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Programa Mundial de Alimentos  
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

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Evaluation Reports

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Executive Board documents are available on WFP's website (<https://executiveboard.wfp.org>).

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## **WFP response to the recommendations in the summary report on the peer review of the evaluation function at the World Food Programme**

### **Background**

1. This document presents the WFP response to the recommendations in the summary report on the peer review of the evaluation function at WFP conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of United Nations organizations and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC). The peer review report was submitted in March 2021. WFP appreciates the work of the peer review panel and welcomes the recommendations of the review.
2. As envisioned in the WFP evaluation policy, the contribution of WFP to ending global hunger is strengthened by evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems that are progressively embedded in a culture of accountability and learning. While the review notes that this vision has not yet been fully realized, implementation of the review recommendations will help WFP to advance towards it. Building on the solid progress made since 2016, implementation will require further consolidation of the integrated evaluation function (the norms, systems, capacity and resources to deliver independent, credible and useful evaluations). This is especially true for the WFP evaluation function, which combines centralized evaluation with demand-led decentralized evaluation.

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3. WFP agrees with the panel's focus on adequate and sustained financial resourcing, appropriate skills and capacities within the evaluation cadre, and a more rigorous approach to ensuring organizational learning from evaluation evidence. Evaluation should be funded adequately in order to meet the requirements of the function as it evolves and the Office of Evaluation (OEV) will take steps to quantify these evolving needs. As the evaluation cadre grows, it needs the right skills and capacities to discharge the function effectively; the function can only be enhanced through a cadre that reflects the diversity and inclusiveness of WFP as a whole, and to which WFP is committed through its people policy. OEV efforts to enhance learning from evaluation and generate evaluation evidence will help WFP utilize evidence more effectively to guide its strategic direction.
4. WFP is also committed to carrying forward the recommendations related to continued strengthening of evaluation partnerships in order to share its experience and support the use and credibility of evaluation beyond WFP, not only with other United Nations agencies but also with national governments and other partners, in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. The recommendations of the peer review come at an opportune moment, enabling WFP to update its evaluation policy through a consultative process that ensures WFP profits from a well-balanced, utility focused evaluation function that is in harmony with the next strategic plan.

WFP RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE PEER REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AT THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	WFP response	Actions to be taken	Action lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> To support the independence of the evaluation function the panel recommends that all conditions relating to that independence be explicitly stated in the next evaluation policy, which should:		WFP welcomes the opportunity to ensure that its commitment to the independence of the evaluation function is fully reflected in its evaluation policy and charter. In updating the policy, specific practices related to the Director of Evaluation will be benchmarked against the evaluation functions of comparable organizations.			
a) state explicitly that the Director of Evaluation reports to the Executive Board on functional issues and the Executive Director on administrative issues; and	OEV	<b>Agree</b> This reflects current practice in WFP.	Update evaluation policy	OEV	March 2022
b) include procedures for the dismissal of the Director of Evaluation, which should require consultation with the Executive Board.	OEV	<b>Agree</b> This reflects best practice and will be included in the updated evaluation policy.	Update evaluation policy	OEV	March 2022

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<b>Recommendation 2:</b> To support the independence and credibility of the evaluation function the panel recommends:					
a) that the next evaluation policy again set a target for a percentage of WFP's contribution income to be dedicated to evaluation, which should be based on an updated financial analysis that takes into consideration the cost of a fully-fledged evaluation function, including an enhanced decentralized evaluation function;	OEV, Executive Board	<b>Agree</b> WFP values the role of evaluation and has taken steps to increase the proportion of WFP's contribution income allocated to evaluation since the establishment of the target in the current evaluation policy. WFP agrees that the target should be informed by an updated financial analysis based on the future direction set out in the updated evaluation policy.	Update evaluation policy	OEV	March 2022
b) that WFP review, with a view to harmonizing, the various financial instruments used to support the various types of evaluations that constitute the evaluation function; and	OEV, evaluation function steering group (EFSG), Corporate Planning and Performance Division (CPP)	<b>Agree</b> WFP agrees that it would be useful to harmonize, to the extent possible, funding sources for the different types of evaluations. Progress has been made in the last two years in consolidating programme support and administrative (PSA) funding for OEV and the regional evaluation units (REUs) and identifying funding sources for impact evaluations.	Update evaluation policy  OEV and CPP will review the financial mechanisms and submit proposals to EFSG.	OEV (EFSG, CPP)  OEV (EFSG, CPP)	March 2022  February 2022

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		<p>The ongoing bottom up strategic budgeting exercise (BUSBE) provides an opportunity to determine internal funding sources for the evaluation function.</p> <p>OEV will continue its proactive engagement with donors on the inclusion of evaluation costs in donor proposals.</p> <p>OEV will continue to work with relevant divisions to ensure systematic forward planning and budgeting in country portfolio budgets for different evaluation types (country strategic plan evaluations (CSPEs)), decentralized evaluations and impact evaluations).</p>			

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c) that if alternative financing arrangements are not created (recommendation 2 b)), WFP consider extending and perhaps modifying the contingency evaluation fund so that it can provide more flexible support to the smallest country offices and potentially support decentralized evaluations undertaken by regional bureaux.	OEV, EFSG, CPP	WFP is currently reviewing the various financial mechanisms for top-up funding, especially for smaller country offices and those with critical funding shortfalls; the organization will consider modifications to the Contingency Evaluation Fund, potentially expanding it beyond decentralized evaluations.			
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> To ensure that the evaluation function has staff with the requisite professional skills and diversity, the panel recommends:		WFP is committed to ensuring that the evaluation cadre has the necessary skills and capacity to be able to discharge the evaluation function effectively, and that the cadre reflects the diversity and inclusion set out in the WFP people policy.			

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a) that WFP recognize evaluation as a specialist skill similar to auditing and exempt OEV from the WFP policy requiring that all positions be first advertised internally; this would allow OEV to advertise posts internally and externally simultaneously and make appointment decisions based solely on skills and competence;	OEV, EFSG, Human Resources Division (HRM)	<p><b>Partially agree</b></p> <p>WFP recognizes that evaluation is a specialist skill akin to auditing, noting that the evaluation cadre works throughout WFP – not only in OEV. WFP values the mix within the evaluation function of externally recruited specialists and current WFP staff with the required competencies appointed through reassignment. Within the WFP evaluation policy and charter, and as per the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) rules and regulations, the Director of Evaluation has full delegated authority over the human resources of the evaluation function. OEV will continue to work with HRM to ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide, in a timely manner, the required pipeline of staff with the requisite skills and competencies, whether recruited internally or externally, in line with the evolving programme of work. This will be reflected in the updated evaluation policy.</p>	Update evaluation policy	OEV (HRM, EFSG)	March 2022

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b) that WFP continue to explore the establishment of an officially recognized cadre of evaluation professionals that provides evaluation staff with a stratified career route and – depending on the size of the cadre – allows staff to rotate among posts and locations; and	OEV, EFSG, HRM	<b>Agree</b> Through the 2020 evaluation capacity development strategy, OEV is working within the framework of the UNEG Professionalization Strategic Objective and exploring a range of approaches for introducing more skills development and credentialling. OEV will engage with HRM, particularly the Strategic Workforce Planning Branch, to review workforce planning and open up different pathways in career development. OEV will also put in place a recognition scheme for the WFP evaluation function.	Design a recognition scheme for the evaluation cadre.	OEV (HRM, EFSG)	Mid-2022
c) that OEV enhance the geographical and cultural diversity of staff in OEV and regional evaluation units while maintaining professional entry standards.	OEV, regional bureaux	<b>Agree</b> Progress has been made in increasing the diversity of OEV and REU staff, and in the monitoring and evaluation FIT pool; however, more needs to be done. Guided by the new WFP people policy and the corporate diversity and inclusion framework, OEV will develop an action plan that will ensure diversity and inclusion in OEV and REUs.	OEV to develop an action plan in consultation with regional bureaux and HRM to ensure diversity and inclusion in the evaluation function.	OEV (regional bureaux, HRM)	Mid-2022



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<b>Recommendation 4:</b> The panel recommends that WFP and OEV take steps to enhance the contribution that evaluation makes to organizational learning, in addition to accountability. The panel recommends:		WFP is committed to evidence-based decision making and the evaluation function contributes to learning at all levels of the organization. Key steps to enhancing the contribution of evaluation to learning are ensuring that existing mechanisms are utilized effectively; communication and knowledge management is strengthened; and the evaluation function is more proactive in supporting learning so that in the medium term the evaluation function becomes a valued learning partner at all levels of the organization. This work will be anchored in the updated evaluation policy through the addition of a fifth outcome in its theory of change dedicated to learning and use.	Update the evaluation policy theory of change to include an outcome on learning and use of evaluation evidence.	OEV	March 2022

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a) that the Executive Board provide incentives for WFP senior management to integrate evaluative lessons into the organization's practices and that WFP senior management drive this same approach downwards through all levels of the organization;	Executive Board, OEV, EFSG, regional evaluation committees	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>The Executive Board will ensure that mechanisms that support the utilization of learning are consistently applied, including the use of evaluative evidence to inform new policies and country strategic plans (CSPs). This will be augmented by greater efforts to summarize and share lessons from evaluations with the Board and to strengthen annual analytical reporting by management to the Oversight and Policy Committee (OPC) and the Board on the implementation status of evaluation recommendations.</p> <p>Clear and well-structured consultation processes between the evaluation function and senior management are steered by the OPC and EFSG corporately and the regional evaluation committees at the regional level. These are guided by accountability and learning needs.</p>	<p>OEV: to ensure lessons learned and evidence summaries are proactively shared with the Executive Board</p> <p>The Oversight and Policy Committee (OPC): to continue to review evaluation evidence of strategic importance to WFP based on reports tabled by OEV</p> <p>Regional bureaux: to hold an annual meeting dedicated to evaluation evidence and the implementation status of evaluation recommendations</p> <p>CPP: to prepare an analytical report on the implementation status of evaluation recommendations for consideration by the OPC and Executive Board</p>	<p>OEV</p> <p>OEV (OPC)</p> <p>Regional directors</p> <p>CPP</p>	<p>Periodically</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>

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b) that OEV experiment with various evaluation approaches and methodologies and offer an expanded menu of evaluation tools, including formative and developmental evaluations and more syntheses and multi-country thematic studies;	OEV, REUs	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>As function lead, OEV has a key role to play in fostering innovation in approaches and methods for all evaluation types. The office is committed to continuing to expand these methods and approaches; this will be reflected in the updated evaluation policy. In recent years OEV has introduced formative evaluation approaches for strategic evaluations; impact evaluation windows; and guidance to support the increased production of syntheses and summaries of evaluation evidence. Current work includes designing impact evaluation approaches and methods for emergency response settings, including rapid-onset crises, and trialling developmental evaluation approaches for the evaluation of the COVID-19 response. OEV and the REUs have a leading role to play in fostering innovation in decentralized evaluations and facilitating cross-fertilization between regions.</p>	<p>Create an evaluation advisory panel that provides advice on approaches and methods across the evaluation function.</p> <p>Coordinate regular webinars that enable the evaluation cadre to share their experiences with new evaluation approaches/methods.</p>	<p>OEV</p> <p>OEV (REUs)</p>	<p>End 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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c) that OEV enhance its added value by systematically providing targeted evidence to targeted decision makers for targeted decisions; this will be most effective if evaluation staff engage with programme and policy design processes, while maintaining their independence, in addition to organizing dedicated meetings for sharing evidence; and	OEV, regional bureaux, REUs	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>OEV is already providing inputs for strategic decision making processes including the development of the new strategic plan; policy and CSP development processes; and through the OPC. However, OEV recognizes that much more needs to be done across the function to value the evidence generated through its evaluations in a more agile, timely and flexible manner. The envisaged addition of an explicit outcome dedicated to learning and the use of evaluation in the policy will enable WFP to diversify evaluation products and build accessible evaluative knowledge around the key priorities of the next strategic plan. This will also entail embedding additional evaluation staff at all levels in relevant policy, programme and management processes while safeguarding their independence and impartiality.</p>	<p>Develop an expanded range of targeted and accessible evidence products.</p> <p>Engage with divisions in headquarters (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Gender Office, Nutrition Division, School-Based Programmes Division,, Cash-Based Transfers Division, Emergency Operations Division, Supply Chain Operations Division, etc.) and regional bureaux to map opportunities for embedding evaluative evidence further in relevant processes across the organization.</p>	<p>OEV</p> <p>OEV (REUs)</p>	<p>End 2021</p> <p>End 2021 (ongoing)</p>

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d) that OEV strengthen its knowledge management and communication practices and:		<b>Agree</b>			
i) until corporate knowledge management systems are in place, take ownership of and responsibility for knowledge management relating to its own products, developing a strategy and procedures for ensuring that evaluation knowledge is accessible and proactively shared throughout WFP;	OEV	<p>OEV has finalized its communications and knowledge management strategy, which sets out a series of actions that seek to enhance the use of evaluation evidence for organizational learning; the strategy will frame the way forward. These actions will be embedded in the theory of change for the evaluation function, specifically with regard to how best to ensure that strategic decision makers can access evaluative evidence in faster and more varied, innovative and meaningful ways at critical decision making times. This has already started through social media and communities of practice, etc.</p> <p>OEV is ready to engage with all colleagues and contribute evaluative evidence to corporate knowledge management developments. At the same time, it will ensure that the body of evidence generated through all evaluation types is made accessible</p>	<p>Roll out the evaluation communication and knowledge management strategy in collaboration with the Innovation and Knowledge Management Division (INK) and knowledge management focal points</p> <p>Further actions to strengthen external evidence partnerships will be specified in the evaluation strategy.</p>	<p>OEV (INK)</p> <p>OEV</p>	<p>December 2021</p> <p>April 2022</p>

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		<p>and shared. Priorities will be informed by the strategic plan for 2022–2027.</p> <p>OEV is active in various initiatives and partnerships sharing customized evidence and lessons learned products, for example through the Global Evaluation Coalition steered by OECD-DAC; the <i>State of the Humanitarian System</i> report led by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP); and with UNEG members. OEV is also an active member in the EvalPartners “Evidence Matters” campaign and supports the EvalForward platform with CGIAR, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. See also the response to recommendation 6.</p>			

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ii) finalize the draft communication and knowledge management strategy, ensuring that it sets out a genuinely transformative approach to internal communication and specifies how OEV will systematically take ownership of knowledge management relating to evaluation products;	OEV				
iii) explore how to facilitate the use of its evaluative evidence in ways that contribute to learning beyond WFP;	OEV				
iv) engage with the Programme and Policy Development Department on the mainstreaming of learning from evaluations; and	OEV, Programme and Policy Development Department				
v) consider commissioning an evaluation of knowledge management at WFP.	OEV	OEV will consider this topic when undertaking its analysis and consultation process ahead of the next cycle of strategic evaluations, which will feed into the next three-year rolling programme of work.	OEV workplan for 2022–2024	OEV	November 2021

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<b>Recommendation 5:</b> The panel recommends that WFP implement changes that will help strengthen the quality and utility of decentralized evaluations and contribute to a stronger integrated evaluation function. Specifically, the panel recommends:		WFP is committed to having an integrated evaluation function and ensuring an appropriate balance between the different evaluation types in order to meet learning and accountability needs in all contexts where WFP works, including small country offices. As part of the strengthening of the integration of the evaluation function, WFP will review coverage norms at the country level for decentralized evaluations and impact evaluations, to be followed in 2023 with a review of CSPE coverage norms.			
a) that OEV, together with the evaluation function steering group and the Executive Board, consider developing an evaluation learning plan and use it to inform the evaluation plans, in addition to meeting accountability needs. Such a learning plan could be incorporated into WFP's next evaluation strategy;	OEV, EFSG, Executive Board	<b>Partially agree</b> As noted in the response to recommendation 4, the articulation of an additional outcome on learning and use of evaluations in the revised policy will help form a more coherent approach to learning from evaluation evidence at various levels of the organization; however, WFP does not agree that this requires a dedicated learning plan. This work will be elaborated in the associated corporate evaluation strategy, building on the	Update evaluation policy theory of change.	OEV	March 2022



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		existing trajectory in order to ensure enhanced learning and more readily available, focused and timely evaluative evidence.			
b) that WFP consider taking a differentiated approach rather than a universal one to evaluating country strategic plans; OEV could base its decision on a review of the strategic value of full coverage when the first-generation country strategic plan evaluations have been completed, which should include consultation with country directors;	OEV, EFSG, Executive Board	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>The current 100 percent coverage norm for CSPEs will be reviewed in 2023 once the first generation of CSPEs has been completed and there has been an evaluation of the CSP policy. The review of the coverage norms for CSPEs will include a consultative process with the Executive Board and with management at various levels that will seek to identify the most credible approach to responding to accountability and learning needs at the global, regional and country levels.</p>	CSP policy evaluation and review of CSPE coverage norms.	OEV	2023

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c) that country offices and regional bureaux be encouraged and given the “space” to focus decentralized evaluations on issues that are strategically important to WFP, as identified in a potential learning plan, which would also require that OEV and the Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division engage with donors with a view to harmonizing their evaluation requirements and reducing the number of evaluations on the same subject, thereby giving country offices the “space” to select other topics for evaluation; and	OEV, EFSG, regional evaluation committees, Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division	<p><b>Partially agree</b></p> <p>Decentralized evaluations should respond to the needs of their commissioners, in line with the response to recommendations 4 and 5a).</p> <p>Acknowledging that some funding partners have specific evaluation requirements, WFP will continue to engage with all partners with the aim of enabling WFP to pursue a clear approach to learning and accountability based on the organization's evidence.</p>	Continue dialogue with funding partners to ensure alignment with the provisions of the evaluation policy.	OEV (Partnerships and Advocacy Department)	

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d) that WFP and OEV invest further in enhancing the credibility and utility of decentralized evaluations so that they add value to centralized evaluations and to evolving evaluation practices at the country level, to which end OEV and WFP could consider:	OEV	<p><b>Agree</b></p> <p>Recognizing the need to ensure that decentralized evaluations complement centralized evaluations in responding to country office learning and accountability needs, WFP and OEV have progressively invested human and financial resources and developed evaluation quality assurance and capacity development mechanisms (such as EvalPro and DEQAS) in order to enhance the credibility and utility of decentralized evaluations. The external <i>post hoc</i> quality assessment has shown a gradual improvement in the quality of decentralized evaluations since 2017, narrowing the gap with centralized evaluations.</p> <p>WFP will reflect on the options available for meeting country office/regional bureau context-specific evaluation needs in alignment with CSP priorities. Regional bureaux will incorporate this reflection in their revised regional evaluation strategies and plans. WFP will continue to use the recommendations of the PHQA</p>	Update evaluation policy and strategy.	OEV	March 2022 (policy) April 2022 (strategy)
i) further boosting the capacity of regional bureaux so that regional evaluation units can provide more intensive support to country offices;	OEV, EFSG				
ii) ensuring that very small country offices have the capacity to manage evaluations by financing their monitoring and evaluation officers, possibly from WFP's programme support and administrative budget;	EFSG, regional bureaux				
iii) inviting small country offices to pool resources to hire multi-country evaluation specialists; and	Regional evaluation committees		Update regional evaluation strategies.	Regional bureaux	July 2022

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		and DEQAS to enhance the quality of decentralized evaluations. Through progressive implementation of the evaluation capacity development strategy, OEV will continue to work with regional bureaux and research, assessment and monitoring and other functions to build country office capacity to commission and manage decentralized evaluations and find sustainable capacity solutions particularly for small country offices.	Review coverage norms for country-level evaluations.	OEV	March 2022
iv) encouraging the sharing of peer-to-peer support by facilitating the provision of support from country offices with strong evaluation expertise to those with less, including through remote or in-person technical assistance.	REUs				

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<b>Recommendation 6:</b> Given the experience and status of WFP's evaluation function the panel considers that WFP should contribute in particular to humanitarian evaluation practice, cross-cutting agendas, joint evaluation and national evaluation capacity. Going forward, OEV and regional evaluation units should:		WFP will continue to share its experience with the United Nations system, other partners and governments in humanitarian and development contexts, building on its growing experience with joint and system-wide evaluation and through global and regional communities of practice and evidence partnerships. See also the response to recommendation 4 d).			
a) be at the forefront of the development and sharing of evaluation approaches and methods and the co-management of joint and system-wide evaluations, particularly in complex humanitarian settings;	OEV	<b>Agree</b> OEV will continue its work with partners in humanitarian contexts including through its capacity and financial support to inter-agency humanitarian evaluations and participation in UNEG and ALNAP in order to contribute to enhancing humanitarian evaluation practices. Current areas of focus include strengthening accountability to affected populations; attention to ethical standards, protection and humanitarian principles; and the development of impact evaluation approaches and methods for use in humanitarian contexts.	Update evaluation policy.	OEV	March 2022

<b>WFP RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE PEER REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AT THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME</b>					
<b>Recommendations and sub-recommendations</b>	<b>Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)</b>	<b>WFP response</b>	<b>Actions to be taken</b>	<b>Action lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)</b>	<b>Action deadline</b>
b) position WFP as a leader and contributor to United Nations reform, country-level harmonization initiatives, independent system-wide evaluations and joint evaluations;	OEV, REUs, EFSG, country directors	<b>Agree</b> WFP plays a leading role in UNEG and the development of system-wide evaluations. WFP will continue to advocate for and participate in joint evaluations with other United Nations agencies and government partners at the global, regional and country levels whenever relevant and feasible. Within the context of country-level United Nations reform, WFP will contribute to the work of the United Nations country teams in conducting joint evaluations, including United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework evaluations and to efforts to harmonize evaluation planning.	Update evaluation policy.	OEV	March 2022

WFP RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SUMMARY REPORT ON THE PEER REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AT THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME					
Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation and sub-recommendation lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	WFP response	Actions to be taken	Action lead (with supporting offices and divisions in brackets)	Action deadline
c) continue to work on mainstreaming into evaluation consideration of gender equality, human rights and inclusion – the United Nations’ “leave no-one behind” agenda – given their centrality to the Sustainable Development Goals; and	OEV, REUs	<b>Agree</b> WFP will continue to prioritize efforts to ensure that gender equality, human rights and inclusion, accountability to affected populations, humanitarian principles and ethical standards are central to the evaluation function, including through updates to the Evaluation Quality Assurance System and capacity development initiatives. Guiding principles will be refined in the update to the evaluation policy.	Update evaluation policy.	OEV	March 2022
d) develop and implement clear principles for national evaluation capacity development.	OEV, REUs	<b>Agree</b> WFP will work with UNEG and other partners to continue support for national evaluation capacity development, defining practices and tools for enhancing action. WFP will clarify the principles that guide the appropriate role and contribution of WFP at the country level.	Update evaluation policy.	OEV	March 2022

## Acronyms

CPP	Corporate Planning and Performance Division
CSP	country strategic plan
CSPE	country strategic plan evaluation
EFSG	evaluation function steering group
HRM	Human Resources Division
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OPC	Oversight and Policy Committee
REU	regional evaluation unit
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group