

# **WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

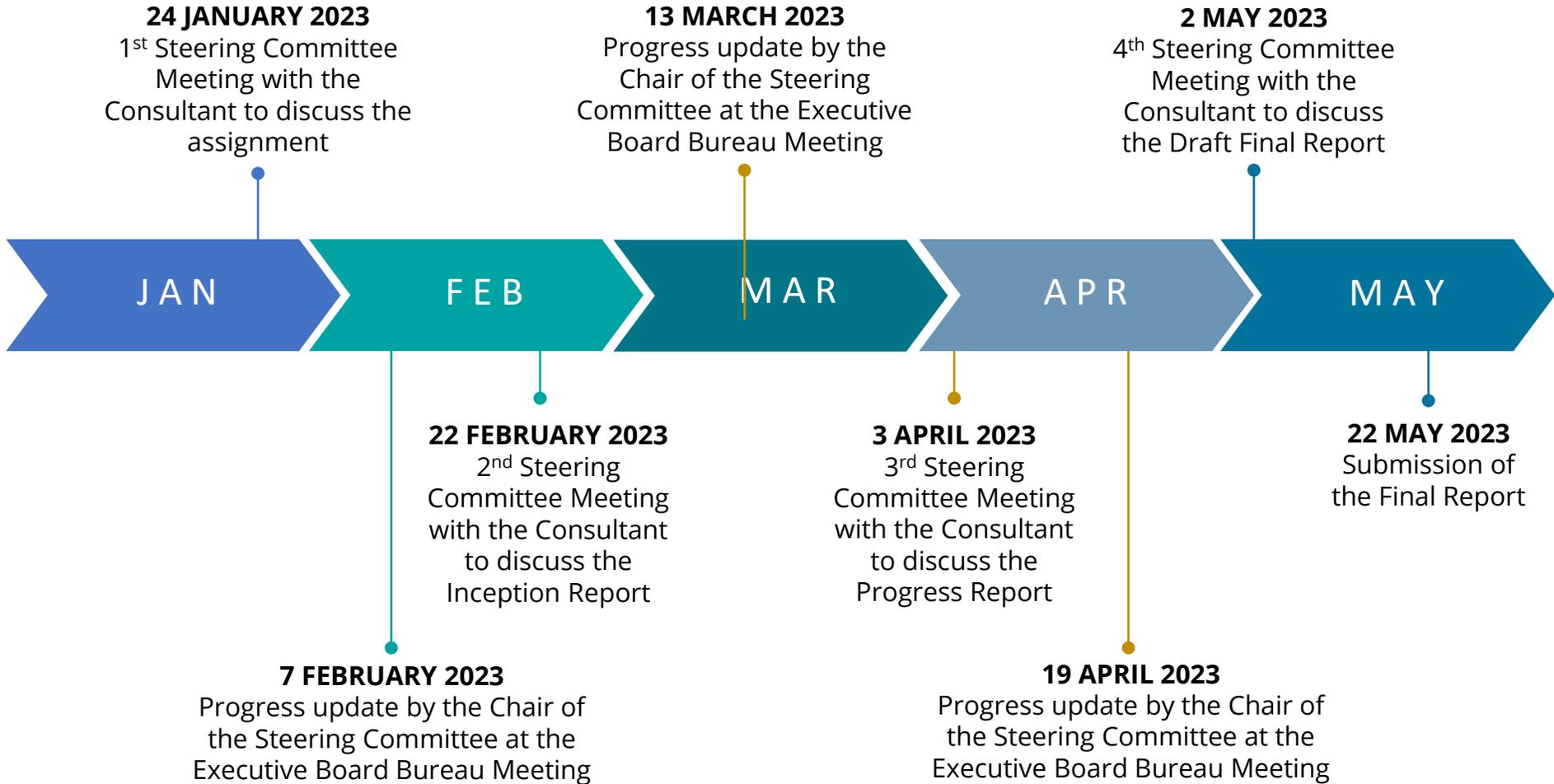
## ***ASSESSMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS***

***Presented by Özge ISKIT***

***WFP Executive Board  
First Informal Consultation  
26 September 2023***

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## 4 MONTHS ASSIGNMENT



# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Scope

The review focuses on the following key areas as defined in its terms of reference:

- ❖ **Current governance frameworks of the Board** as established between 1999 and 2005 in the following four areas: i) strategy, ii) policy, iii) oversight, iv) accountability
- ❖ **Functions of the Board:** The information-sharing, consultation, consensus-building and decision-making functions of the Board and how they are working at present.
- ❖ **Processes of the Board:** The current working methods, consultation and decision-making processes of the Executive Board and its Bureau and the schedule and volume of formal and informal Board meetings, briefings, updates and consultations, including the process for the Board's review and approval of country strategic plans.
- ❖ **Roles and responsibilities** of those concerned with governance (i.e. the Executive Board, its Bureau, permanent representatives and the WFP Secretariat), as well as the relationships of the Board with its advisory bodies (the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC)) and the Joint Inspection Unit.
- ❖ **Best practices from other governance models of United Nations agencies** and international organizations to inform opportunities to improve governance efficiency at WFP.

While looking into these key areas, the review does not seek structural or statutory changes. It aspires to identify opportunities for practical solutions within the framework of the existing rules and regulations.

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Approach & Methodology

**Phase I:** Project Initiation

**Phase II:** Fact finding & Data collection

(desk research, interviews, observation of formal & informal meetings of the Executive Board, Bureau and electoral lists)

**Phase III:** Analysis & Recommendations

### **Component I: Understanding the needs**

- Understand the expectations from the assignment
- Conceptualise the roles & responsibilities of the key stakeholders
- Analyse the current governance frameworks & processes
- Identify the needs, gaps, areas of improvement

### **Component II: Assessment & Analysis**

- Review the roles & responsibilities
- Review the current governance frameworks & processes
- Identify good practices from other UN agencies and international organizations to inform opportunities to improve governance efficiency in WFP
- Convert the analytical assessments into practical options & applicable recommendations

### **Component III: Stakeholder management & Communication**

- Regular meetings with the Steering Committee to understand the expectations, to report the progress & collect feedback
- Interviews with the representatives of the Executive Board Members, Executive Board Bureau, WFP Leadership and management including regional directors, independent offices & the Executive Board Secretariat to identify potential opportunities to further strengthen governance frameworks & improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes
- Continuous communication with the key stakeholders on the assessments and key findings

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Approach & Methodology



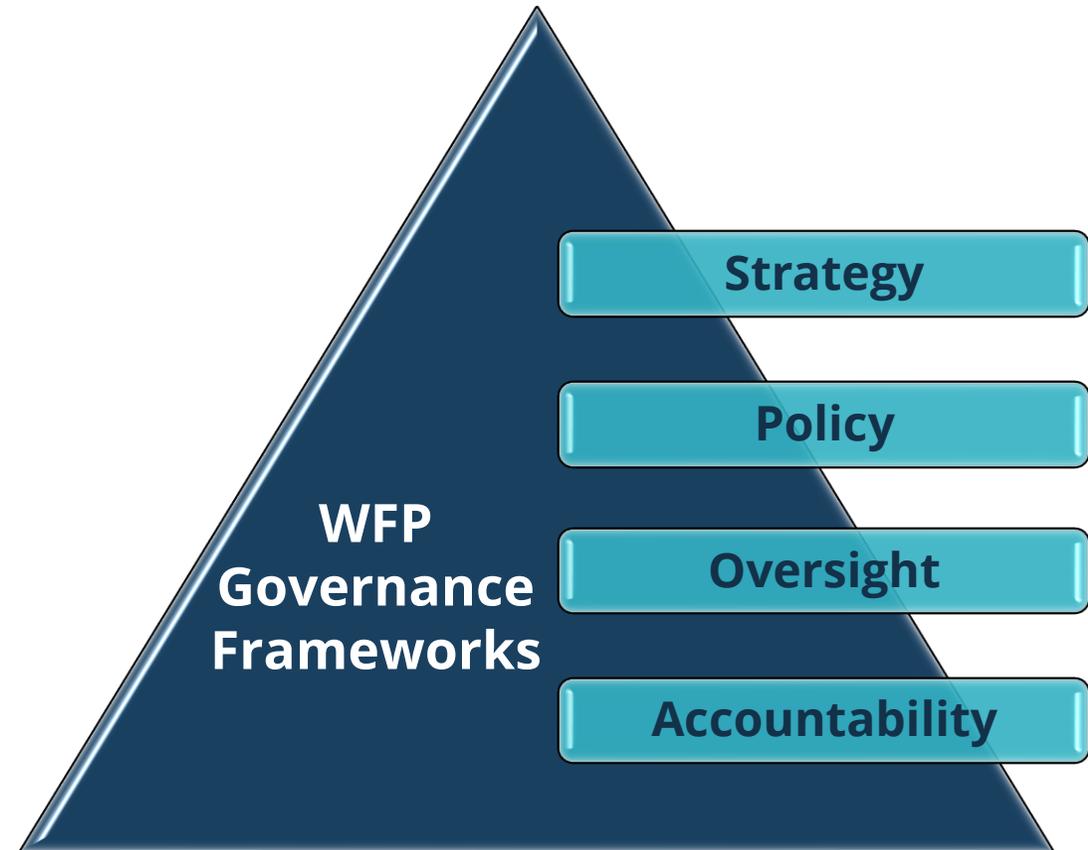
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## WFP Governance frameworks

The Governance Group established by the Executive Board in 1999 issued two formal reports with proposals and recommendations and addressed a number of ad hoc governance issues from 2000 to 2005.

The Governance Group laid the foundation for WFP's Executive Board governance and reporting arrangements based on four interlinked frameworks.



# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## WFP Governance frameworks Strategy

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### 1. Revisit the format and agenda of the formal Board sessions in order to:

- Align the sessions with the governance frameworks (strategy, policy, oversight and accountability)
- Introduce an annual strategy retreat for the Board members and WFP leadership team
- Start every formal Executive Board session with a strategic discussion with the Executive Director on a selected topic agreed by the Executive Board Bureau members
- Include on meeting agendas only mandatory items and reports that require strategic discussion or a decision
- Discontinue side events as they don't add any value to the governance role of the Executive Board.

#### 2. Rationalize and simplify Board documents to facilitate strategic discussions and decisions including formats, word limits and information provided to achieve smart reporting: "strategic input for strategic output".



# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Good practices from other United Nations entities

### UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-WOMEN

**Updated working methods for executive boards** for a harmonized approach to timing of discussion of similar items for the New York based United Nations entities and consistent agendas for Board sessions

No side events during formal Board sessions to allow members time to negotiate and discuss.

### FAO

#### **Efficient use of time at Council meetings:**

The agendas for meetings of the FAO Conference, the FAO Council and FAO regional conferences and technical committees all make use of a "written correspondence procedure" for a number of agenda items, which are considered by these governing bodies through written exchanges in advance of meetings. Only the conclusions of the Members are debated during the meetings themselves.

All management presentations of all agenda items are circulated in advance. For meetings of the Conference members are encouraged to provide their statements in advance (either in writing or in audio-visual form); the statements are uploaded to the meeting website as an alternative to delivery during the meeting.

### IFAD

#### **Strategic discussion with the President:**

Every formal Board session starts with two hours of strategic discussion with the President based on a short background document including questions for the Board to consider.

#### **Shortened formal Board sessions:**

1.5 day Board sessions from 9:30 to 18:00 with a lunch break and two coffee breaks.

Many approvals (e.g. for programmes and operations) are no longer dealt with during Board sessions. There are no side events as the members find the agenda to be too heavy otherwise.

Batch approval at formal Board meetings is being proposed, following the example of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development and the European

**Executive Board retreat** organized with an external facilitator for two days outside of Rome. The first day is dedicated to Board members only. The second day is for discussions with the President and management.

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Reverse engineering exercise

### New approach for the formal Board sessions

Executive Board First Regular Session in January	Executive Board Annual Session in June	Executive Board Second Regular Session in November
<b>Focus:</b> Strategy	<b>Focus:</b> Oversight & Accountability for the previous year	<b>Focus:</b> Planning for the next year (Policy)
<b>Key content:</b> Strategic discussions and the election of the new EB Bureau	<b>Key content:</b> Annual reports, annual accounts, reports of the independent offices, auditors and advisory bodies	<b>Key content:</b> Policies, Biennial programme of work of the Executive Board, WFP Management Plan, selected CSPs
<b>Format:</b> 2 days of Strategy Retreat with workshops and break-out groups + half day formal Board Session for the Bureau elections	<b>Format:</b> 3 days of formal Board Session	<b>Format:</b> 2 days of formal Board Session + 1 day optional in case of a request for discussion for the selected CSPs
<b>Attendance:</b> In person	<b>Attendance:</b> In person meeting for the Board members & optional virtual attendance available for the observers and the officials from the capitals	<b>Attendance:</b> In person meeting for the Board members & optional virtual attendance available for the observers and the officials from the capitals

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

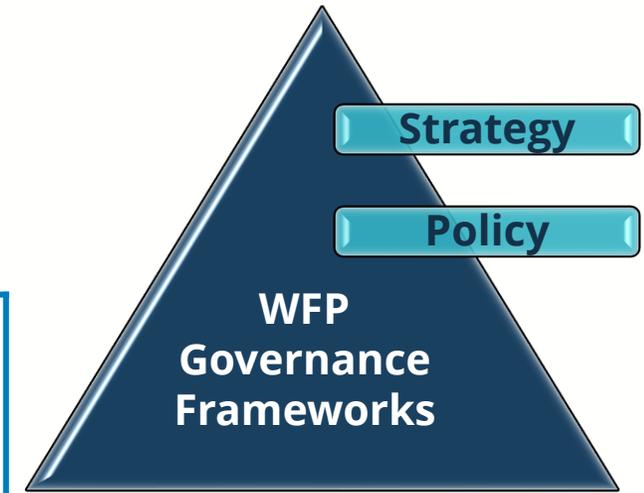
## WFP Governance frameworks Policy

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### 3. Update the policy formulation framework, define roles and responsibilities, as well as clear processes and criteria for:

- Required steps and timeframe to formulate or update a policy and follow up the implementation
- Maximum number, format and frequency of informal consultations and other informal meetings for the formulation or update of each policy
- Use of new technologies and existing digital tools to increase efficiency and engagement with the Board members when collecting input and feedback (e.g. online consultation), as well as follow-up of the implementation
- Stakeholder engagement
- Planning of implementation and budgeting processes when adopting or updating new policies
- Board reporting and engagement to enable the necessary strategic discussions at the required stages of policy formulation.

#### 4. Conduct the planned policy framework review as a part of the current governance initiative rather than a stand-alone exercise to identify the potential gaps and the steps necessary to address identified issues.



# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Good practices from other United Nations entities

### UNICEF

**Limited number of informal meetings:** They are scheduled only for complex and sensitive issues (e.g., strategic plan of the organization or budget adoption, private sector partnerships) and held only virtually. Informal meetings are chaired by the President or in his or her absence by one of the four vice-presidents or, if none is available, by a Member State representative.

**Two-level endorsement requirement for requests to hold additional informal meetings:** A request for an informal meeting from a Member State must be endorsed by the member's own regional group. Once so endorsed it is presented to all other regional groups for review and endorsement. Only after achieving this two-level endorsement will the Executive Board Bureau approve the organization of the meeting. Two-level endorsement serves as an efficient and effective filter.

### FAO

**Dialogue via informal meetings:** Informal meetings are not scripted and are constructive, focusing on dialogue.

### Joint board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS

**Informal consultations and briefings:** All meetings are virtual (not hybrid). All informal consultations and briefings are chaired by Bureau members.

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

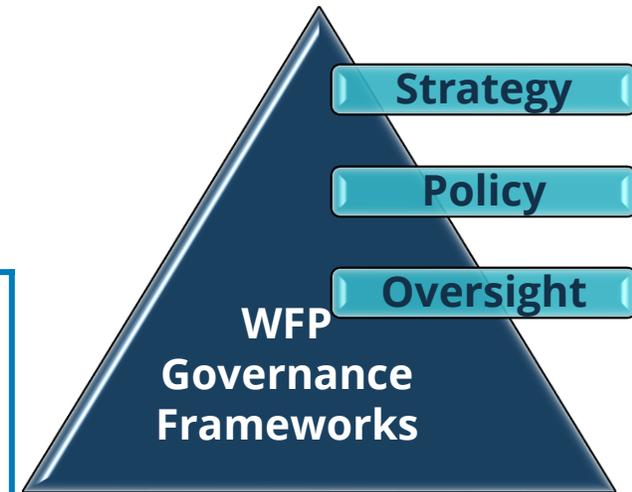
## WFP Governance frameworks Oversight

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### 5. Revisit and update the oversight framework to address the identified issues

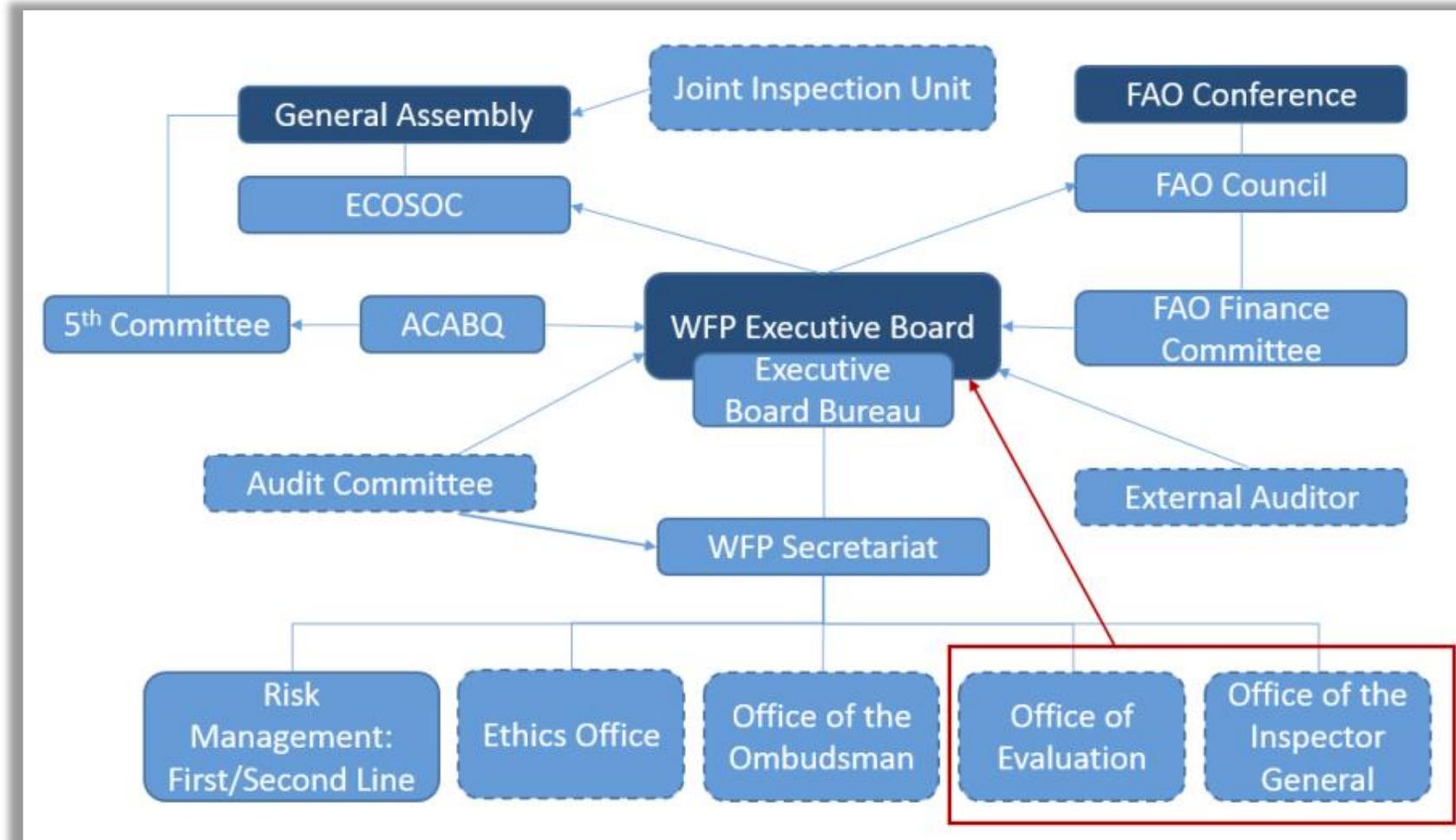
concerning:

- Potential overlaps and risk of contradicting or disconnected recommendations from the oversight bodies reporting on the same or related risks and issues
- Data collection, assessment and reporting cycles of the different oversight bodies and their impact on the capacity and resources of the WFP teams
- Complexity, length and late submission of the Board documents and the impact of the strategic governance role of the Executive Board
- Rationalization and simplification of the Board documents reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Existing follow-up mechanisms and the potential gaps concerning the recommendations of the oversight bodies (e.g. Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), the Finance Committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC), the Office of the Inspector General, evaluations, the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, etc.).
- Frequency and content of the informal Board meetings and assessment of their relevance (e.g. to eliminate the risk of repetition or lack of efficiency)



# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## WFP Governance frameworks Oversight



WFP governance and assurance architecture

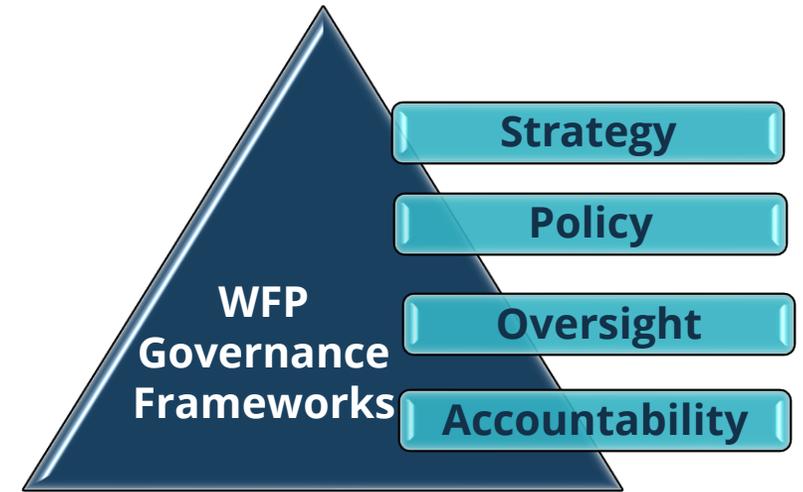
# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## WFP Governance frameworks Accountability

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

6. Rationalize and simplify reporting to make it suitable for strategic discussions and decisions related to accountability.

7. Define the links between key concepts like “strategy”, “policy” and “enablers” to ensure a good understanding by Board members when executing their governance role.



**Mission Statement (1994)**



**4-year Strategic Plan**  
(Rolled out every 2 years)



**2-year Management Plan**  
(Regular updates)



**Annual Performance Report**

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Executive Board

### Roles and responsibilities

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### **8. Redesign the induction session for new Board Members** and introduce:

- training on good governance
- refresher sessions during the year (online or in-person);
- delegates' handbook
- automated monitoring of the outgoing and incoming member state representatives

#### **9. Digital transformation:**

Digitalization of the relevant Board processes (e.g. online consultation), meetings, meeting registration and access and comment on Board documents would help representations with limited resources keep up with the busy Board calendar and engage more actively in Board discussions.

#### **10. Introduce global ethics and integrity benchmarks, including a code of conduct for Executive Board members** including a cooling off period for Board member representatives when joining WFP as staff members

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Executive Board Processes

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### **11. Revisit and improve the consensus building processes and platforms** including:

- Format, content, purpose, frequency, and reporting of the informal meetings to ensure for the Board to have the required discussions and provide strategic direction for WFP. All written documentation and statements should be submitted electronically in advance, and meetings should focus on discussion. The various types of meetings should be assessed to see if some could be replaced by written processes using the existing online platform.
- CSPs: Written online consultations should take place before the informal consultation meetings to ensure that all technical questions have been raised and addressed. The meetings should focus on discussion, with very short presentations at the beginning. Consideration of CSPs at formal Board sessions should be limited to the reading of the relevant draft decisions and ceremonial gaveling to mark their adoption.

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Good practices from other United Nations entities

### FAO

#### **Dialogue via informal meetings:**

Informal meetings are not scripted and are constructive, focusing on dialogue.

#### **Members' gateway:**

The FAO member gateway is a comprehensive communication platform enabling information flows from FAO management and the secretariats of the various governing bodies to the members, as well as among the members themselves. This includes notifications, documents, invitations and registration for meetings.

Access to the gateway is password-protected for registered representatives of members.

In addition, each session of a governing body has its own dedicated, publicly available website containing information applicable to the session, including final reports and other documents.

### Joint board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS

**Informal consultations and briefings:** All meetings are virtual (not hybrid). All informal consultations and briefings are chaired by Bureau members.

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Good practices from other United Nations entities

### UNICEF

#### **Online review and written procedure instead of informal meetings:**

UNICEF country programme documents (CPDs) are virtually reviewed and commented on by Member States ahead of the formal Executive Board sessions at which they are presented for approval. The CPDs are not presented during the formal sessions because they have been already reviewed, but instead are approved on a no-objection basis. There is a ceremonial gaveling at the formal Executive Board session confirming that the document has been approved. Informal in-person consultations on CPDs have been eliminated as it has been agreed that they don't add value.

### Joint board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS

**Country programme documents (CPD):** Draft CPDs get posted on the Executive Board website 12 weeks prior to the formal Board sessions at which they are presented, with a three-week commenting period. Board members use a template for providing comments. The comments are posted on the Executive Board website along with the CPDs and a table with responses. (The template has two columns, one for comments and one for responses.) All changes to the versions of the draft CPD are visible to the Board members as both versions of the CPD are posted on the Board website. All is done via email (comments and responses) because there is no digital platform where members can post comments. Members can view and compare the draft and final versions of the CPD and the template for comments and responses on the Board website. After the written procedure there is an informal consultation at which the final draft is presented.

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Executive Board Bureau

## Role and responsibilities

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**12. Revisit the roles and responsibilities, tenure, and the ways of working of the Executive Board Bureau to ensure:**

- Clear understanding of the role and the responsibilities of the Bureau
- Alignment of the term of the Executive Board and Bureau membership by holding the elections in January. The new Bureau Members elected in January would also have enough time to prepare for the Board's annual session.
- Bureau membership term is long enough for the new Bureau members to understand the role and execute optimally. The Board can agree on ways of working for the Bureau, including the appointment of convenors for two years instead of one.
- All lists employ a harmonized approach to information dissemination and input collection by:
  - Drafting the Terms of Reference of the list convenors and their ways of working
  - Allocating an administrative support officer from the Executive Board Secretariat to each electoral list. This additional administrative support would encourage more Member States to become list convenors.

**13. Design an induction session and a handbook for Executive Board Bureau members focusing on their roles, responsibilities, and ways of working.**

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Good practices from other United Nations entities

### UNICEF

#### **Executive Board Bureau elections held in January:**

The Executive Board Bureau election is part 1 of UNICEF's first regular Board session and is held early in January each year. Part 2 of the session focuses on the consideration of substantive agenda items and is held in February. This is a pragmatic arrangement allowed by the rules to ensure that new Bureau members are elected after the end of the terms of the previous Bureau members and before the first regular Board session in February.

# WFP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## Executive Board Bureau

### Planning and implementation of the recommendations

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

**14. For the implementation of the governance review recommendations a workplan should be developed** based on the following next steps:

- Development of an action plan, stakeholder map, timeline and cost estimation for the implementation of each recommendation
- Informal consultations with the Executive Board to get input for the Implementation Plan
- Development of a Change Management Strategy and an Implementation Plan for a smooth transition to the new ways of working in 2024-2026