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Management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the strategic evaluation of WFP's approaches to targeting and prioritization for food and nutrition assistance

Background

This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations from the summary report on the strategic evaluation of WFP's approaches to targeting and prioritization for food and nutrition assistance. The evaluation covered activities implemented between 2019 and 2025. Taking a utilization-focused, consultative approach, the evaluation served the dual purpose of accountability and learning.

The evaluation made four recommendations, three of which are strategic and one, operational. This management response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the evaluation recommendations and sub-recommendations and presents the planned (or completed) actions for implementing each recommendation, and the related responsibilities and timelines.

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Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
Priority: High **Deadline: June 2026** **Recommendation 1: Support country offices in prioritization decisions by more clearly articulating WFP's strategic focus and positioning in order to strengthen their targeting and prioritization rationales.** Faced with unprecedented budget cuts, country offices need more support in navigating the trade offs inherent in targeting and prioritization. As WFP implements its new strategic plan , it should provide clear strategic guidance on the matters central to programme design and targeting and prioritization discussed below. It should also advocate with donors for space to follow these directions.	Programme Division (PRG) (cross-functional working group on targeting and prioritization; Supply Chain and Delivery Division (SCD)	Agreed				
1.1 Reinforce WFP's commitment to providing high-quality assistance by defining and upholding minimum levels of emergency assistance, strengthening reporting about and accountability for the nutritional adequacy of emergency assistance (for example through a more systematic use of the Optimus analytical tool), and supporting the integration of emergency and resilience programmes in areas affected by recurrent shocks (including by advocating with donors).	PRG; SCD	Agreed	WFP will issue guidance on programme quality in emergencies, outlining the principles, standards and benchmarks for emergency assistance.	Emergency Preparedness and Response Service (PRGE)	June 2026	Ongoing
			In 2025, WFP made significant progress in strengthening reporting on, and accountability for, nutritional adequacy: the food gap methodology was developed to inform decision-making on the adequacy of food transfers and is now available online. The integration of the Optimus tool with the country office tool for managing	Supply Chain Planning and Optimization Unit (SCDO); Programme Monitoring and Reporting Service (PRGM); Nutrition, School Meals		Completed in 2025

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			effectively, COMET, was completed, improving the visualization of nutritional adequacy in COMET during the development of country portfolio needs and systematically reflecting the food gap that rations are intended to cover. In addition, four regional training events were delivered in the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; Western and Central Africa; and Eastern and Southern Africa, engaging colleagues in the nutrition, supply chain, programme, and emergency preparedness and response functions. This aspect of recommendation 1.1 is therefore considered addressed.	and Social Protection Service (PRGS); Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Service (PRGF)		
			WFP will clarify the link between targeting for activities under strategic outcomes 1 and 2 (as per the 2026-2029 strategic plan) within the updated version of the corporate guidance on targeting and prioritization, while ensuring consistency with the actions taken in response to recommendation 2.1.	PRGR; PRGE; PRGF	September 2026	Not started

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1.2 Building on the paper "Considerations for prioritizing humanitarian assistance", encourage country offices to give greater consideration to the cost effectiveness of emergency interventions among the many issues to be considered when deciding whom to target and prioritize among groups of people facing the same severity of need.	PRG (cross-functional working group on targeting and prioritization)	Agreed	WFP will provide on-demand cross-functional support to country offices engaged in prioritizing humanitarian assistance, following the procedure laid out in the country office priority action plan developed by the Programme Policy and Guidance Division in October 2025.	PRGE; PRGF; Supply Chain Delivery Assurance Service (SCDD)	December 2026	Ongoing
			Technical support will be provided to country offices undertaking cost-efficiency analysis of programme modalities, including in order to inform decision-making on prioritization where relevant; and to those analysing in-kind general food assistance, to ensure that the food basket is nutritionally adequate while also exploring the cost-effectiveness of approaches.	PRGS; SCDO; PRGF	December2 026	Not started
			WFP will develop recommendations on how to adapt interventions for preventing and managing wasting in the context of funding constraints.	PRGS; PRGE	June 2026	Not started

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Priority: High **Deadline: December 2026** **Recommendation 2: Uphold targeting and prioritization standards by making guidance and tools more accessible, enforcing compliance with minimum standards, and safeguarding capacity.** The evaluation team suggests that WFP employ the measures discussed below in its efforts to maintain its targeting and prioritization standards during this period of diminishing financial and human resources	PRGF	Agreed				
2.1 Rather than develop a new policy, make existing guidance more accessible by better consolidating and streamlining key documents in one location that is easily accessible to all functions and complementing them with practical tools, training materials and examples of good practice (especially for targeting and prioritization for resilience). As part of these efforts, ensure that targeting and prioritization processes are clear and integrated (see recommendation 4).	PRG (PRGF; PRGR; PRGE; PRGS) PRGM; SCDD	Agreed	In 2026, WFP will ▪ *consolidate and digitalize guidance* through the harmonization of existing technical notes on targeting; the updating of related core guidance; and the digitalization of the complete package of guidance notes to ensure accessibility for users through the revamped Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Resource Centre; and	PRGF	June 2027	Ongoing

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			▪ *strengthen the systematic exchange of knowledge* through the use of the revamped VAM community of practice to institutionalize the regular sharing of good practices and lessons learned on targeting and prioritization.			
2.2 Maintain adequate staffing and expertise at global headquarters (including regional offices) and in country offices to enable a cross functional approach to targeting and prioritization as well as sufficient capacity for data collection and analysis and the design of adaptable targeting and prioritization approaches.	Assistant Executive Director Programme Operations Department (PO); PRG (Programme Cycle, Quality and Budgeting Service (PQB); PRGF)	Agreed	To sustain the provision of high-quality support for country offices, PRG will ▪ *maintain adequate technical capacity in 2026,* with targeting officers at headquarters in Rome and in regional offices; ▪ *ensure the availability of cross-functional expertise* by maintaining cross-divisional representation in the corporate cross-functional working group on targeting and prioritization; ▪ *ensure sufficient budget is allocated* for the provision of operational support for prioritization,; and ▪ *provide the necessary guidance to country offices to ensure adequate budgets* for assessments and targeting exercises in country strategic plan (CSP) frameworks (see also actions taken in response to recommendation 2.3).	PRG, in coordination with PO's Staffing Coordination and Capacity Service	September 2026	Not started

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2.3 To uphold minimum standards, hold country offices accountable for consistently verifying lists of people to be assisted and ensuring inclusive targeting and community engagement practices. Strengthen oversight of cooperating partners in order to mitigate risks of bias, favouritism, sexual exploitation and abuse, and exclusion. Ensure that the resources required to meet minimum standards are adequately reflected and supported in country portfolio needs budgets.	Supply Chain Delivery Assurance Service (SCDD); PRGF; PRGM	Agreed	In 2026, WFP will continue to roll out the targeting assurance framework and clarify technical accountabilities through the following actions, the completion of which will be tracked through the targeting assurance mechanisms already in place: *i) Inclusive targeting and community engagement* WFP will • require that inclusive criteria are systematically included in the design of all assessments and targeting exercises; and • require that community-level committees and cooperating partners are consistently trained on matters related to gender-based violence, child protection, safe referrals, and compliance with measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. *ii) Verification of the people to be assisted* WFP will operationalize the 2025 *Guidance for the verification of people's identities* by require that a verification exercise is planned and conducted before assistance is distributed.	PRGF; PRGM; Gender, Protection and Inclusion Unit (GPI); SCDD	December 2026	Ongoing

			iii) Oversight of cooperating partners WFP will continue the rollout of the Targeting assurance framework, which constitutes the backbone of the organization's functional control checklist and management oversight activities for targeting and is integrated into the Executive Director's assurance exercise in order to facilitate timely reporting and oversight. Benchmarks 7, 12 and 15 of the targeting assurance framework refer specifically to the oversight of cooperating partners, ensuring that: - country offices have a clear understanding of which targeting roles can be performed by cooperating partners and of how to ensure that duties are segregated directly in standard operating procedures (SOPs); - country offices perform adequate capacity assessments and skill mapping for the targeting activities of cooperating partners; and - targeting risks are assessed through stakeholder mapping and integrated into country office risk registers where applicable. The risks are also linked to a clear framework for reporting issues related to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, undue influence and other high-risk			

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			issues to the appropriate level of management. *iv) Resourcing for minimum standards* PRGM will continue to review the cost simulation tool for assessment, monitoring and evaluation at the CSP submission stage, in accordance with standard protocol. In 2026, this process will be supported by the following new management plan key performance indicator: ▪ Percentage of country offices that meet minimum assessment, monitoring and evaluation budgetary thresholds.			
Priority: High **Deadline: December 2026** **Recommendation 3: Support country offices in adopting more transparent, more agile and more cost effective targeting and prioritization approaches.** WFP can take the steps described below to help its country offices become more transparent, agile and cost-effective in their targeting and prioritization practices. This is important to address existing weaknesses in targeting and prioritization practices and to adapt to a more volatile and resource-scarce environment.	PRG	Agreed				

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
3.1 Require country offices to monitor targeting effectiveness (inclusion and exclusion errors disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics relevant to the context) across programmes, ideally through outcome monitoring among WFP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and at a minimum through standardized questions included in post-distribution monitoring as well as the analysis of community feedback data.	PRGM; PRGF	Agreed	In 2026, WFP will ■ consolidate lessons on the monitoring of targeting from pilot countries and conduct a technical consultation; ■ finalize and issue a technical guidance note on the monitoring of targeting; and ■ finalize a corporate corrective action framework to guide country offices in addressing the findings from the monitoring of targeting, post-distribution monitoring data, and community feedback.	PRGM; PRGF	September 2026	Ongoing
3.2 Require country offices to transparently share WFP's targeting and prioritization rationales and criteria with affected people and to communicate the planned duration of assistance from the outset. Where WFP provides blanket or status-based assistance during the initial phase of a response, require country offices to define explicit criteria and, if possible, timelines for the phase-out of assistance or transition to more targeted assistance and to communicate the criteria and timeline transparently to affected people and partners.	GPI; PRGM; PRGF	Agreed	GPI will reinforce existing stipulations in order to ensure that country offices comply with policy requirements for communicating transparently with affected people, including in terms of clarifying targeting and prioritization criteria and providing information on the duration of assistance. The adoption of transparent communication approaches will be fostered through: ■ *dissemination of the Inclusive Targeting and Prioritization technical*	GPI; PRGE; PRGF	December 2026	Not started

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			note to country offices and global headquarters, ensuring clear, accessible communication of the rationale and criteria for targeting and the duration of assistance;			
			▪ *the provision of tailored technical support to country offices on the use of context analysis, such as integrated cross-cutting context analysis and risk assessment (ICARA), for conflict-sensitive communication* that mitigates the risk of exacerbating divisions in the community;			
			▪ *transparent and inclusive communication;*			
			▪ *the rollout of training on complex emergencies*, emphasizing community engagement;			
			▪ *the embedding of community engagement in programme oversight and action plans,* adapting templates and providing technical support aimed at making this a standard practice; and			
			▪ *expansion of the use of community engagement tools* in all contexts, especially during major programme transitions.			

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
			WFP will also build on progress achieved through the targeting assurance framework to ▪ ensure that country office-level SOPs allow sufficient time for stakeholder engagement and require the transparent communication of targeting criteria, prioritization rationales and expected duration of assistance; and ▪ integrate checks on transparency and communication practices into planned oversight activities. See also the actions for launching guidance on programme quality in emergencies under recommendation 1.1.			
3.3 Improve the tracking of targeting costs and encourage country offices to increase the cost effectiveness of targeting and prioritization processes by accepting higher error rates in the initial phases of a response (and in short-term responses) and increasing accuracy over time.	PRGF; PQB	Agreed	WFP will disseminate guidance on targeting and registration in emergencies, which will include considerations regarding the level of rigour expected for targeting and prioritization in different types of emergencies. Global headquarters will also work with PQB to identify and standardize the targeting-related cost elements in corporate systems, thereby increasing their visibility and integration into decision-making.	PRGF; PQB	June 2027	Not started

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3.4 Require country offices to turn existing community feedback mechanisms into more functional appeals processes by ensuring some flexibility to adjust lists of people to be assisted based on appeals.	PRGM; PRGF; GPI; PRGE	Partially agreed, with the observation that this recommendation cannot be implemented in full because community feedback mechanisms (CFMs) cannot be turned into appeals processes, but they can – and should – serve as a channel for the appeals process. CFMs cannot themselves ensure that there is flexibility to adjust beneficiary lists, but they can receive requests for flexibility and pass them on to the relevant targeting unit.	PRGM and PRGF are jointly developing a guidance note on establishing mechanisms for handling appeals related to targeting and prioritization decisions. The guidance will include directions on how to leverage CFM channels in the appeals process, and an SOP template for appeals management that will support country offices in establishing complete and functional appeal systems tailored to their own circumstances and operational needs.	PRGM	June 2026	Ongoing
			PRGE will integrate guidance on beneficiary planning that allows sufficient flexibility to accommodate successful appeals.	PRGE		

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3.5 Encourage country offices to use their engagement with food security and nutrition clusters and cash working groups to create more transparency about targeting and prioritization strategies and, where possible, align approaches to avoid fragmentation.	PRGE (global food security cluster) (PRGF)	Agreed	PRGE will develop and disseminate practical guidance for WFP offices and field-level food security clusters on opportunities for aligning their targeting and prioritization approaches, where feasible. WFP will organize a session on targeting and prioritization with the global and field-level nutrition clusters, which will cover opportunities for alignment on joint nutrition and food security targeting and prioritization exercises. WFP will organize a webinar for field-level food security clusters in order to present key conclusions and recommendations from the Office of Evaluation's evaluation of targeting and prioritization and discuss the implications for coordination.	Global food security cluster; PRGE	June 2026	Not started

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Priority: High **Deadline: December 2027** **Recommendation 4: Strengthen the interoperability of WFP's own data systems and common data systems or data sharing with other humanitarian agencies for targeting and prioritization.** Effective targeting and prioritization hinges on the availability of accurate data. Collecting and updating such data requires a major investment of resources. In a very resource-constrained environment, WFP should therefore adopt more cooperative and more efficient approaches to data collection and management. Depending on context, this can entail one or several of the approaches described below.	PRGF	Agreed				

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
4.1 Prioritize the necessary financial and human resources needed to accelerate the modernization and interoperability or integration of WFP's own digital data systems (e.g. SCOPE, SugarCRM, MoDa and CODA), together with reliable and secure data management practices, in order to enable a more comprehensive collection and storage of vulnerability data for prioritization and support effective de duplication. This requires clear and integrated processes for targeting and prioritization (see recommendation 2).	Technology Division (TEC); PRGF; PRGM; SCDD	Agreed	WFP is committed to strengthening the capacity, interoperability and governance of its digital systems so as to optimize the targeting and registration processes that are central to effective programme delivery. In response to this recommendation, WFP will undertake the following actions:			
			i) *System interoperability* WFP will • establish interoperability between targeting and registration systems so as to ensure that the beneficiary lists generated through targeting processes are seamlessly and automatically transferred into the registration workflow;	SCDD	December 2026	Not started
			• ensure data standardization among its digital systems – such as the SCOPE digital beneficiary information and transfer management platform, the Self-Registration App, the SugarCRM corporate issue escalation and case management system, the MoDa mobile operation data acquisition tool, and the CODA conditional on-demand assistance platform – by promoting the adoption of	PRGF	December 2026	Not started

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office	Management response	Actions	Action lead office	Action deadline	Status
			common data structures, formats and definitions, and leveraging the survey designer platform; and			
			▪ explore and strengthen the linkages between SugarCRM and SCOPE through a priority project under the five-year digital business transformation plan for 2026–2030. Initial stakeholder engagement is under way with TEC and SCD.	PRGM	June 2027	Ongoing
			ii) Secure data management practices WFP will continue the rollout of the centralized database, DataBridges, which enforces reliable and secure data management practices and promotes the development of an integrated process for targeting and prioritization.	PRGF	March 2027	Not started
			iii) Effective deduplication WFP will scale up the implementation of its enterprise deduplication solution and expand its capabilities – including through integration with SCOPE – to ensure comprehensive and consistent deduplication of beneficiary identities in all operations.	SCDD	December 2026	Ongoing

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4.2 Strengthen WFP's role in making data a humanitarian public good by expanding and operationalizing global data-sharing agreements with key humanitarian partners and establish clear governance frameworks for data access, protection and use.	Assistant Executive Director, Programme Operations Department (including PRGF and SCDD) (Global Privacy Office; Legal Office; TEC)	Agreed	WFP will work with other humanitarian partners to establish effective and sustainable data sharing frameworks – encompassing data standardization, interoperability and security protocols – to ensure that shared data are consistent, reliable and responsibly managed. Data can be established as a public good when they are findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR). The rollout of WFP's Data Library (DataLib) ensures that data-sharing practices are recorded and executed in a secure, compliant and effective manner.	PRGF	March 2027	Not started
4.3 Advance local data sharing practices by identifying pilot countries to assess and address common challenges to establishing local data sharing agreements, including legal, ethical and technical barriers. Based on these insights, define concrete steps for expediting local data sharing agreements.	PRGF; Global Privacy Office; Legal Office; TEC; SCDD	Agreed	WFP's internal experts are collaborating with other partners to ensure that the data-sharing practices proposed are suitable for WFP. This work includes consideration of the use of blanket data licences, where applicable, and will contribute to the formulation of SOPs for the main use cases.	PRGF	September 2027	Not started