

# **WFP aviation policy**



**Informal consultation**

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**World Food Programme  
Rome, Italy**

## Executive summary

1. New wars and unresolved conflicts, the global climate crisis, pandemics and recurrent economic shocks have caused an increase in hunger and malnutrition and the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance. WFP's work with partners to enable quick response to humanitarian crises and agility in reaching people that have been affected by disasters, shock and displacement are more important than ever.
2. Embedded in WFP's mandate to deliver food and other assistance to those most in need is the provision of safe and reliable aviation services to the humanitarian community. WFP has used aviation services to deliver humanitarian assistance for over four decades and has provided such services to the broader humanitarian community since 2004. WFP's systems, skills and response capability in emergency aviation services have grown, increasing the ability of the humanitarian system to get to people who are in fragile and remote settings or otherwise hard to reach.
3. In its 2019 report on air transport services, the WFP External Auditor recommended that, given the importance of aviation to the United Nations and the humanitarian community and the risks and funding modalities associated with it, an aviation operations policy be prepared for approval by the Executive Board. The purpose of such a policy document would be to define the scope of WFP's aviation mandate, the coordination of flight missions for the humanitarian community, for WFP itself or for third parties (short-term or dedicated air services), the criteria for including non-governmental organizations as beneficiaries of such services, the relationship between WFP's Aviation Service and Aviation Safety Unit and the funding rules applicable to the activity.
4. In response to the External Auditor's recommendation the present document sets out an aviation policy for WFP. The policy is grounded in WFP's humanitarian principles<sup>1</sup> and its commitment to provide common services to all humanitarian actors. It sets out WFP's objectives with regard to aviation, namely, to provide common, specialized and on-demand aviation services to the broader humanitarian community and critical partners such as United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and diplomatic community; to act as a facilitator between aviation and humanitarian stakeholders in the context of emergency preparedness and response; and to strengthen aviation systems and capacity at the regional and national levels. The policy also describes the role of essential enablers – partnerships, sustainable funding and a high-performing and agile workforce – in achieving the objectives of the policy and outlines the next steps for its implementation and monitoring.

## Introduction and context

5. The world is facing unprecedented challenges and moving further away from achieving zero hunger and the 16 other Sustainable Development Goals. Driven by conflict, the climate crisis and the socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, humanitarian needs have reached unprecedented levels. During emergencies in hard-to-reach areas, the only option for getting to people in need is air transport for humanitarian actors and assistance. WFP's leadership in emergency response, strong partnerships and global footprint help ensure that even the most remote populations receive support by enabling the movement of humanitarian workers and the delivery of humanitarian supplies such as food, medical items and shelter.

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<sup>1</sup> "Humanitarian Principles" (WFP/EB.A/2004/5-C).

6. WFP's strategic plan for 2022–2025 and the Secretary-General's drive for United Nations development system reform commit WFP to enhancing and broadening its capacity to help humanitarian and development actors to become more efficient and effective. In that vein, WFP will continue to manage the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), widely acknowledged as a critical common service that provides passenger and cargo transport in humanitarian situations. WFP will also provide specialized and on-demand aviation services, including airlift, air cargo, airdrops, air evacuations and dedicated bilateral services, to its United Nations partners and other humanitarian and development actors. Leveraging its network of aviation organizations and specialists, its expertise in emergency aviation and its presence in countries facing difficult circumstances, WFP will support national and regional aviation infrastructure and strengthen national and local safety and security aviation standards through measures such as the rehabilitation of the Bassikounou airstrip in Mauritania and aviation safety campaigns held twice a year in various parts of the world to raise awareness of recurrent safety concerns and to foster a culture of safe aviation among civil aviation authorities, airport authorities, air carriers and regulators.
7. Against a backdrop of unprecedented need and increasingly complex situations, WFP is committed to working with its partners to ensure that no one is left behind and to provide agile aviation services while adhering to international safety standards. WFP is also committed to using flexible financing mechanisms and expanding its donor base to ensure its ability to continue operations and to reach people in need.
8. WFP continues to operate in precarious, dynamic environments where humanitarian needs and the means to meet them are continually changing, requiring WFP Aviation to adapt and innovate in a sustainable and effective way. Effective and adequate risk management is therefore an ever-present consideration in decision making. In line with WFP's 2018 enterprise risk management policy, WFP Aviation's risk management processes are designed to provide structure, consistency and transparency in risk decision making across WFP-managed aviation services and field offices. It provides a framework whereby all risks – strategic, operational, fiduciary and financial – can be identified, assessed and managed in accordance with the organization's appetite for risk. The tools used include risk register management at the field level and adoption of a continuous monitoring approach and regular meetings of the aviation risk management forum at the headquarters level. Further, as ensuring accountability for taking action and addressing risk is also a fundamental element of WFP's aviation risk management guidelines, a risk escalation process is well defined and is embedded in daily aviation functions.
9. In 2021 WFP launched an additional UNHAS operation to support the Ebola outbreak response in southern Guinea; it also established an air bridge following a deadly explosion in Equatorial Guinea. In August 2021, UNHAS began operating flights to the Grand Sud region of Madagascar, enabling aid workers to reach areas facing alarming levels of food insecurity. In addition, the year was marked by the unfolding crisis in Afghanistan, the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti and the intensifying crisis in northern Ethiopia.

### **Sample activities of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service**

In 2020, UNHAS operations continued the safe and reliable transport of humanitarian and development workers – despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Operating more than a hundred aircraft, UNHAS served 400 regular destinations in 23 countries experiencing emergencies and humanitarian crises. UNHAS supported the global response to COVID-19 by rapidly implementing preventive measures, securing government authorizations so that it could continue to fly, including to undertake medical evacuation and transport medical samples and cargo. In the same year, WFP launched three new UNHAS operations in response to the escalation of conflict in Burkina Faso, Mozambique and the Syrian Arab Republic.

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### **Purpose of the policy**

10. This policy sets out the vision, objectives, principles and partnerships that frame WFP Aviation and UNHAS operations and describes the aviation governance framework. The policy is grounded in the humanitarian principles and WFP's commitment to provide common services to all humanitarian actors. It also describes the role of essential enablers – partnerships, sustainable funding and a high-performing and agile workforce – in achieving the policy objectives and outlines the next steps for implementation and monitoring. In line with its mandate as a provider of last resort, WFP's role is not to replace the commercial sector but rather to fill in commercial transport market gaps. Importantly, WFP is committed to prioritizing the transport of all humanitarian workers and assistance.
11. As an element of this policy, UNHAS will implement a passenger prioritization system to ensure equal access for all eligible passengers, prioritizing the transport of personnel for life-saving humanitarian interventions. UNHAS will also re-emphasize the prioritization of transport for humanitarian aid workers and medical and security evacuation, including to and from deep field locations and giving highest priority to programme criticality level 1 emergency and life-saving interventions. Moreover, WFP Aviation will prioritize UNHAS' role in providing critical air transport services to the humanitarian community and facilitating the effective implementation and monitoring of emergency responses and projects.
12. At the June 2003 session of the High-Level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, WFP accepted responsibility for administering all United Nations humanitarian and other air operations (excluding those for peacekeeping) as of 1 January 2004. In July 2003 the Executive Director of WFP signed a decision memorandum, based on the recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on aviation operations and safety management, approving the reorganization of the WFP Aviation Service to enable it to meet its responsibilities. That was followed in December 2003 by the issuance of an Executive Director's circular (ED2003/008) establishing a special account for aviation services.

13. Building on the mandate bestowed on it by the High-Level Committee on Management and the imperative to provide assistance in hard-to-reach areas, this policy consolidates and articulates the WFP aviation standards and practices that have evolved over the years; sets out the aviation principles and governance framework that enable effective humanitarian response; and expresses WFP's vision for its aviation activities. Grounded in WFP's leadership in humanitarian operations and track record in aviation, this policy has four aims:
- to state the objectives, principles and partnerships that frame aviation operations;
  - to describe the aviation governance framework;
  - to describe WFP's ambitions for humanitarian aviation, which include providing common services, such as those provided by UNHAS, to the humanitarian community and specialized and on-demand services to partners; facilitating coordination and communication between aviation and humanitarian stakeholders in the context of emergency response; and strengthening regional and national aviation systems and capacity; and
  - to describe essential enablers (such as partnerships, sustainable funding and a high-performing and agile workforce) that will help ensure the sustainability of WFP's aviation activities and the continued delivery of humanitarian assistance in difficult circumstances.

#### **WFP's global air passenger service**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused global disruptions to the commercial air transport system that health and humanitarian responders normally rely on to reach areas affected by crises. UNHAS continued to provide service in countries where it has operations, and in addition WFP stepped in to provide a global air passenger service to destinations where commercial airlines had suspended operations. Working closely with the World Health Organization, other United Nations entities, NGOs and governments, WFP used its logistics capacity and expertise to provide this service, ensuring that critical health and humanitarian cargo and personnel reached the places where they were needed most.

Launched in May 2020, by mid-2022 WFP's global air passenger service had reached 68 locations across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Commonwealth of Independent States, allowing 33,600 essential health and humanitarian personnel from 474 organizations to continue their work on the front lines of the pandemic response. The establishment of passenger networks by WFP also helped governments, regions and commercial airlines to re-establish their own connections in a manner that met with health and safety requirements.

## Vision and objectives

14. WFP will leverage its important comparative advantages – its knowledge of air transport services in emergency situations, its unique constellation of partnerships and its procurement, market intelligence and integrated management system – to achieve three objectives:
- **Provide aviation services.** Building on its record in emergency response, WFP will continue to maintain its leadership in the provision of safe, reliable and efficient aviation services, prioritizing humanitarian actors through common service provision (i.e. UNHAS) and meeting the needs of humanitarian and development organizations through on-demand and specialized services.
  - **Act as a facilitator in humanitarian response.** WFP will leverage its role in emergency response to promote collaboration between aviation and humanitarian stakeholders. In the aftermath of an emergency or onset of a disaster, aviation constitutes an essential lifeline for the people affected, and the first few hours are critical in arranging for the delivery of life-saving equipment, supplies and humanitarian experts. WFP will work with its partners to ensure systematic communication and coordination among aviation and humanitarian actors to ensure emergency response efficiency and effectiveness.
  - **Strengthen aviation systems and capacity at the regional and national levels.** WFP will leverage its collaboration with international aviation organizations and regulators and its partnerships with humanitarian and development actors to promote investment in emergency preparedness and early action and to strengthen national aviation systems and capacity.

## Principles

15. This policy is fully aligned with the principles set out in WFP's strategic plan for 2022–2025, including the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and operational independence and the principle that WFP's activities should be adapting to country circumstances and needs. Furthermore, WFP Aviation is guided by the considerations discussed in the following paragraphs.

### International and United Nations aviation standards

16. WFP Aviation is committed to providing air transport services that meet ICAO standards and recommended practices,<sup>2</sup> United Nations Aviation Standards for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Air Transport Operations (AVSTADS)<sup>3</sup> and the national civil aviation authority regulations in the countries where it operates. This includes WFP's active participation in the United Nations Aviation Technical Advisory Group (UNATAG), which was established to promote measures that reduce the level of risk associated with peacekeeping and humanitarian air transport operations.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> International Civil Aviation Organization. 2006. *Doc 7300/9 Convention on International Civil Aviation*.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations. 2012. *United Nations Aviation Standards for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Air Transport Operations*.

<sup>4</sup> Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations. 2011. *United Nations air operations – Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/738)*.

## Facilitation standards and practices

17. WFP-managed flights are operated for humanitarian purposes, carrying relief personnel and relief supplies such as food, clothing, shelter and medical and other items during or after an emergency and evacuating persons whose life or health is threatened by an emergency to a safe place in the same country or another country. As stipulated in “Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation: Facilitation”,<sup>5</sup> host governments will facilitate the entry into, departure from and transit through their territories of aircraft engaged in relief flights performed by – or on behalf of – international organizations recognized by the United Nations and will take all possible measures to ensure their safe operation. Such relief flights are those undertaken in response to natural and human-made disasters that seriously endanger human health or the environment and similar emergency situations where United Nations assistance is required. Such flights will be commenced as quickly as possible after obtaining agreement with the host government, or in the case of cross border operations, the recipient government. Basic agreements signed by governments and WFP in countries where WFP operates reaffirm that WFP is mandated to operate humanitarian flights in such countries.

## Environmental sustainability

18. WFP embraces the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a world freed from hunger by socially equitable and environmentally responsible sustainable development. To reduce the negative impact of its operations on the environment and the people who depend on it, WFP is committed to integrating sustainability across its activities, including aviation, reducing the environmental impact of its operations and contributing to the broader sustainability efforts of the United Nations and the aviation industry.

## Emergency preparedness

19. WFP employs an emergency preparedness and response framework.<sup>6</sup> WFP prioritizes the agility of its operations in often challenging and at times rapidly shifting environments while maintaining rigorous air safety standards. An emergency preparedness approach helps to ensure effective response through established tools and scenario-based planning, including enhanced and strategically located aircraft capacity with minimal deployment time that is supported by a qualified work force. This also entails working closely with aviation and humanitarian partners to establish emergency regulatory frameworks – as required – to enable the efficient and timely transport of humanitarian actors and supplies in emergencies.

## Customer centred service provision

20. WFP is committed to better meeting the needs of its clients with the aim of helping humanitarian and development actors to become more efficient and effective. WFP adopts industry benchmarks to the extent possible, providing reliable service, catering to customer concerns and minimizing transactional processes. (For an example of this, see the box on the United Nations Booking Hub.

<sup>5</sup> International Civil Aviation Organization. 2017. *International Standards and Recommended Practices – Annex 9 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation: Facilitation, Fifteenth Edition*.

<sup>6</sup> “Emergency preparedness policy – Strengthening WFP emergency for effective response” (WFP/EB.2/2017/4-B/Rev.1).

### **United Nations Booking Hub**

The United Nations Booking Hub is a platform for booking emergency and other aviation services, including flights and sharing information with passengers, including on schedules, routes and country-specific requirements. Launched during the COVID-19 emergency response for flights managed by WFP, the service will be expanded to UNHAS operations. The digital platform enables WFP to provide better services to clients and to solicit their feedback as a basis for making improvements, in a single customer touchpoint for all WFP aviation services. An improved user experience includes quick access to important information, an easier booking process through the web platform or a dedicated application, and effective travel planning. UNHAS personnel and client organization focal points can take advantage of dedicated back-office digital tools, administrative and financial workflow optimization and comprehensive self-service functions for administrative, finance and security personnel. WFP will expand implementation of a passenger prioritization system to ensure equal access for all eligible passengers, prioritizing the transport of personnel for life-saving humanitarian interventions

## **Governance framework**

21. Under the overall guidance of the Executive Board and the direction of WFP's Executive Director and leadership group, the established governance framework will continue to assure the highest standards of aviation safety, security and quality of air transport service. The framework comprises external and internal mechanisms that provide strategic oversight of aviation activities, procurement and compliance with international safety regulations and standards.

### **WFP aviation safety regulatory framework**

22. WFP's aviation safety regulatory framework comprises policies, standards and practices that ensure the highest level of safety and compliance across the Aviation Service, the Aviation Safety Unit and all units and activities related to aviation at headquarters, the regional bureaux and the country offices.
23. The aviation safety regulatory framework consists of the following elements:
- policies and objectives based on the WFP General Rules and Regulations, AVSTADS and ICAO standards and recommended practices;
  - integrated standards and procedures aimed at improving and maintaining aviation safety, aligned with the ICAO State Safety Programme and Safety Management System framework and international standards and recommended practices; and
  - integrated risk management – i.e. the systematic identification, assessment and management of risk as outlined in WFP's 2018 enterprise risk management policy<sup>7</sup> – to ensure that WFP meets regulatory and safety performance requirements.

<sup>7</sup> "2018 enterprise risk management policy" (WFP/EB.2/2018/5-C).

## International advisory group

### ***United Nations Aviation Technical Advisory Group***

24. The regulatory framework is supported by UNATAG, an inter-agency group that reviews amendments to AVSTADS standards and procedures and ensures compliance with international safety standards and operational requirements. UNATAG also promotes measures to reduce the level of risk associated with the United Nations system's civil air transport operations. The permanent members of UNATAG are the Department of Operational Support and WFP, with ICAO in an advisory capacity. Among other things, UNATAG's role is to:
- advise the United Nations system on aviation operational and safety matters;
  - periodically review and amend AVSTADS for consistency with international safety standards and/or operational requirements;
  - periodically review the implementation of AVSTADS;
  - review safety recommendations and propose actions to mitigate risk and reduce organizational exposure;
  - periodically review common procedures for air transport service and safety management;
  - review the results of external audits of the Department of Operational Support and WFP Aviation operations;
  - facilitate the sharing of operational, safety and security information among United Nations stakeholders; and
  - advise on and undertake activities that enhance interoperability between the Department of Operational Support and WFP Aviation.

### **WFP Aviation Safety Board**

25. The Aviation Safety Board is an advisory board responsible for reviewing and advising on issues related to the safety of WFP aviation operations. It is chaired by the Deputy Executive Director, who acts in the capacity of "accountable executive",<sup>8</sup> accountable to the Executive Director for the safety of WFP aviation operations. Members of the Aviation Safety Board include divisional directors and dedicated aviation experts from ICAO and the Flight Safety Foundation, in accordance with the applicable Executive Director decision memorandum.<sup>9</sup> The Aviation Safety Unit acts as the secretariat for the Aviation Safety Board and oversees the implementation of its recommendations.
26. The role of the Aviation Safety Board is to advise on:
- WFP aviation policy and strategic issues;
  - safety policy for WFP Aviation;
  - the role and functions of the Aviation Safety Unit;
  - funding and expenditures for the Aviation Safety Unit;
  - safety performance of WFP Aviation; and
  - high-impact risks presented by the Aviation Service.

<sup>8</sup> International Civil Aviation Organization terminology.

<sup>9</sup> Executive Director's decision memorandum Ref. AA56032(02.08.19) dated 22 July 2019.

### **WFP Air Transport Committee**

27. The WFP Air Transport Committee is chaired by the Director of Supply Chain Operations Division. The members of the committee include personnel from WFP's Legal Office, Risk and Insurance Unit, Aviation Safety Unit and Aviation Service.
28. The committee reviews and make recommendations on the following:
  - air transport contracting actions, procedures and principles;
  - performance evaluations and assessment reports; and
  - air transport guidance material.

### **Procurement**

29. Given the nature of humanitarian operations and the need to react quickly to emergencies, the WFP Aviation Service at headquarters will continue to maintain a list of air operators and air brokers who are pre-approved by the Aviation Safety Unit as being technically qualified, registered in accordance with AVSTADS requirements and strategically positioned to timely provide air transport services.
30. A rigorous evaluation process is in place, entailing detailed technical and financial analysis of offers received from commercial air carriers, the review of commercial air carrier performance evaluations and the review of compliance and safety issues associated with potential commercial air carriers and areas of operation. An electronic tendering system ensures a robust procurement process for air assets and ancillary aviation functions such as fuel and ground handling services as well as compliance with requirements and procedures, including with regard to confidentiality, security and segregation of duties.
31. The Air Transport Contracts Committee evaluates all offers and formulates recommendations based on the following:
  - aircraft and air operator technical documentation;
  - the Aviation Safety Unit's advice on air operator compliance and the safety implications of operating a specific type of aircraft in the environment where it is to be used; and
  - financial considerations.

### **Country-level action**

32. WFP is committed to providing aviation services for humanitarian and development organizations in humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises, transporting passengers and cargo for other United Nations entities, NGOs, international financial institutions and other humanitarian and development partners. This enables access by humanitarian and development actors seeking to provide services and assistance, the assessment of needs and the monitoring of operations in constrained environments. WFP activities at the country level will continue to include implementation of key service modalities such as UNHAS and specialized and on-demand services; the strengthening of national and local aviation systems; and measures to promote environmental sustainability.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> WFP's 2005 policy on exiting emergencies outlines when and how WFP ends an emergency response.

### **UNHAS management at the country level**

33. WFP is committed to promoting an inclusive common service by involving humanitarian users and stakeholders into decision making processes at the country level.

#### ***UNHAS steering committee***

34. Each UNHAS country operation is guided by a steering committee. The purpose of the steering committee is to review and provide overall guidance on the smooth running of UNHAS. Each committee is chaired by the United Nations humanitarian coordinator for the country and co-chaired by the WFP country representative. Additional representatives of United Nations entities, NGOs and the donor community guide UNHAS operations in the following areas:
- UNHAS funding modalities (cost recovery and free service) and the cost-recovery fee;
  - eligibility of organizations to use the air service;
  - priority areas for services and related costs;
  - review of host government policies on humanitarian air transport; and
  - advocacy and resource mobilization to sustain the service.
35. The steering committee makes decisions on administrative and policy issues only. Decisions in respect of aircraft operational and safety issues shall be made solely by WFP/UNHAS based on its operations and safety guidelines.

#### ***UNHAS user group committee***

36. In addition to a UNHAS steering committee, a UNHAS user group committee is established as part of each UNHAS country operation. The committee is chaired by the UNHAS Chief Air Transport Officer and its members include representatives of organizations eligible to use UNHAS services. The purpose of the user group is to promote the interests of users in the movement of passengers and cargo within the area of operations in order to fulfil the needs of the humanitarian community. The UNHAS user group committee improves the UNHAS service by:
- integrating user preferences into decisions about the movement of passengers and cargo;
  - periodically analysing operational requirements for UNHAS implementation; and
  - sharing information regarding quality of service and details on bookings, schedules, clearance requirements and associated costs.

### **Specialized and on-demand services**

37. WFP's strategic plan for 2022–2025 calls for the provision of services, both mandated and on-demand, to be expanded to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian and development communities. WFP Aviation will provide specialized and on-demand aviation services such as:
- short-term aviation services (such as airdrops, medical and security evacuations) for WFP or humanitarian and development actors when required;
  - dedicated air services for humanitarian and development actors (United Nations entities, NGOs, donors), mainly for cargo transport, on a fully funded basis; and

- passenger and cargo air transport services for United Nations civilian peace actors, managed under the 2013 framework agreement between WFP and the Department of Field Support<sup>11</sup> of 2013.

### **Strengthening regional and national aviation systems and capacity**

38. WFP will leverage its experience, presence and partnerships to strengthen regional and national aviation systems and capacity. As the reality of humanitarian contexts means that national or local safety and security standards are frequently less than optimal, WFP's response and activities will support more sustainable aviation solutions whenever feasible.<sup>12</sup> Depending on the context, this can include runway and airport terminal construction and repair, safety and security training and the introduction of new technology. WFP will also continue to collaborate with industry stakeholders such as ICAO and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), as well as with national civil aviation authorities and local operators and suppliers, on the development of regulatory frameworks and on the development of procedures and risk management in fragile countries where gaps exist.

### **Environmental sustainability**

39. Environmental sustainability is a cross-cutting priority for WFP and a key tenet of its aviation activities. In line with WFP's environmental policy,<sup>13</sup> the Aviation Service's environmental and sustainability programme will continue to operationalize WFP's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint. The programme defines and implements aviation-specific principles, goals and measures aimed at reducing the environmental impact of air transport service provision. WFP will work closely with external and internal technical and operational partners to update the programme as circumstances evolve.<sup>14</sup> The programme is structured along three work streams:

- "we measure", consisting of establishing processes and adopting appropriate methodologies for identifying environmental risks and measuring the environmental impact of WFP aviation activities;
- "we reduce", consisting of defining, implementing and monitoring measures aimed at reducing the overall environmental footprint of WFP aviation activities; and
- "we offset", consisting of defining accountability and compensating for environmental impact of WFP aviation activities by taking positive action that supports green and climate protection projects.

### **Essential enablers**

40. Essential enablers – partnerships, sustainable financing and a high-performing and agile workforce – will increase WFP's ability to achieve its aviation objectives.

<sup>11</sup> Framework agreement between the United Nations and the World Food Programme, February 2013.

<sup>12</sup> "[Country capacity-strengthening policy update](#)" (WFP/EB.A/2022/5-A).

<sup>13</sup> "[Environmental Policy](#)" (WFP/EB.1/2017/4-B/Rev.1).

<sup>14</sup> For example, within the framework of the programme, the WFP Aviation Service will maintain its close ties with the aviation industry and contribute as an observer to the roll-out of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, a global measure adopted by ICAO member states in 2016. The phased roll out of the measure started in 2019.

## Partnerships

41. WFP's governance and operations are grounded in credible and active partnerships, including with governments, other United Nations entities, NGOs, international financial institutions, the diplomatic and donor communities and the private sector. The vast NGO network will continue to be a crucial partner for WFP in the delivery of common services, and WFP will rely on NGO participation in UNHAS mechanisms to ensure that common services are efficient and equitable and prioritize humanitarian action. Localization and the increasingly active role of national and local authorities and civil society will provide an opportunity for WFP to play an enabling role, providing technical advice and strengthening national and local emergency aviation response capacity.
42. Partnership with other humanitarian air transport service providers such as the International Red Cross, Médecins sans frontières and the Mission Aviation Fellowship will help improve synergies and strengthen coordinated service delivery.
43. WFP is also committed to systematic strategic and technical engagement with international aviation organizations, regulatory bodies and humanitarian air transport service providers. Partnerships with ICAO, IATA, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and the Flight Safety Foundation will continue to help ensure the quality and safety of WFP aviation activities. WFP will use partnerships to enhance its response capability through knowledge-sharing and access to skills and innovation in the industry; for example, IATA has reviewed and helped improve WFP's internal procedures on aircraft contracting and market assessment.

## Sustainable financing

44. WFP will aim to ensure predictable funding through the promotion of flexible financing mechanisms and expansion of the donor base.<sup>15</sup> WFP air operations are financed through country strategic plans (CSPs) and WFP's aviation special account. The purpose of the latter is to manage costs attributed to headquarters services and ad hoc operations and to provide bridge funding for emergencies.
45. WFP's centralized mechanism will be used to register under a general UNHAS programme category contributions for UNHAS that are not earmarked for a specific CSP. It will allow for direct multilateral contributions to UNHAS operations and enable the allocation of funds to country strategic plans using a transparent process approved by the Executive Director. It will allow for donor countries to specify funding amounts for specific operations while maintaining flexibility for WFP to allocate funds based on the prioritization criteria for UNHAS operations. Funds will be reallocated to country portfolio budgets for aviation operations at the onset of humanitarian crises, enhancing predictability and speed in emergency response.
46. At the country level, UNHAS steering committees will continue to determine UNHAS operation funding modalities, including with regard to cost recovery (the fee charged to organizations for the transport of passengers or cargo). The role of the committees reinforces shared ownership by users, an important facet of common services. While contributions from donor governments, intergovernmental organizations and multilateral funds are the principal source of funding for UNHAS operations, cost recovery will continue to provide supplemental funding and help to promote use of the service for essential humanitarian needs.

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<sup>15</sup> ["Private-sector partnerships and fundraising strategy \(2020–2025\)"](#) (WFP/EB.2/2019/4-A/Rev.1).

## High-performing and agile workforce

47. In line with the WFP people policy,<sup>16</sup> WFP will shape, manage and develop its workforce to ensure that it is able to meet the shifting demands of the complex environments in which it operates. An agile workforce is vital for operating in humanitarian settings and supporting the organization's mandate, which calls for specialized operations such as airdrops and medical and security evacuations. WFP will continue to invest in a diverse, committed, skilled and high-performing workforce that is selected on merit. Learning and training opportunities for professional development and the capture and exchange of knowledge and lessons learned are also a priority.
48. Sustainable, safe and secure humanitarian aviation relies on the availability of qualified and competent employees, supervisors and managers to plan, coordinate, manage, operate, maintain and oversee complex operations and UNHAS missions globally. As aviation staff fulfil a critical role in enabling WFP Aviation to effectively respond to sudden onset emergencies, it is imperative to ensure that the workforce has skills and competencies that match the working environment. WFP Aviation will facilitate this by effective recruitment and training plans addressing talent management, retention and succession planning. In addition WFP Aviation will expand skill sets and attract new talent from industry to ensure that it has an agile pool of aviation professionals with equitable geographical representation and gender balance.

## Implementation

49. Implementation of the aviation policy will be achieved through change management on two levels:
  - Under the leadership of senior management, the Director of Supply Chain Operations Division and the Chief of Aviation Services will ensure that the action at headquarters and the regional level necessary to put in place the essential enablers and achieve the objectives is taken.
  - Aviation Services will be responsible for reviewing relevant policy documents, guidance and operational plans to ensure their normative and operational alignment with the new aviation policy. For example, WFP will ensure that relevant components of the aviation policy are captured in the Air Transport Manual, an internal guidance document for staff engaged in WFP air transport operations, covering standards, regulations and recommended practices.
50. The Aviation Service will communicate the aviation policy to WFP headquarters, regional bureaux, country offices, partners and donors, ensuring that they understand the objectives, principles, governance framework, partnerships and activities of the Aviation Service. Implementation of the policy will be covered by WFP's existing planning and budgeting processes.

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<sup>16</sup> "WFP people policy" (WFP/EB.A/2021/5-A).

**Monitoring, reporting and evaluation**

51. Monitoring of and reporting on implementation of the policy will be based on the key performance indicators (KPIs) established as part of WFP's corporate results framework and annual performance planning process.
52. The Office of Evaluation will conduct an independent evaluation of the policy between four and six years after it is endorsed to assess the continued relevance and effectiveness of the policy, its implementation and whether it should be updated.

## Acronyms

AVSTADS	United Nations Aviation Standards for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Air Transport Operations
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSP	country strategic plan
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
UNATAG	United Nations Aviation Technical Advisory Group
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service