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SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT OF PRRO 10233.0 IN AFGHANISTAN

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report synthesizes the findings of an independent evaluation of the Afghanistan protracted relief and recovery operation 10233.0 approved for April 2003 to April 2005. The evaluation was commissioned by the Office of Evaluation and fielded in May 2004. The evaluation team found that WFP Afghanistan is doing a commendable job in implementing WFP's mandate despite the security situation, which has worsened since the PRRO was designed at the end of 2002. The operation has a number of strengths such as strong synergy between project design and government priorities, effective logistics and pipeline management, and creative and innovative project design, especially in activities related to nutrition. Interviews with partners and beneficiaries reflected general satisfaction with WFP assistance in Afghanistan.

In line with WFP's shift to results-based management, the evaluation team looked at results at the output and outcome levels. However, because of a weak monitoring system it was difficult to get reliable data on beneficiary numbers or any results at the outcome level. The evaluation team based its findings on triangulation between country office monitoring data, interviews with partners, studies and interviews with beneficiaries.

Support for internally displaced people in camps was very effective, but otherwise the evaluation found that the relief objectives were not fully met because (i) free food distributions had been reduced in reaction to government and donor criticism of food aid and (ii) food for work was spread so thinly that the average household received only enough to support a family for 45 days, regardless of the food gap. This was exacerbated by a "one-size-fits-all" approach to food for work that paid insufficient attention to differences between districts with acute/very high food insecurity and those with moderate food insecurity. In many cases, the food assistance was insufficient to have a significant impact on the livelihoods of those who received it.

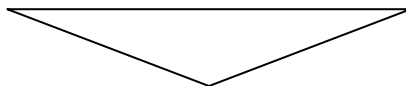
Recovery objectives were partially met through a combination of food for education, food for training and food for work; the effectiveness of school feeding was reduced, however, by an unreliable biscuit supply. Performance in asset creation was highly satisfactory in Badakhshan, where WFP has supported food for work for over a decade and established long-standing relationships with implementing partners who mobilized resources for non-food inputs. In provinces that did not have previous experience with asset-oriented food for work, the quality and sustainability of the work are less satisfactory.

In its second year of implementation, the PRRO should concentrate on ensuring greater effectiveness at the outcome level of (i) food for work, (ii) food for training, (iii) food for education, (iv) assistance to the rural vulnerable and (v) food fortification by working more closely with partners that can provide the non-food inputs necessary to achieve the outcomes and by ensuring a better match between assessed needs and food rations. Assistance to the urban vulnerable needs to be reconsidered, because the changed urban economic environment has made the women's bakeries a less effective instrument for addressing



urban vulnerability. Free food for internally displaced people in camps should continue. The country office should improve the linkage between assessment, programming and monitoring – especially of outcomes – in order to improve programme effectiveness.

DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of the information and recommendations set out in the “Summary Evaluation Report of PRRO 10233.0 in Afghanistan” (WFP/EB.1/2005/6-A).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHOD

1. The purposes of the evaluation were to render accountability to the Board and to enable WFP to learn from experience in order to improve its operations at the country and corporate levels. The evaluation was carried out at mid-term in order to inform management and stakeholders about progress towards results and to identify obstacles that might jeopardize achievement of results within the planned timeframe.
2. The main focus of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and connectedness of the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO). Evaluation methods included (i) a desk review of WFP and non-WFP documents, (ii) analysis of data from the Afghanistan Country Office Recording Database (ACORD) and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), (iii) interviews with staff from WFP, the Government, United Nations agencies, donors and implementing partners (IPs), (iv) visits to all WFP area offices and sub-offices, (v) visits to 65 projects in 13 provinces and (vi) on-site interviews with beneficiaries.

THE CONTEXT OF PRRO 10233.0

3. Afghanistan has recently emerged from a 23-year crisis that included civil conflict, the downfall of the Taliban regime in November 2001 and three consecutive years of drought since 2000. WFP's response has been emergency assistance, most recently through emergency operation (EMOP) 10155.0 implemented between April 2002 and March 2003. Afghanistan has changed significantly since the EMOP began. The Transitional Islamic Government, appointed in June 2002 for 18 months, developed a National Development Framework (NDF) calling for systematic provision of basic social services, creation of livelihoods and environmentally sustainable development. In consultation with the Government, United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), WFP changed its support from emergency assistance to PRRO 10233.0, designed to support the nation-building objectives of NDF, which started in April 2003.
4. Afghanistan has entered the post-conflict reconstruction phase, but security has worsened since the PRRO was designed. Half of Afghanistan's provinces currently have districts that are "no-go" for United Nations staff, where WFP can only operate through IPs or the Government.
5. During the latter part of EMOP 10155, food aid and free food distribution in particular came under heavy criticism from the Government and donors in relation to concerns about possible effects on the market and government preference for cash-based interventions. The PRRO was welcomed as a means of shifting from relief to recovery and of reducing free food in favour of "more sustainable food for work (FFW), food for training (FFT) and food for education (FFE)."
6. This PRRO was approved for 618,989 mt of mixed commodities over two years and is WFP's largest ongoing single-country PRRO. The main relief activities include feeding for internally displaced people (IDPs) in camps, returnee packages, support for rural and urban vulnerable people, and institutional and supplementary feeding. The main recovery activities are FFW, FFE and FFT. The design reflects WFP's Strategic Priorities and the NDF.



RESULTS

7. **Resourcing** for year 1 was adequate, but only 38 percent of year 2 requirements are currently resourced. As of June 2004, 315,733 mt – 58 percent of the total – had been confirmed, including 201,486 mt of reprogrammed carry-over stocks from EMOP 10155,¹ equivalent to 33 percent of total PRRO requirements and almost 100 percent of year 1 distributions. Only biscuit contributions fell short of requirements, by 1,700 mt.
8. **Distribution** of 216,516 mt during year 1 was 72 percent of target because of slow start-up in the first quarter that arose from the need to shift from emergency to recovery mode by establishing new procedures and institutional partnerships. Actual beneficiaries were 7.2 million,² 83 percent of the target in the operational plan.³

PLANNED VERSUS ACTUAL BY ACTIVITY, APRIL 2003–MARCH 2004				
Activity	mt distributed	% of target	Beneficiaries	% of target
Urban vulnerable (bakeries)	15 049	57	231 354	101
Rural vulnerable (10% of FFW)	2 715	25	147 606	48
Institutional and therapeutic feeding	7 046	28	114 687	36
Supplementary feeding	1 910	55	44 366	10
IDP feeding (camp)	25 343	69	301 861	151
Returnee package	14 622	39	889 672	59
FFW	78 974	80	3 256 940	107
FFT/non-formal education	4 044	34	64 962	9
School feeding	10 763	73	1 188 631	163
School feeding take-home (boys, girls)	18 208	110	160 000	88
Take-home ration (girls)	2 228	24	145 000	49
Food for teacher training	25	1	850	0
Food for teacher salary supplement	7 913	88	660 000	147
Other	27 703 ⁴		(not available)	
Total	216 543	72	7 205 929	83

Source: The distribution figures are based on despatch from WFP's warehouse, because figures for actual distribution to beneficiaries are not entered into ACORD on a regular basis. All figures were provided by the Programme Unit and verified with the pipeline unit before submission to the team. The targets are from the operational plan.

¹ Of which 152,556 mt was reprogrammed with donor consent; the remaining 48,430 mt is reported in WINGS as EMOP 10155.

² ACORD beneficiary numbers should be used with caution because of variance between reported and actual beneficiaries, errors in data entry – numbers of rations equated with participants and household members with direct recipients – and double-counting. Revised beneficiary totals sent by the country office on 30 July are not reflected.

³ In spite of a 10 percent decrease in planned delivery, beneficiary targets in the operational plan increased by 2.3 million as a result of calculation errors – numbers of monthly FFW rations were totalled without considering that FFW beneficiaries are assisted for longer than one month.

⁴ Mainly carry over FFW projects from EMOP 10155 and support to small-scale emergencies such as floods and earthquakes during the period evaluated.



9. With the exception of school feeding take-home rations, none of the PRRO activities have met their distribution targets. Some under-delivery is the result of factors beyond WFP's control, such as restricted movement because of insecurity, delayed start-up in partners' programmes, untimely donor contributions, lower-than-anticipated returnee repatriations and a reduced IDP caseload.

FFW

10. Under a PRRO, food assistance is supposed to meet **both** the immediate food needs of the most vulnerable and enable them to restore their livelihoods,⁵ but in practice it is difficult to reconcile the two functions in a single project. FFW supports **relief** objectives when its main function is food transfer, and **recovery** objectives when its aim is asset creation.

⇒ FFW as a Food-Transfer Mechanism

11. Although 78,974 mt were distributed to 542,000 households under the PRRO – 80 percent of the target – the immediate food needs of the most vulnerable were only partially met. The PRRO document specified that FFW would be limited to areas where between 60 percent and 80 percent of the population were acutely or highly food-insecure (an 8–10 month food gap), but only 27 percent of commodities were programmed in such districts. Despite the uncertainty about the numbers of beneficiaries in the database, the team concludes that the food must have been spread rather thinly. The actual beneficiary figures assume 24 kg per beneficiary, which would last for 45 days at an intake of 2,100 kcal per day. Even if the operation had reached its target of 32 kg, or 60 days of food, it would not have contributed significantly to meeting an 8–10 month food gap.
12. Weak targeting, involving **errors of inclusion** (non-poor households) and **errors of exclusion** (many food-insecure households not covered), further reduced the effectiveness of FFW in meeting relief objectives. This is reflected in WFP's own monitoring reports and independently corroborated by the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA), which found that members of the “very poor” wealth group were no more likely to be involved in FFW than those in the “better-off” wealth group. This finding relates to all FFW projects, not only those implemented by WFP.
13. FFW is only weakly self-targeting to the poor, even though food rations are below market wages, because village leaders select participants. They find it difficult to exclude community members who want access to FFW or landowners who have a stake in the asset. Poverty targeting was further weakened by food redistribution within the community.
14. It is uncertain whether FFW helped poor households to cope with crisis or to retain assets, because systematically collected data on results at the outcome level was lacking, but there is evidence that work opportunities reduced out-migration.⁶ There is no systematic evidence that food aid reduces the proportion of expenditure on food in total expenditure.⁷

⁵ *Guidelines for the Preparation of a PRRO*, section 4.2.5

⁶ OXFAM evaluation of WFP-supported FFW under EMOP 10155 in Bamian (2002).

⁷ NRVA found that food expenditure increases steadily in each income quintile. This suggests that even if food aid reduces expenditure on basic staples, it need not necessarily reduce the proportion of food expenditure in total expenditure because poor households have a strong propensity to spend additional cash on higher-value foods. The finding suggests that WFP's corporate indicator for livelihood protection may need revisiting.



⇒ *Contribution of FFW to Asset Creation*

15. Physical outputs for year 1 are impressive: rehabilitation of 3,878 km of roads and 60 km of mountain trails, de-silting of 2,288 km of irrigation canals and drains, 1,361 underground *karezes* (underground irrigation systems), 125 springs, 218 water reservoirs, 14 aqueducts and 708 shallow wells; 17 schools, 3,582 latrines and 500 returnee houses were constructed, and 21,000 trees were planted.
16. Rehabilitation of community assets – roads and drinking water – benefited women and poor households equally, but irrigation rehabilitation mainly benefited landlords.⁸ Tree nurseries and reforestation mainly benefited public institutions, even though FFW recipients were poor.
17. In Badakhshan, construction of new roads enabled isolated villages without previous road access to bring in consumer goods, send out their produce and reach health services. An 84 m bridge built by AfghanAid with WFP support will allow road access to ten remote mountain districts. Rehabilitation of roads cut by landslides benefited 440,000 people in 11 districts in terms of reduced travel time, higher traffic flow and less wear-and-tear on vehicles. This rate of achievement of outcomes was not observed in many of the 30 FFW projects visited by the mission. The quality and sustainability of the asset depends largely on the existence of a capable IP, complementary non-food inputs and community participation in maintenance.
18. FFW is not achieving an optimum relationship between cost, quality and time, and results at the output and outcome levels because of (i) the high transaction cost of sub-project design relative to the short duration of assistance and (ii) modest results in terms of asset creation for food-insecure people.
19. In the food-secure districts, cash for work (CFW) often has a comparative advantage over FFW. NRVA found that Afghans prefer food in winter and spring and cash in summer and autumn; poor households and women in food-deficit areas with poor market access prefer food all year, however. Better-off households in surplus areas near markets prefer cash. WFP should work with cash-based employment programmes and take local preferences for food or cash into account.

The Rural Vulnerable

20. Under the heading of rural vulnerable people, the country office distributed 2,715 mt of free food to 147,000 recipients, 25 percent of target,⁹ mainly through winterization campaigns in remote mountain areas, pre-positioned food stocks before snow blocked mountain passes and organized winter food distributions. Relief objectives were only partially met, however, because of confusion about the “rural vulnerable” category: the country office interprets the rural vulnerable as people who live in villages benefiting from FFW but who are unable to work, so relief needs were often neglected in districts where 60 percent to 80 percent of households had an assessed food gap of 8–10 months.

⁸ Land ownership is highly skewed: 60–80 percent of rural households own no land and sharecroppers get only 10–20 percent of the crop.

⁹ This understates food transfers to the rural vulnerable, because free distributions linked to FFW were not recorded under the category but hidden in ACORD under FFW as 10–15 percent distributions to women.



The Urban Vulnerable

21. The PRRO supports vulnerable people in four major cities through 86 bakeries that employ 897 poor women and 63 men, who supply subsidized bread daily to 167,868 beneficiaries. Bakeries receive free wheat flour and iodized salt from WFP and sell the bread at a subsidy ranging from 67 percent to 83 percent. The bakeries may have been effective at the time of their conception during the Taliban period, but the mission agrees with the country office that the changed environment and greater cash-based employment opportunities in towns make the bakeries less effective in addressing urban vulnerability. The programme is currently under review in an effort to improve targeting and enhance profitability, with a view to gradually phasing out WFP support.

⇒ *Support for IDPs and Returnees*

22. WFP support is highly relevant to national priorities, because voluntary return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs into communities of origin is the main pillar of NDF. Three types of assistance were provided: food transfers to returnees on their way home, assistance in places of return and IDP feeding in camps.

⇒ *Support for Returnee Reintegration*

23. As a result of lower than anticipated returns, WFP provided only 14,662 mt, 39 percent of target, to 889,672 people on their way to their places of origin. The assistance was less effective than anticipated because returnees sometimes sold the wheat to avoid the cost of transporting it home. Since 2004, cash transfers have replaced wheat except in food-insecure districts. The assistance, averaging 16 kg per person, helped to sustain family members for approximately one month, but food alone cannot ensure reintegration.

24. Assistance provided to returnees through FFW opportunities in their place of return under Phase II of the Ogata Initiative¹⁰ was useful, but its livelihood impact was minimal. Only 26 percent of assisted returnees were covered, and food transfers averaged only 7 kg per beneficiary.

⇒ *Support for IDPs in Camps*

25. Free food provided to IDPs in camps was effective, reaching 135,436 in the south, 6,499 in the west and 1,099 in Jalalabad.¹¹ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expressed satisfaction with WFP's performance, reporting that the partnership had worked well and that WFP's assistance had been timely and in agreed quantities and had contributed to meeting legitimate food needs. Nutritional outcomes of IDP feeding were not systematically assessed, but a nutrition survey in March 2004 by *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF) for Zhare Dasht IDP camp in Kandahar indicated insignificant severe wasting among children under 5.¹² There is no suggestion that the situation is substantially different in other camps.

¹⁰ The Ogata Initiative, which promotes the reintegration of IDPs and returnees into their home communities, is financed by Japan and implemented in collaboration with the Government under UNAMA coordination.

¹¹ ACORD reports 301,861 IDPs. The mission team was not able to verify which number was correct, but based on the partners' satisfaction with the support it is assumed that the UNHCR number is closest to the true number, because the resulting 177 kg food transfer per beneficiary is closer to the planned 183 kg.

¹² Severe acute malnutrition: 1.2 percent for Zhare Dasht Camp (MSF, Kandahar, March 2004) and 0.5 percent for Maslakh Camp (MSF, Herat, January 2004) expressed as a percentage of children falling below -3 standard deviation of weight for height.



26. The country office considers the phase-out of WFP assistance to IDPs in the west under the EMOP to be a notable success: the caseload was reduced from 385,000 in December 2001 to 12,800 at the end of March 2003; 48,000 IDPs were assisted to return home. Returns from camps in the south to places of origin have been far slower because of insecurity, unsolved land rights issues and continuing drought. UNHCR is currently undertaking a profiling exercise to determine willingness and requirements for the return, reintegration and relocation of 150,000 IDPs encamped in the south. This is a prerequisite for an exit strategy.
27. WFP indicated its willingness to move away from free distributions to encamped IDPs, but it should be wary of introducing FFW/FFT as an exit strategy because conditions in the south differ from those in the west. In the south, it is unlikely that meaningful FFW/FFT can be organized for the IDPs, because nearly half of them are nomads who have lost their herds and cannot return to their places of origin. Drought and insecurity mean that there is a serious risk that work opportunities will be insufficient to enable IDPs to support themselves.

FFE

⇒ *Contribution to Increased Access*

28. The massive increase in school enrolment since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001 is mainly a result of the changed political environment, the successful United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)-supported back-to-school campaign and the influx of returnees. The contribution of school feeding has so far been modest: in 2003, the multi-indicator cluster survey (MICS) reported 2.92 million children aged 7–11 enrolled and 2.5 million not enrolled; net enrolment was 53.9 percent. The rate in rural areas (46.4 percent) was lower than in towns (77.4 percent); the rate for girls (39.6 percent) was lower than for boys (66.8 percent).
29. In 2003, WFP's school feeding programme assisted 1.2 million schoolchildren in 2,870 schools with 8,224 mt of biscuits and 13,305 mt of wheat. The impact on education has been modest, however, because of unreliable biscuit supply exacerbated by dependency on a sole supplier. Delayed delivery of biscuits in 2003 and 2004 meant that distribution started too late in the academic year to influence enrolment; in late 2003 distribution stopped altogether because of a pipeline break. Biscuits proved effective for increasing daily attendance during the 3–4 months they were available. When distributed at the proper time of day, they helped to address pupils' short term hunger, but on-time distribution was not always achieved. Although biscuits are preferred wherever distribution is feasible, take-home wheat rations were distributed instead in remote mountain areas such as Badakhshan and in insecure areas such as Zabul. This explains the exceeded target shown in the Table. In Badakhshan, where take-home school feeding started on time and continued throughout the school year, it contributed to increased enrolment.
30. The objective of the **take-home oil ration incentive for girls** is to reduce the gender gap in school enrolment. Performance was well below targets during the first year of the PRRO because take-home rations for girls were linked to school feeding, and distribution stopped when the biscuit supply ran out. Overall, quantities distributed were only 24 percent of operational plan targets (see Table). Beneficiary numbers reached 49 percent of target, but only at the cost of spreading the assistance more thinly.
31. The **teachers' salary supplement**, a take-home oil ration, is appreciated but its effectiveness for increasing teacher supply and attendance is not yet proved. Teachers on the Ministry of Education payroll receive the subsidy, but those on short-term provincial



contracts are ineligible. A disproportionate share of assistance goes to towns because rural teachers are less likely to have ministry contracts; the blanket salary supplement for all teachers is therefore an ineffective instrument for increasing the supply of rural teachers, especially women.

32. School **construction** is potentially effective for addressing the primary constraint of increased access to education – lack of schools. Under the PRRO, procedures for labour-intensive school construction with FFW were developed, tested in constructing 13 schools and are ready for scaling up. The main unresolved issue is girls' access: the schools are intended for girls and boys, but parents are reluctant to send daughters.

⇒ *Reduction of Gender Disparities*

33. Between 2002 and 2003, the gender gap decreased nationwide from 0.29 to 0.58 girls per boy. There is evidence that the take-home oil incentive contributes to increased enrolment of girls, but conclusions are premature because oil distribution began too late in 2003 to influence enrolment and lasted only a few months. In 2004, girls' enrolment increased even though oil distribution has yet to start. The oil incentive appears to influence parents' initial decision to enrol daughters. Once enrolled, girls' expectations of receiving oil helps to prevent them from dropping out. In 2004, the number of girls in first grade in major cities – except Kandahar – is rapidly approaching that of boys.

⇒ *FFT/Non-Formal Education*

34. Women's enrolment in **literacy** classes is rapidly expanding. Food aid may have contributed to enrolment, but ministry literacy classes that offer no food aid are equally well-attended. WFP provides food aid for only three months; when it ends, most women continue to attend. Although 78 percent of women and 48 percent of men are illiterate, and rates are higher in rural areas, most literacy classes are town-based and have yet to reach poor, food-insecure rural women.
35. **Vocational training** is relevant for asset creation if it leads to life skills that can be used to earn a living. The WFP-supported training is not yet effective in providing women with technical and business skills and preparing them to work on their own outside the training centres. The poorest beneficiaries tend to stay at the training centres beyond completion of training and to grow dependent on food aid. The training centres employed them to make handicrafts and paid them in food rations. Difficulty in identifying IPs with relevant expertise explains the low performance in this category.

Nutrition and Health Activities

36. The PRRO initially aimed at reducing acute malnutrition and improving health through supplementary feeding for the severely malnourished and institutional feeding for hospitals, orphanages and tuberculosis (TB) patients. The activities were national priorities at project formulation, but Ministry of Health priorities have recently shifted from towns to rural areas and from hospital-based treatment to primary health care. WFP correctly identified chronic malnutrition as more serious than acute malnutrition and shifted resources from hospital-based treatment to food fortification, nutrition/health/hygiene awareness raising, water supply/sanitation and deworming.
37. The food incentive for TB treatment is effective in reducing the drop-out rate because it attracts poor rural people, enables them to stay long enough to complete the treatment, and ensures their return for follow-up visits. Other hospital-based institutional feeding contributes relatively little to health objectives and should be handed over to the ministry.



Food for orphanages is to be phased out because it encouraged poor widows to place their sons in orphanages. Supplementary feeding was drastically reduced in August 2003, when the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WFP adopted stricter criteria and agreed to implement it only in areas where acute malnutrition was higher than 15 percent.

38. Nutrition/health awareness raising took place under FFT and FFE. Under FFT, WFP supported 27 World Health Organization (WHO)-assisted nutrition/hygiene/health courses that provided 1,877 mt for 11,517 participants, of whom 76 percent were women.¹³ The nationwide school deworming campaign raised awareness of soil-transmitted intestinal parasites among children, parents and teachers and treated 5 million children.
39. The project's recent emphasis on micro-nutrient deficiencies is appropriate. It is too soon to assess the effectiveness of WFP-supported flour fortification, but impact could be substantial and sustainable because the programme works through the private sector on a commercial basis.

Capacity-Building

40. The country office is to be commended for its efforts to build capacity in two ministries. The capacity-building project for the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development trained and equipped 197 staff at headquarters and in 23 provinces; WFP also seconded VAM staff and a pastoral adviser. In connection with FFE, WFP established a project-coordination unit in the Ministry of Education, seconded two international and two national staff to the unit, formulated a transitional action plan for handing over FFE implementation to the ministry and trained ministry staff at the central and provincial levels in project management, FFE, school construction, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), school feeding baseline surveying, deworming, English, computer use, data collection and data entry. In support of the school deworming campaign, the ministries of education and health, WHO, UNICEF and WFP jointly trained 20 regional and 28 provincial master trainers from the ministries as mobile training teams and subsequently trained 152 ministerial staff and 8,000 teachers. Further capacity-building is urgently requested by ministries and NGO partners. The PRRO's slow start-up in the first quarter underscores the need for capacity-building to facilitate transition from relief to recovery. WFP staff continuously need capacity-building because of frequent turnover.

Linkage between Vulnerability Assessment and Programming

41. Impressive progress was made in risk and vulnerability assessment with the evolution from VAM to NRVA, but the linkage between vulnerability assessment and programming remains weak. In spite of solid assessment work, the resources allocated to acutely and highly food-insecure districts are well below assessed requirements. The duration and timing of assistance is often inadequate to address the food gap, partly because of remoteness, insecurity, shortage of IPs and inadequate coordination with cash-based programmes. The fact that the annual programming cycle runs from April to April while the VAM/NRVA assessment cycle goes from harvest to harvest each June means that programming is often out of phase with changes in food availability.

¹³ Nutrition awareness for mothers was also provided at mother-and-child health (MCH) centres in connection with institutional feeding.



Targeting

42. Inadequate programming-to-assessment linkage contributes to weak geographic targeting. FFW was to be limited to areas of acute and very high food insecurity, but only 27 percent of FFW resources were programmed for these areas. A substantial share of FFW resources went to the secure and moderately food-insecure districts.
43. At the district level, the evaluation noted a tendency to concentrate FFW interventions in irrigated valley bottoms and to neglect rainfed areas. FFE and FFT show a tendency to concentrate around provincial and district capitals.
44. At the household level, the evaluation noted **errors of inclusion** (non-poor households) and **errors of exclusion** (many poor households not covered) and recommends that targeting be strengthened.

Monitoring

45. Although the country office has made a commendable effort to develop M&E systems, including ACORD and monitoring checklists, the current structure of the M&E system only partially informs management about progress towards results. ACORD does not yet automatically generate planned vs actual project data and does not contain data about results at the outcome level; for various reasons the data are not always reliable. The database implemented in 2002 was improperly set up and had to be restructured; the existing database is being improved. Area office managers cannot yet generate their own reports from ACORD.
46. Existing sub-project monitoring systems based on checklists and consolidated in weekly, monthly and quarterly reports are not designed to capture systematic outcome data or enable managers to know whether their projects make a difference to the beneficiaries. As measuring outcome data is a relatively new requirement in WFP; additional effort is needed to develop thinking about results at the outcome level. The country and area offices are aware of the weaknesses in the system and are reviewing M&E; corporate initiatives are being developed that could support the country office.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Setting Realistic Objectives

47. Although the country office met 72 percent of its tonnage targets and 82 percent of its beneficiary targets, its relief and recovery objectives were only partially met because available resources were insufficient and spread too thinly to have a lasting impact on the livelihoods of the hungry poor. This raises the issue of whether the objectives themselves were too ambitious. An average transfer of either 24 kg per family member through FFW, 18 kg for the rural vulnerable, 16 kg for returnees going home or 7 kg for returnees in their places of origin cannot be expected to make much difference in terms of food needs, let alone livelihood resilience or IDP reintegration. Although the country office can be faulted for spreading the resources too thinly, the broader problem was in strategy and design. This raises a corporate issue, because the Afghanistan PRRO targets differ little from those of previous projects or other PRROs.
48. This issue is particularly pertinent for Strategic Priority 2 – Protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks. The objective sounds new but the means of achieving it – FFW and FFT – are unchanged. Monitoring systems have been unhelpful in this regard and slow to adapt: they track food dispatched from WFP warehouses,



anticipated beneficiaries and – to a limited extent – physical outputs, but fall short of generating feedback on livelihood indicators such as food expenditure, indebtedness, asset depletion and distress migration. Livelihood outcome monitoring tools are urgently needed to enable WFP to assess the realism of its livelihood protection and recovery objectives and the means and resources employed to realize them.

Exit Strategies

49. The PRRO is scheduled to terminate at the end of March 2005, so it needs to develop an exit strategy, particularly for the teachers' salary supplement, subsidies to the women's bakeries and food transfers to hospitals, orphanages and other institutions. The FFE component has moved towards an exit strategy by building capacity in the Ministry of Education to take over. The other components need to do the same.
50. WFP and the Ministry of Health agree that WFP's support for hospital feeding must be phased out and that it should have the capacity to take over institutional feeding by the end of the PRRO. In its budget submission, the ministry requested the funds from the Ministry of Finance, but it is not yet clear that it will get them. The Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development, on the other hand, has indicated that it does not wish to become an implementing ministry for FFW, but only take over M&E-related functions.

Connectedness and Partnership

51. WFP Afghanistan is to be commended for its systematic effort to consult partners on PRRO design and to involve them in implementation, especially at the country office level. Quarterly reviews of the operation are organized jointly by the country office and the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development to inform partners about progress towards results. Since the beginning of the PRRO, coordination among humanitarian players, which was initially weak, has improved; WFP was involved in several inter-agency initiatives. During the past year, there has been greater mutual understanding among partners and WFP regarding food aid through joint stakeholder involvement in NRVA, government representation on project approval committees and the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development involvement in project monitoring. WFP, UNICEF, WHO and the ministries of education and health collaborated in school deworming. Long-term partnerships between WFP and IPs were particularly important for transition from relief to recovery in Badakhshan and could be a model for other regions. There is scope for further strengthening collaboration between WFP, the Government, United Nations agencies and NGOs and for establishing closer ties with national programmes such as the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), the National Emergency Employment Programme (NEEP) and area-based development programmes.

Enhanced Awareness of Potential Impacts of Food Aid on Production, Markets and Prices

52. The impact of food aid on agricultural incentives continues to be hotly debated in Afghanistan, but the mission found no evidence that food aid has significantly distorted agricultural production, prices or markets. Recent studies reach the same conclusion.¹⁴ The only effects are highly localized and transitory. The wheat market is totally open and

¹⁴ Dorosh, P. 2004. *The Impact of Food Aid Flows on Wheat Markets in Afghanistan 2000–2003*. Washington DC, World Bank. Neun, H. and Fitzherbert, A. 2003. *Assistance to the Transitional Authority of the Islamic State of Afghanistan to Elaborate Policy Guidance Regarding Food Aid Utilisation in Afghanistan*. Kabul, Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan and Development Researchers' Network.



heavily traded. The volume of food aid entering Afghanistan is insignificant compared with local production and commercial wheat imports. There is no evidence of a direct connection between food aid and farmers' decisions to grow opium poppy.

Making Good on Enhanced Commitments to Women

53. Under the PRRO, major progress was made in increasing women's participation through emphasis on school feeding, take-home ration for girls, FFT (71 percent women), rural vulnerable people and women's bakeries. To improve the gender balance among PRRO staff, the country office recruited and trained ten women VAM monitors. The country office is to be commended on efforts to recruit and train qualified Afghan women and enable them to travel by hiring a male relative as a chaperone or recruiting a woman whose husband is a WFP driver. The country office correctly gave priority to (i) closing the gender gap in education through the take-home oil incentive for girls, (ii) empowering women through skills training, functional literacy and nutrition/health awareness, (iii) increasing women's employment through the urban bakeries and (iv) involving women in FFW through nurseries, gardening and handicrafts.

WFP's Future Programme in Afghanistan

54. The shift from EMOP to PRRO was appropriate because government priorities have shifted from emergency to recovery towards building the foundations for development. It was optimistic to expect that at the end of the PRRO there would no longer be any need for relief. Food aid continues to be relevant for relief in crisis-affected areas and for livelihood recovery among food-insecure households.



ANNEX: EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE SUMMARY — EVALUATION OF AFGHANISTAN PRRO 10233.0

OEDE recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken
FFW		
<p>1. WFP should improve corporate guidance on identifying FFW approaches for different levels of food insecurity. In acute and highly food-insecure districts, food transfer should take priority over asset creation through FFW. To have an impact, duration of activities should match the food gap, and beneficiary turnover should be less frequent than observed during this mission. In these districts, a combination of FFW and free food distributions should be programmed. Before programming large food transfers to a district assessed as acutely or highly food-insecure, a rapid update of VAM assessments should be undertaken</p>	<p>OD/PSP Country office</p>	<p>This recommendation will be taken into account in the ongoing revision of the <i>Programme Design Manual</i> and in the framework of the Programme Quality Assurance Team (PQA). The Food for Assets (FFA) guidance in the manual will be reviewed and efforts made to improve guidance regarding transition from relief to recovery, including FFW as a means of food transfer and asset creation in situations of acute food insecurity.</p> <p>The country office has revised its field manual to ensure that food transfer considerations will be given priority in acute and highly food-insecure areas as assessed by VAM, and that local assessments will be undertaken to refine NRVA data and determine the level and duration of required assistance. Area offices are to review regularly and request allocation adjustments accordingly.</p>
<p>2. When the priority is asset creation, more attention is needed to ensure that the assets benefit the poor, are good quality and properly maintained.</p>	<p>Country office</p>	<p>A committee has been formed to revise implementation guidelines for each type of FFW activity and ensure that the letters of understanding (LoU) with partners include standards for quality control and maintenance, and state the obligations of both parties, especially regarding provision of non-food items. An internal audit team established by the country office will enforce IP and area office compliance.</p>
<p>3. In programming FFW, WFP should collaborate with cash-based employment programmes and take local preferences for food or cash into account.</p>	<p>Country office</p>	<p>In September 2004 a consultant was seconded to NEEP to ensure that cash-based and food-based programmes are jointly planned and coordinated. A comprehensive plan is being prepared for road and water infrastructure projects, with responsibility determined by (i) level of food insecurity, (ii) availability of cash resources and (iii) beneficiary preference for food or cash as per NRVA. Food is only to be used where it has an obvious comparative advantage.</p>
The Rural Vulnerable		
<p>4. The support to rural vulnerable people should be separated from FFW and granted to able-bodied people in areas experiencing acute and very high food insecurity, even without FFW. Free food assistance should be programmed in sufficient quantities for the entirety of the food gap. Where no IP is available, local implementation by <i>shuras</i> (Islamic councils) should be explored. The ACORD database should consistently record free distribution to rural vulnerable under the rural vulnerable category, not FFW.</p>	<p>PSP/OD Country office</p>	<p>The FFA guide will be revised to include the consideration that food aid interventions for livelihood protection and recovery in highly or acutely food-insecure areas are sometimes better addressed through free distribution to all affected households than through FFW. When programming resources, a portion will be set aside as a contingency for rural vulnerable people and distributed free through communities and <i>shuras</i>. Adjustments will be made to the ACORD database to ensure that these two modes are distinguishable.</p>



ANNEX: EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE SUMMARY — EVALUATION OF AFGHANISTAN PRRO 10233.0		
OEDE recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken
The Urban Vulnerable		
5. WFP should disengage from the women's bakeries and seek alternative ways of addressing urban vulnerability through skills training and cash-based employment programmes.	Country office	A study of urban bakeries was conducted in February and March 2004, and a phase-out strategy for the programme was developed over the summer. Accordingly, area offices have started to review the beneficiary list, terminate assistance to people no longer eligible and discontinue considering new beneficiaries. WFP and its partners are jointly identifying other income-generating activities in which beneficiaries can be involved, including training-oriented/cash-based programmes.
Support for IDPs and Returnees		
6. Rotation of workers every two weeks is inappropriate for supporting returnees in their places of origin. Duration of FFW per household should be extended for up to three months to facilitate reintegration. WFP and its partners should identify ways to monitor the situation of IDPs after resettlement.	Country office	Agreed. But communities will sometimes rotate workers when they see fit. Returnees are given a three-month package when they return to locations near the point of entry. FFW is not provided specifically for returnees and IDPs, because government policy is not to favour these populations over host populations. Returnees and IDPs are often the most vulnerable, however, so they will automatically qualify for FFW activities.
7. WFP should continue relief food assistance to encamped IDPs in the south but encourage UNHCR to verify the distribution lists. WFP and its partners should support the National IDP Plan to identify durable solutions to political, security, land and water issues that impede IDP return and reintegration prior to and as a precondition for any phase-out strategies involving reduction of relief food in favour of FFW or FFT.	Country office	It is acknowledged that relief food should continue for the most vulnerable while durable solutions are being found. WFP is supporting the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Country Team in advocacy work in favour of policies for land distribution and protection. Second priorities are skills training, employment and restoration of essential community services in transient locations.
Food-for-education		
8. WFP should phase out the blanket teacher salary subsidy in favour of a targeted food incentive to women teachers accepting rural postings, in combination with a targeted programme of food for teacher training to bring credentials up to Ministry of Education standards.	School Feeding Service (PSPF) Country office	PSPF agrees that blanket subsidies and targeted incentives for teachers must be considered carefully and used judiciously because they may distort civil service wage schemes, cause unjustifiable inequities between teachers and create unsustainable expectations and expenses. Teacher training and civil service reforms have been proposed by the ministry but not scheduled. Continuation of the subsidy would be conditional on government salary increments being included in the recurrent budget with a time-frame for implementation. Dialogue has started with the Department of Education on incentives for women teachers to accept rural postings, but there are social and cultural hindrances to women teachers working away from their families.



ANNEX: EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE SUMMARY — EVALUATION OF AFGHANISTAN PRRO 10233.0

OEDE recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken
Reduction of Gender Disparities		
9. Take-home rations for girls should continue but WFP and the Ministry of Education should develop a graduation strategy: when overall enrolment rates are above average and girls' enrolment catches up with boys', the food incentive should be retargeted to areas where a major gap in female enrolment persists.	Country office	Agreed. Where overall enrolment is already high and the gender gap has narrowed, steps are being taken to reduce or stop food aid to schoolchildren and reallocate the resources to other remote areas.
FFT/Non-Formal Education		
10. The country office should focus on transferring technical and business skills to equip trainees to generate income independently and cope with market forces. WFP should not use food rations as salary supplement at the training centres because it is not sustainable.	Country office	IP proposals for FFT must demonstrate that skills imparted match market demand. Demand will be ascertained by WFP conducting skill and product surveys in Mazar, Kandahar, Kabul and Herat by the end of December 2004. Trainees are to graduate in a fixed time to avoid dependence on food aid. A comprehensive field review of FFT/non-formal education (NFE) will be undertaken in January 2005.
Capacity-Building		
11. WFP should further strengthen capacity-building for partners, with priority to building Ministry of Health capacity to take over institutional feeding and women's bakeries. Capacity building in the ministries of rural reconstruction and development and education and health should emphasize the provincial level and below.	Country office	A project proposal for capacity development of Ministry of Health staff, especially at provincial level, has been prepared. The ministry needs to indicate its requirements for the project to start before December 2004. The ministries of education and health are implementing the bulk of the FFE activities
Linkage between Vulnerability Assessment and Programming		
12. Linkage between assessment, programming and monitoring should be strengthened at all levels. A system should be established to permit comparison of planned and actual distribution with assessed food needs at the district level to ensure that the food goes to the neediest.	Country office	Agreed. NRVA data is increasingly being used for desk review, and by the Programme Review and Programme Approval committees. A tracking system will be developed in ACORD that links assessments with planned vs. actual distributions, allowing an instant automated flagging of over- or under-distribution of food aid.



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OEDE recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken
<p>13. A corporate training package should be developed on linking assessment, programming and monitoring.</p>	<p>VAM/Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA)/OEDP</p>	<p>The Emergency Needs Assessment Unit (OEN) and VAM are currently developing a learning and operational strategy that will build capacity among WFP programme staff in design, implementation and coordination of baseline studies, emergency assessments, vulnerability analyses and food-security monitoring systems, commencing in the first quarter of 2005. The units and OEDP are working on indicator and module menus with the idea that the same tools are used when data is collected. We are also working on a technology solution; linkages will be an important element. The country office may be approached for testing the tools and when developing the corporate database.</p>
Targeting		
<p>14. Adequate resources should be targeted to the most food-insecure districts. WFP should review options for community-based implementation or direct implementation in case reliable NGOs are unavailable, and/or encourage national NGOs to work in the most food-insecure areas. Stricter criteria for targeting at the district and village levels should be applied and monitored. To ensure that the poorest parts of each district receive a fair share of resources, local counterparts who know the district should participate in Programme Approval Committee meetings.</p>	<p>Country office</p>	<p>Resources are being programmed to the most food-insecure districts based on NRVA and local assessments, but security problems impede access to these areas, which are often the most insecure politically. Security problems also impede monitoring of the targeting mechanisms at the district and village levels. To improve this, WFP will train teams in communities and <i>shuras</i> to implement and report under supervision of WFP field monitors where IPs are unwilling to work.</p> <p>The departments of education, rural development and planning already participate in Programme Approval Committee meetings and joint assessments to ensure that local knowledge about levels of food insecurity below the district level is taken into account.</p>
Monitoring		
<p>15. The country office has to agree on a monitoring system that will inform management about progress towards results at the output and outcome levels and a mechanism for follow-up; it should eventually be electronically based for reporting purposes. OEDP should develop guidance on monitoring systems to assist country offices in this task. Staff at all levels should undergo M&E training, especially concerning outcome monitoring; application should be included in the performance assessment of staff at all levels.</p>	<p>OEDP Country office</p>	<p>A revision of the current M&E system will be conducted, ensuring that the indicators collected are meaningful and in line with government monitoring systems and WFP's Strategic Plan. The country office hopes that the ongoing development of a common M&E approach (CMEA) will help to identify our data-collection and reporting parameters. An urgent need is to identify indicators to measure the outcome of physical infrastructure projects on household food security; until indicators have been identified, qualitative measures will need to be relied on, for example beneficiary perceptions of value-added to communities. Training in M&E is ongoing; two workshops on RBM are planned for January and March.</p> <p>CMEA, which aims to enhance and create common M&E processes, has only just been launched. WFP is therefore not able to provide systematic support to country offices developing M&E systems until the end of 2005.</p>



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OEDE recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken
Setting Realistic Objectives		
<p>16. WFP should assess the realism of corporate livelihood protection and recovery objectives, bearing in mind the means and resources employed to realize them. It should also develop corporate guidance on interim indicators for livelihood outcome monitoring, when household expenditure on food is not available</p>	<p>Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division (PSP)/OEDP/VAM</p>	<p>VAM is working closely with the Office of the Associate Director of Operations (ODO), OEDP, the Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division (PSP) and the Nutrition Service (PSPN) in field testing the current corporate indicator on protecting livelihoods in three countries. Lessons learned from the pilot, along with corresponding guidance materials, will be shared with country offices and regional bureaux in January 2005. Until then, other livelihoods-oriented indicators from existing WFP logframes are being examined. The Emergency Transition Unit (PSPT) agrees that a more comprehensive definition could help to ensuring the realism of recovery objectives. Current work being undertaken by PSPT will be relevant to future work on defining recovery.</p>
Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECW)		
<p>17. The country office should scale up FFT/NFE, targeting women, assess effectiveness of the oil take-home ration, ensure adequate coverage of rural vulnerable populations, implement an exit strategy for the urban bakeries and increase village women's representation on food-distribution committees and decision-making bodies.</p>	<p>Country office</p>	<p>Following the ECW workshop in June, a programme officer was reassigned to the country office to transform workshop recommendations into action points. Guidelines for all project categories have been updated accordingly, and country and area office and individual staff work plans/terms of reference are now being revised to include measurable indicators of progress made in implementing ECW in all functional areas.</p> <p>A consultant was recruited in August 2004 to identify alternative income-generation activities through FFT/NFE for urban and rural women. Several new projects have resulted from this initiative, which are either underway or planned for implementation by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Inclusion of women in project identification, planning and implementation is now a precondition for acceptance and continuation of IP and community proposals. Guidelines and LoUs have been changed accordingly.</p>
WFP's Future Programme in Afghanistan		
<p>18. Relief needs continue to exist, and the balance between relief and recovery needs is difficult to predict, so WFP should plan for a new PRRO to follow the existing one.</p>	<p>Country office</p>	<p>The current PRRO will be extended until the end of 2005 or early 2006 to allow preparation of a new PRRO in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which should be completed by mid-2005.</p>



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACORD	Afghanistan Country Office Recording Database
CFW	cash for work
CMEA	common M&E approach
EMOP	emergency operation
ENA	emergency needs assessment
FFA	food for assets
FFE	food for education
FFT	food for training
FFW	food for work
FTT	food for teacher training
IDP	internally displaced person
IP	implementing partner
LoU	letter of understanding
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MCH	mother-and-child health
MICS	multiple-indicator cluster survey
MSF	<i>Médecins sans frontières</i>
NDF	National Development Framework
NEEP	National Emergency Employment Programme (World Bank financed)
NFE	non-formal education
NGO	non-governmental organization
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Programme (World Bank financed)
ODO	Office of Associate Director of Operations
OEDE	Office of the Executive Director – Evaluation
OEDP	Office of the Executive Director – Programming
OEN	Emergency Needs Assessment Unit
PQA	programme quality assurance team
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSP	Strategy, Policy and Programme Support Division
PSPF	School Feeding Service
PSPN	Nutrition Service
PSPT	Emergencies and Transitions Unit



TB	tuberculosis
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping
WHO	World Health Organization

