



PROPOSAL FOR THE MODIFICATION OF COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN EVALUATION COVERAGE NORMS

Background and rationale

1. The 2016 policy on country strategic plans (CSPs) clarifies that **all CSPs are evaluated in the penultimate year of their programmatic cycle**.¹ WFP's 2022 evaluation policy includes the same stipulation for CSPs,² termed "**coverage norms**".
2. The 2023 CSP policy evaluation recommended that the WFP Office of Evaluation revise these coverage norms to achieve a more **selective, strategic, timely and cost-efficient** evaluation coverage of CSPs. This proposal responds to that request.
3. At the same time, **funding constraints** are requiring WFP to make difficult choices. Its evaluation function also needs to adapt, to maximize the strategic and efficient use of limited resources, while ensuring that WFP policies, strategies, plans and programmes remain fully informed by independent evaluation evidence.

Key principles and operationalization

4. This proposed revision of the CSP coverage norms is based on the following key principle, as outlined in the 2022–2025 strategic plan:
 - Timely generation and accessibility of evaluation evidence to ensure evidence-based planning, programming and decision making, and to inform organizational learning throughout WFP.³
5. To operationalize this principle, the following **conditions** are set:
 - The selection of CSPs to be evaluated must be based on **objective criteria and informed by dialogue** with WFP management in regional bureaux and headquarters to ensure that institutional accountability and learning needs are met.
 - CSP evaluation (CSPE) coverage in any given year must be (as far as feasible) **representative of the full set of CSPs for that year**, which are in their penultimate year of implementation.
 - Each CSP will be evaluated at least once every other cycle.

¹ "Policy on Country Strategic Plans" (WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/Rev.1). Page 19, paragraph 94: "Under the management of the Office of Evaluation, all CSPs, other than ICSPs, will undergo country portfolio evaluations towards the end of their implementation period [...] for the design of subsequent country-level support."

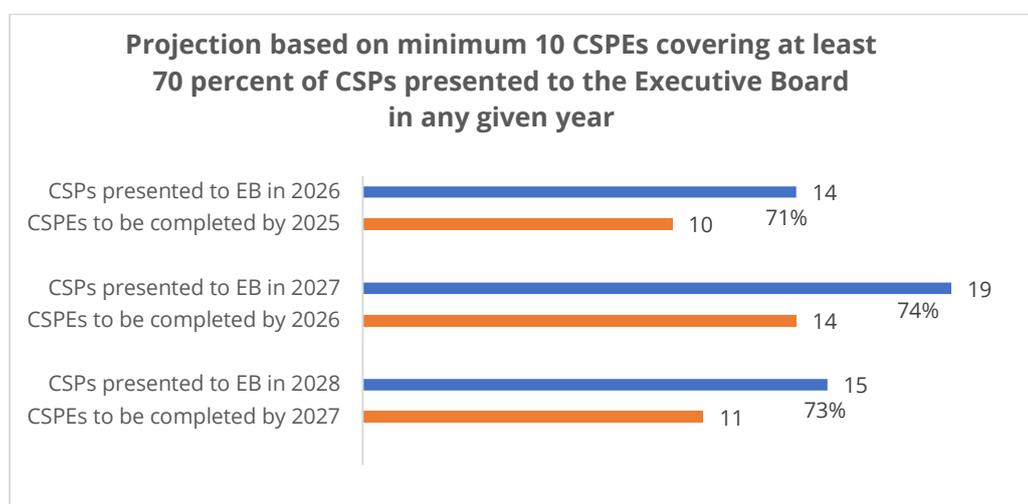
² "WFP evaluation policy 2022" (WFP/EB.1/2022/4-C). Page 14, table 2: Minimum Evaluation Coverage Norms: "a) A CSP evaluation is required in the penultimate year of each CSP."

³ "WFP strategic plan (2022–2025)" (WFP/EB.2/2021/4-A/1/Rev.2).

- Whenever a CSPE is not conducted, the country office should make provisions to ensure adequate planning and budgeting of **decentralized evaluations**⁴ to ensure that accountability and learning needs are met.

Proposed breadth of coverage

- To maximize coverage, the following parameters will be applied:
 - Minimum 10 CSPEs will be conducted in any given year, to cover at least 70 percent of all the CSPs that are in the penultimate year of implementation.
- Considering that CSP cycles are not harmonized across countries⁵ and their duration can be revised during implementation, the percentage and absolute number of CSPs to be evaluated every year will vary depending on the actual number of country offices that are in the penultimate year of the programme cycle and will present a new CSP for approval in the subsequent year.
- The figure below illustrates a projection of the number of CSPEs that would be conducted under this scenario between 2025 and 2027 based on the proposed coverage norm.



Source: *Country Strategic Plans and Interim Country Strategic Plans – Tentative Approval Schedule* as of 15 April 2024 and WFPgo list of CSPs and Interim CSPs.

Abbreviations: EB = Executive Board.

Criteria for selection

- CSPs will be selected for evaluation in their second year of implementation. **All CSPs meeting at least one of the criteria below will be evaluated**, provided that at least four years have passed since the last CSPE:
 - The CSP was not evaluated in the previous cycle.

⁴ The evaluation policy establishes that costs for the CSPE are covered by the country office, so if the CSPE is not conducted, resources have to be reallocated to decentralized evaluations.

⁵ In each country they are normally harmonized with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and/or the Government administrative cycles, but they are not harmonized at the regional or global level.

- ii) **The CSP is being implemented in a country classified as “high risk”** by either the Risk Management Division’s country profile risk index⁶ or the WFP global reassurance project.⁷
 - iii) The CSP is being implemented in a country where a corporate emergency⁸ has been activated during current CSP implementation.
10. For all remaining CSPs, the decision to conduct or waive the evaluation will be informed by the following considerations with the following order of priority:
- i) **Major contextual and/or strategic shifts** which have occurred during CSP implementation and have altered the way WFP is working in the country (e.g. from a CSP primarily focused on technical support, to encompassing emergency response).
 - ii) **Learning opportunity** for WFP (e.g. on new modalities of engagement and/or thematic areas of particular interest).
 - iii) **Strategic priority for the region**, as identified by the regional bureau.
 - iv) **Stakeholder demand** (e.g. government or other national partners).
11. An additional factor for consideration will be decentralized evaluations under way.

Consultation

12. The proposed selection will be shared for feedback by:
- i) The Senior Management Group including the regional directors; and
 - ii) **The Executive Board** during the annual consultation on evaluation held every year in May.
13. To ensure adherence to the principle of independence, the Director of Evaluation will take the decision on final selection.

Planning and budgeting

14. **Country offices will plan and budget for a CSPE for every cycle** in their country portfolio budget. In the second year of CSP implementation, the Office of Evaluation will confirm whether the evaluation should still be planned for.
15. **If there is no CSPE**, the associated budget should be reallocated to decentralized evaluations or other relevant evidence-generation exercises.

Date of commencement

16. The new coverage norm, if approved, would be implemented as of the second semester of 2024 when the Office of Evaluation will conduct the selection of the CSPE programme of work for 2026, to allow adequate time for country office planning and budgeting.

⁶ WFP. 2023. *Country Risk Profile Index – 2023 version*.

⁷ WFP. 2023. *Briefing on the WFP Reassurance Action Plan*. This criterion remains valid throughout the implementation period of the global reassurance project.

⁸ Either for corporate attention or corporate scale-up, noting that the latter may be covered under a corporate emergency evaluation.