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Management response to the recommendations from the synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening from decentralized evaluations

Background

1. This document presents the WFP management response to the recommendations from the synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening (CCS) from decentralized evaluations.
2. The purpose of the synthesis was to provide evidence of WFP's performance in country capacity strengthening, both for the purpose of learning and in the interest of accountability for results to its stakeholders.
3. The synthesis was based on 32 decentralized evaluations completed between 2016 and 2019. The activities and operations covered by the evaluations were designed before the publication of the 2017 country capacity strengthening framework and associated guidance.
4. The synthesis presents five recommendations aimed at improving WFP country capacity strengthening, which is critical to the organization's contribution to Agenda 2030 and the achievement of its strategic objectives. One of the recommendations is strategic and four are operational. Sub-recommendations elaborate on how each main recommendation can be implemented.
5. The response sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or taken) actions, together with responsibilities and timelines.

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE AND LESSONS ON COUNTRY CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FROM DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead office (supporting offices in brackets)	Management response	Actions to be taken	Action lead office	Action deadline
<p>Priority: High Overall deadline: December 2022 1. WFP should reaffirm its commitment to country capacity strengthening through the preparation of a new or updated policy that ensures strong integration of CCS approaches into second-generation country strategic plans (CSPs).</p>	Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service (PRO-T)	Agreed. WFP reaffirms its commitment to CCS and has formed a CCS task force ¹ that will guide the ongoing organizational change process.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
1.1 The new/updated CCS policy should include a clear conceptual framework, terminology and rationale for its approach.	PRO-T	Agreed	1. Revise the CCS lexicon to clarify and update CCS terminology and create a shared understanding across programme and functional areas of CCS-related terms used in different business processes.	PRO-T	June 2021
			2. Develop a CCS position paper that proposes a renewed conceptual framework and rationale	PRO-T	December 2021

¹ The CCS global task force was established in the fourth quarter of 2020 and will run through 2021. Membership includes the Emergency Operations Division (EME), Cash-based Transfers Division, Human Resources Division (HRM), Nutrition Division (NUT), Supply Chain Operations Division (SCO), Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division (PRO) (various units), School-based Programmes Division (SBP), Strategic Partnerships Division and the regional bureaux, with additional divisions/offices invited to participate in specific discussions as required. The task force guides the corporate CCS workplan, which includes development of the CCS policy update and the review and renewal of the CCS normative framework and operational guidance.

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			for the approach used; the paper will be discussed with WFP stakeholders as part of the policy update development process.		
			3. Draft a CCS policy update that will formalize the CCS conceptual framework and approach.	PRO-T	June 2022
1.2 CCS approaches should be more systematically embedded into second-generation CSP design; harmonized and integrated across programming areas; tailored to local and country contexts, including risk mitigation; and aligned with partner needs.	PRO-T	Agreed. WFP updated its second-generation CSP guidance in 2020, taking into consideration the need for alignment with national priorities and the United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks.	4. Further update and refine second-generation CSP guidance following the finalization of the new strategic plan and the CCS policy update.	PRO-T (Programme Cycle Management Unit)	December 2022
			5. Review WFP business processes for government engagement and develop standard operating procedures to facilitate risk mitigation in different contexts.	PRO-T (Programme and Policy Development Department (PD), Enterprise Risk Management Division, Legal Office, Office of Internal Audit, Office of Evaluation (OEV))	December 2021

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			6. Develop structured workplans with different programme areas in order to integrate a more harmonized and measurable CCS approach across WFP activities in second-generation CSPs.	PRO-T (PRO, NUT, SBP)	June 2022
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Overall deadline: January 2023</p> <p>2. Ensure adequate resources for the augmentation of CCS expertise across the organization.</p>	PRO-T (strategic corporate liaison points across WFP)	Agreed. WFP created a strengthened CCS unit in headquarters in the fourth quarter of 2020 to support the creation and augmentation of CCS expertise across the organization.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

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2.1 Conduct a workforce planning exercise or similar exercise to determine the current gaps and future demands for CCS skills and requirements across the organization in the context of the new strategic plan. This should include either recruiting or upgrading specialized CCS experts.	PRO-T (strategic corporate liaison points across WFP)	Agreed	1. Analyse staff capacity gaps and needs for CCS-specific expertise in the field, following the finalization of the new strategic plan and in parallel with the finalization of the CCS policy update. This will determine requirements for external recruitment and internal capability development.	PRO-T (PRO, HRM)	June 2022
			2. Support workforce planning exercises carried out by other programme and functional areas with a view to including CCS skills required for transition, systems-strengthening and engagement.	HRM (with support from programme areas, PRO-T)	June 2022

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2.2. Drawing upon the substantial body of academic and practical evidence on CCS, establish a skills development programme and learning process based on the workforce planning outcomes in order to strengthen the capacity of corporate and country-level WFP staff involved in designing and implementing capacity strengthening, as well as those in support and management roles.	PRO-T (strategic corporate liaison points across WFP)	Agreed	3. Develop a learning curriculum based on the workforce planning exercise in order to augment and upgrade CCS skills within the WFP workforce. The curriculum will draw on established CCS learning programmes; focus on WFP CCS technical skills; and be expanded to accommodate thematic areas and reflect practical experience from the field.	PRO-T (PD, EME, Supply Chain Operations Division (SCO), HRM)	January 2023
2.3 Set out a road map for funding and establishing strategic CCS specialist posts in divisions and functions and in regional and country offices to ensure that appropriate CCS expertise can be drawn upon for design, implementation and review.	PRO-T (strategic corporate liaison points across WFP)	Agreed	4. Develop a road map for resourcing and establishing CCS specialist positions in divisions and units and regional and country offices as part of the implementation plan of the CCS policy update.	PRO-T (programme and functional areas, regional bureaux, HRM)	January 2023
			5. Before the road map is finalized, headquarters units and the field will be supported through the establishment of a roster or pool of experts and the	PRO-T (HRM)	December 2022

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			development and updating of CCS terms of reference in order to fill immediate capacity gaps.		
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Overall deadline: June 2022</p> <p>3. Integrate capacity needs assessment into programme design and implementation.</p>	PRO-T (country offices supported by regional bureaux and programming areas)	Agreed. WFP recognizes the importance of using robust capacity needs assessments as the basis for CCS interventions. The upcoming CCS policy update will provide the basis for a future review of the tools beyond the timeline for this recommendation.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
3.1 Review existing WFP tools used to assess capacity gaps and gauge their effectiveness in CCS design and implementation. Based on the review, refine and simplify CCS needs assessments and their use in programming and create a menu of options and examples of good practices.	PRO-T (country offices supported by regional bureaux and programming areas)	Agreed	1. Review the utility of the current WFP capacity needs assessment tools and propose a menu of options to simplify and adapt them to context. This will cover tools used by different technical and functional areas.	PRO-T (PD, EME, SCO, regional bureaux with input from country offices)	January 2022
			2. Building on and complementing existing knowledge management	PRO-T (PD, EME, SCO, regional bureaux with	January 2022 (ongoing)

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			initiatives at the regional bureau-level, collect and centralize information on successful uses of capacity needs assessments and generate structured case studies to document and disseminate good practices.	inputs from country offices)	
3.2 Promote the systematic use of capacity needs assessment tools as a critical element of CCS intervention design and implementation (working with partners as appropriate) and ensure that CCS initiatives are tailored to second-generation CSP environments, and grounded in national context and needs.	PRO-T (country offices supported by regional bureaux and programming areas)	Agreed	3. Prepare guidance to better enable country offices to apply and contextualize capacity needs assessments when designing and implementing their CCS interventions.	PRO-T (regional bureaux with input from country offices)	June 2022
			4. Systematically support country offices in designing and implementing capacity needs assessments as part of their second-generation CSP processes.	PRO-T (regional bureaux)	June 2022 (ongoing)

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<p>Priority: High Overall deadline: June 2022 4. Refine CCS indicators to improve performance measurement and reporting in line with the new WFP strategic plan and CRF for 2022–2026.</p>	Monitoring and Evaluation Liaison Unit (CPPM) (PRO-T)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Since the period of the evaluations included in the synthesis, WFP has already introduced revised CCS indicators into its CRF; these will be further strengthened and aligned with the new strategic plan.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
4.1 Review the relevance, application and utility of the existing CCS indicators and consider developing a menu of new/complementary qualitative and quantitative indicators. These should be aligned with country-level needs and should feature in the new CRF to measure country capacity strengthening at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels, taking the five pathways into account.	CPPM (PRO-T)	Agreed	1. CPPM with PRO-T started a review of CCS indicators in January 2021 to measure CCS at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels. The reviewed indicators will be included in the new CRF.	CPPM (PRO-T)	November 2021
			2. WFP will review the need for a menu of additional indicators for CCS monitoring.	PRO-T	November 2021

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4.2 Provide enhanced and accessible guidance to regional bureaux and country offices on identifying country-level indicators that facilitate effective measurement of and reporting on CCS and align with the revised CRF indicators.	CPPM (PRO-T)	Agreed	3. The guidelines for regional bureaux on how to use the new corporate indicators will be included in the documents that accompany the new CRF (the indicator compendium and the CRF business rules).	CPPM (PRO-T)	June 2022
			4. Develop guidelines on selecting and creating country-specific indicators for monitoring CCS in different contexts. Such indicators will be aligned with WFP's CCS framework and the CRF where appropriate; they will also aim to provide country offices with the flexibility to reflect context-specific needs.	PRO-T	June 2022

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4.3 Develop a road map with a timeline for any future CCS indicators to be developed during the implementation of the new strategic plan.	CPPM (PRO-T)	Agreed	5. Develop a road map with a timeline for all the indicators developed after the submission of the new CRF to the 2021 November Executive Board, i.e. during the strategic plan for 2022–2026; the road map will be included as an annex to the CRF document.	CPPM (PRO-T)	November 2021
4.4 Develop guidance for country offices on how to introduce an integrated measurement of strengthened government capacity over time, across all programming areas.	PRO-T	Agreed	6. Review capacity strengthening monitoring and evaluation approaches from the development sector in order to identify good practices for integrated measurement and evidence generation.	PRO-T (CPPM, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, OEV)	December 2021
			7. Drawing on the review under action 6, develop guidance on the use of optional methodologies, including qualitative and quantitative studies, for measuring government capacity strengthening	PRO-T (PD, SCO, EME, CPPM, OEV)	June 2022

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			results over time. This guidance will give country offices the flexibility to tailor their CCS monitoring and evaluation framework to their needs. The guidance will be developed in consultation with different programme areas to provide an integrated approach.		
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Overall deadline: June 2022</p> <p>5. Strengthen guidance and provide technical support to enhance the integration of gender, protection and accountability to affected populations in CCS interventions.</p>	PRO (Gender Office (GEN) and country offices supported by regional bureaux)	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>The current CCS framework and toolkit already contains elements of protection and accountability to affected populations (AAP) and it has a gender transformative agenda.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
5.1 Strengthen guidance and tools to support the integration and mainstreaming of commitments related to gender, protection and accountability to affected populations into CCS-related interventions across programming areas.	PRO (GEN)	Agreed	1. WFP will carry out a structured review of its CCS framework and approach through a gender, protection and AAP lens and will use the findings in the development of the CCS policy update.	PRO-T (Emergencies and Transitions Unit (PRO-P), GEN)	June 2022

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			2. WFP will update its CCS guidance and toolkit in line with its CCS policy update, including its positions on gender, protection and AAP.	PRO-T (PRO-P, GEN)	June 2022
5.2 Update and integrate the CCS gender checklist into the corporate CCS framework to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are advocated and mainstreamed into CCS in a context-specific manner.	PRO (GEN, and country offices supported by regional bureaux)	Agreed	3. WFP will review and update the CCS gender checklist within the renewed CCS normative framework and toolkit, in line with the CCS policy update.	PRO-T (GEN)	June 2022

Acronyms

AAP	accountability to affected populations
CCS	country capacity strengthening
CPPM	Monitoring and Evaluation Liaison Unit
CRF	corporate results framework
CSP	country strategic plan
EME	Emergency Operations Division
GEN	Gender Office
HRM	Human Resources Division
NUT	Nutrition Division
OEV	Office of Evaluation
PD	Programme and Policy Development Department
PRO	Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division
PRO-P	Emergencies and Transitions Unit
PRO-T	Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service
SBP	School-based Programmes Division
SCO	Supply Chain Operations Division