



Protection and Accountability to Affected People

Informal Update to the Executive Board

Gender, Protection and Inclusion Unit

27 July 2026

Prior to the 2020 Protection and Accountability Policy

2004

10 humanitarian principles guiding WFP work defined

2005-2008

Protection Project

2012

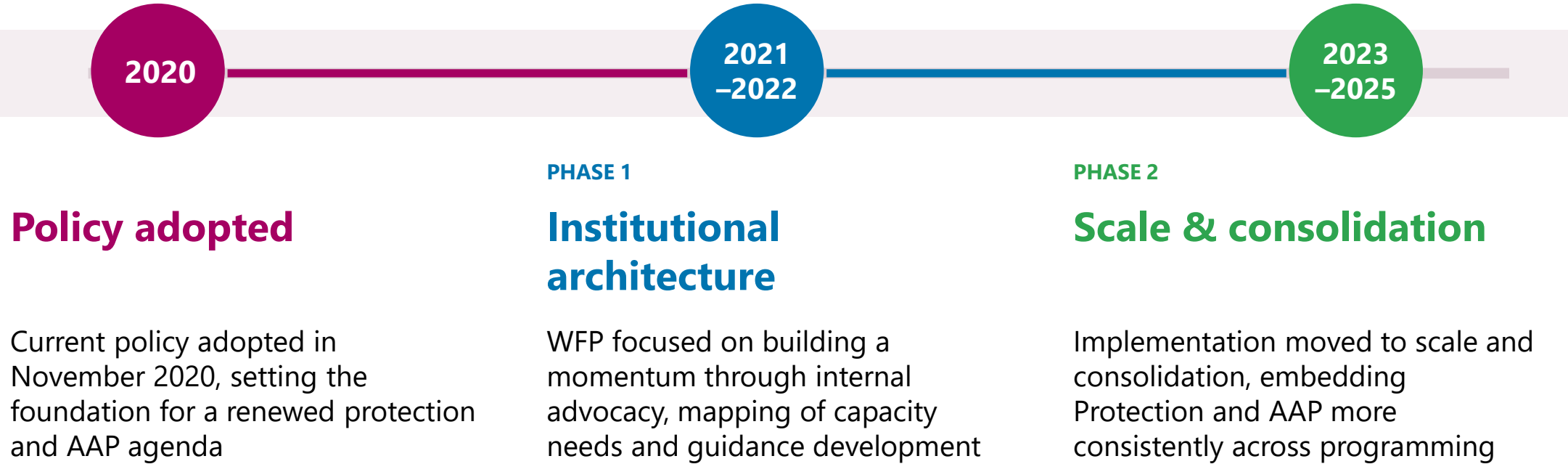
Humanitarian Protection Policy

2018

Evaluation of the Protection Policy



5-Year Transformation



WFP’s protection and AAP agenda matured from policy foundation to institution-wide operating practice.

Key Achievements

1. Protection & AAP are embedded as corporate priorities in WFP

- Broadly recognised as non-negotiable elements of WFP's work
- Integrated in Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and 2026-2029
- Mandatory corporate level indicators
- Embedded in other corporate processes and frameworks

2. Stronger integration in planning and programming

- Programmes designed with better understanding of risks, and how protection risks and food insecurity interact
- Scaling up of integrated context analysis and risk assessments



Key Achievements

4. Expanded systems for accountability to affected people

- Rapid scale-up of Community Engagement Action Plans
- Digitalisation and standardization of Community Feedback Mechanisms
- Enhanced use of community insights for programme adaptation and learning

5. Significant investments in capacity strengthening and staffing

- Expanded staffing
- People-centred approaches training roll-out
- Strengthened engagement with cooperating partners

6. Strengthened partnerships and inter-agency leadership

- Strengthened collaboration with specialized protection actors and UN partners
- Shaping interagency standards and strategy on Centrality of Protection and Collective CFMs
- Increasing inter-agency CFM engagement and emerging leadership as CFM service providers

Enablers



Strong Executive Board support and sustained donor engagement



Multi-annual supplementary extrabudgetary funding



Provision of complementary expertise via secondees



Increased system-wide momentum on the Centrality of Protection

Key challenges and risks

- Internal funding constraints
- High staff turnover
- Uneven implementation at CO level
- Broader system pressures, leading to heightened protection risks

Conclusions and way ahead

Future progress will hinge on:

- Predictable and flexible multi-year funding
- Continued investments in staffing and capacity strengthening
- Continued integration of protection and AAP across all programming areas

A **policy evaluation planned for 2027** will offer further insights and recommendations.



Funding cuts are reshaping the humanitarian sector

Global funding reductions are triggering significant, system-wide changes.



- A shift toward **minimal, survival-oriented programming** – diminishing focus on proactive risk reduction, preventive interventions, stabilization and recovery
- Assistance increasingly excluding areas with **crisis-level food insecurity**
- Increased reliance on remote monitoring **limits the ability to account for multidimensional vulnerability**
- **Staffing, field presence, monitoring and partner capacity** are reduced

The impact of funding cuts in WFP

Key operational shifts:

- '**Hyperprioritisation**' and focus on IPC 4 and 5
- Large-scale reduction in **assistance coverage**
- Reduction in **value of assistance** delivered
- Reductions in **operational capacity and staffing** - weakening protection capacities, community engagement and community feedback mechanisms



Reduced assistance is increasing exposure to harm

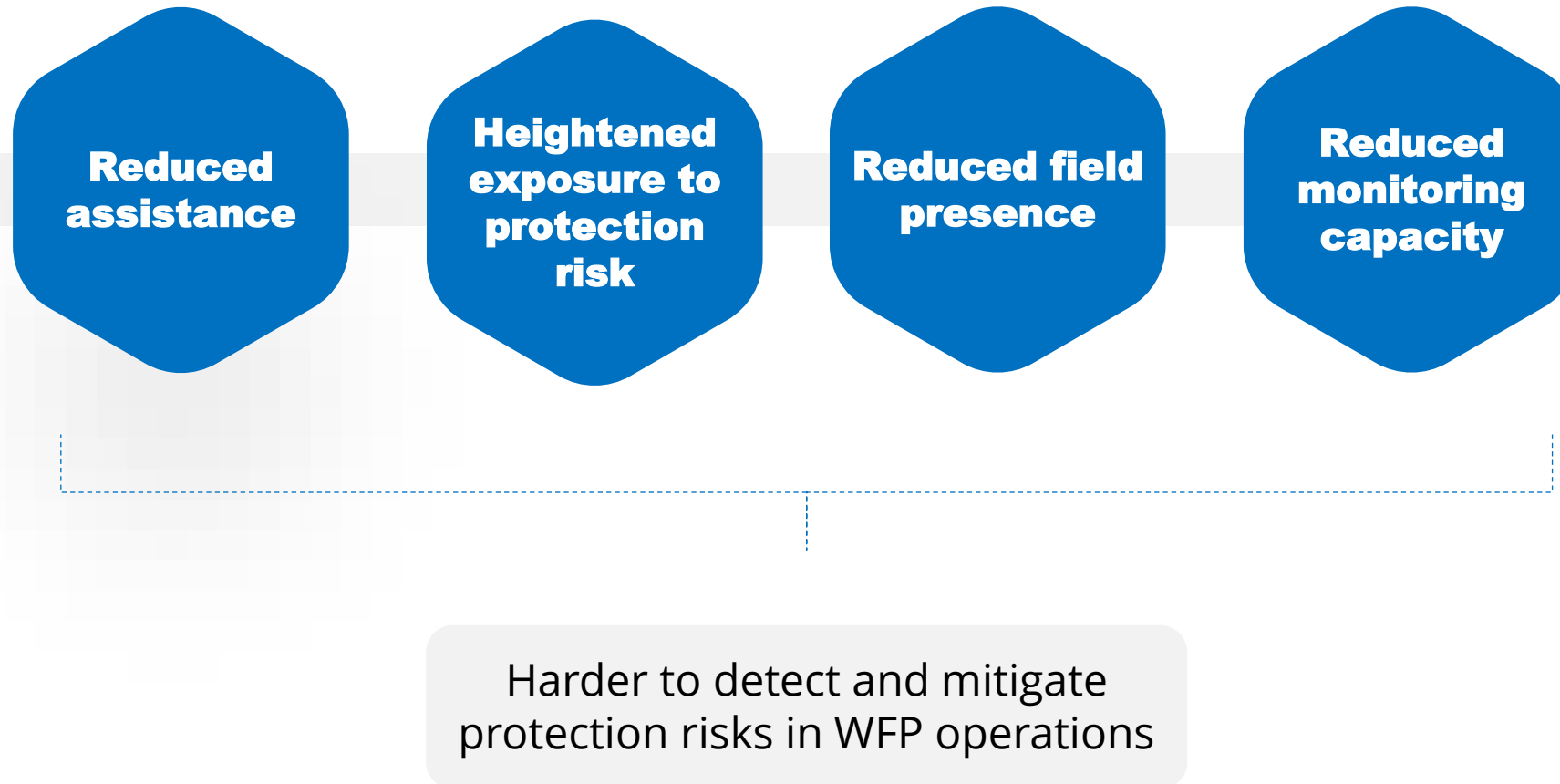
Important changes to the protection landscape

- Households are adopting **more severe coping strategies**, including harmful and irreversible survival strategies, such as gender-based violence, child labour, early marriage, and unsafe migration
- Some individuals are **at higher risk of earlier, deeper, and more prolonged impacts**, due to structural inequalities, reduced coping capacity, and reliance on services that are being withdrawn
- Reduced availability of **specialised protection services**, affecting response and hindering referrals
- As monitoring and CFM capacities and field presence contract, many individuals and the risks they face may **remain invisible**

Further indirect impact

- Increased social tension and breakdowns in social cohesion at community level
- Erosion of trust in humanitarian actors

Protection risks are rising while mitigation capacity is weakening



How protection and AAP continue to inform our work

- **Document changes** at field level
- Listen to affected people to inform prioritisation decisions and **communicate transparently** about changes in assistance
- Ensure **programme adjustments** are informed by protection risk assessments and community feedback, not only food security severity thresholds or operational efficiency considerations
- Provide **guidance and hands-on support to country offices** on how to maintain minimum standards across operations, including safe access, community engagement and community feedback mechanisms



Voices from the Field

Bangladesh CO



Protection context in the Rohingya refugee response

Context:

- Amongst the largest and most densely populated refugee camp (1.2 million people)
- Protracted crisis with increasing protection and security risks, including GBV, abductions and armed group activity
- Severe livelihood constraints, with no legal opportunities for employment

Food insecurity and rationale for targeting:

- Moving to targeting assistance considering lessons learned from 2023 ration cut (12\$ to 8\$)
- Differences in food insecurity and self-reliance across households
- Targeting and Prioritization Exercise (TPE) enables support to be directed to those with the greatest needs

TPE from 1st April 2026:

EXTREMELY

Food insecure
33% of population
Transfer Value: \$12

HIGHLY

Food insecure
50% of population
Transfer Value: \$10

Food insecure
17% of population
Transfer Value: \$7

Integrating protection and AAP in Targeting and Prioritisation

Community consultations and targeting criteria

- Community consultations on household needs and ranking vulnerability
- Protection and AAP team contribute directly to targeting decisions

Sensitisation and community engagement

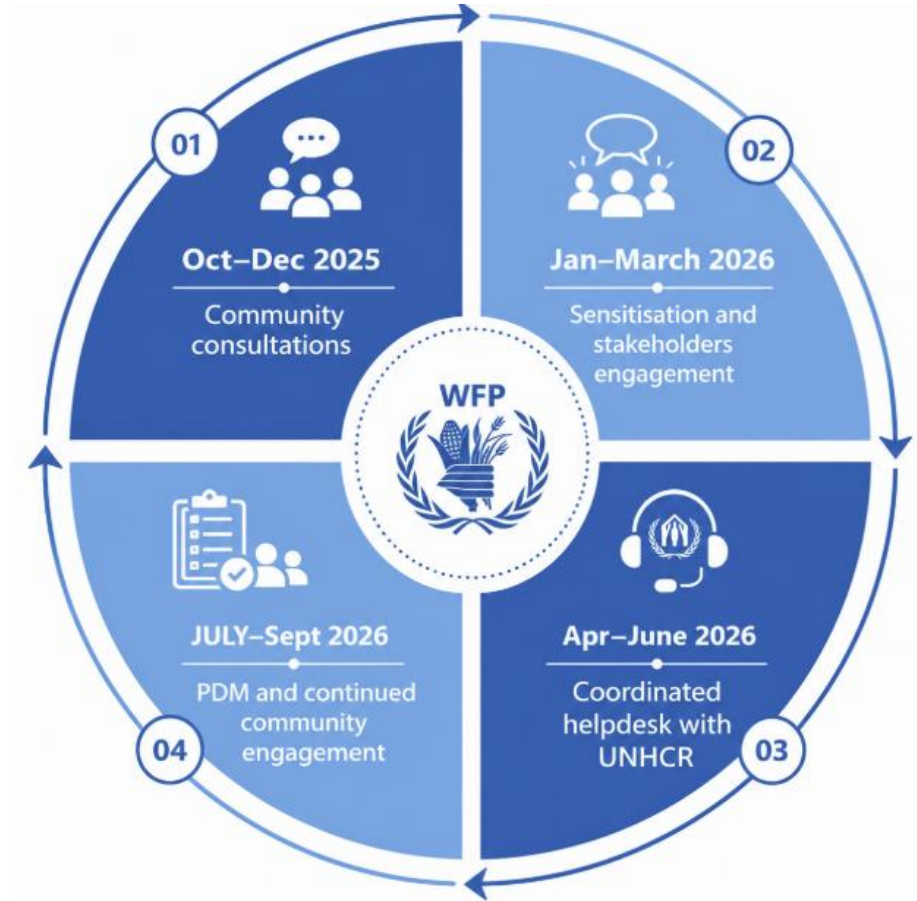
- Simplified complex targeting model into easy-to-understand messages
- Translation and sensitization across multiple channels and languages
- Trained Rohingya volunteers served as frontline communicators

Collaboration with UNHCR

- Coordinated Helpdesk in collaboration with UNHCR at WFP outlets
- Joint efforts in improving household data

Post-distribution monitoring

- Protection considerations integrated in PDM



Building Community Acceptance: Results and Take-aways

Community acceptance

- CFM cases: 29,000 in April | 17,000 in May | 12,000 in June
- Programmatic changes introduced as a result of community feedback
- Initial resistance but quick acceptance thanks to sensitisation and engagement with local government and community leaders

Protection and AAP lessons learned:

- Participation improves programme quality
- Transparency builds acceptance
- Community-led engagement matters
- Protection and accountability are not separate from food assistance programming

Way forward:

- PDM results available in September 2026
- Pipeline break December 2026
- Context: limited funding for other sectors, climate and economic shocks



Voices from the Field

Sudan CO



Protection risks driving food insecurity in Sudan

- Sudan is now the largest humanitarian crisis in the world
- 19.5 million people are facing severe hunger, with 14 'famine risk' hotspots
- Hunger in Sudan is driven by protection risks:
 - **Limited food AVAILABILITY:**
 - critical food system infrastructure has been destroyed/damaged in attacks
 - insecurity, mass forced displacement, UXO contamination mean fields are abandoned
 - **Restricted ACCESS to food:**
 - restrictions on free movement of people and goods, including siege
 - intensified local inter-tribal violence and discrimination, including hate speech
 - loss of livelihoods and exhaustion of assets
 - Physical and mental health impacts of violence

Mitigating the protection risks driving hunger

MAINSTREAMING protection:

- Capturing *community* perceptions of violence and how it can be addressed
- Enforcing mandatory PSEA requirements across staff and partners
- Improving safe referrals for survivors' access to specialist support
- Learning exchange and capacity strengthening across FSL Cluster
- Embedding protection and conflict-sensitivity data in operational planning, assessments and monitoring

INTEGRATING protection:

- Explicitly targeting assistance to reduce acute protection threats
- Leveraging cash assistance to enhance pathways to socio-economic rights
- Contributing analysis and capacities to progress the HCT's Action Plan on the Centrality of Protection

ADVOCACY on protection:

- Contributing to the evidence base for HCT advocacy with conflict parties
- Mapping the links between protections risks and food insecurity

Consequences of funding shortfalls

- **Needs far outpace resources - WFP can only plan to support 1 in 5 people** – 4 million people prioritized out of 19.5 million in need of emergency food assistance
- **Of the total USD 656 million required** over the next 6 months, a minimum of USD 324 million is urgently required to sustain the current level of operations and prevent further cuts in assistance.
- **Pausing emergency food assistance** for vulnerable people **will likely:**
 - **Escalate hunger**
 - **Increase exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse** including:
 - High-risk movements across conflict frontlines; to/through EO contaminated areas
 - Survival sex, exploitative labour, early marriage
 - Further forced displacement
 - Forced recruitment, including of children, into armed groups
 - Intensified inter-communal conflict
- The **impact of this violence is NOT temporary** – physical and psychological trauma undermines resilience, productive capacities, and prospects for peace

Q&A

