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LIVES

WFP's Progress on Resilience Evidence Generation

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Resilience building has the potential to limit the toll of humanitarian crises and avert humanitarian food assistance needs by helping people, communities and systems better **absorb, adapt and transform** in the face of shocks. Generating evidence around resilience serves multiple crucial purposes. It can:

- Support strategic decision making, enabling informed choices for program development;
- Enhance programming and resilience outcomes by identifying best practices, lessons learned and areas for improvement;
- Foster continuous learning for WFP and partners, enabling an evolving understanding of the contexts in which they operate;
- Serve as a cornerstone of accountability, ensuring transparency and promoting effective resilience-building interventions.

The [Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience](#) (2019) and the [Policy Evaluation of Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition](#) (2023) recommend investments in improving resilience monitoring, measurement and programme learning.

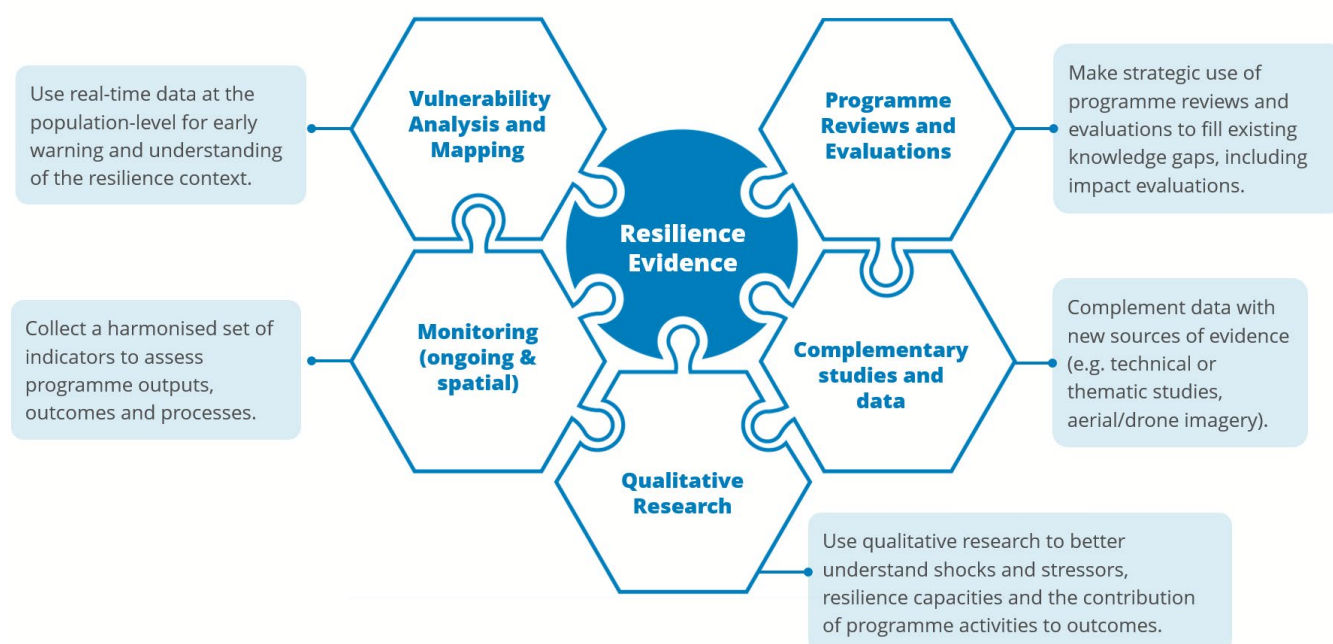
In response to the earlier evaluation, a review was commissioned to ODI on *Guiding resilience measurement in WFP's monitoring and evaluation*. Instead of creating new resilience composite indicators, the review

recommended leveraging **existing WFP processes** and tracking progress through indicators primarily drawn from **WFP's Corporate Results Framework** (CRF). A new workstream was initiated, co-led by the Asset Creation, Livelihoods and Resilience unit and the Field Monitoring unit (RAM-M), with the following timeline:

- **2020-21:** Developed a six-step approach to resilience evidence generation with Dr Mark Conostas.¹
- **2021-22:** Tested the RMME approach in WFP's programmes in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the G5 Sahel countries.
- **2023:** Consulted with 11 prominent international experts in resilience measurement to validate and enhance the RMME approach to generate rigorous and actionable resilience evidence.
- **2024:** Will roll-out the six-step approach, including two new resilience-specific indicators, with the support of a 'thought consortium' of resilience measurement international experts.

¹ Dr Mark Conostas of Cornell University serves as Director of Resilience Evidence for Decisions in Development Initiative (REDDI) and chaired the FSIN Resilience Measurement Technical Working Group.

WFP'S APPROACH TO RESILIENCE EVIDENCE GENERATION



Resilience evidence is reflected in a wealth of existing WFP resources. As seen in the diagram above, resilience evidence can be generated from a range of sources to fill in pieces of the evidence puzzle. Sources include:

- **Existing WFP processes:** vulnerability assessment and mapping (VAM) analysis, monitoring, qualitative research, programme reviews and evaluations and corporate reporting; and
- **Complementary external sources:** studies and evaluations from research partners (e.g. IFPRI and CGIAR).

WFP'S RESILIENCE EVIDENCE APPROACH

WFP's Resilience Evidence approach describes how people, institutions, and systems manage shocks and stressors differently as a result of WFP and partner programmes. The approach uses six iterative steps:

- **Step 1:** Stocktake information on the resilience context and evidence base.
- **Step 2:** Develop a resilience theory of change (ToC).
- **Step 3:** Develop resilience evidence and learning questions.
- **Step 4:** Develop a resilience evidence generation plan (including selection of methodologies and indicators).
- **Step 5:** Collect, analyze and visualize resilience data.
- **Step 6:** Generate evidence-based insights and actions.

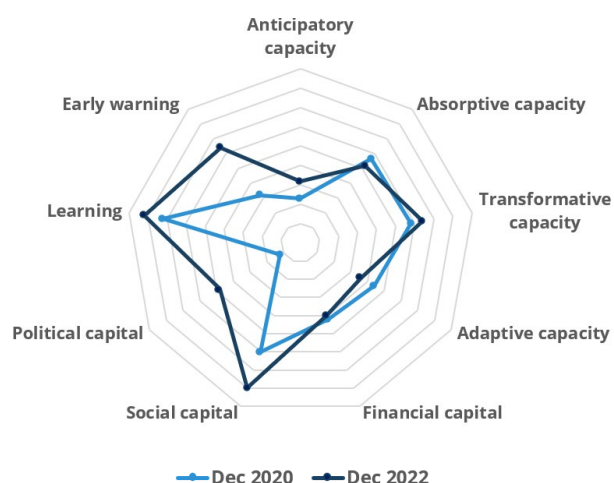
WFP's six-step approach was endorsed by a group of internationally-recognized experts in May 2023. The

central purpose of the approach is to support evidence-based decision making to improve WFP's resilience building programmes.

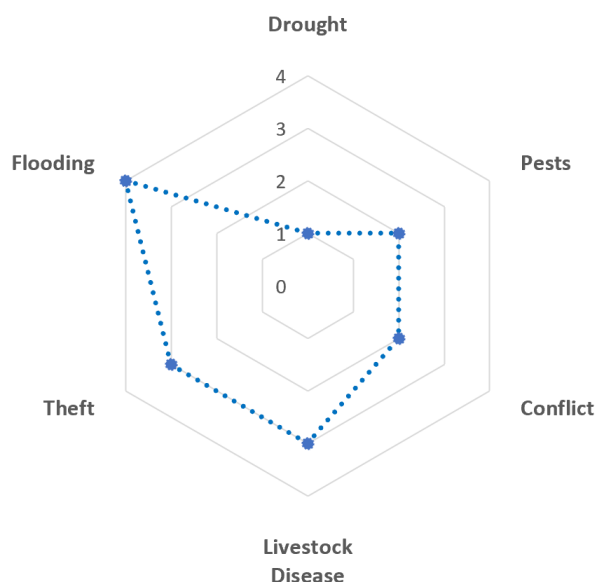
RESILIENCE-SPECIFIC CORPORATE INDICATORS

WFP is including two indicators in the CRF 2022-2025: the [Resilience Capacity Score \(RCS\)](#) and the [Shock Exposure Index \(SEI\)](#). The **RCS** measures households' perception of their resilience capacities to shocks and stressors. The RCS is based on the subjective self-evaluated resilience score (SERS) designed by Lindsey Jones and has been found to generate similar findings to objective measures of resilience. The RCS has been used in multiple countries, including Bangladesh, Niger, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

RCS data has supported an understanding of how resilience capacities have changed over time as seen below in this diagram from Niger's integrated resilience programme.



Drawing on an indicator developed by the Technical Assistance to NGOs (TANGO) for USAID resilience programmes, the **SEI** measures the shock exposure of surveyed households to six shocks as seen in the diagram below. It can show how the exposure to shocks evolves over time, and interpret changes in outcome data such as food security indicators and the RCS. The SEI has been used in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Zimbabwe.



MEASURING AVERTED HUMANITARIAN FOOD ASSISTANCE NEEDS

Measuring **averted humanitarian food assistance (HFA)** needs is a key priority for WFP's resilience evidence generation agenda. It connects WFP's longer-term role of protecting investments in resilience-building activities to its immediate primary mandate of saving lives and livelihoods.

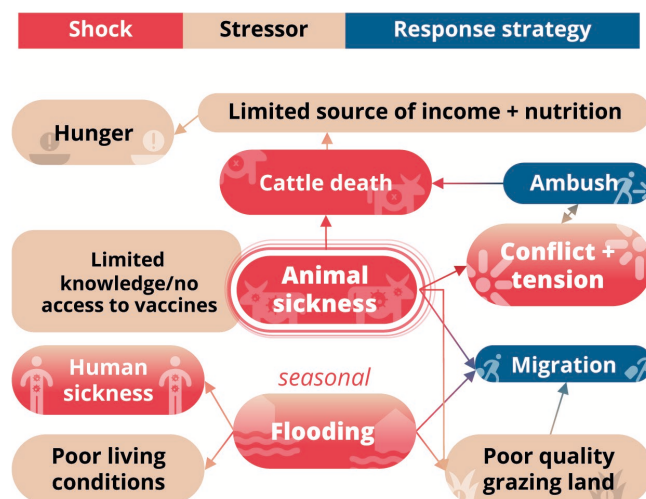
With the support of a group of international experts engaged through a partnership with **TANGO International**, WFP is developing and piloting a methodology to measure the HFA needs that are averted as a result of WFP and partner programmes.

Building on lessons learned from similar work developed by TANGO International and USAID, the methodology will make use of **common indicators** that are already widely adopted across WFP's country operations. Piloting of the methodology will begin from 2024.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Since 2020, WFP has substantially built staff capacity to conduct qualitative research through e-learning, guidance, facilitating trainings, technical support and qualitative software.

Focus group discussion guides have been developed to complement the **RCS and SEI quantitative indicators**, to **map the outcomes** of resilience programmes, and to understand the **contribution** of WFP's programme activities to observed outcomes. Qualitative research has deepened the understanding of the compounding, interconnected nature of shocks and stressors, as seen from the diagram from South Sudan's pastoralist programme.



COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

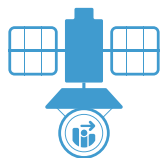
WFP has invested in complementary studies to generate evidence. For example, a **social cohesion study conducted in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)** in Burkina and Niger revealed that resilience activities promoted gender dialogue and empowerment for women. It created spaces for people to interact, thereby reducing stereotypes, fostering stronger community bonds, and improving relationships between different communities and their leaders. The same study showed that asset creation and livelihood activities improved natural resources and economic opportunities, reducing conflict between farmers and herders, decreased outmigration, and enhancing trust among youth and elders.

A study by WFP and **AGRYMET Regional Center** in Niger found that land rehabilitation activities under the integrated approach can sequester six tonnes of CO₂ per hectare annually. This not only supports rehabilitated land to retain more moisture in dry spells, but also contributes to global climate mitigation efforts.

A study is currently underway by **Tetrattech** to assess how food assistance for assets (FFA) can best contribute to global and national adaptation and mitigation action. It will support WFP to further improve the integration of climate change into its resilience programming framework and maximize the climate change adaptation and mitigation benefits.

WFP also works with **African Universities** that complement specific research agendas and ground proofing on a number of relevant subjects (e.g. biomass, technical performance of specific land rehabilitation techniques and empowerment).

ASSET IMPACT MONITORING FROM SPACE (AIMS)



WFP is able to monitor the maintenance of FFA assets over time by leveraging satellite technologies through the **Asset Impact Monitoring from Space (AIMS)**.

Very High Resolution (VHR) imagery is photo-interpreted to understand whether

the asset is still in place, and if it is being maintained by communities. **Multiple time series images are then compared to verify that the asset has been maintained at different stages** - right after the end of intervention, one year later, two years later and beyond.

AIMS also looks at long-term time series satellite data (Modis, Landsat, Sentinel) to assess how, and if, the construction or rehabilitation of FFA assets has had an **impact on the soil/vegetation/soil water content over time** (e.g. changes in vegetation condition).

This methodology has proven particularly insightful to generate quantifiable evidence of the positive impact that FFA assets can have on the surrounding area. For example, in **Syria** and **Niger**, all of the assets monitored have shown a clear improvement of the surrounding vegetation conditions. Some of these assets even exhibited a **100% vegetation improvement** over the long-term average.

EVALUATIONS

The **Climate and Resilience Impact Evaluation (IE) Window** seeks to understand how integrated programmes contribute to resilience building outcomes. It is jointly led by the Office of Evaluation (OEV), Asset Creation, Livelihoods and Resilience Unit (PROR-L), the Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (PRO-C), and the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) department.

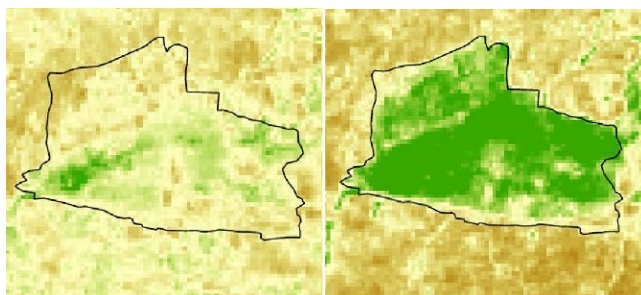
Data collection from Niger and Mali (as part of the Sahel Resilience Initiative), South Sudan and Rwanda concluded earlier in 2023. Results are forthcoming.

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*Qualitative photo interpretation from **Niger**. Comparison between before and after implementation of soil and water conservation measures, showing the presence of sylvo-pastoral half-moons in Koona region.*



@Landsat 8. Vegetation conditions during rainy season before (2019) and after the implementation (2021)

Photo cover page: WFP / Bangladesh / Shehzad Nooran

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