

measuring results,
sharing lessons

2015

Annual Evaluation Report

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World Food Programme

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Executive Summary

2015 Overarching Lessons and Recommendations

Part 1 of this annual evaluation report presents synthesized findings, lessons and recommendations from Office of Evaluation reports. While the majority are for evaluations completed in 2015, two synthesis reports include some evaluations completed earlier.

Relevant to the current global context and forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit, Section 1.2 presents a synthesis of evaluation findings on WFP's strategic and operational emergency preparedness and response efforts. Reflecting the growing prominence of nutrition issues in global development dialogue around the Sustainable Development Goals and Zero Hunger Challenge, Section 1.3 highlights findings from evaluations concerning WFP's policy, partnerships and programme activities related to nutrition. The synthesis of other findings from country-specific evaluations presented in Section 1.4 reflects on WFP's work in different contexts and its shifts from food aid to food assistance, and from implementer to enabler.

Part 2 reports on developments in WFP's evaluation function, notably its new evaluation policy, which was approved in late 2015, and on the Office of Evaluation's performance against its 2015 workplan. The new policy is supported by an evaluation charter, which establishes the mandate, authorities and institutional arrangements for the new evaluation function and is annexed to this report. Alongside its continued programme of centralized evaluations, the operationalization of the augmented function envisaged in the policy is a major focus for the Office of Evaluation's efforts in 2016.

Building on WFP's strengths is ever more important in the 2030 Agenda era. Drawing on the synthesized evaluations presented in Part 1 and focusing on the topics that featured most frequently in the recommendations of individual evaluations and the two synthesis reports, this summary identifies the following issues for senior management's consideration.

WFP's continued shifts from **food aid to food assistance** and from **implementer to enabler**, as heralded by the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, were confirmed by many evaluations as highly relevant and appropriate for sustainable hunger solutions in diverse contexts. WFP's strategic reorientation appears to be gathering pace on the ground wherever the context permits, and increasingly recognized by staff.

The evaluations confirm WFP's strengths in **emergency response** – often in extremely challenging contexts – which continued to form the bulk of its programme expenditures. WFP's investments in strengthening its response capacity and the coordination and quality of its responses have enhanced its reputation in the humanitarian system, with positive results, especially in large-scale, sudden-onset emergencies. However, the high visibility of Level 3 emergencies, and the global demands of managing several such emergencies concurrently have at times had unintended consequences for chronic, underfunded and lower-level emergencies.

The increasing ambition and range of WFP's work require a **knowledge-driven** organization to: manage the continuous innovation demanded by today's complex context; support its partnerships; and underpin its comparative advantage, especially in rapidly evolving fields such as nutrition, resilience and assistance modalities. Reflected in multiple findings concerning data and analysis to underpin programme design, modality selection, targeting and prioritization, outcome monitoring and cost-effectiveness, the evaluations provided ample evidence of positive efforts, although these are not yet fully reflected on the ground. The most frequent category of recommendations related to further strengthening of WFP's **evidence and knowledge culture**, by applying stronger incentives to increase

attention to monitoring, evidence generation and analysis in all contexts; and by increasing the sharing and use of lessons in programme design and decision-making.

Success in all areas of WFP's work – from emergency response to capacity development – depends on effective **partnerships**. The evaluations revealed a mixed picture regarding collaboration and synergy among United Nations agencies, and relationships with cooperating partners. The second most frequent group of recommendations urged WFP to apply its strong corporate commitment to partnerships more consistently, supported by clear analysis of complementarities and added value.

Concerning partnerships with governments, a similar number of reports, including both syntheses, recommended building on identified positive results with more systematic and systems-oriented approaches to **national capacity development** in WFP's areas of proven expertise, such as emergency preparedness, food security and vulnerability analysis, social protection, and school feeding. This strategic reorientation towards supporting national systems tailored to the diverse contexts and sectors in which WFP works entails: i) in contexts other than emergency response, positioning WFP's programming within national social protection and other frameworks, such as for nutrition, and accelerating the shift to enabler by making the provision of technical advice the default standard approach; ii) in protracted situations, developing long-term transition plans that prepare WFP to hand over responsibility

to national partners; and iii) in emergency contexts, strengthening the engagement and capacity of national counterparts in preparedness and response.

Several evaluations recommended greater **financing flexibility** to support the humanitarian–development nexus and the long-term perspective of the 2030 Agenda, anticipating WFP's ongoing Financial Framework Review and associated processes to better enable country-level results-based management. In this regard, findings concerning developments – for example in cash-based transfer¹ programming and in monitoring systems – suggest that the time lag between system improvements and operational results should not be underestimated.

Mixed findings on gender led to recommendations in many reports – including the two syntheses – on systematically including plans for meeting gender policy objectives in all projects and country and corporate strategies, moving beyond the “inclusion of women” approach in ways that are appropriate to each context. Underpinning many of these issues is WFP's investment in its staff through the People Strategy. There were multiple recommendations on: i) ensuring that relevant staff profiles and deployments combine the necessary operational competence with strategic, partnership and analytical skills; and ii) providing staff with accessible guidance and skills development, notably in accountability to affected populations, gender, equity-focused programme design and monitoring, and in rapidly evolving areas of knowledge such as cash-based transfers and nutrition programming.

¹ WFP now uses the term “cash-based transfers” to refer to both cash and voucher transfer modalities, while evaluation reports reflect the prior separation of cash and vouchers.

Part 1. Evaluation Findings

Introduction

At this time of unprecedented humanitarian need and complexity, amid the global dialogue on strengthening the effectiveness of the global humanitarian system and its connections with development, and noting the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) commitments to ensuring that through the 2030 Agenda “no one is left behind”, this year’s synthesis of common findings and lessons from evaluations highlights issues that are particularly relevant to WFP’s next Strategic Plan.

Reflecting this global dialogue and the range of evaluations completed in 2015, this year’s synthesized findings are presented in three sections: i) emergency preparedness and response; ii) nutrition; and iii) country-specific evaluations.

With the resources available to WFP’s Office of Evaluation (OEV), different types of centralized evaluation are conducted to assess systematically the relevance, alignment, coherence and coordination of WFP’s policies, strategies, country portfolios and operations, and their results in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. While the 32 evaluations covered in Part 1 (Table 1), were not selected for statistical representativeness, they span all WFP activity types across a wide range of environmental, political and socio-economic settings, and cover two of its most important thematic areas – emergency response and nutrition.

Each synthesis used an analytical framework based on the evaluation questions and the prominent themes of findings, systematically extracted from the evaluation reports and analysed for common patterns and notable divergences related to strengths, weaknesses, challenges, strategic conclusions and lessons.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

WFP is a leading actor in the international humanitarian system. In 2014² WFP was the single largest recipient of overall humanitarian funding and of pooled funds; emergency preparedness and response (EPR) activities totalled USD 3.65 billion or 86 percent of WFP’s programme expenditures, directly assisting 70 percent of its beneficiaries. It leads or co-leads three of the global clusters introduced in 2005: Logistics, Food Security, and Emergency Telecommunications.

Acknowledged weaknesses in the humanitarian system’s collective response to three large-scale emergencies in 2010 prompted the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to adopt the Transformative Agenda in 2011 to strengthen leadership, coordination and accountability in major humanitarian responses. As well as participating in this global reform agenda, WFP also introduced a series of internal strengthening initiatives, which were consolidated into a major organizational redesign in 2012 and 2013.

Since then however, the number, scale and complexity of emergencies have increased, further stretching the capacities of donors and humanitarian organizations. In 2015, WFP and the IASC-led humanitarian system responded to six concurrent Level 3 emergencies³ and six Level 2 emergencies,⁴ the majority of which had been ongoing for longer than a year. In May 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General convenes the first World Humanitarian Summit to “generate greater global leadership and political will to end conflict, alleviate suffering and reduce risk”.

² The latest year for which published data were available.

³ Central African Republic, Ebola virus, Iraq, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen.

⁴ Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Nepal, Somalia, Ukraine.

Table 1: Evaluations synthesized in Part 1 of the 2015 Annual Evaluation Report (AER)

Subject	Reference Period												
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Synthesis 1 - Emergency Preparedness and Response													
WFP's Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme (PREP)													
Global logistics cluster**													
FAC/WFP Joint Evaluation of Food Security Cluster Coordination in Humanitarian Action*													
WFP's use of pooled funds for humanitarian preparedness and response*													
WFP's Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis													
WFP's Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis													
Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Response to Conflict in South Sudan													
Inter-agency Evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan humanitarian response*													
Mozambique: PRRO 200355 (2012-2014)*													
Mali: EMOP 200525 (2013-2014)*													
Ethiopia: PRRO 200290 (2012-2013) mid-term evaluation*													
Tajikistan: PRRO 200122 (2010-2014)*													
Madagascar: PRRO 200065 (2010-2013)*													
Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger: Regional EMOP 200438 (2012-2013)*													
United Republic of Tanzania CPE													
State of Palestine CPE													
Somalia: PRRO 200443 (2013-2015) mid-term evaluation													
Iran: PRRO 200310 (2013-2015) mid-term evaluation													
Synthesis 2 - Nutrition and Synthesis 3 - Country-Specific													
Policy***													
Nutrition Policy													
Strategic***													
REACH – Joint Evaluation of Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger and Under-nutrition (FAO/WFP/UNICEF/WFP/WHO/DFATD Canada)													
United Republic of Tanzania CPE													
State of Palestine CPE													
CPE													
WFP's Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis													
Level 3													
Armenia: DEV 200128 (2010-2016) mid-term evaluation													
Bangladesh: CP 200243 (2012-2016) mid-term evaluation													
Ecuador: PRRO 200275 (2011-2014)													
Ghana: CP 200247 (2012-2016) mid-term evaluation													
Guinea Bissau: PRRO 200526 (2013-2015)*													
Haiti: DEV 200150 (2012-2014)*													
Honduras: CP 200240 (2012-2016) mid-term evaluation*													
Iran: PRRO 200310 (2013-2015) mid-term evaluation													
Malawi: CP 200287 (2012-2016) mid-term evaluation*													
Mali: EMOP 200525 (2013-2014)*													
Mozambique: CP 200286 (2012-2015) mid-term evaluation													
Pakistan: PRRO 200250 (2013-2015)*													
Somalia: PRRO 200443 (2013-2015) mid-term evaluation													
Tunisia: DEV 200493 (2012-2015)													
Zambia: CP 200157 (2011-2015) mid-term evaluation*													
Zimbabwe: PRRO 200453 (2012-2015)*													

CP = country programme
DEV = development project
EMOP = emergency operation
PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation

* Evaluation completed in 2014
** Evaluation completed in 2012
*** Evaluation only included in the synthesis 2 on nutrition

Source: OEY database.
Reference period: For Operations, it refers to the duration of the Operation and the scope of the evaluation.

Reflecting this context, emergency response and preparedness continued to form a major focus of WFP's evaluations during 2015. In addition to participating in inter-agency evaluations of IASC's collective responses to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and the crisis in South Sudan, in 2015 OEV completed evaluations of WFP's response to the Syrian crisis and of its Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme (PREP). The latter evaluation formed the last in OEV's series of strategic evaluations on EPR, complementing those completed in 2014 on WFP's use of pooled funds and of the food security cluster. This section of the AER considers the synthesis evaluation report of this series,⁵ together with EPR-related findings from five other evaluations completed in 2015.⁶

Together, the six base evaluation reports covered WFP's EPR activities in 30 countries, including the two collective responses in the Philippines and South Sudan. The analysis revealed a high degree of consistency in findings and recommendations across the reports.

WFP's EPR capacity and position in the humanitarian system

A major finding from the evaluations is that WFP strengthened its capacity to implement EPR programmes in line with global reform efforts such as the Transformative Agenda. Along with its active contributions to inter-agency reforms and processes, this capacity strengthened WFP's position in the evolving humanitarian system.

WFP's investments in EPR through PREP and the clusters it leads or co-leads were highly relevant. They contributed to positive results, especially in responses to Level 3 emergencies. New system-wide and corporate processes promoted by global reforms satisfied demands from Headquarters, donors and international humanitarian partners. Strengthened coordination capacities and WFP's investments in operational information management resulted in more timely, consistent and user-friendly products for corporate and external audiences. The reform efforts also enabled WFP to harness more predictable contributions from the Central Emergency Response Fund.

WFP used system-wide instruments, such as global and country-based pooled funds, with positive results. Although they accounted for only 4 percent of WFP's donor contributions between 2009 and 2013, pooled funds significantly contributed to WFP's operations, complementing internal advance financing mechanisms. They were also important for funding common services provided by WFP.

In addition, WFP supported global reform processes by sharing experiences, good practices and tools. Its EPR package facilitated the development of a global protocol on emergency response preparedness, led by the IASC Preparedness and Resilience Task Team as part of the Transformative Agenda. WFP's innovative internal advance financing mechanisms were also identified as valuable examples for other humanitarian actors.

However, the evaluations also identified some shortcomings. For example, the EPR synthesis found that while the focus on Level 3 emergencies improved WFP's response to corporate emergencies, there were sometimes unintended consequences for chronic, underfunded and lower-level emergencies.

WFP's strong engagement in inter-agency response planning increased coherence, trust and ownership at the country level, but these processes were highly resource-intensive and did not result in significant changes to the strategic approach or content of operations. Overly demanding processes and limited or inconsistent field-level acceptance of reforms were widely reported in the evaluations.

Gender and accountability to affected populations

The synthesis report highlighted that the clear corporate commitment to cross-cutting issues expressed by WFP and the humanitarian system was often incorporated to only a limited degree in operations. For example, although pooled funds had facilitated use of the IASC gender marker, and gender-disaggregated data were collected during needs assessments and monitoring, these developments had limited influence on WFP's programming. Limited funding for gender-related programming constrained WFP's ability to reduce gender gaps.

⁵ See "Synthesis Report of the Evaluation Series of WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response (2012–2015)", covering evaluations of PREP, the food security cluster, the global logistics cluster, the use of pooled funds, the Philippines (inter agency), emergency operations in Mali and the Syrian region, and protracted relief and recovery operations in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique and Tajikistan.

⁶ Country portfolio evaluations in the State of Palestine and the United Republic of Tanzania; inter-agency evaluation in South Sudan; and operation evaluations in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Somalia.

The extent to which beneficiaries were consulted and their concerns addressed in programming varied. For example, although WFP set up a beneficiary hotline in Somalia in 2010, it was not widely known to locals at the time of the evaluation. On the other hand, WFP's approach to mainstreaming beneficiary considerations into programmes in South Sudan was cited as a positive example. Another positive example was noted in the State of Palestine, where WFP learned from and acted on beneficiary feedback.

Programmes using cash-based transfers

The humanitarian system is undergoing a dynamic shift in transfer modalities from in-kind assistance to cash-based transfers.⁷ This trend was also visible in – and in part led by – WFP, whose use of cash-based transfers in all contexts rose from 1 percent of beneficiaries in 2009 to 11 percent in 2014, representing 21 percent of WFP's 2014 operational costs.⁸

Echoing the 2014 AER, which covered the evaluation of the cash and vouchers policy, the 2015 evaluations generally commended WFP for its increased use of cash-based transfers, highlighting the benefits of these modalities and their positive reception by beneficiaries. In the State of Palestine for example, WFP's innovative electronic voucher system served as a model for operations elsewhere. However, there were gaps in WFP's capacity for rapid implementation of cash-based transfers in emergency settings. Several evaluations – including those in the State of Palestine and of the regional response to the Syrian crisis – identified weaknesses in the analysis supporting the selection of modalities, particularly between vouchers and cash.

Following the policy evaluation, in 2015, changes were made to corporate systems and guidance to enable more precise cost and outcome analysis of restricted and unrestricted, conditional and unconditional transfers; these changes will be assessed in future evaluations.

Non-governmental partners

The evaluations found that WFP's relationships with non-governmental partners varied widely. Examples of effective partnerships were noted for example in Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania; however, in Jordan, Lebanon and the Philippines, NGOs perceived their relationships with WFP – and other United Nations agencies – as contractual rather than true partnerships.

Limited risk sharing, gaps in partners' capacity and insufficient consultation with non-governmental partners compromised programme implementation in some cases, such as in Iraq and Madagascar, and necessitated a shift to direct implementation by WFP in South Sudan. Pooled funds also did not result in any significant change in WFP's relationships with its partners. In contrast, some clusters led or co-led by WFP were found to have built trust and improved relationships with partners, such as in Bangladesh and Mali.

Overall, measures for addressing these shortcomings through PREP were found to be inadequate for the importance of the issue, and there remains scope for ensuring that clusters systematically involve all participants as equal partners.

Capacity development of government partners

WFP made important investments in developing the EPR capacities of government agencies, particularly in countries enduring frequent natural shocks. For example, the logistics cluster supported national disaster management agencies in improving warehousing and contingency planning in Haiti, Mozambique, Pakistan and several Pacific island countries. WFP also achieved positive results in building local capacities through vulnerability analysis and mapping activities in the State of Palestine and the United Republic of Tanzania, and through contingency planning and food-management support in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Tajikistan.

Overall however, the strengthening of government partners' capacities did not receive sufficient emphasis and lacked coherence. Only 11 percent of PREP funding was allocated to strengthening the capacities of national authorities. Despite the availability of inter-agency guidance, evaluations of food security and logistics clusters reported that the clusters' roles in preparedness and capacity development were unclear. Pooled funds were found to have little comparative advantage in financing capacity-development activities.

Human resources

In addition to relationships with partners and the often challenging operating contexts, other factors also affected WFP's EPR performance. While all evaluations emphasized WFP's experienced and pragmatic staff, whose capabilities earned WFP credibility with partners, human resources remained a major concern.

⁷ See also *Doing Cash Differently: How Cash Transfers Can Transform Humanitarian Aid*. London: Overseas Development Institute, 2015.

⁸ WFP Annual Performance Report 2014, latest available data.

Initiatives introduced by PREP, such as the emergency response roster, addressed only some aspects of reported challenges, and systemic staffing gaps significantly constrained the performance of operations. Global clusters led or co-led by WFP deployed their own staff from support teams as surge capacity to fill gaps in the field, but this reduced staff's capacity to undertake important core tasks at the global level. Staff training courses were of high quality, but their targeting and links to deployments were identified as areas for improvement.

Funding and flexibility

Most evaluations identified funding gaps as limiting WFP's performance, causing delays, pipeline breaks, reduced delivery volumes and ration cuts. Inconsistent resourcing for strategic activities such as those introduced by PREP created concerns about sustainability. Dedicated funding for the global logistics cluster brought benefits in predictability and timeliness, but funding shortfalls at the country level led to inefficiency and the suspension of partners' programmes, as in South Sudan. The effectiveness of the food security cluster was limited by inconsistent funding at the global and country levels, despite wide recognition – confirmed by evaluations – that investments in coordination are worthwhile.

WFP's two advance-financing mechanisms – the Immediate Response Account and the Working Capital Financing Facility – allowed it to respond and scale up quickly. Pooled funds were often used as collateral for, or repayments of, internal advances, for which ceilings nearly doubled between 2012 and 2014, significantly improving the availability of rapid and flexible funding. In 2014, WFP set up a joint rapid response mechanism with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which was activated in South Sudan the following year, enabling the two organizations to scale up quickly to reach more than 1 million people in remote areas.

Lessons from EPR evaluations

i) With some shifts in emphasis, the findings from the evaluations completed in 2015 largely confirmed the lessons on EPR provided in the 2014 AER. First, the positive benefits of innovations introduced through the global humanitarian reform process, including clusters, pooled funds and advance financing mechanisms, were reaffirmed by this broader 2015 analysis. WFP's investments in EPR, including strengthened technical capacity and advance financing mechanisms, enabled it to build on its strong reputation with more effective and predictable responses, especially to large-scale, sudden-onset emergencies.

- ii) Of importance to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the second emerging lesson from 2014 – which identified the risk of system-wide processes crowding out operationally relevant activities – is confirmed. The 2015 evaluations found that the increasing demands of global processes are limiting the implementation of corporate reforms and have unintended effects, leading to recurring calls for scaling back these processes to reduce demands on field staff.
- iii) Despite the confirmed contribution of clusters to humanitarian response, the challenge of adequately resourcing cluster coordination remained in 2015: several evaluations called for more resources and leadership of human resources for emergency response. WFP's dedicated and competent staff delivered in ever-more demanding contexts, but the 2015 evaluations found that, despite the progress made, challenges remain, particularly regarding lack of capacity in newer areas such as the use of cash-based transfers in emergencies. Considering the importance of such transfers for WFP's effectiveness, all evaluations recommended further investment and attention in this rapidly changing area.
- iv) Building on the fourth emerging lesson from the 2014 evaluations, the analysis for this report confirmed the need for continued efforts to shift relationships with non-governmental partners from contractual to genuine partnerships. Evaluations in 2015 identified several good practices in WFP's engagement with national counterparts, particularly in strengthening EPR, contingency planning and food management. These examples illustrate the importance of strengthening national systems and capacities for emergency preparedness, to move beyond immediate response towards disaster risk reduction and resilience. Many of the 2015 evaluations recommended an increased focus on capacity development in relationships with government partners, and a more consistent approach to relationships with non-governmental partners.
- v) Echoing the 2014 AER, the 2015 evaluations found that there is still room for improving WFP's consideration of gender and accountability to affected people in EPR. This report and its constituent evaluations highlight several examples on which to build.
- vi) The 2015 synthesis revealed recurring calls for more rigorous analysis and its greater use in decision-making, especially related to gender, and accountability to and feedback from affected people.

Nutrition

International interest in and understanding of nutrition continue to grow. Nutrition features in the SDGs, and the annual Global Nutrition Report⁹ promotes global understanding and accountability on nutrition. Nutrition featured more prominently in WFP’s Strategic Plan 2014–2017 than in its predecessor, building on the 2012 nutrition policy.

Reflecting this increased attention, in 2015 nutrition was prominent on the evaluation agenda both within WFP and beyond. An independent comprehensive evaluation of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement¹⁰ confirmed the rapid mobilization of a broad base of supporters and recommended that SUN continue to build on its strengths, address fundamental design weaknesses and strengthen implementation.

In 2015, OEV completed an evaluation of WFP’s 2012 nutrition policy and led a joint evaluation of the multi-agency Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) initiative, whose Secretariat is in WFP. In addition, 11 of the 16 WFP operations and one of the country portfolios evaluated in 2015 included nutrition activities. This section synthesizes all evaluation findings relevant to nutrition.

Evaluation of the 2012 nutrition policy

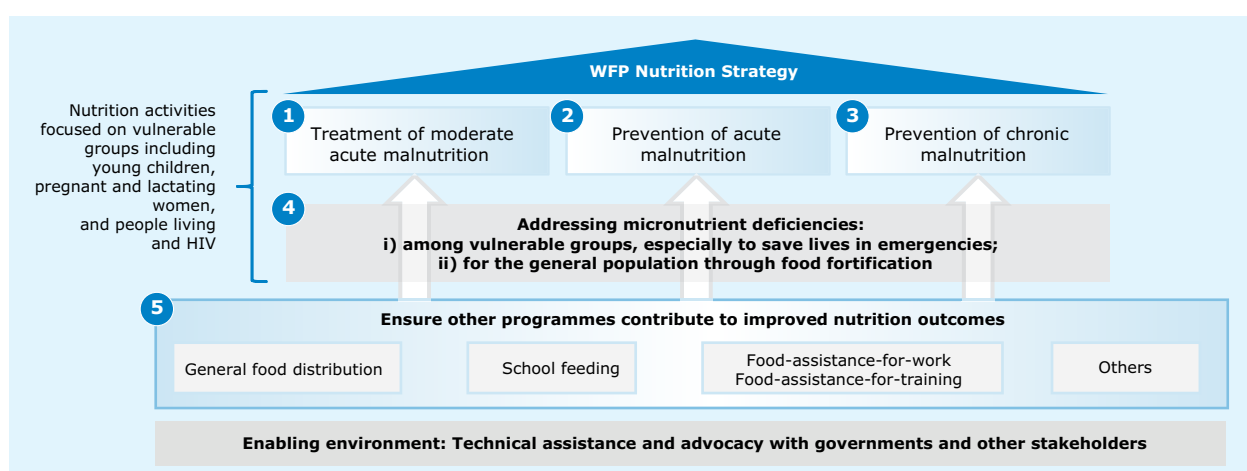
WFP’s nutrition policy seeks to influence almost all of WFP’s operations while advocating for a substantial expansion of nutrition programmes. Its conceptual

framework distinguishes between nutrition-specific interventions, which address malnutrition directly, and nutrition-sensitive interventions, which address its underlying causes (Figure 1). Five distinct policy areas reflect a growing awareness of the need to address stunting as well as acute malnutrition, and focus on prevention as well as treatment. The policy advocates for working through partnerships and achieving greater coherence among United Nations agencies.

The evaluation found the policy overall both relevant and timely: it was clearly written and well understood across WFP, and its conceptual framework was relevant and durable. It was consistent with WFP’s mandate and coherent with its strategic plans, rightly emphasizing the importance of multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approaches and partnerships to address chronic and acute malnutrition, and making capacity development of governments and partners a specific objective.

The policy drew on emerging evidence on undernutrition, including the significance of stunting. However, the evaluation concluded that adequately supporting some of the policy’s prescriptions and recommendations with a strong evidence base remains a challenge. The policy omitted important emerging issues such as overnutrition, and its treatment of gender was superficial. It had a practical orientation, but its implied targets for expanding WFP’s nutrition programming were overambitious. Its emphasis on supplementary feeding, along with insufficient attention to the complementary factors recognized in its conceptual framework, reinforced perceptions of the policy’s excessive focus on product-based solutions.

Figure 1. Nutrition Policy Conceptual Framework



⁹ International Food Policy Research Institute. 2015. *Global Nutrition Report 2015: Actions and accountability to advance nutrition and sustainable development*. Washington, DC.

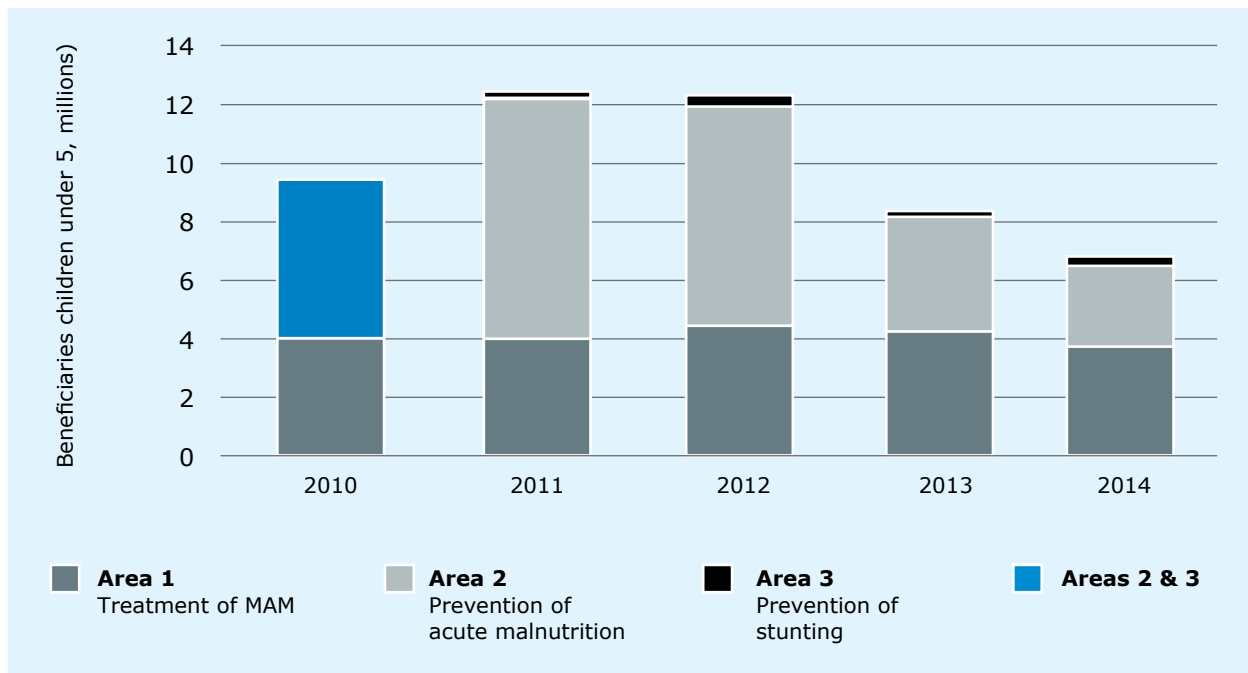
¹⁰ Mokoro Limited. 2015. *Independent Comprehensive Evaluation of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement: Final Report – Main Report and Annexes*. Oxford, UK.

Initial results included upgraded nutrition specifications for the commodities WFP procures; however, nutrition programmes were not scaled up to the extent envisaged by the policy (Figure 2). Food remained the dominant modality for WFP’s nutrition interventions, with limited use of cash-based transfers reflecting the limited global evidence base for nutrition outcomes related to this modality. Stunting

prevention programmes grew rapidly from a low base, but beneficiary numbers in areas such as treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition did not increase.

WFP has been proactive in the SUN movement and other partnerships, but progress towards greater coherence among United Nations agencies, although not entirely within WFP’s control, has been regrettably slow.

Figure 2. Actual beneficiaries in nutrition policy areas 1–3, 2010–2014



Source: Nutrition policy evaluation report.

MAM = moderate acute malnutrition.

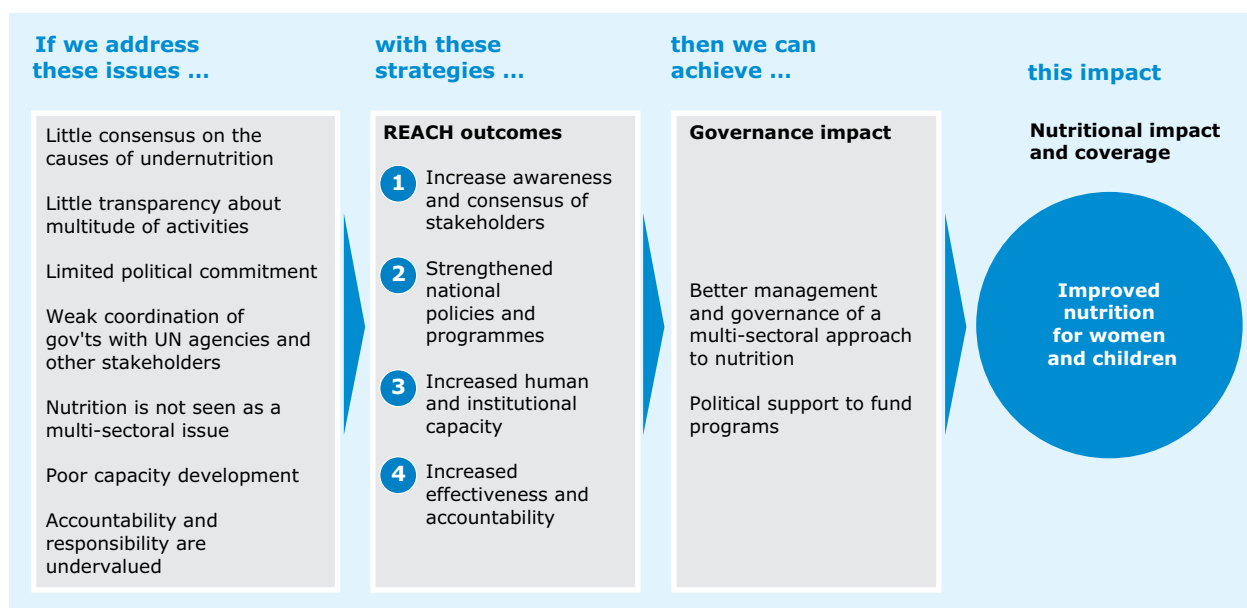
The analysis was limited to children under 5. Area 4 beneficiaries are captured in Areas 1–3. For Area 5, the evaluation was unable to distinguish between potential and actual nutrition-sensitive interventions.

The evaluation recommended: i) revising, updating and further developing the nutrition policy, and linking it to WFP’s next Strategic Plan; ii) improving policy guidance and dissemination, particularly in critical areas identified in the evaluation, including gender and nutrition-sensitive programming; iii) improving monitoring and operational research; iv) developing capacity within WFP; v) continuing WFP’s commitment to multi-sector partnerships; and vi) addressing systemic issues that constrain resource availability.

Evaluation of REACH

The United Nations REACH initiative aims to support the governance of country-level nutrition responses. It brings together WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to strengthen country-level nutrition planning and promote stronger nutrition coordination among these United Nations agencies. REACH began in 2008 and was expanded in 2010. This evaluation, covering 2011–2015, focused on the role of the REACH Secretariat, hosted by WFP, and its results in Bangladesh, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Figure 3. REACH theory of change



Source: REACH evaluation report.

The evaluation found that REACH fitted well with the priorities of the international nutrition agenda and of partner agencies, including gender and equity objectives. At the country level, it complemented the SUN movement. However, considering the complexity of the institutional environment, its timeframes were overambitious; its theory of change underestimated the importance of political commitment and the political economy of inter-agency cooperation; and its design was under-resourced for the scale of intended change.

REACH made substantial progress in two of its four outcome areas: Outcome 1 – Increased awareness and commitment; and Outcome 2 – Strengthening national nutrition policies and programmes. There was less progress towards Outcome 3 – Capacity development and Outcome 4 – Increasing effectiveness and accountability. The initiative’s high-level planning, tools and analysis highlighted equity and gender issues in nutrition, but implementation in these areas was slow. Country-level results were achieved at lower cost than budgeted, allowing timelines to be extended.

Even before the evaluation was complete, it had been decided that REACH would become the coordinating body for the United Nations SUN Network. Taking this decision into account, the evaluation’s recommendations centred on: i) maintaining the focus of REACH as a neutral facilitator of country-level nutrition governance; ii) expanding timeframes for engagement; iii) strengthening incentives for agencies’ contributions to the initiative; iv) redesigning the theory of change; v) aligning REACH with other technical support initiatives in nutrition; and vi) strengthening support for gender and equity in nutrition.

Nutrition findings from other evaluations

Nutrition-related findings from 2015 operation evaluations corroborated the nutrition policy evaluation findings regarding the uneven pace of roll-out of the policy’s concepts and approaches. There were delays in implementing nutrition-sensitive programming and building the required evidence base through accurate monitoring and impact measurement. In a few cases – most notably in Bangladesh – country offices clearly applied the policy in analysis and programme design. In others, the evaluators’ analysis drew explicitly on the policy’s concepts, but in several cases, the nutrition policy had little apparent influence on programmes or on the approach to their evaluation.

Several findings from operation evaluations concerning WFP’s overall effectiveness are also relevant to its nutrition efforts. For example, operational ambitions frequently outstripped WFP’s human resource capacity; the skills and approaches required were not always matched by WFP’s technical and human capacities; and, when funding was constrained, WFP could be more effective by concentrating its activities in fewer areas over a sustained period.

Reflecting programme design, nutrition was not a significant theme in the evaluation of the Syrian response. The Tanzanian country programme evaluation (CPE) found that WFP had followed policy guidelines in addressing stunting and micronutrient deficiencies in refugee camps, and had engaged constructively in national nutrition policy discussions, but could have been more proactive. Considering the

relatively low levels of undernutrition, the increasing obesity and the micronutrient deficiencies in the State of Palestine, its CPE affirmed WFP's decisions to adjust the composition of food rations and work with government and other partners instead of providing special nutrition products.

Lessons from nutrition evaluations

i) WFP's role and comparative advantage in nutrition. Evaluation findings suggest the need for a more realistic view of available resources for nutrition programmes, particularly prevention activities, reflecting the need for clear evidence of WFP's comparative advantage. In coordination with partners, better articulation of the role of product-based approaches is needed, along with evidence of WFP's added value in each nutrition focus area, in both emergency and development contexts.

ii) United Nations collaboration. The evaluations of WFP's nutrition policy and REACH echoed findings regarding United Nations collaboration from the independent evaluation of SUN. They all underscored the need for:

- i) commitment to the United Nations Global Nutrition Agenda¹¹ and SUN Network from the highest levels of United Nations agencies; and
- ii) a clear mandate and stronger accountability mechanisms set by the governing bodies of United Nations agencies to strengthen incentives for inter-agency cooperation and coordination.

iii) Operationalizing the nutrition policy. WFP's nutrition policy is a strong platform, but should be strengthened in several areas:

- a) WFP is appropriately making nutrition a higher corporate priority, which needs to be reflected in its next Strategic Plan, in full collaboration with other agencies and in line with the United Nations Global Nutrition Agenda.
- b) There is scope for expanding WFP's nutrition capacity further by equipping country offices

and regional bureaux with appropriate staff and skills to deliver high-quality programme management, effective national policy advocacy and support for national nutrition strategy and planning.

c) High-quality guidance should be made more accessible to staff. Significant gaps in nutrition guidance should be filled, especially related to nutrition-sensitive approaches, the "double burden", outcome monitoring, and coherence among nutrition, gender and cash-based transfer activities.

iv) Strengthening the evidence base for WFP's work in nutrition:

a) Providing evidence of the effectiveness-in-practice of some of WFP's nutrition approaches remains a challenge. There is scope for developing a comprehensive operational research strategy in partnership with international and national nutrition research institutions.

b) Progress on utilizing the nutrition outcome indicators included in the Strategic Results Framework is at an early stage. As in other areas, decision-makers are called on to prioritize consistently the need for evidence of impact. The development of guidance appropriate for WFP programmes and national monitoring and evaluation systems will help.

v) Addressing systemic resource constraints. In addition to strengthening the evidence base for credible advocacy – particularly on prevention of malnutrition – and the internal and external coherence of nutrition interventions, other efforts to address WFP's resource constraints that are relevant for nutrition include: i) the Financial Framework Review and related measures to increase the flexibility and predictability of funding; and ii) improved financial and outcome monitoring systems to enable better analysis of cost-effectiveness and results-based budgeting and reporting.

¹¹ United Nations Global Nutrition Agenda version 1.0, 2015. The United Nations Nutrition Network comprises WFP, IFAD, FAO, UNICEF and WHO.

Country-Specific Evaluations

Context

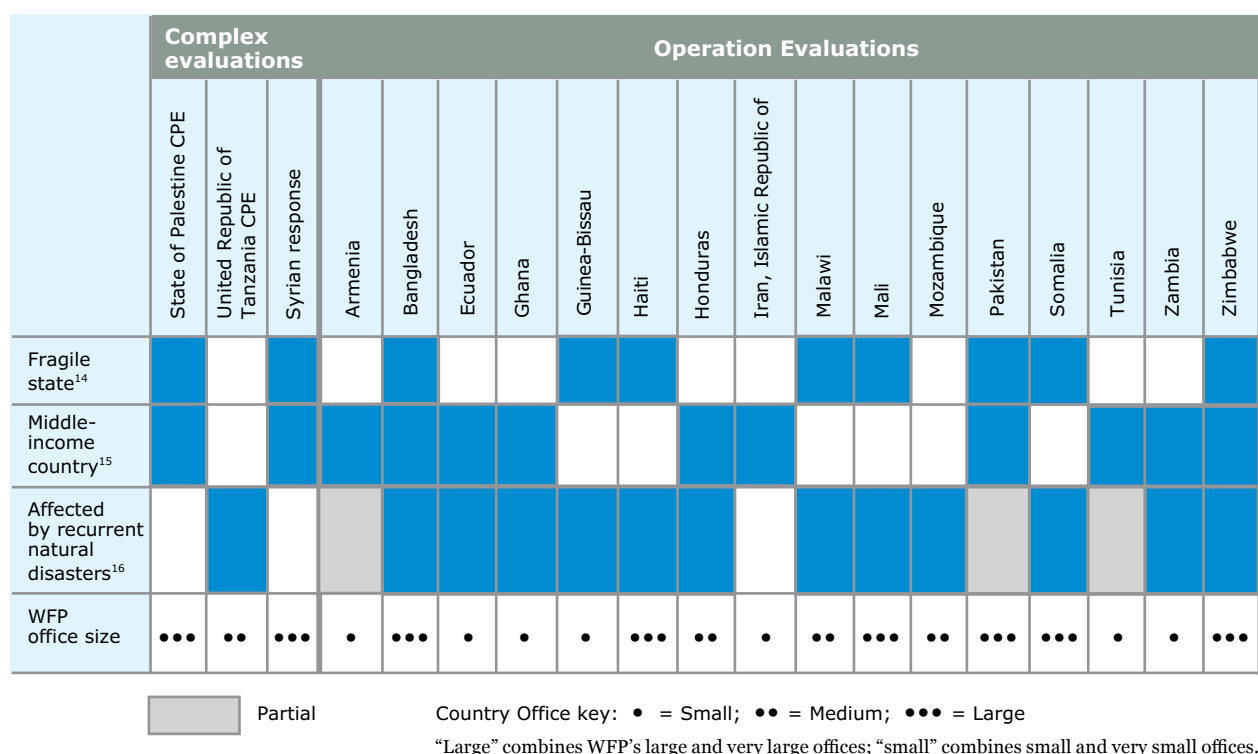
This section identifies additional findings and lessons synthesized from country-specific evaluations completed in 2015.¹² The evaluations reflected the diversity of WFP’s operations, spanning all its activity types implemented in a range of environmental, political and economic contexts, including escalating conflicts, sudden shocks, protracted crises, and relatively stable environments. The contexts described in the two CPEs – the State of Palestine and the United Republic of Tanzania – were notably dissimilar, except for the longevity of WFP’s engagement.

Above all, the operations and portfolios evaluated were exceptionally diverse in scale. For example, WFP’s regional response to the Syrian crisis had a budget of USD 4.7 billion for 2011–2014, compared with a budget

of USD 293 million for the United Republic of Tanzania portfolio for the same period. Of the 16 individual operations evaluated, 25 percent had budgets of less than USD 17 million.¹³ Figure 4 illustrates the range of contexts and scales of WFP’s responses. This diversity makes the common qualitative findings and lessons emerging from the synthesis all the more significant.

As well as the sheer number and scale of crises in 2015 (see Introduction), the challenges WFP faced have arguably become increasingly complex, concerning for instance: i) understanding beneficiary needs; ii) seeking coherence among an increasingly wide range of actors; iii) assuring that short-term emergency activities take longer-term and interconnected problems into account – “connectedness”; iv) managing transitions between immediate emergency response, protracted crises and long-term social protection; and v) the different approaches appropriate in low- and middle-income contexts.

Figure 4. Contextual characteristics of complex evaluations and operations evaluations



¹² The Synthesis Report of Operations Evaluations was presented to the Board in November 2015 and includes operation evaluations conducted between July 2014 and June 2015.

¹³ Of the 16 operations evaluations included in the synthesis, 9 are mid-term evaluations.

¹⁴ Source of definition: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2015 (2014 World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank harmonized list); 2014 Fragile States Index, Fund for Peace.

¹⁵ Source: World Bank.

¹⁶ Source: World Risk Index 2013.

Strategic positioning and partnerships

While continuing to progress from food aid to food assistance as well as responding to escalating and multiple protracted crises, WFP also had to take account of: i) the changing international landscape and objectives reflected in the global humanitarian and development dialogue; ii) global humanitarian reforms; iii) demands for greater transparency, accountability to affected populations and evidence of effectiveness at good value; iv) emerging practices in humanitarian action, influenced by rapid technological advances; and v) evolving knowledge in fields such as nutrition.

Broadly the evaluations confirmed that WFP is continuing its adaptation to these changing international needs and expectations. Generally, operations were found appropriate to **beneficiaries' needs**, but with some qualifications. In several cases, WFP's programmes were not as well aligned with beneficiary needs during implementation as they were at the design stage. This reduced alignment reflects the changing contexts, over-optimistic initial assumptions about funding and/or failure to use monitoring to refine targeting.

Where assessed, WFP's work was broadly aligned with humanitarian principles, but some difficult compromises were noted. For example, while WFP reported that its approach maximized access to affected populations, some beneficiaries and partners perceived that WFP's relationship with the Syrian Government undermined its reputation for impartiality and neutrality. In the State of Palestine, debate over the perceived dichotomy between humanitarian response and development reflected wider institutional challenges for WFP as it seeks to play a more enabling role.

Particularly as WFP continues its shift from implementer to enabler, its choice of, and relationships with, partners are critical to meeting its Strategic Objectives. The 2015 evaluations showed that WFP recognizes this, although greater distinction is required in its partnering approach, appropriate to its many different relationships with implementing agencies, state actors, United Nations and other international agencies, and the private sector.

For example, most evaluations commented positively on the broad coherence with national policies and frameworks. Regarding partnerships with governments, the evaluations found overall strong

intent where opportunities existed, albeit with some over-optimistic assumptions about partners' technical and financial capacities, which led to over-ambitious programming. Several evaluations found that more progress could have been made towards alignment with existing national social protection systems – noting the potential for sustainable capacity development of national institutions and for WFP's influence on national policies.

Regarding inter-agency partnerships, alignment with countries' United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) was generally strong. However, in the country portfolio operating within a Delivering as One framework, the efforts involved were frequently reported to outweigh the benefits.

Some good examples of private-sector partnerships were highlighted, including the innovative partnership for electronic vouchers in the Syrian regional response. In both this response and the State of Palestine portfolio, there was increased attention to the secondary economic benefits arising from private-sector involvement.

Analysis and design

Substantial analytical work fed into the design of operations and portfolios, with 12 of the 16 operations evaluated showing a strong analytical base. However, evaluations also highlighted the need for continued analysis to support the refinement and adaptation of activities over time, and programme designs frequently failed to address the trade-offs necessitated by underfunding, which could have been anticipated. For instance, while WFP's understanding of humanitarian needs enabled rapid scale up in response to the Syrian crisis – with broadly appropriate programmes at the outset – analyses of markets, gender, food insecurity, conflict dynamics and cost-effectiveness were insufficient to inform decisions regarding targeting and transfer modalities.

Of the six cases assessed in the context of country strategies, only two used these analyses to inform operation design; in some cases and sectors, implementation did not match strategic design, or strategic re-positioning was slow, for reasons that were not always evident. Selection of the best transfer modality is increasingly important, and rapidly evolving technology has broadened the options. Echoing findings from previous years, many evaluations found the analysis underpinning

the selection of transfer modalities unsatisfactory – particularly for deciding between cash and vouchers. Recently updated guidance and support for cash-based transfers are expected to be reflected in future evaluation findings.

Performance and results

The 2015 evaluations found generally strong technical performance, with renewed acknowledgement of WFP’s agility and strength in logistics and of its leading role in international humanitarian response. They also found innovation and adaptation in response to evolving contexts and to the direction of WFP’s successive strategic plans, but they recognized that these adaptations – from food aid to food assistance and from implementer to enabler – are works in progress.

Although WFP’s response to the Syrian crisis could have been stronger, the evaluation found that overall, WFP’s support was timely and responsive in an operation that was massively scaled up as the crisis evolved. WFP was effective in protecting refugees’ food security, and delivered assistance in ways that had collateral economic benefits. In the State of Palestine, the innovative electronic voucher modality was rapidly scaled up, enabling more beneficiaries to be reached than originally targeted, and with greater cost-effectiveness than in-kind assistance.

At the output level, the operation and country portfolio evaluations illustrated that the largest shortfalls in coverage achieved against that planned were in nutrition and food assistance-for-assets activities, mainly because of funding shortfalls. Although general distribution was more likely to reach target numbers of beneficiaries, funding shortfalls and pipeline breaks meant that beneficiaries often did not receive as much assistance as planned. Even when beneficiary numbers met or exceeded targets, transfers were often reduced in frequency, quantity or both.

The evaluations found mixed performance in capacity development. Positive examples consistent with WFP’s shift from implementer to enabler were identified in school feeding, disaster risk reduction, national capacity for social protection in the State of Palestine, and vulnerability analysis and mapping in the United Republic of Tanzania. However, 5 of the 16 operation evaluations identified piecemeal approaches rather than systems-oriented models, and some opportunities

were missed for engaging in and influencing national policies and/or integrating WFP’s portfolio into these. Confusion between capacity development and capacity augmentation continued, and possibilities for hand-over were frequently constrained by governments’ limited technical and financial capacities or the national context. Under-reporting and under-representation continued to be significant issues.

The operations and country portfolios evaluated in 2015 also yielded mixed results on gender. Four of the 16 operations had gender-sensitive designs, while gender analysis and subsequent monitoring in others were only superficially considered. However, 13 of the operation evaluations and both the CPEs found evidence of country offices making efforts to tackle gender barriers and empower women, which were not always captured in reporting systems.

Lessons from country-specific evaluations

- i) On innovation.** Among WFP’s most striking innovations is its use of electronic vouchers, especially in emergencies, including its facilitation of platforms for joint use by multiple agencies to meet a range of beneficiary needs. The development and use of electronic vouchers in the State of Palestine was seen as one of the portfolio’s greatest achievements, and became a model for WFP operations elsewhere, including in the Syrian response. Echoing similar lessons from last year’s AER concerning innovation management, however, innovation must be underpinned by strong analysis and monitoring. Strengthening WFP’s monitoring will enable better understanding and credible communication of the costs and benefits of different designs, approaches and modalities.
- ii) Analysis and monitoring.** Almost all the evaluations stressed the need for WFP to strengthen monitoring and analysis to improve modality design and targeting during implementation as well as to inform initial choices. Both the 2015 synthesis of operation evaluations and last year’s AER noted that in WFP’s increasingly complex and crowded operating environment, the capacity to provide evidence of outcomes and cost-effectiveness analysis routinely is of ever-greater importance for securing stakeholders’ confidence.

- iii) Stronger links to national social protection systems.** WFP activities increasingly resonate with and form part of wider national social protection systems. WFP should proactively and more consistently engage in the development of these systems, in line with its continuing shift from food assistance implementer to enabler of sustainable hunger solutions.
- iv) Funding constraints.** WFP is often constrained by the type and volume of funding it receives. In many cases, transfer modalities were bounded by donor preferences.¹⁷ The shift to more strategic and sustainable hunger solutions requires continued effort to achieve more flexible and predictable funding and financial allocations. At the same time, funding constraints can often be anticipated and should be taken into account more explicitly when planning the scale and targeting of WFP's operations.
- v) From implementer to enabler.** The evaluations found that while progress in this transition continued, limitations persisted. The 2015 evaluations indicated that success lies in smart, strategic choices of national partners for programme delivery and long-term commitment, linked to more comprehensive assessment and systematic approaches to capacity development built on synergies.
- vi) Corporate systems and support.** WFP has demonstrated its agility in scaling up during rapid-onset stages of crises. Further development of WFP's corporate systems, along with greater support and guidance, would enhance country offices' management of transition in protracted and rapidly altering contexts, and engagement in national capacity development in more stable contexts. This development requires: i) more flexible funding, as implied by the ongoing Financial Framework Review; ii) skills for undertaking WFP's new roles; and iii) more systematic guidance and support in areas where WFP is seeking to strengthen or innovate, particularly monitoring and analysis of cost-effectiveness, gender, social protection and capacity development, and "enabling" approaches more generally.

¹⁷ The operation evaluation synthesis noted that: "Dependent on voluntary contributions, WFP found itself vulnerable to donor preferences in these 16 operations. Earmarking of funds, short-term commitments and fragmented contributions restricted its room to manoeuvre and limited its scope to strategize for the future. Country-level reorientation has occurred despite, rather than because of, resource flows."

Part 2. WFP's Evaluation Function

New Evaluation Policy

Development of WFP's evaluation function in 2015 was framed by the findings and recommendations of two significant reviews in the preceding year: the peer review of WFP's evaluation function carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC);¹⁸ and the Joint Inspection Unit's analysis of evaluation functions across the United Nations system. Following the Board's endorsement of management's response to the peer review recommendations in November 2014, a new evaluation policy was approved by the Board in November 2015.

Coinciding with the 2015 International Year of Evaluation, progress in United Nations and IASC system-wide arrangements for evaluation, and preparations for the 2030 Agenda, the new policy places evaluation at the core of WFP's continued organizational strengthening efforts to achieve its Strategic Objectives and maximize its contribution to the SDGs.

The 2016–2021 evaluation policy¹⁹ aims to strengthen WFP's contribution to ending global hunger by embedding evaluation thinking and systems into WFP's culture of accountability and learning, through ensuring that evaluation results are consistently and comprehensively incorporated into WFP's policies, strategies and programmes.

Reflecting the 2030 Agenda's emphasis on global and national partnerships, the new policy establishes WFP's evaluation function as a combined centralized and demand-led decentralized evaluation model – a significant departure from the previous policy. It aims to: i) respond to rising stakeholder demand for evidence of and accountability for results at the country level; and ii) underpin WFP's partnerships and evidence-based contributions to national policies, systems and capacities for achieving the SDGs.

The policy includes a comprehensive normative and accountability framework comprising coverage norms, principles, standards, roles and responsibilities for evaluation across WFP. Alongside its targets for resourcing the substantial increases required in the number of WFP's evaluations, the policy also envisages: augmentation and capacity development of WFP staff; advisory support to enhance the quality of evaluations; knowledge management; and reporting systems. The Director of Evaluation provides global leadership of, sets standards for, oversees and reports on the entire evaluation function.

Recognizing the scale of change implied by this augmentation of WFP's evaluation function, the policy adopts a phased approach to organizational change, foreseeing gradual implementation between 2016 and 2021. The policy is supported by: i) an Evaluation Charter (Annex 1), which elaborates the evaluation function's mandate, authorities and institutional arrangements; and ii) an internal evaluation strategy to guide the policy's phased implementation. Together, the evaluation policy, charter and strategy form the basis for embedding evaluation across WFP over the coming years. As a first step, the Executive Director opened WFP's first global evaluation meeting, held in late 2015 to disseminate the policy and launch WFP's global evaluation network.

OEV Performance to plan in 2015

This section reports on OEV's performance to plan, as presented in WFP's Management Plan 2015–2017. It outlines performance on: i) the conduct and coverage of the planned programme of complex evaluations and the temporary series of operation evaluations managed by OEV; ii) establishment of WFP's decentralized evaluation function; iii) evaluation dissemination and use; iv) engagement in the international evaluation system; and v) the use of human and financial resources for the year, to conclude reporting on OEV's management results.

¹⁸ Available at: <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp264679.pdf>.

¹⁹ [WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1](#)

Evaluations and coverage

The 2015 programme of evaluations completed by OEV sustained the significant advances in evaluation coverage begun in 2014 (Figure 5). In 2015, 27 countries were covered by OEV evaluations –

fewer than the peak of 33 covered in 2014, but still representing a healthy increase since launch of the operation evaluation series in 2013, with 20 in 2013 and 21 in 2012.

Figure 5. 2015 Countries covered by centralized evaluations completed in 2015, by region

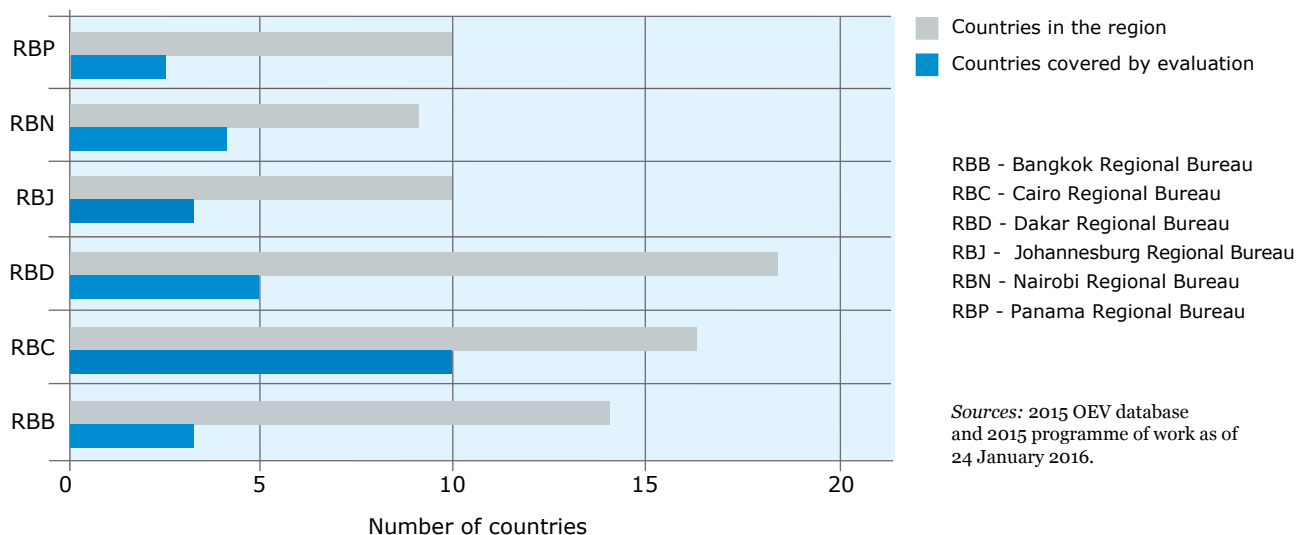
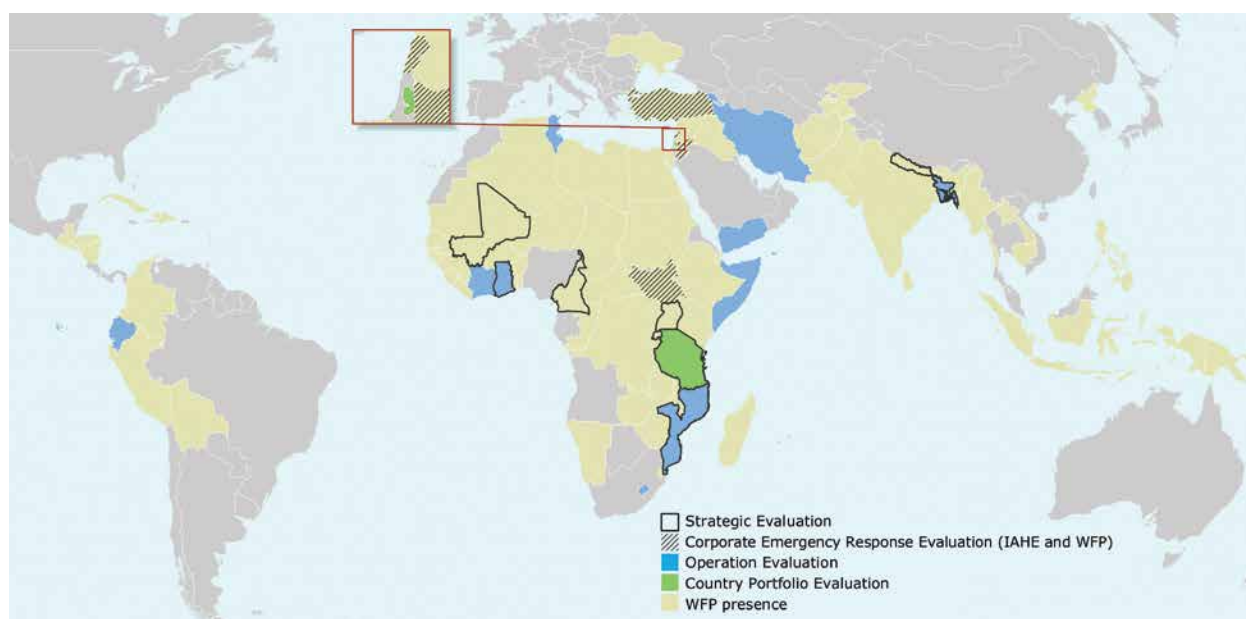


Figure 6 shows that as in previous years, there were significant disparities in the regional distribution of evaluations. This is partly because, when selecting countries, greater weight was given to the relevance of

the topic, for global evaluations, and to the timeliness of evaluation to inform decision-making, for country-specific evaluations, than to geographical distribution.

Figure 6. Countries visited by evaluation teams²⁰



WFP corporate emergency response evaluation = Syrian regional crisis; IAHE corporate emergency response evaluation = South Sudan.

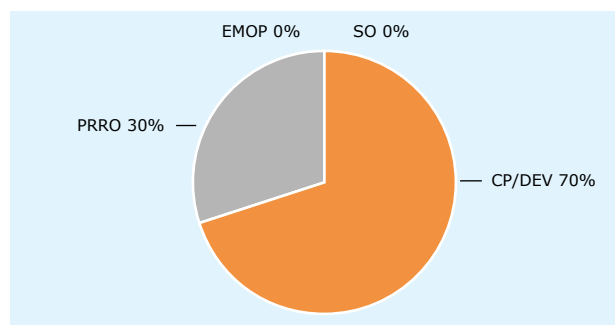
²⁰ Evaluation teams of centralized evaluations completed in 2015.

Figure 7 illustrates the coverage of operation evaluations completed in 2015. Although the selection of these evaluations took into account the distribution

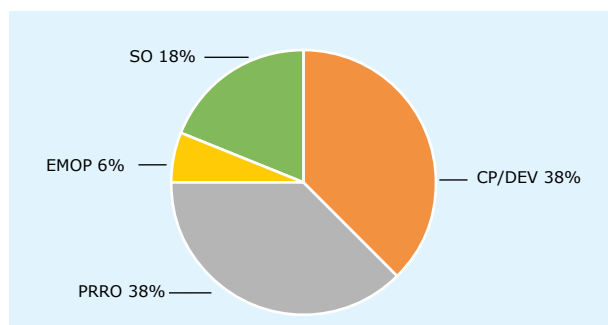
of WFP's programme of work, here too coverage in 2015 alone was not evenly representative of programme categories or regions.²¹

Figure 7. Completed operation evaluations and WFP operations by programme category and region, 2015

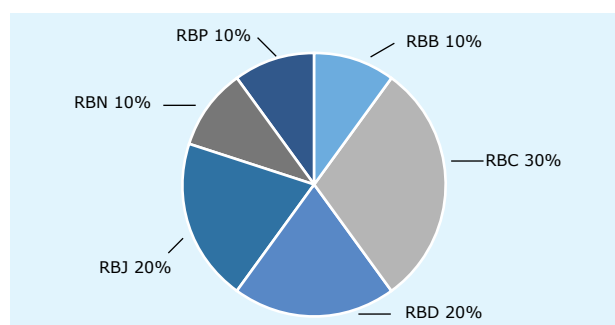
a. Operation evaluations by programme category



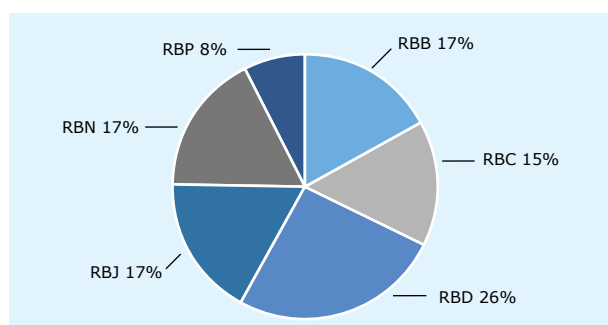
b. WFP operations by programme category



c. Operation evaluations by regional bureau



d. WFP operations by regional bureau



Calculated in terms of number of operations. Data cover the ten operation evaluations completed in 2015, and WFP's 2015 programme of work, excluding Level 3 emergencies.

Sources: OEV internal database and WFP Programme of Work as of February 2016.

RBB–Bangkok Regional Bureau; RBC–Cairo Regional Bureau; RBD–Dakar Regional Bureau; RBJ–Johannesburg Regional Bureau; RBN–Nairobi Regional Bureau; RBP–Panama Regional Bureau

With USD 2.4 million in non-staff Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) funding, ten complex evaluations of multiple operations, policies and strategies were completed and 12 new ones started in 2015. Maintaining this level of output with a reduced investment was made possible by efficiency gains from conducting more evaluations through partnerships (see paragraphs 75 and 76). The funds thus liberated were dedicated to enhancing other aspects of WFP's evaluation function.²² The series of operation evaluations, which were funded largely from project resources, continued: 10 were completed and 15 started.

Table 2 shows performance rates against plans for the various evaluation types managed by OEV. In all, 20 evaluations were completed; at ten, the number of complex evaluations completed was 91 percent of those planned, while the ten operation evaluations completed were three more than planned, bringing the overall completion²³ rate to 111 percent. With one more CPE begun in 2015 than originally planned, the overall start²⁴ rate was 104 percent.

²¹ Coverage over the life of the whole series of operation evaluations is more representative of geographic distribution and programme categories.

²² According to WFP's 2008 Evaluation Policy (applicable through 2015), paragraph.25, "the Director of the Office of Evaluation has full discretion in establishing the evaluation work programme in line with the Evaluation Policy and full authority over the management of human and financial resources for evaluation".

²³ "Completion" occurs when the final evaluation report is approved by the Director of OEV. Reports approved at the end of the calendar year are usually presented at the first Board session of the following year.

²⁴ An evaluation starts when budget expenditure commences.

Table 2. Implementation of Evaluation Work Plan 2015

		Country portfolio evaluations	Impact evaluations	Global evaluations (policy and strategic)	Humanitarian emergency Level 3	Syntheses	Sub-Total (core programme)	Single operation evaluations (temporary)	Total evaluations
Completions	Planned to be completed in 2015	2	0	3	3	3	11	7	18
	Actual completions 2015	2	0	3	2	3	10	10	20
	Completion rate	100%	-	100%	67%	100%	91%	143%	111%
Starts	Planned to start 2015	3	4	1	0	3	11	15	26
	Unplanned new actual starts	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total actual starts 2015	4	4	1	0	3	12	15	27
	Start rate	133%	100%	100%	0%	100%	109%	100%	104%

In addition, preparations were begun for an evaluation of WFP’s response to the Ebola crisis and an Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) of the corporate emergency response in Iraq. An evaluability advisory assessment of WFP’s Strategic Plan²⁵ was also conducted (reporting in 2016). This assessment had been postponed to 2015 to take account of adjustment of the new Strategic Plan to the SDGs and Zero Hunger Challenge.

Pursuing the development and modelling of best practices in partnerships with other actors in international humanitarian and development evaluation – outcome 4 of WFP’s 2016–2021 evaluation policy – OEV continued its participation in IAHEs of Level 3 emergency responses in South Sudan (completed) and the Central African Republic (near completion), with evaluation management coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).²⁶ Initiated in 2014, this new type of evaluation is part of the humanitarian programme cycle of the IASC Transformative Agenda, and provides shared analysis of and learning from the collective humanitarian response. Including the OEV-managed evaluation of WFP’s Ebola and Syrian responses, four of the seven Level 3 emergencies ongoing in 2014 and the six ongoing in 2015 are or have been under evaluation.

The series of four impact evaluations covering WFP’s work on moderate and acute malnutrition in humanitarian contexts was started as planned in partnership with the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation. Part of a larger thematic effort on this topic, the evaluations were planned for eight countries to generate learning from and for many actors. OEV hosted an inception workshop in September 2015 with 30 practitioner and academic participants. This series will be completed in 2017.

Both of these partnerships involve cost sharing, enabling increased coverage and enhanced learning with the available resources.

Strengthening decentralized evaluation

In 2015, activities to strengthen the decentralized evaluation function focused primarily on its normative framework. All elements of the function have been embedded in the new evaluation policy by setting norms and standards for decentralized evaluations and clear roles and accountabilities for the various stakeholders within WFP in terms of planning, resourcing, capacity development, quality assurance, reporting, use, management response and dissemination. The framework also includes clear provisions for safeguarding the impartiality of decentralized evaluations.

²⁵ Evaluability assessments assess whether objectives are adequately defined and results sufficiently verifiable to enable credible and reliable evaluation.

²⁶ Joint evaluations coordinated by OCHA are not presented to the Board.

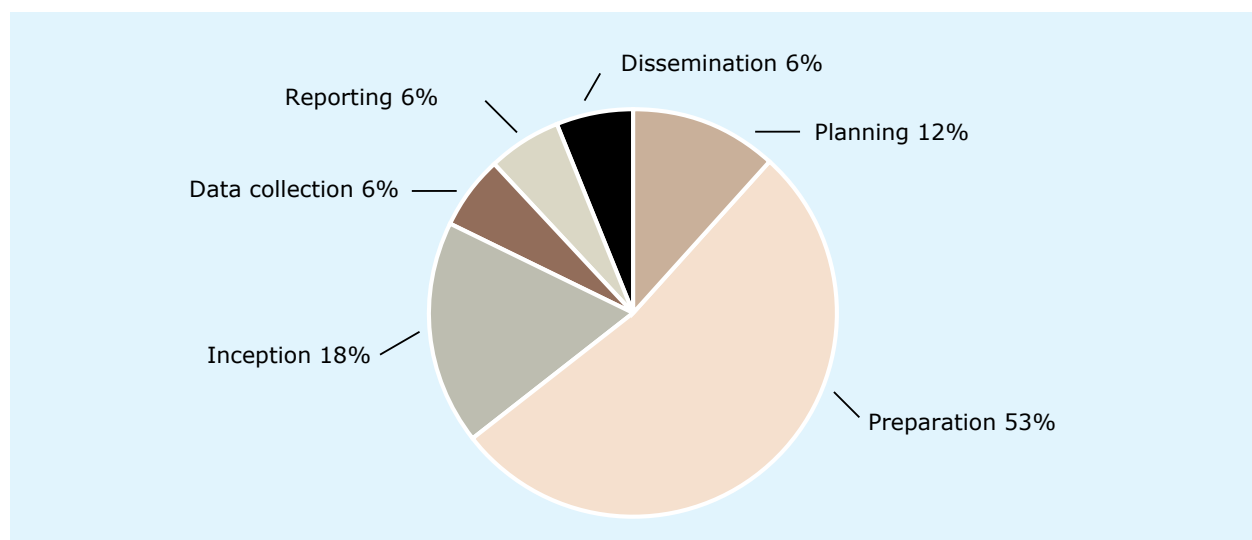
OEV prioritized initiatives for developing WFP's capacity to undertake high-quality decentralized evaluations:

i) A process guide was drafted for decentralized evaluation. Following the standards of the Evaluation Quality Assurance System, it clarifies the management process for decentralized evaluations and the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders at various stages. It also includes templates, checklists and technical notes. The first draft of the guide was validated by country offices and regional bureaux, and will be piloted in 2016.

This process guide is part of a comprehensive decentralized evaluation quality assurance system, which applies the same international, professional evaluation standards as those in OEV's well-established Evaluation Quality Assurance System for centralized evaluations.

ii) Initiated in 2014, the decentralized evaluation help desk became fully operational in 2015, supporting regional bureaux and country offices in 20 exercises within its first year. The majority of requests came at the planning, inception and preparation stages of decentralized evaluations (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Percentages of requests for support at different evaluation phases, 2015



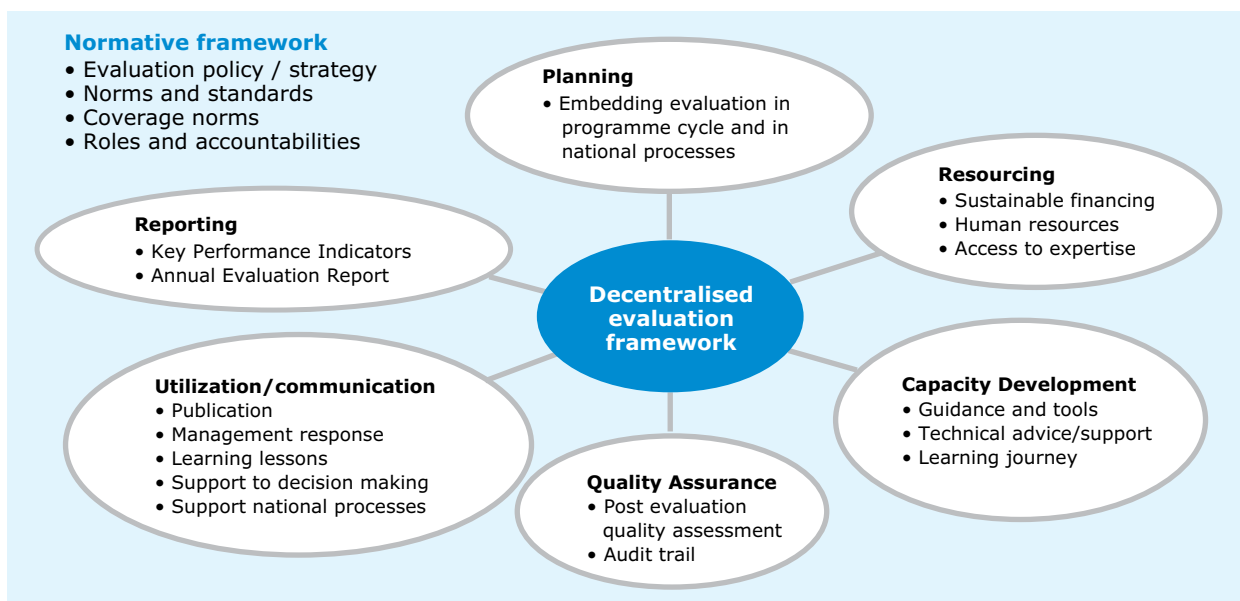
iii) Embedding of evaluation in WFP's Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Programme. OEV led the design and implementation of sessions on evaluation and initiated development of a further module dedicated to evaluation and review as part of this initiative, led by WFP's Performance Management and Monitoring Division.

iv) To increase WFP staff's awareness of evaluation-related issues, OEV organized evaluation sessions in two regional monitoring and evaluation network meetings.

v) An intranet page on decentralized evaluation was established, providing colleagues worldwide with immediate access to guidance and other information on decentralized evaluations.

In parallel, OEV engaged with other divisions to strengthen planning for evaluation and discuss and develop sustainable funding mechanisms for decentralized evaluations.

Figure 9. Core elements of the decentralized evaluation function



Learning from and use of evaluations

To strengthen the use of evaluation evidence in WFP’s policy and programme planning processes, OEV provided evaluation evidence through the strategic programme review process to inform the development of country strategies and projects. OEV provided comments on 94 percent of strategic programme review documents and attended two thirds of review meetings. OEV also systematically reviewed pilot Country Strategic Plans and advised on associated templates.

CPEs are designed to provide evidence of WFP’s current strategic positioning and results as a starting point for future country strategies and Country Strategic Plans, while operation evaluations are designed to inform project planning. So the nature and timing of country office planning decisions continued to be a strong criterion in the selection process for country-level evaluations – whether of single operations, corporate

emergency responses or country portfolios – to ensure the most appropriate type of evaluation for impending decision-making needs.

OEV is also an observer in the Policy and Programme Advisory Group, which includes colleagues from Headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices. OEV contributes lessons from past evaluations to inform reflection on corporate developments and engagement in evaluation-related issues. A special consultation with this group was held in 2015 on the demand-led, decentralized function and provisions for safeguarding impartiality.

Continuing efforts to build tailor-made learning opportunities into the evaluation process included dedicated events for stakeholder learning from evaluations (Table 3), supplemented by briefings, consultations and presentations to stakeholders and WFP senior management.

Table 3. Evaluation-related stakeholder learning events in 2015

Evaluation	Stakeholders	Location
CPE United Republic of Tanzania	External partners and WFP staff	Dar-es-Salaam
Final Evaluation of the Purchase for Progress (P4P) Pilot	Participants at the annual P4P Global Consultation (including staff, partners, donors and academia)	Rome
Nutrition Policy	WFP technical and management staff	Rome
Strategic Evaluation of WFP’s Use of Pooled Funds	IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Force	Geneva
	OCHA	New York

Syntheses of evaluations of WFP's work have also been well received as tools to enable learning. A synthesis of findings from the series of four recent strategic evaluations on aspects of emergency preparedness and response²⁷ was supplemented by: i) cross-referencing of findings with related findings from several other evaluations, including that of WFP's response to the Syrian crisis; and ii) interviews with senior EPR stakeholders concerning progress on follow-up actions to the evaluations.

The evaluability assessment of WFP's Strategic Plan adopted an innovative strategic approach in response to the decision to bring forward design of the new Strategic Plan to align it with the 2030 Agenda, and to adapt WFP's planning and financing systems through the Road Map to Zero Hunger. The evaluability assessment advised WFP's management on the extent to which the performance management architecture enables assessment of progress on WFP's Strategic Objectives, and on what improvements could be made in the next Strategic Plan.

Staffing factors necessitated a shift in priorities of planned activities in this area, including the postponement of upgrades to OEV's intranet and internet sites. However, all evaluation reports continued to be publically available online, and contributions to WFP's ongoing work on corporate knowledge management were maintained.

Unique page views of OEV's intranet site increased by 68 percent, with only 7 percent being new visitors. Intranet activity increased significantly in the last quarter of 2015, when the new evaluation policy was approved and new materials for decentralized evaluation were published. Unique page views of OEV's internet site dropped by 15 percent, with a 25 percent decrease in visitors, 80 percent of whom were new.

Evaluation function reporting

Evaluation forms part of WFP's performance management architecture and the quality of evaluations is greatly enhanced by high-quality monitoring data. Therefore, OEV engaged with the Performance Management and Monitoring Division to formulate WFP's monitoring strategy.

OEV's systems for reporting on the centralized evaluation function were analysed in relation to the new evaluation policy and steps were taken to design a system for oversight of the policy's implementation. This system, to be further developed in 2016, will measure the quality and extent of evaluation activities across WFP.

Development of a post-evaluation quality assessment system covering both centralized and decentralized evaluations was postponed to 2016 – the first year of the new policy's implementation.

An independent meta-assessment of 21 OEV-managed evaluations found that OEV met the requirements for gender integration set by the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan, and improved on its 2014 score. This was achieved by investing in the technical capacity and awareness of gender requirements of OEV and evaluation teams.

Engagement with the international evaluation system

Through its inter-agency collaboration and partnerships with United Nations system-wide evaluation networks, OEV continued its engagement in and support to the IASC's IAHE arrangement for greater learning and accountability under the Transformative Agenda. OEV participated in evaluations of the collective responses in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, and in the Coordinated Accountability and Lessons Learning (CALL) initiative for the Syrian response. A synthesis report of findings and lessons from the almost 1,000 entries in the CALL information system is being prepared as a contribution to preparations for the WHS.

In line with their 2014 joint statement of intent, the evaluation offices of the four Rome-based agencies hosted a technical seminar in November 2015 on the evaluability of SDG 2 – *End hunger, achieve food security and nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture*. Attendees from 38 countries included evaluators, academics, government representatives, United Nations and other international agency staff, with an additional 1,000 virtual participants. The seminar set the basis for future development of a shared SDG 2 evaluation agenda.

²⁷ PREP; the global logistics cluster; the WFP/FAO joint evaluation of food security cluster coordination in humanitarian action; and WFP's use of pooled funds for humanitarian preparedness and response.

Reflecting increased global attention to humanitarian issues, OEV launched a humanitarian evaluation interest group in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). Its first study, started in 2015, will allow a better understanding of how application of the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence are evaluated – highlighting best practices, challenges and opportunities.

OEV continued its lead role in UNEG, with the Director of OEV serving as vice-chair for system-wide evaluation issues during the very active International Year of Evaluation. In 2015, OEV: i) convened a group to consider the implications of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs for United Nations evaluation functions; ii) continued its engagement in the Independent System-Wide Evaluation Interim Coordination Mechanism and its pilot evaluations of UNDAFs and capacity building in statistics; and iii) assisted the review and updating of UNEG’s foundational norms and standards, also taking account of how specific aspects of evaluation in humanitarian contexts are recognized.

In addition, OEV continued to support the work of UNEG on professionalization of evaluation, decentralized evaluation and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of evaluation issues affecting WFP. The Director also continued as a steering group member of the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP); two evaluations managed or co-managed by OEV were selected as good practice examples in ALNAP’s Guide on Evaluation of Humanitarian Action.

Resources for evaluation

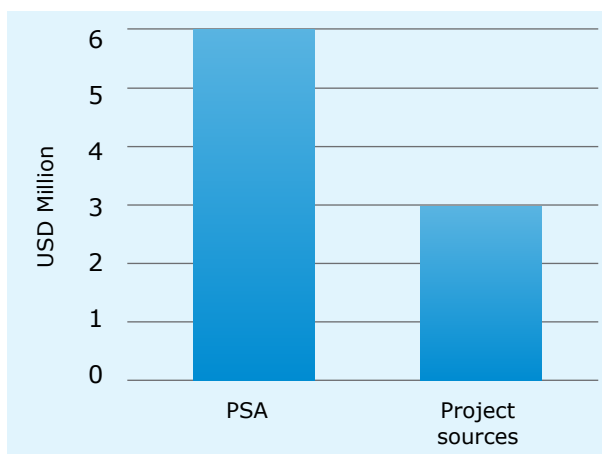
This section reports only on resources available to OEV for evaluation. In line with WFP’s Evaluation Policy (2016–2021), over the coming years WFP’s management information system will be expanded to enable aggregated reporting on resources dedicated to WFP’s evaluation function as a whole.

The total budget for evaluation in 2015 was USD 9 million – 8 percent more than in 2014. This represented 0.18 percent of WFP’s total projected 2015 contributions income.²⁸

WFP allotted USD 5.5 million from the 2015 PSA budget to OEV’s work programme: USD 2.5 million for staff and USD 3 million for non-staff expenditures, approximately in line with the 2014 allotment. A further USD 600,000 was allotted to the critical corporate initiative of continuing to develop the decentralized evaluation function and other enhancements in line with WFP’s response to the DAC/UNEG peer review. These two components represented a 13 percent increase over 2014. OEV expended 99 percent of all funds within the year.

The special account from which operation evaluations are funded – largely from project sources – totalled USD 2.59 million, similar to the 2014 level, but with a small increase in standard WFP staff rates.

Figure 10. OEV budget, 2015



OEV’s established staff comprised the Director, nine professional officers and three general service staff. Further improvements were made in geographical and gender diversity, although there are still more women than men. The 50:50 balance between WFP staff on rotation and externally recruited experts was maintained.

Over the year, the position occupancy rate was 89 percent, compared with 81 percent in 2014; temporary staff filled gaps. Professional staff turnover during the year was 17 percent, compared with 33 percent in 2014.

Just over the target of 2 percent of professional staff work time was spent in professional development – slightly less than 2 percent for established professional staff and slightly more for short-term personnel.

²⁸ Source: WFP MP EB.2/2015/5_A/1/Rev.1 (pg. 6)

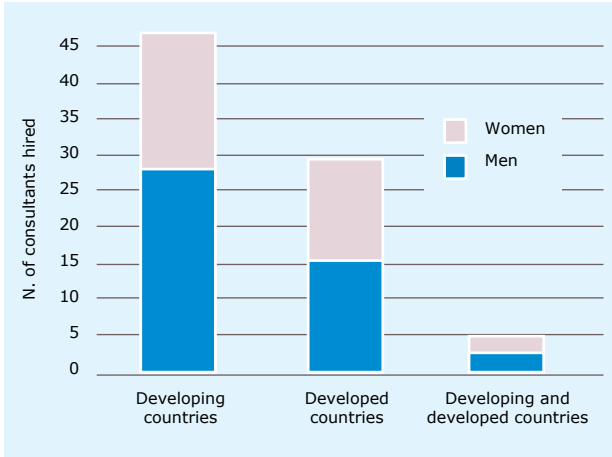
Current systems do not adequately capture virtual modes of learning such as webinars and peer-to-peer exchange, which are increasingly common.

OEV maintained 12 long-term agreements (LTAs) with consultancy firms and research institutions providing evaluation services in the technical and geographical areas required for the programme of complex evaluations. Seven LTAs provided services for the operation evaluations.²⁹ As in 2014, all evaluation teams in 2015 were contracted through LTAs.

For evaluations managed by OEV in 2015, 81 consultants were hired, compared with 106 in 2014. Fifty-seven percent of consultants for complex evaluations were contracted for the first time bringing fresh expertise to complement that of consultants with WFP experience, (compared with 41 percent in 2014). The average evaluation team for complex evaluations was 6.1 consultants, up from 4.8 in 2014; operation evaluation teams averaged 3.6 consultants.

The composition of evaluation teams had a reasonable gender balance, with 57 percent men and 43 percent women compared with 46 percent men and 54 percent women in 2014. The proportion of professionals from developing countries climbed to 36 percent,³⁰ compared with a low of 25 percent in 2014, with 58 percent from developed countries and 6 percent of dual nationality. Figure 11 shows the gender and geographical diversity combined.

Figure 11. Composition of evaluation teams, 2015



²⁹ Three organizations have LTAs for both types of service.


³⁰ This figure does not include local researchers who are subcontracted at the country level.

Annex 1. Evaluation Charter

Available at the following link:

<http://docustore.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/cd/wfp283812.pdf>

Fighting Hunger Worldwide



World Food Programme
wfp.org

Executive Director's Circular (Office of Evaluation)

Date: 10 May 2016
Circular No.: OED2016/007
Revises:
Amends:
Supersedes: OED2010/004

WFP Evaluation Charter

Introduction

1. Pursuant to the Evaluation Policy (2016-2021)¹ approved by the Executive Board in November 2015, this Executive Director Circular establishes the Charter for WFP's evaluation function. This Charter should be read in conjunction with the Evaluation Policy.
2. In line with *Agenda 2030*, the Evaluation Policy responds to expectations by member states and all WFP stakeholders for independent and credible evidence on its results, which generate knowledge to strengthen WFP's contribution to ending global hunger. The Evaluation Policy establishes the vision and strategic direction for embedding evaluation into WFP's culture of and systems for accountability and learning across the organization. It sets the normative framework and standards, and specifies a new model for WFP's evaluation function, comprising centralized and demand-led decentralized evaluation, to be implemented in a phased approach elaborated in an Evaluation Strategy².
3. Together, the Charter and the Evaluation Policy *constitute the governance framework for WFP's evaluation function*. In addition, the Evaluation Charter sets the *institutional arrangements* for operationalization of the Policy and Strategy that enable evaluation to be progressively integrated into WFP's policies, strategies and programmes.
4. The new evaluation function established by the Evaluation Policy carries implications well beyond the Office of Evaluation. Accordingly, the Charter specifies governance and roles in the evaluation function across WFP, in

¹ [WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1](#), henceforth in this document referred to as 'Evaluation Policy'. Verbatim from the Evaluation Policy has been replicated as relevant and it is indicated in italics.

² Under development in 2016, available at: <http://docustore.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp283853.pdf>

Acronyms

AER	Annual Evaluation Report
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
CALL	Syria Coordinated Accountability and Lessons Learning initiative
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CP	country programme
CPE	country portfolio evaluation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEV	Development Programme
EMOP	emergency operation
EPR	emergency preparedness and response
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LTA	long-term agreement
MAM	moderate acute malnutrition
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEV	Office of Evaluation
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PREP	Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSA	Programme Support and Administrative (budget)
REACH	Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SO	Special Operation
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization



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