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Management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of WFP's environmental policy

Background

This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations in the summary report on the evaluation of WFP's environmental policy of 2017. The evaluation was intended to serve accountability and learning purposes and is expected to inform WFP's decisions on the future direction of the policy.

The evaluation made four recommendations and a number of sub-recommendations. The following response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with each recommendation and sub-recommendation, and presents the planned, or completed, actions, responsibilities and timelines for their implementation.

Focal point:

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Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Responsible WFP office or division (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office or division (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Deadline for completion	Status of implementation
<p>Deadline: Second quarter 2026</p> <p>Recommendation 1: WFP should establish a stronger approach and governance structure to ensure that environmental and social sustainability are systematically addressed across the organization.</p>	<p>Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer Office (COO) (Management Services Division (MSD), Programme Policy and Guidance Division (PPG), Supply Chain and Delivery Division (SCD))</p>					
<p>1.1. Complementing existing WFP policies, the environmental policy should be revised to reflect the updated framing, structures and conceptual approaches for environmental and social sustainability (Q4 2026)</p>	<p>PPG, MSD, SCD</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<p>1. Take stock of the gaps in WFP's environmental policy and of the current framework and approaches for ensuring environmental and social sustainability.</p>	<p>MSD (PPG, SCD)</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>Not started</p>
			<p>2. Revise the existing environmental policy and present the updated policy to the Executive Board at its second regular session in November 2026.</p>	<p>MSD (PPG, SCD)</p>	<p>July 2026</p>	<p>Not started</p>

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<p>1.2. WFP should establish a sustainability unit responsible for—at a minimum –safeguards and environmental management system (EMS), along with the sustainability functions performed by the Supply Chain and Delivery Division (SCD). Guided by a high-level champion (at the level of Deputy Executive Director or Assistant Executive Director), the unit should take the organizational lead on ensuring the operationalization of the environmental policy (including subsequent revisions) and the mainstreaming of sustainability across WFP.</p> <p>(Q4 2025)</p>	<p>Programme Operations Department (PO) (MSD, PPG, SCD)</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p>Maintaining sufficient sustainability-focused staffing capacity in specific divisions and units is critical to improving the sustainability of WFP's operations. To separate the staffing capacity from the division or function responsible for implementing the changes would risk undermining the progress and momentum already achieved, as sustainability is not yet fully embedded into operations, job profiles and activities.</p> <p>However, there is need for a more structured governance mechanism that provides high-level endorsement of the sustainability efforts of all WFP's divisions and functions.</p> <p>An options paper setting out the governance and funding mechanisms that could support sustainability functions in WFP divisions is under development for presentation to the leadership team.</p>	<p>3. Present the options paper to the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer</p>	<p>PPG, MSD, SCD</p>	<p>First quarter of 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
			<p>4. Implement the chosen option.</p>	<p>PPG, MSD, SCD</p>	<p>December 2025</p>	<p>Not started</p>

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<p>1.3. WFP should make it a priority to identify stable resourcing models for the sustainability unit. This should include – but not be restricted to – a “lift and shift” model, whereby existing resources for safeguards, EMS and the SCD sustainability unit are retained and redeployed to the newly formed sustainability unit.</p> <p>Sustainability Unit. (Q4 2025)</p>	PO (MSD, PPG, SCD)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Stable resourcing for ensuring sustainability is essential, but it should not be tied to the creation of a single sustainability unit. Alternative options will be presented in the paper described in response to sub-recommendation 1.2 (above).</p>	5. Ensure stable resourcing for sustainability in accordance with the funding mechanism selected from the options paper, and include it in the management plan for 2026–2028.	MSD, PPG, SCD	April 2025	Not started
<p>1.4. The ESSF should be reviewed and revised as needed to support WFP's efforts to address environmental and social sustainability by providing practical guidance for all operations. This should include the following, as required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ References and guidance for applying tools and analyses developed by SCD, PPGG and other relevant units. ➤ Guidance on incorporating environmental and social sustainability considerations into country strategic plans and activity design and implementation <p>(Q4 2025)</p>	PO (MSD, PPG, SCD)	Agreed	6. Update the standards module in the environmental and social sustainability framework (ESSF).	MSD (PPG, SCD)	June 2025	Not started
			7. Update the EMS module in the ESSF (please see the response to sub-recommendation 3.1 below).	MSD, SCD, (PPG)	June 2025	Not started
			8. Develop guidance specific to relevant programme areas – including school meals, social protection, nutrition, gender and inclusion, climate and resilience – to complement and update the existing safeguards module of the ESSF.	PPG	December 2025	Not started

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			9. Define new tools for the ESSF as required, such as for supply chains.	SCD	June 2025	Not started
			10. Communicate the updated ESSF through a joint directive.	MSD, PPG, SCD	December 2025	Not started
1.5. WFP's forthcoming strategic plan should reflect the organization's strengthened approach to environmental and social sustainability by including social dimensions in its framing of environmental sustainability as a cross cutting priority. (Q3 2025)	PO (PPG, SCD)	Partially agreed. The strategic plan is developed through a consultation process, which ultimately requires consensus on its final content.	11. Management will take the evaluation findings into consideration when developing the next strategic plan. Additional inputs and consultations are required before decisions on reframing the cross-cutting priorities can be made.	Strategic Coordination and Assistant Executive Director Office (POC)	July 2025	Ongoing
Deadline: Q2 2026 Recommendation 2: WFP leadership should ensure that safeguards are applied across all country strategic plan activities.	PO					

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<p>2.1 WFP's safeguards system should be strengthened through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish an accountability mechanism that incentivizes and ensures the application of safeguards across all country strategic plan activities with a view to mitigating reputational risk and establishing access to new funding streams. ➤ Develop a process that requires activity managers to ensure adherence to relevant safeguards before interventions are approved. ➤ Clarify where and how other WFP expertise (e.g. gender analysis) could be used or must be used during safeguard screening processes. <p>(Q2 2026)</p>	PPG (POC, Human Resources Division (HRM))	Agreed	<p>1. PPG should collaborate with HRM on exploring mechanisms for strengthening accountability, such as by including safeguarding responsibilities in the generic terms of reference of programme policy officers, and adding related accountability in the performance and competency enhancement assessments of country directors, heads of programme and activity managers.</p>	PPG (Staffing Coordination and Capacity Service (POS), HRM)	March 2026	Not started
			<p>2. POC should coordinate with the units responsible with a view to ensuring that the available guidance on safeguards is accessible in the country strategic plan (CSP) manual.</p>	POC (PPG)	December 2025	Not started

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			3. Review the safeguards screening processes to ensure that they are consistent with WFP's tools for, and expertise in, other areas, such as gender and protection issues.	PPG	March 2026	Not started
2.2 WFP should develop mechanisms that give greater priority to and tailor the safeguards system so that it is better aligned with WFP's mandate and operating model. In particular, WFP should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explore whether, how and in what contexts tailored safeguards processes could be applied: this should include clearly defined thresholds for applying any streamlined processes. 	PPG (Emergency Preparedness and Response Service, Emergency Coordination Service)	Agreed	4. WFP's management will draw on the experience of other actors in the humanitarian sector to inform the adaptation of its safeguarding processes to emergency settings, including through the development of context-specific approaches.	COO, PPG	June 2026	Not started

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<p>➤ Develop a road map for analysing and identifying where safeguards would be feasible in WFP's emergency operations. This should include establishing whether – and if so, what – thresholds should be applied. WFP should consider undertaking this research in coordination with other humanitarian actors that are facing similar challenges. Consideration should be given to involving donors in this research, with a view to improving their understanding of the barriers to applying safeguards during emergency responses.</p> <p>(Q2 2026)</p>						
<p>Deadline: Q4 2026</p> <p>Recommendation 3: I Improve the extent to which environmental and social sustainability is addressed by the EMS and broaden the application of the EMS.</p>	MSD (SCD, PPG)					

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3.1 EMS documentation and guidance (including the environmental and social sustainability framework) should be screened to identify opportunities for incorporating social sustainability considerations into the design of the EMS and into the ESSF itself. (Q4 2025)	MSD (PPG)	Agreed	1. MSD should coordinate with PPG and HRM to find entry points for incorporating gender equality, diversity and social inclusion considerations into the EMS.	MSD (PPG, HRM, SCD)	March 2025	Not started
			2. Update guidance on the EMS (please see response to sub-recommendation 1.2).	MSD (PPG, SCD)	June 2025	Not started
			3. Incorporate the updated EMS guidance into the updated ESSF.	MSD	November 2025	Not started
3.2. WFP should develop protocols and guidance for engaging and supporting partners (including the landlords of facilities leased by WFP, vendors, governments and cooperating partners) in the application of the EMS. (Q4 2025)	MSD (SCD, PPG)	Agreed	4. MSD should coordinate with SCD, PPG and the Legal Office with a view to identifying entry points for supporting WFP's partners and vendors in applying the EMS.	MSD (SCD, PPG, Legal Office)	March 2025	Not started
			5. Include new protocols and guidance in the updated ESSF.	MSD (SCD)	November 2025	Not started

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			6. Integrate supply chain-related initiatives for vendors, governments and partners into the guidance on, and implementation of, the EMS, and the updated ESSF.	SCD (MSD)	November 2025	Not started
Deadline: Q3 2025 Recommendation 4: Strengthen the monitoring of environmental and social sustainability across WFP.	PPG					
<p>4.1 The CRF indicator, “proportion of FLAs/MOUs/CCs that have been screened for environmental and social sustainability risks”, should be reformulated to capture all activity management agreements (including those activities directly managed by WFP). Complementary qualitative indicators/processes should also be developed to track the rollout of safeguards. The EMS would also benefit from additional reporting focused on qualitative progress.</p>	PPG (MSD, Analysis, Planning and Performance Division (APP))	<p>Partially agreed</p> <p>The current corporate results framework (CRF) indicator is already efficient in covering the most common and relevant agreements that can be tracked by a programme performance monitoring system, so no reformulation is required. In addition, the activities managed directly by WFP do not involve implementation agreements, and so cannot be captured by this indicator.</p> <p>However, a new quantitative indicator will be developed to track the risks identified and the related mitigation measures proposed.</p>	1. Management will develop, and include in the new CRF, a cross-cutting quantitative indicator that provides information on environmental and social risks identified and their management.	PPG, (APP, SCD, MSD)	November 2025	Not started
			2. Environmental and social safeguards advisors at headquarters and in regional bureaux will develop and implement an action plan for identifying and responding to opportunities for learning and improvement related to the technical quality of the environmental and social risk screening	PPG (APP, SCD, MSD)	December 2025	Not started

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		As the rollout of safeguards is context-specific, the qualitative aspects of the process would be better assessed in complementary thematic reviews and CSP evaluations.	process through thematic reviews and CSP evaluations.			
			3. MSD will develop a new qualitative indicator for the EMS and include it in the new CRF.	MSD (APP, SCD)	September 2025	Not started
4.2 WFP should develop a monitoring framework capable of measuring WFP's work on environmental and social sustainability, including the results achieved. (Q3 2025)	MSD (PPG, SCD, APP)	Agreed	4. Take stock of inter-agency reporting requirements, international reporting standards and international best practices.	MSD (PPG, SCD, APP, Chief Financial Officer Division (CFO))	March 2025	Ongoing
			5. MSD, in collaboration with PPG, SCD, CFO and APP, should propose a comprehensive monitoring framework, aligned with the environmental plan of action 2030 and including the indicators developed in response to sub-recommendation 4.1.	MSD (PPG, SCD, APP, CFO)	July 2025	Not started

Acronyms

APP	Analysis, Planning and Performance Division
CFO	Chief Financial Officer Division
COO	Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer Office
CRF	corporate results framework
CSP	country strategic plan
EMS	environmental management system
ESSF	environmental and social sustainability framework
HRM	Human Resources Division
MSD	Management Services Division
PO	Programme Operations Department
POC	Strategic Coordination and Assistant Executive Director Office
POS	Staffing Coordination and Capacity Service
PPG	Programme Policy and Guidance Division
SCD	Supply Chain and Delivery Division