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## **WFP PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

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## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.**

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff focal point(s) indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Documentation and Meetings Clerk (tel.: 066513-2645).



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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ALNAP	Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance
BCM	Beneficiary Contact Monitoring
COPR	Country Office Project Report
CP	Country Programme
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
EMOP	Emergency operation
EMSYST	Evaluation Memory System
FAM	Food Aid Monitor
FASrep	Food Availability Status Report
GTZ	German Association for Technical Cooperation
ITAD	Information Technology and Agricultural Development
KPI	Key performance indicator
LOU	Letter of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
PRC	Programme Review Committee
PRRO	Protracted relief and recovery operation
QPR	Quarterly Project Report
RBM	Resource-based management
SITrep	Situation Report
SPR	Standardized Project Report
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping



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## INTRODUCTION

### Background and Purpose

1. In response to a request by the Executive Board at its Second Regular Session of 1999, this paper reviews WFP's current monitoring and evaluation principles and methods. It also proposes new directions in order to improve the role and application of monitoring and evaluation throughout the organization. This paper is intended to initiate an Executive Board discussion on WFP's monitoring and evaluation practices.

### The Relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation<sup>1</sup>

2. Monitoring is a continuous management function and tool to track inputs, activities, outputs and—to a lesser extent—outcomes and determine whether they are proceeding according to the work plan and overall project design. It measures an intervention's progress, through established milestones and indicators and against its original objectives, so that efficiency can be improved and the work plan adjusted if necessary.
3. Evaluation is the periodic assessment of current and completed WFP interventions—of their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, as well as their outcomes, both expected and unexpected, and, where possible, their long-term impact. Evaluation is an essential component of an important management tool in WFP's various intervention cycles. It provides an objective means of appraising policies and processes, and the generalized lessons drawn can improve other interventions.
4. Monitoring and evaluation are closely linked and mutually supportive. Evaluation needs and feeds on a good monitoring system with sound performance indicators and reliable tracking. Whereas monitoring is a day-to-day management tool, evaluation is a strategic tool that involves comparing data from different periods to draw conclusions not only for that intervention, but for programming in general.

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## OVERVIEW OF CURRENT MONITORING PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

### The Guiding Principles of Monitoring in WFP

5. Monitoring in WFP currently fulfils two main objectives:
  - It allows managers to identify and assess potential problems—or successes—and to make necessary modifications throughout the life of the intervention in order to keep it on track to achieve its objectives; and
  - It provides information for accountability purposes within WFP as well as to donors, governments, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

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<sup>1</sup> For a glossary of key terms used in this paper see the Annex.



6. Monitoring in WFP is guided by two overall principles:
  - Systematic monitoring must be built into the design of every emergency operation (EMOP), protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) and development intervention; and
  - Monitoring systems need to be responsive and appropriate to the characteristics of the situation and the intervention being monitored.
7. All levels of the management hierarchy, from the counterparts responsible for the development project or relief/recovery operation to the country office and to the Executive Board, as well as the beneficiaries themselves, rely on the feedback that monitoring provides. Monitoring activities have implications for the vertical management hierarchy (e.g. involving collection of data at the base level and transmission to the control, planning and decision-making levels) as well as a horizontal management dimension (the sharing of information among organizational units). Monitoring combines the two dimensions and creates an information system that can increase efficiency and effectiveness.

### What is Monitored?

8. As a continuous management function, monitoring measures the progress of operations to ensure that deliveries and distributions are being effected as planned, the food is reaching the targeted beneficiaries, and resources are being used as efficiently as possible. Ideally, each WFP project has a work plan including objectives and activities along with appropriate means of verification. Monitoring measures the achievements of actions as they were specified in the work plan, but it does not test or confirm whether those actions were necessary and sufficient to reach the stated goal. In short, monitoring answers the question: *Did we do—or are we doing—what we said we would?*
9. If monitoring is used to track and determine whether “inputs, activities, outputs and, to a lesser extent, outcomes” are proceeding according to plan, the terms themselves must be fully understood and different monitoring tools (and indicators) applied for each. While inputs, activities and outputs relate to the work plan, the outcomes (the immediate effects on beneficiaries, for example) relate to original objectives and can only be measured if a baseline situation has been determined.

### Recent Changes in Focus

10. Currently, WFP does not have an explicit monitoring policy. Operationally, standard monitoring practices, although not systematically applied, are based on the concepts contained in the WFP/Information Technology and Agricultural Development (ITAD) Self-briefing Materials.<sup>2</sup> These manuals describe monitoring in a development context; however, since their publication in 1991 WFP’s focus has moved increasingly towards emergency and relief interventions. Combined with WFP’s current organizational restructuring, this change in focus highlights the need for a critical assessment and redefinition of monitoring practices as well as operational guidelines and policies. The first stage—a thorough review of WFP’s current monitoring practices in the field—is now under way. The assessment exercise, which is being undertaken by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and began in February 2000 is described in paragraphs 66 to 70 below.

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<sup>2</sup> WFP/ITAD Self-briefing Materials, Modules 1-5, 1991.



11. The shift for WFP in the 1990s towards relief and recovery activities has brought new challenges in obtaining reliable project information. Complex emergencies in particular are characterized by difficulties in access, disruption of activities, security problems and the manipulation of data by local leaders to secure more resources. Even if deliveries and some distributions are monitored, post-distribution monitoring in conflict zones is notoriously difficult. Problems of accountability are more often related to on-the-ground realities than to deficiencies in management.
12. In emergency situations in particular WFP has relied increasingly on NGO implementing partners, due to insufficient or absent governmental capacity in conflict zones. In such cases these partners are themselves accountable for the use of WFP assistance and for monitoring and reporting to WFP country offices or sub-offices. WFP has therefore to concern itself with the quality and availability of implementing partners and the training and/or equipment required to fulfil minimum reporting requirements.

### **Constraints Upon Effective Monitoring in Complex Emergencies**

There are numerous examples of food aid abuse during the acute phases of complex emergencies, especially in conflict zones where food becomes a strategic resource for combatants. Monitoring is not always welcomed. Some examples of difficulties encountered have been catalogued in the September 1999 report “Thematic Study of Recurring Challenges in the Provision of Food Assistance in Complex Emergencies” (WFP/EB.3/99/4/3).

These include:

- Discouragement, intimidation and even physical abuse of staff who report looting and other discrepancies (former Yugoslavia in 1996, Somalia, 1994; Liberia, 1997; Sudan, 1998)
- Commandeering of food stocks by government authorities for distribution (Guinea-Bissau, 1998 )
- Problems with using traditional structures to target, distribute and report on food to the most needy (the Sudan, 1998 )
- Government restrictions on interviewing recipients and on random surveying (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, 1996–98).



## Shared Responsibility for Monitoring

### *Role of the Office of Evaluation*

13. Overall responsibility for monitoring (including one senior staff position) was transferred to the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) as of 1 January 2000. OEDE will serve as an interface in monitoring issues between the field, the various Bureaux, donors and the Executive Board. As best practices and guidelines for future results-based monitoring are set out in the coming year, OEDE will publish and package them for dissemination, training and advocacy. Mechanisms for this will include an M&E news bulletin, a regional M&E network and an M&E webpage developed for the WFP Intranet.

### *Role of Regional Offices*

14. The Regional offices provide technical expertise and support, if needed, to country offices and implementing partners for planning and designing the monitoring system. This may include, for example, advising on measurable performance indicators, reviewing and analysing monitoring information received and suggesting corrective actions. The regional offices also share information regularly with donors to keep them abreast of the progress and performance of the intervention.

### *Role of the Country Office*

15. Monitoring the handling and distribution/use of WFP-supplied commodities is an important responsibility of the country office. In general, the country office:
- plans and continuously reviews the level and type of monitoring required;
  - makes sure that all stakeholders are consulted;
  - mobilizes personnel, defines monitoring procedures and schedules field operations;
  - prepares and progressively refines checklists, worksheets and reporting formats used by government staff, implementing partners and/or WFP sub-office staff;
  - establishes arrangements for reviewing and following up on findings;
  - consolidates, processes and analyses information received from WFP sub-offices or implementing partners; and
  - prepares and submits standard monitoring reports to regional offices and/or headquarters.
16. In particular, the Country Director and his/her staff ensure that:
- monitoring and reporting are adequately specified in the Letters of Understanding (LOUs) with governments and/or implementing partners, or in the case of development interventions, in the annex to plans of operation and operational contracts;
  - the necessary support through training and technical assistance is given;
  - especially in emergency and relief and recovery operations, sufficient staff and support budgets are allocated for monitoring; and
  - in addition to interim progress reports and other special reports, the country office project report (COPR) and standardized project reports (SPR) are prepared and submitted to regional offices and/or headquarters by the specified deadlines.
17. The country office is supported by the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit, often with an officer in-country whose technical skills contribute to monitoring by



identifying the needs of target populations and helping to define objectives to meet those needs. VAM can also assist in the identification of intervention indicators and help determine feasible information needs. Through socio-economic data collection and analysis, VAM can inform and even collect monitoring data in certain circumstances.

18. For development interventions, where the host government is the prime implementor, the WFP country office ensures that the quarterly project report (QPR) and the project implementation report (PIR) are adequately prepared, drawing on reports from the project field staff. It further reviews field trip, beneficiary contact monitoring and evaluation reports.
19. In emergencies/PRROs, where an NGO implementing partner is invariably used, an initial analysis of monitoring data is normally done at the sub-office level. Here also, the delegated responsibility of Food Aid Monitors (FAMs) is determined. FAMs have other responsibilities in addition to monitoring. They will often be “monitors of monitors”, ensuring the timely and appropriate presentation of reports by the implementing partner.

### ***Role of the National Government and Other Implementing Partners***

20. The national government (including the government hosting a refugee population) participates in designing the monitoring system including discussions on what is to be monitored, how it will be monitored, how it will be reported, existing technical capacity, existing baseline data, and financial and human resources available and/or needed. Where a government department directly implements a WFP-assisted project or relief intervention, that department has direct responsibility for monitoring and reporting of progress and achievements. Where a government department works with a WFP implementing partner, the specific monitoring and reporting responsibilities of both organizations must be spelt out. The latter tends to be the case in emergency and relief operations where WFP makes most use of experienced on-the-ground implementing partners.

### **Monitoring Emergency Operations (EMOPs)**

21. For the monitoring of an EMOP, the country office responsibilities include:
  - monitoring receipt and delivery of WFP-supplied commodities and non-food items;
  - monitoring the number of people receiving WFP assistance;
  - reviewing distribution and monitoring plans with the government and NGO implementing partners;
  - compiling and disseminating information on food availability and unmet need, and scheduling shipping;
  - providing advice and operational support for the handling and distribution of food;
  - monitoring the handling and distribution of WFP-supplied commodities; and
  - preparing and submitting proposals and recommendations for further assistance.
22. Staff resources are especially stretched during the early phase of an EMOP and monitoring reports are primarily concerned with the movement of commodities and numbers of beneficiaries. Reports produced for EMOPs include a situation report (SITrep), food availability status report (FASrep) and a standard project report (SPR).





## Monitoring Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs)

23. The country office's monitoring and reporting responsibilities for a PRRO are similar to those for an EMOP. However, in PRROs monitoring plays the further role of helping managers to decide when to move from a relief to a recovery response, and when any change in the composition and level of the food ration is warranted. Appropriate indicators for PRROs would point to signs of transition from relief to development.

## Monitoring Development Interventions

24. Governmental and non-governmental implementors have their own management and reporting procedures and WFP's commodity provision will often be only one component of a larger (and independently resourced) project. The role of WFP country staff is to act as a partner in the development process. This entails: an independent assessment of activities; oversight of the monitoring systems of implementing partners; regular field visits to make physical checks of commodity stocks, distribution and work or feeding activities; assessment of work quality, appropriateness of activities and progress towards objectives; helping to identify problems and solutions to overcome them; and determining beneficiaries' perceptions and reactions to project activities and food aid.

### **Status of Gender-Sensitive M&E in WFP Country Offices in South Asia**

In January 1999, the WFP South Asia Regional Workshop on Gender-Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation identified the following areas for improvement to monitoring practices in relation to gender issues:

- In general, operational contracts, plans of operation and project objectives should better reflect WFP's global/regional/country Commitments to Women.
- New reporting formats are needed for monitoring gender targets and activities.
- Although the QPR is a useful and valuable instrument for capturing trends over time, it may need modification with respect to gender. The same is true of the COPR.
- The mere giving of numbers of workers by sex is not enough to address monitoring needs in relation to the gender issue. Questions of equity also need to be addressed.
- Field monitoring visits and reports are excellent tools for capturing qualitative information on gender matters. More use should be made of them.
- Some indicators need to be more tightly defined. Examples are "improvement in the productive role of women" and "improvement in health/sanitation/living conditions/literacy".
- In plans of operation and operational contracts, gender-related studies seem to be the obligation of WFP rather than participating governments. The responsibility should be shared more evenly.
- Formats are needed for reporting on the progress of Gender Action Plans.
- Gender issues should be better incorporated into mid-term appraisal/supervision/evaluation missions.



## Methods of Monitoring

25. The sophistication and diversity of monitoring methods employed by WFP have depended on two main variables: partner/staff capacity and the programme category. Relief programmes by their very nature evolve rapidly and monitoring activities tend to be confined to nutritional indicators combined with cursory observation on socio-economic issues at the outset of an emergency.
26. Current monitoring methods emphasize quantitative data collection and reporting such as counting beneficiaries, recording food deliveries and compiling reports. Standard reporting formats for development programmes require that both quantitative<sup>3</sup> and qualitative<sup>4</sup> information be collected in order to monitor progress towards objectives. Methods to be used include the tracking of beneficiary response indicators, setting and monitoring management milestones and other performance indicators. Programme implementation reports further require the government to list key management actions and inputs to track during programme implementation.
27. WFP uses beneficiary contact monitoring (BCM) as a complementary strategy to involve the beneficiaries to a greater extent. BCM refers to the systematic investigation of beneficiary response to interventions. It is based on the assumption that if beneficiaries approve of the interventions' activities and services, and use them voluntarily, that is good evidence of progress towards meeting the objectives.

### Beneficiary Contact Monitoring (BCM)

- ✓ Is the project reaching targeted beneficiaries?
- ✓ Are the project activities useful to them?
- ✓ Is food aid playing its intended role?
- ✓ Are the beneficiaries encountering specific problems?
- ✓ In what way do they see their lives improving as a result of the project?

Two approaches are used for data collection:

- Beneficiaries are questioned at specific locations by WFP staff, implementing partners or government staff using topic-focused interviews; and
- A questionnaire/survey is used on a sample population.

BCM is appropriate for development projects as well as EMOPs and PRROs. It can be used by WFP at two levels:

*Level 1:* Beneficiaries are contacted during WFP regular field visits and interviewed as part of regular on-site field monitoring.

*Level 2:* Where more detailed investigation is required, and where the resources and management capacity exist in-country, provision can be made for specific BCM studies (e.g. a survey of beneficiary response; a rapid rural appraisal (RRA); some form of participatory evaluation).

*Source: ITAD Self-briefing Materials, Module 5, 1991.*

<sup>3</sup> Quarterly progress report (QPR), programme implementation report (PIR) and standard project report (SPR).

<sup>4</sup> Country office project report (COPR).



## OVERVIEW OF CURRENT EVALUATION PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

### The Guiding Principles of Evaluation in WFP

28. Evaluation in WFP fulfils three main objectives:

- It provides an objective basis for assessing the performance and impact of interventions, policies and processes.
- It improves current and future interventions through the feedback of recommendations and generic lessons learned.
- It provides accountability, including the provision of information to the Executive Board, donors and the public.

29. WFP adheres to the following overall guiding principles for the execution of its evaluations:

- ***Evaluations must serve a management purpose.*** The evaluation must serve the information needs of intended users. Reports should clearly describe the intervention being evaluated, including its situational context, and the purposes, procedures and findings of the evaluation; findings and reports must be disseminated in a timely manner; evaluations must be designed and implemented so they offer the greatest potential for follow-through by programme managers at all levels.
- ***Evaluations must be independent and impartial.*** Evaluators should not have been engaged in any way in the intervention that is evaluated (e.g. participation in an appraisal mission, project consultancies, etc.) The evaluation should be complete and fair in its examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the intervention being evaluated. If different viewpoints exist they must be presented in the evaluation report. This ensures the value of the evaluation for accountability purposes.
- ***Evaluations must be credible.*** The evaluation must reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the worth or merit of the intervention being evaluated. The evaluation report must detail how the findings were arrived at and what methods the evaluation team applied.
- ***Evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons*** must be made public and disseminated to all stakeholders concerned. This is essential for the management of ongoing operations, for the design of future interventions, for the refinement of policies and for accountability.
- ***Evaluation concerns must be addressed at the design stage*** of an intervention, when a) measurable objectives and performance indicators are established; b) monitoring and evaluation systems are developed to track these performance indicators systematically throughout, and possibly beyond, the lifetime of the intervention; and c) lessons from similar interventions are taken into account.
- Whenever possible, ***evaluations must be undertaken in partnership*** with recipient countries, sister United Nations agencies and interested donors. Such partnership should be envisaged regardless of who initiates the evaluation.



## Evaluation Scope

30. WFP evaluations cover the entire range of WFP interventions, from development interventions to protracted relief and recovery operations to emergency operations.
31. Evaluations are **mandatory** for all Country Programmes (CPs) and when specifically requested by the Executive Board. Mandatory evaluations are the responsibility of OEDE and are usually undertaken by a team of two to four independent external consultants.
32. Regular emergency, protracted relief and recovery and development intervention evaluations are **non-mandatory** and are identified in accordance with a set of established criteria (see the following Table). Non-mandatory evaluations may also be proposed for advocacy reasons (e.g. to document best practices) by WFP management, Regional Bureaux or country offices. OEDE carefully reviews such proposals against the selection criteria and selects those that obtain a high ranking. As with mandatory evaluations, all evaluations are managed by OEDE and undertaken by independent consultants.
33. Country offices may also commission and manage evaluations themselves in addition to those incorporated into the OEDE work programme. Independent consultants also undertake these evaluations.

TABLE: SUMMARY OF OEDE SELECTION CRITERIA FOR NON-MANDATORY EVALUATIONS

Criterion	Type of intervention	Indicators of priority		
		High	Medium	Low
<b>Size (million US\$)</b>	Development	20 +	5–20	5 –
	PRRO/EMOP	40 +	15–40	15 –
<b>Risk</b> <sup>1</sup>	All	Substantial	Some	Negligible
<b>Broader applicability</b> <sup>2</sup>	All	Very relevant	Some possibilities	None or limited
<b>Duration</b> <sup>3</sup>	Development	10 years +	5–10 years	5 years –
<b>Complexity</b>	PRRO/EMOP	2 phases +	Into 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase	1 <sup>st</sup> phase

<sup>1</sup> Refers to number of identified risk factors and their combined effect on operations.

<sup>2</sup> Refers to scope for lessons to be applied in other operations in the country or elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> Refers to the total period of support for the same activity, including previous phases.

34. OEDE also identifies thematic evaluations (e.g. school feeding) in collaboration with in-house technical and operational units. Such evaluations must have potential for institutional learning (e.g. identify generic lessons or best practices) and are usually carried out by external consultants in collaboration with the relevant in-house units (e.g. the *Commitments to Women* review was assisted by the inter-unit Gender Task Force and the Gender Unit).
35. Joint evaluations are sometimes undertaken with other agencies or donors. The aim of such evaluations may be to review the coordinated donor response in particular emergency situations. Typically, one agency takes the lead and asks others to participate in the

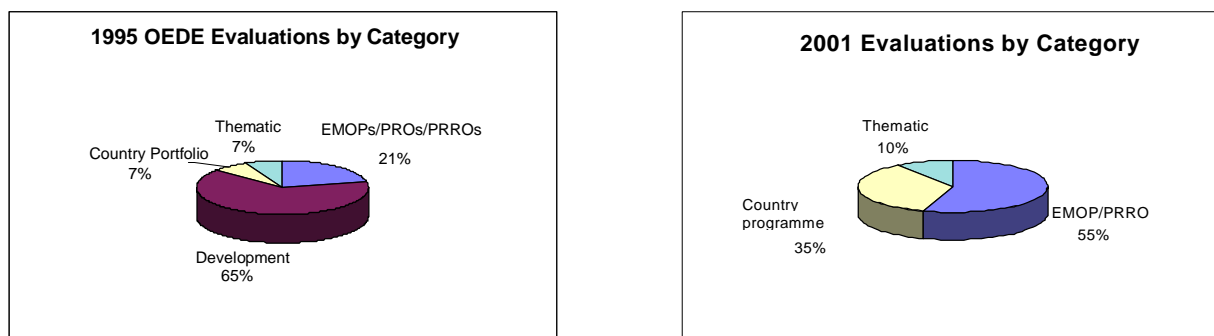


evaluation, starting with the drafting of the terms of reference. WFP participation may involve WFP staff as well as external consultants.

### Evaluation Coverage and Shift in Focus

36. In the past, OEDE has focused on mid-term or terminal evaluations of development interventions. Relief operations constitute an increasing share of annual evaluations, reflecting a trend and shift in focus that is taking place for WFP as a whole.

*Graph 1: Distribution of OEDE Evaluations by Category, 1995 and 2001.*



37. The development portfolio nevertheless retains a strong presence in OEDE's annual evaluation programme as OEDE has responded to the request of the Executive Board to undertake external evaluations of each CP. Eighteen Country Programme evaluations have been scheduled between late 1999 and 2001. They will not only provide information on the relevance and effectiveness of WFP's Country Programme approach, but also directly influence the subsequent Country Strategy Outlines (CSOs) in those countries. OEDE also intends to expand the coverage of thematic and strategic evaluations giving attention to issues affecting WFP's emergency and relief portfolio.

### Role of the Office of Evaluation

38. The Office of Evaluation, which reports directly to the Deputy Executive Director of WFP, is in charge of carrying out WFP's evaluation function. The office is headed by a Director and staffed by six evaluation professionals and three support staff. Most evaluations are managed centrally by OEDE and undertaken by independent consultants. While some country offices are also undertaking evaluations, the role of evaluation in WFP has been almost entirely confined to "spot-check" evaluations undertaken by OEDE.



39. OEDE's current mandate includes the following:
- conducting evaluations;
  - disseminating experiences and lessons;
  - contributing to corporate strategy and policy; and
  - ensuring that evaluation experience is reflected in new project and programme proposals (through the Programme Review Committee).
40. In the past, most of OEDE's activities have focused on conducting evaluations. More recently, OEDE has started to include the development and refinement of evaluation tools and methods in its annual work plan.

### Role of the Country Office

41. In the case of OEDE evaluations, the country office plays a supporting role by contributing to the terms of reference, arranging for government, partner and beneficiary inputs, setting the itinerary and planning workshops, and ensuring that evaluation findings and recommendations are disseminated to all parties concerned.
42. A number of country offices have initiated their own evaluations with external consultants. In such cases, the country offices are fully responsible for all stages of the evaluation.
43. In addition to external evaluations, project completion reports provide an opportunity for self-assessment of the extent to which the objectives and planned outcomes have been achieved. However, more often than not, they focus on financial and resource accountability issues. If full use were made of them, these project completion reports could constitute self-evaluations by country offices. The role of the reports is being reviewed as part of the OASIS project management system currently being developed.

### Role of the National Government

44. The national government is an important partner in any evaluation and is usually involved once the evaluation has started. Governments usually assign a representative to join evaluation teams and he/she is fully briefed and debriefed by the team. It is standard practice to present an aide-mémoire to the government prior to the team's departure from the country.

### Collaboration with Others

45. WFP is a member of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation, which meets on an annual basis. Joint evaluations are undertaken with UNHCR and UNICEF on an ad hoc basis and evaluation findings are sometimes shared with other agencies such as FAO, IFAD and UNDP. A joint training workshop with FAO and IFAD evaluation departments was held in 1998 and some evaluation events organized by each Rome-based agency also include the other agencies. There is, however, scope for more regular collaboration and efforts to secure this are under way.



46. WFP is also a funding member of the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance (ALNAP). Hosted by the Overseas Development Institute in London, this includes major governmental, non-governmental and United Nations agencies working in the humanitarian field.
47. OEDE also welcomes collaboration with interested donor countries. Over recent years, Australia, Canada and France have funded evaluation consultants and participated in missions. It is hoped that this level of donor involvement will increase.

## Methods of Evaluation

48. Evaluation methods for development and protracted relief and recovery interventions typically include a systematic examination of effectiveness (achievement of objectives), their efficiency (cost-effectiveness), their outcome or impact (changes produced as a result of the intervention) and their sustainability (capacity to continue once external aid has been phased out).
49. Evaluation is an evolving field and current evaluation methods used in WFP evaluation missions range from conventional ones, in which external evaluators conduct the evaluation, to participatory methods that include stakeholders in the evaluation activity. Increasingly, WFP's evaluations tend to apply a mixed conventional/participatory approach (e.g. an external evaluation team following an overall conventional approach also applies participatory methods such as rapid rural appraisal, stakeholder workshops, or focus group interviews).
50. Evaluation reports in the past have been criticized for their lack of information on the impact of food aid on the beneficiaries. Two factors currently hamper WFP's ability to demonstrate the impact of projects evaluated:
- At the time of the evaluation—typically at mid-point or at the end of the project—longer-term impact cannot be measured. Measurement should therefore focus on the outcomes (immediate effects) that may be obtainable during the lifetime or immediately after the completion of the intervention.
  - Most evaluations cannot build their findings on clearly defined baseline data—one of the major shortcomings in WFP project design.<sup>5</sup> Without baseline information and related ongoing data collection by the projects, evaluation teams need to base their findings on informal rather than formal data. Standard three-week missions do not allow enough time to organize and undertake formal surveys using acceptable sampling techniques.
51. In order to assess the effect of food aid on beneficiaries, evaluation teams need to revert to rapid rural appraisal techniques to obtain information on the changes—both positive and negative—produced by the food aid intervention. Such participatory and more qualitative-oriented evaluations can provide valuable information on visible and immediate outcomes as well as on the prospects of obtaining the longer-term desired impact.
52. Evaluations of EMOPs pose additional challenges as another factor—timing—is introduced. The intervention itself may have rapidly and informally changed its *modus*

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<sup>5</sup> A number of offices have undertaken select baseline surveys but there are no WFP-wide common methods or guidelines.



*operandi* and objectives in order to adapt to the prevailing conditions. Such EMOP evaluations, therefore, often need to reconstruct the course of events. Evaluators who undertake final EMOP evaluations often find few of the key actors still in place, as many project staff will have moved on by the time the evaluation team arrives. For these reasons, EMOP evaluations tend to focus primarily on process issues and whether or not the aid has successfully reached the targeted population. Issues most often examined include: the timeliness of products and services delivered to the beneficiaries; the extent to which resources matched the needs; the quantities and qualities of goods and services provided; the appropriateness of goods and services provided; the appropriateness of logistics and possible alternatives; the operation's cost in comparison to similar operations; and inter-agency collaboration and coordination. As a recent participatory evaluation of EMOP China 6045.00 demonstrated, the application of rapid rural appraisal techniques will provide important insights regarding the immediate effects (outcomes) of the assistance on people's livelihoods.

### Making Evaluations Relevant—How to Benefit from Experience

53. How does OEDE currently help build WFP as a learning organization and feed back the results from evaluations to operations? This feedback is formally provided mainly through OEDE's regular participation on the Programme Review Committees (PRCs) where all new programme proposals are discussed and appraised. OEDE officers supply the PRC with feedback on the design of the intervention's monitoring and evaluation section, relevant evaluation experience, and on relevant lessons or best practices.
54. All evaluation reports are shared and discussed within WFP, at headquarters and regional and country levels, as well as with external actors such as the recipient governments, implementing agencies, and cooperating United Nations agencies. The Executive Board reviews summaries of all evaluations undertaken by OEDE. The purpose is twofold: first, this allows for feedback from the Board to WFP on any issues arising from evaluations; and second, it provides accountability and demonstrates to the Board that programmes are critically reviewed and lessons learned are used to improve new operations.
55. In 1998, OEDE developed an Evaluation Memory System (EMSYST). This system was initially set aside since it did not prove to be "user-friendly" and served only for document storage. OEDE is currently revising the system and plans to make it available throughout the organization by June. This revised system will have a search function, clear sectoral categories and provide relevant lessons derived from evaluation experience for each sector.
56. A recommendation tracking system allowing OEDE to track implementation of evaluation recommendations by country offices is also being developed. OEDE now prepares a management response to all evaluation summaries presented to the Board. This response reflects action planned at both the field and corporate levels regarding the recommendations and best practices identified.
57. A database alone will not achieve the objective of making evaluations relevant and building a learning organization. OEDE plans to achieve this objective through a two-pronged approach:
  - a) Increase the number of thematic evaluations maintaining a focus on issues of strategic importance for the organization so that recommendations and lessons can provide the basis for new sectoral policies and guidelines prepared by WFP's Strategy and Policy Division and Operations Department.





- b) Share the results of evaluations (recommendations and lessons) through a number of channels, including: regular publication of thematic best practices papers on specific issues (e.g. food assistance and natural resources); an interactive evaluation webpage; a monitoring and evaluation newsletter that highlights evaluation findings, presents tools and methods, shares information on the monitoring and evaluation activities of other agencies, and lists forthcoming seminars and training; and the M&E network—a loose network of regional and national WFP M&E officers and advisers.

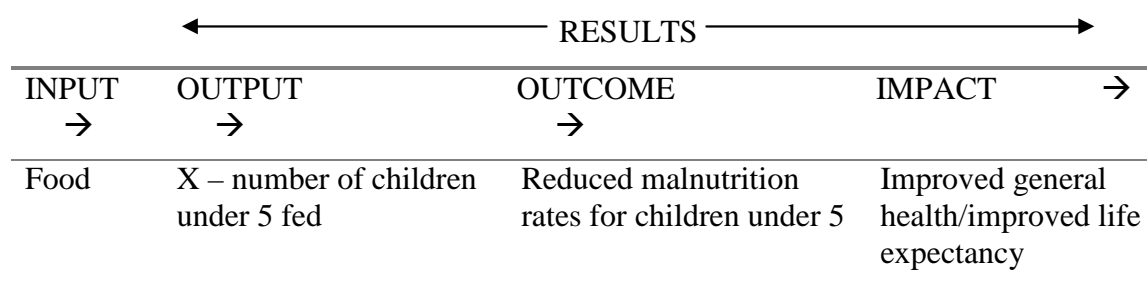
## NEW DIRECTIONS FOR MONITORING IN WFP

### Results-based Monitoring

#### *The Introduction of Results-based Management*

58. WFP intends to introduce and apply Results-based Management (RBM) over the next few years. RBM is a broad management strategy aimed at achieving important changes in the way agencies operate, with the improvement of performance (achieving better results) as the central orientation.
59. Hitherto, WFP has understood monitoring in terms of *process*—collecting data on both inputs and the physical achievements (or outputs) of an activity (numbers of beneficiaries, commodity movements, quantity/quality of physical/institutional assets created, etc). With RBM, however, comes an emphasis on *performance*—the collection and analysis of data that measure outputs and outcomes (the number of people actually being fed, as opposed to the number assessed to be in need of assistance, the extent to which nutritional status has been improved as a direct result of the intervention, the number of WFP-assisted people who have actually created an asset, etc.).
60. In a results-based management approach, monitoring plays a critical role in the ability to achieve and document meaningful results that are useful for decision-making and accountability purposes. Hence, RBM will have a profound impact on the way WFP does project monitoring and reporting. In order to implement RBM, WFP will need to focus on the reporting of results, what is being reported and how it is being reported. In reporting results, it must go beyond reporting on outputs (e.g. the number of people fed), and also report on outcomes (e.g. reduced malnutrition rates).
61. Given WFP's inexperience with reporting on outcomes, this constitutes a major challenge and shift.
62. A simple diagram to identify results within a results-based context is as follows:





63. Within RBM, the results in focus are outputs and outcomes. Impact, while also constituting a result, is not directly assessed as part of RBM but addressed in ex-post evaluations and special research studies.

### Measuring and Using Results

64. What is measured in the diagram above is *results as they emerge during implementation*. These require performance indicators that measure both outputs and outcomes. The highest level of results—impact—is not measured during monitoring. To be meaningful, all results assessments require an adequate baseline of information and precise, realistic and attainable objectives. It is important to select the essential results data needed to show progress towards achieving the intended results. The measure of progress to be used should be agreed between WFP staff and the Executive Board. The measures (or indicators) need to be practical, low-cost and should give a clear picture of the most valued results of the organization. A minimum set of core results or key performance indicators needs to be developed and applied throughout WFP—from the corporate level, to Country Programme level down to the project level. A set of operational guidelines for conducting monitoring in all of WFP's programme categories will be finalized by late August 2000.
65. To realize the benefits of measuring results, it is important to actually use them. Performance information should be used for internal management purposes including decision-making and identifying areas for improvement. It can also be used for accountability purposes and reporting to external stakeholder audiences such as donors, governments and the general public.

### The 2000 Monitoring Review and Concrete Next Steps

66. As WFP changes its organizational structure and management framework, so too must its monitoring and evaluation practices and policies evolve. Before WFP can create improved results-based monitoring principles and the policy that guides them, a clear understanding is needed of the monitoring systems currently used in relief, recovery and development interventions as well as those practised corporately.
67. In the past decade, there have been a number of discreet efforts to improve the monitoring function within WFP interventions. For example, the WFP/ITAD study in the early 1990s dealt with monitoring, reporting and evaluation in one module. More recently, monitoring guidelines for school feeding and natural resource management food-for-work programmes were developed; several gender-sensitive monitoring training programmes were completed; and computerized monitoring systems were designed in several country offices (e.g. Cambodia and Guatemala).



68. Only once the best monitoring practices are identified can efforts be made to replicate and build on them in the future. To assist WFP in the task of identifying those best practices, GTZ has been contracted to undertake a global assessment of WFP's monitoring systems. This review is currently under way, having begun in mid-February, and is scheduled to culminate in August 2000 with a concrete set of monitoring guidelines crafted with the new WFP organizational structure and management framework in mind.
69. Three monitoring experts are currently visiting nine countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Mali, Morocco, Uganda and Zambia) to assess the monitoring practices being implemented in the field. Through meetings with WFP staff, partner organizations and site visits, the consultants are examining design, implementation, capacity, resourcing and reporting issues with a particular view to describing best practices and identifying problem areas. A monitoring survey is also being distributed in order to include all WFP countries in the review.

#### **In-progress highlights of the 2000 monitoring review**

A three-person GTZ expert team is currently conducting a global monitoring assessment; preliminary findings are available. The team has so far observed the following country office initiatives to strengthen WFP's programmatic monitoring practices and identified areas for improvement.

Purpose, outputs, and activities of core programme components (general food distribution, school feeding, food for work) have been formulated in a hierarchical manner and indicators defined.

- Workshops are being initiated to translate WFP principles on Monitoring and Evaluation into practical application at the field level.
- The job title "food monitor" is being changed into "field monitor" and task descriptions are being revised to reflect broader monitoring responsibilities.
- The plans of operation of some projects include quarterly report formats that facilitate the recording of data on project outcomes, such as enrolment and attendance rates, and employment opportunities created.
- New formats are currently being tested for weekly and biweekly situation reports including monthly reporting on programme performance.

Areas that require more attention include:

- The need for the establishment of clearer objectives in programme design.
- The way WFP counts beneficiaries.
- The need for a more coherent approach to planning and coordinating surveys and baseline studies.
- Linkages with partners in relation to monitoring.

70. The expert team will recommend improvements to WFP's existing monitoring systems and influence the design of new systems so that they conform to and reflect the new results orientation. A three-day workshop to discuss GTZ's findings and obtain feedback and recommendations from selected WFP staff will be held in late May. The assessment results and the input gathered from the workshop will be used to develop a set of operational guidelines.



## NEW DIRECTIONS FOR EVALUATION IN WFP

71. New directions for evaluation, as with monitoring, need to be seen within the context of RBM. Through this approach, evaluation has a firm place within the overall performance management framework.<sup>6</sup> Together with the accountability function, this implies more emphasis on evaluation as a regular management tool that provides critical external feedback on progress towards achieving results. To establish regular evaluations at the country level alongside spot-check evaluations undertaken by OEDE will involve a major shift for the organization. Country offices will need to incorporate evaluation activities into their regular work programmes. This would allow OEDE to move towards a more strategic and supportive role. Such a shift would have consequences for the overall roles of OEDE and the country offices as well as evaluation methods, necessitating a set of evaluation guidelines, the training of staff and building the capacity of implementing partners. Concrete steps to improve the evaluation function are presented in paragraph 77.

### Shift in the Role of the Office of Evaluation

- **Conduct of evaluations.** OEDE evaluations would focus strategically on issues important for the overall organization (e.g. thematic and issues-focused evaluations). As for country-level evaluations, OEDE would advise country offices on the management of evaluations and evaluation methods, and assist in the identification of suitable consultants. Country office evaluation reports would be reviewed by OEDE for overall consistency and salient findings and lessons would be incorporated into best practices papers and other OEDE publications.
- **A corporate policy on evaluations.** To ensure a uniform approach to evaluations, it is necessary to develop and agree on policy and guidelines. Once a policy is endorsed, OEDE's new oversight role will be to ensure the application of the guidelines.
- **Making evaluations relevant.** All evaluations must result in clear and targeted management-oriented recommendations. The implementation of these recommendations will be monitored by OEDE through a simple recommendation tracking system. Evaluations must also systematically reflect on lessons that can be distilled for broader application and learning. Dissemination of evaluation knowledge should also be undertaken through an evaluation webpage, a news bulletin, a regional M&E network, formal and informal training sessions and discussion meetings, and publication of thematic reviews highlighting best practices.
- **Capacity-building.** OEDE evaluation officers should be more involved in training activities and building up the evaluation capacity of field staff. This would require additional training on state-of-the-art evaluation methods for OEDE staff, including training of trainers. Training modules should be developed for use at regional workshops, headquarters training sessions, etc. Collaboration with other agencies and donors, including ALNAP, is also envisaged.

<sup>6</sup> Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation (OECD, 1998): "Evaluations must be part of a wider performance management framework".



### Shift in the Role of the Country Office

72. In line with the principles of RBM, evaluations should become a regular feature of Country Programme and project cycles. Mid-term evaluations could allow managers to assess independently the likelihood of the project to achieve its desired results. Final evaluations confirm whether or not results have been achieved.
73. Country offices would be fully responsible for all stages of the evaluation. Country offices would also be responsible for ensuring that evaluation reports are accurate and that suitable lessons are identified and for ensuring that these are disseminated and applied as appropriate. Technical support would be provided, by request, from OEDE or the regional M&E officers.

### Evaluation Capacity-building

74. Making evaluation an integral part of a results-oriented management system at the country level has training implications. WFP field staff should be offered evaluation training. Such training, however, should not be isolated and could be offered within a larger training package on project design and implementation (e.g. training on logical frameworks, Enabling Development policy).
75. Primary attention should be given to regional and national M&E focal points and advisors. Often such focal points are appointed with no evaluation background and acquire their skills on the job. A training-of-trainers component could be added so that some of these focal points in turn can provide relevant training at the country and project level.
76. Training must also include national government counterparts and implementing partners. Since training of national counterparts is an issue of interest to all United Nations agencies and would require a coordinated approach, such government evaluation capacity-building would ideally be undertaken within the framework of UNDAF-coordinated training activities.

### Concrete Next Steps to Improve the Evaluation Function

77. In order to improve and enhance the evaluation function in WFP, OEDE intends to implement the following:



STEPS TO IMPROVE THE EVALUATION FUNCTION
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Objective	Implementation Strategy/Task *	Results
1. A clear and agreed upon understanding of evaluation by WFP staff and its Executive Board	1.1 Establish evaluation policy	Common approach to evaluation by all WFP country offices
	1.2 Develop evaluation guidelines	
2. Make evaluation more relevant	2.1 Improved lessons database	Wider understanding of evaluation functions, issues and results among WFP staff
	2.2 Evaluation webpage	
	2.3 Recommendation tracking system	
	2.4 Ad hoc seminars, brown-bag lunches on evaluation issues and methods	
3. Enhanced staff evaluation capacity	In close collaboration with the WFP M&E network:	WFP programme staff trained in state-of-the-art evaluation methods
	3.1 Develop training strategy and package	
	3.1.1 Individual evaluation training programme for OEDE staff	
	3.1.2 Training for M&E network	
	3.1.3 Provide training on evaluation for programme staff	
4. Improved collaboration with other agencies and donors on evaluation	4.1 Share information on evaluation practices with Rome-based agencies	Better harmonization of evaluation approaches with key partners
	4.2 Investigate joint training programmes	
	4.3 Attend evaluation-related meetings of donors, evaluation societies etc.	
	4.4 Undertake joint evaluations	
5. Improved quality of evaluations	5.1 Develop evaluation guidelines	Improved quality of project documents and M&E systems. More evaluation reports able to assess results at outcome level
	5.2 Develop menu of key performance indicators (KPI) for key areas of WFP assistance	
	5.3 Advocate for new projects to contain results-oriented objectives, KPIs and baseline information	
	5.4 Ensure participation consultant experienced in participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) for evaluation missions as appropriate	
6. Evaluation an integral part of a results-based management system (RBM)	6.1 Establish clear criteria for country-managed evaluations	Increased number of evaluations undertaken by country offices and enhanced country office participation in RBM

\* The above tasks are all contained in OEDE's 2000-2001 Work Plan.



## ANNEX

## GLOSSARY

<b>Conclusion</b>	Synthesis and analysis of findings
<b>Finding</b>	Factual statements, which include description and measurement
<b>Impact</b>	The long-term changes brought about by an intervention usually at regional or national level. They are the highest order of results in the sequence: outputs, outcomes, impacts
<b>Indicator</b>	Sign of progress throughout an intervention. Qualitative or quantitative indicators may be chosen to assess the provision of inputs, the success of a process (that, is the transformation of inputs into outputs), and the outputs themselves, as well as outcomes and impacts. Indicators may be either direct or indirect (proxy), but they should be such as to allow agreement that progress has or has not been made as planned
<b>Lesson</b>	Conclusions and recommendations drawn from an experience that may be applicable to a type of situation rather than one particular set of circumstances. Such conclusions may be positive or negative
<b>Objective</b>	The desired outcome of an activity
<b>Outcome</b>	Change caused by the outputs of an intervention
<b>Output</b>	The immediate result of an intervention, produced by the transformation of the inputs through the intervention processes
<b>Recommendation</b>	Prescription of what change should be made to the intervention based on findings and conclusions
<b>Results</b>	A broad term used to refer to outputs, outcomes and impact of an intervention

