

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

Iraq: An evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2010 –2015)

Evaluation Report

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Fact Sheet: WFP's Portfolio in Iraq

Timeline and funding level of WFP portfolio in Iraq 2010 - mid 2015										
Operation	Time Frame	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	L3 launched in August 2014		
PRRO 200035	April 2010 – March 2012 (extended to Dec 2015)	Req: 96,624,986 Rec: 74,012,793 Funded: 78%								
DEV 200104	May 2010 – April 2012 (extended to Aug 2012)	Req: 25,391,910 Rec: 3,082,284 Funded: 12%								
SO 200117	Dec 2010 - Dec 2011 (extended to May 2012)	Req: 17,071,954 Rec: 6,348,198 Funded: 37%								
IR-EMOP 200663	Jan 2014 - April 2014	Req: 1,497,731 Rec: 880,949 Funded: 59%								
EMOP 200677	April 2014 - Sept 2014 (extended to Dec 2015)	Req: 449,609,081 Rec: 330,622,439 Funded: 74%								
IR-EMOP 200729	June 2014 - Aug 2014	Req: 1,490,252 Rec: 1,002,632 Funded: 67%								
SO 200746	Jul 2014 - Dec 2015	Req: 10,404,922 Rec: 6,937,690 Funded: 67%								
Direct Expenses (US\$ millions)		16,673	23,927	22,842	40,285	127,056	213,428			
% Direct Expenses: Iraq vs. WFP World		0.42%	0.64%	0.57%	0.97%	2.69%	5%			
Food Distributed (MT)		18,548	2,672	4,546	5,295	57,918	27,633			
Total of Beneficiaries (planned)		628,346	622,873	716,227	518,328	1,784,600	2,096,000			
Total of Beneficiaries (actual)		1,084,089	613,518	718,127	716,515	2,158,292	1,850,531			
% women beneficiaries (actual)		45%	45%	46%	46%	49%	49%			

LEGEND Funding Level

- > 75%
- Between 50 and 75%
- Less than 50%

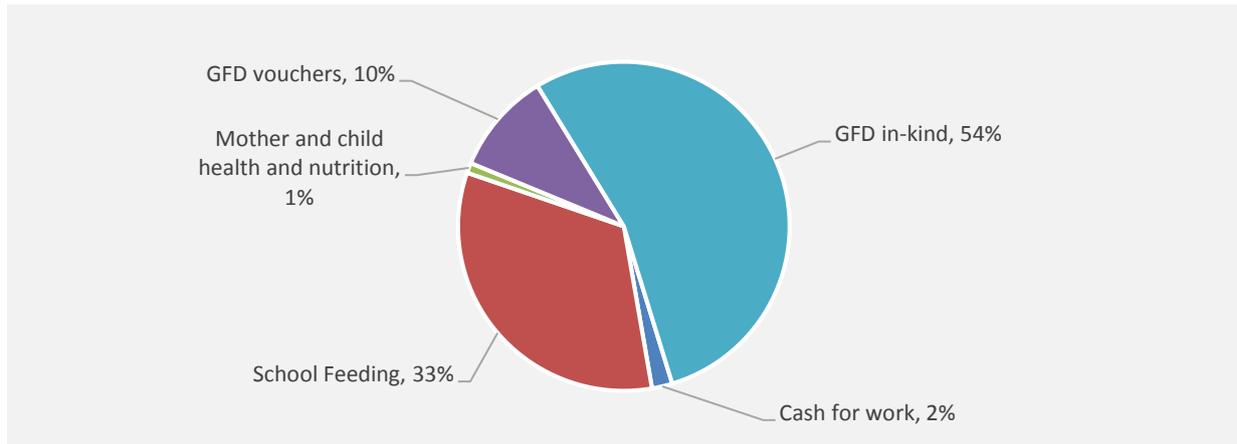
Source: APR 2015, SPR 2011-2015, Resource Situation Updates as of August 2015
 EMOP 200677, PRRO 200035 and SO 200746 are categorized as L3
 Requirements (Req.) and Contributions Received (Rec.) are in US\$

Distribution of Portfolio Activities, Modalities and Strategic Objectives

	Capacity Development	School Feeding	MCHN	GFD	CFW	CBT	UNHAS	Logistics Cluster	Emergency Telecoms	SOs 2008-2013	SOs 2014-2017
DEV 200104	x									5	4
PRRO 200035	x	x	x		x					4	2
IR-EMOP 200663				x						3	1
IR-EMOP 200729				x						3	1
EMOP 200677				x		x				3	1
SO 200117							x			-	-
SO 200746								x	x	-	-

Source: WFP SPRs 2010-15

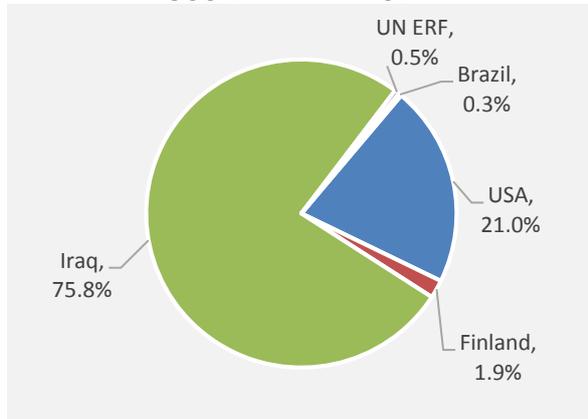
Percentage of actual beneficiaries by activities 2010–15



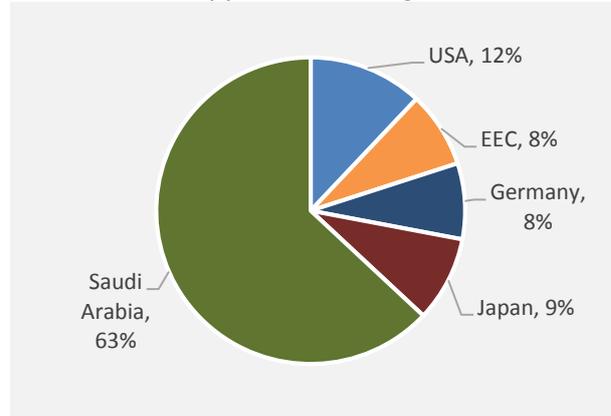
Source: WFP SPRs 2010-15

Top 5 donors by Operation

PRRO 200355 (2010-2015)

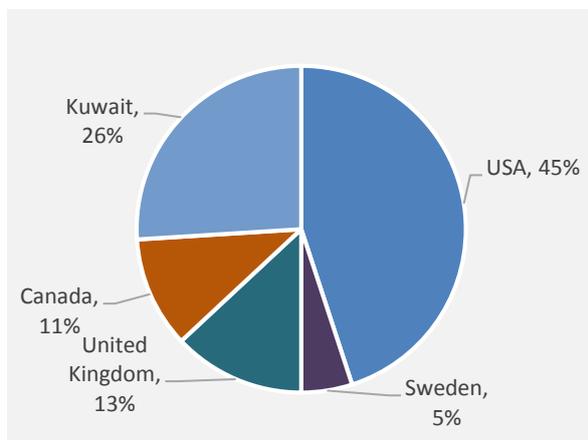


EMOP 200677 (2010-2015)

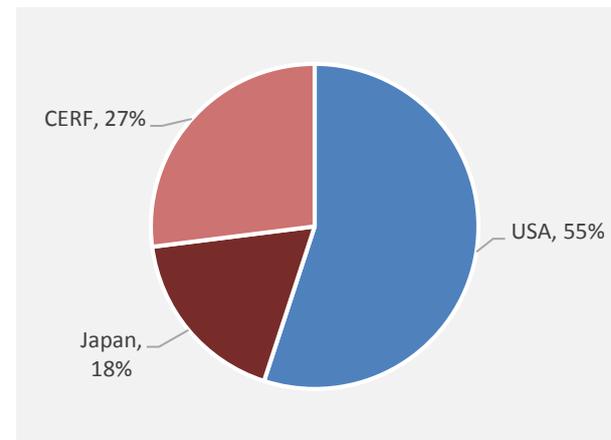


Source: WFP SPRs 2010-15

SO 200746 (2014-2015)



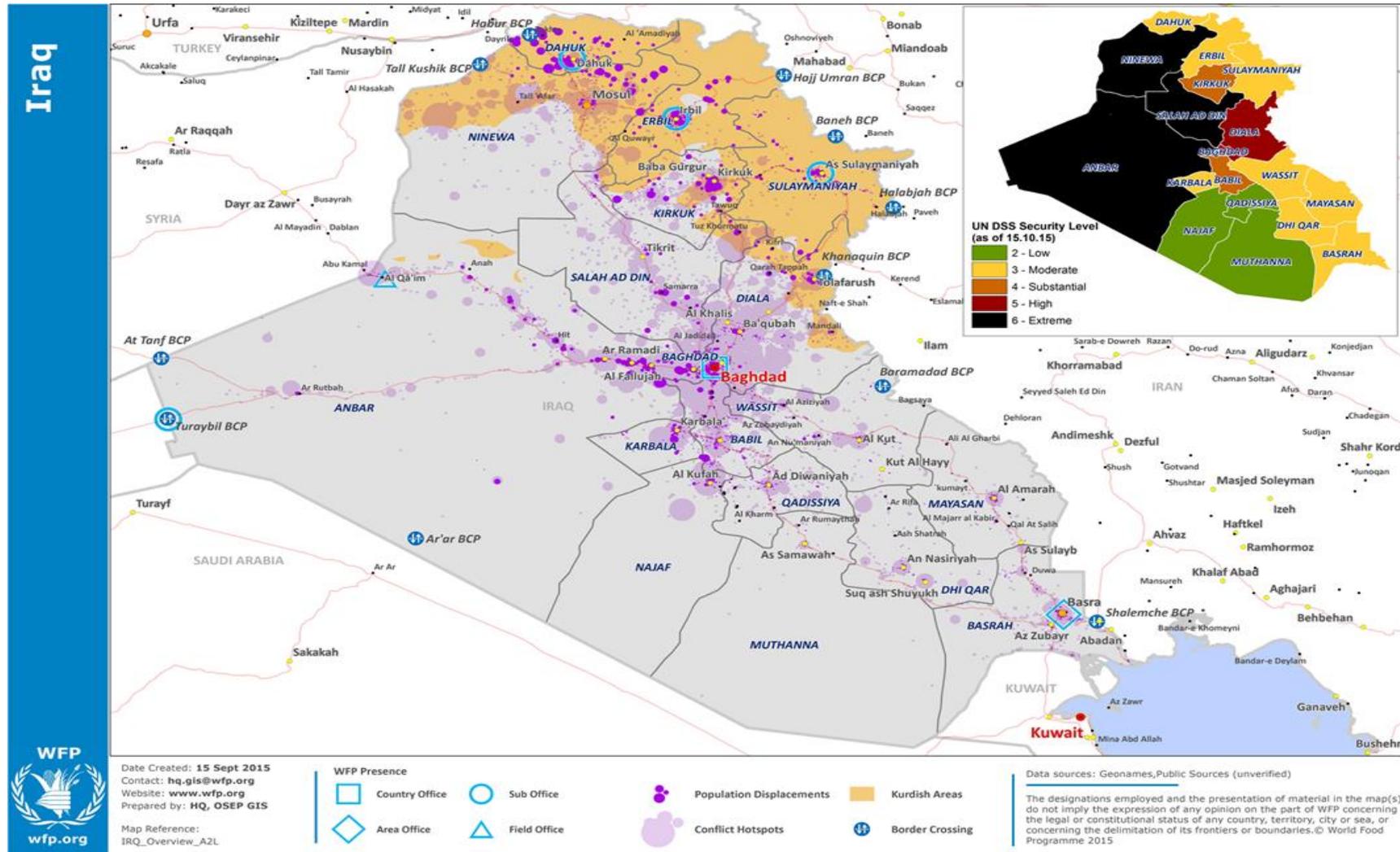
SO 200117 (2010-2012)



Overall Top 5 Donors to the Portfolio:

Saudi Arabia, Iraq, USA, Japan, and Germany

Map of Iraq



Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This country portfolio evaluation (CPE) covered the WFP Iraq country strategy (CS) 2010–2014 and WFP activities for 2010–2015. The Iraq component of the regional emergency operation (EMOP) 200433 covering Syrian refugees was evaluated in 2015¹ and so was not within the scope of this evaluation.

2. As in all CPEs, the evaluation assessed: i) the alignment and strategic positioning of WFP’s country strategy and portfolio; ii) factors and quality of strategic decision-making; and iii) the performance and results of the WFP portfolio. An independent external team undertook the evaluation – in which 305 stakeholders participated² – using mixed methods: review of secondary data and literature;³ review of qualitative and quantitative primary data; and site visits in March and April 2016, including focus group discussions with women and men beneficiaries. Constraints included restricted access to some operational areas and limited institutional memory resulting from staff turnover, which was mitigated by conducting two online surveys.

Context

3. Iraq is classified as an upper-middle-income country,⁴ ranking 121st of 188 countries in the 2015 Human Development Index. However, the sharp drop in global oil prices in 2015 and the ongoing security crisis have had significant repercussions on the national economy and food security. The 2015 Global Hunger Index rated the situation in Iraq as “serious”, ranking the country 58th of 104. Already in 2014, an estimated 22.5 percent of the 35.87 million inhabitants were living below the poverty line.

4. The 2008 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis (CFSVA) estimated that 930,000 people were food-insecure, with an additional 9.4 percent of the population – 2.8 million people – at risk of food insecurity and dependent on food rations from the Government’s Public Distribution System (PDS). Although no comprehensive survey has been conducted since then, a 2015 needs assessment showed that 22 percent of displaced households living in host communities were unable to meet their basic needs.⁵

5. Despite the gradual withdrawal of United States armed forces between 2009 and 2011, national unity and stability failed to materialize. During the evaluation period, political tensions and insecurity prevailed. The presence and impact of the terrorist organization known as Daesh increased, being reversed only recently. A gradual escalation of violence peaked in 2014, causing massive displacements and triggering an abrupt shift in international support to Iraq, from development to humanitarian assistance (Figure 1). Control of large parts of Iraq by Daesh and armed opposition groups displaced 3.2 million people by the end of 2015 with 3 million more people living in Daesh-controlled areas. The 2016 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan indicated that nearly one-third of Iraq’s population – 10 million people – required humanitarian assistance, of whom 2.5 million people required food assistance.⁶

¹ WFP. 2015. Evaluation of WFP’s Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis (2011–2014) with Summary Evaluation Report WFP/EB.A/2015/7-C.

² Of whom 179 were consulted in focus group discussions.

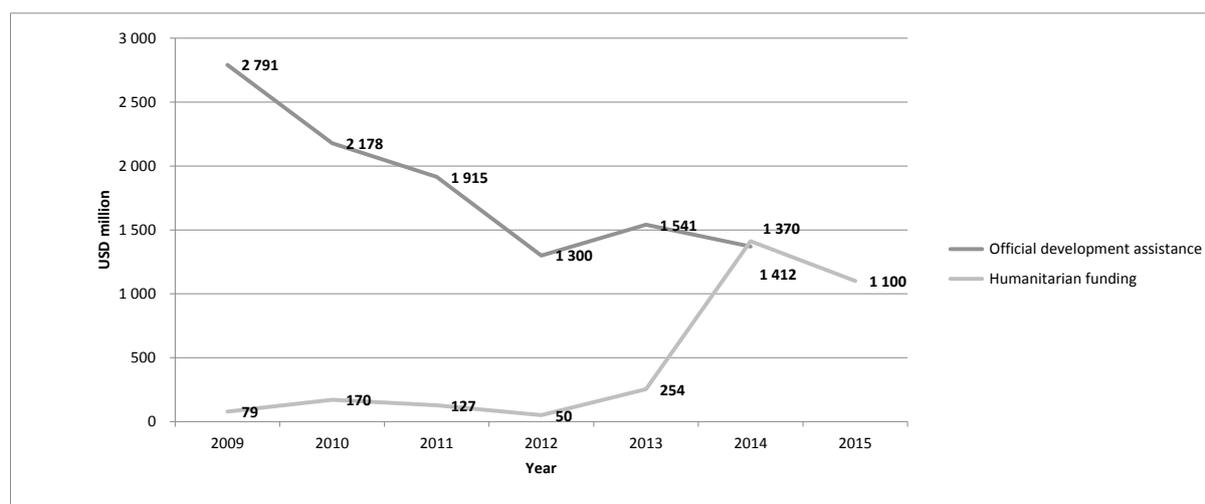
³ Including a brief on the Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Iraq AR/16/08 June 2016.

⁴ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD>

⁵ REACH Initiative. 2015. Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Outside Camps in Iraq.

⁶ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2016. Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan.

Figure 1: International assistance to Iraq, 2010–2015



No data available for official development assistance in 2014/15.
Sources: <https://fts.unocha.org/> <http://data.worldbank.org/>

6. In August 2014, given the scale of the humanitarian situation and its links to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee activated a Level 3 system-wide emergency response – the highest-level – in Iraq to scale up aid.⁷

7. Although Iraqi government forces have liberated some areas formerly held by Daesh, and displaced people have been able to return to certain areas, many people are returning to damaged or destroyed homes and potentially booby-trapped and mined areas with few services. Protection issues are paramount as parties to the conflict regularly violate human rights and international humanitarian law. Indiscriminate bombing, mass executions, abduction, rape, looting and expulsion are common in hard-hit areas, and sectarian violence threatens to tear communities apart.⁶

8. Because of the current conflict, economic stagnation and mass displacements, the quality of education in Iraq has deteriorated significantly. Gender disparity has been identified as one of the major challenges.

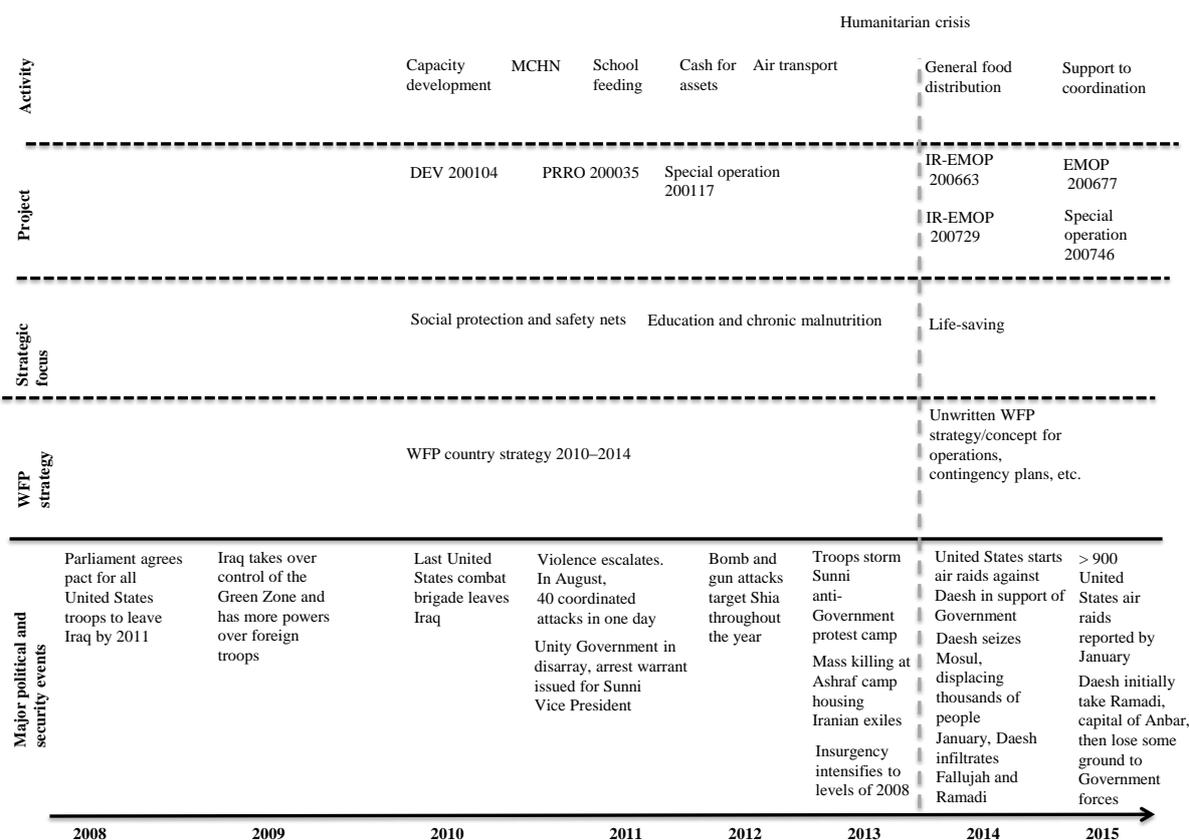
WFP Strategy and Portfolio

9. WFP has been present in Iraq since 1964. Between 2010 and 2015, the WFP portfolio in Iraq consisted of seven operations with a total budget of more than USD 375 million, which underwent a major shift in 2014, as illustrated in Figure 2. Between 2010 and 2015 total portfolio expenditure was approximately USD 354 million, of which most – USD 291 million – was spent on emergency operations. Emergency and relief/recovery operations received 74 and 78 percent respectively of their planned budget requirements, while the development project received only 12 percent. Humanitarian response plans provided the common framework for humanitarian response, with more than 33 percent of total funding for these plans in 2015 going to WFP and the clusters it leads.⁸

⁷ The emergency operation in Iraq was categorized as a WFP Level 3 emergency response on 11 August 2014, extended until 28 February 2017.

⁸ The global food security, logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters.

Figure 2: WFP Iraq country portfolio, 2010–2015



DEV = development project; IR-EMOP = immediate-response EMOP; MCHN = mother-and-child health and nutrition; PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation; SO = special operation.
 Source: Evaluation team.

10. Designed during a period of peace, the country strategy (2010–2014) was guided by the principle that, as Iraq was a relatively prosperous middle-income country, WFP’s role should be to support the authorities in achieving more effective and transparent use of their resources for solutions to food insecurity. WFP’s country office in Iraq initially focused its efforts on development support through two projects⁹ with financial support from the Government of Iraq. The DEV focused on strengthening national social protection systems through reform of the PDS and diversification of social safety nets linked to the productive sector. The long-standing relationship between the PDS and WFP goes back to the “Oil for Food” programme, established by the United Nations in 1995.

11. The PRRO began simultaneously with the DEV in April 2010, and is currently awaiting approval for an extension until December 2016.¹⁰ The main component – school feeding – was suspended in January 2014¹¹ owing to an unresolved dispute over imported high-energy biscuits, which led to the subsequent freezing of government funding transferred to WFP in 2013 to finance a second round of school feeding.¹² Food-

⁹ DEV 200104 “Capacity Development to Reform the Public Distribution System (PDS) and Strengthen Social Safety Nets for Vulnerable Groups in Iraq” and PRRO 200035 “Support for Vulnerable Groups”.

¹⁰ PRRO 200035 was originally planned to cover the two years from April 2010 to March 2012 but has had nine budget revisions. On 19 August 2015 a concept note was endorsed for DEV 200855 to continue WFP’s development activities currently implemented through the PRRO.

¹¹ School feeding continued in some locations using food commodities that were carried over from 2013.

¹² This issue was subject to an investigation by the WFP Office of Inspections and Investigations (report not available to the evaluation team) and an internal audit.

assistance-for-assets activities, via cash-based transfers (CBTs), were implemented during 2011–2013, while MCHN activities targeted children aged 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women.

12. By 2014, the escalating conflict and displacement triggered the launch of two IR-EMOPs,¹³ later folded into a single operation.¹⁴ Two special operations were also launched to cover the work of the WFP-led logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters.

13. Emergency operations were scaled up to respond to escalating needs, from an initial 240,000 displaced people to 2.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps and host communities, and to populations in accessible conflict zones. Life-saving emergency assistance was distributed in the form of family food parcels (FFPs), and immediate-response rations of ready-to-eat food commodities for displaced people on the move. Subsequently, whenever appropriate, commodity vouchers were distributed for the purchase of food commodities at specified retail outlets.

Evaluation Findings

Alignment and strategic positioning

14. The CS was appropriately designed to begin the shift in WFP’s role, towards “enabling” rather than “implementing” (paragraph 10). However, the Government’s PDS system was far from fully functional, its school feeding programmes lacked effectiveness, and the latest CFSVA (2008) had identified pockets of food insecurity. The CS was relevant to Iraq’s humanitarian and development needs at the time and was also coherent with the Government’s national objectives and policies.

15. The evaluation also found that the CS was well-aligned with the WFP Strategic Plan 2008–2013, specifically addressing Strategic Objectives 3, 4 and 5;¹⁵ it remained relevant to the subsequent WFP Strategic Plan 2014–2017, Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 4.

16. The CS was based on analysis from the 2008 CFSVA, national development policies, and consultations with government representatives from Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

17. Overall, the country office worked in close coherence with a number of government ministries, even though the activities themselves fell short of expectations. In recent years, the PDS, run by the Ministry of Trade, has come under national and international scrutiny, and its need of reform has been accepted, in principle, in government circles. The use of a DEV to improve logistics capacity and the internal efficiency of the PDS was therefore well aligned with official objectives, but – in the absence of the necessary government buy-in – failure was almost inevitable.

18. The PDS still lacks efficiency and transparency in its functioning, and the need for national social protection and safety net programmes remains vital. WFP’s recent use of CBTs to support IDPs has been well received by all levels of the Government; responding stakeholders consistently agreed that wherever possible, this modality is the best way

¹³ IR-EMOP 200663 “Emergency Food Assistance for IDPs in Iraq as a Result of the Fighting in Fallujah and Ramadi”; IR-EMOP 200729 “Emergency Food Assistance for IDPs in Iraq as a Result of the Fighting in Mosul City, Ninewa Governorate”.

¹⁴ EMOP 200677 “Emergency Assistance to Populations Affected by the Al-Anbar Crisis”.

¹⁵ Strategic Objective 3 – Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situations; Strategic Objective 4 – Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition; and Strategic Objective 5 – Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchase.

forward.

19. With the onset of Daesh-related insecurity, WFP successfully realigned the portfolio to respond to humanitarian needs and increased its engagement with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, responsible for assisting IDPs.

20. In a difficult operating environment, with some United Nations agencies reporting that the United Nations Country Team was not functioning at its maximum potential, WFP managed to organize its own strategic alignments to enable it to function. Through the well-respected Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), WFP teamed up with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and, more recently, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to provide three-day immediate-response rations to recently displaced people. WFP is also working well with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on promoting the adoption of a cash-based response, where appropriate. WFP's recent development of a card for the System for Cash Operations (SCOPE), through which transfers from multiple organizations can be made, is an important step in this direction, in line with beneficiary preferences and likely to prove more cost-efficient and flexible.

Driving factors and quality of strategic decision-making

21. With the onset of the recent crisis, and dwindling donor support for development initiatives in Iraq, the CS became somewhat redundant. The country office redirected its focus appropriately, towards emergency operations, making the best use of WFP's comparative advantage in Iraq to meet short-term humanitarian needs. As an organization with proven logistical capabilities, WFP's delivery of food supplies on a large scale across a wide geographical area falls well within its mandate and corporate expertise. Adding to this expertise a network of local and international cooperating partners, and utilizing strategically provisioned warehouses to reach areas to which WFP staff and vehicles had no access improved WFP's coverage considerably.

22. The evaluation found a significant gap in the evidence base used to inform decisions on WFP support: since the start of major displacements in late 2014, neither a comprehensive assessment of national vulnerability nor an in-depth food security or household economic survey of displaced people has been conducted. The gap of eight years between the last CFSVA and the one currently under preparation in conjunction with the Ministry of Health is considered too long, even if understandable given the security constraints and existing government capacity.¹⁶ It would have been expected that at some point, the global Food Security Cluster, led by WFP, would have undertaken an emergency food security assessment.

23. Targeting of a mobile population, especially an urban one, was a challenge. Discontent with the targeting approach adopted by WFP was found among government and cooperating partners. Initially, blanket food assistance was provided based on status, i.e. to all IDPs holding PDS cards. However, in 2015, demographic targeting criteria¹⁷ based on localized assessments, such as a rapid food security assessment conducted by the multi-agency REACH Initiative,¹⁸ were applied to select the IDPs who were eligible for WFP assistance. Although the approach was refined over time, it did not account for socio-economic differences within IDP communities, cultural aspects

¹⁶ A UNICEF multiple-indicator cluster survey was planned for mid-2014 but the Central Statistics Office reportedly did not have sufficient capacity to undertake a CFSVA at the same time.

¹⁷ Initial eligibility criteria were holders of PDS cards, and households: with no adults of working age – 18–60 years; with one or more mentally or physically handicapped members; headed by a woman, especially a widow; and/or with limited or no access to employment.

¹⁸ REACH initiative. July 2015. Rapid Food Security Assessment of IDPs and Host Communities – Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

regarding women's ability to work outside the household, or regional differences within Iraq itself. While recognizing the challenges, the evaluation considered that a needs-based targeting approach should have been initiated earlier.

24. To its credit, the country office took the necessary major strategic decisions – despite the limited reliable and up-to-date evidence – when scaling up rapidly from relatively small-scale operations to respond to a Level 3 emergency. Inputs were gathered from a range of major stakeholders, and technical advice from Headquarters on targeting was sought and followed. Nevertheless, these processes could have been improved with greater involvement, and therefore ownership, of partners in the decisions being made.

25. Considerable staffing shortages, including in core senior positions,¹⁹ high staff turnover and delays in deployment during the emergency response had impacts on operational efficiency and contributed to a lack of consistency in approaches and decision-making. Of particular importance, a lack of essential staff in vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) positions limited the country office's analytical and monitoring capacity and support to evidence-based decision-making. Third-party monitoring was used as a supplement, especially but not exclusively in inaccessible areas. However, reporting was unsatisfactory in terms of regularity and quality and could not be used to inform programme decisions.²⁰

Portfolio performance and results

26. The performance and results of the portfolio were assessed mainly against output data covering the period 2012–2015, because of inconsistencies and gaps in outcome data, lack of baselines for emergency operations, and an overall lack of reliable data for 2010–2012. Programme performance was mixed (Figure 3). In the early part of the evaluation period, WFP and its partners assisted the Iraqi population in all the governorates with the greatest needs, albeit to a lesser extent than originally planned, because of operational challenges and funding shortfalls.

27. *Emergency operations* generally delivered higher outputs than anticipated, despite constraints in access, and security issues. Owing to delays in setting up an operational system, CBT coverage was lower than planned, reaching 66 percent of planned beneficiaries. In contrast, the coverage of cash-for-work activities in the PRRO exceeded plans, at 118 percent.

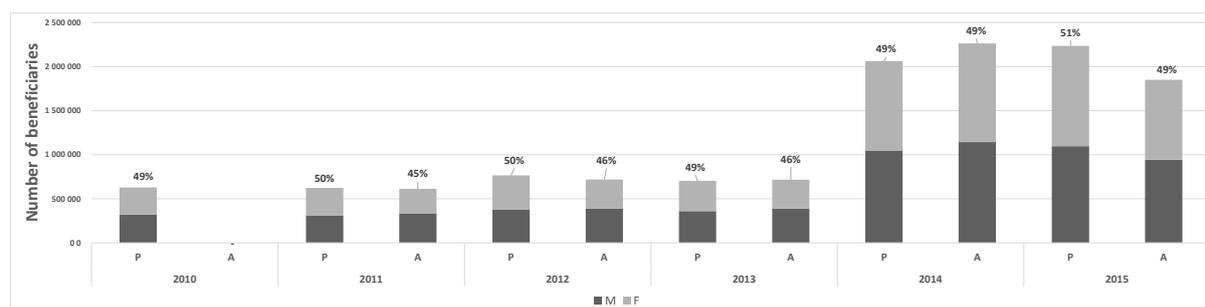
28. Towards the end of 2015, WFP began a six-month cash transfer pilot project for 11,000 IDPs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Following the pilot, key informant interviews with all actors and beneficiaries confirmed that cash would be the preferred modality for future responses in Iraq, rather than vouchers or in-kind food distributions.

29. The tonnage of commodities distributed was initially lower than planned, owing to access constraints. This shortfall was rectified in 2015, when special nutritional products for children were added to RRM rations, pushing distributions to exceed planned targets by 40 percent, but reaching fewer beneficiaries.

¹⁹ For example, in Emergency Coordinator, Deputy Country Director, Head of Programme, VAM and M&E positions.

²⁰ It is too early to assess whether investments in the training of third-party monitoring vendors by the country office's M&E officer – an international staff member – will be effective.

Figure 3: Total planned versus actual beneficiaries, Iraq portfolio 2010–2015



A = actual; P = planned; F = women/girls; M = men/boys.

Sources: 2010–2015 Standard Project Reports (SPRs).

30. As the first line of response for displaced populations on the move, the RRM was highly valued by a broad range of stakeholders for its immediate impact. WFP coordinated its food response with UNICEF, which provided water and hygiene kits, while UNFPA started to provide dignity kits towards the end of the evaluation period.²¹ The distribution of family food parcels (FFPs) was planned to complement the PDS ration. In general, focus group discussions with beneficiaries reported satisfaction with the FFP ration, although there were regular complaints about the quality/type of rice. Third-party monitoring reported, and evaluation interviews with partners and beneficiaries confirmed, that the distribution process was good and waiting times were acceptable. Beneficiaries particularly appreciated the regularity of the food assistance compared with one-off distributions from other organizations.

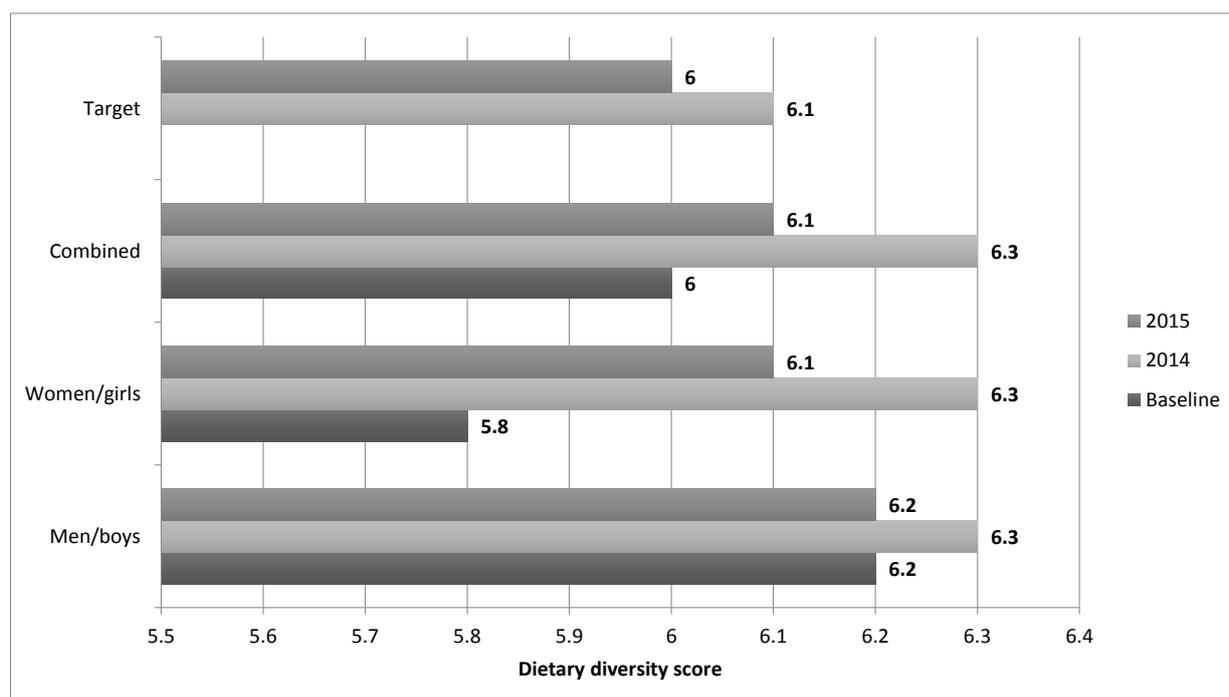
31. In 2014 and 2015, IDP dietary diversity scores exceeded targets (Figure 4). Data collected on coping strategies suggested that WFP beneficiaries were less likely to use negative coping strategies,²² indicating – to some extent – the effectiveness of food assistance to IDPs. The percentage of households with poor food consumption scores remained low and within target levels, although this apparently positive outcome masked discrepancies between female- and male-headed households and should also be treated with caution because baseline and monitoring data were not comparable.²³

²¹ <http://www.save-iraq.info/response-plan/rapid-response-mechanism/>

²² 2014 SPR for EMOP 200677.

²³ These data cover recipients of FFPs and vouchers.

Figure 4: IDPs' dietary diversity scores, 2014–2015



Sources: 2014 and 2015 SPRs for EMOP 200677.

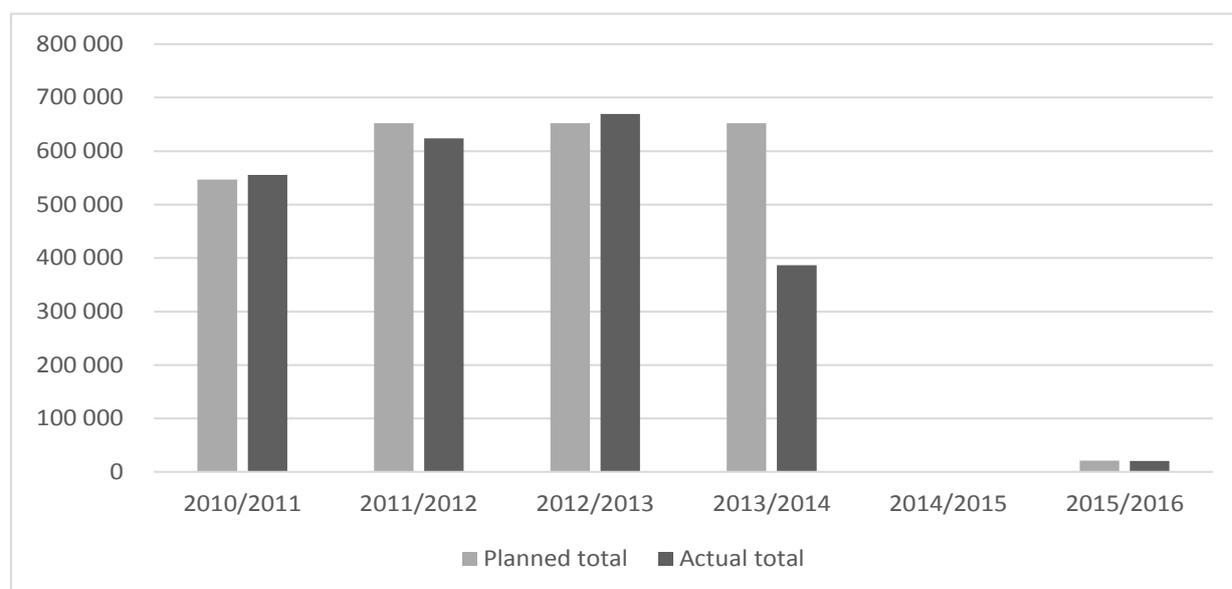
32. *MCHN activities* did not reach expected output or outcome targets. Recovery rates of 70 percent in 2012 and 69 percent in 2013, and default rates of 29 percent in 2012 and 31 percent in 2013 for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition did not meet Sphere targets.²⁴ Reasons identified for high default rates included poor awareness among mothers and caregivers, difficulty in reaching health centres from remote rural areas, and poor acceptance of Plumpy – the food provided – by children.

33. *School feeding* activities were on track until their suspension in 2014, as shown in Figure 5. In 2011/2012, the increase in school enrolments was higher in WFP-assisted districts than at the national level,²⁵ and anecdotal information collected from teachers during field visits stressed the improved attention and performance of children associated with the consumption of high-energy biscuits. The first phase of a pilot project in early 2015 reached more than 20,000 primary school students in Thi-Qar governorate. Using a locally purchased food basket, the project showed some initial positive effects on school attendance and was well-appreciated by students, parents and the local administration.

²⁴ Sphere targets are > 75 percent recovery and < 15 percent default.

²⁵ 2011/2012 SPRs.

Figure 5: Actual versus planned school feeding beneficiaries, 2010–2015



Sources: SPRs for PRRO 200035.

34. Weak institutional memory and high staff turnover limited the evaluation’s ability to assess the efficiency of technical assistance provided through the school feeding programme. However, it was clear that this assistance did not achieve the intended results. Despite many efforts and duly implemented capacity development activities, there was no appropriation of a nationally owned programme by the Ministry of Education, nor was a hand-over strategy developed.

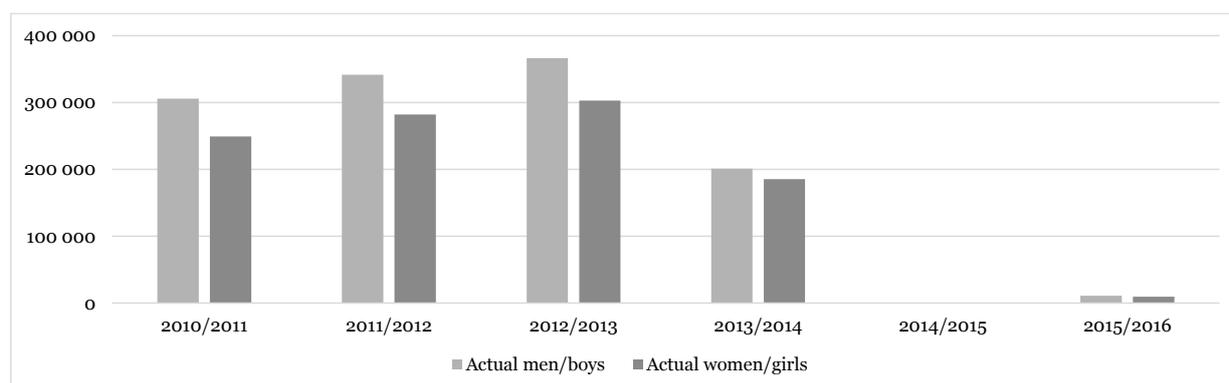
35. Successful *capacity development* requires full government commitment to reform, a detailed work plan, donor support, and the availability of experienced staff with a range of expertise. Interviews with key stakeholders confirmed that none of these were in place for the PDS reform. It is therefore not surprising that the CS objectives, and related efforts to improve the efficiency of supply chain management through training and technology transfer, proved unrealistic and ineffective.

36. In September 2013, on behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, WFP negotiated USD 1.8 million from the Government as a co-financing mechanism to strengthen the authorities’ ability to target vulnerable groups better. No outcomes were reported. The Ministry expressed strong interest in the resumption of capacity development activities, particularly in vulnerability analysis to improve the targeting of beneficiaries for vocational training activities. This could be a good opportunity for WFP collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other United Nations agencies with this specific expertise.

37. *Gender*. Earlier programme design, implementation and advocacy lacked gender analysis and failed to address gender gaps, for example, in the attendance of girls in the school feeding programme (Figure 6). From January 2015, however, there was greater focus on gender, with the routing of all documentation through the communication with communities and gender officer²⁶ to ensure that gender, accountability and protection considerations were taken into account.

²⁶ In January 2015 the communication with communities officer started working with beneficiaries to understand information gaps and enhance communication with beneficiaries.

Figure 6: Gender disparity among school feeding beneficiaries, 2010–2015



Sources: 2011–2015 SPRs for PRRO 200035.

38. *Efficiency.* During the period covered by this CPE, the country office procured internationally a total of 191,400 mt²⁷ of food commodities and distributed CBTs for a total value of USD 80,871,893. A high degree of expertise was utilized to achieve a good geographical spread of commodity suppliers, and flexibility in the pricing of commodities, balancing delivery terms – delivery at place – and types of commodity with the need to respond in a timely and efficient manner to demands from the field. However, complaints were received from beneficiaries regarding the distribution of items that had passed their sell-by dates, notably in the immediate-response rations.

39. The overall net cost per ton of food commodities fluctuated between approximately USD 800 and USD 1,000.²⁸ These figures are 30–40 percent above WFP’s corporate average. The large share of more expensive FFPs and immediate-response rations – 82 percent of total tonnage – and the delivery at place trade terms explain the mark up, which the evaluation team found to be justified: without these terms, commodities would not have been deliverable.

40. The decision to switch from pre-packed food parcels for the FFP to a break-bulk formula²⁹ was a positive move, entailing a 15 percent saving. Given the volatile situation prevailing in Iraq from mid-2014, the application of delivery at place trade terms was also prudent, leaving responsibility for delivery of the food consignments with the supplier. The total distribution costs for EMOP 200677 were USD 209.52/mt, close to the WFP corporate average.

41. CBTs proved to be more cost-efficient than food (Table 1). The direct operational costs of distributing a net value of USD 100 of CBTs were between three and seven times lower than the costs of distributing an equal net value of food. CBT distribution costs for EMOP 200677 showed a saving of almost 31 percent – from USD 11.55 to USD 7.84 – compared with similar costs under PRRO 200035. This reduction reflected measures taken by the country office to control costs.

²⁷ Tonnage extracted from the procurement returns recorded by OPS at WFP’s Rome Headquarters. This figure includes consignments on order but not yet delivered, and consignments afloat or in transit, and may therefore differ from the distributed tonnages reported in SPRs.

²⁸ Excluding IR-EMOP 200667, for which only a very small tonnage – 550 mt – was activated, the food cost per ton varied between USD 800 and USD 900 according to WFP procurement extracts.

²⁹ Break-bulk formula refers to the packaging of food in small, separable units.

TABLE 1: COSTING BY OPERATION, 2010–2015				
	PRRO 200035	IR-EMOP 200663	EMOP 200677	IR-EMOP 200729
Food commodities distributed (<i>mt</i>)	13 570	756	151 609	550
Total food cost (<i>USD</i>)	10 780 639	579 965	129 745 028	549 319
Food cost per ton (<i>USD</i>)	794	767	856	999
Total operational cost excluding food cost (<i>USD</i>)	8 428 442	222 062	31 796 361	362 443
Total direct cost per USD 100 net value of food distributed (<i>USD</i>)	78.19	38.29	24.51	65.98
Net value of CBTs distributed (<i>USD</i>)	8 931 430		71 773 978	
Bank and distribution costs (<i>USD</i>)	1 031 270		5 622 499	
Total direct cost per USD 100 net value of CBTs distributed (<i>USD</i>)	11.55		7.84	

Source: Analysis of WFP procurement and COMPAS extracts – SPRs and financial information supplied by WFP Iraq country office.

42. *Humanitarian principles.* WFP operated in accordance with its commitments to the humanitarian principles in providing emergency assistance to all displaced people, irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity. However, reported concerns about unequal access to new PDS cards for an unknown number of IDPs from certain minority groups warrant stronger attention from WFP to ensure that humanitarian principles are upheld. Efforts were made to ensure the safety of beneficiaries when collecting WFP assistance. Operations were implemented in cooperation with government counterparts in Baghdad and the authorities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, while maintaining operational independence, sometimes implementing changes – such as the recent targeting exercise – without the Government’s full agreement. However, access to certain occupied areas was prohibited to humanitarian agencies and their local partners.

Conclusions

43. Overall, WFP interventions during the evaluation period were well aligned with emergency humanitarian needs, and the policies and objectives of the Government of Iraq and donors in addressing ongoing social safety net and development needs. WFP used its comparative advantage and large logistics expertise to support a significant number of IDPs across a broad geographical area. It positioned itself strategically alongside its United Nations counterparts, both responding to immediate humanitarian needs and promoting and introducing more flexible support modalities.

44. Safety net activities were less successful, being placed on hold or falling short of targets. Notably, the suspension of school feeding activities had a negative effect on programme results, and on WFP’s organizational reputation, among both the Government of Iraq and other operational stakeholders. The shift in modality from in-kind support towards cash-based interventions was appreciated by the Government and the United Nations agencies that WFP partnered. Further advances with the SCOPE credit card system need to be pursued to consolidate WFP’s strong position in the cash-based assistance sector.

45. The strategic shift from capacity development activities that were no longer feasible towards Level 3 emergency interventions required that recent decision-making

become more operational. In this respect, the country office showed itself to be both flexible and solution-focused. Scaling up from a relatively small country operation to respond to a complex Level 3 humanitarian crisis was not easy. Issues were raised regarding the demographically based targeting process, and the inability to follow up on short-term deployments by appointing long-term staff of the appropriate calibre and experience in a timely manner.

46. Shortage of funding, lack of government ownership of the necessary reform agenda, and suspension of school feeding all contributed to the early curtailment of WFP's capacity development activities, leaving the 2010–2014 CS somewhat redundant. As usual in emergencies, decreasing levels of available funding negatively affected the amount of support provided to affected people. The 2016 CFSVA and the suggested WFP beneficiary assessment should provide a clearer basis for future interventions and help to satisfy donor requirements.

Recommendations

47. **Recommendation 1:** With support from the regional bureau, the country office should start preparing the next CS before the end of 2016. The strategy should acknowledge the protracted nature of the conflict in Iraq and predict displacements over the next three years. It should incorporate a mid-term review process to track progress and ensure relevancy. The following should be included:

- i) a package of activities that includes continuation of WFP's ongoing support to IDPs and emergency life-saving activities – immediate-response rations – and continued management of the WFP-led clusters;
- ii) reoriented capacity development interventions for targeted safety net programmes in food-insecure areas. Activities should be coordinated with those of other major actors, with a new emphasis on vocational training and cash transfer modalities, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The possible regeneration of school feeding and MCHN programmes should be considered, based on the adjustments recommended below;
- iii) WFP support that is based on national and localized partnerships with government agencies, cooperating partners and United Nations agencies, and initiated only when a robust resource mobilization strategy is in place;
- iv) a formal hand-over/exit strategy indicating timelines for the transfer of responsibilities in all sectors, including IDP food assistance and long-term social safety net programmes and incorporating an assessment of the constraints and potential benefits of PDS reform for national food security. Any future initiatives need to be funded by the Government with WFP providing enabling support; and
- v) thorough integration of gender considerations into all programmes through comprehensive gender analysis. For example, gender disparity in terms of girls' attendance at primary school, should be targeted and addressed in any future school feeding interventions, possibly through a combination of in-school feeding support and conditional family take-home rations for girls.

48. **Recommendation 2:** In addition to the planned CFSVA, the country office should undertake, prior to the end of 2016, a detailed gender-disaggregated assessment of beneficiary livelihoods, food security, nutrition and economic status, which will ensure that support goes to the right beneficiaries, and provide:

- i) revised targeting criteria to be incorporated into new programme design, replacing the current IDP targeting criteria; and
- ii) a basis – when combined with the upcoming 2016 CFSVA – for future evidence-based programming and improved decision-making regarding targeting.

49. **Recommendation 3:** As a matter of utmost urgency, WFP Headquarters needs to resolve issues preventing the resumption of school feeding activities that are currently on hold. If the school feeding programme is reactivated, WFP should strengthen its support to national and local authorities for a government-led programme. This should be based on district-level targeting according to identified areas of food insecurity in inner cities and rural areas, and be implemented using a locally procured variable food basket appropriate to each location. Future school feeding programmes need to be more results-oriented, and incorporate a long-term strategy for attaining programme sustainability.

50. **Recommendation 4:** For reasons of cost-effectiveness and the overwhelming preference of stakeholders, by the end of 2016, with support from the regional bureau and Headquarters, the country office should move from FFPs and vouchers to the use of cash transfers as the transfer modality, wherever feasible. A gender and protection analysis of the move towards cash should be undertaken as a prerequisite. Investments should be made in efforts to establish WFP as a central figure in the cash-based assistance sector, including recruitment of staff with relevant CBT experience, analysis of lessons learned to date, and finalization of technology and support systems for the SCOPE card.

51. **Recommendation 5:** The country office should prioritize the recruitment and placement of national and international staff to fill core positions, including in VAM and M&E, as soon as possible. WFP's Human Resources Division should consider a review of corporate human resources recruitment and deployment practices in a Level 3 environment such as Iraq. The possibility of further fast-tracking of administrative policies and procedures should also be explored.

52. **Recommendation 6:** By the end of 2016, the country office should formulate and implement a more communicative and inclusive participatory approach to partnerships with the Government, cooperating partners and beneficiaries. A quarterly review process should be initiated to ensure that all relevant WFP staff receive and act on beneficiary feedback, particularly on the quality and sell-by dates of commodities provided, and that beneficiary feedback is used to improve programme activities. The management of communications between WFP and different levels of government structures in the field needs to be reviewed and responsibilities clearly defined.

53. **Recommendation 7:** At the corporate level, WFP should ensure that all future Level 3 responses have adequate M&E and VAM capacity in place to ensure the availability of national food security mapping and analysis on which beneficiary targeting and strategic and operational decision-making can be based.

54. With regional bureau support, the country office should ensure consistent and robust internal monitoring capacity that enables more thorough assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of support provided. Building on experience, it should make the most effective use of the expertise of WFP staff, together with third-party monitoring, to ensure continual improvement of programme activities.

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation Features

1. The United Nations World Food Programme's (WFP) series of Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) focus on the operations of the organization at a country level and the full range of its activities there during a specific period. The CPEs address three key areas:

- Question 1: Alignment and Strategic Positioning of WFP's Country Strategy and Portfolio;
- Question 2: Factors and Quality of Strategic Decision Making;
- Question 3: Performance and Results of the WFP Portfolio.

2. WFP activities in the Republic of Iraq (referred to hereafter as Iraq) from 2010 to 2015 were selected for a CPE to address these principal questions¹. The CPE reviewed all WFP activities² in the country over this period, covering three emergency operations (EMOPs),³ one protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO), one Development Programme (DEV) and two Special Operations (SOs), with costs incurred as of the end of 2015 of approximately USD354 million. The CPE also considered the WFP Iraq Country Strategy (CS) 2010-2014 document, and the USD17 million contribution received from Iraq's Ministry of Education (MoE) during November 2012⁴ towards the school feeding programme, and lessons that can be drawn from that partnership.

3. The resultant conclusions and recommendations will assist WFP's Country Office (CO), as primary user of the report, as it develops its next CS, operational goals and objectives, and reassesses its strategic partnerships in the country. Other key users will be the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV), WFP's Regional Bureau (RB) in Cairo, HQ divisions of Programme and Policy, Performance Management and Monitoring, and Emergency Preparedness and Response, and WFP's senior management and Executive Board.

4. The evaluation itself took place between January and July 2016, including a briefing visit to WFP in Rome and an inception mission to Baghdad and Erbil undertaken in February by the Team Leader (TL) and the OEV Research Analyst (to establish links between the TL, the Country Director (CD), and in-country staff, and other stakeholders). The evaluation field mission took place in March/April 2016, with reporting due to be completed by August 2016. In mid-June 2016, WFP held an in-country learning workshop to present a draft summary of the CPE results and recommendations. Additional quality assurance for the reporting was provided remotely by a KonTerra consultant.

5. The independent team of external evaluators consisted of three international and two Iraqi national consultants on the field mission, with two further home-based international consultants specializing in certain technical aspects working closely with them. The mission was able to visit four WFP offices and sub-offices (Baghdad, Erbil,

¹ The evaluation Terms of Reference covered up to mid-2015, however when considered relevant and important the evaluation team looked at activities implemented towards the end of 2015.

² The Regional EMOP 200433 was evaluated in 2015 by OEV under WFP's Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis, and is not part of the scope of this evaluation

³ Two are Immediate Response EMOPs. The emergency under EMOP 200677 has been categorized as Level 3 (L3).

⁴ Registered in 2013 as a Trust Fund. In December 2013 a second tranche of USD17 million was transferred to WFP to finance a second round of school feeding. However the money has been frozen because of a dispute between WFP and the MoE around the expiry date of imported biscuits. This element of the operation was subject to an investigation from WFP Office of Inspections and Investigations.

Dohuk and Suleymeniya⁵), where the majority of activities had taken place, and consulted with numerous Government partners, co-operating partners (CPs), donors, beneficiaries, WFP staff, and other key informants. Contacts were also made with stakeholders based outside of the country.

6. A mixed methods approach used four main sources of information to augment the limited accessibility of primary data, ensure validity and reliability of results, and deliver credible and evidence based recommendations. These sources were a review of literature, and secondary data, collection of qualitative and quantitative primary data, and site visits, including focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries. The two Arabic speaking female members of the evaluation team (ET) were able to conduct women-only FGDs to collect their perspectives in their own language. The ET ensured that all findings were analyzed to identify any gender implications. Two electronic surveys were also undertaken with current and former WFP staff and members of the Humanitarian Country Team's (HCT) Food Security cluster and Government counterparts.⁶ Through these methods, the ET secured the participation of 305 stakeholders—179 of which were in focus group discussions.

7. Certain constraints were faced during the mission due to operational areas being off limits for expatriate staff because of the security situation, although the national consultants were able to visit project sites and beneficiaries in Wassit, Thi Qar and Diyala governorates. Limited institutional memory was available regarding the CS decision-making processes in 2010 and activities during 2012/2013, as few WFP staff or governmental counterparts remained from that period.

1.2. Country Context

8. Iraq has a total population of 35.87 million (2015)⁷ and is bordered by Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, Iran and Turkey. Iraq is administered through 19 Governorates, three of which are in the Kurdish Region of Iraq ruled by the Kurdish Regional Government. Iraq ranks 121st out of 188 countries in the 2015 UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) and 161st out of 168 countries in the 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International.⁸ The United Nations' gender inequality index of 2014 ranks Iraq 123rd out of 155 countries.⁹ The 2015 Global Hunger Index rated Iraq as serious, ranking 58th of 104. In 2014, an estimated 22.5 percent of the 35.87 million inhabitants were already living below the poverty line.

9. Economy and Development. Iraq was highly regarded in the region some twenty years ago for its public sector management capabilities, its growth strategy for an emerging economy and its social welfare programmes. However, years of war since 2003 and international isolation have severely damaged Iraq's economic institutions and infrastructure. The country has the world's fifth largest oil reserves but the sharp drop in global oil prices in 2015 and the ongoing security crisis have caused a significant decline in its oil revenue, with repercussions for the national economy.¹⁰

10. Iraq's gross national income of USD15,100 per capita (2014) classifies it as an upper-middle-income country (MIC).¹¹ The country reached this MIC status in 2011, but by 2013 its development profile was characterized by significant spatial and

⁵ Staff at the southern office of Basra were interviewed remotely.

⁶ This documentation is available in the CPE Inception Report.

⁷ <http://data.worldbank.org/country/iraq>

⁸ <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015/#map-container>

⁹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

¹⁰ Iraq's Fiscal and Economic Situation, UNAMI Joint Analysis Unit, September 2015, measured in purchasing power parity.

¹¹ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD>

demographic inequalities, many of which were acknowledged in Iraq’s National Development Plan (NDP) 2010-2014.

11. In recent years the agricultural sector has slipped from being the second largest contributor to Iraq’s economy, providing eight percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) to being the eighth largest contributor generating only four percent of Iraq’s GDP.¹² The sector is highly subsidized in order to meet the requirements of the Public Distribution System (PDS), and as such any reforms of the PDS will lead to a contraction of the agricultural sector. Despite the fact that Iraq’s rural population (eleven million people¹³) produces nearly one third of all in-country available food, it has a disproportionately large number of poor and food insecure persons. Nearly 70 percent of the food insecure population is located in rural communities where agricultural wages are the lowest across all sectors.¹⁴

12. Food Security and Nutrition. The 2008 CFSVA estimated that 930,000 people were food insecure. The findings of this survey also indicated that an additional 9.4 percent of the population (then 2.8 million people) was highly dependent upon the PDS food ration, without which they could be expected to become food insecure. In May 2015, REACH ¹⁵ released an assessment report commissioned by WFP in support of a programmatic shift to food assistance.¹⁶ Preliminary results showed that 22 percent of displaced households residing in host communities interviewed said they were not able to meet their basic needs. Of this, food (72 percent) was the most unfulfilled need in these households. Food consumption scores (FCS) were generally lower in the central and southern governorates than in the Kurdish region and neighboring governorates. A combination of factors, including widespread use of coping strategies by IDP households, high rates of unemployment, and low incomes indicated that current levels of food consumption were unlikely to be affordable in the longer term.¹⁷

13. The 2011 Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) provided information on the mortality and nutrition situation in the Republic of Iraq, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Mortality and Nutrition Indicators 2011

	National	Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI)
Under 5 Mortality	37/1,000 live births	32/1,000 live births
Underweight	8.5%	6.7%
Stunting	22.6%	5.4%
Wasting	7.4%	5.0%

Source: UNICEF, 2011, Multi-indicator Cluster Survey of Iraq

14. The data suggests that the level of stunting is of medium public health significance according to the WHO classification¹⁸ while for wasting it is classified as ‘poor’.

¹² GOI Central Statistics Organization (CSO): Gross Domestic Product & National Income Provisional Estimate 2014

¹³ World Bank 2015.

¹⁴ FAO, 2014, Food Security Monitoring System in the Kurdish Region of Iraq.

¹⁵ Present in Iraq since November 2012, the REACH initiative has contributed to inform the humanitarian response to the refugee and IDP crises, conducting household and community-level assessments.

¹⁶ This built on the 16 Emergency Food and Nutrition Assessments undertaken in co-operation with FAO which started in July 2014.

¹⁷ REACH Initiative, 2016, Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment of Internally Displaced People outside camps in Iraq.

¹⁸ WHO, 1995.

However, perhaps more significant is the difference between the national and Kurdish regional indicators.

15. Education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that prior to the first Gulf War in 1991 Iraq had one of the best educational performances in the region. The primary school Gross Enrolment Rate was 100 percent and literacy levels were high.¹⁹

16. In 2011, eight out of every nine children of primary school age in Iraq (89 percent) were attending primary or secondary schools. In urban areas, 93 percent of children attended school compared with 84 percent in rural areas. The school attendance rate of children was higher in line with household income levels: 97 percent of children from the most affluent households attended school and 95 percent of children of comparatively well off households, 93 percent of children of intermediate households, compared to 89 percent of children from poor households and 77 percent from poorest households. Boys had a higher attendance rate than girls (93 percent and 85 percent respectively).²⁰

17. Due to the current conflict, economic stagnation and displacement of millions of people, the quality of education in Iraq has deteriorated significantly.²¹ Surveys conducted in 2011 indicated that around nine out of 10 children enrolled and attended primary school, but only four of them completed the full course. Every year, 450,000 primary school children either did not complete their primary education on time or dropped out of school altogether.

18. Gender and Equality. According to the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 Islam is the main source of legislation and laws that contradict it cannot be enacted. However, personal issues such as marriage, divorce and inheritance can be governed by the rules of each religious group. Iraq acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1986, though it maintains reservations to several articles.²² Gender-based violence is relatively common²³ and some 76 percent of reported cases of gender-based violence involve intimate partner violence. One of every four people displaced is an adolescent girl or woman of reproductive age.

19. Women make up 25 percent of the membership of the Lower House of Parliament and, while measures are in place to encourage their participation in politics, none of the 19 Provincial Governors of Iraq is a woman. Iraq does not have an official Gender Policy and although there is a Women's Ministry it is underfunded. The 2013-2017 NDP does include a few gender targets, but also reports that the Government does not expect to achieve gender equality in the near term due to cultural and social factors.

20. A gender disparity has been identified as one of the major challenges faced by the education system in Iraq. In 2011, the MICS indicated that with a gender parity of 0.92 the number of boys attending urban primary schools was higher than the number of girls. This indicator dropped to 0.86 in rural areas. The Iraqi NDP 2013-2017 stated, "the education system has failed to bridge the gap in gender-based enrolment. The net enrolment rate (NER) for males in primary education reached 96 percent, compared

¹⁹ The most updated primary gross enrolment ratio is 107 (2007-2010 data). Source: UNICEF report, 2015.

²⁰ Iraq Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2011, Preliminary Report, Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO), Ministry of Health, UNICEF, April 2012.

²¹ In particular for secondary school age children: only 52% attendance for boys and 44% for girls. Barriers to secondary school attendance, IOM, May 2013.

²² UNICEF, 2011, Iraq, MENA Gender Equality profile, Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa.

²³ The 2014 UNDP Human Development Report records that the percentage of women and men aged 15-49 that considers a husband is justified to hit or beat his wife is high at 51.2 percent

with 88 percent for females.”²⁴ In addition to access to basic education, girls between the ages of 10 and 14 report needing to learn more about health and nutrition. Up to 87 percent of girls in this age group say they lack information about different aspects of their health and 60 percent said that they did not have enough information about nutrition.²⁵

21. With increased insecurity and overburdened infrastructure, women’s status in Iraq continues to face increased decline. Years of war and political instability resulted in an increased number of female-headed households (FHHs) where, by 2011, one of every 10 families was headed by a woman.²⁶ These families face an additional burden of securing economic means. In 2010, 71 percent of women in FHHs reported being able to work but unable to find employment,²⁷ making these families especially vulnerable to food insecurity. According to one study conducted in 2012 on FHHs in Baghdad, the daily struggle of women in these families “revolves around obtaining food and paying for shelter, schooling and medical care.”²⁸

22. Government Strategies. Iraq’s National Development Strategy (NDS) 2007-2010 and its National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (2009) were taken into account by WFP during the formulation of its 2010-2014 CS. The 2013-2017 NDP describes economic, social and environmental goals that aim to drive the country towards its key developmental vision.²⁹ Perhaps more importantly the Poverty Reduction Strategy 2009 delineates a number of key perspectives for poverty alleviation, including higher income for low-paid workers, upgraded education, and a social safety net for the poor.

23. According to the 2013 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report,³⁰ Iraq has achieved MDG 1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger), although some concerns remain for the prevalence of underweight children.³¹ MDG 6 (combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) has also been achieved. The development challenges are to build up Iraq’s capacity to properly use its own substantial resources and to diversify its economy away from an over-reliance on oil, as well as to move from a country-centric development agenda to a more open and competitive stance.³² Collaboration efforts with Iraq are complicated by the need to negotiate with what are de facto two governments, namely the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

24. International Assistance. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2011-2014)³³ for Iraq identified five priority areas needing improvement providing the scope and strategic direction of the United Nations system’s support to the country over the period.³⁴ The UNDAF described the United Nations Country Team’s (UNCT) commitment to provide technical support for capacity development of

²⁴ Iraq National Development Plan 2013-2017.

²⁵ Ministry of Planning, Central Statistics Organization, 2012: Iraq Women Integrated Social and Health Survey.

²⁶ IOM, 2011, Iraq Special Report: Female Headed Households.

²⁷ IOM, 2010, Iraq Special Report: Female Headed Households.

²⁸ Lafta, R. K., Hayawi, A. H., & Khudhairi, J. M. (2012). Medical and social problems among women headed families in Baghdad. *Qatar Medical Journal*, 2012(2), 51–58. <http://doi.org/10.5339/qmj.2012.2.13>

²⁹ The NDP 2013-2017 has as its vision “a safe, stable country where citizens enjoy civil, economic, social and environmental rights, aspire to build a diverse and competitive national economy, possess the keys to advancement in all scientific, cultural and intellectual fields; where everyone participates in a federal, decentralized, socially-integrated system that provides fair opportunities for development, in which the private sector and civil society are active partners and environmental sustainability represents an approach towards achieving a green economy.”

³⁰ Available at: http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/MDGs/Iraq_MDG_Report_2013.html

³¹ UNDP and the CSO, 2015 MDG, and UNDP Iraq Country Office, 2013.

³² Country Partnership Strategy for Iraq 2013-2016, the World Bank, November 2012.

³³ The previous UNDAF cycle covered 2011-2014, and the current one ends in 2019.

³⁴ These five areas were: improved governance, including the protection of human rights; inclusive, more equitable and sustainable economic growth; environmental management and compliance with ratified international environmental treaties and obligations; increased access to quality essential services; and investment in human capital and empowerment of women, youth and children.

service providers, to enable the delivery of quality essential services, particularly health, education, water and sanitation, housing, agricultural inputs, and food and nutrition security.

25. The UNCT, through the UNDAF, recognized that nearly 100 percent of Iraqis received food and occasional non-food items through the Government's Public Distribution System (PDS), intended to provide a minimum standard of living for the entire population. The UNCT considered the lack of targeting of the food rations to the poorest segments of Iraq's population as a major shortcoming,³⁵ and indicative of the inefficiency in the PDS, rather than it being utilized for reducing social inequalities and lowering levels of food insecurity and poverty. High dependence on the PDS as the major source of food is inherently a source of vulnerability as disruptions in food distribution often leads to acute food insecurity. While the prevalence of food insecurity is estimated at three percent in Iraq, the prevalence of vulnerability to food insecurity is put at 22 percent.³⁶

26. Humanitarian situation. Despite the gradual withdrawal of US armed forces between 2009 and 2011, national unity and stability failed to materialize. During the evaluation period, political tensions and insecurity prevailed. The presence and impact of the terrorist organization known as Daesh increased, only recently being reversed. A gradual escalation of violence peaked in 2014, causing massive displacements and triggering an abrupt shift in international support to Iraq, from development to humanitarian assistance. Control of large parts of Iraq by Daesh and armed opposition groups resulted in 3.2 million people displaced by the end of 2015 and 3 million more living under Daesh control. The Iraq 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) indicated that nearly one-third of Iraq's population, some 10 million people, require humanitarian assistance of which 2.5 million people require food assistance.³⁷ A summary timeline of political and security events from 2008 to 2015 is given in Annex C.

27. Three specific events in 2014 resulted in an expansion of humanitarian assistance: i) fighting between Daesh and the Iraqi army in Anbar and Ninewa Governorates in January 2014 resulted in the displacement of an estimated 83,000 individuals,³⁸; ii) in June 2014, fighting in Mosul resulted in approximately 500,000 people being displaced³⁹; and iii) in August 2014 an Daesh attack on the Yazidi population in Sinjar created a further mass displacement.

28. Since the fall of Mosul, armed opposition groups including Baathists, tribal militias and members of the former regime and military, along with Daesh, took control of large parts of the Iraqi provinces of Ninewa, Salah Al-Din and Diyala. The 2015 HRP estimates that a total of 1.5 million people required assistance and 1.2 million were internally displaced persons (IDPs).⁴⁰

29. Some 97 international humanitarian actors and over 60 national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been working in support of a Government-led response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation.⁴¹ The Iraq HRP 2015⁴² was

³⁵ Government of Iraq attempts to reform the PDS in terms of it becoming a targeted exercise, have met with political resistance.

³⁶ United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2011-2014).

³⁷ OCHA, 2016

³⁸ WFP, 2014, IR-EMOP 200663 Project Document.

³⁹ WFP, 2014, IR-EMOP 200729 Project Document.

⁴⁰ OCHA, 2015, Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan.

⁴¹ OCHA, 2015, Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan.

⁴² The HRP targets populations in critical need throughout Iraq but does not cover the refugee response in Iraq (this is covered in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, launched in 2014).

elaborated by the Iraq Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and presents cluster responses in 13 fields such as Food Security, Health, Logistics, etc. The 2015 HRP has the following three strategic objectives:

- to respond to the protection needs of civilians, including those displaced and otherwise affected by the conflict with due regard to human rights and international humanitarian law;
- to provide life-saving assistance and ensure access to essential services for displaced and vulnerable individuals in a manner that supports the Government's responsibility as first responder;
- to improve access of conflict-affected people to livelihoods and durable solutions to enable them to restore their self-sufficiency and build resilience.⁴³

30. On 12 August 2014, given the scale of the humanitarian situation and its links with the crisis in Syria, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) activated the highest level system-wide emergency (L3) in Iraq to scale up the aid response. WFP activated its own L3 Corporate Emergency on August 11th 2014, extended until February 2017.

31. Displacement continues throughout Iraq, although Iraqi Government forces have liberated some areas formerly held by Daesh and return has been possible to certain areas. The majority of the returnees have gone back to locations within Ninewa, Diyala and Salah Al-Din governorates. The legacies left behind by the conflict created further problems for returnees, with many returning to damaged or destroyed homes and potentially booby-trapped and mined areas with few services. Humanitarian response in such areas was also frequently curtailed due to the uncertain security situation, which left returnees with little support or protection.⁴⁴ Charts in Annex D detail the number of monthly displacements from March 2014 to April 2016 (just under 3.5 Million), as well as a marked increase in the number of IDPs since June 2014; and an overview of the numbers of returnees over the same period (approximately 553,000).

32. In early 2016, political instability remained a key concern in Iraq. While the Government of Iraq has started an assault to retake areas under Daesh control around Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, it is yet to be seen whether the new cabinet formed in March 2016 will resolve Iraq's chronic Government crisis.⁴⁵

33. Protection. In 2014, the number of people in need of life-saving assistance doubled, and then re-doubled. Civilians were increasingly unable to cope with the consequences of the crisis, with children, who suffered heightened protection risks and disruption to their education, being particularly affected. Movement restrictions have exacerbated the crisis. Affected populations were unable to access safe areas, or faced challenges doing so, and humanitarian actors struggled to reach people who were in the most precarious locations. Civilians fleeing violence, half of whom were children, continued to be blocked from reaching safety or faced threats of eviction, expulsion and forced return to unsafe areas, from various authorities.⁴⁶

34. Numerous cases of human rights violations perpetrated by parties to the conflict have been reported in Iraq, and the United Nations Secretary-General reported 880 incidents of grave violations against children last year, of which 711 were verified.⁴⁷ The

⁴³ Iraq 2014/2015 Strategic Response Plan.

⁴⁴ <http://iomiraq.net/article/o/iraq-crisis-situation-report-15-october-15-november>.

⁴⁵ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/04/iraq-government-breakthrough-160403072455695.html>

⁴⁶ Joint NGO Brief on Humanitarian and Protection Issues in Iraq-UN General Assembly.

⁴⁷ United Nations Secretary-General's Report on Children and Armed Conflict, 2015.

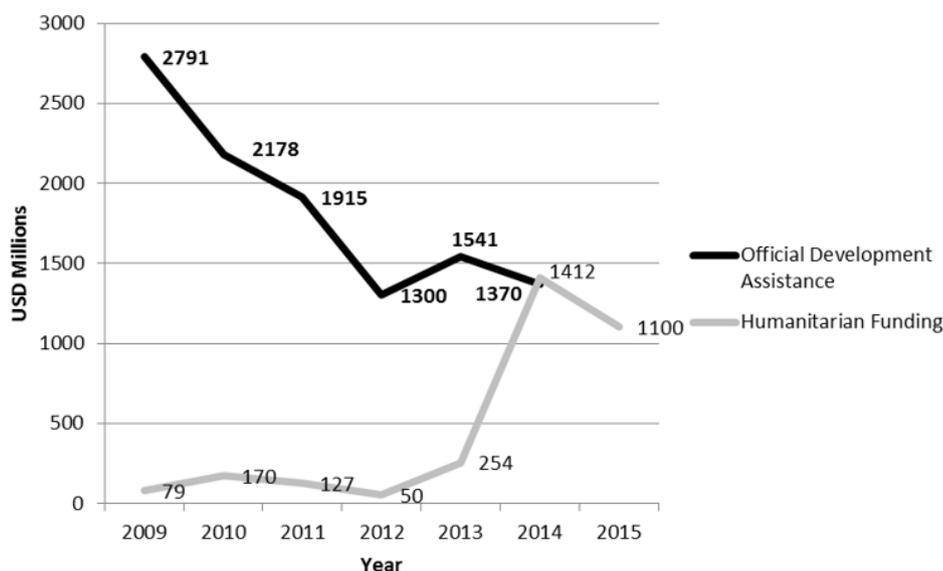
2015 HRP points to mass executions, systematic rape and acts of violence perpetrated by armed groups against civilians across the country.⁴⁸

35. Returnees also faced serious protection risks. These included widespread presence of militias, absence of the rule of law, the targeting of persons from specific ethnicities or sects, loss of housing and related documentation, the absence of effective mechanisms for property restitution or compensation, and threats from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and landmines. In Kirkuk governorate, officials employed tactics to induce return, or otherwise limit the presence of displaced people, including evictions and home demolitions, mass arrests, confiscation of identity documents and, in some cases, immediate forced relocation.⁴⁹

36. People are also pushed to return by limited and/or discriminatory access to services or restrictions on their freedom of movement. As forced returns are occurring, other people wishing to return are not allowed to do so. In some areas of Diyala, Kirkuk and Ninewa governorates, the property of people who fled in fear of attacks has been destroyed to prevent their return.⁵⁰

37. The provision of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and of humanitarian aid to Iraq between 2009 and 2014⁵¹ is shown in Figure 1. The graph shows the declining trend in development assistance, reflecting donor sentiment that Iraq should fund its own development programmes, and the sharp increase in humanitarian funding to address the displacement crisis in 2014. Despite the increase in humanitarian funding assistance since 2012, it is still insufficient to cover the needs.⁵²

Figure 1:: International assistance to Iraq, 2010-2014



No data available for official development assistance in 2014/15.
 Source: www.fts.unocha.org, www.data.worldbank.org

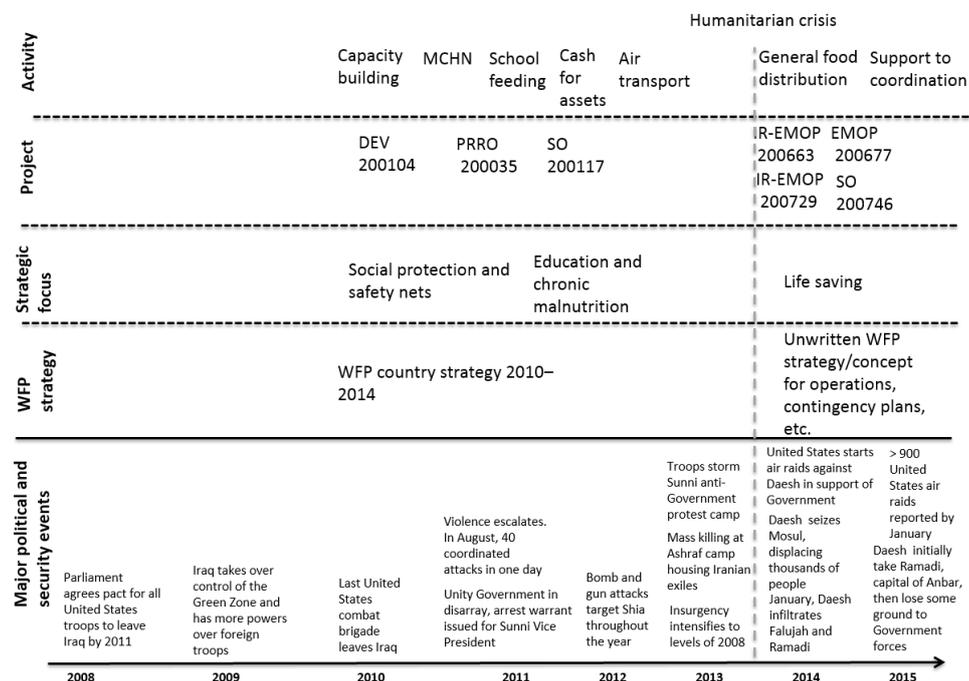
⁴⁸ OCHA, 2015, Humanitarian Response Plan.
⁴⁹ OCHA, 2016, Humanitarian Needs Overview.
⁵⁰ Ibid.
⁵¹ The latest available figures.
⁵² OCHA, 2016, Humanitarian Needs Overview.

1.3. WFP's Portfolio in Iraq

38. Historically WFP has been present in Iraq since 1964, undertaking 46 operations valued at USD2.6 billion.⁵³ The portfolio between 2012 and 2015 under evaluation consisted of seven operations with a total budget value of over USD375 million. Humanitarian Response Plans provided the common framework for humanitarian response, with over 33 percent of total HRP funding in 2015 going to WFP and the clusters it leads.⁵⁴

39. The central guiding principle of WFP's Country Strategy (2010-2014) for Iraq was that, since Iraq was a relatively prosperous MIC, WFP's main role, should be to support the authorities for a more effective and transparent use of their resources for food insecurity solutions. From 2010, and based on the CS vision and goals, WFP focused its efforts on developmental support through two projects, namely DEV 200104⁵⁵ and PRRO 200035⁵⁶--which focused on strengthening national social protection systems, through reform of the Public Distribution System (PDS), and diversification of social safety nets linked to the productive sector.. By 2014, the increase in conflict and resulting displacement triggered the launch of two Immediate Response EMOPs (IR-EMOPs 200633 and 200729), which were later folded into EMOP 200677. WFP launched two Special Operations (SO) to assist the humanitarian community with air transport, logistics common services and telecommunications clusters. Figure 2 below shows WFP's Iraq portfolio and its relationship with the UNDAF, HRP, the National Development Plans and relevant Government strategies.

Figure 2: WFP Iraq country portfolio, 2010-2015



DEV = development project; IR-EMOP = immediate-response EMOP; MCHN = mother-and-child health and nutrition; PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation; SO = special operation.

Source: Evaluation team.

⁵³ Iraq CPE TOR.

⁵⁴ Global Food Security, Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters.

⁵⁵ Development Project Iraq (DEV) 200104: 'Capacity development to reform the Public Distribution System (PDS) and strengthen social safety nets for vulnerable groups in Iraq'

⁵⁶ Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200035 Iraq: 'Support for Vulnerable Groups'

WFP's Contribution to Social Protection

40. One Development Project (DEV 200104)⁵⁷ was in place from June 2010 to August 2012.⁵⁸ The long-standing relationship between the PDS and WFP goes as far back as the 'Oil for Food' programme established by the United Nations in 1995.⁵⁹ In line with the CS, the overall goal of this operation was to reform the PDS system and as such support the Government of Iraq in strengthening social protection for vulnerable groups, through the reform and the development of a more diversified system of social safety nets linked to the productive sector. Implementation of the project was to include:

- providing technical assistance in supply chain management and the design and implementation of effective social safety nets;
- transferring the necessary technology for improving the efficiency of PDS supply chain management; and
- training government staff in supply chain management and design of social safety nets.

41. It was envisaged to establish a project office to manage this ambitious project under the direct supervision of the WFP CD. WFP proposed to recruit a project coordinator to provide substantive leadership and technical direction to a multidisciplinary team recruited to the project. WFP planned to implement the project in close collaboration of the Ministry of Trade (MoT) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA).⁶⁰ By 2011, DEV 200104 was greatly underfunded, receiving contributions of only 12 percent of the approved budget. As such, very few of the planned activities with the MoT ever took place. On the other hand, some progress was made with the MoLSA activities implemented through an established Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).⁶¹

42. PRRO 200035. This simultaneous operation⁶² began in April 2010 and is currently awaiting approval of its extension until December 2016.⁶³ Through it, WFP aimed to improve the social protection and food security of vulnerable groups most affected by prolonged instability. School feeding was the main component but this activity was suspended in January 2014⁶⁴ due to an unresolved dispute related to the use of imported high energy biscuits (HEB). Food for Assets (FFA) activities were implemented during 2011-2013. In addition, mother and child health and nutrition (MCHN) was addressed through supplementary feeding programmes targeting children aged 6-59 months, and pregnant and lactating women. By 2015, confirmed contributions for the PRRO were 78 percent of the approved budget, with expenditure at 63 percent of confirmed contributions.

⁵⁷ The CS and DEV 200104 were designed in 2009-2010 – before the security situation worsened and assistance had to focus on life-saving activities.

⁵⁸ DEV 200104 was extended for five months (extension in time only) due to the slow pace in the implementation of the project activities.

⁵⁹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 986.

⁶⁰ WFP, 2010 DEV 200104 project document.

⁶¹ It should be noted that some of the ministries mentioned have been recently merged with other ministries within the April 2016 Government of Iraq Cabinet shuffle. It is yet to be seen what impact this will have.

⁶² PRRO 200035 was designed in 2009-2010 – before the security situation worsened and assistance had to focus on life-saving activities.

⁶³ PRRO 200035 was originally planned to cover a two year period (April 2010-March 2012). The PRRO had nine budget revisions. On 19 August 2015 a Concept Note was endorsed for Development Project 200855 as a continuation of WFP's development activities currently implemented under the PRRO.

⁶⁴ School feeding continued in some locations using food commodities that were carried over from 2013.

43. The FFA component of the PRRO was implemented to create community assets using cash-based transfers, as an example to the authorities of how social safety net activities could be organized using this modality. The value of the transfer was initially the equivalent in local currency of USD10 for workers and USD13 for team leaders. The annual Standard Project Reports (SPRs) for the PRRO suggest adjustments to the value of the transfers were made based on beneficiary needs.⁶⁵ Vulnerable households in selected districts of Baghdad, Ninewa and Diyala were targeted, and the interventions, identified through community needs assessments, were implemented in areas with a high concentration of IDPs.

44. Through FFA, IDP women were trained to establish kitchen gardens that provided the households with fresh food and income from sales. Those women who had received training from UNESCO in tailoring were provided with sewing machines to generate income and support their families in the long term. Other activities under the FFA component included road construction, cleaning public areas and painting buildings. Additional resources permitted the provision of unconditional cash assistance to Iraqi refugees returning from Syria.

45. The MCHN component was implemented between 2011 and 2013. The activities started with food distributions in May 2012 for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) for children 6-59 months and the prevention of stunting for children 6-23 months. The prevention programme targeted Primary Health Centres (PHCs) with nutrition units in districts identified through the 2008 CFSVA, including three districts (Amedi, Khanaqeen and Afak) with high rates of stunting, by providing monthly rations of Plumpy'Doz for six months. Within the programme, all children registered at the PHCs were eligible for assistance, whereas in cases of treatment, only children with MAM (using weight-for-height) were supported.

WFP's Humanitarian Response

46. From 2014, through two IR-EMOPs and one EMOP⁶⁶, WFP provided life-saving food assistance in the form of general food distributions (GFDs) to IDPs in camps, IDPs in host communities and populations in conflict zones. GFD took two forms: family food parcels (FFPs), and immediate response rations (IRRs) of ready-to-eat commodities for displaced populations on the move. In addition, when possible, CBTs in the form of vouchers were used to provide assistance to populations for the purchase of food commodities at specified suppliers/traders where beneficiaries could purchase foods up to the value of the voucher (USD26). The voucher value was aligned with the in-kind ration's nutritional composition and was intended to meet 80 percent of an individual's monthly caloric needs.⁶⁷

47. Emergency operations were scaled up to respond to the escalating needs, from an initial 240,000 displaced people, to 2.2 million IDPs in camps and host communities, and to populations in accessible conflict zones. The two IR-EMOPs were launched in January and June 2014 respectively. The first IR-EMOP (200633) aimed to provide critical food assistance to IDPs and vulnerable households in Al Anbar governorate. The second IR-EMOP (200729) aimed to provide emergency food assistance to people displaced by the sudden onset of fighting in Mosul City, in Ninewa governorate.

⁶⁵ WFP, 2012, PRRO 200035 Standard Project Report.

⁶⁶ With two budget revisions.

⁶⁷ WFP, 2014, SPR EMOP 200677.

48. The current EMOP 200677⁶⁸ was originally planned as a follow-up to IR 200633 to respond to the urgent needs of the displaced people,⁶⁹ estimated at 240,000 individuals. Budget Revision (BR) 4 in July 2015 aimed to provide emergency assistance to the growing needs of 2.2 million food insecure people across all 19 governorates.

49. This EMOP was launched in May 2014 and was initially due to be completed by December 2015. However, it has been revised six times through BRs, the latest of which extends the project to the end of 2016 and aligns the operation with the HRP.

50. Special Operations. Two SOs were in place during the evaluation period. The first (December 2010-May 2012) was for the WFP-run United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) to provide air transport to remote and insecure locations in the country for the entire humanitarian community. This operation started in December 2010 becoming fully functional by May 2011,⁷⁰ but was then stopped in March 2012. Given the scale of the emergency and the scope of the humanitarian needs in 2014, the second (and current) SO 200746 aimed to provide a coordinated logistics response and augmentation of emergency telecommunications capability to ensure the efficient delivery of assistance. This SO covered the work of two WFP-led clusters: Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).

⁶⁸ EMOP 200677 was initially planned to cover April - September 2014, and was extended until December 2015 and again more recently to end of 2016.

⁶⁹ Fighting erupted in Al Anbar between Iraqi army forces and militia resulting in widespread displacement.

⁷⁰ After May 2011, UNHAS Iraq operated to six different destinations in Iraq (Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul and Suleimaniyah) and linking Iraq to Amman, Jordan and Kuwait. SPR 2011, SO 200117.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1. Portfolio Alignment and Strategic Positioning

51. The WFP Iraq CS (2010-2014) was appropriately designed to begin to shift WFP's role towards 'enabling', rather than 'implementing'. However, the Government's PDS system was far from fully functional, their school feeding programmes lacked effectiveness, and the CFVSA had identified pockets of food insecurity. The CS was therefore relevant to Iraq's humanitarian and development needs at that time and was also coherent with the Government's national objectives and policies. With the onset of the Daesh-related insecurity, WFP successfully re-aligned the portfolio to respond to humanitarian needs, and increased its engagement with the Ministry of Migration and Displaced (MoDM), responsible for the IDP caseload.

52. The CS was developed in 2009 based on findings from the 2008 CFSVA. Table 2 below provides a list of governorates with the lowest income and the greatest proportion of households with a poor wealth index as well as governorates with greater than 30 percent of households having a poor or borderline FCS. Column 4 (severity) enumerates the level of severity of need a governorate had, with the last column indicating which WFP (or WFP-supported) activities were undertaken in these governorates.

Table 2: WFP activities (2010 – 2015) relating to needs based on Income, Wealth Index and FCS.

Governorates with 79-94% of households within the poorest Wealth Index	Governorates with more than 30% of households with poor and borderline FCS	Governorates with the lowest income Quintile	Severity (based on number of criteria fulfilled)	WFP Activities
Ninewa	Ninewa	Ninewa	3	MCHN/SF/CFW
Qadissia	Qadissia	Qadissia	3	SF/MCHN/GFD (FFP)
Diyala	Diyala		2	MCHN/SF/IRR/
				FFP/CFW
Muthana	Muthana		2	SF/FFP
Missan			1	SF
Karbala		Karbala	2	SF
		Kirkuk	1	IRR
	Wassit		1	SF/FFP
Suleimaniyah			1	SF/IRR/FFP/Vouchers

Source: WFP, 2008, CFSVA Iraq

53. The above indicates the relevance of the work undertaken by WFP and how its partners assisted the Iraqi population in all governorates with the greatest needs. In addition, WFP also responded to the IDP crisis in Dohuk and Erbil in the KRI.

54. WFP's intention was to provide capacity development support to help the Government of Iraq improve their efforts to develop education and nutrition services, and make existing national safety net mechanisms more efficient. This was a reasonable approach at that time, considering the country was seemingly recovering economically and stabilizing politically, however, this approach has since shown itself to be somewhat lacking as infighting between political parties continues and the Government has struggled to implement its national policies and strategies. For example, the PDS system was far from fully functional and suffered from accusations of corruption, the school feeding programmes lacked effectiveness, and the 2008 CFVSA had identified pockets

of food insecurity. The CS was therefore relevant to Iraq's humanitarian and development needs and tried to improve national food security related governance issues.

55. At the time of its development, the 2010-2014 CS was also closely aligned with WFP's global Strategic Plan for 2008-2013, specifically addressing Strategic Objectives 3, 4 and 5.⁷¹ The approach remained relevant to the subsequent WFP Strategic Plan that has been developed for the period 2014-2017. A graphic showing how the goals of the CS aligned with the strategic objectives of WFP's global Strategic Plan over the portfolio period is presented in Annex E.

56. The CS was also coherent with the Government's national objectives and policies. For example, the 2012 National Education Strategy outlined future school feeding goals and indicated WFP as the main strategic partner. Despite a dispute over the expiry date of one food commodity (HEB, as discussed later), this is an intervention the Government continues to want to undertake. The generally positive feedback on a 2015 pilot school feeding project in Thi Qar may yet set the basis for future school feeding initiatives.

57. The school feeding activities implemented in Iraq with WFP support since 2010 have benefited from two favorable circumstances: the willingness of the Government to re-introduce school meals to primary schools, as stipulated in the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction⁷² on one hand, and the adoption of a corporate School Feeding Policy by WFP in 2009⁷³ on the other hand. In this respect the CO has been successful in negotiating separate school feeding agreements with the Governments in both Baghdad and in KRI. The objectives of the two-year PRRO 200035⁷⁴ are in line with the Government's plans and strategies adopted during this period, particularly the National Nutrition Strategy.⁷⁵

58. WFP has worked in close coherence with a number of government ministries. The Ministry of Health (MoH) has also been involved in ongoing school feeding activities (more so in South and Central Iraq than in KRI), although their main area of co-operation with WFP has been the MCHN activities. The National Nutrition Strategy for Iraq (2012-2014) was prepared with support from WFP and approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2012. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the MoH and WFP in June 2011.⁷⁶ Although programme activities were short-lived and could have been better implemented, it can be seen that WFP and the MoH have been working alongside each other with the same objectives. WFP continued to support the Nutrition Research Institute with the printing of documentation and some minor support towards office costs. The MoH and WFP are jointly undertaking the 2016 CFSVA, with key support from the Ministry of Planning and the Kurdistan Central Statistics Organization (CSO).

59. In recent years, the PDS, run by the MoT, has come under detailed scrutiny nationally (in terms of corruption charges) and internationally (being considered both

⁷¹ SO3: restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in postconflict, post-disaster or transition situations; SO4: reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition; SO5: strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchase.

⁷² National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, High Committee for Poverty Reduction Policies, Ministry of Planning & Development Cooperation, Ministry of Planning Kurdistan Region Government (KRG), First Edition, 2009.

⁷³ WFP/EB.2/2009/4-A.

⁷⁴ To restore attendance and learning and reduce drop-outs among primary schoolchildren in the most food-insecure districts'

⁷⁵ The National Nutrition Strategy, Iraq, 2012-2021.

⁷⁶ World Food Programme Iraq, Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) Programme, Internal Review, Concept Note, November 2012.

inefficient and expensive).⁷⁷ There was an agreed need to reform, accepted within Government circles and within WFP. As such, the notion of a development project (DEV 200104) to improve logistical capacity and internal efficiency within the PDS was again very much in alignment with official objectives; however, in the absence of the necessary governmental buy in, failure was almost inevitable.

60. WFP has also entered into negotiations with the MoLSA with respect to targeted vocational training activities, cash for work, short term employment generation (such as agricultural work), as well as unconditional cash transfers, as other means of implementing a national safety net. These activities are crucial, and the former would provide a more sustainable solution to an individual family's long-term poverty situation. Unfortunately, this is on hold currently as the PRRO, in which these activities are incorporated, is blocked due to the ongoing HEB issue.

61. With the onset of the Daesh-related insecurity and the population movement crisis, WFP's engagement with the Government has increased even further, particularly with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), which is responsible for the IDP caseload. This continuing engagement has occurred at both national and local levels, where WFP has interacted with local authorities responsible for IDPs in their governorate/district—especially with respect to recent attempts to establish a targeted system of support to the beneficiaries. Some frustrations have been expressed, both by co-operating partners and local authorities, in terms of the degree of communication provided by WFP on such a significant change to IDP support criteria.

62. The necessity for IDPs to have a valid PDS card so that they can receive WFP support⁷⁸ has meant that the two organizations have had to work together closely to try to ensure the availability of replacements for lost cards, and the changes needed for an IDP family's designated PDS collection point from their original location to their displaced location.⁷⁹

63. Similarly, within the conflict response environment, key informant interviews (KIIs) clearly showed that WFP has collaborated well with a number of United Nations agencies. The well-respected Rapid Response Mechanism has seen WFP team up with UNICEF, and more recently UNFPA, to provide three-day immediate response rations (IRR) to those recently displaced. Despite some difficulties, the ability of WFP to provide this much needed support through its network of local and international CPs is well appreciated by the authorities, donors and the beneficiaries themselves. WFP also played a key co-ordination role as the co-leader of the nationwide Food Security Cluster (and sub-clusters), and leader of the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).

64. Feedback from co-operating partners also indicated that WFP is working well with UNHCR to push the adoption of a cash based response approach wherever appropriate. This is in line with what the majority of beneficiaries prefer (some remote locations will always need in-kind support) and would be more cost efficient and flexible in its usage (Table 15 below). WFP's development of the SCOPE card onto which transfers from multiple organizations can be made is an important step forward. In what way this can be utilized in the future, how the required technology can be organized in sufficient

⁷⁷ "The PDS is very effective in reaching the poor and guaranteeing a minimum standard of living, but it accomplishes this goal in a very costly and inefficient way – absorbing 21 percent of government revenue". World Bank June, 2005.

⁷⁸ This criteria is in place so as to avoid cases of duplications and fraud in terms of one family registering at different locations.

⁷⁹ The efficiency of the PDS in this respect has been somewhat mixed, leaving the NGO community to care for those beneficiaries who fall through the cracks and receive no support from either WFP or the PDS. Note also that local authorities do not always wish to approve such amendments to a family's locations as this increases their commitment to support those additional numbers within their areas of jurisdiction.

quantities, and how the SCOPE database can be shared with other stakeholders needs to be pursued. Again, WFP is adopting an approach relevant to ongoing humanitarian needs.

65. The PRRO envisaged delivery of its school feeding component through partnership with other UN Agencies. It indicated that complementary activities under the Essential Package⁸⁰ would be developed in collaboration with UNICEF, WHO and FAO. Also WFP and UNICEF were to develop joint area-based programming for school feeding. The WFP CO formulated co-operation plans with clear objectives, methodologies and work plans. It was envisaged to purchase and distribute locally-produced food in UNICEF's supported Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) that were also assisted under the WFP school feeding programme and WHO/MoH Health Promoting Schools Initiative. Nevertheless, none of these activities were undertaken before the suspension of the school-feeding programme. More recently, within the framework of a pilot project in Thi Qar, WFP partnered with UNICEF on water and sanitation activities. Although very limited, this initiative paves the way for possible future expanded co-operation.

66. In an environment where some United Nations agencies have reported that the UNCT does not function to its maximum potential, WFP has managed to organize its own strategic alignments that have enabled it to function in a difficult operating environment. WFP's role with respect to the vast number of expected returnees remains unclear. The dominance of UNDP with respect to the usage of the Stabilization Fund leaves the roles for all members of the UNCT somewhat unclear.⁸¹ This is an area that needs clarification. CFW/CFA/CFT modalities to support the returnees would provide opportunities for collaboration with MoLSA and MoDM. These would facilitate the regeneration of local infrastructure and provide beneficiary households with both a short-term income and perhaps also a longer term livelihood.⁸² Similarly, collaboration with other United Nations agencies, such as the FAO, in terms of localized food security projects need to be further elaborated and finalised.

67. Ultimately with respect to the IDP situation, WFP's long-term exit strategy needs to be formulated and agreed with national and local government offices. This should cover the need to transfer the responsibility for the beneficiaries from WFP-supported emergency operations to the Government's social protection and safety net programmes, illustrating simultaneously how WFP will support such activities.

68. Regarding alignment between themselves and WFP, donor feedback in general was positive, both in terms of programmatic emphasis and with regard to the strategic change of approach towards CBT modalities. However, some concerns were raised by donors regarding the newly-implemented targeting process, shortfalls in the monitoring capabilities of the WFP operation, the lack of strong vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) capacity, and the need for clear assessment information on which future responses can be based.

2.2. Driving Factors and Quality of Strategic Decision Making

69. With the onset of the recent crisis, and dwindling donor support for development initiatives in Iraq, the CS became somewhat redundant. The CO's focus was re-directed, appropriately, towards emergency operations, making the best use of WFP's

⁸⁰ In 2002 WFP and UNICEF signed a global MoU and entered into partnership through an integrated package of cost-effective interventions to improve the nutritional and health status of school children.

⁸¹ The current UNDP stance is that this funding lies outside of the humanitarian arena and as such will be managed by themselves together with the Government.

⁸² Considering the amount of construction and renovation work that will need to be done, it is unlikely that the population could have too many skilled workers.

comparative advantage in Iraq to meet short-term humanitarian needs. As an organization with proven logistical capabilities, the delivery of food supplies on a large scale across a wide geographical area falls well within WFP's mandate and corporate expertise. Adding to this a network of local and international co-operating partners, utilizing strategically provisioned warehouses, in order to reach those areas that WFP staff and vehicles cannot access, improved WFP's coverage considerably.

70. As part of the CS process the Strategic Review Committee (SRC) of WFP provided feedback to the CO on the potential risks of providing support to the PDS. These included: insecurity; political challenges to reforming the PDS and the involvement of the United Nations/WFP in the process;⁸³ potential loss of credibility, since the Prime Minister of Iraq requested WFP support; potential negative effects on local production; corruption; and political pressure on food targeting.⁸⁴

71. The SRC went on to request that, "clarification on resourcing assumptions should be provided in the Strategy, with the identification of possible interest from donors and the Government, and ascertaining funding sources" and that "a viable resource mobilization and advocacy strategy should be developed."⁸⁵ Recognizing the high risk, the CO nevertheless proceeded to engage with PDS reform, but a lack of donor interest in supporting a MIC's development initiatives, tied in with a lack of Government investment in the need to reform, meant that activities stopped in August 2012.

72. The evaluation found a significant gap in the evidence-base used to inform decisions on WFP support: since the start of major displacements in late 2014, neither a comprehensive assessment of national vulnerability, nor an in-depth food security or household economic survey of those displaced were conducted. The gap of eight years between the last CFSVA and the current one under preparation in conjunction with the Ministry of Health (MOH) is considered too long, even if understandable due to security constraints and existing Government capacity.⁸⁶ It would have been expected, at some point, that the Food Security Cluster, led by WFP, could have undertaken an emergency food security assessment (EFSA).

73. It is therefore not possible to state that decisions underlying the ongoing WFP support have been based on up to date beneficiary evidence or analysis, or that WFP and the humanitarian community as a whole has an up-to-date understanding of vulnerability and food insecurity levels of either those who were displaced or those unaffected.

74. The lack of strong WFP VAM capacity at the outset of the response has been a disappointment to other United Nations partners who would normally utilize the outputs such a service can provide.⁸⁷ Recently increased capacity within the VAM and M&E units should support future decision making processes.⁸⁸ Current mobile VAM (m-VAM) activities have contributed to a certain extent, as have third party monitoring reports.⁸⁹ However, these lacked consistency and services are currently being improved.

75. That said, the emergency response activities were based on WFP's life-saving mandate, and there is no doubt that recently displaced populations need emergency rations. These emergency response activities themselves have dominated recent WFP

⁸³ Given WFPs role in the food for oil programme.

⁸⁴ WFP, 2009, Note for the Record: Strategic Review Committee Meeting Iraq Country Strategy 2010-2014.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ A Unicef Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey was planned for mid-2014, and the Central Statistics Office did not have the capacity to undertake a CVFSA at the same time.

⁸⁷ Feedback from co-operating partners, donors, and other UN agencies.

⁸⁸ VAM reports have been released monthly since February 2015.

⁸⁹ Stars Orbit have undertaken third party monitoring activities on behalf of WFP, especially in areas where WFP staff cannot access.

operations. Realistically, if Iraq had not been beset by a complex humanitarian crisis, the WFP CO would have struggled to remain viable, as it would have had very few activities to implement.

76. In terms of the day-to-day and forward looking management of operations, the CO has a senior management team structure in place with representatives from relevant departments that meet weekly, plus a monthly budget review meeting. Operational management has become more feasible since the end of 2013 when security conditions enabled the CO to run activities out of its main offices in Baghdad and Erbil.⁹⁰ Previously the operation had been managed from Amman in Jordan, meaning limited management presence in the country and reduced contact with Government counterparts.

77. Major decisions, such as the targeting process, were taken, gathering input from co-operating partners and key staff, stakeholders, and Government departments. Such processes could be improved, however, with greater involvement and therefore ownership by external partners of the decisions being made. Currently the feeling they have is more of being informed rather than being consulted.

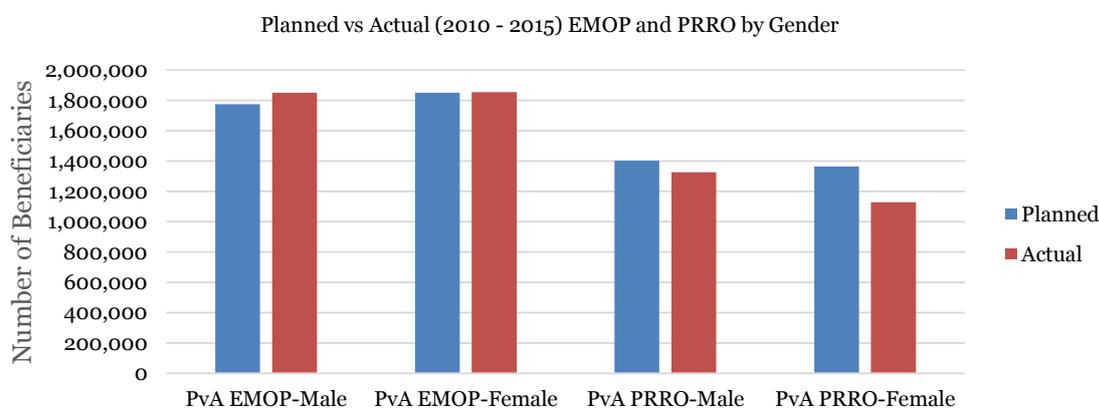
78. Similarly some CO staff expressed their desire for a more inclusive approach to decision making. They wish to be better informed and more involved in decision-making processes. For staff motivation and retention, such issues need consideration.

2.3. Portfolio Performance and Results

79. The analysis of programme performance showed a mixed level of achievement (Figures 3 and 4 below). The portfolio’s effectiveness in terms of delivering against plans was higher than anticipated, with respect to the emergency operations despite the constraints around access and security. The PRRO and capacity development approaches were less successful, as explained in more detail below. Issues, such as a dispute with the Government over food supplies in schools (HEB issue), and funding shortfalls, have had significant negative impacts in this respect.

80. Beneficiaries. The emergency operations in general have reached more beneficiaries than planned (approximately 2%); in contrast, the PRRO reached fewer. This can be seen in Figure 3 below where the number of beneficiaries reached is shown, disaggregated by sex and by operation; further details are available in Annex F.

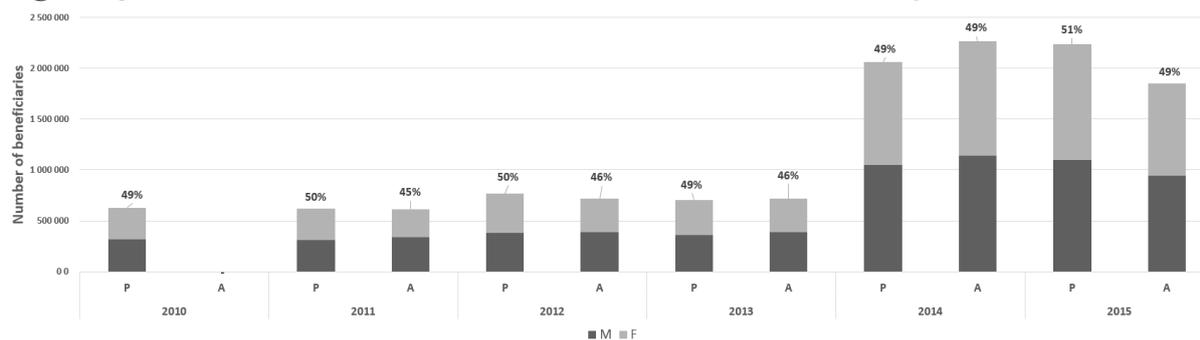
Figure 3: Planned vs. Actual Beneficiaries in total (2010-2015)



Source: SPRs 2010-2015

⁹⁰ Flights between the two locations are now readily available.

Figure 4: Planned vs. Actual Beneficiaries in total (2010-2015)



A = actual; P = planned; F = women/girls; M = men/boys.

Sources: 2010–2015 SPRs for IR-EMOP and EMOP 200663, 200677 200729, and PRRO 200035

81. Under the PRRO, achievement rates for MCHN activities fell far short of expectations although the CBT activities reached more people than anticipated (mainly via cash-for-work activities). School Feeding coverage was good until the programme was halted in 2014. Annex F provides an overview of planned and actual beneficiaries for the School Feeding, MCHN and the FFA (CBT) activities disaggregated by sex.

82. Commodities. The total metric tonnes of food distributed under the three EMOPs is detailed in Table 3 below. The tonnage of commodities distributed was initially lower than planned due to access constraints. This was rectified in 2015, when specific nutritional products for children were added to RRM rations, pushing distributions to exceed planned targets by 40 percent, although to fewer beneficiaries. These distribution shortfalls for the IR-EMOPS were reportedly largely due to access constraints in highly volatile areas.⁹¹ The higher than planned distribution of food in 2015 was a result of reaching more children aged 6-59 months by including a Plumpy'Doz and A29 (nutritional bar) ration within the FFPs and IRRs provided to the IDPs.⁹²

Table 3: Food quantities distributed - Planned versus Actual (2014-2015)

	Planned (Mt)	Actual (Mt)	Actual vs Planned (%)
IR-EMOP 200633	1,172	756	65
IR-EMOP 200729	1,132	550	49
EMOP 200677 (2014)	64,699	56,004	87
EMOP 200677 (2015)	68,087	95,605	140
Total	135,090	152,915	113

Source: WFP, 2014, SPR IR-EMOP 200633, SPR IR-EMOP 200729.

83. Table 4 below provides planned versus actual tonnage of food commodities distributed through PRRO 200035 to the end of 2014. The data shows consistent shortfalls in the amount of food distributed in relation to the planned amounts. An initial secondary data review suggests that the lack of funding for different components of the PRRO contributed to shortfalls in the planned versus actual food distributed. Another contributory factor to low output rates was the dispute between WFP and the MoE over the distribution and use of the imported HEBs as described above.

⁹¹ IR-EMOP 200633 Standard Project Report.

⁹² WFP, 2015, SPR EMOP 200677

Table 4: PRRO 200035 food tonnage distributed (2011-2014)⁹³

Year	Planned (Mt)	Actual (Mt)	% Actual vs Planned
2011	6,989	2,672	38%
2012	11,222	4,546	41%
2013	6,524	5,295	81%
2014	9,718	608	6%

Source: WFP SPRs PRRO 200035, 2010-2015

84. In addition to in-kind food assistance WFP provided assistance through CBT (vouchers). Table 5 below shows the planned versus actual transfer values distributed in the form of vouchers.

Table 5: EMOP 200677 Vouchers distributed - Planned versus Actual (2014-2015)

	Planned (USD)	Actual (USD)	Actual vs Planned
2014	20,278,400	9,767,487	48%
2015	87,774,310	62,006,490	71%
Total	108,052,710	71,773,978	66%

Source: WFP, 2014, SPR EMOP 200677

WFP's Contribution to Social Protection

85. The Government's NDS (2007-2010), the International Compact for Iraq (2009), the new NDP (2010-2014) and the UNDAF (2011-2014) all prioritized reform of the PDS and social safety nets in order to better protect vulnerable groups. WFP's CS noted the following targets in relation to social safety nets:

- A comprehensive social protection policy to protect vulnerable groups and promote growth to integrate them into society and the economy at large is developed and institutionalized by the Government of Iraq by 2014;
- Efficiency in managing the supply chain of the PDS by the Government is strengthened by 2014 and accountability improved;
- The PDS reformed and a social safety net targeting vulnerable groups institutionalized by the Government by 2014.

Social Safety Nets

86. The PDS is the largest social safety net component of Iraq's social protection programme. While it has functioned well at times in the past, providing 2,200 Kcal per person per day to all eligible Iraqis, since 2003 there has been a progressive deterioration in its performance. In 2005 the World Bank noted that the PDS was very effective at reaching the poor and guaranteeing a minimum standard of living, but it accomplished this goal in a very costly and inefficient manner, absorbing 21 percent of Government revenue.⁹⁴

⁹³ No food was distributed through PRRO 200035 in 2015 due to the suspension of the SF programme.

⁹⁴ World Bank, 2005, Executive Summary; 'Considering the Future of the Iraqi Public Distribution System'

87. Feedback from interviews with beneficiaries, as well as from partners in the field, confirms that the PDS is presently still not functioning effectively. WFP itself indicates that this is due to inefficiencies in supply chain management, including procurement, quality control, shipping, commodity tracking, warehousing and storage, distribution and monitoring.⁹⁵ However, there are other issues apparent with ongoing accusations of corruption within the system, as well as a somewhat politicized approach to coverage, which reduce its operational impact. Successful capacity development requires full government commitment towards reform, a detailed work-plan, donor support, plus the availability of experienced staff with a range of expertise. Interviews with key stakeholders confirmed that none of this was in place for PDS reform. It is therefore not surprising that the country strategy objectives, and related efforts to improve the efficiency of supply chain management through training and technology transfer, proved unrealistic and ineffective.

88. The focus of all activities was the capacity development of the MoT and MoLSA, comprising technical assistance and training of ministry staff.⁹⁶ Table 6 below indicates the number staff of MoT and MoLSA trained by WFP.

Table 6: Number of Ministry staff trained by WFP, by gender (2010-2012)

Year	Planned			Actual			Act. vs Plans %
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
2010	-	-	10	-	-	11	110
2011	-	-	300	-	-	140	47
2012	22	25	47	22	25	47	100

Source: WFP SPR DEV 200104 (2010-2012)

89. Activities included a wide array of trainings including supply chain management trainings, basic analytical techniques, design and implementation of social transfer programmes, M&E good practices, results based management and food security and poverty measurement and analysis, and field operations for social safety net (SSN) social workers. Additionally, a joint field operations training of trainers (ToT) was conducted by MoLSA and WFP.

90. It is unclear what impact these trainings have had on the operations of both the PDS and SSN programme of MoT and MoLSA respectively. The BR1 (May 2012) states, “training modules in food procurement, logistics and warehouse management and M&E were adapted to the Iraqi context.” However, it was not clear whether all trainings followed standard training materials (curricula, presentations, exercises etc.) and whether these existed within the organization.

91. The relationship between WFP and MoLSA is very positive and KIIs during this evaluation suggested that the Ministry appreciated the support it received and would like WFP to resume its capacity development inputs. In September 2013 WFP negotiated, on behalf of MoLSA, USD1.8 million from the Government as a co-financing mechanism to strengthen the authorities’ ability to better target vulnerable groups. Specific assistance was requested to improve targeting by providing a ToT exercise and trainings on targeting to newly recruited social workers. In contrast, the relationship

⁹⁵ WFP, 2010, Project Document DEV 200104

⁹⁶ Training costs as per the 2012 SPR Dev 200104 were USD 336,397.

between MoT and WFP was described as ‘competitive’ by key informants, a legacy perhaps of the historical relationship forged during the oil for food programme. This has not been helped by continued changes at Ministerial level in the MoT resulting from the political volatility of Iraq, making it difficult to forge long-term relationships.

92. Technical assistance has taken different forms, including support in the production of reports such as “Food Deprivation in Iraq”, an *ex ante* review of the expected impact of PDS reform on the prevalence of food deprivation. Furthermore, an M&E targeting questionnaire and database were designed with MoLSA to enhance SSN targeting. These targeting tools were to be used to exclude non-vulnerable groups who are already enrolled in the SSN, and as a vulnerability filter for new SSN applicants.

93. While difficult to assess the exact role played by WFP and other United Nations agencies, there were a number of key advances that have occurred over the portfolio period that, to a certain extent, may be as a result of WFP’s advocacy, and their focus on social protection issues in Iraq. These included:

- The Council of Ministers (CoM) approved a five-year plan to reform the PDS and the need to better target the needy population.
- The CoM approved the formation of the High Steering Committee for Reduction of Poverty aided by a permanent secretariat and technical committees.
- PDS reform was due to start with the removal of individuals with a total monthly income of more than 1.5 million Iraqi Dinars (approximately USD1,250) from the beneficiary lists, and the food basket’s reduction from 11 to five food items.
- MoLSA, with the support of WFP, established a Policy Analysis Unit.⁹⁷

94. Currently, WFP efforts to improve the Government’s social protection mechanism are undertaken relatively independently of other actors. Looking ahead, in such a complex operating environment, it would be beneficial for the CO to form a consortium with other organizations and donors interested in supporting the Government in its social protection efforts. This could enable a more strategic and holistic approach where WFP and others could focus their efforts where there would be added value and could achieve greater impact by working as part of a broader strategy.

School Feeding

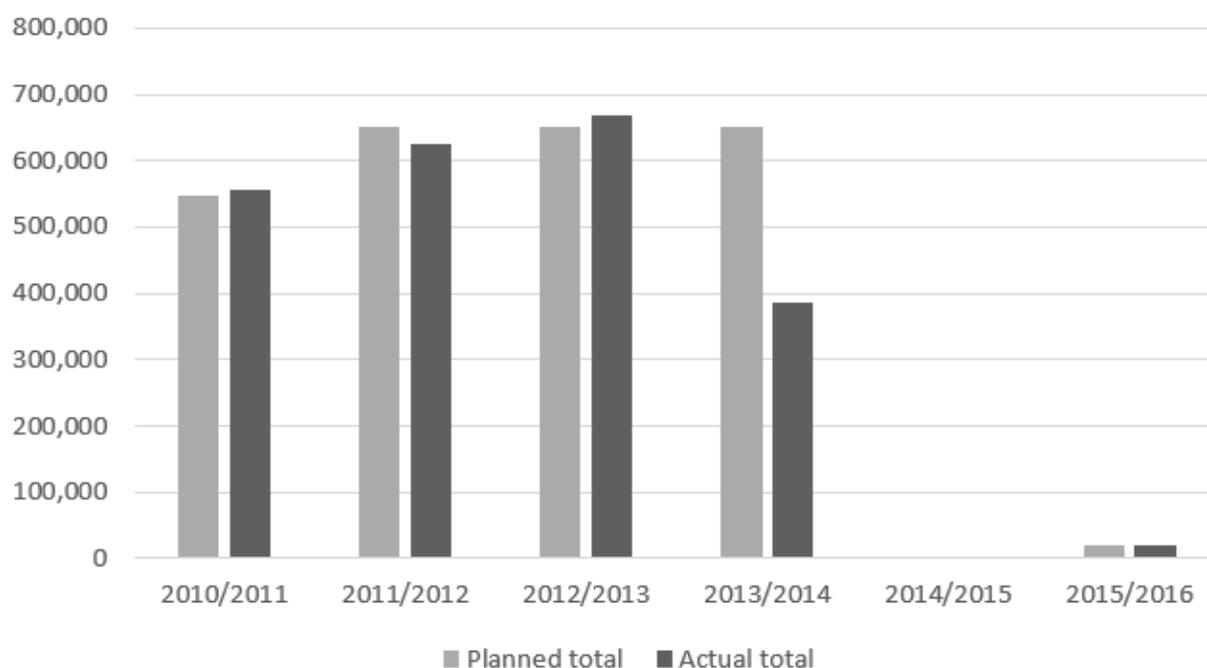
95. Following a resolution of the Iraqi Council of Ministers (resolution 299, August 2010) establishing a budget of USD17 million in favour of a national school feeding (SF) programme, WFP was requested to carry out the implementation for the 2010/2011 academic year and to build the capacity of MoE to manage the programme and take over responsibility for implementation. One major objective of the PRRO 200035 SF component was to support the development of a nationally-owned SF programme.

96. All primary schools within selected districts were included in the programme to avoid children shifting from non-assisted schools to assisted schools, and all students within these schools received food. The most food insecure districts were selected on the basis of data from the 2008 CFSVA, assuming that due to poverty and food insecurity they had the lowest levels of school attendance and retention. The number of districts targeted was adjusted over time, depending on the availability of resources. Initially designed to cover 41 districts out of 115 throughout the country, the SF programme was finally implemented in 24 of them.

⁹⁷ WFP, 2015, SPR DEV 200104.

97. Actual vs. planned beneficiaries. As shown in Figure 4 below, until the time of its suspension in 2014, the SF programme targeted a total of 652,400 school children in 1,850 schools, with, over the first three years, a high percentage of those numbers being actually reached. During the 2014/2015 school year, no distributions were planned or achieved. A pilot project launched in 2015 targeted and reached around 21,000 beneficiaries attending 72 schools.

Figure 5: Actual vs planned school feeding beneficiaries (2010-2015)



Sources: SPRs for PRRO 200035, WFP CO (for these totals disaggregated please see Figure 7 below).

98. Figure 5 reflects the evolution of the programme with the following features:

- An increased number of beneficiaries during the first three years of implementation compared to numbers planned. Some discrepancies between actual and planned beneficiaries were due to the fact that the actual number of children enrolled at school was not always the same as officially registered. Some adjustments were made possible because of improvements in the registration system which led to more accurate data;
- a huge discrepancy between actual and planned beneficiaries in 2013/2014 school year as a result of the suspension of activities after January 2014⁹⁸;
- no beneficiaries at all during 2014/2015 after the suspension of the programme;
- a much smaller number of school children benefitting from school feeding under the Thi Qar pilot project, started in the second semester of 2015.

99. Rations provided. According to the PRRO 200035 project document, school children benefitting from WFP food assistance would receive 100 grams of date bars fortified with iron and vitamin A per day, equating to about 450 kilocalories (kcal). This modality had been selected due to the lack of adequate cooking facilities in most schools. In addition, date bars are culturally acceptable, they offer potential for local production and comply with Iraqi food quality and safety standards, and are endorsed by the MoE

⁹⁸ However, from January to May 2014 school feeding continued in some locations using food commodities that were carried over from 2013. 2014 SPR PRRO 200035.

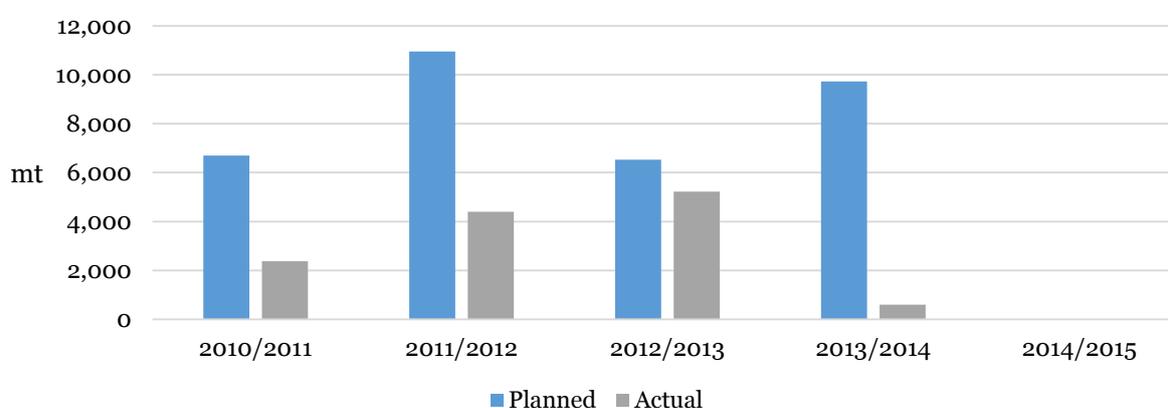
and MoH. The date bars would initially have been imported from neighbouring countries and eventually produced locally.

100. At the start, WFP had planned to use only locally procured fortified date bars. However, due to the non-competitive price bidding and the lack of production capacity for sufficient quantities for the whole school-feeding programme, in 2011 the ration was changed to high-energy biscuits (HEBs) procured internationally (mainly from United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Indonesia). A third BR was necessary to increase the external transport budget to cover costs related to tonnage purchased internationally.

101. In 2012, WFP and the MoE renewed a Partnership Agreement whereby HEBs would be provided to 564,600 primary school children in 1,853 schools in the 24 most vulnerable districts in central and southern governorates. This agreement was repeated in 2013 for the following school year.

102. Figure 6 below shows that throughout the school feeding programme implementation, the commodity distribution has always been lower than planned.

Figure 6: Metric tonnes HEB: Actual vs planned (2010 -2015)



Source: WFP CO, SPRs

103. Reasons for this discrepancy varied from one year to another:

- in 2011, the school feeding implementation was delayed due to difficulties of procuring locally produced commodities;
- in 2012, a pipeline break, mainly caused by the long lead-time of producing fortified biscuits, resulted in a reduction of the number of feeding days in schools (only for 60 percent of actual school days);
- in 2013, the individual ration was reduced to 50g per day for a limited time period at the beginning of the school year due to delayed biscuit arrivals. There was a pipeline break in early 2013 caused by several factors: the long lead-time of producing fortified biscuits according to Iraqi specifications and shipping them to Iraq via Jordan; the restrictive regulations on shelf life combined with a minimum validity upon entry into Iraq (see next paragraphs); and political conflicts preventing trucks from entering Iraq. The pipeline break explains the lower than planned number of actual feeding days (69 percent);
- in 2014, due to changed Government criteria around HEBs (see next paragraph), their distribution was limited to only one of the six planned months;
- no distributions were planned for the 2014/2015 year.

104. The case of the high-energy biscuits⁹⁹. In 2012 the Central Organization for Standardization and Quality Control (COSQC) issued an instruction (IQS 1847/2012), whereby all foodstuffs entering Iraq should have a maximum shelf-life of nine months and enter the country within the first three months of its shelf life. WFP purchased HEBs with a 24-month shelf-life, consistent with WFP commodity specifications; Iraqi regulations, however, viewed them as 'regular biscuits', to which they applied the nine month maximum rule. As a result of this ruling from January 2014, HEBs were no longer imported into Iraq or allowed to be distributed. HEBs that were already in-country were distributed to 386,621 school children in 1,853 schools. A total of 815 mt of HEBs, which had been held at the port because they did not meet the Iraqi import requirements, were withdrawn and the decision made for them to be destroyed. The consequence of this was that a second tranche of USD17 million that had been transferred to WFP (registered as a Trust Fund) to finance a second round of school feeding was frozen. WFP was informed that the Ministry of Finance would not make a renewed allocation for school feeding until this contribution already given to WFP was returned. A meeting between MoE and WFP held in November 2014 covered two pending issues: the return of USD17 million transferred to WFP, and the reconciliation of WFP and MoE records under the 2012 Agreement. A solution was not forthcoming then, and the case has still not been resolved. As a result of this, since January 2014 the SF activities under PRRO 200035 have been halted, and the Government funds provided to WFP were frozen. The fact that no solution has been found reflects badly on WFP both within government circles as well as with other UN agencies.

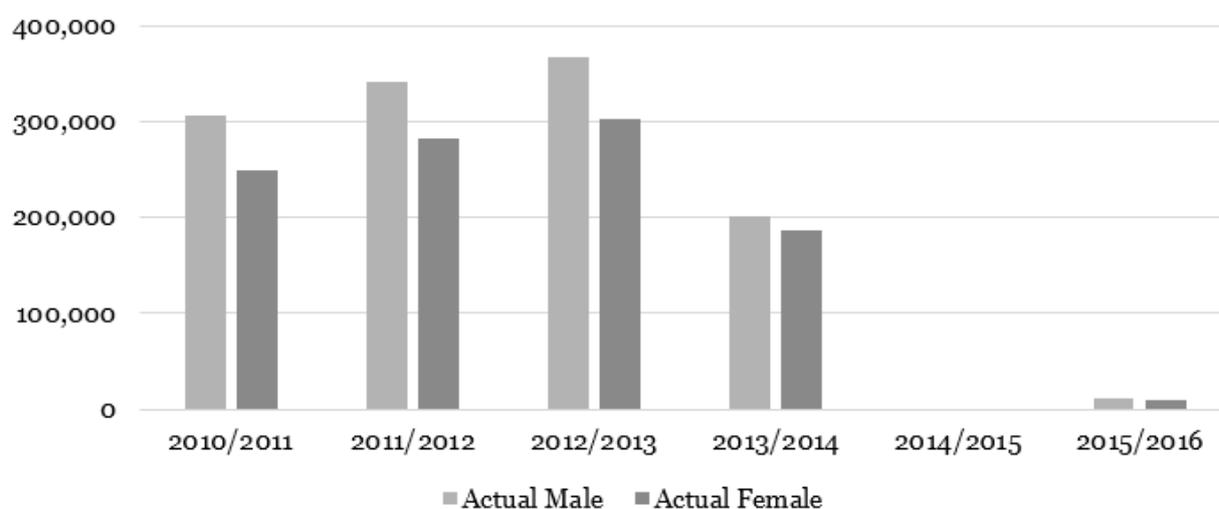
105. SF activities started again (PRRO 200035 BR#8) through a pilot project in Thi Qar, with food financed and procured by WFP for the second half of 2014/2015 school year. It was funded from a remaining balance on WFP's earlier oil-for-food programme, and not by the Government. A new locally-sourced food basket was introduced, consisting of a piece of fruit, bread, cheese, plus milk or fruit juice, providing around 470 kcal per day (26 percent of daily requirements). The total number of days and tonnage (449 mt) was lower than planned (840 mt) due to difficulties with one local caterer, the end of the school year coming sooner than anticipated because of examinations, and religious holidays.

106. Attaining objectives. The SF programme had two objectives, with the first linked to direct implementation (improved attendance and learning achievements, and reduced drop-outs among primary school children), in line with SO4 of the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2011. The second (to support the establishment of a nationally owned school feeding programme) was in line with SO5 of the same Strategic Plan and SO4 of the successive Strategic Plan.

107. With respect to the first objective, there is a gender perspective in that female students tend to leave school before their male counterparts. This can be seen in Figure below which shows the numbers disaggregated by gender. More attention needs to be addressed towards this issue in future interventions (see Gender section below).

⁹⁹ This issue was subject to an investigation by the WFP Office of Inspections and Investigations (report not available to the evaluation team) and an internal audit.

Figure 7: Gender disparity among school feeding beneficiaries, 2010–2015



Sources: 2011–2015 SPRs for PRRO 200035.

108. A detailed work plan was prepared by the CO on the basis of WFP’s eight school feeding quality standards,¹⁰⁰ which described a framework for the implementation of capacity development activities to be conducted in three phases during the period 2011-2013 to instigate and prepare for the handover of the programme to the MoE.

109. Students’ improved attendance and learning achievements. Based on data collected through M&E forms completed by head teachers, two indicators were calculated: the average annual rate of change in the number of children enrolled in assisted schools, and the retention rate, with results as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: School feeding rate of change and retention rates (2011 -2013)

	Annual Targets	2011	2012	2013
Average annual rate of change in number of children enrolled ¹⁰¹	6.0%	4.0%	5.6%	4.0%
Retention rate ¹⁰²	85%	98.0%	98.5%	98.5%

Source: SPRs, WFP CO¹⁰³

110. According to the SPRs, in 2011/2012 the school enrolment increase in WFP-assisted districts was higher than at the national level during the same period, and drop-out of students remained equally low for girls and boys across all assisted districts during both 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 school years. It does not seem that the pipeline breaks that affected the distribution of food (reduced number of feeding days, or of ration size) had an influence on children’s attendance.

111. No quantitative data was collected (for example, a pass rate from one grade to the other) to monitor learning achievements. Nevertheless, anecdotal information from teachers collected by the ET during field visits stressed the improved attention and performance of the children in relation to the consumption of the HEBs.

¹⁰⁰ As set out in WFP’s 2009 School Feeding Policy, WFP/EB.2/2009/4-A

¹⁰¹ According to the WFP Strategic Results Framework (SRF) 2014-2017, the project target should be an annual increase in enrolment rate of girls and boys of 6%.

¹⁰² Project target: retention rate of 85% (SRF 2014-2017).

¹⁰³ Gender disaggregated data is not available for this information.

112. No data was collected in schools previously assisted by WFP after the suspension of school feeding activities in 2014. Eventual decreased enrolment numbers and attendance rates could have highlighted *'a contrario'* the impact of WFP food assistance.

113. Under the first phase of the Thi Qar pilot project (second semester 2015), the positive effects on school attendance were acknowledged to the ET during field visits, as well as the high satisfaction of students, parents, and the local administration. Implementation of this pilot was equally praised by staff in boys' and girls' schools and by their parents. Members of the recently established Project Management Committee recommended a continuation of the project, and the new locally purchased product methodology was suggested as the way forward in the future.

114. Establishment of a nationally-owned SF programme. As part of WFP's capacity development, a TOT workshop was conducted in Erbil in April 2011 for representatives of governorates, the MoE in Baghdad and Erbil, the MoH and MoLSA. Replica sessions were conducted in each governorate. In July 2011 a SF costing workshop was conducted with the aim of supporting the MoE in estimating its budget for SF.

115. In April 2012, the United States-based Global Child Nutrition Foundation helped the WFP CO to organize a study tour of MoE delegates to Washington, D.C., to learn about the US experience with school feeding. Several training courses on school feeding implementation, supply chain management and monitoring and evaluation were also provided during the period.

116. In 2013, a delegation from Iraq was invited to participate in the annual Global Child Nutrition Forum co-hosted by the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil. The Iraqi participation in this Forum was intended to provide members of the delegation with an overview of SF experiences in other participating countries, and facilitate a review of the national status of the Iraqi SF programme. Moreover, it was expected to be an opportunity for the MoE to establish future partnerships, notably with the Government of Brazil, for additional activities on technical assistance.¹⁰⁴

117. Weak institutional memory and high staff turnover in WFP Iraq limited the ET's ability to assess the efficiency of the technical assistance provided in SF. It could not be ascertained how many of the Government staff who benefitted from training and/or from study visits in the United States and in Brazil had been maintained in duty positions dealing with SF issues, and it was not possible to evaluate to what extent any learning is actually being used, applied or implemented by the ministry staff.

118. However, it does seem clear that the provision of capacity development activities has had no impact on progress towards the formulation of a nationally-owned SF framework: in mid-2013, three years after its adoption, WFP CO expressed the need for a revision of the capacity development workplan to further build the leadership and commitment from the MoE. Despite many efforts and duly implemented capacity development activities, the appropriation of a national programme by the Ministry had not materialized at that time. No progress on this issue has yet been made, nor has a hand-over strategy been developed or implemented since then.

Mother and child health and nutrition (MCHN)

119. The MCHN programme was also aligned with the MoH's Nutrition Strategy 2012-2021, which includes objectives to reduce acute and chronic malnutrition as well as

¹⁰⁴ The Centre of Excellence, a partnership between WFP and the Government of Brazil, was created in 2011 to support Governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America in the development of sustainable solutions against hunger, by means of a Programme for Capacity Development. The Centre provides advice on policies and programmes, technical assistance, and opportunities.

targets to reduce low birth weight. The programme objectives address three out of five pillars of WFP’s nutrition policy: the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, the prevention of acute malnutrition, and the prevention of chronic malnutrition. The 2008 CFSVA highlighted high rates of wasting and stunting in specific districts. These were targeted as part of the MCHN programme.¹⁰⁵ However, due to limited funding, the programme start was delayed until May 2012 on a reduced scale, focusing on two of the four components: the treatment of MAM (wasting, weight-for-height) for children 6-59 months of age in districts with the highest levels of wasting, and the prevention of stunting (height-for-age for children 6-23 months of age in districts with the highest levels of stunting). However, it is unclear, other than due to poor funding, how prioritizations to implement the different components of the MCHN programme were made.

120. The MCHN activities did not reach expected output or outcome targets. Recovery rates (70 percent in 2012; 69 percent in 2013) and default rates (29 percent in 2012; 31 percent in 2013) for the treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) did not meet SPHERE targets.¹⁰⁶ Reasons identified for high default rates include: poor awareness of mothers and care-takers, difficulty in reaching health centres from remote rural areas, and poor acceptance of Plumpy by children.

121. Table 8 below provides an overview of the ration size per target group of the MCHN programme.

Table 8: Planned Rations and calorific value per target group of the MCHN programme

Target Group	Ration	Calorific Value (Kcal/pp/day)
Moderately Malnourished 6-59 months (WFH < -2 and >-3 Z score)	Supplementary Plumpy, 92 g/pp/day	491 kcal/day
Prevention of Stunting 6-23 months old children	Plumpy’Doz, 47g/pp/day	251 kcal/day
Prevention of MAM	HEB 183g/pp/day (24-59 mo.) HEB 133g/pp/day (6-23 months) Iodized Salt	825 kcal/day 600 kcal/day
Pregnant and Lactating women	HEB 217g/pp/day Iodized Salt	975 kcal/day

Source: WFP, 2012, Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Programme, Internal Review

122. The Lancet series¹⁰⁷ highlights that the first 1,000 days (from conception to 24 months of age) is the window of opportunity when appropriate complementary feeding, combined with breastfeeding, can ensure that a child’s nutrient needs are met. Therefore, failure to provide a nutrient supplement to pregnant and lactating women is

¹⁰⁵ A Review of the MCHN programme workshop report highlighted these districts and discussed the expansion of the programme to other districts, however, it did not specify how these additional districts would be chosen.

¹⁰⁶ Sphere targets are greater than 75 percent for recovery and less than 15 percent for default.

¹⁰⁷ Black, R., Allen, L., Bhutta, Z., Caulfield, L., de Onis, M., Ezzati, M., Mathers, C. and Rivera, J. 2008. Maternal and child undernutrition: global and regional exposures and health consequences. *The Lancet*, 371 (9608): 243–260.

likely to have reduced the impact of the MCHN programme in preventing stunting in children aged 6-23 months.

123. MCHN activities were targeted to six districts of Iraq based on the highest rates of stunting and wasting from the WFP/Government 2008 CFSVA.¹⁰⁸ Table 9 details the districts and number of Primary Health Care (PHC) centres targeted.

Table 9: Districts and number of PHC Centres targeted by MCHN activities

Governorate	District	Total PHCs	PHCs with nutrition unit	PHCs included in programme
Diyala	Mukdadiya	17	5	3
	Khanaqeen	12	2	2
Qadisiya	Afak	5	4	2
Salah Al din	Balad	8	6	6
Ninewa	Makhmour	8	3	3
Dohuk	Amedie	24	13	8
Total		74	33	24

Source: WFP, 2012, Concept Note, Internal Review of MCHN

124. Table 10 below breaks down the number of female and male children receiving assistance under MCHN and the number of planned versus actual beneficiaries. Initially the programme was due to stop at the end of 2012; however, a carryover of commodities enabled it to function in 2013 after which it ended, with left-over commodities distributed in a camp in Dohuk.¹⁰⁹

Table 10: MCHN beneficiaries: planned vs actual, by programme and gender (2012-2013)

Year	Children 6-59 months Treatment for MAM							Children 6-23 months Prevention of Stunting						
	Planned			Actual			% A vs P	Planned			Actual			% A vs P
	M	F	T	M	F	T		M	F	T	M	Fe	Tl	
2012	11,172	10,728	21,900	7,317	8,057	15,374	70%	6,500	6,500	13,000	10,199	8,248	18,447	142%
2013	0	0	0	2,405	2,314	4,719		10,385	9,724	20,109	0	0	0	

M=males, F=females, T=total

Source: WFP, 2012 and 2013, SPR PRRO 200035

125. During a workshop held to review progress with MoH and WFP staff, three main reasons were given for the high default rate, which were further supported by KIIs and the FGDs held with beneficiaries: (i) the lack of awareness of mothers and care-takers, (ii) remote rural areas in which most of the families lived and the high cost of transportation over long distances, making it difficult to regularly bring their children to the PHCs, and (iii) the taste of Plumpy was not liked by the children.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ WFP, 2012, Concept Note, Internal Review of MCHN.

¹⁰⁹ WFP, 2013, SPR PRRO 200035.

¹¹⁰ WFP, 2013, Internal Review Workshop of MCHN programme Iraq.

126. The low recovery rate is difficult to analyse without data on non-response and re-admissions, and without follow-up. According to a joint guidance issued by UNHCR and WFP, a supplementary take home ration should provide 1,000-1,200 kcal/person/day with 10-12 percent energy from protein.¹¹¹ The ration provided for the treatment of MAM in children aged 6-59 months was less than half this value and feedback from the FGDs suggested that it was shared among other children in the household.¹¹² In addition, FGDs and KIIs suggested that the supplementary Plumpy was poorly accepted by children. These factors are very likely to have reduced the recovery rate of moderately malnourished children.

127. Other issues raised during the review workshop and supported by KII feedback were the need for more staff at PHC centres, more training for staff, better storage facilities for commodities and training on how to enhance acceptability of the Plumpy'Doz with children.¹¹³

128. In addition to the MCHN programme the NRI received support from WFP for publishing and printing various guidelines, including the MOH Nutrition Strategy (2012-2021), and the National Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.

Cash for Work (CFW)

129. The BR#2 (February 2011) of PRRO 200035 introduced cash for work (CFW) as an activity targeting vulnerable households and Iraqi returnees. This built on earlier experiences whereby from May to July 2010 a pilot CFW project was implemented under EMOP 10717¹¹⁴ (which preceded PRRO 200035). A review undertaken by the TPM on these activities¹¹⁵ was positive about the outcomes of the pilot, although it suggested a number of areas for improvement. These included:

- a need for better targeting of IDPs and returnees, as well as women;
- a need for a lower cost-efficiency for CFW than in-kind food distributions;
- a need to extend duration of project activities and improve their cost-efficiency;
- a more careful selection of activities to ensure adherence to selection criteria;
- efforts to increase involvement of the MoLSA for an eventual handover and incorporation of CFW activities into the national social safety net programme.¹¹⁶

130. Responding to the concerns raised by the review, the CFW activities were gradually made more cost efficient through renegotiating agreements with cooperating partners.

131. In February 2011 CFW was implemented in Baghdad and Diyala governorates. The programme provided the Iraqi Dinar equivalent of USD10 to workers and USD13 to team leaders using the Smart Key card mechanism used by the Government. Initially the work was for 66 days; later reduced to 40 days allowing more participants to join the CFW. Table 11 provides a breakdown of CFW beneficiaries by gender and planned versus actual numbers of beneficiaries.

¹¹¹ WFP, UNHCR, 2011, Guidelines for Selective Feeding, The Management of Malnutrition.

¹¹² Guidelines recommend a ration of 92 g/pp/day of Supplementary Plumpy, which was followed by the programme, however, low recovery rates suggest that the sharing of the ration reduced its impact on moderately malnourished children.

¹¹³ WFP, 2013, Internal Review Workshop of MCHN programme Iraq.

¹¹⁴ This EMOP is not covered by the Country Portfolio evaluation but forms the basis for WFP's cash transfer programming in Iraq and the learning from it has influenced current practice.

¹¹⁵ Pilot Cash for Work Programme for Returnee IDPs/Refugees & Host Communities in the Governorate of Diyala, Iraq. Stars Orbit Consultants, November 2010.

¹¹⁶ WFP, 2011, Budget Revision 2 PRRO 200035.

Table 11: CFW beneficiaries: planned versus actual, by gender (2011-2013)

Year	Planned			Actual			Actual vs Planned (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2011	23,250	22,338	45,588	30,025	28,259	58,284	129	127	128
2012	29,619	28,458	58,077	30,747	29,541	60,288	104	104	104
2013	16,228	15,591	31,819	20,743	19,979	40,722	128	128	128
Total	69,097	66,387	135,484	81,515	77,779	159,294	118	117	118

Source: WFP, 2011-2013 SPR PRRO 200035

132. This CFW component of PRRO 200035 consistently supported more beneficiaries than planned, demonstrating the acceptance of the programme by the target population and potential for future long-term public works activities as part of the Government's social safety nets programme. Overall the ET noted¹¹⁷ that the programme was popular with beneficiaries as a source of additional cash that helped meet food and household costs.

133. BR#4 (February 2012) expanded the number of beneficiaries and included the Governorate of Ninewa, reaching a total of 173 communities across the governorates of Baghdad, Diyala and Ninewa.¹¹⁸ The programme targeted vulnerable households but also focused on reaching areas with high concentrations of IDPs and returnees. The latter received unconditional cash transfers in order to facilitate their return and were included, despite not being planned for, based on a request from the Government.¹¹⁹ In addition, this was the only programme between 2010 and 2014 to target the settled Iraqi population and families likely to be hosting IDPs. These groups are not specifically disaggregated in the WFP SPRs and it was therefore not possible to verify these numbers.

134. There was a range of different work activities undertaken in the programme, including road construction, cleaning and painting of public buildings, clearing irrigation schemes and drainage systems, planting trees and arranging kitchen gardens. Community Development Groups (CDGs) were organized to select the beneficiaries and types of CFW activities.¹²⁰ Some KIIs and FGDs suggested that local government officials decided on the targeting, and there were also reports of multiple beneficiaries from the same family.

135. The BR#4 noted that due to coordination with the MoDM and UNHCR 40 percent of beneficiaries of the programme were IDPs or Iraqi returnees. It was also noted that there were some difficulties due to the cultural issues associated with women undertaking hard labour tasks. SPR 2012 stated, 'under the CFW programme, more men participants were targeted than women, due to the hard labour required in the projects implemented under this programme.' However, kitchen garden activities were identified and women cleared grass and weeds from communal areas so as to be included in the programme.

136. The SPR 2012 report also noted that only 24 percent of CDG members, who were expected to choose activities, were women. This is likely to have made it difficult for

¹¹⁷ Through FGDs with beneficiaries and interviews with local authorities.

¹¹⁸ WFP, 2012, SPR PRRO 200035.

¹¹⁹ WFP, 2012, SPR PRRO 200035.

¹²⁰ WFP, 2011, Budget Revision 4 PRRO 200035.

CDGs to choose activities suitable for women. In the FGDs with women in Diyala, they highlighted that the activities chosen for them to participate in were minimal and they thought of the cash as charity. As such, women interviewees did not find the assets created were sustainable, in contrast to feedback from the FGD held with men in Diyala where it was indicated that the assets were sustained beyond the programme, confirmed by local authority interviews.

2.3.1.5. Capacity Development

137. Under PRRO 200035, in September 2013 WFP negotiated, on behalf of MoLSA, USD1.8 million from the Government as a co-financing mechanism to strengthen the authorities' ability to better target vulnerable groups. Key activities were trainings and technical assistance to enhance the collection of quality primary data, although it has been suggested by some WFP staff that the CO lacked the capacity to guide this process. No specific capacity development outcomes were reported. Table 12 details the planned and actual number of MoLSA staff trained.

Table 12: Planned and Actual Participants of Training (2013)

Year	Planned			Actual			% A vs P
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
2013	80	40	120	28	11	39	32.5%

Source: WFP, 2013, SPR PRRO 200035

138. Beyond noting the low level of achievement, the ET was not able to verify the quality and impact of the trainings and whether the trainees had used the training in their subsequent work.

139. In April 2014, the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs expressed interest in taking over WFP's CBT programme for IDPs.¹²¹ Key informant interviews suggested that MoLSA would welcome the re-starting of capacity development activities, particularly in the areas of vulnerability analysis, for the purpose of targeting beneficiaries for vocational training activities that would take them out of poverty. This could be a good opportunity for WFP collaboration with FAO and other United Nations agencies with this specific expertise.

WFP's Humanitarian Response

Immediate Response Rations (IRR) as a part of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM).

140. The IRR/RRM was born out of lessons learned from WFP's experience in implementing IR-EMOP 200729 in Mosul in June 2014. WFP was unable to provide two cycles of distribution of family food parcels (FFPs) to the same displaced population because of a lack of access and an unstable security situation. Some families incurred multiple displacements resulting in the FFPs being left behind, because they were too heavy to carry and the contents needed to be cooked. As such the smaller IRR package was initiated, distributed whenever access was possible. Demonstrating flexibility, WFP also set up field kitchens, when viable, to serve IDPs with immediate food assistance. While not being able to provide repeat distributions WFP did provide lifesaving food assistance to a greater than planned number of IDPs.

¹²¹ WFP, Budget Revision 7 PRRO 200035.

141. As the first line of response for displaced populations on the move, the RRM was highly valued by a broad range of stakeholders for its immediate impact. WFP coordinates its food response with UNICEF, which provides water and hygiene kits, while UNFPA has recently started to provide dignity kits.¹²² The RRM is based on two modalities: the first is distributions done through Cooperating Partners (CP) while the second is direct United Nations delivery. The IRR rations are provided in a pre-packed form, stored with WFP partners.

142. Blanket distribution of IRRs was introduced in BR#1 (August 2014) of EMOP 200677 and was made up of ready-to-eat food items providing the full energy requirements for three days for five people (2,000 kcal/person/day) on the move. It weighed 12 kg and originally had items such as plain biscuits, canned meat, tuna, bread, fava beans, chickpeas, jam, halawa,¹²³ tahini,¹²⁴ and dates.

143. Despite its overall success, some areas of concern were identified: key informants reported that the provision of some of the ready-to-eat items were spoiled, for example the bread. This item was later removed from the IRR package. The current food basket has been adjusted after consultations with beneficiaries.

144. Key informants also reported that in some cases items within the package were found to have passed their expiry date. The IRR package was made up of a number of different items (each with different expiry dates) which were pre-packaged in a box. It was therefore only when the box is opened that CPs can identify if items have expired. This is a labour intensive process for the CPs, and should be addressed at the packaging site in order to reduce the logistical burden on the CPs.

145. Key informants also reported early inefficiencies because WFP and UNICEF had different CPs providing the different elements of support, so distributions of items were not taking place at the same time and were not well coordinated. In some instances WFP triggered a response with a CP without UNICEF doing so, and vice versa. More recently, this was rectified and WFP's and UNICEF's CPs are almost completely aligned.

146. Overall the IRR, as part of the RRM, is seen as an important and vital contribution to life-saving efforts. Donors as well as CPs believe it to be an essential part of the response to the IDP crisis. Cooperating partners also viewed it as an important means for them to access otherwise hard-to-reach areas and enabled them to undertake other activities, such as addressing protection concerns. WFP has established a good network of CPs that provided a broad coverage of these areas.

Family Food Parcels

147. Distribution of FFPs in 2014 and 2015 was planned as a complementary ration to the PDS system and in addition to the immediate one-off distribution by MoDM of one million Iraqi Dinars (about USD900) to all displaced families. However, key informants indicated that coordination with the PDS system generally proved difficult due to inconsistent PDS distributions (delays or incomplete commodity distributions). For example, beneficiary FGDs suggested that recently only one out of the five PDS commodities was being distributed.

148. The FFPs were intended for distribution to IDPs based on 80 percent (1,700 kcal/person/day) of a full ration,¹²⁵ recognizing that markets continued to function in

¹²² <http://www.save-iraq.info/response-plan/rapid-response-mechanism/>

¹²³ A sweet made from sesame paste.

¹²⁴ Sesame paste.

¹²⁵ Following WFP policy instructions which assumes that as the IDP are displaced within their own borders they will have additional coping mechanisms..

areas where IDPs had been displaced, and that IDPs also had their own resources. The FFP ration was calculated based on a family size of five people for 30 days. The ration was provided as a blanket distribution throughout the period under evaluation to all IDPs who could present their PDS card as identification. BR#4 (July 2015) detailed a change in ration (see Annex G), making it more culturally acceptable as well as detailing the complementary ration to be provided alongside the PDS system distribution.¹²⁶ Table 13 below details the ration as planned in the EMOP 200677 project document.

Table 13: Planned FFP Rations EMOP 200677

Commodities	Full FFP Ration (g/person/day)	Commodities	Full FFP Ration (g/person/day)
Wheat Flour	167	Canned Beans	32
Rice	100	Vegetable Oil	30
Bulgur	17	Sugar	33
Pasta	17	Salt	5
Lentils	33		
TOTAL	434		
Total kcal/day	1,706		
% kcal from protein	10.40%		
% kcal from fat	17.80%		
Feeding days per month	30		

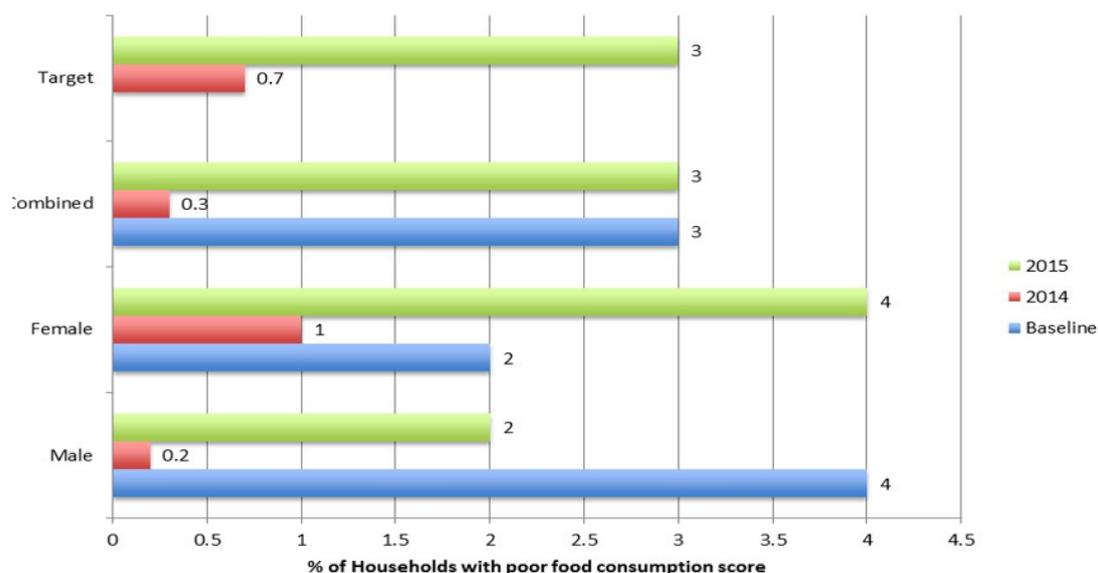
Source: WFP, 2014, Project Document EMOP 200677

149. Figures 8 and 9 below detail the Food Consumption Score (FCS) and Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) measurements against targets, by sex of household head for the IDP population for 2014 and 2015.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ An example of collaboration between WFP and the PDS system: if the PDS system plans to distribute Wheat, WFP would remove this from its ration in order to complement the PDS distribution.

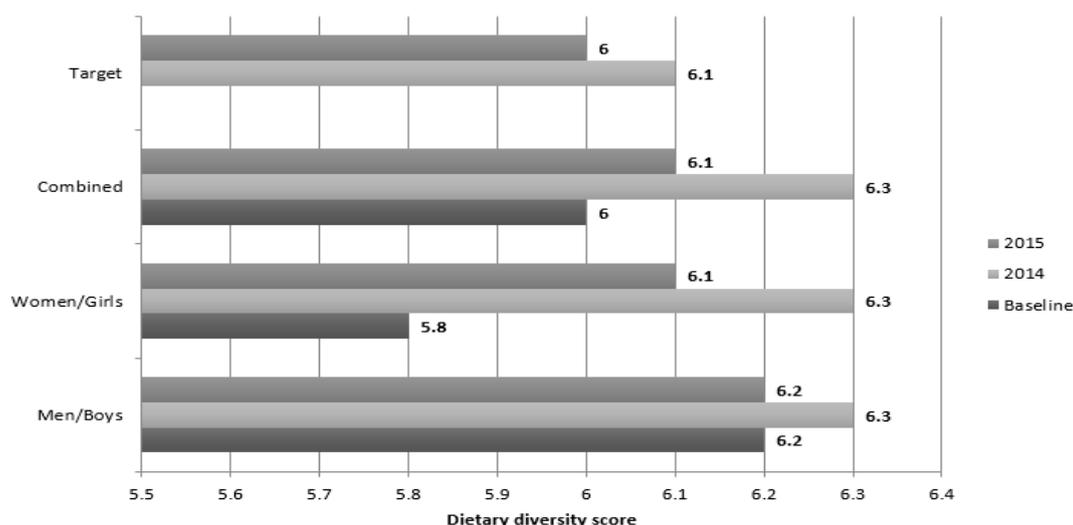
¹²⁷ Note that this data covers recipients of both the FFP and the Voucher programme.

Figure 8:: Food Consumption Scores against targets (2014-2015)



Source 2014 and 2015 SPR for EMOP 200677.

Figure 9: IDPs’ dietary diversity scores, 2014–2015



Sources: 2014 and 2015 SPRs for EMOP 200677.

150. It should be noted that the pre-assistance baseline data collection was only carried out in the south of the country from August to December 2014, while the post distribution monitoring (PDM) data covered all areas where beneficiaries received WFP assistance at least once. As such, care should be taken when interpreting the figures above (which include data that is not fully comparable).

151. In 2014, when the FCS target was 0.7 percent or less of households having a poor FCS, the combined percentage for both male and female-headed households was 0.3 percent. However, this relatively positive outcome masked a discrepancy between groups in that one percent of FHHs had a poor FCS, compared to only 0.2 percent of households headed by men. In 2015, when the target was three percent¹²⁸ of households or less having poor FCSs, the combined level was three percent. Once again this masked

¹²⁸ It is not clear to the ET why a change in target for FCS was made in 2015.

discrepancies between female and male-headed households, with the former having a higher proportion with a poor FCS.

152. The dietary diversity outcomes for male and female-headed households exceeded the targets set by WFP. Data collected on coping strategies suggests that those receiving food assistance from WFP were less likely to use negative coping strategies, demonstrating the effectiveness and impact of WFP food assistance. Households headed by women were slightly more likely to use these negative coping strategies than households headed by men.¹²⁹

153. WFP's only targeting criteria for this programme throughout the portfolio period was IDP status and possession of the Government-controlled PDS card (or a certified identification number).¹³⁰ This latter requirement was deemed essential by WFP as the PDS card held the only unique number identifier within Iraq and therefore offered the only means of preventing beneficiary duplication, given the mobile nature of the population.¹³¹ Exclusion of IDPs without PDS cards,¹³² however, meant that they were not entitled to support by WFP or by the PDS. Although WFP did support these families for two months, to give them time to make the necessary arrangements with the card, this eventually may have led to WFP excluding the most vulnerable in the population.¹³³ While the ET does not have clear evidence to this effect it should be noted that WFP has not studied the issue in detail either, despite being aware of it, as stated in the EMOP 200677 Project Document:¹³⁴ "displaced people do not have access to their regular PDS entitlements as they can only receive the food assistance where they are registered in the programme."

154. The Ministry of Trade (MoT) has announced its intention to address the issue of the replacement of lost ID cards and has permitted the distribution of commodities at IDP locations, but the time taken for beneficiaries to transfer locations can be extensive. To date this continues to be an issue for IDPs.

155. In general, FGDs with beneficiaries reported satisfaction with the FFP ration, although the quality/type¹³⁵ of the rice was a regular complaint. This was also reported in PDM undertaken by Stars Orbit Consultants.¹³⁶ They reported on more than one occasion of beneficiaries' concerns over the "quality" of the rice ration. For example, in March 2015, they reported that, "In 45 percent of the sites, the monitors indicated the quality was good, while in the remaining 55 percent of the sites, particular issues were noted. The most frequently cited issues were related to the quality of the rice and lentils" (paragraph 203).

156. Third-party monitoring (TPM) reported, and evaluation interviews with partners and beneficiaries confirmed, that the distribution process was good and waiting times were acceptable. Beneficiaries particularly appreciated that the food assistance was

¹²⁹ WFP, 2014, SPR, EMOP 200677.

¹³⁰ Targeting criteria was instigated in the third quarter of 2015, and although outside of the CPE scope is reviewed in the targeting section below 2.3.3.1.

¹³¹ In fact WFP later found that the same PDS card number could be present in different governorates. And had to add an additional digit in order to make unique identifier numbers to input into the SCOPE registration database.

¹³² IDPs not having a PDS card can be due to a number of reasons including loss perhaps when fleeing conflict, and new marriages (new families need to register independently). Getting a replacement card often requires travel to Baghdad which in such an insecure context cannot always easily be done.

¹³³ WFP have provided a blanket distribution for those IDPs in locations where freedom of movement is not possible (although this is a small minority).

¹³⁴ From the the EMOP 200677 Project Document.

¹³⁵ While documents and FGD used the term quality of rice and lentils, in fact this is a reference to the type of rice. WFP provided short grain rice, not basmati rice (long grain), which is the rice the majority of the population is accustomed to.

¹³⁶ Stars Orbit Consultants undertake third party monitoring for WFP.

regular, compared to one-off distributions from other organizations. However, there has also been some feedback indicating that beneficiaries had to wait in direct sunlight, as no shaded areas were available for them to shelter under.¹³⁷ Beneficiaries also raised this issue during the FGDs.

157. Through 2014 and the early part of 2015, WFP was well-funded and distribution of the full ration was possible. Only logistical or security issues prevented full rations from being distributed, accounting for the lower than planned tonnage distributed. However, as funding started to run short WFP began, in May 2015, a two-month distribution cycle for FFPs and a gradual reduction in entitlements was initiated. From September onwards, IDPs in central¹³⁸ conflict-affected areas continued to receive full entitlements, while IDPs elsewhere received a selection of two to three commodities, effectively reducing the ration entitlement by more than 50 percent.¹³⁹

158. The BR#4 (July 2015) was almost completely based on efforts to find cost savings, indicating that WFP was trying to meet its commitments. Savings were being made by:

- A change in procurement strategy, through which commodities would be purchased in bulk where possible, instead of already having been packed into the individual FFPs;¹⁴⁰
- A change in food basket for GFD which would retain the nutritional value but make the ration more cost-effective;
- Continuing efforts to link and harmonize food entitlements with the PDS, whereby WFP would seek to provide a complementary (rather than full) ration to PDS recipients.¹⁴¹

159. While WFP tried to make this a gradual shift, beneficiaries at the FGDs suggested it was felt to be an abrupt change and not everyone had been clearly informed. The CPs also noted that it was not always clear what items would be available for distribution and when distributions could take place. However, there was general recognition that this was related to shortfalls in funding and procurement challenges.

Cash-based Transfers

160. During the early part of 2014, CBT modalities were considered inappropriate¹⁴² due to lack of access¹⁴³ for conducting market assessments and to set up a monitoring system. However, in November 2014, WFP started to use vouchers to assist displaced families.¹⁴⁴ The vouchers could be redeemed at selected local shops, empowering families to choose the foods they preferred.

161. IDPs in urban and peri-urban areas of the KRI receiving FFP support were progressively shifted from food to the *value voucher* transfer modality. Initially the voucher was valued at USD26/person/month and was based on the equivalent of a pre-defined food basket that would provide 80 percent of daily energy requirements, although beneficiaries would be able to choose from this list what they purchased from traders.¹⁴⁵ Those IDPs receiving a PDS ration would be entitled to a USD10 value

¹³⁷ Stars Orbit Consultants, 2015, Monthly Reports for March and November.

¹³⁸ Central Iraq is one of the more food insecure areas in Iraq according to the CFSVA 2008 and the report 'Food Deprivation in Iraq'.

¹³⁹ WFP, 2015, SPR EMOP 200677.

¹⁴⁰ The FFPs would then be put together in country.

¹⁴¹ WFP, Budget Revision 4.

¹⁴² Iraq EMOP 200677, Project Document.

¹⁴³ Access issue mainly related to insecurity, however the mobility of the displaced population also made monitoring very difficult.

¹⁴⁴ WFP, 2014, SPR EMOP 200677.

¹⁴⁵ WFP, Budget Revision 3.

voucher complementary to the PDS entitlement. However, as with the FFPs, funding constraints meant that the voucher value was decreased to USD16/person/month and eventually to USD10/person/month.¹⁴⁶

162. Although the system has taken longer than expected to establish,¹⁴⁷ beneficiaries interviewed almost unanimously preferred the vouchers to the in-kind FFP. They reported that vouchers gave them more dignity and the ability to choose items that they needed rather than have a prescribed ration which they would have to partially monetize in order to access cash to purchase other needed items, such as soap and other hygiene goods, or medicines.¹⁴⁸ However, beneficiaries reported that the use of traders meant that some items were more expensive than in traditional markets and in some instances prices were raised prior to a voucher distribution.

163. Staff from the CPs and from WFP noted that there were occasions when vouchers were sold and even redeemed for cash by traders at lower than face value¹⁴⁹. When identified, the CPs and WFP took steps to remove the traders from the programme. Although these cases have been reported to be rare, and while the ET has not seen statistics on this, according to the staff and CPs involved it is unlikely that the impact of these few dishonest traders would be significant.

164. Beneficiaries deemed the process of voucher distribution to be good and well organized. However, similar to the FFP distributions, they reported having to wait in unshaded areas, and there were also reports of CP staff treating beneficiaries with disrespect during distributions. In addition, as a result of the sometimes precarious funding situation, delays in voucher distributions were necessary which meant the vouchers had to be spent within a shorter time frame. Beneficiaries also reported that in some instances the vouchers were not distributed on a monthly basis.

165. Partners indicated that payments to traders were sometimes delayed. Traders tended to purchase large quantities of commodities on credit and were therefore taking on significant financial risk. Although aware of this, WFP needs to take this into account and reduce as much as possible any delays in payments. The ET does recognize, however, that this situation was not always of WFP's making and was at times related to strict international requirements for banking transactions and delayed reporting by the CP.

166. In 2016, WFP switched from providing multiple vouchers based on the number in the household to a single voucher with a total amount. This considerably simplified the work of CPs, although beneficiaries expressed problems with the single voucher approach. For instance, this meant that they would have to do all their purchasing in one visit, limiting their choice if some items were not available on the day of their shopping visit. Furthermore, storage of items in bulk was difficult, particularly when living in a limited space, and for items requiring refrigeration.

167. Towards the end of 2015 WFP began a six-month cash transfer pilot project for 11,000 IDPs in the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI). Looking forward, key informant interviews with all actors and beneficiaries confirmed that cash would be the preferred modality for the future response in Iraq, compared with vouchers and in-kind food distributions.

¹⁴⁶ WFP, 2015, SPR EMOP 200677.

¹⁴⁷ SPR 2014 EMOP 200677: it took longer than anticipated to mobilize cooperating partners, contract shops and establish a distribution network in KRI.

¹⁴⁸ Beneficiaries also noted that they would often sell rations at a loss in terms of value.

¹⁴⁹ This issue was included in the Internal Audit Report of WFP Operations in Iraq AR/16/08

Cross Activity considerations

168. *Humanitarian Principles*: WFP operated in accordance with its commitments to the Humanitarian Principles in providing emergency assistance to all those displaced irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity, although there were concerns about certain ethnic groups not having access to renewed PDS cards, which warrants stronger attention by WFP in future. Efforts were made to ensure the safety of beneficiaries when collecting WFP assistance. Operations were implemented in co-operation with Government counterparts both in Baghdad as well as the authorities in KRI, while maintaining operational independence – at times, implementing changes (for example, the recent targeting exercise) without full Government agreement. However, access to certain occupied areas was prohibited to humanitarian agencies and their local partners.

Targeting the Humanitarian Response

169. Until the end of 2015 WFP provided blanket food assistance in response to the IDP crisis to all those who could present a PDS identification. However, the evaluation team noted that there were some major concerns voiced by KRI Government officials, beneficiaries and WFP staff about the ongoing targeting exercise. While not strictly within the portfolio evaluation period, the repercussions and impact on future programming justified the attention of the evaluation team.

170. A high level VAM mission from WFP HQ in January 2015 noted, “currently all IDPs receive food assistance due to ‘status based’ rather than ‘needs based’ targeting. There is scope for ‘needs based’ targeting given significant socio-economic differences within the IDP communities. Targeting exercises should be undertaken at all IDP locations using criteria informed by the latest food security assessments.”¹⁵⁰ Due to the ongoing insecurity situation, continuous new arrivals and a lack of VAM expertise and staff, this exercise was not undertaken. Instead a demographically-based targeting exercise based on household information gathered by CPs was implemented, with the objective of “reducing the internally displaced people (IDP) caseload by 30 percent by February 2016 in order to provide assistance only to those for whom it will make a critical difference.”¹⁵¹

171. This was belatedly initiated during March 2015 in order to cut costs in line with expected funding levels and to safeguard support for the most vulnerable beneficiaries.¹⁵² A targeting update in November 2015 stated that for households (HHs) to be included in the future distribution lists for WFP, they had to meet one of the following vulnerability criteria:¹⁵³ HHs headed by children or the elderly; HHs with one or more members with a disability; HHs headed by females – mostly widows; HHs who have limited or no access to employment due to their proximity to urban centres. However, a second phase of targeting was to use other criteria such as housing conditions, displacement information, and the ratio of economically active adult members to total members of HHs.

172. The ET understands that in 2016, WFP started to implement targeting based on the last of these three criteria (economically active adult members) in addition to the indicators outlined above.¹⁵⁴ However, this does not factor in that women traditionally are often not allowed to work outside the household, thus potentially excluding those

¹⁵⁰ WFP, 2015, Mission Report Erbil Iraq, Summary Findings and Recommendations.

¹⁵¹ WFP, 2015, WFP Iraq IDP Targeting Strategy

¹⁵² WFP Six Month Strategy, undated.

¹⁵³ In addition to holding a PDS card.

¹⁵⁴ Note that this is different to the intent of the targeting strategy which suggested considering the ratio of males of working age against total number of household members.

HHs with a high female to male ratio from food assistance. The CO programme team has accepted that the demographic formula as applied on a national basis does not make allowances for regional cultural differences, and has recently initiated changes.

173. A further issue that created concern amongst beneficiaries was that there were a number of HHs with salaried Government staff receiving assistance, despite the likelihood that they were less vulnerable.¹⁵⁵ WFP is aware of this, but the Government has not been forthcoming in providing the list of salaried employees, making it difficult to identify and remove them. Where they have been provided, for example from Ninewa Governorate, these HHs have been removed from WFP distribution lists.¹⁵⁶

174. A targeted approach should have commenced earlier, being accepted as a best practice within any emergency response environment, while acknowledging that funding levels inevitably diminish over time. Beneficiaries had become accustomed to a blanket coverage and have had difficulty accepting that some families should receive support when others do not, especially in an environment where the PDS is provided to everyone, rich and poor alike, and even more so when the targeting is not based on household income levels. Due to the recent reduction in available funds, support levels for each individual family have correspondingly reduced, thereby exacerbating the issue in terms of beneficiary acceptance. Greater beneficiary involvement in the process, combined with improved capacity development of CPs would have been beneficial and is an approach that should be adopted for any future similar initiatives.

175. While there has been no CFSVA since 2008 there have been numerous assessment reports that have identified potentially useful targeting indicators. While these all require further examination they include indicators such as IDPs' duration of displacement, income¹⁵⁷ and asset ownership¹⁵⁸ - all of which could be utilized in future targeting refinements.

176. While accepting its intention to be a short-term solution, using demographic criteria to select eligible beneficiaries (and achieve the required 30 percent decrease in caseload due to budget constraints), has achieved its objective, but this methodology should be replaced as soon as possible by a comprehensive targeting system using socio-economic criteria, backed up by a fully staffed WFP CO M&E department that samples beneficiary recipients to ensure the right beneficiaries are receiving the support provided and that CPs are undertaking their tasks as required.

177. Finally, WFP operations are currently predominantly based in KRI where the majority of the IDP caseload has been located since initial displacements began. However, more recently, in terms of food insecurity, returnee vulnerability, and volatility (attempts to retake Falluja and surrounding areas were ongoing at the time of writing this report), Central and Eastern Iraq are potentially areas of equal if not greater need. Within this context populations are being displaced on a daily basis into a dry arid landscape, with no guaranteed access for United Nations agencies (although this is gradually improving over time). Accepting that WFP is currently responding to those newly displaced through the RRM, it would seem logical that once security in the region improves, the organization considers plans for an operational base in the area, available in the short term to deal with ongoing needs of those currently displaced, and in the longer term as a staging point for the support to returnees once they resettle.

¹⁵⁵ Note that despite being salaried, not all civil servants are receiving their salaries.

¹⁵⁶ WFP, 2015, WFP Iraq IDP Targeting Strategy.

¹⁵⁷ Measured through expenditure. REACH, July 2015, Rapid Food Security Assessment of IDPS and Host communities-Kurdish Region of Iraq.

¹⁵⁸ REACH, July 2015, Rapid Food Security Assessment of IDPS and Host communities-Kurdish Region of Iraq.

Monitoring

178. Overall the performance of the CO M&E department within this response has been lacking, mostly due a lack of appropriate long-term staff with the relevant capacity. Instead, a series of temporary duty (TDY) assignments or short term consultants have fulfilled the function, leading to a lack of continuity and vision.

179. Third party monitoring was mainly used in inaccessible areas, though occasionally in more accessible areas when the partner supported WFP in supplementing limited personnel capacity at WFP's satellite offices to handle the monitoring workload, and adjust to the growing monitoring caseload due to increased displacements after January 2014. This partner also conducted post-distribution monitoring (PDM) twice per year in all regions.

180. The TPM's reporting initially was irregular and was not incorporated in such a way that could inform programme decision making and ensure any improvements on gender or protection issues. According to KIIs, the lack of quality monitoring reports was a direct result of a shortfall in M&E staffing within the CO. The absence of a dedicated M&E officer resulted in inconsistent TPM performance, with their monitoring reports considered by many¹⁵⁹ as unreliable and lacking quality controls. Cooperating partners complained that local TPMs were not always responsive at short notice to be present at distributions. While CPs provided monitoring information, the CO did not have a system in place to organize a streamlined process of collecting all monitoring data and reporting on it regularly.

181. Currently, the quality of monitoring data from the third party vendor is being improved as the CO's dedicated M&E officer is working to enhance their data collection capabilities and their reporting quality. Investments in local staff, trained by experienced international staff, should have been made from the start. This is one lesson to be learnt, not only in Iraq but seemingly throughout WFP as an organization.

Supply Chain - Procurement

182. WFP procured a total of 191,400 metric tonnes (mt)¹⁶⁰ of food commodities for Iraq during the period covered by this CPE. Detailed analysis of the procurement returns for Iraq reveals a high degree of expertise has been utilized to achieve a good geographical spread of commodity suppliers, and flexibility in the pricing of commodities, accommodating both delivery terms (DAP¹⁶¹) and types of commodities, with the need to respond in a timely and efficient manner to demands from the field. While the FFP and IRR have proven to be an appropriate and efficient food distribution mode for IDPs on the move, CBT modalities offer interesting savings opportunities which should be explored and tested more thoroughly (see paragraphs 208 and 209).

183. The rations distributed totaled 156,796 mt (82 percent of the total amount of food commodities procured). The rations fall into two major categories: the pre-packed FFPs which were mainly procured from Turkey for a total tonnage of 133,028 mt,¹⁶² and the IR rations¹⁶³ totaling 23,768 mt and exclusively procured from Iraqi traders. The other

¹⁵⁹ Feedback from key informant interviews.

¹⁶⁰ Tonnage extracted from the procurement returns of OPS – WFP Rome. This tonnage figure also comprises consignments on order but not yet delivered, and consignments afloat or in transit, and may therefore differ with the distributed tonnages reported in the SPRs.

¹⁶¹ DAP: delivery at place.

¹⁶² The pre-packed Family Food Parcels (FFP) comprised 65 kg of dry products like rice, wheat flour, lentils, bulgur, beans, sugar and salt. At a later stage a switch was operated from procuring pre-packed parcels to the purchase of breakbulk commodities resulting in a USD6 saving per parcel.

¹⁶³ The Immediate Response Rations comprised an assortment of ready to eat food including canned food for a period of three days.

main commodities were the HEBs procured in Indonesia, the UAE, Turkey and Iraq for a total tonnage of 15,022 mt, and the 10,513 mt wheat flour from Iraq and Turkey.

184. Commodity prices fluctuated in tune with the prices on the world market and availability. Noteworthy is the price for HEBs which fluctuated between USD1,150/mt (from the UAE) and USD2,500/mt (from Iraq). The price per mt for the IRR purchased outside of Iraq fluctuated wildly between USD775/mt and USD 3,467/mt, in line with the content of the parcel. The Government policy to give Iraqi suppliers and traders the exclusive right for the supply of HEB and rations has certainly had a bearing on pricing.

185. Almost 91 percent of the commodities were procured on ‘delivered at place’ (DAP) terms meaning that the supplier was responsible for organizing the transport to the agreed place of delivery inside Iraq. This was mainly the case for all the commodities procured in Turkey, which was (77 percent) by far the biggest supplier of food into Iraq during this CPE period.

186. Numerous complaints were voiced by beneficiaries and other key stakeholders regarding the quality/type of rice, as mentioned earlier. WFP specified the quality to be delivered as five percent broken rice. It is not unusual for rice imported from India and Pakistan to not strictly meet the buyer’s specifications, and tighter controls need to be in place to ensure this important commodity meets required specifications. As mentioned above, batches of tinned food in the IRR were distributed after their expiry date. This may indicate some shortcomings on the part of traders and suppliers in Iraq and highlights the necessity of quality controls by a general superintendence company or a trusted surveyor, even for supplies purchased in the country. Still, these survey reports must not absolve WFP from regular controls, and links between beneficiary feedback and procurement officers also need to be in place.

187. Both the PRRO 200035 and EMOP 200667 were reasonably well funded: respectively 78 percent and 74 percent.¹⁶⁴ Given the highly volatile situation on the ground, both projects had to be regularly updated resulting in a series of BRs: nine for the PRRO 200035 and six for the EMOP 200677. This affected the regularity of the resourcing, causing an inevitable disruption of the procurement process. Adjustment to the frequency of distributions, the recalibration of the ration sizes and commodity substitutions helped to alleviate the impact on the beneficiaries.

Supply Chain - Logistics

188. Logistic operations at the beginning of this CPE period were fairly manageable: the road infrastructure was still in reasonably good condition, ample road transport capacity was readily available at short notice and sufficient warehousing capacity existed at least in the periphery of urban areas. If required, additional support could be drawn from a large number of service providers. As from mid-2014 this promising situation deteriorated significantly, the main constraints stemming from the rapidly changing security situation, the continuous flux of refugees and IDPs, the absence of stable and well-established Government structures and reliable public services, and the frequently-modified official instructions and regulations, all further compounded by widespread corruption.

189. Despite these conditions, WFP’s supply chain managed to dispatch, store and distribute close to 160,000 mt of food commodities in the 18 month period from mid-2014 till the end of 2015 (see Annex H). One of the main features was certainly the drive from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the UNCT and the

¹⁶⁴ As recorded in the SPR 2015.

leading national and international NGOs to close ranks and work together. This is substantiated by many records of monthly meetings reviewing the situation on the ground.¹⁶⁵

190. Despite the prevailing conditions forcing the CO to operate with a skeleton staff out of Amman until the end of 2013, and then out of Baghdad, the sub-offices succeeded in keeping the logistics functioning in compliance with established procedures. Service providers, road hauliers and CPs were unanimous in indicating that the tender procedures, the tender awards, the field level agreement (FLA) negotiations, the payment of invoices and the settlement of claims were all perceived as fair and honest.

191. Road haulage in general caused no problems, with a good supply of road transport capacity. Some drivers were hesitant to drive from the southern to the northern governorates, which required a trans-shipment of commodities from one truck to the other half-way through a transport journey. In general, the road carrier took charge of the trans-shipment operations and delays were contained.

192. Up to 82 percent of the food commodities were routed from Turkey via the northern corridor using the Habur border crossing point¹⁶⁶ and serving primarily the regions around Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah. While the port facilities are rated as excellent at Umm Qasr, the Customs clearance procedures were considered more tedious and lacked the flexibility enjoyed at the Habur crossing in the north. Still the border crossing between Turkey and Iraq takes on average three days, which cannot be considered as a satisfactory situation. With rising insecurity in Anbar governorate the use of the western corridor via Aqaba was abandoned late 2013.

193. Less than one percent of the food commodities were routed via the southern corridor, although this route remained secure and fluid during the entire period under review. This route was perceived (during the CPE review period) as less attractive, with all the attention being directed towards the northern corridor. Although tested and considered expensive and time consuming WFP could perhaps have utilized this southern option to a greater extent to maintain contacts and working relationships should a serious mishap occur along the northern route. WFP with UNICEF recently carried out an extensive survey of the southern corridor, assessing the Iraqi inland route to Baghdad, and the route transiting over Iranian territory, updating at the same time the Logistic Capacity Assessment (LCA) report for Iraq. This joint initiative is noteworthy. The relaxation of the trade embargo regulations with Iran could also open interesting alternatives for the procurement of food commodities.

194. WFP operated a humanitarian flight service (UNHAS) in Iraq under SO 200117. With the withdrawal of the US forces from the country in 2009 the services provided by United States Forces-Iraq also declined, and only UNAMI Embraer aircraft, with a capacity for 30 passengers remained, offering international connections and minimal cover to domestic destinations. It was agreed to restart an UNHAS service to augment the UNAMI flight schedule, and this resumed in early 2011. A Chief Air Transport Officer was appointed to Baghdad, and air passages were offered on a partial cost recovery basis.¹⁶⁷ Though the service was widely appreciated, by early 2012 it had fallen short of the monthly target figure of 800 passengers, with only 368 passengers transported monthly, as shown in Table 14. The service was discontinued in 2012.

¹⁶⁵ Minutes of FSMS (Food Security Monitoring Services), Executive Briefs, VAM reports, Logistic and ETC cluster meetings.

¹⁶⁶ Traffic via northern corridor: 156.126 mt or 82%, western corridor (Aqaba port and Turaybil Border Crossing Point): 10.376 mt or 5%, southern corridor (Umm Qasr) 1.460 mt or 1% and Iraq local procurement: 23.438 mt or 12% for a total of 191.400 mt.

¹⁶⁷ Initially USD300 and USD100 for an international and internal journey respectively. After a year the rate was reduced to USD250 for an international airfare.

Table 14: Planned and Actual Passengers on UNHAS flights (2011 -2012)

Year	Planned (per month)	Actual (per month)	Actual vs. Planned as a percentage
2011	800	738	92.3%
2012	800	368	46.0%

Source: WFP, 2011 & 2012 SO 200117 SPRs

195. Some 33 agencies and organizations made use of the UNHAS service which was eventually funded to the tune of 52 percent. The evaluation did not find any evidence that the stoppage of the flight services in 2012 was considered a serious impediment to humanitarian operations in Iraq.

196. Concurrent with the deteriorating situation in mid-2014, the United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordinator activated the cluster system and as such the WFP-led logistics cluster was established. The declared prime objective of SO 200746 was to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance providing information management and coordination services to the humanitarian community. Coordination centres were set up in both Baghdad and Erbil, combining the facilities of a logistics cluster with those of an information management office.

197. The WFP-led logistics cluster endeavored to meet the many requirements of the Iraq HRP, aligned itself to the RRM and was instrumental in developing the Humanitarian Operations Centres. The CO successfully completed four BRs in rapid succession, extending the operations until the end of 2016, and keeping the programme in line with the ever-changing requirements on the ground. Temporary storage capacity, adjusted in line with demand, was provided, together with complimentary mobile storage units offered on loan to the NGOs. Equipment like pallets and tarpaulins were provided on demand. Cargo clearance services and road transport facilities were also available though the demand for these services was limited. The cluster organized inter-agency humanitarian convoys, the development of contingency capacity and the prepositioning of relief. The cluster also organized (together with USAID/OFDA) the reception of some 29,000 m³ of non-food items, mainly hygiene kits, and their onward distribution with the assistance of IOM, UNICEF and UNFPA.

198. Communication centres (COMCENs) were created in Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah to facilitate interagency communication. The COMCENs established in Baghdad, Erbil and Dohuk provided logistic information, and used GIS services to provide maps, accommodating specific requirements if possible.¹⁶⁸ A dedicated website provided *inter alia* an update on road conditions and newsletters.

199. Stakeholders interviewed were unanimous about the high quality of service provided by the WFP-led Logistics Cluster and the COMCENs. They fulfilled their role as the lynchpin in the humanitarian response system.

200. Upon the activation of the cluster system, and supported through SO 200746, the CO also established an Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), thanks to a USD2 million contribution from the Kuwaiti Government. The deployment of an emergency team of telecom specialists provided the entire humanitarian community with reliable communication facilities from mid-2014. The ETC worked with the three

¹⁶⁸ Though the GIS mapping service is recognized as the domain of WFP, OCHA felt it appropriate to set up its own mapping services. No underlying reason was given for this move.

radio communication centres in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah, as well as providing Internet services at Arbat and Domiz camps.¹⁶⁹ The Ericsson Group made Internet broadband equipment available in the camps, illustrating the tangible relationship existing between the group and WFP.

201. The range of ETC services comprised radio programming, permanent VHF radio room services and Internet connectivity. The ETC in Iraq operates in close cooperation with UNAMI providing valuable assistance with the clearance of imported radio equipment at Erbil airport and support in obtaining the necessary radio frequencies and broadband. The cooperation with UNAMI works both ways, since the ETC provides staff and equipment to the UNAMI radio room. The ETC services were unanimously appreciated by all United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations, all acknowledging that the ETC facilities greatly enhanced the coordination of their respective activities.

202. The ETC delivered radio training to approximately 100 United Nations and NGO staff/radio operators on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that correct radio protocol was consistently followed by all users. It configured more than 245 individual radios of United Nations agencies and NGOs with a standard program compatible with both digital and analog radio networks. National and local ETC meetings were held at regular intervals.

Efficiency and costing.

203. During the period covered by this CPE, the CO procured internationally a total of 191,400 metric tonnes (mt)¹⁷⁰ of food commodities and distributed cash-based transfers for a total value of US \$80,871,893. The overall net cost per mt of food commodities fluctuated between approximately USD800 and USD1,000¹⁷¹ (see Annex B for cost calculations). These figures are some 30 to 40 percent above the corporate average. The large share of more expensive FFP and IRR rations (82 percent of the total tonnage) and the DAP trade terms, including most of the outside and inside Iraq transport costs, explain this mark up.

204. The decision to switch from a pre-packed food parcels for the FFP to a break-bulk formula¹⁷², entailing a 15 percent saving, indicates the oversight given to the supply chain management. Given the volatile situation prevailing from mid-2014, the application of DAP trade terms was a prudent move, leaving responsibility for delivery of the food consignments with the supplier. The external transport costs (sea freight) were negligible considering the small tonnages routed via Aqaba and Umm Qasr ports.¹⁷³

205. The distribution costs for the EMOP 200677, taking the landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) and the other direct operational (ODOC) costs together, stand at USD209.52/mt and are close to the corporate average. For the PRRO 200035 and the IR-EMOP 200729 the combined LTSH and ODOC costs are however high with USD588.55 and USD659.08 per mt respectively. The apportionment of the FLA rates

¹⁶⁹ Serving 146 registered users in Arbat area and 34 users in the Domiz area.

¹⁷⁰ Tonnage extracted from the procurement returns of OPS – WFP Rome. This tonnage figure also comprises consignments on order but not yet delivered, and consignments afloat or in transit, and may therefore differ with the distributed tonnages reported in the SPRs.

¹⁷¹ Discounting the IR-EMOP 200667 which had only a very small tonnage (550 mt) activated, the food cost per mt varied between USD800 and USD900

¹⁷² Break-bulk formula refers to the packaging of food in small, separable units

¹⁷³ Tonnage routed via Aqaba port: 10,376 mt, via Umm Qasr port: 1,460 mt amounting to 6% of the total tonnage activated. Average sea freight: USD32.58/mt.

negotiated with the CPs between the LTSH and ODOC cost categories is not always consistent and evident.

206. The key figures in Table 15 are indicative of the comparative efficiencies achieved between modalities.¹⁷⁴ Cash-based transfers proved to be more cost-efficient than food. The cost¹⁷⁵ to distribute a net value of USD100 of CBT was between three and seven times lower than the cost for distributing an equal net value of food. Moreover, CBT distribution costs under EMOP 200677 showed a saving of almost 31 percent (USD11.55 down to USD7.84), compared with similar costs under PRRO 200035. This reduction reflected measures taken by the CO to control costs.

Table 15: Costing by operation (2010-2015)

	PRRO 200035	IR-EMOP 200663	EMOP 200677	IR-EMOP 200729
Food commodities distributed	13,570 mt	756 mt	151,609 mt	550 mt
Total food cost in USD	10,780,639	579,965	129,745,028	549,319
Food cost per mt in USD	794	767	856	999
Total operational cost excluding food cost in USD	8,428,442	222,062	31,796,361	362,443
Total direct cost per USD100 net value food distributed	78.19	38.29	24.51	65.98
USD net value C&V distributed	8,931,430		71,773,978	
Bank & distribution cost in USD	1,031,270		5,622,499	
Total direct cost per USD100 net value C&V distributed.	11.55		7.84	

Source: Analysis of WFP procurement and COMPAS extracts – SPRs and financial information supplied by CO.

207. From Table 15, it can be concluded that:

- The direct operational costs (DOC) to distribute food with a value of USD100 tends to decrease substantially with the tonnage activated (economy of scale);
- The modalities of more intricate food distributions, like school feeding or support during emergency situations, have a direct bearing, often inflationary, on distribution costs;
- The DOC to distribute a net value of USD100 of CBT is between three and seven times lower than the cost for distributing an equal net value of food;
- As is the case for food distribution, the unit cost of distributing CBT tends to decrease as volume rises;
- The CBT distribution cost recorded in the EMOP 200677 shows a substantial decrease in comparison with the costs recorded under PRRO 200035: from USD11.55 down to USD7.84 or a saving of almost 31 percent. This reduction reflects the corrective measures taken by the CO to keep costs under control.

¹⁷⁴ See Annex B for full calculations.

¹⁷⁵ Direct Operating Cost (DOC)

208. The direct support costs (DSC, or fixed overhead costs) and indirect support costs (ISC) must also be added to the distribution costs for the full picture. This confirms the conclusion that the distribution of CBT is more efficient when looking at the final US dollar value transferred to the beneficiaries. The amount of DSC or fixed overhead costs per USD100 of DOC or services provided and extended to the beneficiaries is also an indication of the level of efficiency attained by the management, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Total DOC and DSC by programme (2010-2015)

	PRRO 200035	IR-EMOP 200663	EMOP 200677	IR-EMOP 200729	SO 200117	SO 200746
Total DOC in USD	29,493,507	802,027	239,571,197	911,762	6,201,953	3,908,445
Total DSC in USD	15,448,131	78,992	27,661,132	90,870	1,978,220	507,682
DSC per USD100 of DOC	52.38	9.84	11.55	9.97	31.90	12.99

Source: 2015 SPRs

209. From above, it can be concluded that:

- The implementation of the PRRO 200035 met with several problems such as the discussions around the HEB, the measures imposed by the Government to resort solely to local manufacturers/traders, and difficulties encountered with the start-up of the CBT distribution. These setbacks affected the output/volume of food and Cash and Voucher services extended to the beneficiaries and accounted for under DOC. With little or no opportunity for the CO to compress its fixed cost or DSC, this situation is ultimately reflected in a high level of DSC (USD 52.38) per USD 100 of output or services (food and CBT).
- For the other programmes the level of DSC per USD100 worth of DOC is in line with the corporate average.¹⁷⁶

Human Resources (HR)

210. Although designated as a L3 emergency, interviews with senior management, as well as programme staff, strongly indicated that operations were under-resourced in terms of experienced staff over the duration of the emergency response period, particularly with respect to long term staff in key positions such as M&E and VAM, as well as extended periods without an Emergency Coordinator, a Deputy Country Director, and a Head of Programmes.

211. Many short-term TDY staff deployed to the operation, but feedback to the evaluation indicated that at times those deployed have lacked appropriate experience, and their high turnover and relatively short periods of deployment (typically three months or less) created a situation that has been blamed for hindering efforts to conduct vulnerability assessments among IDPs and the targeting and selection of beneficiaries. Capacity development was also compromised due to the high numbers of TDYs. The lack of a fully functioning M&E unit has affected levels of feedback from field operations, and a lack of senior support staff at the CO office, were cited by some as reasons for not feeling fully supported by the HR and Finance functions.

212. Staffing issues have inevitably had an impact on operational efficiency, as mentioned by a number of CPs who expressed concern about the high turnover of WFP staff, and therefore a lack of consistency in approaches and decision-making from the WFP office. In the online survey undertaken with former and current WFP staff, most respondents identified staff shortages as a key detractor from implementing operations

¹⁷⁶ To compare with DSC per USD100 worth of DOC extracted from CPE Mauritania: CP 200251: USD9.04; PRRO 200474: USD12.57; PRRO 200640: USD12.51; IR-EMOP 200401: USD19.00; IR-EMOP 200333 : USD17.37.

successfully. One complaint is that consultant roles, even those who have stayed for a significant length of time, are not given the appropriate level of authority to fulfil their duties. The issue expressed by staff is less about finding candidates for short-term deployments but more in terms of delays in recruitment for longer term positions.

213. The recruitment processes adopted during this emergency response need to be reviewed in order to establish why so many difficulties were encountered, specifically in terms of the slow recruitment procedures regarding longer-term staff in an L3 response when deployments need to be fast tracked, and why so many gaps in senior positions have been left open. The question of why the reassignment of staff takes so long to process needs to be looked into within this review. Having staff on a standby roster could possibly help resolve these delays. Medicals for incoming staff and visa requirements have also seemed to slow the process. It is understandable that Iraq may not have been seen as an attractive posting, although innovative inducements regarding future postings or additional incentives could have been offered.

Gender and Protection

214. From the feedback received and from observations of operational activities, it was evident that the incorporation of good gender practices into operational activities was weak throughout the evaluation period, and that WFP Iraq had not been able to sufficiently integrate corporate commitments on gender into programme design, monitoring and reporting, or advocacy. The small size of the CO before the start of the large-scale emergency operations, and considerable staffing shortages during the planning and implementation of the EMOPs, contributed to this lack of support for gender mainstreaming.

215. The school feeding planning and implementation were not based on any gender analysis. The programme as implemented lacked evidence that it supported bridging existing gender gaps.

216. The findings of surveys conducted prior to the formulation of the National Development Plan 2013-2017 showed that the Iraqi education system is influenced by the cultural systems and social customs and traditions that continuously prevent women from pursuing their education, and reflected disparities in the delivery of education services. This pattern is reflected in the SF programme, as seen in Figure 7 above.

217. Although gender disparity has been repeatedly underlined as a challenge in WFP and Government documents, feedback to date and meetings in the field indicate that the CO has made little progress in addressing this challenge and activities have not yet translated into measures to provide a specific incentive for girls to enrol and regularly attend school. This could have been, for example, a combination of in-school feeding support and family take home rations, particularly for girls in the last primary grades, in rural areas, which has been implemented by WFP in many other countries. The main problem is that in remote areas where school enrolment for girls significantly lagged behind boys there is little interest in educating girls after a certain age when culturally they are expected to contribute more to activities at home.

218. The lack of consistent M&E data for GFD programmes indicates that the CO had limited abilities to assess gender-based issues during the distributions. Until January 2015, there was, for instance, no staff member in the CO nominated as focal point on gender and protection issues. According to key informants, the duties of this position were not fulfilled by anyone. Coupled with this issue the inconsistent monitoring (distribution and post distribution) for IRR, FFP and vouchers highlights the lack of visibility of gender related issues until then.

219. Since January 2015, gender considerations have increased greatly where the CO implemented a system of cycling all documentation through the Communication with Communities (CwC) and Gender Officer to ensure the perspective of gender, accountability and protection were taken into account. Gender and protection assessments are now taking place in conjunction with feasibility studies of other modalities, such as cash transfers.

220. The need to present a PDS card at distribution sites in order to receive assistance remains a possible vulnerability issue as mentioned earlier. There is a concern among local government officials and cooperating partners that a small number of IDPs from certain ethnic groups or minorities cannot produce a PDS card at distribution sites because of official policies that discriminate against their ability to get one. WFP needs to be careful to ensure that if such discrimination exists they act to counter this approach, in line with WFP's obligations to the humanitarian principle of impartiality. Another protection concern for certain minority IDPs is that if they either show a PDS card or try to replace a lost card then they may be forced to relocate.

221. Almost all beneficiaries expressed feeling safe while collecting their entitlements, although some said they sometimes felt unsafe in overcrowded shops after receiving vouchers (because all beneficiaries from one location will rush to a few selected shops to use their vouchers right after distribution), and were concerned that at a large distribution gathering they were susceptible to an attack from Daesh.

Communicating with Beneficiaries

222. Communication with beneficiaries has been inconsistent and variable across the different programme areas during the evaluation period.¹⁷⁷ For example, in the MCHN programme, mothers said they were unaware of how to use and keep the Plumpy'Doz and they did not receive the right training on how to improve its acceptability with their children. With this key component lacking, the programme would have difficulty succeeding. Key informants commented on this, highlighting the link between good communication with beneficiaries and successful programme implementation.

223. In school feeding, it is known from elsewhere that the success of these activities relies partly on the participation of beneficiary communities represented by food management committees consisting of parents, teachers, and students.¹⁷⁸ A strong community participation and ownership was one of the eight school feeding quality standards identified by the 2009 WFP school feeding policy, transformed into five policy goals after its revision in 2013.¹⁷⁹

224. In Iraq, beneficiary communities were not involved in the design of the school feeding programme, nor did/do they play a role in its implementation and monitoring. At the FGDs, parents confirmed that their participation in school feeding activities was weak or non-existent as their roles and responsibilities were not established, particularly regarding food management and distribution.

225. A more participatory approach has been developed with the pilot project in Thi Qar, though even here mothers indicated that they were not consulted or asked about the contents of the food basket. Although on the one hand they agreed that they liked its

¹⁷⁷ The ET acknowledges that there is currently considerable efforts made to improve CO performance on this issue. Matters related to ongoing targeting activities have been included even though they are outside of the evaluation focus period.

¹⁷⁸ Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development and the Education Sector, by Donald Bundy et al., WFP/The World Bank, 2009.

¹⁷⁹ Revised School Feeding Policy, WFP/EB.2/2013/4-C.

content and believed it contained a good meal, there are likely to be local preferences.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, school staff mentioned being part of the discussion on determining the content of the food basket and the logistics of distributing the meals at their schools. Communication with beneficiaries concerning emergency operations involved dealing with communication via the cooperating partners, IDP camp management, and complaint mechanisms. During FGDs, beneficiaries reported complaining to both the CPs and camp management about the quality of certain items, and had used complaint hotlines. They said some of these complaints were heard and addressed, but they also complained that there was frequently no response.

226. This usage of the complaint mechanisms and hotlines is indicative that beneficiaries have understood the information received on how and where to communicate complaints. Based on KIIs, many complaints were about changing the form of the assistance (from in-kind to voucher, for example) or requesting different or additional food items, which would explain why some complaints were left unresolved.

227. Communicating the specific details of the form of assistance would have been addressed either by CPs or camp management. Ensuring that CPs and camp managers are providing the appropriate information to manage the expectations of beneficiaries is a necessary step that may require additional CwC scoping and support. The trickle down of information provided via the Government is the weak link in this process. The assumption that higher level officials will inform local authorities or government appointed community leaders seems optimistic. There is a need for clear roles and responsibilities as to who will liaise and inform at this level as this is outside the remit of the CWC officer.

228. Almost all IDP beneficiaries interviewed said they were not consulted or asked about the contents of the FFPs, and also indicated that they had not been advised or consulted about changes to their rations before distribution. During FGDs, some beneficiaries complained of not knowing what items would be missing from their rations and what may change.

229. Another issue raised by a number of beneficiaries was confusion about timing of distributions. This complaint varied across CPs and across camps. Many locations reported receiving timely SMS notifications on changes to distributions; others complained about not being informed early enough rather than not being informed at all. This is a challenging issue as announcing distribution times needs to ensure safety and protection of beneficiaries, which is accomplished by not announcing distribution times well in advance. Some voucher recipients faced a similar issue with changes to the value of the voucher, mentioning that they were not informed ahead of time of the decreasing value.

230. The quality/type of rice remained an unresolved issue, and was a topic frequently mentioned by beneficiaries, local government officials and CPs. While most staff acknowledged knowing about the complaint, there had been no conversation about how to communicate a resolution or a response back to CPs and to beneficiaries.

231. It is important to note that during ration and voucher distributions, CPs provided complaint hotlines to beneficiaries. Beneficiaries also had access to a separate United Nations complaint hotline (where feedback about WFP programmes was in the majority), assuming they were aware of the mechanism. Between January and April

¹⁸⁰ For example, dairy breeding parents in some locations requested that milk not be given with the meal as this was available for the children at home. In this instance they would have preferred a fruit juice to be provided

2015, 48 percent of IDPs did not have information on existing complaint mechanisms,¹⁸¹ though this trend may be changing. During the ET's FGDs, beneficiaries were aware of at least one form of complaint mechanism and many mentioned that CPs offered a complaint desk at the end of a distribution line where they could register complaints.

232. Since January 2015, the WFP CwC officer started working with beneficiaries to understand information gaps and enhance beneficiary communication. The CPs have also responded with improved beneficiary communication, many reporting making efforts to be more consistent with their communication towards beneficiaries, and reporting back to WFP sub-offices on how they are disseminating messages.

Co-operating partners

233. The general feedback from the CPs was that co-operation between themselves and WFP had been good. Some concerns were raised regarding the short duration of the FLAs (sometimes three months or less), which have created problems of staff retention and operational continuity within their organizations. Other issues were around the CPs not feeling they were in a true partnership but were treated more like implementers on behalf of WFP, where communications arrive at the last minute, and additional information requests or changes to clauses in FLAs are commonplace. They would also like to have received some capacity development support in areas where they lack expertise.

234. A more participatory and inclusive approach needs to be adopted in future that uses CPs' local knowledge (especially that of local NGOs) and incorporates their input into future programme design and planning. This would increase ownership on the part of the CPs and potentially improve programmatic performance and beneficiary satisfaction.

¹⁸¹ CwC baseline survey among in-camp and out-of-camp beneficiaries between January 2015 – April 2015.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. Overall Assessment

235. Overall, WFP interventions during the evaluation period were well-aligned with emergency humanitarian needs, as well as the Government of Iraq's and donors' policies and objectives to address ongoing social safety net and developmental needs. WFP used its comparative advantage and large logistical expertise to support a significant number of IDPs across a broad geographical area. It positioned itself strategically alongside its United Nations counterparts, both responding to the immediate humanitarian needs and promoting and introducing more flexible support modalities.

236. Safety net activities have been less successful, with activities having been placed on hold or falling short of expectations. The strategic shift from capacity development activities that were no longer feasible, towards the ongoing Level 3 emergency interventions required recent decision making to be more operational. In this respect the CO has shown itself to be both flexible and solution-focused. Scaling up from a relatively small country operation in order to respond to a complex L3 humanitarian crisis has not been easy. Above all the main shortcoming has been the organization's inability to follow up short-term deployments with the necessary long-term staff of the appropriate calibre and experience in a timely manner.

237. A shortage of funding, a lack of governmental ownership of the necessary reform agenda and the suspension of activities related to the HEB issue, have all contributed to the early curtailment of WFP's capacity development safety nets activities, leaving the 2010-2014 CS somewhat redundant. The PDS development programme was ill-conceived, and efforts to improve the efficiency of supply chain management through trainings and the transfer of technology were misguided. The forthcoming 2016 CFSVA should provide a clearer basis for future interventions, which should go some way to satisfy donor requirements in this respect.

Relevance, Coherence, and Appropriateness

238. From the outset of the 2010-2014 CS to the present day, WFP's approach to the development needs of national safety nets (for example, the vocational training planned through MoLSA, the school feeding and MCHN programmes, and the intended capacity development of the MoT's PDS) has remained relevant to national developmental needs, and coherent with national policies and objectives. The same can be said for its provision of IRRs, FFPs and cash/vouchers to the Daesh-created IDP crisis in terms of meeting beneficiary needs and providing support to the Government. As the support changes from in-kind commodities, to vouchers, to direct cash support, the more flexible this intervention becomes, and therefore the more appropriate to beneficiary requirements.

239. Significant operational partnerships have been formulated with other United Nations Agencies (UNICEF and UNFPA within the RRM; with UNHCR regarding cash transfers; and with FAO on assessments) as well as with donors (ECHO, USAID etc.) and with co-operating partners. The coherence on communal goals and objectives with such partners is evident in that the EMOPs have been relatively well funded. WFP remains in alignment with key donor priorities, whose focus is towards the provision of NGO support through CBT modalities and lifesaving activities, both of which match WFP's current focus, future potential and organizational mandate. Strategic partnerships already established will facilitate a strong forward momentum as the CO heads towards new leadership and a new country strategy. The CS will need to balance ongoing support to those displaced by conflict with meeting the capacity development

needs of a Government that lacks public confidence and is currently undergoing an internal restructuring.

Effectiveness

240. The effectiveness of the WFP operations has been variable. The immediate provision of short-term emergency support, as well as the long-term support to displaced communities, is WFP's principal positive output during the evaluation period, showing good flexibility and responsiveness. However, this is offset by their inability to implement the PRRO capacity development and safety net activities.

241. The success of the emergency response activities illustrates that WFP has very much based the interventions on its comparative advantage, which currently lies with its logistical capacity and its network of operational partners. This may soon be supplemented as WFP's central role in CBT modalities progresses. WFP's in-country experience with cash transfers should place it at a strategic advantage over other actors in future cash transfer programming in Iraq. This, coupled with the SCOPE database and the new SCOPE card, and the possibility for multiple agencies to transfer their support to an individual family using that one mechanism, should ensure that WFP is well placed among both the United Nations and Government actors wishing to use a cash transfer modality.

242. PRRO safety net activities are clearly an area that needs attention in order to get activities back on track. Resolution of the long-running HEB issue needs to be prioritized, not only to repair the credibility of WFP within the MoE and other Government ministries, but also in terms of restoring WFP's reputation amongst some of its fellow United Nations agencies. The CO needs to resolve this issue so it can return to a normal operational standing. Without doing so, developmental and safety net activities will remain on hold or will operate only on a small scale. Responsibility within WFP corporately for resolving this impasse and a deadline for its resolution need to be formulated with utmost urgency - this issue has dragged on for too long. The lack of urgency in this matter does not reflect well on WFP as an organization, illustrating either a lack of commitment to the school feeding programme itself, a loss of humanitarian imperative, or an inability to make important decisions.

243. The pilot Thi Qar school feeding project has provided a model of local procurement procedures that could provide the basis for future school feeding programmes, whereby a selection of healthy nutritious items are provided on a daily basis. This has been well accepted by all stakeholders involved, including the MoE which is willing to move forward in this manner.

244. The overhaul of the PDS, as proposed in the DEV 200035, did not go well. The necessary commitment within the Government towards reform was seemingly not there. Improving the functionality of the PDS remains a possibility, but the Government of Iraq must take ownership of the process, including committing its own funding to agreed capacity development activities. The possibility of sharing targeted beneficiary lists through the use of the SCOPE system could be beneficial to future operations. As in all other safety net development activities, WFP should play an enabling capacity development role rather than an implementing one.

245. At the time of the evaluation there was no up to date information on the nutrition status of the population. The CVFSA planned for 2016 will provide a basis for any future efforts to address MAM or stunting, providing an analysis of food insecurity and nutrition status in country. Government agencies such as MoLSA are very willing to undertake vocational training and CFW/CFA, as is the MoH/NRI willing to support any

CMAM interventions. As in all other capacity development interventions, implementation practices need to see greater ownership within Government departments than currently exists, and there needs to be increased awareness amongst Government staff of intervention modalities and the utilization of nutritional products provided.

Efficiency

246. In terms of the efficiency with which the required emergency operations commodities have been imported and transported to the beneficiaries, the operation has shown great expertise and commitment even if the cost of operations in Iraq can be seen as higher than average globally (being some 30 to 40 percent above the corporate average). This was due to the more expensive FFP and IRR rations dominating procurement (82 percent of the total tonnage) and the DAP trade terms. The decision to switch from a pre-packed formula for the FFP to a break-bulk formula, entailing a 15 percent saving, was a positive move. CBT modalities, however, have proven substantially more efficient in terms of costs. In view of the possible substantial cost saving opportunities and increased efficacy it would also be advisable to monitor closely the CBT distribution costs versus the food distribution costs.

247. Logistical support provided during the course of the intervention has generally been well managed. Feedback from partners and providers has been generally positive. Services provided by the logistics and ET clusters have been extremely valuable in supporting the activities of the entire humanitarian community and again have been overwhelmingly well received.

248. With respect to the targeting of IDP support, a number of donors expressed their desire to see future WFP interventions based on solid assessments and primary data. One lesson to be learnt for future operations should be that targeting commence as early as possible in any MIC response, as inevitably some of the IDPs will be financially secure, and the reality that funding levels will always diminish over time should be anticipated.

249. Co-operating partners and local authorities are somewhat disillusioned with the current demographic targeting process; a more effective participatory approach in such matters would increase stakeholder ownership of decisions undertaken, and increase their willingness to solve problems collectively. As soon as possible, targeting needs to shift from this desk-based approach to one based on a comprehensive household economic security assessment and the 2016 CFSVA. Generally, the CO should make greater efforts to communicate in a timely manner with partners and beneficiaries and discuss issues on a more equal footing. Communication and accountability to beneficiaries through official channels also needs to be improved so that targeting decisions can be more easily disseminated and understood.

250. Despite being a designated L3 humanitarian crisis, staffing issues have had negative effects on operations. The reliance on numerous short-term TDY staff deployed to the operation has had a detrimental impact. The inability of the organization to recruit or relocate senior staff into an L3 response needs to be reviewed. This high turnover of staff inevitably had an impact on operational efficiency, as mentioned by a number of CPs. Capacity development of local staff who will eventually replace the international staff, who invariably remain in post while the expatriate staff move on, in order to should be undertaken as a matter of best practice in future interventions.

Impact

251. Due to the lack of baseline studies and ongoing beneficiary assessment data, it is not possible within the parameters of this CPE to fully assess the impact of the FFP emergency food and voucher support. One concern is the feedback received that, broadly speaking, food security is not considered a major issue in KRI, although this to some extent must correlate to the WFP and humanitarian aid community support provided. The need for a detailed household economic assessment that can be monitored over time is again evident as this would enable vulnerability levels to be measured more clearly, and coping mechanisms to be tracked over time. The need for more effective monitoring and beneficiary feedback mechanisms is evident here as well.

252. As the safety net activities have not proceeded as planned, their impact cannot be evaluated. Across all capacity development activities it is difficult to assess the impact of training and support provision on safety net programmes. In future such trainings need to have clear objectives and measurable follow up indicators to ensure that intended results have been achieved. The school feeding activities did run as planned for three years with some positive results. However, more needs to be done to reduce the gender disparity in terms of school attendance in remote communities.

Connectedness and sustainability

253. There is a clear connectedness between the ongoing PRRO activities and the longer term development objectives of the Government of Iraq (acknowledging that the main component—school feeding—remains suspended), although evidently there are a number of performance and integrity issues to be resolved. Iraq's status as a MIC will always deter international donors from supporting such activities, especially with the Government currently in turmoil, and particularly as ongoing corruption allegations and reform are major political issues. Ownership within the Government is therefore a key prerequisite for such capacity development activities to succeed, as well as the internal funding of such initiatives.

Gender and Protection

254. Operations during the evaluation period have not taken into account gender considerations to any significant extent. This is evident across all activities, from the lack of measures to offset gender disparities in the school feeding programme, to the lack of consideration of women's roles in Iraqi society when putting together the demographic criteria for the recent targeting exercise. In a country with a poor record on women's rights, gender issues need to be clearly considered and incorporated at all levels of operational design and implementation.

255. In terms of protection work within the response it can be seen that efforts were made to ensure the safety of everyone when collecting food or vouchers. However, with the intended transfer over to a cash transfer modality WFP needs to look at the gender and protection aspects of such a move. This will not only affect WFP but all humanitarian and government agencies that provide such support, justifying a coordinated response and a unified approach. For instance, the cash sector could benefit from a consortium of agencies that would advocate on behalf of the beneficiaries to ensure that their safety is approached in a consistent manner.

3.2. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: With support from the regional bureau, the country office should start preparing the next CS before the end of 2016. The strategy should

acknowledge the protracted nature of the conflict in Iraq and predict displacements over the next three years. It should incorporate a mid-term review process to track progress and ensure relevancy. The following should be included:

- i) a package of activities that includes continuation of WFP's ongoing support to IDPs and emergency life-saving activities – immediate-response rations – and continued management of the WFP-led clusters;
- ii) reoriented capacity development interventions for targeted safety net programmes in food-insecure areas. Activities should be coordinated with those of other major actors, with a new emphasis on vocational training and cash transfer modalities, through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The possible regeneration of school feeding and MCHN programmes should be considered, based on the adjustments recommended below;
- iii) WFP support that is based on national and localized partnerships with government agencies, cooperating partners and United Nations agencies, and initiated only when a robust resource mobilization strategy is in place;
- iv) a formal hand-over/exit strategy indicating timelines for the transfer of responsibilities in all sectors, including IDP food assistance and long-term social safety net programmes and incorporating an assessment of the constraints and potential benefits of PDS reform for national food security. Any future initiatives need to be funded by the Government with WFP providing enabling support; and
- v) thorough integration of gender considerations into all programmes through comprehensive gender analysis. For example, gender disparity in terms of girls' attendance at primary school, should be targeted and addressed in any future school feeding interventions, possibly through a combination of in-school feeding support and conditional family take-home rations for girls.

Recommendation 2: In addition to the planned CFSVA, the country office should undertake, prior to the end of 2016, a detailed gender-disaggregated assessment of beneficiary livelihoods, food security, nutrition and economic status, which will ensure that support goes to the right beneficiaries, and provide:

- i) revised targeting criteria to be incorporated into new programme design, replacing the current IDP targeting criteria; and
- ii) a basis – when combined with the upcoming 2016 CFSVA – for future evidence-based programming and improved decision-making regarding targeting.

Recommendation 3: As a matter of utmost urgency, WFP Headquarters needs to resolve issues preventing the resumption of school feeding activities that are currently on hold. If the school feeding programme is reactivated, WFP should strengthen its support to national and local authorities for a government-led programme. This should be based on district-level targeting according to identified areas of food insecurity in inner cities and rural areas, and be implemented using a locally procured variable food basket appropriate to each location. Future school feeding programmes need to be more results-oriented, and incorporate a long-term strategy for attaining programme sustainability.

Recommendation 4: For reasons of cost-effectiveness and the overwhelming preference of stakeholders, by the end of 2016, with support from the regional bureau and Headquarters, the country office should move from FFPs and vouchers to the use of cash transfers as the transfer modality, wherever feasible. A gender and protection

analysis of the move towards cash should be undertaken as a prerequisite. Investments should be made in efforts to establish WFP as a central figure in the cash-based assistance sector, including recruitment of staff with relevant CBT experience, analysis of lessons learned to date, and finalization of technology and support systems for the SCOPE card.

Recommendation 5: The country office should prioritize the recruitment and placement of national and international staff to fill core positions, including in VAM and M&E, as soon as possible. WFP's Human Resources Division should consider a review of corporate human resources recruitment and deployment practices in a Level 3 environment such as Iraq. The possibility of further fast-tracking of administrative policies and procedures should also be explored.

Recommendation 6: By the end of 2016, the country office should formulate and implement a more communicative and inclusive participatory approach to partnerships with the Government, cooperating partners and beneficiaries. A quarterly review process should be initiated to ensure that all relevant WFP staff receive and act on beneficiary feedback, particularly on the quality and sell-by dates of commodities provided, and that beneficiary feedback is used to improve programme activities. The management of communications between WFP and different levels of government structures in the field needs to be reviewed and responsibilities clearly defined.

Recommendation 7: At the corporate level, WFP should ensure that all future Level 3 responses have adequate M&E and VAM capacity in place to ensure the availability of national food security mapping and analysis on which beneficiary targeting and strategic and operational decision-making can be based.

With regional bureau support, the country office should ensure consistent and robust internal monitoring capacity that enables more thorough assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of support provided. Building on experience, it should make the most effective use of the expertise of WFP staff, together with third-party monitoring, to ensure continual improvement of programme activities.

Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
BR	budget revision
CAS	community asset score
CBO	community-based organization
CBT	Cash-based transfer
CD	Country Director
CDG	Community Development Group
CEDAW	Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
CFW	cash for work
CO	country office
CoM	Council of Ministers
COMCEM	Communication Centre
CMAM	community-based management of acute malnutrition
CP	cooperating partner
CPE	country portfolio evaluation
CS	country strategy
CwC	Communication with Communities
DAP	Delivered at Place
DDS	dietary diversity score
DEV	development project
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Australia
DFATD	Department. of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development (Canada)
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (UN)
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EM	evaluation manager
EMOP	emergency operation
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
ET	evaluation team
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCS	food consumption score
FFA	food for assets
FFP	family food parcel
FFW	food for work
FGD	focus group discussion
FHHs	female-headed households
FLA	field level agreement
FSMS	food security monitoring systems
GFD	general food distribution
GoI	Government of Iraq
HEB	high energy biscuit
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HR	Human Resources
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	internally displaced person

IED	improvised explosive device
INGO	international non-governmental organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR-EMOP	immediate response emergency operation
IRR	immediate response rations
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KII	key informant interview
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LTSH	Landside Transport, Storage and Handling
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MAM	moderate acute malnutrition
MCHN	mother and child health and nutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIC	middle-income country
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MoDM	Ministry of Displacement and Migration
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
MoT	Ministry of Trade
NCI	national capacity index
NDP	national development plan
NDS	national development strategy
NGO	non-governmental organization
NNGO	national non-governmental organization
NRI	Nutritional Research Institute
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODOC	other direct operational costs
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development- Development Assistance Committee
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
PDM	post distribution monitoring
PDS	public distribution system
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
RB	regional bureau
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
RRM	rapid response mechanism
SCOPE	system for cash operations
SER	summary evaluation report
SF	school feeding
SFP	supplementary feeding programme
SO	special operation
SPR	standard projectreport
SSI	semi-structured interviews
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats
TDY	temporary duty
TL	team leader
ToT	Training of Trainers

TPM third party monitor
UNAMI United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

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