome monitoring, including through the collection and analysis of disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data, in order to enhance impact reporting and learning. 1.b Invest in modernizing and strengthening monitoring systems so that there is adequate monitoring capacity at the field level. The country office will conduct an assessment to determine the investment required to strengthen the monitoring system and to define the appropriate level of monitoring	Country office RAM unit	December 2026	Ongoing

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
			capacity needed in the field. The assessment results will be used to help address capacity gaps in a sustainable manner.			
4.2 WFP should ensure high-quality reporting on results for donors, country office management and programme staff in country and field offices. In the latter case, such reporting should be presented at a sufficiently granular geographical level to inform localized adjustments to programmes.		Agreed	2. Review and update reporting templates in order to ensure programme performance and results reports are high-quality and sufficiently disaggregated for both internal and external purposes.	Country office RAM; programme and partnerships units	December 2026	Ongoing
			3. Commission decentralized evaluations of relief, refugee assistance, resilience, nutrition and school feeding activities.	Country office evaluation unit	June 2030	Not started

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
Priority: Medium Deadline: End 2026 Recommendation 5: Accelerate the shift from in-kind to cash-based assistance where its higher cost-effectiveness is demonstrated.	Country office programme and evaluation units	Agreed				
5.1 WFP should conduct and update feasibility and comparative cost effectiveness analyses to inform donor advocacy and plans to roll out cash-based assistance.		Agreed	1. Conduct assessments to understand the feasibility of using cash assistance in areas where such assessments have not yet been conducted, in line with the programme prioritization framework.	Country office programme unit CBT team	December 2025	Not started
			2. Update cash feasibility assessments in areas where cash-based transfer (CBT) programmes have been rolled out and use the results to inform necessary adjustments in CBT programming.	Country office programme unit CBT team	December 2025	Not started
			3. Conduct a cost efficiency analysis for 2024 comparing the cost of delivering in-kind assistance and CBTs.	Country office programme unit CBT team	December 2025	Not started

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
			4. Commission a decentralized evaluation of comparative cost effectiveness across food assistance transfer modalities.	Country office evaluation unit	December 2027	Not started
5.2 WFP should underpin the rollout of cash-based assistance with realistic operational plans that take country office and partner capacity into account.		Agreed	5. Map CBT donors to use for advocacy as part of efforts to increase fundraising.	Country office programme unit CBT team	December 2025	Not started
			6. Finalize the process for selecting financial service providers to ensure that a range of providers with various cash delivery mechanisms is available for different areas of operation.	Country office programme unit CBT team	December 2025	Not started
			7. Develop an operational plan that is in line with the programme prioritization framework, available grants and other funding and financial service provider capacity.	Country office programme unit CBT team	December 2025	Not started

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
Priority: High Deadline: Mid-2028 Recommendation 6: Improve planning for staffing needs to ensure agility in staffing and continuity in strategic direction.	Country office management, supported by the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer and Human Resources Division	Agreed				
6.1 WFP should maintain stability at the senior management level, especially during crisis responses, to ensure the clarity of its strategic direction and decision making.		Agreed	1. The country office will take rapid and proactive action to pre-position and otherwise assign senior management staff.	Country office management, supported by the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer and Human Resources Division	August 2024	Completed
6.2 WFP should ensure adequate staffing in situations of operational scale-up and scale-down.		Agreed	2. Conduct an organizational alignment exercise and implement the resulting recommendations in a timely and effective manner.	Country office human resources unit supported by regional bureau human resources unit and headquarters Human Resources Division	June 2025	Ongoing
			3. Develop and implement a wellness strategy for country office staff.	Country office wellness and human resources units	June 2030	Ongoing