



UNEG/OECD DAC WFP PEER REVIEW

PRESENTATION TO WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD

2021

Panel Members



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About the Peer Review

- Purpose and scope
 - Independence, credibility, and utility of the WFP evaluation function.
 - Intended to inform next Evaluation Policy
- Process
 - OEV produced a comprehensive Self-Assessment Report - frank & constructive reflection.
 - Panel's consultant produced a Preliminary Assessment
 - Panel held interviews
 - Entirely remote due to COVID19

Overall Assessment

- WFP has established a **strong and mature centralized evaluation function**.
- The **decentralized evaluation system is less mature, but significant progress has been made**:
 - Panel congratulates WFP, OEV & Regional Evaluation Units for achievements to date.
- **UNEG Norms and Standards have been embedded throughout evaluation function.**
- **High degree of professionalism in OEV & influences international evaluation community.**
- Panel endorses fully MOPAN assessment conclusion that WFP has:
 - “A highly strategic independent corporate evaluation function” that produces “high-quality centralised and decentralised evaluations”.

Primary **opportunity** relates to strengthening even further its **utility** (value added)

2016-2021 Evaluation Policy theory of change:

“by 2021 evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems are embedded in WFP's culture of accountability and learning....”

Too ambitious for 2021 given scale of challenge. Likely possible within coming years. But WFP will need to take further action to accelerate change

- **Not recommending any fundamental changes** to strong existing model: it works well.
- Panel makes **six overarching recommendations**, with action points under each.

Independence

WFP's central evaluation function has a **high degree of structural and functional independence** – finding in line with previous assessments.

Recommendation 1:

- All conditions (Director's reporting, recruitment, dismissal, etc) that relate to independence should be stated in next Evaluation Policy

Recommendation 2:

- Next Policy should again set target for a % (to be calculated through a financial analysis) of WFP's income to be dedicated to evaluation.
- Review financial instruments that support evaluation to harmonize them.
- Extend/modify the Contingency Evaluation Fund to provide even more flexible support to smaller country offices if a financing review doesn't make it redundant.

Credibility

- Evaluation function & its products have high degree of credibility.
- OEV has established very robust principles, guidance and practices for both centralized and decentralized evaluations.

Recommendation 3: Ensure the evaluation function has the required professional skills and diversity with:

- a) WFP recognises evaluation is a specialist profession akin to audit & exempts OEV from WFP policy requiring all positions to be first advertised internally. This will **allow OEV to advertise posts internally and externally simultaneously & make appointment decisions based solely on competence.**
- b) **Continue exploring viability of establishing an “Evaluation cadre”** that provides a stratified career path.
- c) OEV **enhances** the geographical, **cultural diversity of staff** in HQ positions.

Utility – all remaining recommendations relate to enhancing utility.

Enhancing Value Addition

Recommendation 4: Further enhance contribution that evaluation makes to organisational learning in WFP.

Positive that evaluations increasingly seen as enhancing learning & good practice, as well as accountability.

But will need continued focus to drive transition from: “Accountability for results” to “accountability for learning for results”, striking an optimal balance between accountability and learning.

Panel recommends:

- a) the **Executive Board incentivizes WFP’s senior management to integrate evaluative lessons into the organisation’s practices; and WFP’s senior management drive this same approach downwards within the organisation.**
- b) **OEV experiment with different evaluation questions, approaches and methodologies, and offer an expanded “menu” of evaluation tools.**
- c) OEV enhances its added value by **systematically providing targeted evidence to targeted decision-makers for targeted decisions.**
- d) OEV strengthens knowledge management and communication for its products.

Further strengthening the Integrated Evaluation Function

Panel impressed by development of decentralized evaluation system.

Continued emphasis to ensure both centralized and decentralized evaluations contribute equally to WFP's learning. Suggest WFP considers these proposals.

Recommendation 5: WFP implements changes that will help strengthen the utility of decentralized evaluations and contribute to a stronger integrated evaluation function. Specifically, Panel recommends:

- a) OEV together with the EFSG and the Executive Board consider developing an evaluation learning plan and ensure evaluation plans are guided by this collaborative analysis, in addition to accountability.
- b) Consider taking a strategic approach rather than a universal one to evaluating Country Strategic Plans.
 - OEV could base a decision on a review of the strategic value of full coverage when the first-generation Country Strategic Plan Evaluations have been completed.

c) Incentivise Country offices and Regional Bureaux to focus decentralized evaluation on issues that are strategically important to WFP at corporate level, as identified in a potential “learning plan”, as well as at country level.

- donors will need to harmonise their evaluation requirements, reducing the volume of evaluations on the same subject to give country offices the “space” to select other topics to evaluate.

d) Invest further in enhancing the quality of decentralized evaluations so there is parity in terms of value addition with centralized evaluations. Consider:

- Further boosting capacity of regional evaluation units so they can provide more intensive support to country offices.
- Ensuring small country offices have the capacity to manage evaluations, including by inviting small country offices to pool resources to hire a multi-country evaluation specialist.
- Encourage “peer to peer” support

Positioning & Partnership

WFP has strong record of working in partnership and supporting global evaluation practice. But it can be strengthened:

Recommendation 6: Given experience and status of WFP's evaluation function the Panel considers that WFP should:

- a) Be at forefront of developing & sharing evaluation approaches, including in complex humanitarian contexts.
- b) Continue positioning itself as a leader and contributor to UN reform, country-level harmonization initiatives, independent system-wide evaluations, and joint evaluations.
- c) Continue mainstreaming into evaluation gender equality, human rights, and inclusion.
- d) Develop and implement clear principles for National Evaluation Capacity Development in the next Evaluation Policy period.