OFFICE OF EVALUATION WORK PLAN 2016–2018: ANNEX TO THE MANAGEMENT PLAN



Informal Consultation

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World Food Programme Rome, Italy

INTRODUCTION

- 1. This annex sets out the Office of Evaluation's (OEV) proposed programme of work for 2016–2018. It is the first such plan under the new evaluation policy submitted for approval at the Executive Board's November 2015 session.
- 2. The new [draft] evaluation policy aligns the principles and requirements for a top quality evaluation function in the United Nations with WFP's specific organizational context, aims, and architecture. It reflects WFP leadership's determination and ambition to meet global expectations for independent evaluation to support accountability for results and evidence based decision-making across the organization.
- 3. In line with the Strategic Plan, Fit for Purpose and international commitments, the new [draft] policy sets the strategic direction, normative and accountability framework for WFP's entire evaluation function, notably by building on WFP's high-performing centralized evaluation function, the establishment of a demand-led decentralized evaluation function.
- 4. Taking account of WFP's priorities, risks and resource constraints, and recognizing that WFP's centralized evaluation function and decentralized evaluation functions are at very different stages of development, WFP Management and the Executive Board have agreed a phased approach to resourcing and implementation over the period 2016 to 2021. The 2016 deliverables described below are accordingly based on the strategic priorities set by the new [draft] policy, setting out OEV's first steps in its implementation. The outlook for 2017-2018 is provisional and may need adjustment in future OEV work plans in line with the forthcoming evaluation strategy and resource availability.

WORK PLAN SUMMARY

- 5. 2016 itself is somewhat of a transition year for OEV as it takes up its augmented role including covering oversight, establishment and reporting on the entire evaluation function across WFP in addition to maintaining its responsibility for centralized evaluation. This work plan is hence structured in line with the strategic work streams flowing from the [draft] evaluation policy 2016–2021, illustrated in figure 1.
- 6. Over 2016–2018 OEV will:
 - i) launch early in 2016, an evaluation strategy to guide implementation of the new evaluation policy;
 - ii) generate independent evidence for accountability and learning through OEV's programme of centralized evaluations, selected in line with the policy's phased approach to application of coverage norms; priority evidence needs and absorption capacity; and resource availability. Continue the temporary central evaluation series of single operation evaluations for a further year into 2017² at the coverage levels established in 2014;
 - iii) continue establishing and embedding the enabling framework for decentralized evaluation in line with the evaluation policy;

¹ "Response to the Recommendations of the Summary Report of the Peer Review of the Evaluation Function at the World Food Programme" (WFP/EB.2/2014/6-D/Rev.1).

² Last evaluations commissioned in 2016.

- iv) contribute to WFP's learning and accountability culture by supporting active use of evaluation in policy and programme design and approval;
- v) engage in the international evaluation system through system-wide evaluations, partnerships and networks; and
- vi) extend the information and reporting systems to enable oversight of the entire evaluation function, centralized and decentralized.



Figure 1: WFP's augmented evaluation function

RESOURCES

- 7. In 2016, the total resources available to OEV from all sources for the entire work plan are USD 9.14 million. This represents a 0.4 percent increase over 2015 (USD 9.1 million). The total staff costs (all funding sources) are USD 3.13 million (compared to USD 3.1 million in 2015) and non-staff costs are USD 6.01 million.
- 8. Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) resources: of the total resources available, PSA resources allocated to OEV in 2016 are USD 6.3 million. This comprises a basic divisional PSA allocation of USD 5.5 million (flat-lined since 2014) plus an additional sum for 2016 of USD 0.8 million. The latter represents a 15 percent addition to the basic allocation and an increase of 3.17 percent over OEV's 2015 PSA level. Staff costs for 2016 are USD 2.5 million and non-staff costs are USD 3.8 million.
- 9. Other resources: in addition, USD 2,837,500 will be made available from the dedicated special account established in 2013, drawing on project resources for delivery of the single operations evaluation series, temporarily managed by OEV.

- 10. To make a firm start to policy implementation, ensuring systematic progression to meet centralized evaluation coverage norms, while also establishing all the elements required for an enhanced evaluation function across WFP, would require significantly more PSA resources than allocated in the order of USD 8 million in 2016. The main factors driving the current resource gap are:
 - the backlog of evaluations due under the agreed cycle of evaluation of WFP policies;
 - ➤ the desirability of gradually increasing coverage e.g. of policy and country portfolio evaluations, in line with the coverage norms; and
 - the activities necessary to progress systematically on all the strategic work streams, including decentralized evaluation, function reporting, and enhanced and proactive support to learning from and use of evaluation.
- 11. In view of the resource constraints in 2016, the work plan makes austere and creative prioritization decisions, and seeks maximum efficiency gains (see paragraph 14 below) in evaluation management and value-added from partnership arrangements. Approximately two thirds of PSA staff and non-staff financial resources is apportioned to centralized evaluations; approximately one-third is dedicated to make essential progress on all the other strategic work streams. To achieve this balance in 2016, reductions in the number of centralized evaluations (first made in 2015) have been continued. They are below recent coverage levels and increase the distance from the norms laid out in the new policy.
- 12. The work plan outlook for 2017 and 2018 assumes a larger step forward towards the new evaluation policy target of 0.8 percent of WFP contributions income being dedicated to evaluation both centralized and decentralized. In 2015, OEV's budget (alone) represented 0.14 percent of WFP's total estimated contributions income.
- 13. OEV is committed to keeping evaluation costs to the minimum necessary to provide robust and credible evidence at the right time in an accessible form to help decision makers use it for evidence-based decisions. Efficiencies and economies have been achieved by:
 - i) conducting evaluations jointly or in partnership with others, wherever possible, so that costs are shared (e.g. inter-agency humanitarian evaluations);
 - ii) partially out-sourcing evaluation management, where this can create cost savings, while maintaining quality standards (e.g. operation evaluations; Impact Evaluation series with the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation);
 - iii) use of long-term agreements (LTAs) with a wide range of evaluation service providers;³ and
 - iv) creating synergies between evaluations by conducting them in series and producing syntheses to enhance their contribution to knowledge.

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³ The LTAs provide multiple advantages, including administrative efficiency gains.

14. In sum: Table 1 provides an overview of OEV's Plan for centralized evaluations in 2016 and provisional outlook for 2017 and 2018. Fourteen core centralized evaluations will be underway in 2016, including 8 continued from 2015⁴ and 6 new starts⁵; a further 25 operation evaluations temporarily managed by OEV will be underway, comprising 10 continued from 2015 and 15 new starts. The rationale and details of these deliverables are in Section B below. Deliverables for the other strategic work streams are shown in Section C onwards.

2016 Deliverables and 2017–2018 Outlook

A. Evaluation Strategy

15. Started in 2015, the evaluation strategy will be one of the earliest deliverables completed under the 2016 work plan. It is intended as a bridge between the evaluation policy and WFP's annual Management Plans. The strategy will elaborate the phasing, implementation arrangements and steps required for the achievement of the policy's intended outcomes and purpose, including progressive application across WFP of principles and coverage norms; capacities and resourcing; roles and responsibilities; quality assessment and reporting.

B. Centralized Evaluations

- 16. OEV's centrally-managed evaluations inform all stakeholders of the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of WFP's policies, strategies, operations and activities, and the efficiency of their implementation. There are two strands, namely: i) evaluations of policies, global strategies and programmes, humanitarian emergency (Level 3) responses, country portfolios, and the impact of WFP activities; and ii) the temporary single operations evaluations series using an out-sourced management model.
- 17. The programme of evaluations for 2016–2018 has been selected and prioritized to maximize relevance to WFP's dynamic policy and programming context. In line with the WFP Management Plan 2016–2018's six focus areas for continued organizational strengthening, ⁶ it is designed to generate timely and pertinent evidence to support evidence-based decision making. Several of the planned evaluations and series specifically contribute evidence on national capacity development, nutrition capabilities, and/or strategic partnerships. Through the strategic work streams described below, OEV itself is forging new strategic evaluation partnerships, enhancing its input to WFP policy and operational decision making and taking further steps for efficiency gains in the evaluation processes.

⁴ Including the series of 4 Impact Evaluations of Moderate & Acute Malnutrition under a new evaluation partnership. The partnership was under early negotiation at the time of writing the work plan 2015 and therefore not included in the count of 6 new starts shown in that Plan.

⁵ In 2015, 7 completions were planned and 10 new starts (see previous footnote); in 2014, 9 completions and 8 new starts were planned.

⁶ Described in "Strategic Utilization of WFP's PSA Equalization Account" (WFP/EB.A/2015/6-D/1).

- 18. Reflecting the unprecedented number of Level 3 emergencies in 2014, the category of humanitarian emergency Level 3 response evaluations, initiated in 2014, will continue. Following successful tests of the inter-agency humanitarian evaluation (IAHE), embedded in the IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle requirements, all Level 3 responses will be evaluated either by an IAHE or by OEV in a separate evaluation of WFP's response. Decisions are made on a case by case basis. Emergency responses below Level 3 will be considered under the selection process for operations evaluations to ensure optimum coverage. In 2016, the evaluation of WFP's regional response to the Ebola crisis will be completed as a separate WFP evaluation.
- 19. The norm for evaluation of WFP's policies is set by "WFP Policy Formulation" agreed by the Board in 2011. Application of this approach for all policies approved after 2011 requires evaluation four to six years after start of implementation to contribute evaluation evidence and learning into WFP's policy cycle. Consistent with this and resource availability, in 2016 evaluations of the "Humanitarian Protection Policy" (2012) and of "WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017)" will commence. In addition, the evaluation of "WFP's Capacity Development Policy" (2009) will be completed in 2016. An evaluation of the HIV/AIDS Policy is indicated in the outlook for policy evaluations in 2017 and, in 2018, evaluations of the "Update to WFP's Safety Nets Policy" (2012), "Revised School Feeding Policy" (2013) and "Policy on Peace Building in Transition Settings" (2013).
- 20. For policies approved more than six years ago, evaluation either of the policy itself, or of the theme addressed by the policy is considered, based on the criterion of continuing relevance to WFP's work, or potential to contribute to new policy development. In 2016, OEV plans to commence an evaluation of "WFP's Role in Humanitarian Action", covering three such older policies: "Humanitarian Principles" (2004), "Humanitarian Access and its Implications for WFP" (2006); and "WFP's Role in the Humanitarian Assistance System" (2010). Conceptualization will begin after the World Humanitarian Summit (May 2016) to take into account WFP's latest position papers on the issues as well as the summit outcomes, intended to contribute evidence into renewed policy commitment by WFP. Other policy evaluations may be added depending on resources and priorities set by the forthcoming evaluation strategy.
- 21. Strategic evaluations focus on strategies, systemic or corporate issues and/or programmes and initiatives with global or regional coverage. OEV plans and priorities have been updated to reflect latest developments on renewal of WFP's Strategic Plan. No new strategic evaluations will start in 2016. Instead, plans for strategic evaluations from 2017 onwards will be finalized after preparation of WFP's next Strategic Plan, aligning evaluation plans with the agency's Strategic Plan and evaluating progress on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) within that framework. Plans for future strategic evaluations will also be informed by the Evaluability Assessment⁹ of WFP's Strategic Plan 2014–2017 (EASP), to be completed early in 2016. In addition, this exercise intends to help inform preparation of the next Strategic Plan and accompanying the Strategic Results Framework. Accordingly, it will take a forward-looking perspective on WFP's expected contributions to

⁷ WFP/EB.A/2011/5-B.

⁸ This document is part of WFP's Policy Compendium.

⁹ Evaluability assessments assess the extent to which reliable and credible evaluation is possible, considering: clarity and rationality of design (objectives, targets and indicators); demand from stakeholders; adequacy of indicators and relevant data, and provides advice on how limitations can be overcome/reduced.

- Sustainable Development Goal 2 "End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture" and related strategic areas of interest.
- 22. Looking ahead, the full future plan of strategic evaluations will depend on the results of the EASP. That said, it is likely that a future series of strategic evaluations will include elements related to managing in the increasingly crisis-prone, complex, crowded and cost-conscious context in which WFP works, in which humanitarian and development dimensions are inter-connected and require collaborative dynamic and flexible responses. Noting the suite of organizational change initiatives scheduled for completion in 2016 and undertaken in association with the Strategic Plan (2014–2017) to increase WFP's efficiency and effectiveness, a strategic evaluation "Managing Organizational Change" is planned for 2017.
- 23. The strategic evaluation of WFP's work on resilience, previously planned for 2016, will be replaced in due course by an evaluation of "Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition", approved in 2015. 11
- 24. Providing evidence of strategic positioning performance and results of all WFP operations and activities over a 3–5 year period, country portfolio evaluations (CPEs) support WFP's renewed focus on embedding a strategic "portfolio" approach to its engagement at country level. They are an accountability instrument and a learning tool to inform future country strategy.
- 25. After systematic selection of countries eligible for CPE¹², the final criterion determining evaluation planning is "timeliness" to contribute evidence to country office (CO) strategic and operational planning, aligning WFP Strategic Plan, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and other United Nations coordination processes with national needs and priorities. These processes are not entirely within WFP's control. For this reason, OEV's CPE planning is flexible and the countries named below are indicative.
- 26. Under the evaluation policy 2016–2021 WFP aims to increase coverage progressively to 7 or 8 CPE's annually. With resource constraints in 2016, priority is given to starting CPE's in Sri Lanka and Cameroon (to be confirmed) and to completing CPE's in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Burundi and Iraq (started in 2015).
- 27. The centrally managed temporary series of single operations evaluations, begun in 2013, will continue in 2016. In 2016, 10 operations evaluations started in 2015 will be completed and, subject to resources, a further 15 will begin. This enables continuity of coverage through 2016, while establishment of WFP's decentralized evaluation function is progressed. Further plans for this series will be developed in accordance with the evaluation strategy and aligned with WFP's evolving performance management and project cycle management systems, and associated strategies. Since single operations evaluations are published but not presented to the Board, a synthesis of completed operations evaluations will continue to be prepared for the Board in 2016 and 2017.

¹⁰ A Rome-based agency Year of Evaluation seminar in late 2015 will consider issues associated with evaluating RBA contributions to SDG2.

¹¹ WFP/EB.A/2015/5-C.

¹² Based on criteria such as portfolio size; programming profile; regional balance; and presence of recent or on-going evaluation coverage, especially by operation evaluations or inter-agency humanitarian evaluation (IAHE).

28. The multi-country series of impact evaluations of moderate acute malnutrition, started in 2015, will continue through 2016 and 2017, culminating with a synthesis of the series. Building on its previous experience with three series of impact evaluations, ¹³ OEV is working in a strategic global partnership with the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) for this series. This enables increased coverage by partnering with additional specialized expertise for the conduct and management of credible, quality impact evaluations, meeting the particular methodological challenges of humanitarian contexts and of this topic in particular. In this case a more experimental evaluation approach is being used over 2 years with collection of baseline data integrated into the evaluation process.

TABLE 1: CENTRALIZED EVALUATION PLAN 2016 AND OUTLOOK 2017 AND 2018 Phased progression towards full coverage						
Туре	2016 (Board session)	2017	2018			
Policy	Continued from 2015: Capacity Development (2/16) New starts: WFP's role in Humanitarian Action Humanitarian Protection Corporate Partnerships Strategy	Continued from 2016: WFP's Role in Humanitarian Action (1/17) Protection (A/17) Corporate Partnerships Strategy (A/17) New starts: HIV/AIDS	Continued from 2017: • HIV/AIDS New starts: • Safety Nets Update • Revised School Feeding • Peace Building in Transition Settings			
Strategic	Continued from 2015: None New starts: None	Continued from 2016: None New Starts: Managing Organizational Change Others too be decided on basis of WFP's next Strategic Plan and evaluability assessment of Strategic Plan	New starts: • As 2017			
Country portfolio	Continued from 2015: Islamic Republic of Mauritania (A/16) Burundi (2/16) Iraq (2/16) New starts: Cameroon Sri Lanka	Continued from 2016: Cameroon Sri Lanka New starts: (tbc) Country 1 Country 2 Country 3 Country 4	Continued from 2016: tbd New starts: (tbc) Country 1 Country 2 Country 3 Country 4 Country 5 Country 6*			

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¹³ On school feeding; on the contribution of food assistance to durable solutions in protracted refugee situations; and the impact of food for assets on livelihoods resilience.

TABLE 1: CENTRALIZED EVALUATION PLAN 2016 AND OUTLOOK 2017 AND 2018 Phased progression towards full coverage						
Туре	2016 (Board session)	2017	2018			
Humanitarian emergency L3 response	Continued from 2015: None New starts: WFP's Ebola Crisis Response: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone	Continued from 2016: WFP's Ebola Crisis Response: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone New starts: Tbd by context: assume 2	Tbd by context Assume 2			
Impact evaluations	Continued from 2015: Moderate and Acute Malnutrition in: Somalia, Sudan, Niger, Chad	Continued from 2016: Moderate and Acute Malnutrition in: Somalia, Sudan, Niger, Chad (2/17)	To be defined			
Single operations (excluding L3)	Continued from 2015: 10 New Starts: 15	Continued from 2016: Completion of series.				
Evaluation syntheses	 Annual Evaluation Report 2015 (A/16) Single-operation evaluations synthesis 2015/16 (2/16) 	 Annual Evaluation Report 2016 – expanded (A/17) Single-operation evaluations synthesis 2016/17 (2/17) IE MAM series (2/17) 	Annual Evaluation Report 2017 – expanded (A/18)			

^{*} Number to be determined but progressing towards the coverage norms in the evaluation policy.

C. Strengthening the Decentralized Evaluation Function

29. WFP accorded priority for investment in 2015 and 2016 first to strengthening monitoring, while maintaining WFP's high-performing central evaluation function and putting in place the key elements of an enabling framework for decentralized evaluation. In line with the new evaluation policy, figure 2 depicts the core elements of the decentralized evaluation function, which will be progressively operationalized over the next three years, 2016 to 2018 (subject to the evaluation strategy and resource availability). While the decentralized evaluation function will be operationalized across WFP, OEV has a lead role in developing, in consultation with colleagues from other Headquarter divisions, regional offices and country offices, its core systemic elements. During 2016 within OEV, close interaction with the strategic work streams on learning and use and on evaluation function reporting will also be critically important.

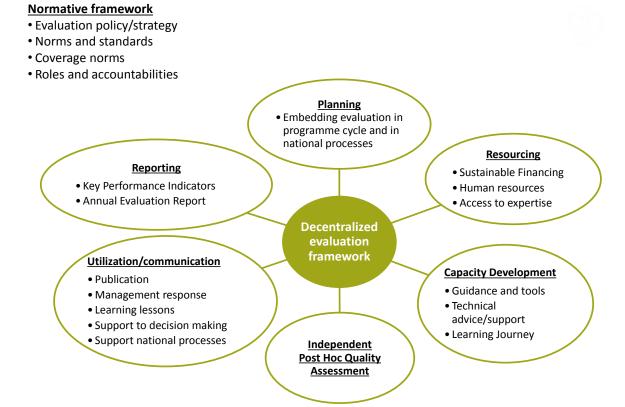
30. Priorities for 2016 will be to:

- communicate the implications of the evaluation policy for decentralized evaluations at all levels of the organization through proactive engagement with colleagues in regional bureaux and country offices;
- pilot the draft guidance for decentralized evaluation and develop it further¹⁴. This will include continued punctual technical advice to colleagues piloting the guidance, and development of an external review mechanism of draft terms of reference (TOR), inception and evaluation reports;

¹⁴ The draft guidance was designed in 2015 jointly with RMP's guidance on reviews.

- ➤ design an independent post hoc quality assessment for decentralized evaluations, ¹⁵ which will also be applied to centralized evaluations;
- design a comprehensive learning journey on decentralized evaluations;
- develop job descriptions and recruit regional evaluation advisors to be established in 2017; and
- support identification of a sustainable financing mechanism for decentralized evaluations.
- 31. The 2016 priorities and the elements of the decentralized evaluation function as well as the pace of their implementation may evolve in view of resources actually available to the evaluation function. In the outlook for 2017, OEV expects that each regional bureau will be creating a new position of regional evaluation adviser in line with the evaluation policy.

Figure 2: Core elements of the decentralized evaluation function



D. Promoting Learning and Use of Evaluation

32. WFP's [draft] evaluation policy reaffirms the importance of ensuring that evaluations are useful to decision-makers and stakeholders, that they stimulate *learning and use* to improve policies, strategies, programmes and operational decision-making and thus support WFP in meeting its accountability requirements.

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¹⁵ Originally planned for 2015, it was postponed to 2016 to follow approval of the policy.

- 33. Considering the resource limitations and the need for phased development of the function towards the policy's outcomes, in 2016, priorities will be:
 - enhancing learning from evaluation processes and the use of evaluation evidence for programme, policy, planning and implementation, by systematically bringing evaluation evidence into WFP's Strategic Programme Review Process and by conducting evaluation learning workshops, where resources permit;
 - completing the upgrade of WFP's Evaluation Intranet and Internet pages (started in 2015) to facilitate more effective sharing of evaluation information and evidence, and to increase accessibility of evidence from all WFP evaluations (centralized and decentralized) to internal and external users;
 - actively communicating to WFP staff and stakeholders about the evaluation policy, evaluation strategy; and
 - continuing to plan and conduct evaluations with the clear intent to use their results, undertaking evaluations in a timely way to inform decision-making processes.

E. Engagement in the International Evaluation System

- 34. OEV will continue its engagement in the international evaluation system, focusing on where it can add greatest value and of most relevance to WFP's work. Noting the particular opportunities offered by the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the International Year of Evaluation, in 2016 OEV will:
 - Continue to participate in the Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluation arrangement under the IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle.
 - Chair the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) work to ensure that evaluation informs Unite Nations system-wide initiatives and emerging demands, including through the Independent System-Wide Evaluation mechanism, and the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality. OEV will also lead UNEG's consideration of the implications for evaluation of the SDGs and efforts to strengthen UNEG's engagement on humanitarian evaluation issues.
 - Enhance collaboration among evaluation offices of the Rome-based agencies, building on: the 2015 joint seminar on preparing to evaluate Sustainable Development Goal 2; joint evaluations, e.g. the food security cluster in 2014, the REACH initiative in 2015, and advice on the decentralized evaluation of the committee on food security; and, joint learning and capacity-building initiatives e.g. on gender, humanitarian evaluation begun in 2014–2015.
 - Contribute to other relevant UNEG work streams on decentralized evaluation, norms and standards, professionalization, peer review, knowledge management and use of evaluation, partnerships and evaluation capacity development in line with the 2014 resolution on national evaluation capacity.
 - Continue to contribute to and collaborate with other international professional networks. 16

¹⁶ e.g. The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), on which OEV serves as a steering group member; impact evaluation networks, such as the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation; and professional evaluation associations, such as the American and European Evaluation Associations, and the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS).

Continue to build and test the strategic partnership with the 3ie under its thematic window on humanitarian evaluation.

F. Evaluation Function Reporting

- 35. In the evaluation strategy, OEV will also lay out the key performance indicators (KPIs) and associated information and reporting systems for WFP's central and decentralized evaluation function in line with the framework set in the [draft] policy itself. OEV will report annually on these to the Board to support its oversight of WFP's evaluation function, commencing 2017.
- 36. The KPIs are being developed within the six groupings embedded in the [draft] evaluation policy 2016–2021. To monitor and report on these requires extension of WFP's information and reporting systems. Building on the foundations laid in 2015, the priority activities for 2016 will be:
 - collecting data on a core set of indicators, available from existing information and reporting systems;
 - reporting on these in a re-designed Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2016 (EB.A/17);
 - expanding the indicator compendium designed in 2015;
 - drafting guidance for data collection of KPIs; and
 - ➤ design of a purpose-built web-based platform and dashboard for KPI data collection for decentralized and centralized evaluation with connections to other corporate platforms and systems to be developed over 2017 and 2018.