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Evaluation reports

For consideration

Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

Management response to the recommendations in the synthesis of evidence and lessons on WFP's cooperating partners from centralized and decentralized evaluations

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the synthesis of evidence and lessons on WFP's cooperating partners (CPs) from centralized and decentralized evaluations. The synthesis drew on evidence and lessons from evaluations completed between 2020 and 2023 in order to understand the role and contribution of CPs to WFP's work and the factors affecting the quality of CP engagement and performance and the nature of WFP's relationships with CPs over time.
2. The synthesis makes five recommendations in relation to prioritizing long-term, sustainable partnerships based on respect and trust; adopting strategic, tailored capacity strengthening with a localization focus; embedding CP engagement throughout the programme cycle; aligning CPs with cross-cutting priorities through clear contracts and capacity building; and improving CP management efficiency and learning. The response below 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.

Focal points:

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Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (with supporting offices, divisions and units in brackets)	Management response	Actions	Action lead office (with supporting offices, divisions and units in brackets)	Action deadline	Status
<p>Priority: medium Deadline: November 2025</p> <p>1. PRIORITIZE SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS: Aim for long-term, sustainable partnerships, grounded in appreciation of CPs and an ethos of shared interests, mutual respect and trust.</p>	Supply Chain and Delivery Division – Operational Partners Unit	Agreed.				
<p>1.1 To promote partnerships with cooperating partners that are sustainable beyond the funding cycle, where relevant (e.g. based upon fund availability), encourage the use of multi-year field-level agreements (within the approved duration of the relevant CSP, interim CSP or limited emergency operation) and the application of guidance on developing strategic and risk-informed approaches to engaging with CPs.</p> <p>Priority: medium (November 2025)</p>	Operational Partners Unit (Programme Policy and Guidance Division; regional bureau CP management advisers; country office programme officers and CP managers)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The Operational Partners Unit issued a guidance for longer-term field-level agreements (FLAs) in 2023.</p> <p>The use of longer-term FLAs depends on strategic and operational decisions taken within the framework of individual country strategic plans (CSPs). The Operational Partners Unit is in the process of updating CP Spot Check Guidance on spot-checks for CPs to facilitate risk-informed decision-making by country offices in this regard.</p>	<p>1. Develop and disseminate guidance on spot-checks for CPs. The guidance will refer to the role of country offices and headquarters under the CP management assurance framework.</p>	Operational Partners Unit	31 March 2025	Ongoing

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<p>1.2 Where government CPs play a key role in CSP implementation, develop clear operational guidance for partnerships supporting CSPs, based on an ethos of shared interests. This should consider the wide range of operating contexts within which governments act as a CP or WFP transfers resources through government systems.</p> <p>Contract templates for engagement with government CPs should be developed and regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Priority: medium (November 2025)</p>	<p>Programme Policy and Guidance Division; (Legal Office; Risk Management Division; regional bureaux CP management advisers; country office programme officers and CP managers)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>A consultative process is under way to finalize guidance for situations in which governments act as CPs. The guidance will be disseminated through webinars and supplemented with updated templates and risk escalation procedures.</p>	<p>2. Develop guidance for situations in which governments act as CPs or WFP transfers resources through government systems.</p> <p>3. Develop templates for engagement with government CPs.</p>	<p>Programme Policy and Guidance Division</p> <p>Programme Policy and Guidance Division (Legal Office)</p>	<p>31 December 2024</p> <p>30 November 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Not started</p>
<p>Priority: medium Deadline: June 2026</p> <p>2. ADOPT STRATEGIC AND TAILORED APPROACHES TO CAPACITY STRENGTHENING: Build upon strengths in areas of joint priority for WFP and partners, applying a localization lens.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p>				

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<p>2.1. Enhance existing CP management guidance to support country offices in conducting, in a spirit of partnership, analysis and mapping of partners' capacities from a localization perspective, to better identify the assets and comparative advantages that CPs bring to partnerships.</p> <p>Priority: medium (January 2026)</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit (Programme Policy and Guidance Division; regional bureau CP management advisors; country office programme officers and CP managers)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>WFP is developing a localization policy, in consultation with the Executive Board and internal/external stakeholders.</p> <p>The Operational Partners Unit will incorporate localization guidance into the CP management framework, where applicable, to ensure alignment with the localization policy.</p>	<p>1. Develop a localization policy for Executive Board approval.</p>	<p>Programme Policy and Guidance Division</p>	<p>30 June 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>2. Update CP management guidance to include relevant elements from localization policy.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit</p>	<p>31 January 2026</p>	<p>Not started (to commence after completion of localization policy)</p>
<p>2.2. Enhance the clarity and quality of communication to CPs on key aspects of the WFP approach to programme delivery by developing and monitoring the implementation of an induction programme for CPs to familiarize them with WFP programmatic approaches (e.g. targeting criteria, priority groups) and cross-cutting concerns.</p> <p>Priority: medium (June 2026)</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit (Programme Policy and Guidance Division; Analysis, Planning and Performance Division; regional bureau CP managers; country office programme officers and CP managers)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The Operational Partners Unit is developing a global CP onboarding package to support country offices in conducting standard induction training sessions so as to enhance CPs' understanding of programmatic approaches.</p> <p>Once the global onboarding package is finalized, it will be shared across WFP through internal communication channels.</p>	<p>3. Develop a global CP onboarding package.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit</p>	<p>31 March 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>4. Disseminate the global CP onboarding package across WFP.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit</p>	<p>30 June 2025</p>	<p>Not started</p>

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<p>2.3 Following approval of the localization policy, develop tools for assessing, developing and/or enhancing CP leadership in relevant areas, in line with Grand Bargain and Inter-Agency Standing Committee commitments on leadership by local partners.</p> <p>Priority: medium (June 2026)</p>	Operational Partners Unit (Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service)	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>WFP is committed to empowering local partners, including building their capacity and enhancing their decision-making autonomy. Implementing leadership building activities for local partners, however, would require significant operational resources from country offices at a time when most operations are shrinking due to funding cuts. The knowledge that WFP must transfer to national and local NGOs is about how to implement inclusive and assured food assistance programmes. While this may serve to enhance leadership by local partners, WFP is not in a position to design new tools and processes with this objective. WFP would be keen, however, to convene or leverage other organizations who work in this area, such as when WFP partnered with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to build the capacity of local IFRC.</p>	<p>5. Develop a capacity strengthening strategy for local NGOs.</p>	Operational Partners Unit	30 June 2025	Not started

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<p>Priority: medium Deadline: November 2025</p> <p>3. INCORPORATE PLAN FOR ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT CSP: Facilitate CP engagement at all stages of the CSP programme cycle design, implementation through to performance assessment.</p>	Programme Cycle and Quality Unit	Agreed.				
<p>3.1. To formulate programmes that better respond to local context and community needs at the country strategic plan design stage, country offices should be supported in conducting comprehensive mapping and analysis of government and NGO cooperating partnerships and engaging cooperating partners in the programme design process, including engaging in needs analysis and the development of a country strategic plan theory of change and intended aims.</p> <p>Priority: medium (November 2025)</p>	Programme Cycle and Quality Unit (Operational Partners Unit; Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service; Analysis, Planning and Performance Division; regional bureau CP management advisers; country office programme officers and CP managers)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The revised CSP development process will reinforce the importance of country offices conducting comprehensive mapping and analysis of government and NGO CPs – as well as engaging with them at early stages – by making these activities key steps of the CSP design phase. Country offices, with regional bureau supervision and support, will be responsible for implementing these activities.</p>	<p>1. Finalize the design, roll-out and dissemination of a new CSP formulation and development framework that includes conducting comprehensive mapping and analysis of government and NGO cooperating partnerships as well as engagement with CPs in programme design as key steps of the CSP design and formulation phases.</p>	Programme Cycle and Quality Unit	30 November 2025	Ongoing

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<p>3.2. Embed mechanisms for consultation, joint planning and feedback from government and NGO CPs on programme quality throughout CSP implementation.</p> <p>Priority: medium (November 2025)</p>	<p>Programme Cycle and Quality Unit, Programme Policy and Guidance Division (Operational Partners Unit; Analysis, Planning and Performance Division; country office programme officers and CP managers)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>A revised CSP development framework is being finalized. It includes strengthened consultations through the CSP development cycle, with a strong focus on improving programme quality.</p> <p>Country offices, with regional bureau supervision and support, will ultimately be responsible for implementing these activities.</p>	<p>2. Finalize the design, roll-out and dissemination of a new CSP formulation and development framework that includes strengthened consultations, joint planning and feedback from government and NGO CPs on programme quality as key steps of the CSP design and formulation phases.</p>	<p>Programme Cycle and Quality Unit</p>	<p>30 November 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Priority: high Deadline: November 2026</p> <p>4. STRENGTHEN ALIGNMENT WITH CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES: To ensure CP alignment with cross-cutting priorities and reduce risk, match clear contractual requirements with capacity-strengthening opportunities.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>				

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<p>4.1. Following the design of WFP's next strategic plan (which will cover 2026–2030), conduct regular reviews of the field-level agreement template to ensure that CP contracting is aligned with any new corporate priorities and policies (including cyber security and, following its approval, the policy on localization).</p> <p>Priority: high (November 2026)</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit (Delivery Assurance Service; Legal Office; Risk Management Division; Technology Division)</p>	<p>Agreed. The Operational Partners Unit regularly reviews the FLA template as part of its standard practice. The most recent update was in June 2024.</p>	<p>1. Conduct annual reviews of FLA template.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit</p>	<p>June 2024 and June 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.2. Provide clear guidance and capacity support – in collaboration with (or upon request from) regional bureau and country office counterparts where specialist resources are available – to NGO and government CPs on current WFP commitments on gender equality and inclusion, including with regard to the adoption of gender-transformative approaches in their organizations and programme work.</p> <p>Priority: high (November 2025)</p>	<p>Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service (Operational Partnerships Unit, Ethics Office; regional bureau CP management advisers; country office CP managers; protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) focal points in country offices)</p>	<p>Agreed. The Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service will finalize the CP induction package on gender, protection and inclusion, which includes training for country offices.</p>	<p>2. Finalize CP induction training on gender, protection and inclusion.</p>	<p>Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<p>4.3. Noting that disability inclusion is now a contractual obligation within the field-level agreement template, provide capacity strengthening for CPs, country offices and regional bureaux to enable them to adopt and support a disability-inclusive approach to WFP programming in accordance with WFP standards. Compliance should be monitored by country offices, with support from regional bureaux and headquarters as required, to ensure adherence to these standards.</p> <p>Priority: high (June 2025)</p>	<p>Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service (Operational Partners Unit; Ethics Office; regional bureau CP management advisers; country office CP managers)</p>	<p>Agreed. Disability-inclusive language and commitments, as developed in coordination with the Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service, have been integrated into the latest FLA template.</p>	<p>3. Raise awareness of the CP guidelines and the disability inclusion section.</p>	<p>Gender, Protection and Inclusion Service</p>	<p>30 June 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.4. In accordance with the strategic evaluation on PSEA (2024), conduct an assessment and prioritization of the risks facing and the capacity needs of CPs in respect of meeting PSEA commitments, including specific analysis of government CP capacity needs.</p> <p>Priority: high (November 2025)</p>	<p>Ethics Office (Operational Partners Unit; regional bureau CP management advisers; country office CP managers)</p>	<p>Agreed. The Ethics Office in close collaboration with the Operational Partners Unit is gradually rolling out the United Nations Implementing Partners PSEA Capacity Assessment for NGO and civil society organization partners.</p>	<p>4. Make the United Nations Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment mandatory (by updating the United Nations Partner Portal directive or developing a new Executive Director's circular)</p>	<p>Ethics Office</p>	<p>31 December 2024</p>	<p>Not started</p>

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			5. Contribute to inter-agency efforts (through the Implementing Partner Protocol Working Group) to roll out the adapted tool of the United Nations Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment for government partners.	Ethics Office	31 July 2025	Ongoing
<p>Priority: high Deadline: June 2025</p> <p>5. IMPROVE CP MANAGEMENT: Enhance the efficiency of, and learning from, CP management and administration.</p>	Operational Partners Unit	Agreed.				

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5.1 Clarify, share and promote existing guidance on the scope for flexibility to adjust contracting and payment processes in response to changes in the operating environment, and train staff responsible for CP management on implementing the revised guidance. Priority: high (November 2025)	Operational Partners Unit (Delivery Assurance Service; Legal Office; Financial Operations and Insurance Service; regional bureau CP management advisers; country office CP managers)	Agreed. A new Executive Director's circular or directive will be issued to update the NGO partnership management framework. It will be supported by a communication and sensitization campaign aimed at country offices and regional bureaux.	1. Finalize an Executive Director's circular or directive on CP management to make the NGO partnership management framework official.	Operational Partners Unit	30 June 2025	Ongoing
			2. Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers white paper has been submitted and it will be potentially piloted. Based on recommendations from senior leadership, its proposed measures may be piloted in selected country offices as part of an initial testing phase in 2025. The Operational Partners Unit will support the Financial Operations and Insurance Service in following up on the pilot and its results.	Financial Operations and Insurance Service	30 November 2025	Ongoing

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<p>5.2 Establish targets and performance indicators for the timeliness of signing contracts with – and the processing and delivery of payments to – CPs. These should be integrated into a shared responsibility framework and take into account the ongoing implementation of Partner Connect.</p> <p>Priority: high (December 2025)</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit (Delivery Assurance Service; Financial Operations and Insurance Service; Analysis, Planning and Performance Division)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The ongoing implementation of Partner Connect will provide data on the timeliness of contractual management, thereby enabling the continued monitoring of relevant key performance indicators.</p>	<p>3. Implement Partner Connect, which provides data on the timeliness of contractual management, enabling the continued monitoring of relevant key performance indicators.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit</p>	<p>31 December 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>5.3 Complementing the tools available, establish a space for exchanging knowledge and good practices on NGO CP management across WFP.</p> <p>Priority: high (June 2025)</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit (Delivery Assurance Service; Research and Knowledge Management Service; regional bureau CP management advisers; country office CP managers)</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Multiple communication channels across WFP functional domains – including the Yammer community, information sessions, and regional bureau/country office workshops – will be used to establish a space for exchanging knowledge.</p>	<p>4. Develop a communication package covering multiple communication channels across WFP functional domains, including the Yammer community and information sessions.</p> <p>5. With support from the Knowledge Management and Library Unit, WFP will assess the NGO partnership community and determine whether further steps are needed to enhance knowledge sharing.</p>	<p>Operational Partners Unit (with support from the Knowledge management and Library Unit)</p>	<p>30 June 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>