



Evaluation of WFP's Supply Chain Strategic Roadmap (2022–2025)

Context

Access to food and livelihoods is increasingly constrained by political instability, disasters, economic shocks and rising food prices, all of which are driving higher levels of food insecurity and hunger. Within this context, humanitarian and development actors are facing significant funding cuts, making timely and adequate support harder to deliver. WFP remains central to the global humanitarian supply chain, providing procurement, logistics, and emergency assistance. However, WFP's resourcing has declined sharply reflecting broader external funding trends.

In response to these challenges, the UN Secretary-General launched the UN80 initiative to improve efficiency and reduce fragmentation across UN agencies. As part of this, WFP is playing a key role in the design and delivery of a UN-wide integrated supply chain platform.

Subject and focus of the evaluation

WFP's supply chain function comprises procurement, logistics, aviation, shipping and service provision including both mandated services, the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), the Global Logistics Cluster, and the UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD).

The Supply Chain Strategic Roadmap 2022–2025 was developed by WFP's supply chain function to align with the objectives articulated in WFP's Strategic Plan (2022–2025). It articulates **three strategic pillars** to guide WFP's supply chain:

- i) Leadership in emergencies;
- ii) Support strengthening of national systems;
- iii) Providing augmented services and delivery solutions.

The Roadmap identifies **five enablers** for its performance: *people, partnerships, technology and innovation, funding, and evidence*.

The evaluation includes assessment of the implementation of the **Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy** which is identified under Pillar 2 as an entry point for improving livelihoods and increasing local production and strengthening local supply chains.

Objectives and users

The evaluation served the dual objectives of accountability and learning, with an emphasis on the latter. The main intended users of the evaluation include WFP's Supply Chain and Delivery Function, WFP management at Global HQ and country level, Executive Board members, donors, and WFP's diverse range of partners in the humanitarian and development sectors, including other UN agencies, private sector organizations, cooperating partners, and ultimately the people that WFP aims to serve.

Key evaluation insights

Articulation of strategic ambitions: The Supply Chain Strategic Roadmap articulated clear, relevant aspirations for WFP's supply chain to evolve from its operational role to that of global leader and strategic partner in the international humanitarian system. However, limited dissemination of the Roadmap hindered institutional uptake, and demands on the supply chain have changed in light of current growing humanitarian crises and funding gaps.

Platforms and reporting: The Roadmap helped drive institutional investments and organizational changes to enhance internal efficiency and programmatic contributions. However, opportunities for further consolidation and integration across functions and systems remain.

People: The Roadmap's broad scope and increasing expectations for supply chain staff demands a diversified and expanded supply chain workforce. However, staffing levels have not evolved or expanded commensurately.

Funding: Efforts to strengthen sustainable resourcing have been supported by the investment in On-Demand Services (ODS) and increased use of advance financing. However, the ambitions for flexible funding have not been fully achieved due to recent funding cuts.

What was achieved against Roadmap ambitions?

Pillar 1: Leadership in emergencies and protracted crises
WFP's continued leadership role in emergency response has been supported by its supply chain infrastructure and rapid response mechanisms, enhancing reach to the most vulnerable people with food and cash. Even in the context of increasingly complex emergencies, and amidst funding cuts, the organization was able to respond to sudden onset crises within an average of one day in 2024. The expanded reach to affected people was supported by programme adaptations and innovative delivery methods.

WFP's supply chain function has increasingly supported flexible delivery modalities tailored to local needs and preferences. Country offices often conduct studies to determine the most appropriate modality – such as in-kind food, vouchers, or cash – and the supply chain adapts accordingly.

WFP has worked to reach most vulnerable through leveraging technology and digital solutions; adapting logistics and delivery methods to overcome access; strengthening partnerships and local capacity; and engaging in negotiations for improved access to vulnerable populations isolated by conflict.

Pillar 2: Support to strengthening national systems
The Roadmap positioned WFP's supply chain to strengthen national systems by supporting local supply chains and building technical supply chain expertise. Contributions made through training, policy advice, new technologies, and infrastructure support helped improve national supply chains.

The Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy (2019) reinforced programmatic objectives alongside WFP's procurement needs (e.g. to support smallholder farmers and strengthen food value chains). However, limited guidance, reduced resourcing, shifting expectations and gaps in reporting frameworks hindered WFP's ability to demonstrate supply chain contributions to national system strengthening.

Since the policy was implemented, the proportion of WFP's local and regional food procurement has remained stable, accounting for 50–65 percent of WFP's total procurement. In absolute value, however, WFP more than doubled its expenditure on local procurement constituting a significant investment in local economies.

The strength of national markets and systems had a greater influence on cost reductions and transfer savings for WFP's supply chain than any other factor.

Pillar 3: Partner of Choice

WFP's services have earned the trust and respect of partners globally. This has helped to reposition WFP as a critical and fundamental systems enabler as well as a service provider. Current and future UN reforms have the potential to further expand the supply chain function's joint service provision opportunities. WFP diversified the type, nature and composition of its partnerships contributing to supply chain efficiency and national systems strengthening. However, current monitoring frameworks do not adequately track or reflect the value added by these collaborations.

Efficiency gains: WFP's supply chain has achieved measurable improvements in cost efficiency, timeliness and quality since 2019. Multiple factors contributed to supply chain efficiency gains. The expansion of advance finance mechanisms such as the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF), Immediate Response Account (IRA), Internal Project Lending (IPL), inter-country corridor management and the UNHRD have enabled more proactive planning, faster procurement and pre-positioning of stock. Specific efficiency gains include overall improvements in procurement in terms of cost per metric ton, food transfers for small moderate and big operations in terms of food transfer cost per metric ton, and the cost associated with cash transfers over time.

Cross-cutting priorities: Although recently embedded, the integration of environmental sustainability considerations into the supply chain function is improving environmental outcomes. The uptake of tools developed by the Supply Chain Environmental Sustainability Unit varies by country offices, for example to track carbon emissions. WFP's supply chain function has incorporated gender, equity and protection considerations, in alignment with broader corporate strategies and policies, though gaps remain in ensuring their consistent application across supply chain operations.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. WFP should update the Supply Chain Roadmap to a Supply Chain and Delivery strategy, which articulates the vision for the supply chain and delivery function that aligns with the corporate strategic plan and considers the evolving commitment to UN80.

Recommendation 2. Enhance coherence and interoperability of planning, platforms and processes across WFP.

Recommendation 3. Enhance external coherence for operationalization of a UN-wide Integrated Supply Chain Vision.

Recommendation 4. Strengthen the operationalisation of implementation mechanisms in alignment with the revised Supply Chain and Delivery strategy, WFP Strategic Plan and UN Reforms.