

Strategic Evaluation

From Food Aid to Food Assistance- Working in Partnership: A Strategic Evaluation – Vol. I Full Report

January 05, 2012

Commissioned by the

Office of Evaluation

Measuring Results, Sharing Lessons

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[Report number: OE/2012/003]



World Food Programme

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Acknowledgements

Before commencing this Evaluation Report, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all stakeholders with whom we have collaborated during this evaluation, giving special recognition to the staff and management of WFP offices worldwide. We also wish to thank the staff and management of OE for rapidly mobilizing data, and for engaging a network of global partners in the evaluation process. It is as a direct result of this level of cooperation and enthusiasm that the realization of this evaluation has become possible.

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Executive Summary

Evaluation Features

1. This strategic evaluation of WFP's partnerships is one of four strategic evaluations conducted by WFP's Office of Evaluation in the 2010–2011 biennium that are related to the shift from food aid to food assistance as called for in WFP's 2008–2013 Strategic Plan. This evaluation assessed how WFP's partnerships and its role within them are affected by this strategic shift. It focused on two domains: nutrition and health; and emergency preparedness and response.

2. The evaluation was conducted by a five-member independent evaluation team from May until November 2011. The functional and geographic diversity of the country visits and desk studies is shown in Table 1.

Category	Sub-category
Country visits	Haiti Kenya Lao People's Democratic Republic
Country desk studies	Colombia Niger
Regional visits	Asia (Bangkok) East and Central Africa (Nairobi) Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama City)
Regional desk studies	Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Cairo) West Africa (Dakar) Southern Africa (Johannesburg)
Desk studies of major partners	United Nations partners, global non-governmental organizations (NGOs), selected governments and donors, TNT ¹ and Vodafone
Global desk studies	WFP staff

3. Qualitative interviews and group discussions were complemented by quantitative instruments, including:

- a survey of 400 external partners and stakeholders;
- a survey of 199 WFP managers and senior professionals;
- a partnership agreement scorecard, which was applied to 80 agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and similar documents; and
- a Good Partnership Health Checklist used in interviews with NGOs at the country level.

¹ TNT is a private mail and express delivery company.

4. The response rate was 43 percent for the external survey and 31 percent for the internal survey. Both are above the industry standard of 30 percent for unsolicited surveys.

Context

5. Partnership is an essential element for effective international humanitarian and development assistance, and is a recurring theme in global platforms such as the Millennium Development Goals, the 2009 L'Aquila G8 Summit and the World Food Summit on Food Security.

6. Attention is being devoted to making partnerships more effective. Some organizations have developed principles to guide their partnership practices. For example, the partnership principles adopted by the Global Humanitarian Platform include equality, transparency, a results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. The emerging consensus on the characteristics of effective partnerships is characterized by:

- voluntary and collaborative interaction;
- complementary interests and objectives;
- shared contribution of resources – financial, human or both;
- shared risks and benefits; and
- mutual accountability.

7. For the purpose of this evaluation, partnership was defined as voluntary collaboration sustained over a period of time in which each party shares benefits, costs and risks to achieve a jointly defined objective. The evaluation did not include those relationships between WFP and donors or private-sector organizations that are primarily financial, nor was its focus on relationships that are primarily contractual – whereby WFP contracts with an organization to deliver goods or services.

8. A three-level classification was developed for use in the evaluation:

- **Delivery partnerships:** To deliver services to beneficiaries with the provision that partners bring benefits or skills beyond the contractual delivery of goods or services.
- **Knowledge/skill-transfer partnerships:** To develop the capacity of third parties – especially governments, regional bodies and NGOs – or expand the scope of knowledge.
- **Framework and policy partnerships:** To position WFP to work within a global system or to raise awareness or advocate for new approaches in response to issues of common concern.

Partnership in WFP

9. WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2013) makes a commitment to work more coherently with different actors in order to: achieve WFP's goals; contribute to the

overall aims of the United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals; complement government capacities; and support hand-over.

10. WFP distinguishes between NGOs as cooperating partners – primarily those who provide a service, such as food distribution, for a fee – and complementary partners – those who contribute their own resources towards shared goals. But there is no accepted definition of “partnership” or “partner” in WFP, and no overarching partnership policy, although some sector-level policies do address partnership. Examples include the 2001 NGO Partnership Framework, the 2004 policy on national capacity development (updated in 2009), the 2004 policy on engaging new partners in the private sector and the associated 2008 private-sector partnership and fundraising strategy.

11. **Nutrition and health.** Over 50 percent of all WFP projects carried out in partnership with other United Nations or international organizations include nutrition and health activities – the largest share for any sector. In 2008, WFP partnered with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on 140 projects in 71 countries, of which 61 percent were related to health and nutrition. Of the 291 projects reporting NGO partnerships between 2005 and 2009, 61 percent had nutrition-related activities. A number of new and innovative partnerships are being forged in the area of nutrition and health, including the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) framework and the REACH partnership for ending child hunger.

12. **Emergency preparedness and response.** WFP works with a range of partners to develop governments’ capacities for disaster preparedness and response, and to address emergency needs in order to complement governments’ own capacities. WFP is the lead organization in the emergency telecommunications and logistics clusters. With the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), it also co-leads the global food security cluster, which was established in 2010 but is already operational in 15 countries.

Evaluation Findings

13. This report addresses four main evaluation questions:

- i) What implications does the shift from food aid to food assistance have for WFP’s partnerships?
- ii) How effective and efficient are WFP’s partnerships?
- iii) How do factors in WFP’s external operating environment – including donors, the policy environment, and a country’s social, political, economic and cultural conditions – affect its ability to develop and maintain effective partnerships?
- iv) How do internal factors – including processes, systems, culture and staff capacity – affect WFP’s ability to develop and maintain effective partnerships?

14. It became apparent that in addition to these four questions, there were several overarching issues that affected the way the evaluation questions were considered by internal and external stakeholders.

Overarching Findings

⇒ Lack of clarity about the shift from food aid to food assistance and about partnership

15. Although most survey respondents reported an understanding of the strategic shift – and that their partnerships had evolved in response to it – more detailed investigation uncovered clear disparities and a considerable lack of understanding. Interviews with WFP staff and partners at different levels found a wide variation in understanding about the nature of the transformation from food aid to food assistance. Whereas some described it as a re-branding of work already taking place before 2008, others viewed “food assistance” as closely linked to the Paris and Accra declarations. Many were unable to identify specific effects of the transformation on operations other than the shift to voucher or cash transfer programmes.

16. WFP’s partners also had differences of opinion about what the shift entailed, although most indicated they “understood” it. While many country-level NGO and government stakeholders did not fully understand what food assistance is, they noted that WFP had changed the nature of its programmes and how it worked. Government stakeholders in Kenya reported the use of a tripartite decision-making model with WFP and NGOs that more strongly recognized national accountability and responsibility. Institutional stakeholders, especially United Nations partners at the regional and global levels, voiced concern about the lack of understanding of the shift. Whereas 82 percent of WFP survey respondents reported that roles and responsibilities among WFP and its partners were clear at the national level, only 60 percent indicated that they were clear at the international and regional levels.

17. There was also a lack of clear understanding among WFP staff and partners about partnership. Virtually any form of collaborative relationship at any geographic or functional level was viewed as a partnership. There were also widely differing views within WFP about what constitutes an effective partnership. Although WFP agreed to the Global Humanitarian Platform good partnership principles, field-level staff had only a vague awareness of them, and while they supported these principles, they did not clearly understand the implications for their work. Few were aware of the principles of good practice or ways to assess whether a partnership is effective. These ambiguities have led to uncertainty about how partnerships can impact WFP’s transformation. Because WFP has not formally categorized partnerships and what constitutes good partnership, ambiguities arise regarding how effective these relationships are in attaining the equally ambiguous objective of providing food assistance.

⇒ Uneven communications

18. The evaluators found that WFP’s communications about partnerships and food assistance– two cornerstones of its current Strategic Plan – were uneven at best. At the country level, NGO stakeholders were generally unaware of the strategic transformation or the centrality of partnership to WFP, except that they were being

asked to do things differently. The fact that WFP staff at all levels, including senior managers at Headquarters, had differing views about the nature of food assistance and partnership, underscores the lack of substantive understanding or clear definition provided by WFP leadership concerning these two core elements of the Strategic Plan.

Summary of Main Findings

⇒ *WFP as a valued and respected partner*

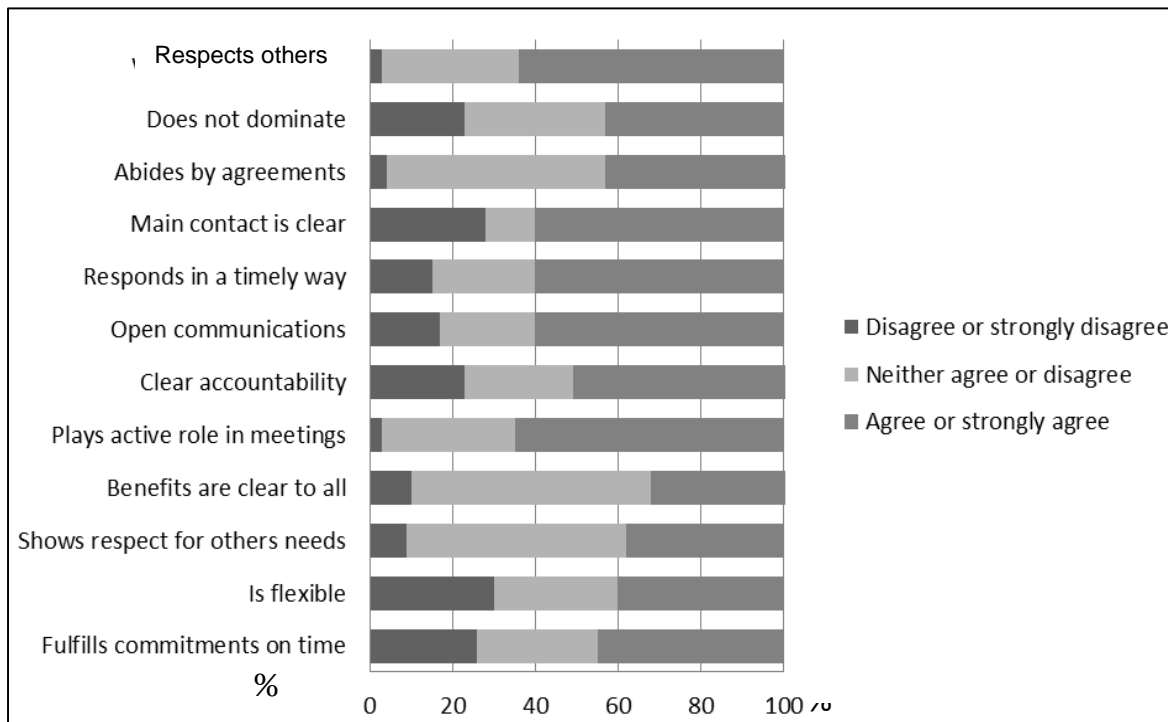
19. According to survey data and interviews, WFP is considered to be a valued and respected partner. The following Table shows how external stakeholders rated WFP’s adherence to partnership principles. Respondents rated WFP most highly for its results-oriented approach and degree of responsibility. The majority of respondents rated WFP lower in degree of transparency. Although people interviewed rarely made specific reference to partnership principles, they indicated that WFP staff, especially at the field level, are seen as trustworthy, open and honest, which are core values related to effective partnership.

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Don’t know	Total
Equality	17 (15%)	37 (33%)	41 (36%)	8 (7%)	10 (9%)	113
Transparency	16 (14%)	33 (29%)	47 (42%)	9 (8%)	8 (7%)	113
Results-oriented approach	24 (21%)	49 (43%)	30 (27%)	1 (1%)	9 (8%)	113
Responsibility	20 (18%)	47 (42%)	36 (32%)	1 (1%)	9 (8%)	113
Complementarity	15 (13%)	37 (33%)	42 (38%)	4 (4%)	14 (12%)	112

20. Figure 1 shows how 60 country-level NGOs rated WFP’s performance using a “good partnership health” checklist. For most indicators, WFP was rated positively by most respondents. The most highly rated areas were: respect for others; responding in a timely manner; communicating openly; ensuring that the main contact point is clear; and playing an active role in meetings. Areas of relative weakness include flexibility and fulfilling commitments on time.

21. Interviews with NGOs indicated that concern about fulfilling commitments is related to payment delays and, more importantly, delays in the delivery of food and pipeline breaks.

Figure 1: Good partnership health checklist rating



⇒ *Capacity gaps, particularly in the area of nutrition*

22. There were a number of weaknesses in WFP’s partnering performance related to nutrition that were not observed in emergency preparedness and response. Major weaknesses included: i) a lack of technical expertise to support participation in these programmes; ii) a lack of senior professional staff to undertake WFP’s work and partner effectively with NGOs, governments and others; iii) a lack of clarity regarding WFP’s strategic aims in nutrition as it shifted from food aid to food assistance.

23. To engender trust and build a long-term knowledge base, partners need to maintain consistency of staff and to ensure staff professionalism and skills. In Haiti, WFP staff working with the Ministry of Health indicated that the impending reduction in project commitments for nutrition would reduce WFP’s team by at least half in the near future, impeding the Ministry’s re-building efforts and its efforts to build internal nutrition-related capacity. Several WFP nutrition staff members, including nutrition coordinators, were employed on a contractual basis: some positions experienced rapid turnover while other staff members faced termination because of contractual requirements. In other cases, nutrition positions were filled with less experienced and less qualified staff.

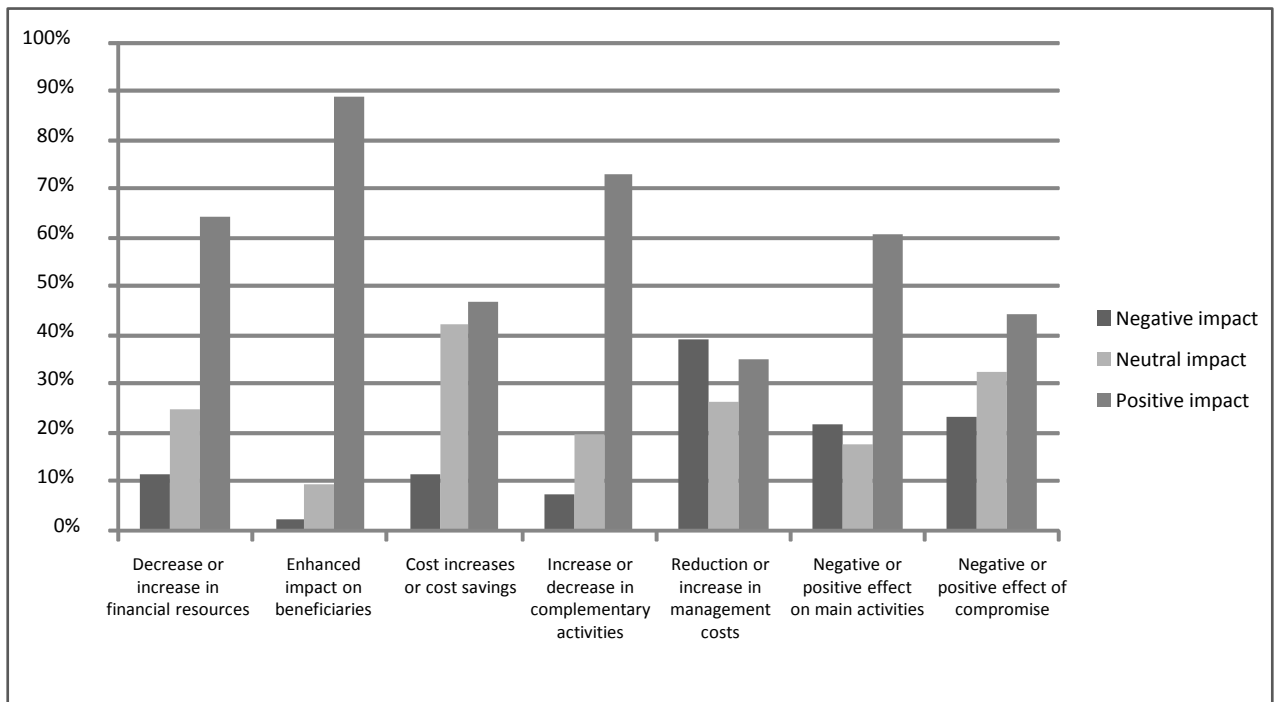
24. WFP staff faced challenges in sustaining financial resources for nutrition given WFP’s tonnage-based financing model, since high-value but low-tonnage nutrition products depleted budgets and resulted in less discretionary funding for capacity development and related activities. Respondents did not express confidence that the impending changes to the tonnage model would provide the resources necessary to ensure the longevity of WFP’s nutrition activities.

25. Ambiguity about WFP’s roles and responsibilities in the area of nutrition was expressed by virtually all United Nations stakeholders at the regional and global levels. At the country level, stakeholders from NGOs and other United Nations agencies had similar concerns about a lack of clarity regarding nutrition, with calls for “higher levels of authority” to provide this clarity. WFP is currently developing a new nutrition policy that might clarify this issue.

⇒ *Benefits and costs of partnership*

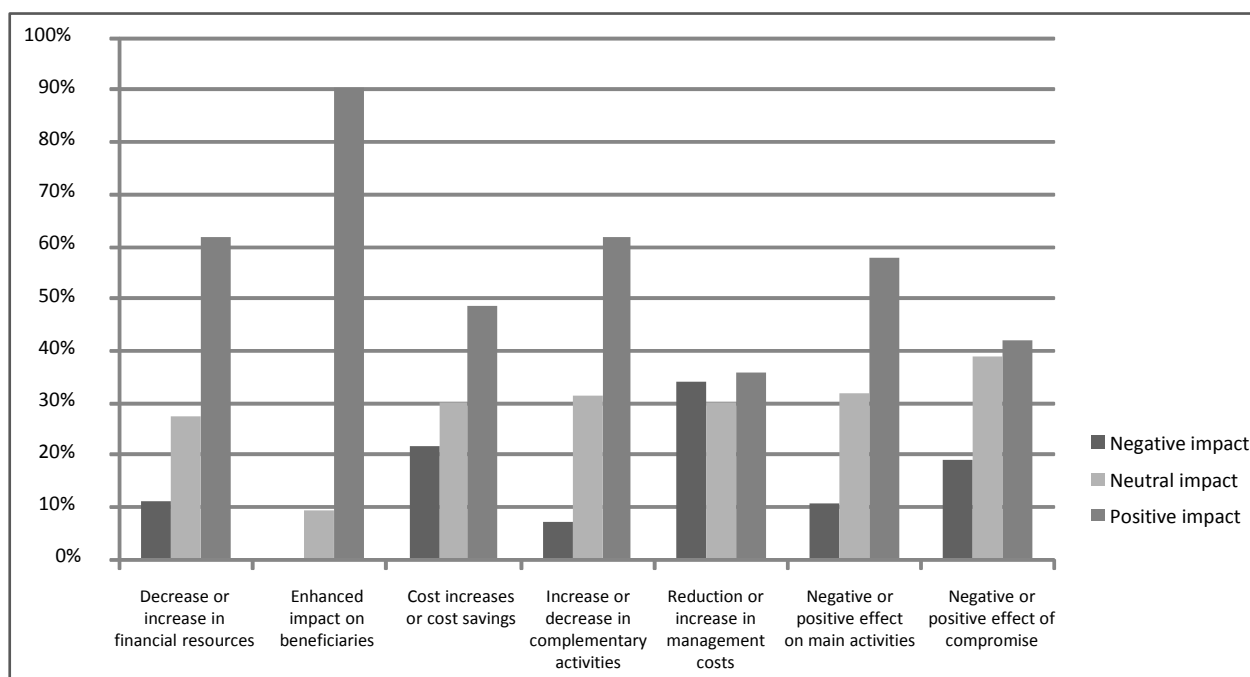
26. Working in partnership is seen to be beneficial and to increase the effectiveness of WFP’s operations and those of its partners. As shown in Figure 2, WFP staff reported that benefits are greater than costs in all areas except management costs, which implies that management costs increase with partnership. Strong positive impacts were seen on beneficiaries, financial resources, complementarity and WFP’s main activities.

Figure 2: Costs versus benefits of partnership: internal stakeholders



27. As shown in Figure 3, external stakeholders’ perspectives on the costs and benefits of partnership are similar to those of WFP staff, with impact on beneficiaries, financial resources and complementarity rated as most positive. Management costs were also rated more negatively by external stakeholders.

Figure 3: Costs versus benefits of partnership: external stakeholders



28. Interviews and surveys indicated that the added values of partnership include: access to increased information in order to improve decision-making; synergies and the opportunity for collective or better-coordinated initiatives; increased impact on beneficiaries; cost savings; knowledge transfer; and increased sensitivity to local conditions. Negative factors related to partnership include: the time needed to manage a relationship; the impact of personalities on the effectiveness of a partnership; lack of information about the logistics of the joint activities; and bureaucratic processes related to authorization and payment.

⇒ *The need for investments in capacity development*

29. National governments are WFP's most important partners at the country level and WFP's Strategic Plan recognizes the centrality of governments in meeting the hunger needs of their populations. Other partnerships help WFP to complement government capacities and support hand-over as the overarching objective.

30. The evaluators found several examples in which governments asked for more support for capacity development but WFP's ability to respond was limited. In Haiti, the national government requested long-term assistance in capacity development for both nutrition and emergency preparedness, including secondments and mentoring. In Kenya, ministry officials in the areas of nutrition and health, and emergency preparedness indicated the need for WFP and others to recognize that additional support was required over the long term. In contrast, both the REACH and SUN initiatives do recognize the need for longevity of commitment by both United Nations and government partners.

31. The short duration of WFP's project cycle hinders a long-term approach. For example, in Kenya the longest project duration has been three years. A project-based approach is not well adapted to working with governments in a joint strategy. Although WFP is making efforts to develop country programmes and strategies, joint strategies developed by WFP and governments were absent in the countries reviewed.

32. According to WFP's 2009 Annual Performance Report, the percentage of joint United Nations programming grew from 22 percent in 2007 to 36 percent in 2009. Notwithstanding collaborative efforts such as the cluster approach and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), this finding highlights a gap in WFP's approach to strategic partnership with United Nations partners, which could affect its ability to respond to national needs and build capacity.

33. How WFP engages with governments can also affect its partnerships. WFP has usually engaged with operational ministries rather than ministries of planning or finance. WFP managers and staff reported that their primary points of access to ministries were staff at levels below senior decision makers, resulting in delivery-oriented approaches and lacking an overall sense of continuity.

⇒ *Unclear roles and responsibilities in nutrition*

34. Interview data and information secured during group meetings – including the meeting that presented the interim report for this evaluation – underscored the ambiguity about WFP's roles and responsibilities in the area of nutrition. Virtually all United Nations stakeholders at the regional and global levels echoed these concerns. These ambiguities were not isolated to WFP's relationship with only one United Nations system partner. Stakeholders identified ambiguities in WFP's relationship with FAO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and most notably with UNICEF.

35. Opinions about the degree of this ambiguity in relation to nutrition ranged from its description as an irritant to more strident characterizations such as "widespread mandate creep". Despite the renewed MOU between WFP and UNICEF in early 2011, WFP's role in nutrition remains ambiguous, as recognized at the June 2011 WFP Global Nutrition Workshop.

⇒ *Internal challenges to partnership*

36. Most staff who responded to the survey reported that several of WFP's internal systems are inadequate to support partnerships, including financial systems, reporting systems and policies. Only 60 percent of staff found WFP's project planning and monitoring systems to be supportive of partnership, and 54 percent found the programme guidance adequate to support partnership.

37. Attempts were made with the time and resources available to capture financial data and quantitative data about the financial outputs and outcomes of partnership.

However, WFP’s administrative and management systems cannot readily track costs and benefits, which reduces WFP’s ability to learn from and better manage its partnerships.

38. As Table 3 indicates, WFP and external stakeholders have different perspectives on the adequacy of monitoring systems: a higher percentage of WFP staff than external stakeholders indicated that partnerships are not adequately monitored. However, both WFP and external stakeholders agreed that knowledge and learning are promoted in WFP’s partnerships.

TABLE 3: ADEQUACY OF MONITORING AND LEARNING						
Indicator	Strongly disagree/disagree		Agree/strongly agree		Number of respondents	
	External	WFP	External	WFP	External	WFP
The performance of partnerships with WFP is adequately monitored.	42 (40%)	32 (64%)	62 (59%)	18 (36%)	104	50
Knowledge is shared effectively and learning promoted in partnerships with WFP.	31 (28%)	10 (20%)	81 (72%)	40 (80%)	112	50

39. WFP’s agreements were reviewed to assess the extent to which they reflect good practice and are therefore likely to promote effective partnership. Any rating above 80 percent or 8.0 points was an acceptable score. Only a few of these agreements were found to be in the acceptable range. Table 4 shows the indicators that received the highest ratings (greater than 7.0).

TABLE 4: WFP AGREEMENTS: HIGHEST-RATED INDICATORS	
Scorecard indicators	Average rating
Identification of representatives/status	9.6
Rules for individual partners to leave or join	8.7
Grievance mechanism to resolve differences	7.9
Funding arrangements	7.6
Procedures for communicating with ongoing partners	7.5
Description of partner organizations	7.4

40. Table 5 shows those indicators that received the lowest score (4.0 or lower). Monitoring and evaluation was often a weakness in the agreements reviewed, as were intellectual property and confidentiality rules, and exit strategies for the partnership.

Scorecard indicators	Average rating
Intellectual property and confidentiality rules	3.9
Rules for branding (own/others)	3.6
Metrics for monitoring/measuring performance	3.4
Health check/review procedures	2.6
Exit ("moving on") strategy for partnership	1.5

41. Many of WFP's private-sector agreements achieved a satisfactory rating. There are some possible explanations for this. The costs and the inherent risks shared by both parties in these agreements require a degree of accuracy that may not be necessary in more conceptual documents laying out relationships between two United Nations agencies.

42. As shown in Table 6, many United Nations agreements predate the current WFP Strategic Plan and therefore predate the strategic shift towards food assistance.

United Nations agency	Agreement type	Date of agreement	Score %
FAO	MOU	1999	42
WHO	Other	2001	39
UNDP*	MOU	2007	75
FAO	Other	2007	61
WHO	Other	2007	61
UNDP	Other	2010	68
UNFPA	MOU	2010	67
UNICEF	MOU	2011	59
UNHCR**	MOU	2011	75
UNEP***	MOU	2011	67

* UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

** UNHCR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

*** UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

43. In addition, awareness of good partnering practice is low, with little investment in training or awareness-raising. Over 70 percent of staff reported that investments in staff training to foster more collaborative approaches were inadequate.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

44. WFP is considered by virtually all stakeholders to be a valued and respected partner. Working with WFP is seen as positive, resulting in an increased impact on beneficiaries. While stakeholders raised some concerns about WFP's capacity in some areas and some lack of clarity about its evolving mandate, these limitations did not substantially detract from their overall positive assessment of WFP as a partner.

45. WFP staff members also recognize the value of working in partnership, particularly the increased access to beneficiaries it provides. Working in collaboration with others is seen as beneficial and increases WFP's effectiveness.

46. Ambiguities and uneven communications related to the nature of food assistance and partnership have implications for effective partnering. In a functioning partnership, both parties need to share common objectives. However, if one or both partners are unclear about core objectives, this may impact their ability to negotiate partnerships in order to maximize comparative advantages and maintain trust.

47. One major challenge for WFP is to reinforce its capacity development efforts with additional resources designed not to "hand over" but to "build together". This requires a long-term approach and investments, not only in WFP's direct support to governments, but with other development partners to ensure a coordinated response. A significant impediment to achieving these goals is WFP's short-term, project-based planning system.

48. Shortfalls in technical expertise (as was notable in the area of nutrition) undermine WFP's credibility with partners. A shortage of well-trained and senior staff makes working with partners more difficult and inhibits building long-term relationships.

49. WFP's credibility and the degree of confidence among its partners depend upon the extent to which WFP is willing to commit the resources necessary to substantiate its growing role in the areas of health and nutrition.

Recommendations

50. **Recommendation 1: WFP should empower the Executive Management Council, reporting to the Executive Director, to articulate a comprehensive partnership strategy, including a communications strategy.** This strategy should address issues raised during the evaluation, including:

- defining partnership and partnership principles for WFP;

- clarifying how WFP’s strategic transformation to food assistance relates to partnership;
- addressing internal and external communications about partnerships; and
- addressing procedures for working in partnership and incentives to support new approaches.

51. **Recommendation 2: WFP should consider additional resources to enhance its capacity in nutrition and health, and build partnership skills, including: increased training for all staff; direct outreach to external partners in order to better engage them in determining what constitutes good partnership; and specific incentives for managers to ensure that they demonstrate leadership in promoting a new partnership strategy.** WFP should allocate new resources or redirect existing resources to address capacity gaps in nutrition. In order to build partnering capacity, actions are needed in a broad range of areas, including orientation, managerial leadership and the overall management of change within WFP.

52. **Recommendation 3: WFP should enter into discussions with United Nations partners, especially FAO, UNICEF, and WHO, to clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to WFP’s shift to a food-assistance model, specifically with respect to mutual roles and responsibilities related to nutrition.** WFP should develop an agreement between United Nations agencies that clarifies roles and responsibilities, and includes a review and updating mechanism that enables it to evolve in response to changing circumstances.

53. **Recommendation 4: WFP should amend its global and (if relevant) regional framework agreements with other United Nations organizations to reflect new conditions and to incorporate aspects of good partnering agreements.** WFP’s agreements should be updated to reflect its current strategic directions, the new directions of its partners, the implications of the shift in development assistance over the past decade and elements of good partnering.

54. **Recommendation 5: WFP should consider developing a mechanism to complement the standardized field-level agreements and lay out mutual expectations between WFP and local partners with respect to the mutual exercise of good-partnership practices.** WFP should develop a mechanism for use at the country level that enables it and its NGO partners to agree on how the principles of good partnership are put into practice between WFP country offices and NGOs.

55. **Recommendation 6: WFP should consider amending its project planning and reporting systems to include specific references to good partnership and partnership-related outcomes, and to promote the longer-term approach needed to sustain partnerships and contribute to capacity development.** Existing models should be amended to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of partnerships, and partnership-related outcomes. It is

important to recognize that indicators related to good partnership are needed to encourage managers to adopt recommended behaviours and process changes. Given the limitations of the project-based planning model, WFP should consider amending country-level planning to recognize the continuity necessary for promoting good partnerships and sustainable capacity development, which are core to the strategic transformation. A series of pilots with different types of projects or countries should be used to test and refine indicators for monitoring and evaluating partnerships in WFP's planning and reporting systems.

56. Recommendation 7: WFP should expand and formalize the country-level partnership evaluation system based on the principle of mutual accountability; an example to build on was seen in Kenya. WFP should develop an evaluation tool that enables a mutual assessment by partners of their strengths and weaknesses in the partnership. These may range from the contributions of partnership to delivery, quality and timeliness to communications, transparency and other aspects of partnership management and effectiveness.

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation Features

1. This evaluation is one of four strategic evaluations being conducted in the current biennium by WFP's Office of Evaluation (OE) that are related to the shift from food aid to food assistance as envisaged by the current WFP Strategic Plan. The primary focus of this evaluation is to assess how the partnership activities of WFP might be affected by this strategic shift and, of equal importance, how WFP's current partnership practices contribute to the attainment of this strategic shift.

2. The objectives of the evaluation are two-fold:

- First, to assess quality and results of WFP partnerships in light of the on-going strategic transformation; and
- Second, to determine why certain changes have or have not occurred and to draw lessons from this evidence.

3. The stakeholders for this evaluation are the whole of WFP including its Executive Board, NGOs (global and country level), UN system partners and other development cooperation partners, national governments and regional governmental bodies and the private sector.

4. The evaluation focused on two major areas of WFP activity: nutrition and health; and emergency preparedness and response. Since WFP is in the process of making a transition towards new partnerships for food assistance, the evaluation emphasizes building understanding and learning from experiences rather than accounting for past work.

5. For the purpose of this evaluation, partnership was defined as those voluntary collaborations sustained over a period of time where each party shares benefits, costs and risks to achieve a jointly defined objective. The evaluation did not include relationships between WFP and donors or private sector organizations that are primarily financial, nor was the focus on relationships that are primarily contractual, whereby WFP contracts with an organization to deliver a good or service

6. This Report is not simply a summary of case studies or electronic surveys. Rather, individual data sets were synthesized to produce more holistic findings across WFP's wide spectrum of relationships and throughout its diverse operational fields. The level of consistency of the data, secured from both internal and external stakeholders, made this task easier and has allowed for the development of an integrated approach wherein there are only a few variances to broad patterns.

1.2 Overview of Methodology

7. The evaluation was conducted from May until November 2011, with field work and other data collection occurring in July through September. The team for this

independent evaluation consisted of five key members: a specialist in health and nutrition, a specialist in partnership practices, an economist, a former senior official of UN system agencies to provide organizational context and a team leader, who is a senior evaluator who specialises in UN and multilateral system assignments. Quality assurance was ensured by the review of materials by the Evaluation Manager using EQAS Guidelines for Strategic Evaluations, as well as review of the draft evaluation report by key WFP stakeholders.

8. In its desire to understand how cooperation with others might assist in the attainment of its high-level strategic goals, WFP is breaking new ground by examining a behavioural aspect of its organizational culture. Such objectives and fields of analyses, however, demand a comprehensive, holistic and rigorous methodology – a mixed method approach. In such circumstances, it is necessary to seek out as many data sources as possible to triangulate findings.

9. In adopting a mixed methods approach for this evaluation, it was necessary to develop some quantitative tools to balance the largely qualitative field work. Four specific instruments were developed. Details can be found in Annex I, Volume 2:

- An External Survey, distributed on-line to some 400 stakeholders,
- An Internal Survey for some 199 WFP managers and senior professionals located at Headquarters, Regional Bureaux and Country Offices,
- A Partnership Agreement Scorecard, designed by the Partnering Initiative of London, England, which was applied to some 80 agreements, MOUs or other such documents; and,
- A Good Partnership Health Checklist, which asked NGO partners at the country level to assess WFP's capacity as a good partner.

10. The following table illustrates the extent of the geographic and functional diversity of the data collection for this evaluation. All complete list of the partnerships reviewed can be found in Table 2.1.

Table 1.1 Geographic and Functional Diversity of the Data Collection

Type	Locale	Methods
Country Visits	Laos, Kenya, Haiti	Interviews, document review, surveys, checklists
Country Desk Top	Colombia, Niger	Interviews, document review surveys, checklists,
Regional Visits	Asia/Pacific (Bangkok) East Africa (Nairobi) Latin American & Caribbean (Panama)	Interviews, document review , surveys, checklists
Regional Desk Top	Middle East/North Africa (Cairo) West Africa (Dakar) Southern Africa (Johannesburg)	Interviews, document review
Other Key Partners	UN system, Global NGOs, Selected governments and donors	Survey, interviews, document review, checklist assessment
Private Sector	TNT, Vodafone	Interviews, document review
WFP Staff	Global	Survey, interviews, document review

1.2.1 The Electronic Surveys

11. The mailing list for the external survey included 360 potential respondents from the following groups. To ensure adequate participation from a range of regions and countries surveys were distributed in English, French, and Spanish.

- Top 10 donor countries
- 110 UN Humanitarian Response Depot partners
- 36 NGO global focal points
- 20 Logistics Cluster members
- 15 ERIA Division Directors from UN agencies
- 82 IASC Global Nutrition Cluster members
- 17 IASC focal points
- 5 Private sector partner focal points
- 61 Government representatives from host countries receiving the largest amount of WFP support

12. A total of 199 WFP managers and senior professionals at Headquarters, Regional Bureaux and Country Offices were invited to participate in the internal survey, comprising the following:

- 23 Senior HQ managers (Division Directors and selected Branch managers or Chiefs)
- Senior field managers and others
 - 74 Country Directors
 - 74 Deputy Country Directors
 - 6 Regional Directors
 - 6 Deputy Regional Directors

- 5 UNHRD managers
- 11 Evaluation Internal Reference Group members

13. The two surveys generated positive rates of response. The external survey produced a 43% response rate, well above the industry standard for unsolicited surveys such as these (normally 30%). The internal survey produced a response rate of 31%. The following tables illustrate the response rate on the basis of organizational affiliation and locale for the External Survey and job type and locale for the Internal Survey.

Figure 1.1 External Survey: Organizational Affiliation

Response	Chart	%	Count
United Nations Organization		19%	30
Other International Organization		12%	19
Private Company		1%	2
Research or Academic Institute		3%	4
Government Organization		13%	21
Donor		6%	9
Non-Governmental Organization		43%	68
Red Cross/Crescent Movement		3%	4
Other (please specify):		0%	0
Total Responses			157

Figure 1.2 External Survey: Location of Respondents

Response	Chart	%	Count
Headquarters		63%	99
Regional office		10%	15
Country office or sub-office		24%	38
Other		3%	5
Total Responses			157

Figure 1.3 Internal Survey: Location of Respondents

Response	Chart	%	Count
HQ Rome		19%	12
Regional Bureau		5%	3
Country Office or sub-office		69%	43
Liaison Office		0%	0
Other		6%	4
Total Responses			62

Figure 1.4 Internal Survey: Job Type

Response	Chart	%	Count
Senior Management		71%	44
Programme Officer		13%	8
Technical specialist (nutrition and health or emergency preparedness and response)		3%	2
Administration, Human Resources or Financial Management		0%	0
Logistician		3%	2
Other (Please specify):		10%	6
Total Responses			62

1.3 Context

1.3.1 Global Issues and Trends Related to Partnership

14. Partnership is increasingly considered to be an essential element for effective international humanitarian and development assistance. Partnership is a recurring theme in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the World Summit for Sustainable Development, the Paris Declaration and other global initiatives that are shaping development. The new development environment calls for more coordinated work by the United Nations at the country level and stronger government leadership in the development process.

15. Delegates to the L'Aquila G8 meeting in July 2009 and November 2009 World Food Summit on Food Security emphasized the need for better coordination at global, regional and national levels and the need to ensure that national and regional interests are voiced and considered.

16. United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) were designed to set out the collective UN response to a country's needs in development and some humanitarian interventions. Delivering as One (DaO) pilot countries were established following the High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence Report to the Secretary-General in November 2006 with the aim of increasing the UN's impact through improvements in efficiency, coherence and effectiveness.

17. Since 1991, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has played a role in coordinating effective humanitarian action in partnership with international and national actors. The humanitarian cluster approach was adopted in 2006 to address gaps and enhance quality in humanitarian action.

18. In addition to inter-UN partnerships and changing relationships with governments, private companies and foundations have increasingly entered into the development arena.

1.3.2 International Debate and Good Practice

19. Given the interest and importance of partnership, attention is being given to developing better understanding and consensus as to how partnerships can be made more effective. An emerging understanding of the characteristics of effective partnerships, include:

- shared contribution of resources, either financial or human or both;
- voluntary and collaborative relationship;
- mutual accountability;
- shared risks and shared benefits; and
- complementary interests and objectives.

20. The Global Humanitarian Platform (www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org) agreed in 2007 to base their partnership on the principles of equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity.

21. Partnerships can also be assessed against five elements:

- 1) Setup – how well has the partnership been set up?
- 2) Operations – how efficiently is the partnership operating?
- 3) Relationship – how well are the organizations working together as partners?
- 4) Partnership added-value – what are the benefits or otherwise of working in partnership rather than as a single organization?
- 5) Impact – what impact is the programme having?

22. The ability of an organization to work effectively in partnership is affected by both external and internal factors. External factors include political, economic, administrative and other contextual factors. Internal factors include staff knowledge and skill, organizational systems, leadership, culture, and. New skills related to partnerships include:

- negotiation, mediation and facilitation;
- partnership “championship”, institutional engagement and relationship management;
- communications, awareness raising and resource mobilization;
- institution-strengthening, coaching / capacity building;
- co-ordination & administration, project/programme planning and management; and
- synthesizing information, monitoring, evaluating / reviewing.

23. Partnership effectiveness also depends on the costs and benefits derived from working in partnership (either directly or indirectly). Costs and benefits of partnership include both monetary and non-monetary costs and benefits, and those associated with processes, outputs and outcomes. This evaluation developed a framework against which to analyse the most salient costs and benefits of WFP’s partnership activities that related to the objectives of the partnership, specifically related to delivery, knowledge and skills development or policy and advocacy, as shown in the following table.

Table 1.2 Potential Costs and Benefits from Partnership

<p>Overarching costs and benefits</p>	<p>Increased responsibility sharing Reduced financial contributions from any one partner (better sharing of costs) Provide regular opportunity for partners 'advocacy programmes Costs related to partnership management/ operation including planning, co-ordination, joint M&E, Reduced or increased speed of implementation Reduced or improved quality of implementation Reputational effects due to perceptions of WFP/Partner Opportunity costs due to otherwise valuable work foregone or capacity of partner organization to manage all activities impeded Damage to working relationships due to disputes, working difficulties etc. Suppression of organizational objectives and ways of working Increased dependency on funding stream through the partnership</p>
<p>Costs and benefits of delivery partnerships</p>	<p>Pooled resources leading to access to additional resources Increased/widened scope of programmes leading to additional inputs/outputs (quantity and nature) Cost savings through coordinated inputs: goods and services provided by partners; economies of scale; joint activities; access to skilled personnel of partners; standardization Create synergy Increased speed and quality of implementation Access to wider networks Enhanced reputation through ability to engage in "socially valuable" delivery operations Increased visibility and market knowledge</p>
<p>Costs and benefits of partnerships to develop knowledge and skills</p>	<p>Two-way exchange of skills and knowledge Improved access to research opportunities otherwise difficult to achieve Enhanced reputation due to increased ability to engage in "socially valuable" research Ensure full range of expertise required through increased access to additional expertise and expert costs saved Continuity of programmes to strengthened relations between partners and enhanced sustainability of partner organizations</p>
<p>Costs and benefits of partnerships for policy and advocacy</p>	<p>Enhanced advocacy positions Provide regular opportunity for partners 'advocacy programmes Productive partnerships which add value by providing mandate to engage in and impetus for development of operational partnerships Broad parameters set for the development of operational partnerships Provide regular opportunity for partners' advocacy programmes Improved influence through access to Decision Makers Increased ability to support comprehensive range of policy areas</p>

24. Memoranda of understanding, letters of agreement and similar documents often serve as an important part of the foundation upon which partnership is built. In order for such documents to play an effective foundational role in supporting partnerships, they should contain essential elements including:

- **Who is partnering:** an overview of the partners and their missions and representatives.

- **Why they are partnering:** shared objectives as related to the objectives of the individual partners.
- **What the partnership is proposing** to accomplish, including timeline, resource commitments, roles and sustainability strategy.
- **Timeframe of the partnership:** when accomplishments are expected and milestones.
- **How the partnership will be conducted:** governance, decision-making procedures, funding arrangements, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation metrics and plans for reviewing and updating.
- **Communications:** including procedures for partner communications, branding, public profile, intellectual property.

1.3.3 The Specific WFP Context

25. For the purpose of this evaluation, partnership was defined as those voluntary collaborations sustained over a period of time where each party shares benefits, costs and risks to achieve a jointly defined objective .

26. However, the term “partnership” does not have a formal definition in WFP and is not used consistently in WFP; rather it is applied to a wide variety of relationships ranging from contracts with service providers, donor-recipient, relationships with host country governments, inter-UN collaboration and others.

27. The importance of partnership to the WFP however, is undeniable. An entire section of WFP’s Strategic Plan is dedicated to partnerships. The Plan makes a commitment to working more coherently together with different actors so as to achieve WFP’s goals, as well as contributing to the overall United Nations’ aims and the Millennium Development Goals. The plan recognizes national and local governments (including communities) as the main actors in meeting hunger needs of their populations, and that WFP will design and implement its interventions with the government playing the leading role and in preparation for governments to assume ownership of activities. Other partnerships help WFP complement government capacities and support eventual handover as the overarching objective.

28. Beginning with data collection from the Inception Phase onwards, a fundamental gap in how WFP perceived partnership became increasingly evident. Traditional approaches tend to focus on the organizational nature of a partner (a government body, an NGO, a private sector entity, etc.), or, the geographic nature of the partner (a global partner like a member of the UN system, a regional partner like the collective members of a regional network for disaster risk reduction, a local or country level partner like an NGO delivering goods and services “on the front line”).

29. The table below shows the main categories of WFP partners and the rationale for why WFP works with each.

Table 1.3 Organizational Categories of Partners and Rationale

Categories of Partners	Rationale
National & local government & communities	Primary responsibility for meeting the hunger-related needs of their populations building upon their unique depth and breadth of knowledge about needs and solutions.
UN& other international organizations	Contributing to timely and effective response during humanitarian emergencies (UNHCR,OCHA,ICRC, etc.) or to address chronic hunger (UNICEF,UNDP,FAO and IFAD etc.).
National & international NGOs	Helping to increase WFP’s deep field presence among other roles.
Private sector	Providing material assets related to transportation and information and communication technology during emergencies, and technical expertise and specialized personnel in areas linked to WFP’s operational needs in addressing chronic food insecurity.
UN Clusters	Fulfilling WFP’s role and responsibilities as the cluster lead or co-lead agency.
Academic or research institutions	Contributing analytical capacity to complement WFP’s own capacity.

30. Neither the organizational or the geographic typology adequately confronts a more fundamental issue: it is neither who, nor where WFP works with another entity. Rather, **it is why it chooses or needs to do so**. This led the evaluation to develop a three-level typology to attempt to capture why and what each partnership was all about. The typology is portrayed below.

Table 1.4 Three - Level Typology

Type	Objectives
Delivery	To deliver services to beneficiaries More commonly called “collaborating partner” With the proviso that a “Delivery Partner” must bring tangible or intangible benefits or skills over and above the contractual delivery of goods or a services
Knowledge/Skills Transfer	To build capacity build with third parties – many times governments, regional bodies or NGOs Implies a degree of mutuality of interest and risk that is more than a training activity To expand the scope of knowledge
Framework and Policy	To promote relations between regional or global bodies that position WFP to work within the global system To work together to raise awareness or advocate for new approaches and responses to issues of common concern

31. Given the range of WFP’s work with NGOs it is also important to clarify how it presently categories them. WFP distinguishes between complementary NGO partners, those which engage with WFP to achieve mutual objectives, with each contributing complementary skills, knowledge and resources, and cooperating NGO partners, those that provide a service related to the distribution of food, for which WFP pays. This evaluation was mostly concerned with complementary NGO partners however, as will be seen later in the evaluation many partners are both cooperating and complementary.

1.4 WFP Work in the Area and Recent Development

1.4.1 Current Policies and Practices

32. WFP has not developed a logical model to contextualize how partnership-related activities and partnerships generally contribute to the attainment of the Strategic Objectives. This is not surprising given that WFP has neither a comprehensive definition of what constitutes a partnership nor a set of agreed upon principles for partnership/a partnership policy.

33. During the course of the evaluation, WFP undertook a number of actions, in addition to those set out in the TOR and the Inception Report. These actions have had some degree of impact on the evaluation, although not to a great extent. In September and October 2011, WFP began discussions with representatives of its major global NGO partners to address possible revisions to the Field Level Agreement. The evaluation learned that for the most part, these discussions focussed around issues of fiduciary compliance and activity reporting. They appear not to have addressed the more qualitative issues of principles of partnership. Third, WFP is in the process of developing a comprehensive policy for its activities in the area of nutrition. Fourth, in October 2011, WFP developed a new draft of its Strategic Results Framework and its Management Results Framework.

34. These two Frameworks potentially have great importance for how WFP will improve the quality of its performance measurement. From the perspective of the practice of good partnership, the new Strategic Results Framework, in increasing the sensitivity of reporting for Strategic Objective 5 by improving country reporting and developing a capacity assessment tool (National Capacity Index), implies a need to better understand not just what was done, but how it was done. However, the practice of good partnership is not assessed. In terms of the Management Results Framework, with the exception of several indicators related to Learning and Innovation, the Framework does not directly address partnership as a management practice.

35. While WFP does not have an overarching partnership policy, sector level policies address the types of partnerships articulated in the Strategic Plan and WFPs role within them, including the NGO Partnership Framework approved in 2001, the 2004 policy on national capacity building (updated in 2009) and the 2004 policy about how to engage new partners in the private sector and associated private sector partnership and fund raising strategy of 2008.

36. **Partnerships for Improved Nutrition and Health:** A policy was established to move towards mainstreaming nutrition in WFP's development and emergency work as early as 2004 and the policy is currently being revised. A number of new and innovative partnerships are being put into place in the domain of nutrition and health. WFP collaborates with UN and international organizations at the operational level to implement its health and nutrition activities. Over 50% of all WFP projects carried out in partnership with other UN or international organizations

include nutrition and health activities (the largest share for any sector). In 2008, WFP partnered with UNICEF for example, in 140 projects in 71 countries, of which 61% were related to health and nutrition. Of 291 projects reporting NGO partnerships between 2005 and 2009, 61% had nutrition related activities. WFP is involved with several major innovative multi-sectoral partnership initiatives in nutrition and health, for example, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) framework and REACH project. A number of significant private sector partnerships have also been developed to support WFP's work in nutrition and health

37. Partnerships for Improved Emergency Preparedness and Response: Governments are the lead partner in disaster preparedness and response, and WFP works with a range of partners to help governments build their capacities for disaster preparedness and response, or to address emergency needs when a government's own capacities are overwhelmed during a disaster.

38. Regional partnerships with governments are increasingly important. Examples include the partnership with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) whereby seven African countries partnered with WFP to conduct workshops in nutrition, and the collaboration to strengthen the regional emergency preparedness and response capacity through the Regional Early Warning System for Central America (SATCA).

39. WFP engages in global humanitarian coordination efforts including the UN Standing Committee on Humanitarian Assistance coordinated by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) that provides a framework for coordination from global to operational. WFP partners with others through the emergency response cluster system introduced in 2005. WFP is the lead organization for the Emergency Telecommunications and Logistics clusters. WFP co-leads with FAO the Global Food Security Cluster, newly established in 2010 but already operational in 15 countries in response to recognition of the importance of food security in humanitarian crises. As cluster lead, WFP is responsible for organizing coordination at global and country level, strengthening global preparedness, developing global guidance and acting as provider of last resort.

40. Private sector partnerships are also important in emergency preparedness and response; some of those partners include TNT, Caterpillar and Vodafone.

1.4.2 Trend Information

41. As shown below, the top ten UN and IO organizations have remained fairly stable between 2005 and 2010, with UNICEF working with both the most number of WFP countries and the most number of projects, followed by FAO and WHO.

Figure 1.5 Trends Top Ten UN /IO Partners 2005-2010 Number of WFP Projects

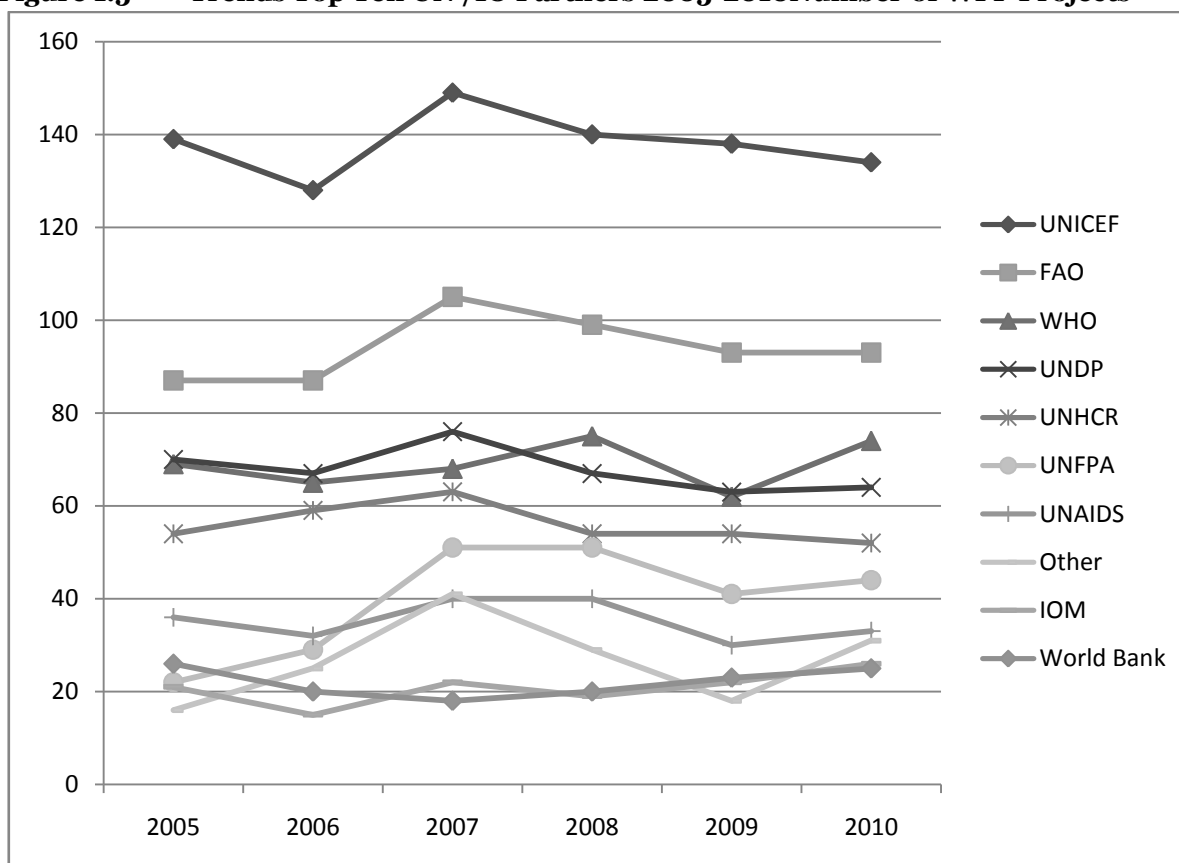


Table 1.5 Trends Top Ten UN / IO partners 2005-2010 Number of WFP Projects

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
UNICEF	139	128	149	140	138	134
FAO	87	87	105	99	93	93
WHO	69	65	68	75	62	74
UNDP	70	67	76	67	63	64
UNHCR	54	59	63	54	54	52
UNFPA	22	29	51	51	41	44
UNAIDS	36	32	40	40	30	33
Other	16	25	41	29	18	31
IOM	21	15	22	19	22	26
World Bank	26	20	18	20	23	25

Figure 1.6 Trends Top Ten UN /IO Partners 2005-2010 Number of WFP Countries

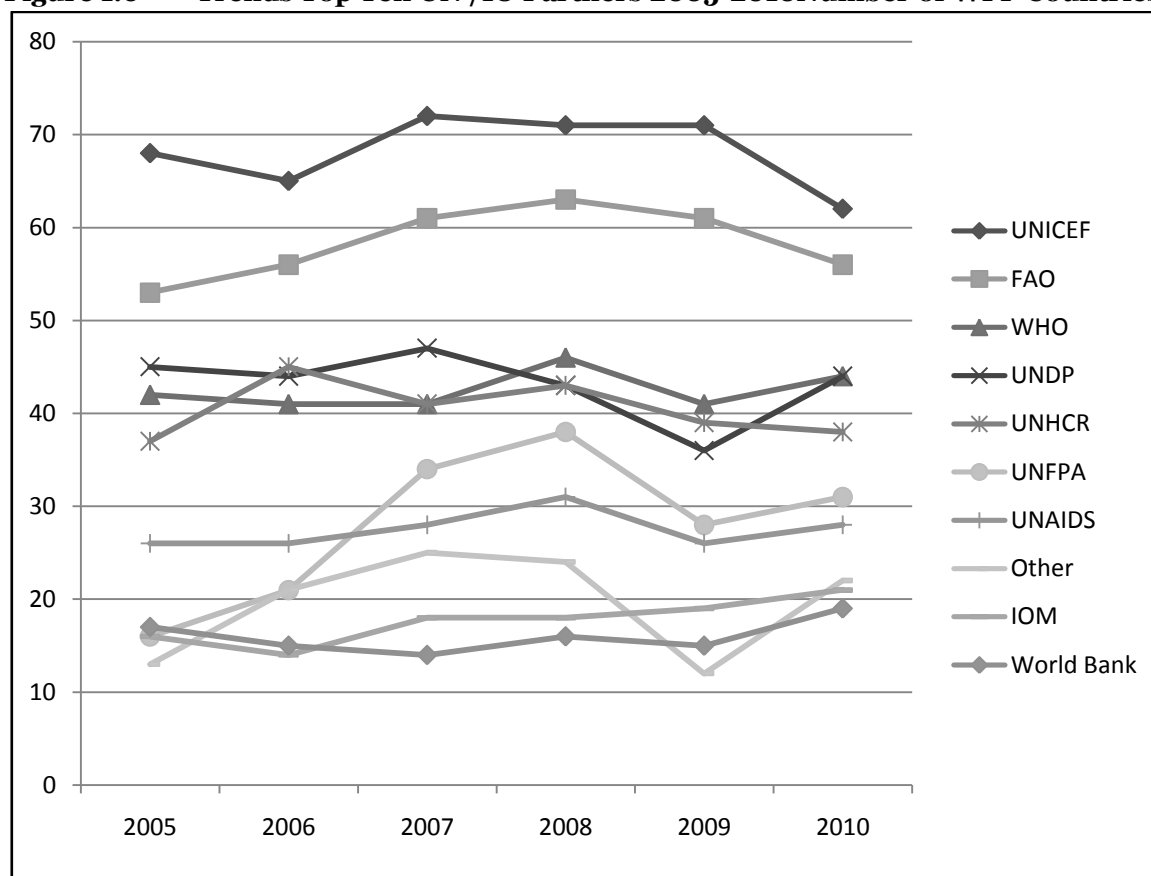
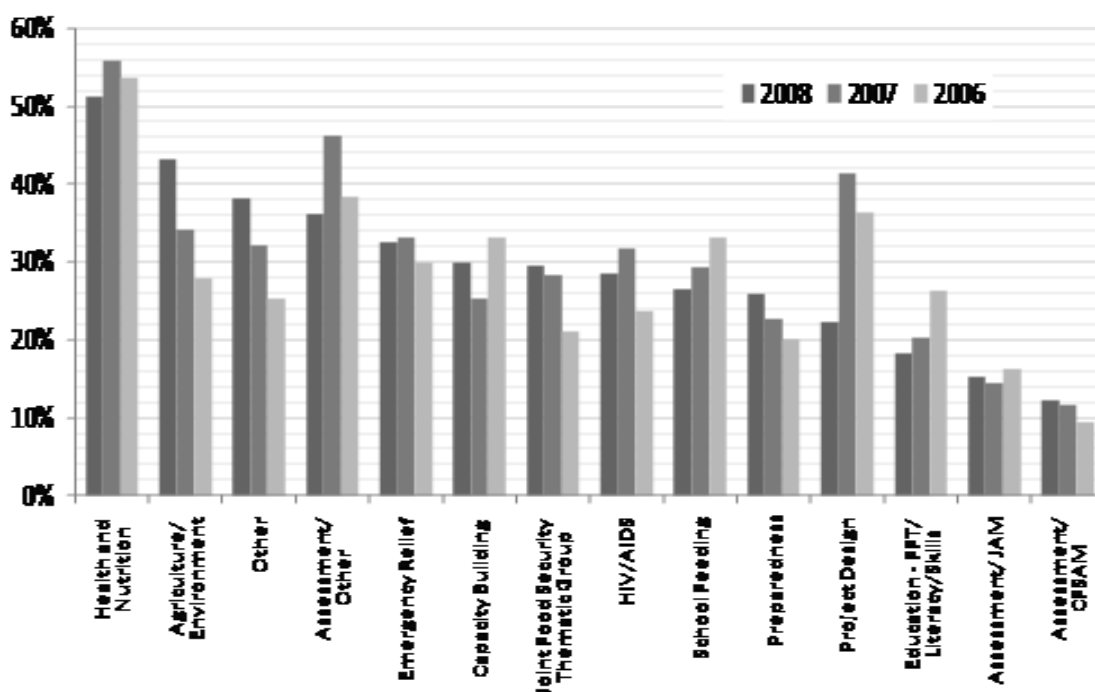


Table 1.6 Trends Top Ten UN / IO Partners 2005-2010 Number of WFP Countries

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
UNICEF	68	65	72	71	71	62
FAO	53	56	61	63	61	56
WHO	42	41	41	46	41	44
UNDP	45	44	47	43	36	44
UNHCR	37	45	41	43	39	38
UNFPA	16	21	34	38	28	31
UNAIDS	26	26	28	31	26	28
Other	13	21	25	24	12	22
IOM	16	14	18	18	19	21
World Bank	17	15	14	16	15	19

42. The figure below shows the technical areas in which UN / IO partnerships have taken place between 2006 and 2008. Health and nutrition is consistently the highest area across these years.

Figure 1.7 Technical areas for UN/IO collaboration 2006-2008



43. Increasingly, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also important partners in development, playing a wide range of roles from consultation in high-level policy and programme discussions to enhancing the field presence of UN organizations and implementation of field level programmes. In 2010, WFP reported collaborations with 2,398 NGOs, of which 220 were international and 2,178 local. As shown in the following table, numbers have remained fairly constant but decreased overall in 2009, reportedly due to greater hand over to governments and streamlining of reporting systems.

Table 1.7 Trends in NGO partner numbers by Project Type 2005 - 2007

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
PRRO	1509	2558	2135	2345	1801
EMOP	622	623	609	382	438
Dev.	312	245	235	245	369
Total	2443	3426	2979	2972	2615

44. The above statistics highlighting the extent of WFP partnerships need to be viewed with a degree of caution. The 2009 Annual Performance Report indicates that some 83% of WFP-supported projects worldwide were conducted in partnership with UN agencies and/or international organizations. When factoring in NGOs, the rate grew to 97%. However, many of these relationships would not stand the test of the definitions of partnership that were laid out earlier in this Report. More importantly, the rate of WFP programs that are joint UN programs is much different. The rate

rose from 22% in 2007, to 36% in 2009, a large increase. These activities clearly would all meet a test of partnership. Defining virtually every collaborative relationship as a partnership results in a tautology and in fact does not advance understanding of partnership as a set of distinct practices. The cause for this apparent tautology lies in the widely varying uses of the words “partner” and “partnership”, a situation which will figure largely in subsequent specific evaluation findings.

45. As shown in the table below, the value of private sector contributions to WFP has risen from US\$ 5.5 million in 2003 to US\$ 145.3 million in 2009. The type of donation has shifted from mostly extra-ordinary gifts in kind to mostly financial contributions over this same period.

Table 1.8 WFP Private Sector Donations Trend 2003-2010

WFP PRIVATE DONATIONS TREND 2003-2010									
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2009 - 2010 % change
CASH	5.5	21.3	27.0	38.0	50.0	145.5	104.6	143.5	37%
EGIK	23.1	43.6	45.5	37.4	45.2	48.8	40.8	11.0	-73%
TOTAL (mill US\$)	28.6	64.9	72.5	75.4	95.3	194.3	145.3	154.5	

2. Specific Evaluation Findings

46. This evaluation addressed four key questions, each complemented by a series of sub-questions. These four key questions are:

- What implications does the shift from food aid to food assistance have for WFP’s partnerships in nutrition and health; and emergency preparedness and response?
- How effective and efficient are WFP’s partnerships for food assistance in nutrition and health; and emergency preparedness and response?
- How do factors in WFP’s external operating environment including donors, policy environment, and social/political/economic and cultural conditions in the country affect its ability to develop and maintain effective partnerships in nutrition and health; and emergency preparedness and response?
- How do factors inside of WFP including processes, systems, culture, and staff capacity affect WFP’s ability to develop and maintain effective

partnerships in nutrition and health; and emergency preparedness and response?

47. Although the TOR for this assignment laid out four key evaluation questions, early on during the data collection process it became evident that there were a series of overarching issues that, in large part, affected the way the evaluation questions were being considered by both internal and external stakeholders. These three issues, while constituting a type of high-level finding, also establish some primary conditions, on which the balance of the evaluation rests.

2.1 Overarching Findings

2.1.1 From Food Aid to Food Assistance

Finding 1: The nature of the shift from food aid to food assistance is unevenly understood both within WFP and among its external partners.

48. The transformation of WFP to a food assistance focused body is the focus of WFP's Strategic Plan and by implication is the driving force for its work in the current planning cycle. However, the nature of this transformation was differently understood, with these differences being significant.

49. There was widespread ambiguity about the transformation from food aid to food assistance with no particular views predominating. For example, within one regional office, two senior managers had widely different views about first what constituted "food aid" and second, what the implications were of this transformation. More generally, the range of perceptions about what is "food assistance" ranged from a view that it constitutes merely a re-branding, to a very holistic perception of "food assistance" that was more closely linked to the Paris and Accra declarations, the building of capacity and the evolution of WFP into a "service provider".

50. Turning to the perceptions of WFP's partners, there were similar differences of views. At the country level, NGO and government stakeholders, while not understanding in full what food assistance might constitute, saw that WFP in a very practical sense was making changes in the nature of its program base. Government stakeholders in Kenya, in dealing with the planning of a food for assets program in arid regions noted that the tripartite decision-making model, wherein the government was in the lead, with WFP's support, and NGO delivery, constituted a new way of recognizing local accountability and responsibility. At the regional and global levels, institutional stakeholders, especially UN system partners, voiced probably the most concern about this ambiguity.

51. Looking through the lens of the three-level functional model of partnership, it seems that the delivery partners have a sense of the changes that are being made and how they impact on their own organizations and common beneficiaries. The same can be said for many of the knowledge transfer partners, especially at the country

level. However, the framework and policy partners, especially at regional and international levels, do not seem to have as consistent an understanding.

52. One cause for this diversity of opinion about the strategic thrust of WFP may lie in WFP's project planning paradigm wherein the major denominator is the individual project at the country level, with only one third of its projects being delivered as joint UN projects.

53. The ambiguity about what constitutes "food assistance" leads to a situation where stakeholders' views are being formed on the basis of a divergent understanding of the nature of partnership. A fundamental principle of partnership is that both parties need to share common objectives. However, if one or the other or both are unclear about these objectives, in this case, what constitutes "food assistance", it follows that this degree of ambiguity may impact on how both parties view the objective in question in the first instance, or the quality of the relationship in the second.

2.1.2 The Nature of Partnership

Finding 2: What constitutes partnership is unevenly understood by WFP and by its external stakeholders.

54. Other than with NGO partners and the private sector, there is no agreed upon understanding of what constitutes a partner, good partnership, or principles on which partnership should be based.

55. The evaluation found that any form of collaborative relationship at any level of geography or for any type of activity was seen by both parties as a "partnership". While this, in large part, may be the result of the misuse or overuse of the term "partner", this does not reflect the degree to which the diversity of partnership exists. The overwhelming majority of WFP's collaborative relationships are related to the delivery of a good or a service to beneficiaries, with again the majority being undertaken by third party agents, primarily NGOs. Yet, the NGOs encountered during this evaluation who are involved in delivery, in all instances, viewed themselves as partners, not contractors, bringing their own intrinsic value-added characteristics to a relationship.

56. Governmental bodies working with WFP clearly saw themselves as partners, and not merely recipients of assistance. Likewise, UN and other multilateral stakeholders at both the country and regional levels also saw themselves as working with WFP in relationships that involved mutuality as opposed to subordination. At the global level, with respect to either global NGOs, multilateral bodies or UN system members, all perceive a degree of mutuality that is inherent in a real partnership.

57. Although WFP has signed on to the 2007 set of good partnership principles developed by the Global Humanitarian Platform (www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org), which brings together UN and non-UN

humanitarian organizations including WFP, awareness of these principles is uneven at best. Field level staff reported that they had only a vague awareness of them, and while supporting them did not see “how they might fit” into their day to day operations. Few if any had awareness of groups like The Partnering Initiative, and its set of principles although these are widely recognized outside of WFP.

58. This general lack of awareness is puzzling due to the degree to which WFP has begun to introduce considerations of partnership into several of its management training programs. During data collection, it was learned that elements of good partnering and centrality of good partnership to the Strategic Plan were integrated into the on-going management training. However, it is telling to note that when asked, individuals did not associate the elements of these programs as being “training in partnership”. It also should be noted that the general lack of awareness or ambiguity about the nature of partnership was common across WFP, impacting staff involved in nutrition as well as those involved with emergency preparedness and response.

59. Because WFP has not developed a formal categorization of the nature of partnership and what constitutes key aspects of good partnership, an ambiguity arose about how effective these relationships were in attaining an equally ambiguous objective called “food assistance”.

2.1.3 Communications

Finding 3: The communications about what constitutes “food assistance” and “partnership” have been uneven and have led to ambiguities.

60. This overarching finding lays out one cause for the ambiguity about food assistance and as well about the nature of partnership. The evaluation, in engaging virtually hundreds of stakeholders, found that WFP communications about these two cornerstones of its Strategic Plan were uneven at best.

61. Issues related to lack of clear communication were found at all levels of the organization and across differing types of partners. At the regional level, UN agencies working with WFP in information-sharing partnerships indicated that while WFP spoke about its transformation, it did not fully explain it. Similar findings occurred with respect to interviews with global partners who were predominantly engaged in high-level coordinative activities. Within WFP itself, with very few exceptions, staff and managers indicated that they needed more information about the transformation as a whole and that they had received little if any information about the centrality of partnership to it. Moreover, at the country level, the apparent divergences of opinion about the transformation and about partnership appeared to be the widest, with many respondents candidly remarking that they really had no idea of what WFP corporately was attempting to communicate.

62. At the country level, NGO stakeholders generally were unaware of the strategic transformation or the centrality of partnership to WFP, beyond the extent to which they were being asked to do things differently. NGO partners at the country level, in being asked to work with new instruments such as vouchers, or cash, or transform food for work into food for assets, recognized that something clearly was different but they were not aware of the extent that these differences were resulting in a transformation of WFP. Therefore, paradoxically, these NGO stakeholders were operating within what many at WFP see as elements of “food assistance” without knowing about it.

2.2 The Implications Of The Strategic Transformation

63. The first evaluation question addresses a core issue of how WFP partners and the implications of how it partners, given the strategic transformation from food aid to food assistance. This important issue focuses on whether WFP currently has the right kind of partnerships so as to promote this transformation.

2.2.1 How Partnerships Contribute to the Achievement of Objectives and Accomplishments

Finding 4: The chief benefits for WFP of working in partnership are: increasing the scope and outreach of WFP, improving its understanding of the issues it faces from the global down to subnational levels, and increasing its responsiveness to the needs of beneficiaries.

64. At the country level, working with NGOs who have a deeper access to civil society, enables WFP to more effectively deliver additional services, increasing its scope and reach to a broader number of beneficiaries and to better tailor its services. Costs are lower, and delivery is more immediate and sensitive to local needs. Participation in regional coordinating bodies like REDLAC or ECOWAS enabled WFP to increase its understanding of the work of others and to help increase understanding of WFP’s role.

65. Working in partnership increases WFP’s understanding by giving it access to information that it might not otherwise be able to secure. For example, by working at the country level with NGOs, WFP can acquire more relevant information, probably quicker, about the challenges and needs of beneficiaries. By working with governments, WFP is in a better position to understand local circumstances and how its humanitarian efforts can fit with the objectives of the government. By working with UN partners at the country level, WFP is situated to better tailor its responses, maximize synergies and comparative advantages, and also to be able to carry out joint activities.

66. WFP’s responsiveness is also increased by its partnership efforts. For example, participating in regional for a about either nutrition or emergency preparedness allows it to better position itself to meet challenges that may go beyond

national borders. At the country level, its partnerships with NGOs and governments enables it to acquire information to more rapidly tailor its responses. As well, sustained partnership relationships with governments enables WFP to become responsive to longer term government needs in capacity building.

67. In terms of country level operations, with the possible exception of Colombia and Laos, the evaluation did not uncover any other instances of partnerships resulting in additional financial resources being provided to the WFP. In Colombia, the government has chosen in a number of instances, to contract WFP to provide it knowledge-based services in the area of nutrition and the central coordinating office for the national government for development has thus has provided additional resources itself. In Laos, the Duchy of Luxembourg, as a donor, and in an effort to reduce overhead costs and increase inter-agency coordination, required WFP to join with other UN system bodies in order to secure funding via a joint project.

2.2.2 Different Types of Partners Involved, their Roles and the Added Value of Each to the Partnership Effort

Finding 5: Many partnerships were found to have multiple and complementary objectives to deliver food aid/assistance, to develop knowledge or transfer skills and/or to create or maintain a supportive policy environment.

68. The evaluation found that, in many instances, relationships which could be characterized as “delivery” also contained elements of skills transfer. This was in large part due to the fact that many of these delivery operations involve some degree of capacity building of either local NGO staff or members of various levels of government. For example, in Colombia and in Kenya, WFP support and delivery involved sensitizing government officials at subnational levels to new approaches to nutrition in one instance, and the transformation of short-term approaches to food for work into longer term approaches to food for assets, (support for local infrastructure improvements). The implication of this diversity is that the partnership typologies, geographic, organizational or functional, are not airtight and as such the approaches to promoting good partnership and any eventual criteria or orientation need this degree of flexibility.

69. Table 2.1 below lists the specific partnerships examined by the evaluation. Several identified in the Inception Report were not reviewed due to lack of access to either data or stakeholders, or lack of a sufficient number of stakeholders to provide a critical mass of data.

Table 2.1 Types of Partnerships Reviewed

Country	Partnership/Project	Partnership Objective Type		
		Delivery	Knowledge/ Skills Transfer	Frame work
Laos	Access to Primary Education for Girls and Boys in Remote Areas of Lao PDR	√	√	
	Addressing Malnutrition through Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Activities	√		
	REACH	√	√	√
	Feeding the Future		√	
	Assistance to Food Insecure Households Affected by Multiple Livelihood Shocks			√
Kenya	Protecting and Rebuilding Livelihoods in the Arid and Semi-Arid Areas	√	√	
	Food Assistance to Somali and Sudanese Refugees	√		
	Management of Moderate Malnutrition in the Arid Areas of Kenya	√		√
	Kenya Task Force on Social Protection Resilience Building and Drought Management	√	√	√
	Kenya Humanitarian Country Team		√	
	Delivery of Essential Nutrition Services in Kenya March 2011	√	√	
Haiti	Food Assistance to Flood Affected Populations in Haiti	√	√	
	Food Assistance to Earthquake Affected Populations in Haiti	√	√	
	Food Assistance for Vulnerable Groups Exposed to Recurrent Shocks	√		
	Extension of Technical Agreement CNIGS		√	
	July- Dec Accord Technique Entre L'etat Haitien Represente Par Le Ministere De L'interieur Et Des Collectivites Territoriales Et Le Programme Alimentaire Mondial Des Nations Unies 2011		√	
Columbia	Emergency Assistance to Persons Affected by Massive Displacements in Narino	√	√	
	Colombia Food Assistance to Internally Displaced Person and Other Highly Insecure Groups Affected by Violence	√	√	
Niger	Emergency Food Assistance to Flood Affected Population in the Agadez Region	√		
	Saving Lives and Improving the Nutritional Status of Food-Insecure Populations Affected by Drought and High Malnutrition Rates in Niger	√	√	
	Improving the nutritional status and reinforcing livelihoods of vulnerable populations in Niger	√	√	
Regional	UN Humanitarian Response Depot	√	√	
	Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS)		√	√
	Risk, Emergency, and Disaster Task Force Inter-Agency Workgroup for Latin America & The Caribbean (REDLAC)			√
	TNT	√	√	√
	Vodafone	√	√	√

2.2.3 The Effectiveness of Partnership Governance

Finding 6: WFP does not have unrestricted scope to choose with whom it partners.

70. WFP does not have a choice in many instances as to which partners it works with. As an active participant in the Global Cluster Approach, its work with other UN agencies and other members of any given cluster is not open to broader consideration. WFP is the lead agency in Logistics and Co-Lead with FAO in the Food Security Cluster. The degree and the intensity of participation in mechanisms such as the clusters can and will vary based on individual circumstances and on human resources resource availability. As well, as part of the global humanitarian initiative, WFP and others rely on third party intermediaries to deliver and, to some extent, plan humanitarian interventions.

71. In terms of NGOs, WFP's range of choice is many times constrained by local conventions and the decisions of host governments. In Haiti, Laos and Kenya, the evaluation encountered situations where, either by convention or by active government choice, NGOs involved in humanitarian services, not only for WFP, had effectively secured exclusive rights in certain regions or territories. In such circumstances therefore, WFP's ability to improve the quality of its services by seeking "better" local partners is limited.

72. There are however, several areas where WFP has the ability to choose with respect to the private sector in general and philanthropies, the most significant being its overarching corporate relationships with private sector partners. The evaluation briefly reviewed TNT and Vodafone. It found that in these instances, and by inference, in other instances, WFP corporately has the means and the tools to proactively recruit lead private sector partners in key areas like logistics, or communications technology.

Finding 7: WFP has only limited selection criteria to determine partnership and as such, lacks the capacity to more proactively choose its partnerships.

73. In relation to the private sector, WFP is guided by overall UN procedures to ensure that relations with the private sector are undertaken in an ethical and transparent manner and that the impartiality of a UN agency is not imperilled due to a partnership.

74. Other elements of WFP however, and especially the plethora of partnerships with NGOs for delivery-related activity, do not have as forward looking a set of criteria. Whether the NGO actually can "do it" is taken as an assumption as there are no formal means of capacity assessment.

75. By containing considerable elements of informality and responsiveness to local situations WFP's governance of partnership increases the possibility for

effectiveness. Country missions uncovered that while instruments like the FLA may be poorly cast in terms of the factors that constitute a good agreement as displayed in the Partnership Agreement Scorecard (see section 2.3.1 below), the day-to-day pace of work has resulted in higher levels of communication, openness and trust. However, as a number of NGO stakeholders reported in meetings and through the Good Partnership Health Checklist (see section 2.3.1 below), the informality of what appears to be so many relationships has a downside. Some NGOs perceive, quite rightly, that WFP maintains ultimate decision-making and is not fully transparent in its decision-making and how that impacts the NGOs, especially in instances of “bad news” or delays. NGO respondents to the external survey rated transparency weakest among the partnership principles (see Table 2.4 below). Governmental and UN system stakeholders in interviews in all subject countries also voiced concerns about the perception that WFP was not sufficiently transparent or communicative.

Finding 8: Individual WFP Projects are the common denominator of a vast majority of its partnerships.

76. Earlier, data about recent performance highlighted the extent of WFP’s work with others notwithstanding some terminological ambiguity. The most salient characteristic of these statistics is the extent to which their denominator is the individual WFP project. This is largely a result of WFP’s planning system which is effectively project based.

77. The implication of this project based model, however, is that partnerships in general and especially those with governments and NGOs for either capacity building or delivery to beneficiaries are cast in relatively short terms. From the perspective of good partnership, such short-term relationships may result in a degree of tension between WFP and its partner about the extent of its commitment and also produce uncertainties as to resource allocations. For example, in Haiti, the partnership with the Ministry of Health to strengthen its nutrition capacity is weakened by the fact that WFP’s contribution to the partnership occurs through a succession of relatively short-term projects. WFP staff and Haitian officials both commented that this project-by-project approach did not lead to the continuity that Haitian officials sought with respect to capacity building and the long-term objective of hand-over.

Finding 9: The most valuable type of partner necessary for the fulfillment of the transition to a food assistance approach is government.

78. Working more as a food assistance rather than food aid agent means that WFP will require new kinds of relationships with governments. There are several dimensions related to the centrality of governments among all of WFP’s partners.

79. The first dimension relates to why governments, as governments, are crucial partners. Over the last decade, commencing with the Millennium Development Goals, UN organizations and other international bodies have transformed how they deliver development assistance and humanitarian assistance in particular. The Paris

and Accra declarations confirm a global commitment to recognize the importance of national governments as more than aid recipients, but as full partners and, for the most part, the bodies that will determine the course of action of the intervention involved. In short, the two declarations set out a new paradigm where humanitarian organizations not only work with but work through the governments in question, thus recognizing not only their sovereignty but the extent to which they represent the best interests of the affected populations.

80. The second dimension of the importance of governments again relates to commitments made in the last decade to transfer to governments more responsibilities for the actual delivery of development assistance. This relates to WFP's Strategic Objective 5 and the whole concept of building capacity to eventually "hand-over". There are however, some obstacles in the way of these commitments to governments. The majority, for WFP, relate to issues about the extent of capacity building and the longevity of WFP project cycles.

81. For example, to promote the inclusion of nutrition and HIV/AIDS-related programming into national development or national nutrition strategies may require longer term commitments to capacity building in these areas than can be afforded by the WFP tonnage-based resource allocation model, now somewhat modified to allow for more discretionary and "non-tonnage" expenditures. In Haiti, the evaluation found that the national government in both nutrition and emergency preparedness was calling for relatively long-term assistance capacity building, secondments and mentoring. These needs were confirmed by WFP staff. In Kenya, ministry officials in the areas of both nutrition/health and emergency preparedness indicated that WFP and others needed to recognize the degree to which additional support would be required over the long term. The short duration of WFP's project cycle was seen as a factor that hinders a long-term approach. For example, in Kenya where WFP has been working for decades, the longest duration of any project has been three years. In Haiti, the back-to-back natural disasters resulted in the appearance of a long-term project, which in fact was a series of shorter term projects, leading to uncertainty about both the continuity and scope of WFP's support.

82. Transforming the nature of a partnership with governments from one based primarily on delivery to one enabling government ownership, capacity and accountability has obvious implications for WFP staff. Capacity building, within the structure of a good partnership, involves ensuring that WFP staff have the specific skills needed to assist a government, sometimes in quite specific areas. For example, in Laos, WFP staff and managers both recognize that their qualifications probably did not match what might be needed in the future.

Finding 10: The governance of partnerships with national governments is not well understood and not well documented.

83. The evaluation found that the project-based resource allocation model of WFP made it difficult for it to establish longer term and more holistic approaches to

working with national governments. It should be mentioned however, that REACH and SUN vary from this model in the fact that they themselves recognize the need for longevity of commitment by both UN and government partners.

84. The impact of this degree of ambiguity is that while governments may see WFP as a unified entity, WFP tends to see a national government in a more disaggregated sense, on a ministry-by-ministry basis. The evaluation noted that for the most part, the government entities engaged did not include national ministries of planning, or ministries of finance. Rather, operational ministries were identified.

85. The cause for this apparent disaggregated approach again lies in WFP's largely project-based planning model. As noted earlier, the majority of partnerships reviewed for this evaluation were individual projects or successions of individual projects. Mutual WFP/national government overarching strategies were absent from the locales reviewed, although in some of the countries visited, WFP Country Strategies exist or are under development.

86. More importantly, in discussion with WFP managers and staff, it became apparent that their primary points of access to line ministries were staff in many instances, at levels well below senior decision-makers at the political level, or the most senior government officials (permanent secretary). WFP staff and some government officials commented that this low level of access resulted in very delivery-oriented approaches and lacked an overall sense of continuity.

Finding 11: Many of WFP's current set of agreements/MOUs with its UN and other development partners have not been translated into parallel country-based agreements.

87. There are few opportunities, especially with respect to capacity building within the framework of public sector modernization, where WFP would be the sole external intervener. It is more likely that several UN agencies, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNEP, etc. and bilateral development cooperation partners may be equally active. Finally, the role of the World Bank and the regional development banks also need to be taken into consideration.

88. The evaluation found that while WFP has negotiated high-level MOUs with UN system partners, levels of practical coordination at the country level were not as well established. In the locales surveyed, the evaluation did not uncover any real degree of formalized inter-agency coordination, other than the work done by the Resident Coordinator. The evaluation did not study a country where UN "Deliver as One" was active. The evaluation also uncovered instances where the personality of successive Resident Coordinators influenced the nature of in-country collaboration with varying patterns – close and frequent collaborative work, contrasted by other models that favoured a more fragmented and bilateral approach.

89. In the venues reviewed, individual partnership initiatives such as SUN or REACH, while collaborative and well-coordinated by design, were a small minority.

90. It is also important to recognize the degree to which WFP currently is engaged in formal joint programmes with other UN agencies. According to the 2009 Annual Performance Report, the percentage of joint programming grew from 22% in 2007 to 36% in 2009.

91. This finding does not detract from the cross-agency collaborative efforts such as the Cluster Approach and UNDAFs. Rather, it highlights a gap in WFP's approach to partnership and working together more broadly. Given the stated importance of partnership to WFP, the apparent general absence of WFP country-level agreements with its UN systems partners may again illustrate a lack of understanding of what constitutes good partnership, the practical advantages of partnership and the need to be proactive in promoting it.

2.3 The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Partnerships

92. The second major question addressed the efficiency and effectiveness of WFP's partnership activities. It was predicated on the belief that WFP senior management needed additional information about how its partnerships were functioning and whether current partnership practice resulted in the most effective transformation of resources into benefits.

2.3.1 Is Good Partnership Practice Followed?

93. This sub-question has two dimensions. The first relates to an assessment of partnership agreements scored against a set of generally recognized characteristics of good partnership. The second is drawn from survey data, both the internal and external surveys and the Good Partnership Health Checklist, which was administered to country-level NGOs. These two provide the metrics about partnership and whether WFP is conducting itself in accord with principles of partnership.

Finding 12: The majority of WFP agreements meet minimum standards for good partnership with gaps in key areas resulting in challenges in promoting more participatory and open partnerships.

94. The evaluation examined about 80 varying agreements, ranging from high-level agreements with UN system partners, through several NGO partners at the global level and partnerships with the private sector down to country-level partnerships as typified by the FLA. Some 69 were assessed in detail (see Annex XI for details). These latter documents were held at WFP's Headquarters and, as such, would constitute the kind of instrument that would be essential in a "Framework" partnership as noted in the typology described earlier in this Report. The FLA is included in this overview because it is the primary instrument that links NGOs and WFP in the "delivery" partnerships. It is important to note that these thousands of delivery relationships are viewed by WFP and more so by the NGOs as something more than purely contractual, and as such, are deemed to be a type of partnership, albeit a fairly inflexible one.

95. The ratings provided by this assessment are derived from a scale developed by The Partnering Initiative. A rating of anything in excess of 80% is deemed to constitute an acceptable score and a solid demonstration that good partnership principles are embodied in these framework agreements.

96. The analysis of these agreements shows only a very few instruments ranking in the range of “acceptable” (see Annex XI, Volume 2). Many private sector agreements reach this level. There are some possible explanations for this. The costs of these relationships and the inherent risks shared by both parties require a degree of accuracy that may not be necessary in a more conceptual document that would lay out a relationship between two UN agencies.

97. UN partnership agreements, even ones developed within the last several years, rank generally in the mid 60 percentile range with the exception of an agreement with UNHCR concluded in 2011 which was ranked at the 75 percentile. Key areas of challenge with respect to UN system agreements lay in areas related to communications, management protocols, and especially measurement. The FLA was rated even lower, at the 45th percentile.

98. What is also interesting to note is that over half of these UN agreements predate the current WFP Strategic Plan and thus, predate the strategic shift toward food assistance. The table below shows that nearly all agreements with UN partners pre-date the current WFP Strategic Plan and as such, are at risk of being obsolete in terms of content and direction.

Table 2.2 Scored UN Partnership Agreements by Date and Percentile.

UN Body	Agreement Type	Date of Agreement	Percentile Score %
UNDRO	MOU	1976	56
UNDHA	MOU	1995	59
UNV	Other	1996	41
FAO	MOU	1999	42
WHO	Other	2001	39
ICAO	Other	2001	46
UNDP	MOU	2007	75
FAO	Other	2007	61
WHO	Other	2007	61
UNDP	Other	2010	68
UNFPA	MOU	2010	67
UNICEF	MOU	2011	59
UNHCR	MOU	2011	75
UNEP	MOU	2011	67

99. Turning to NGOs at the global level, the assessment found that the vast majority of agreements were concluded at least a decade ago and many nearly two decades ago. There is no doubt that the text of such agreements could not be expected to reflect contemporary circumstances. These framework agreements with NGOs tend to cluster in the high 60 percentile range, again with gaps related to decision-making and measurement.

100. Looking at specific characteristics, it is clear that there are common areas of concern. Risk management, measures to ensure sustainability, performance measurement, renewal/revision/updating all rate very low.

101. The following table shows the average rating for each of the 30 indicators, broken down by three main types of agreements. The values for the indicators are against a maximum of 10 points.

Table 2.3 Partnership Agreement Scorecard Rating for WFP Agreements

Scorecard Indicator	Average		
	MOU Aggregate Total /33	STAND- BYAGREEMENTS Aggregate Total /14	ALLOTHERAGREEMENTS Aggregate Total /20
1 - (Who?)Description of partner organizations	8.1	6.0	8.2
2 - (Who?)Identification of representatives/status	9.5	10.0	9.2
3 - (Why?)Vision statement	8.1	5.0	6.6
4 - (Why?)Shared objectives	8.2	5.0	6.6
5 - (Why?)Individual partner objectives	6.9	3.0	5.6
6 - (What?)Proposed project/activities	8.4	5.0	7.2
7 - (What?)Outline work plan	7.2	5.0	6.6
8 - (What?)Resource commitments from each partner	6.9	5.0	5.9
9 - (What?)Roles and responsibilities	7.5	5.0	6.4
10 - (What?)Performance indicators	6.2	5.0	5.6
11 - (What?)Sustainability strategy	5.4	3.0	5.0
12 - (What?)Risk Management (collective and individual)	3.8	5.3	4.7
13 - (When?)Timeframes	6.8	5.2	6.5
14 - (When?)Milestones	4.3	5.0	5.5
15 - (How?)Relationship management protocols	8.3	5.1	6.6
16 - (How?)Governance arrangements	7.8	5.2	5.6
17 - (How?)Decision-making procedures	7.4	5.2	6.6
18 - (How?)Funding arrangements	7.5	8.2	7.1
19 - (How?)Measures to mitigate risks	5.1	5.4	4.6

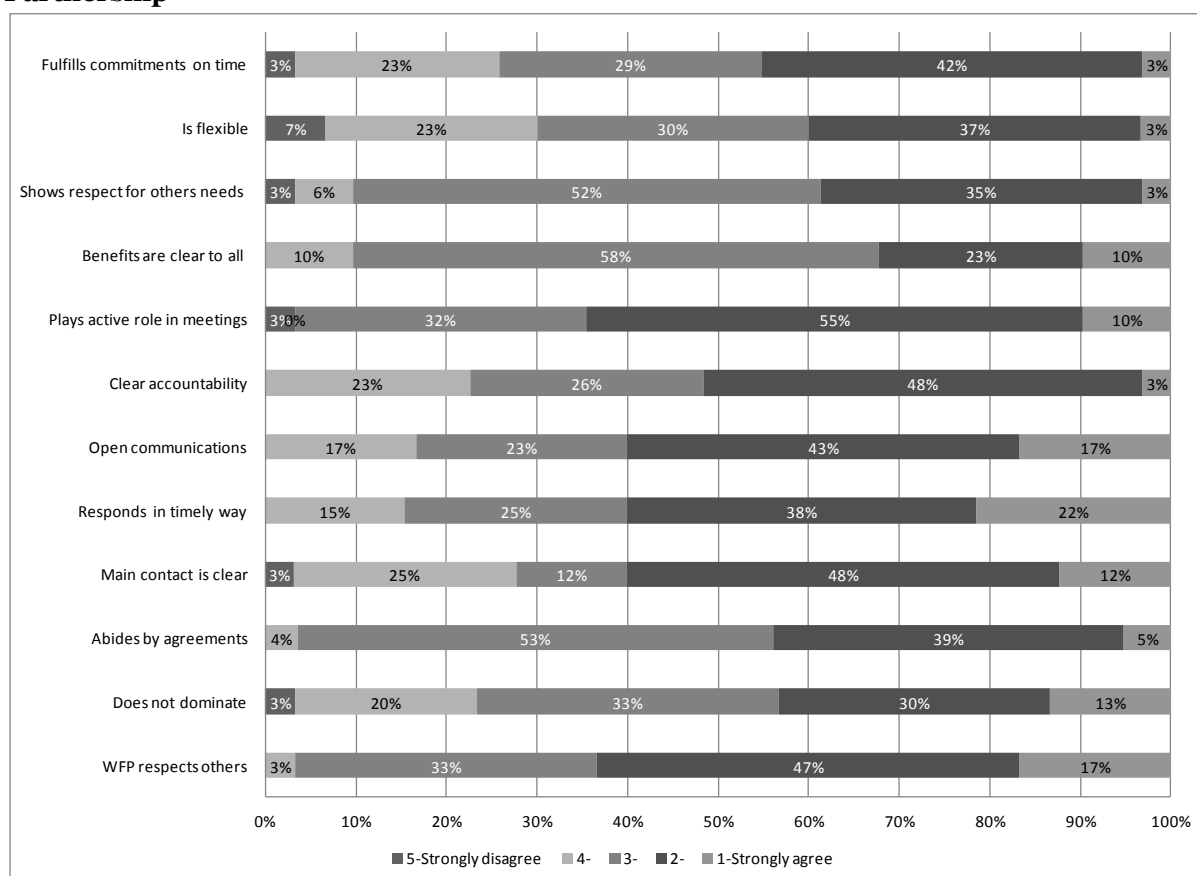
Scorecard Indicator	Average		
	MOU Aggregate Total /33	STAND- BYAGREEMENTS Aggregate Total /14	ALLOTHERAGREEMENTS Aggregate Total /20
20 - (How?)Measures to strengthen partnering capacity	8.0	6.1	6.3
21 - (How?)Metrics for monitoring/measuring performance	5.0	2.1	3.0
22 - (How?)Health check/review procedures	4.3	2.0	1.6
23 - (Communications?)Procedures for communicating with on-going partners	8.4	8.0	6.2
24 - (Communications?)Rules for branding (own/others)	6.9	n/a	4.0
25 - (Communications?)Rules for the public profile of the partnership	7.3	n/a	5.2
26 - (Communications?)Intellectual property and confidentiality rules	2.1	7.1	2.6
27 - (Communications?)Protocols for communicating with partners/others	5.2	3.0	4.8
28 - (What if?)Grievance mechanism to resolve differences	7.1	9.0	7.5
29 - (What if?)Rules for individual partners to leave or join	8.6	9.0	8.4
30 - (What if?)Exit ('moving on') strategy for partnership	1.6	0.0	2.8

Finding 13: Overall, the WFP is seen by both NGO and institutional partners to be a good partner, with some caveats.

102. Three sets of data can be drawn from to address the perceptions of WFP's partners to assess the quality of the partnership.

103. The first set, the Good Partnership Health Checklist, administered to country level NGOs (about 60 respondents) tends to show that WFP is seen as a trusted and valued partner that may have some issues with respect to openness and transparency. The following table illustrates the responses to these 12 characteristics of good partnership.

Figure 2.1 Good Partnership Health Checklist: The 12 Characteristics of Good Partnership



104. NGO respondents to the electronic survey appear to be somewhat more positive than their national level cousins. For example, more NGO respondents at the global level see WFP acting in a more open fashion than is evident at the national level. The following table, drawn from the electronic survey presents NGO data about adherence to partnership principles.

105. The table below illustrates the degree to which NGO respondents saw WFP adherence to partnership principles, with a majority responding “always” or “frequently” to every factor save for transparency.

Table 2.4 NGO Partners: WFP Adherence to Partnership Principles (n=51)

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Do Not Know
Equality	8 (16%)	19 (37%)	17 (33%)	5 (10%)	2 (4%)
Transparency	7 (14%)	13 (25%)	24 (47%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)
Results oriented approach	10 (20%)	23 (45%)	14 (27%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)
Responsibility	7 (14%)	21 (41%)	18 (35%)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)
Complementarity	7 (14%)	19 (37%)	20 (39%)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)

106. As shown in the table below, UN and other multilateral partners see the WFP as a valued partner. Their responses to the external survey about the overall value of partnership show strong majorities in support of the WFP as a good partner. Key highlights include strong majorities in relation “results oriented approaches” and

“responsibility” However, “complementarity”, “transparency” and “equality” are not seen in as positive a light.

Table 2.5 UN System & Multilateral Partners: WFP Adherence to Partnership Principles (n=34)

	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Do Not Know
Equality	5 (15%)	10 (29%)	15 (44%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)
Transparency	4 (12%)	13 (38%)	12 (35%)	3 (9%)	2 (6%)
Results oriented approach	8 (24%)	17 (50%)	8 (24%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Responsibility	7 (21%)	17 (50%)	9 (26%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Complementarity	4 (12%)	9 (27%)	14 (42%)	1 (3%)	5 (15%)

107. All data sources and interviews with external partners confirm the extent to which WFP is seen to be a good partner. Local NGO partners, primarily involved in delivery, are highly supportive of WFP in key areas such as respect, openness of communications and accountability. At the country level, as shown in the Good Partnership Health Checklist data, there is one area of potential concern relating to whether WFP abides by its agreements and in that light, a majority have identified this factor as an area of concern. This concern however, may in large part, relate to issues about payment which were identified by NGOs, and probably more importantly, issues about delays in the delivery of commodities, pipeline breakdowns.

108. There were some apprehensions about the transparency of decision-making and openness in general. A majority, 57%, of NGO respondents at the global level indicated that WFP had a challenge in the transparency of its consultations and its decision-making. UN and other multilateral survey respondents reported a 45% rate of concern (identifying “sometimes” or “never” in response to the survey question). UN respondents also identified equality as an issue of concern, some 52%, with global NGOs reporting some 43%.

109. In terms of additional caveats, as Figure 2.1 illustrates above, at the country level, the Good Partnership Health Checklist that was completed by national level NGO stakeholders shows that some 36% have concerns about the degree of respect provided by WFP with some 40% being concerned about the degree of openness.

2.3.2 Do the Benefits Outweigh the Costs?

110. One of the innovative elements of this evaluation was the exploration of costs and benefits, going beyond anecdotal evidence to survey both internal and external stakeholders about the various factors that make up a more complete approach to cost/benefit analysis. Two methodologies were used to assess costs and benefits from the perspective of external partners as well as WFP staff. The first methodology utilized interviews to seek qualitative information about costs and benefits. The second methodology incorporated into the internal and external surveys a series of questions focussed on key considerations of the costs and benefits of partnership.

Finding 14: Current WFP Data Systems are not capable of disaggregating financial costs and benefits of partnership.

111. It became apparent that actual financial costs especially in relation to the time and effort required to maintain a particular partnership, for example, with an NGO or a group of NGOs involved in delivery, or with the headquarters of a UN system organization to foster framework cooperation, could not be derived from WFP data systems. As well, the same systems could not capture the data needed to quantify benefits of partnership.

Finding 15: The benefits of partnership were perceived to outweigh intrinsic costs by substantial factors.

112. Internal and external stakeholders through interviews were asked to identify what they saw as the benefits of partnership – the added value of working together. Responses included: access to increased information so as to improve decision-making, synergies and the opportunity for collective or better coordinated initiatives, increased impact for beneficiaries, cost savings, knowledge transfer, and increased sensitivity to local conditions.

113. These benefits were counterbalanced to a small degree by stakeholders' perceptions that there were detracting factors largely related to the time needed to manage a relationship, and the impact of how personalities could affect the effectiveness of a partnership. These negative factors, fewer in number, were generally characterized as irritants. Others included lack of information about logistics, and the extent of the bureaucratic processes for both authorization and subsequent payment. These factors, which can be seen as administrative in nature, can affect the level of trust and perceptions of transparency, key aspects of "good partnership".

114. To assess cost and benefit, the seven survey questions were presented on the basis of a 10 point scale with +1 through +5 representing increased levels of positive impact, -1 through -5 representing levels of negative impact, and 0 representing no discernible difference. This scale therefore, allowed respondents a high degree of flexibility in assessing each of the seven questions. The tables below show the results of that approach to rating cost and benefit.

115. Stakeholders were also asked to provide comments or illustrative remarks. However, unlike some of the other survey questions, the response rate for such specific comments was less than 20%; thereby resulting in anecdotal information only.

116. As the graphs below clearly show, majorities of internal and external stakeholders alike indicated that working together resulted in considerable additional outputs, interventions and numbers of individuals actually served. Working together therefore, contributes to the broadest humanitarian goals.

117. The following two graphs amplify that above, addressing other kinds of benefits that have accrued.

Figure 2.2 Costs & Benefits of Partnership: External Stakeholder Responses

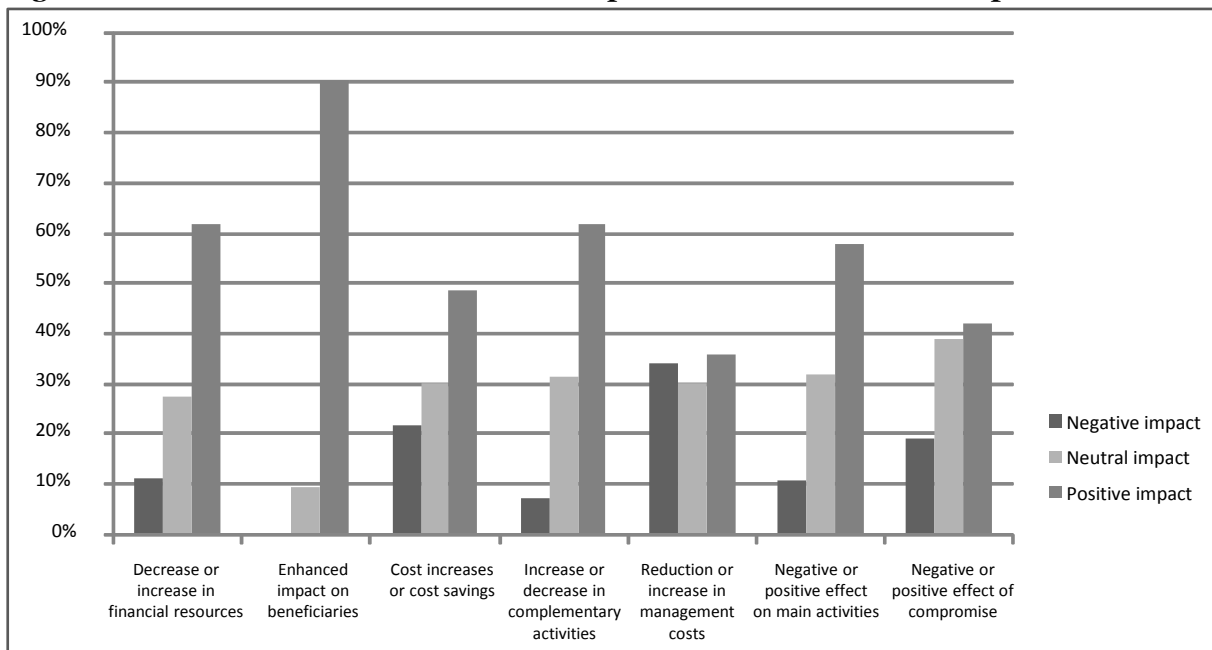
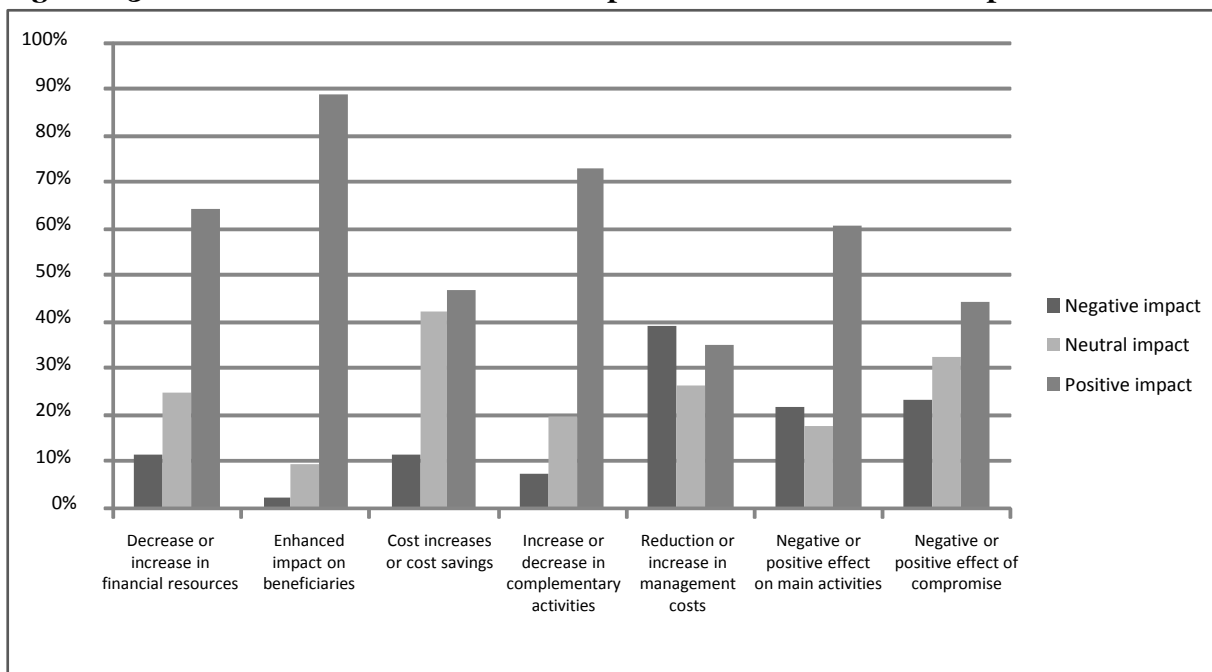


Figure 2.3 Costs & Benefits of Partnership: Internal Stakeholder Responses



118. It is interesting to observe that while in a number of cases, the neutral and positive attributions might be quite similar in rating, the negative characteristics were uniformly seen as very low. This data therefore tends to confirm other data about irritants and good partnership, wherein negative factors generally were seen as irritants, as opposed to major stumbling blocks in promoting good relationships.

119. The interview data acquired primarily at the country level confirms these perceptions. NGO stakeholders indicated that working with WFP increased their scope and provided them with considerable additional knowledge (Kenya and Haiti). WFP stakeholders in Laos indicated that the NGO networks in place provided WFP with additional sources of information and outreach over and above its network of country offices and sub offices.

Finding 16: There were very few differences between internal and external stakeholders’ perceptions about costs and benefits.

120. The above findings clearly show the extent to which working in partnership is perceived to be positive. It is important however, to examine whether internal and external stakeholders had significant differences of opinion with respect to the attributes of the seven specific questions related to cost/benefit.

121. The following three figures show that the differences of opinion between internal and external respondents were nominal.

122. Another possible area of comparison related to whether different types of external stakeholders had different perceptions; for example, NGO perceptions versus those of UN system or other multilateral body stakeholders. The evaluation found no significant differences between these two subsets of stakeholders.

Figure 2.4 Comparison of Levels of Positive Impact

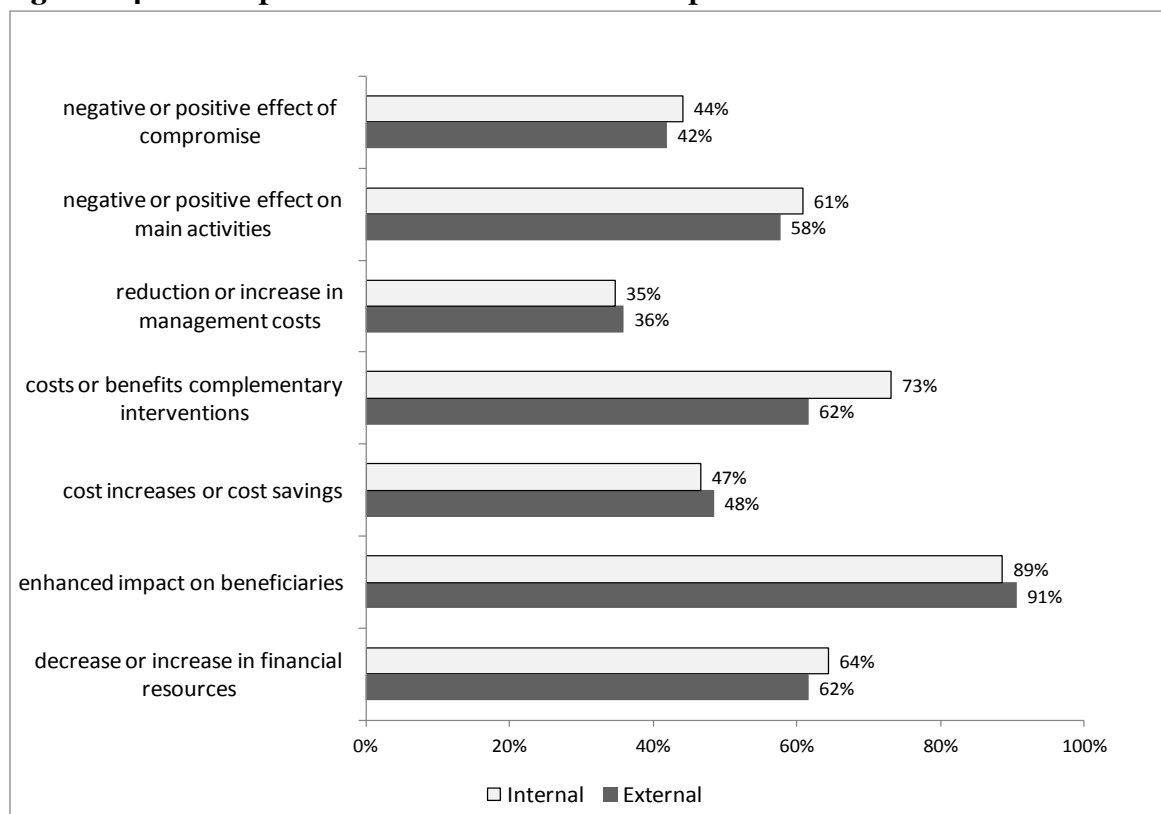


Figure 2.5 Comparison of Levels of Negative Impact

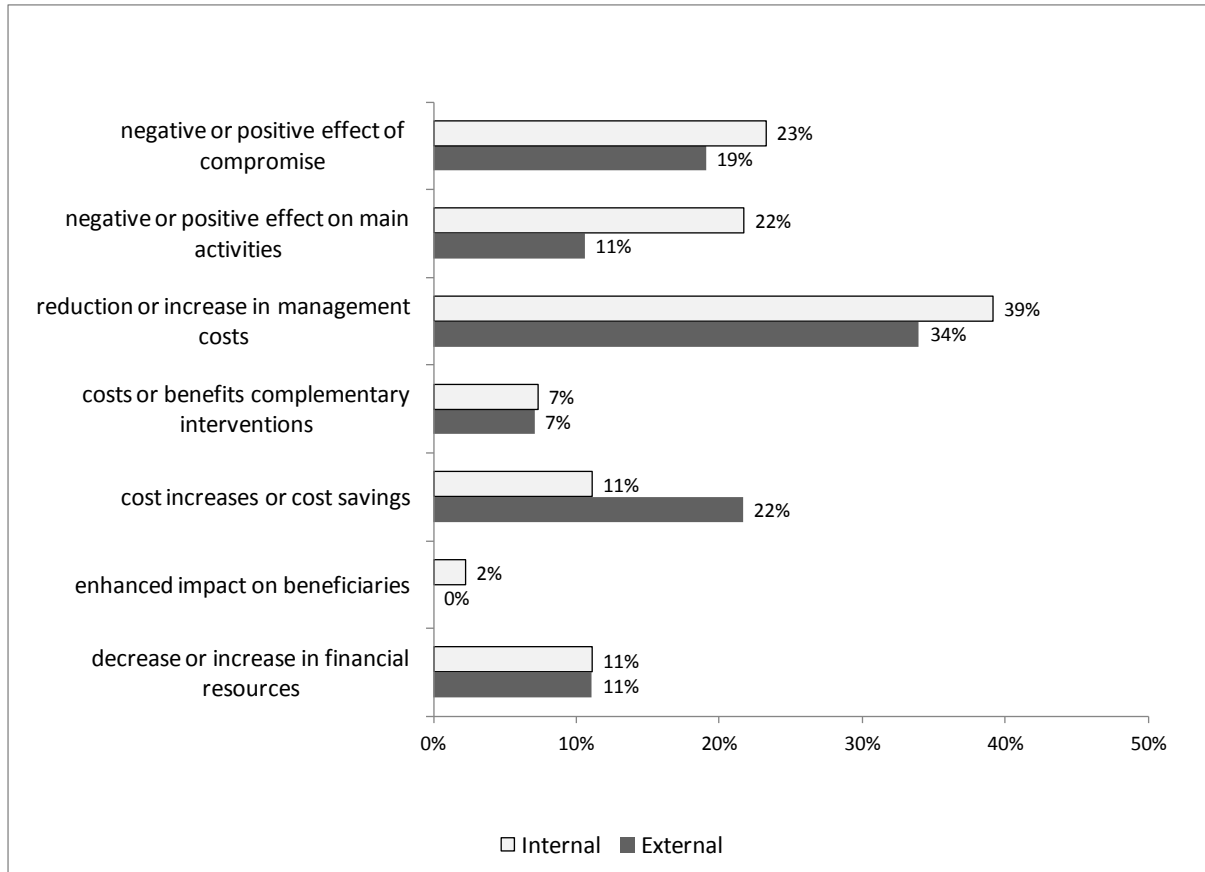
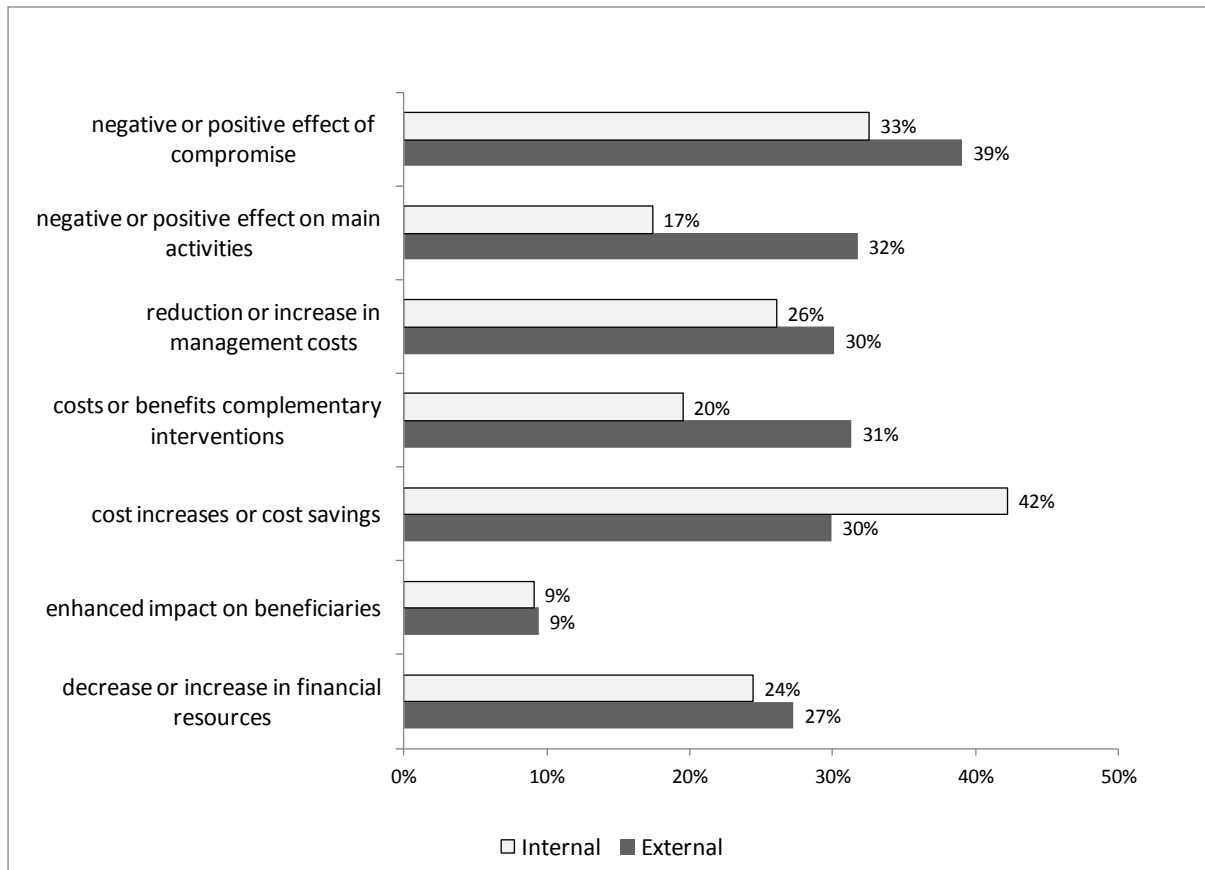


Figure 2.6 Comparison of Levels of Neutral Impact



2.4 The External Operating Environment

123. The third evaluation question recognizes that the formalities of partnership tell only part of the story. The environment where a partnership exists can have considerable impact on the efficacy of the relationship. This key question therefore, recognizes the degree to which situational factors affect relationships with the most important of these, external relationships, being with the national governments in those countries where the WFP operates.

2.4.1 Balancing Differences in Mandates, Objectives and Capacities of Different Partners

Finding 17: There is strong evidence to show that partnership has contributed to an increased scope and quantity of services at the country level.

124. One of the key benefits of partnership lies in access to additional or improved quality of service. For example, in Colombia, a partnership between WFP, NGOs, a private foundation and a major food retailer resulted in additional access to remote indigenous communities, where training was provided in nutrition-related matters. As well, in Colombia, the community-level approach to partnership has enabled WFP to access both urban and rural communities of displaced persons who would otherwise not be served. In Laos, an innovative partnership with NGOs that involves no food delivery but is based on a train-the-trainer approach to nutrition awareness, again results in WFP knowledge being transmitted to individuals.

125. WFP's central "WFP Working with NGOs: A Framework for Partnership" speaks to the need to identify with NGOs what additional benefits over and above "commodity delivery" may exist. As such, documents such as this recognize the importance of synergies. One of the synergies of working in partnership with NGOs at the country level is the extent to which WFP gains access to additional local knowledge that would otherwise not be available to it. In comparison to many other UN organizations at the country level, WFP's tradition of networks of field offices and sub offices gives it a greater degree of local awareness than others. These local offices enable WFP to better engage at the "front line" with NGO partners. Thus, the combination of field presence with an increased access to local knowledge results in an additional benefit.

Finding 18: At the regional level, additional benefits accrue when WFP participates in inter-agency task forces and committees, many of which are led by other UN bodies.

126. Regional cooperation, especially among UN organizations, produces additional benefits for all, with WFP and others recognizing their increased importance. For the most part, these benefits lie in the area of information sharing and increased possibilities for inter-agency coordination of efforts. The evaluation observed in West Africa and in Latin America, effective regional coordination in

terms of emergency preparedness and response wherein bodies like ECOWAS and REDLAC served as information clearing houses. The partners in these organizations, both of which are led by other UN member agencies, commented on the extent to which WFP shared information and provided technical insights to the other partners.

127. It is also very important to note that many of these regional coordinating bodies, formed or led by others, are not documented. They do not have a formal collective MOU. Indeed, in one instance, stakeholders remarked that formalization might lead to tensions over mandates and procedural matters which would impede the open flow of information. This implies that a “one size for all” approach to delineating a WFP strategy for partnership would be contrary to the best interests of the varied types of relationships that WFP engages in.

2.4.2 Changing roles of hosting governments in WFP partnerships at national and regional level

128. This sub-question had at its core Strategic Objective 5, and its commitment to promote among hosting countries greater sustainability and capacity, leading to what is referred to as “handover”.

Finding 19: The Paris Declaration has contributed to more assertion of authority by national governments, thus redefining relationships and also in increased costs to national governments and WFP.

129. The evaluation found that the assumption of more authority by national governments involves additional and long-term commitments by both parties to capacity building and to its sustainability. This assumption of increased authority by national governments has a number of characteristics that transcend WFP’s actions and speak to the overall evolution in the national capacity of the public sectors of developing countries. Technical assistance, in its most traditional sense, namely skills training, is only part of the overall equation. For new skills, in this instance, those related to either nutrition or emergency preparedness to be integrated, national planning models and budgeting systems need to be amended so as to give sufficient priority in the national budget, as opposed to their being solely supported from donor sources.

130. For example, in Kenya, the Ministry of Arid Lands, while receiving support from WFP and others for both food and technical support, has begun to integrate policy-making and decision-making functions within its own national budget. By contrast, in Haiti, Ministry of Health officials were candid in stating that if external support including WFP’s were withdrawn, their nutrition programming would simply collapse.

131. There are several implications from these situations. First, the sharing of responsibilities and roles between governments and WFP cannot be characterized in a homogenous fashion rather must be adapted to the context. Second, as has been shown in virtually all overview studies of the success of public sector modernization,

building capacity can be a very long-term process, involving a number of individual project cycles. WFP's current resource model even as amended, places heavy emphasis on tonnage and probably does not provide enough flexibility to address long-term capacity building challenges.

132. In all the countries included in this evaluation with the exception of Colombia, both WFP and government stakeholders confirmed that long-term support by WFP and other donors was seen as an essential element for the success and sustainability of capacity building initiatives.

133. WFP has incurred additional non-food costs in support of nutrition in particular, with the sustainability of some of these measures being at risk. WFP stakeholders in virtually all the nations surveyed indicated that they faced on-going challenges in sustaining support in the area of nutrition due to the difficulties in the tonnage model wherein high value but low tonnage nutrition-related commodities resulted in low budgets and thus less discretionary funding for capacity building and related activities. Stakeholders did not seem to believe that the impending amendments to the tonnage model would provide the degree of resources necessary to ensure the longevity of WFP activities in the field of nutrition.

134. Stakeholders in the area of emergency preparedness indicated that the high tonnage inherent in emergency response gave them a greater degree of flexibility. However, they were also candid in indicating that longer term capacity building, especially outside of the ambit of an emergency or a protracted response to it, was at risk, again because reduction in tonnage would curtail the flexibility needed to provide non-commodity-based assistance. For example, in Laos, senior national officials responsible for emergency planning urged that WFP find the means to continue its capacity building with them outside of the range of the support for the flooding emergency which was being reduced.

2.4.3 Operating Context in the Host Country

Finding 20: Differing levels of government capacity and engagement affect the ability to develop and maintain partnerships.

135. This finding speaks to the apparently self-evident conclusion that governments have differing levels of capacity, as well as differing levels of commitment. What is interesting is not so much this conclusion but its impact on the exercise of partnership in both subject areas. A highly centralized government such as Laos may simply not be "positioned" to provide the degree of overall access. By contrast, in Colombia, WFP has made inroads with many ministries, health, education and those related to public safety.

136. In Colombia, the evaluation encountered a government with internally sustainable high quality resources in both the areas of nutrition, and emergency preparedness. In this instance, with a government of such capacities and one committed to comprehensive national strategies, WFP's role is that of an advisor of

choice, which may provide technical assistance in limited areas where Colombian authorities do not have the need for on-going capacity. By contrast, in Haiti, while the government is assuming more authority for planning and decision-making in both subject areas, its overall capacity remains limited. More importantly, both WFP and Haitian stakeholders indicated that the current level of planning and delivery capacity was not sustainable without support from WFP and other donors.

137. In Laos, WFP and Laotian government stakeholders both recognized the degree of capacity gaps in the area of nutrition. By contrast, it appears that the gaps, which exist in the area of emergency preparedness are not as significant. Again, in both subject areas in Laos, WFP and governmental stakeholders recognized that even the existing level of capacity was dependent on external support from both WFP. Thus in terms of partnerships, these situations involve WFP's recognition of a long-term dependency on it should it wish to strengthen the national capacity in line with Strategic Objective 5.

138. Another consideration relative to the capacity and engagement of national governments relates to the differences in types of governance paradigms. For example, the REACH initiative is predicated on the existence of steering committee-like bodies where government ministries and UN bodies work together. There is an assumption in this model that government ministries participating in such committees have the authority to negotiate and to take decisions. However, the governance paradigm in Laos is highly centralized. It is not surprising therefore, that the inter-ministerial and UN committee for REACH in Laos have yet to meet. This situation may be exacerbated by the extent of WFP staff turnover and the junior level of the personnel – incapable of engaging at the managerial and executive levels.

139. Other types of governance are very different and offer different challenges and opportunities. For example, the governance paradigm in Colombia could be said to be characterized by a high degree of regional autonomy, de-centralization and empowered ministries. In this environment and given the overall capacity of the government of Colombia, WFP's partnerships involve working with responsible and empowered government organizations at all levels.

140. There is a major implication related to this finding. It is that there is no homogeneity in the nature of governments with which WFP may partner; and thus by implication, there is no one-size fits all in working with governments in partnership. Because of this, there is a limit to the extent to which WFP can transfer specific good practices from one context to another.

141. This diversity in the capacity of governments has resource implications on a global scale that affect the quality and effectiveness of partnerships. For example, it would appear that there are more internal capacity gaps in governments as well as WFP with respect to nutrition matters than with respect to emergency preparedness and response.

142. National government figures in Kenya, Laos and Haiti all remarked that they required long-term assistance in capacity building. This implies, for WFP, a degree of commitment to capacity building that may be difficult to accommodate within the current or even amended resource allocation and short-term duration project-driven models. For example, in Haiti, WFP staff in the Ministry of Health indicated that the impending reduction in project commitments for nutrition would both reduce WFP's team by at least half in the near future and thus deprive the ministry in its rebuilding efforts and its efforts to build indigenous nutrition-related capacity. Officials in Laos echoed these views with respect to emergency preparedness and response. In terms of partnership practice, situations like this undermine the relationship because of the lack of predictability and consistency in the response of WFP to its partners' basic needs.

2.4.4 Roles and Mandates Established at International and/or Regional Policy Fora

Finding 21: There are perceptions among WFP and other UN agency personnel about the lack of a clear mandate with respect to nutrition-related activities.

143. Interview data and information secured during group meetings, including the meeting that presented the Interim Report for this evaluation, underscored the continued ambiguity about WFP's roles and responsibilities in the area of nutrition. Virtually all UN stakeholders at the regional or global levels echoed these concerns. The ambiguities noted were not isolated to WFP's relationship with only one UN system partner. Stakeholders identified ambiguities in relation to WHO, FAO, UNFPA, and most notably, UNICEF.

144. Opinions about the degree of this ambiguity in relation to nutrition ranged from characterization as an irritant, to much more strident characterizations as "widespread mandate creep". Notwithstanding the renewed MOU between UNICEF and WFP in the early months of 2011, WFP's role in nutrition remains ambiguous, as was recognized at the June 2011 WFP global nutrition conference.

145. The principles of good partnership imply that trust and clarity are essential for a relationship to flourish. While it would be unreasonable to believe that issues of mandate and jurisdiction are clear in all other areas and with all other partners, it is important to reinforce the degree to which this perception of ambiguity appears to be negatively impacting on partnership relationships and on the WFP as a whole. However, the WFP is in the process of developing a new nutrition policy which might clarify some of these issues.

146. At the country level, NGO stakeholders and those from other UN bodies generally had the same concerns about a lack of clarity in the nutrition area, with calls for "higher levels of authority" to provide clarity.

2.5 Internal Factors Affecting Partnership

147. The final evaluation question focuses on the impact of factors internal to WFP – how these factors impact upon good partnership practices, and by implication, their impact on the attainment of overall Strategic Objectives. This set of findings is probably the most qualitative in that survey instruments did not focus to any significant degree on these kinds of internal management issues.

2.5.1 Staff Skills, Knowledge, and Aptitudes

Finding 22: There are generally gaps in formal skills training related good partnership practices.

148. WFP staff interviewed recognized that for the most part, they were generally unaware of what constituted good partnership practices and by extension how to translate these practices into working with partners themselves. Skills and capacities related to effective partnering include “soft skills” and personal competencies such as flexibility, responsiveness, ability to learn together, communication skills, and negotiation skills. This view was widespread and was shared by all types of employees – international staff, local staff, and consultants. Few had any awareness of the Principles of Good Humanitarian Partnership to which WFP had subscribed in 2007 or any other partnership principles. In other words, the centrality of partnership within WFP’s strategy has not yet been matched by a comparable level of awareness even among those staff closest to strategy development and interpretation.

149. Current management training for all those above P-5 levels includes elements related to partnership. As well, other staff orientation programs are beginning to include references to partnership as a key capacity. The disparity between what staff feel about their awareness of partnership and what is being done to orient them to its importance and characteristics firmly underscores the overarching finding that there are serious ambiguities about the nature of these terms.

150. In a number of interviews, staff at the country level characterize “partnership” as something like a defined practice, a set of steps to be taken, a skill to be learned and implemented like a new accounting system. After further discussion, staff and managers generally came to recognize that the practice of partnership was more than a process. They came to see that it involved changing mind-sets about the totality of how WFP and by extension, its staff and managers, would work with others.

151. This specific finding also relates to the third overarching finding noted earlier in this Report; namely that communications about partnership and its importance to WFP had been somewhat limited. Staff and managers indicated that they felt that they had not been adequately informed about partnership, over and above the issue of whether sufficient orientation and training was provided.

Finding 23: There appear to be more gaps in both partnering skills and specific subject matter personnel in the area of nutrition versus that of emergency preparedness.

152. Internal and external stakeholders of this evaluation reported that they saw both skills gaps and gaps in absolute numbers of personnel in the area of nutrition. Such gaps were not reported in the area of emergency preparedness which is seen as a long-standing core function and not a newer area of work.

153. The evaluation found that in several instances, most notably in Laos, WFP nutrition staff, including nutrition coordinators, were employed on a contractual basis, with some having experienced rapid turnover, while others faced termination due to human resource contractual requirements.

154. To engender trust and to build a long-term knowledge base, partners need to maintain consistency of staff (quantity) and to ensure the professionalism and skills of staff (quality). In some of the countries reviewed, these factors were not present with respect to nutrition, due in part to the degree of turnover and the lower level staff (UN Volunteers, Young Professional, and short term local consultants).

2.5.2 The Impact of Financial, Planning, M&E and Other Systems

Finding 24: WFP planning and resource allocation models (including upcoming revisions) hinder the ability to implement long-term approaches which promote both the exercise of good partnership and by extension, the attainment of the strategic shift to food assistance.

155. A current planning model with its short-term horizon hampers WFP's ability to plan and successfully partner in instances where food assistance strategies require longer term commitments.

156. The current allocation models impede building trust and longevity of relations with national governments. In Haiti, both government and WFP stakeholders indicated that the success of the capacity building with the Ministry of Health and the assumption of increased levels of domestic decision-making were in large part due to the back-to-back emergencies which beset Haiti. However, with the impending project reductions, winding down from the earthquake, these successful capacity building initiatives face a sustainability challenge in the fact that WFP will no longer be able to support the government to the same extent. The same situation but related to emergency preparedness and response was witnessed in Laos.

157. At a regional level, in both Asia and Latin America, WFP staff indicated that the resourcing model even with some amendments to increase discretionary spending, was difficult to adapt to models where capacity building or technical assistance in general was being provided to governments, or NGOs or civil society. In Colombia, the support provided to regional governments to promote nutrition in general was highly dependent on tonnage allocated for displaced persons with

potential reductions resulting in withdrawal from some food assistance related activities.

158. It is clear that a largely commodity-based resource allocation model, which is relatively short-term in nature and largely disaggregated to a project-based denominator, inhibits synergies and makes it difficult to pursue long-term strategies. However, conclusions such as these about how managerial systems impact on partnership and by extension, the attainment of the transformation, have to be balanced against the reality of the long-standing management paradigm at WFP and the inescapable fact that WFP is the world's premier emergency food provider.

Finding 25: WFP reporting procedures make it difficult to identify the impact of good partnership practices or to report on the stewardship of activities in non-food areas.

159. WFP faces a challenge in improving the quality of its M&E and by extension, general reporting vehicles in order to effectively monitor and evaluate partnerships. Standard project reporting remains limited, for the most part, to activity and financial data and to output data relative to number of persons served, etc. The consequences of WFP activity are seldom identified. In that light, because many capacity building activities linked to a food assistance paradigm are tied to commodity deliveries, their reporting and the development of specific capacity-related performance indicators remains limited. Current WFP reporting is silent in relation to indicators of partnership (beyond reporting the number of NGO and UN partners) and associated partnership processes. Successful partnerships are also successful learning relationships since everyone is bringing different strengths to bear on a problem, and in order to do this effectively requires cross partnership learning to draw upon the varied knowledge, experience and skills.

160. In Kenya and in some other countries, WFP is experimenting with a partner evaluation report. However, this reporting is largely one-way in that WFP uses it to assess the partner's performance against WFP compliance standards. There are however, efforts to consider a reciprocal approach to partner evaluation, to enable partners to rate WFP.

161. NGO stakeholders to this evaluation indicated that they felt there was a degree of overlap and duplication between WFP and some other multilateral development partners in instances where two or more partners were working together.

2.5.3 The Impact of WFP's Organizational Culture

Finding 26: WFP does not appear to offer active incentives to promote good partnership practice.

162. Organizational culture is a reflection of the overall character and values of an organization and is related to formal systems, rules and procedures, organizational history, incentives and other factors. WFP's culture is rooted in three things: the

United Nations; logistics; and emergency response. This means it is dynamic, highly task oriented, responsive, works quickly, but has detailed rules and procedures, and tends towards centralized authorities. The culture is highly technical, task oriented and focused on product delivery. Whereas these characteristics make WFP a desirable partner, it also presents some challenges. Effective partnership requires a focus on processes as much as products, such communication, relationship management, evolving in response to changing circumstances over longer time horizons. Examples include attention to developing long term agreements, attention to planning for exit strategies, and monitoring not just the outputs but the relationship and associated processes.

163. No one managerial system could be identified as particularly supportive of or detracting from the exercise of good partnership. Rather, evidence shows that the managerial culture of WFP remains very control-oriented, somewhat top down and largely designed to manage and control the supply of goods, services and commodities. Human resource systems that are designed to limit unauthorized growth of permanent employees can have an unintended consequence of limiting capacity in new areas of activity such as nutrition and thus limiting the capacity of WFP as a nutrition partner.

164. Good partnership practice implies a degree of flexibility to tailor plans and activities to meet specific needs. For example, staff and NGOs in two of the field study countries remarked that the standardized FLA, while very valuable as a mechanism for regulating a contract, was inflexible in terms of how it would function in areas where the “product” in question was more knowledge-based, training as opposed to delivery.

165. There also do not appear to be direct institutionalized incentives to promote good partnership practice on the part of staff. WFP continues to expand its work in collaboration with others and is placing additional emphasis on partnership and while management training and managerial competencies now include consideration of partnership as a core competency, it remains inescapable, as was identified in the overarching findings, that what actually constitutes partnership is poorly understood.

166. Moreover, the evaluation did not uncover any examples of managerial efforts to reward or otherwise positively reinforce the exercise of good partnership practices. Some internal stakeholders, including managers, even question WFP’s sincerity about the importance of partnership. A common theme echoed among staff and managers alike was the need for better communications and support for what partnership implied.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Overall Assessment

167. The one unifying conclusion is that WFP is considered by virtually all stakeholders to be a valued and respected partner, and that working with WFP is seen as a positive experience which results in increased scope and range of activities, and increased impact among common beneficiaries. While stakeholders also raised some concerns about WFP capacity in some areas and the impact of its administrative systems and a degree of a lack of clarity about its evolving mandate, stakeholders did not perceive these limitations to be of such significance so as to substantially detract from the overall positive assessment of WFP as a partner. Internal data has shown that WFP staff recognise the value of working in partnership particularly in enabling increased access to target beneficiaries. Partnerships are also seen as a way to add value to projects by bringing in expertise, saving costs and accessing funding opportunities.

168. The first key evaluation question focused on the implications for WFP of its strategic shift. Over its near 50 year history, WFP has had a very strong track record of working with others through the UN humanitarian system. The partnership challenge that WFP now faces in terms of the transformation is less about choosing between one partner or another or having the appropriate selection criteria, as it is about the ability of WFP to meet new expectations. In this regard, the evaluation found that WFP had skills shortages in the area of nutrition, albeit a relatively small domain in comparison to the totality of WFP activities but one which has garnered increased importance and visibility in the current strategic plan. WFP's strengths in logistics and delivery are evident in the degree to which its partners see it as a very strong player in the area emergency preparedness and response. The evaluation concluded that the credibility of WFP and the degree of on-going confidence that is necessary among its partners is in some respects dependent on the extent to which WFP is willing to commit the resources necessary to substantiate its enlarging role in the area of health and nutrition.

169. The second key evaluation question asked about the efficiency and effectiveness of WFP's partnerships. Based on survey data and especially with respect to cost and benefits, working in collaboration with others is seen as beneficial and increases WFP's effectiveness. However, WFP administrative and managerial systems cannot track cost benefit considerations and thus reduce the ability to learn and to better manage partnerships. The evaluation has concluded that although explicit citations to good partnership practice are few in number, the informal practices of many staff, especially at the field level, reflect that trust, openness and honesty are seen as core values. WFP's partners in emergency preparedness and response areas seem to be more positive about WFP as a partner than those in relation to nutrition and health. The lack of clarity in relation to nutrition matters

points to a need to not only increase resources for nutrition but to clarify roles and responsibilities so as to reduce possible ambiguities about mandate.

170. The third key question spoke to how external issues are impacting on WFP's ability to maintain strong partner relations. Working with governments may be the most significant consideration with respect to the external environment. The impact of the Paris and Accra declarations goes to the heart of WFP's Strategic Objectives and specifically those related to assisting governments to assume a higher degree of responsibility for planning and delivery. The challenge for WFP is to reinforce its capacity building efforts with additional resources that are designed to not "hand over" but to build together. Capacity building of the kind needed to combat hunger is necessarily a long-term and potentially resource intensive activity where WFP will not only have to work with a host government but also with other bilateral and multilateral development partners so as to ensure a coordinated response. The evaluation found that there were a number of weaknesses in WFP's partnering performance specific to nutrition that were not observed in the emergency preparedness and response. These appeared to be systematic differences related to the level of resourcing and preparedness that WFP had achieved with relation to nutrition activities. The main weaknesses were i) a lack of clarity over WFP's strategic aims as the organisation moved from "food aid to food assistance" and became more deeply involved in long-term nutrition programmes; ii) a relative lack of technical expertise to support participation in these programmes; iii) a relative lack of senior professional staff to undertake WFP's work and partner effectively with counterparts from NGOs, government etc.

171. These weaknesses have a number of impacts on WFP's ability to partner and especially in relation to its ability to partner with national governments. Firstly, where there is uncertainty over aims and objectives, this makes it harder for actual or potential partners to build a relationship of trust and commitment with WFP. Secondly, where there are shortfalls in technical expertise, this undermines WFP's credibility with partners. Thirdly, a shortage of suitably well-trained and senior staff means that working with partners will be more difficult and, in particular, building long-term relationships will prove problematic.

172. The final key question asked how factors internal to WFP affect its ability to partner. Solutions to improve the quality and effectiveness of partnership have to be balanced with systems that maintain transparency and accountability for the resources given to WFP by its donors. Thus, while from a partnership perspective it would probably be more appropriate to suggest longer term planning horizons and more recourse to resourcing outside of even an amended tonnage model, it is necessary to also understand that making such a specific recommendation would imply the whole-scale transformation of WFP's planning models.

173. The managerial and planning systems of WFP are not well adapted for the requirements of substantive capacity building. Likewise, there are skills gaps in the area of nutrition that may call into question the credibility of WFP in what is being

perceived to be a flagship activity. Awareness of good partnering practice is low which could imply a need for training. However, the overall shift to a food assistance paradigm requires more than just partnership training.

174. The evaluation found that while WFP had some procedural and definitional issues and that while some of its systems detracted from good partnership practice, on balance a solid foundation was present on which to shape a refreshed WFP that is more capable of responding to the broader global challenges that have been set out in the Paris and Accra declarations, challenges that in themselves, will transform “foreign aid” into development cooperation and partnership.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: WFP should empower the Executive Management Council, reporting to the Executive Director to articulate a comprehensive partnership strategy including a communications strategy.

175. The evaluation found a lack of clarity in the understanding of what constitutes partnership and ineffective internal and external communication about what it means for WFP. While the Multilateral and NGO Relations Division and Private Sector unit of WFP have provided guidance to their stakeholders, there is a gap in the strategic framework of WFP with respect to understanding and communicating what constitutes partnership. The evaluation made a contribution in articulating a three level functional approach (delivery, skills and knowledge transfer, framework and policy) rather than one based on the organisational type of partner. A new comprehensive partnership strategy should also present procedures for implementation and incentives to support new approaches.

176. One of the overarching findings of this evaluation was that food assistance as a new paradigm was ill-defined. While the term food assistance is frequently linked with “partnership”, neither is well understood. Stakeholders to this evaluation remarked that neither term was adequately understood and that the degree of ambiguity could lead to possible friction in relationships. They also remarked that communications about both transformation to a food assistance paradigm in general and the importance of partnerships was sparse. There is a need, both internal to WFP and externally with partners, for clarity and consistent communication. Such clarity and consistent communication might also provide WFP senior management with vehicles to stress the importance of good partnership, in essence, to lead by example.

177. There is a very strong caveat however to this crucial recommendation. In 2001 The Executive Board approved new approaches to working with NGO partners in “WFP Working with NGOs: A Framework for Partnership”, (WFP/EB.A/2001/4b). In many respect this framework mirrors a good number of the findings and recommendations of this present evaluation. Yet, key items in the 2001 Framework were not implemented, in a way therefore presaging this evaluation. Thus, this first

recommendation is the cornerstone on which all others rest. Until a new “partnership strategy” is articulated subsequent recommendation lack force.

Recommendation 2: WFP should consider additional resources to enhance its capacity in nutrition and health, and build partnership skills, including: increased training for all staff, direct outreach to external partners to better engage them in determining what constitutes good partnership; and specific incentives for managers to ensure that they demonstrate leadership in promoting a new partnership strategy.

178. WFP had skills gaps in nutrition in particular and in partnering skills in general. However, the two types of gaps require very different levels of commitment by it.

179. The first involves a recognition that WFP would need to allocate new resources or re-profile existing resources to address what are generally recognized to be internal capacity gaps. The second, the gap in partnering skills in general, requires a different kind of commitment that involves orientation, training, managerial leadership and to some degree, a focus on the overall management of change within WFP. The primary resource model of WFP, although somewhat amended to increase flexibility, may require additional flexibility so as to respond to the resource intensive challenges that are inherent in the shift to food assistance, and in the greater promotion of the commitments of Paris and Accra.

180. The need for additional resources in the area of nutrition partnerships can be justified by the issues cited above: WFP would benefit from providing additional resources a) to better communicate its strategic intent; and b) to train and support more professional staff in the field. These developments would reassure partners of WFP’s long-term commitment to working in nutrition, its ability to provide added value through its technical expertise and its capacity to establish and manage senior-level partnerships that are equitable and sustainable.

181. In practical terms, this Recommendation also implies that WFP is not a credible partner at the country level if it does not have sufficient expertise in nutrition (in terms of both numbers of staff and staff with substantial levels of experience). It also implies that WFP managers at the country and regional levels probably will have to re-profile resources to more forcefully sustain capacity building measures with governments or regional bodies.

Recommendation 3: WFP should enter into discussions with United Nations system partners, especially FAO, UNICEF, and WHO to clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to WFP’s shift to a food-assistance model, specifically with respect to mutual roles and responsibilities related to nutrition.

182. This Recommendation speaks to one of the early overarching findings about the lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities among key UN agencies. It implies

more than specifically amending high-level agreements which in themselves, are more designed to facilitate cooperation than they are to articulate specific roles and responsibilities.

183. To that end, it is probably more beneficial to consider some kind of accord between heads of agencies that would entail not only the articulation of clearer roles and responsibilities but also a review and updating mechanism so as to ensure such accords evolve in response to changing circumstances.

Recommendation 4: WFP should amend its global and (if relevant) regional framework agreements with other United Nations organizations to reflect new conditions and to incorporate aspects of good partnering agreements.

184. Many of these were crafted over a decade ago and do not reflect either WFP's current strategic directions, or those of the other partner. As well, the implications in the overall shift in development assistance that has occurred over the past decade may not be included in these agreements.

185. Analysis has shown that many agreements are deficient in elaborating key elements of good partnering. Their elaboration would send a strong moral signal to others of the commitment of WFP to working in collaboration and the degree to which it is willing to formally commit to such principles. Indeed, if good partnership is central to WFP's overall transformation, taking the lead in amending framework agreements to embrace good partnering practices would assert WFP's leadership among UN agencies the acceptance of good partnering as an element of the overall humanitarian system.

186. This recommendation however is contingent on the previous related to the high-level clarification of roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 5: WFP should consider developing a mechanism to complement the standardized Field-Level Agreements and lay out mutual expectations between WFP and local partners with respect to the mutual exercise of good partnership practices.

187. Clearly, it would be unwise to take the primarily contractual FLA and graft into it highly qualitative values inherent in good partnership. Presently, while it is theoretically possible to amend the FLA. We did not encounter instances of same, or any instances where there were mutual accords about the use of good partnering practices. As well, at the country level, we heard that NGO partners were seeking a mechanism that would allow a more mutual/joint approach to assessing the quality and effectiveness of a partnership.

188. In terms of format, it is possible to craft a partnership "statement" to which both parties would agree that would reflect how the principles of good partnership are brought into play with respect to relations between WFP and individual NGOs.

189. It is also possible to include in overarching global NGO agreements references to somewhat operational matters like mutual accountability. However, to do so only at a global level might be seen as lip service and would not have the immediacy of WFP and a local partner agreeing to a set of terms of good practice that would affect their direct relationship. What is implied therefore is a kind of template that WFP and a local partner could develop together and modify to their own needs.

190. To more smoothly implement a recommendation such as this, it might be more appropriate if this new tool were to be used at the time when a new FLA is being developed. In this way, there would not be the disruption associated by a system-wide introduction of an instrument that addresses a new concept – a mutuality of responsibility and accountability.

Recommendation 6: WFP should consider amending its project planning and reporting systems to include specific references to good partnership and partnership related outcomes, and to promote the longer term approach needed to sustain partnership and contribute to capacity development.

191. Throughout the evaluation there were persistent calls for further amending WFP’s project planning and by extension primary resource allocation model, the tonnage model, as a means of providing additional resources that might be required for both improved partnership practices and more importantly, meeting the new challenges of the shift to a food assistance paradigm. While this may be an attractive proposal, it is probably impractical given the state of WFP’s overall resource allocation planning and reporting architecture. Accordingly, it may be more practical to propose that existing models be amended to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of partnership and partnership-related outcomes.

192. The evaluation recognizes that the introduction of new reporting tools designed to track non-tangible outcomes related to partnering behaviours would be a considerable task. However, as the old aphorism states” You get what you measure”, it is important to recognise that indicators related to good partnership are needed so as to encourage managers in the adoption of the kinds of behaviours and process changes that are recommended by this evaluation.

193. This recommendation also addresses findings related to the impact of the project–based planning cycle on partnerships and especially on partnerships related to capacity building which involve longer term commitments. While impending changes to the resource allocation model may result in greater degrees of flexibility, because the primary model remains project-based, the assurance of continuity continues to be absent. In practical terms, greater emphasis in country level planning of the continuity required for capacity building, especially in relation to “hand over” would provide a degree of assurance to WFP’s partners, especially governments and NGOs that WFP at least in principle was committed beyond the duration of the specific project in question. As well, such references in country level planning would

allow WFP managers, at least tentatively, to plan in the longer term so as to ensure a greater degree of continuity in the provision of needed capacity building programming.

194. In that light, a phased-in approach, or a series of pilot activities, types of projects or countries, might be considered to test and refine adding “good partnership” outcomes to WFP’s already evolving planning and reporting systems.

Recommendation 7: WFP should expand and formalize the country level partnership evaluation system based on the principle of mutual accountability; an example to build on was seen in Kenya.

195. Mutual accountability is one of the cornerstones of good partnership practice. Yet, WFP’s accountability systems focus on WFP assessing its partners’ performance, rather than its own performance in the partnership. In Kenya, the partnership evaluation process, conducted at a country level between WFP and primarily NGOs, has provided a basis on which to build. Presently, it is a review by WFP of the compliance of NGOs with WFP-predetermined procedures and standards. However, it is planned that the process might be made reciprocal in the coming years by asking the partner to assess WFP in relation to its work, accountability and responsiveness.

196. Making this change would enable WFP to move beyond talking about mutual accountability to actually practicing it. In practice, what would be required would be the development of a rated questionnaire wherein both sides could assess their mutual strengths and weaknesses in relation to aspects of the partnership, delivery, quality, timeliness, communications, transparency, etc. Such an approach to mutual accountability, as with any new system, could probably benefit from a period of pilot testing and sequenced phase-in.

Acronyms

CNIGS	Centre National de l'Information Géo-Spatiale
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EGIK	Extraordinary Gifts in Kind
EMOP	Emergency Operation
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FLA	Field Level Agreement
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IO	International Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OE	WFP Office of Evaluation
PRRO	Protected Relief and Recovery Operation
RB	Regional Bureau
REDLAC	Risk, Emergency, and Disaster Task Force Inter-Agency Workgroup for Latin America & The Caribbean
SATCA	Regional Early Warning System for Central America
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDHA	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Organization

UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Annexes

Annexes are included in Volumes II-IV

Rome, January 2012, OE/2012/003

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