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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE SAHEL REGIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATION (EMOP 10249.0)

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation focuses on strategies for intervention, targeting and collecting results in Mali and Mauritania. An in-depth analysis of survival and economic mechanisms would provide significant data on food insecurity, which is useful in defining the intervention strategy. Such a strategy would not only consider agricultural production and nutrition, but the contribution of livestock breeding and seasonal migrations. The regional approach tends to deal with capacity-building of national structures in place.

The methods used for geographic and beneficiary targeting have shown that national monitoring structures have substantial knowledge of food insecurity, but evaluating needs of the consumption units would require many more food-insecurity indicators. The use of quotas per region based on available data has not allowed for complete coverage of food-aid needs. Refined targeting, carried out at the village level and taking into account vulnerability linked to drought were rendered useless because food was systematically redistributed in communities. The targeting of aid to beneficiaries should be based on more accurate analysis and knowledge of the socio-cultural environment, while emphasizing the role of supervising partners and the need for supplementary efforts in vulnerability analysis and mapping.

The results were examined according to outcomes and outputs. The first finding was that there is little monitoring of outcomes to enable analysis of the extent to which food aid was distributed or to carryout triangulation. With regard to outputs, barely half of all food was distributed by the end of the lean period, despite large surpluses in Mauritania; in emergency situations, food aid should be supplied quickly, adequately and continuously. Monitoring mechanisms should be implemented at the national level and should be capable of achieving the desired results. Finally, the regional vulnerability analysis and mapping unit, which focuses on special needs evaluation tasks, could lend its technical skills to national structures and country offices in order to improve and harmonize targeting.

DRAFT DECISION*

The Board takes note of the information and recommendations set out in the “Summary Report of the Evaluation of the Sahel Regional Emergency Operation (EMOP 10249.0)” (WFP/EB.3/2004/6-A).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

1. The purpose of the evaluation mission's analysis and recommendations focused on assessment of the intervention strategy and the efficiency of food aid targeting methods, and on monitoring the results of the Western Sahel regional emergency operation (EMOP) in terms of outcomes. An in-depth analysis and field visits were conducted in two countries out of five, Mali and Mauritania. The evaluation team stayed from 16 November to 16 December 2003.

OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATION

2. EMOP 10249.0 aimed to assist populations affected by drought and the drop in cereal production in five countries: Cape Verde, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal. Although these five countries were affected differently, food insecurity and malnutrition have increased everywhere. The main objective was to save human lives, especially for vulnerable groups, and to maintain assets and means of production for beneficiary families. The operation included quarterly distributions and a strategy adapted to national contexts. The distributions in the first trimester were intended to end deterioration of the food situation; those in the second were aimed at avoiding migration and encouraging people to stay and prepare the land. The third trimester was to have taken place during the critical lean period from July to September. The operation, which cost approximately US\$28 million, planned to supply 55,000 mt of food to 420,000 beneficiaries. Mauritania alone was to receive 45,000 mt, or 80 percent of the total and Mali was to receive 4,000 mt, or 7 percent.

INTERVENTION STRATEGY

Documentation of Strategic Approach

3. The strategic approach of the operation is based on numerous surveys and studies, especially: (i) the mid-term growing season assessment of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS); (ii) the report from the Bamako meeting in September 2002; (iii) the October 2002 joint reports of CILSS, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP on food security and evaluation of the cereal deficit in Cape Verde, The Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal; and (iv) the vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) surveys of those countries. The results of the VAM surveys allowed further nutritional data to be collected and for use of the early-warning system (EWS), but sampling was inadequate. Geographical targeting, the intervention strategy and the estimated number of food-aid beneficiaries were adjusted following the surveys.
4. Most of the documents used concerned agricultural production, but they also covered nutrition and food security within the framework of VAM surveys. The joint CILSS/FAO/WFP reports analysed agricultural variability, although food security in Mali and Mauritania rest on three pillars: agriculture, cattle breeding and migration towards larger urban centres. The percentage of income for each varies considerably from one region to another, but agriculture certainly does not constitute the main source of income for most respondents of these surveys.



5. The strategic approach chosen for the targeting of aid to beneficiaries in Mali is integrated into the national strategy. Distributions were generalized in some areas however, even if the rations were reduced. WFP aid only covered 75,000 people in three months. In Mauritania, three intervention strategies were recommended in the VAM survey of October 2002. They were: therapeutic feeding and intensive nutrition programmes in the most affected communities, to improve the nutrition of children; food aid to households exposed to food insecurity, which can eventually be supplied through the food-for-work (FFW) and food-for-training (FFT) programmes; and FFW and FFT activities for vulnerable households suffering from food insecurity in order to avoid de-stocking. The project document states that 120,000 will receive full rations for nine months until the end of the lean season, and 300,00 people will receive a reduced ration for six months, starting three months later.

Relevance of the Strategy

6. The intervention strategy chosen in the project document only covers free distribution to vulnerable food-insecure households in Mauritania, despite the valid recommendations of the VAM survey. The strategy also provides that the distribution in The Gambia and Senegal be within the framework of community activities. The strategy chosen for Mali respects the decisions of national mechanisms for needs evaluation, with WFP's participation.
7. The chosen strategy should be closely related to the operation's aims and focus on vulnerability linked to drought. Its design, however, does not consider current structural interventions within the framework of country programmes, particularly in Mauritania. The approach adapted to Mali recommends an immediate reduced general distribution to a large part of the population, following geographic targeting, before the lean period in mid—2003. Problems with this approach are illustrated below. Problems linked to this approach are illustrated below. In considering available human resources and stocks and the need to distribute food without delay this approach was the most realistic option to ensure emergency food coverage. A second better targeted distribution without WFP food aid was planned but not implemented. The Gambia and Senegal have integrated structurally linked interventions, but in practice it is impossible to dissociate the two kinds of vulnerability or even to isolate people who are seasonally vulnerable from those who are vulnerable for structural reasons, because the two kinds of vulnerability are linked and concurrent.
8. As specified in the WFP *Food and Nutrition Handbook*, vulnerability to food insecurity is a basic parameter that determines the design of projects and targeting strategies. An efficient intervention strategy is designed by studying vulnerability and localizing vulnerable groups. Understanding the needs of the population is only one step towards a complete analysis of factors that determine its vulnerability. According to the normative VAM framework, three dimensions are necessary to measure food insecurity: the availability, accessibility and utilization of food commodities. It is therefore surprising that the agricultural production deficit weighs heavily upon the choice of intervention strategy. A thorough analysis of the survival mechanisms adopted by populations to confront severe



drought-induced food insecurity has provided important information of access to food commodities.¹

Regional Strategy

9. The regional strategy enhanced donors' awareness and allowed them to respond appropriately to the food crisis that plagued Mauritania with three consecutive years of drought and fruitless harvests. It also allowed for an increased role of the regional bureau and the simplification of the administration procedures for document submission. The regional strategy permitted five countries suffering from drought to combine under the same operation. The advantages were not equal for all countries concerned, however.
10. From the operational point of view types of interventions such as rations and food baskets, operational partners and the duration of assistance vary by country and could have been implemented within the framework of separate national operations. There was no attempt to coordinate the implementation of the regional operation, especially along the Mauritanian-Malian border where distribution took place at different times. Urban communities benefited from food aid in Mali, while they were excluded in Mauritania where refined targeting efforts were used. Mali opted for a reduced, general distribution to targeted regions. Rations in Mauritania consisted of 1,800 kcal and 2,100 kcal; partial but generalized rations were 1,050 kcal in Mali.
11. The arguments for and against a regional, rather than a national strategy are summarized below. The arguments in favour include: (i) making donors aware of the region, thereby preventing some countries from being put at a disadvantage compared to others; (ii) increased decision-making powers of the regional bureau concerning funding and foodstuffs and the coordination and deployment of regional personnel, (iii) improved communications and information exchange among countries affected by drought; and (iv) the simplification of administrative procedures, including five national operations combined in a single project document.
12. The arguments against a regional strategy include: (i) reduced national decision-making powers; (ii) the possibility that some countries could appear disadvantaged compared to others; (iii) the difficulty of integrating existing WFP national strategies with those directly connected to drought; (iv) the tendency to exceed national monitoring mechanism in Mauritania, which could damage national capacity-building; and (v) the risk that the directives will appear to lack coherence.
13. Most operational issues could be addressed at the national level, permitting a greater national cohesion and capacity-building, an area in which WFP is already active. Some decision-making, information exchange and coordination responsibilities could have been maintained by the regional bureau, such as the distribution of food and funds, and skills training. The slowly-developing emergencies have not justified increasing the number of

¹ The regional bureau comments that the analysis contained in the section concerning the strategy's relevance does not take into consideration all available data. Prior to designing the project, the regional VAM unit, evaluated the impact of drought in analysing all the elements and in using primary and secondary data in collaboration with Headquarters and the country offices.

The intervention strategy was developed after consulting various missions, evaluations and surveys in Mauritania by CILSS/FAO, the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS-NET), the Food Security Observatory (FSO), EWS in Mauritania, WFP, Oxfam UK, *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF) and the VAM survey of October 2002. Although the CILSS/FAO missions focus particularly on agricultural production, all the other evaluations relied on indicators included most factors influencing food security.

The VAM survey evaluated the impact of drought on household food security and, to this end, evaluated the availability, accessibility and use of foodstuffs, and risk-management strategies used by households.



regional structures that risk damaging cooperation among national interventions. These structures oppose the strategic priority linked to national capacity-building. It is therefore advisable to encourage decentralization of decision-making powers at the national level.

Recommendation

- Prioritize greater integration with national structures, especially for cyclic or slowly-developing catastrophes, in order to support national cooperation and strengthen national capacities for. These benefits are more important than the comparative advantages of regional operations, such as resource mobilization and the submission of a single document.

EFFICIENCY OF TARGETING METHODS

14. The efficiency of targeting methods varies greatly from one country to another. The evaluation has identified two levels of targeting food requirements: geographical targeting and food-aid beneficiary targeting. The project document planned for geographical targeting with the following indicators: nutritional status, food consumption, production level, resources to ensure food security at the household level, cereal reserves, price levels, abnormal migration, the use of risky survival strategies and presence of operational partners.

Geographic Targeting in Mali

15. WFP has not carried out its own targeting or direct distribution. The cereal market restructuring programme (PRMC) is part of the strengthened food security system in Mali, which is well regarded. It comprises the Government, which is responsible for 80 percent of the budget, and donors. The WFP country office has the main role of coordinating donors and ensuring the operations of the PRMC permanent secretariat, as well as participating in all decision-making. PRMC prepares and monitors cases; all decisions are based on consensus.
16. Coordination within PRMC is carried out at two levels. The management committee of donors organizes periodic meetings with national diplomatic missions and PRMC; it examines and adopts budgets and makes important decisions on the basis of case studies prepared and approved by the technical committee. The committee on orientation and coordination of the food security system, which is the main institute of cooperation and management, organizes regular meetings with all the ministers² concerned and partners. The agricultural products office of Mali manages the national security stock, and the agricultural market observatory ensures transparency of operations of the cereal market and manages common counterpart and food-security funds.
17. In Mali, only the region of Kayes and Koulikoro, on the border with Mauritania, has received food aid. Most of this came from WFP, in the form of a free general distribution in January 2003. By contrast, Mauritania, some Malian urban communities such as Nioro have also profited from the free distribution. Only 3 out of 16 communities have been excluded because they are less vulnerable and benefit from cereal banks.

² Ministers concerned with food security: the Minister in charge of PRMC, the Minister for Territorial Administration, the Minister of Transport and the Minister for the Budget.



18. EWS has regional technical teams responsible for collecting and analysing monitoring information, which allows for the early detection of food insecurity. EWS's role is to predict food crises, assess their scope and determine their location and the method of intervention. In-depth social, medical and nutritional surveys show the significance of the identified problems. The support unit for basic development identifies the need for emergency food assistance and follows up on the implementation of emergency measures. The EWS methodology is based on a comparison of information on drought-induced and chronic needs to assess the development of indicators,³ on the basis of a yearly average or reference system. During 2002–2003, food insecurity crisis affected a large population and the level of national food stocks were inadequate to cover needs. WFP expected to cover one-sixth of the needs with 4,000 mt, but its actual contribution was only 20 percent of that; commodities were not always transferred to the national food stock.

Geographic Targeting in Mauritania

19. The Food Security Commission (FSC) responsible for managing crises in Mauritania, is supported by the Food Security Observatory (FSO), which is responsible for identifying and monitoring risk areas and vulnerable populations. At the end of the 2000–2001 agricultural year, an analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators listed three categories of risk to food security — moderate, high and extreme — in four large geographical areas. An evaluation of urgent food aid needs was carried out.

20. The east and the southeastern border with Mali is essentially a cereal-production area, heavily reliant on rain. The river area is characterized by lowland irrigated and rain-fed cultivation. The north is characterized by date cultivation and livestock breeding and Aftout is an area of rain-fed agriculture. But harvests are inadequate and pastoral activities are few. Aftout suffers from chronic food insecurity but is also vulnerable to drought-induced crises.

21. The identification of areas at risk is carried out twice during the agricultural year, during the short growing season at the end of September and during the major growing season at the end of February, during the winter season of decline when market gardening predominates. Instead of proceeding with precise quantitative surveys, process of identifying rural areas at risk is based on a qualitative assessment of food security indicators.⁴ Each rural area within all the moughataa, or departments, of the country is classified according to degree of vulnerability.

22. Methods of targeting, such as determining fixed quotas in Nouakchott on the community level, are based on available demographic data from the most recent census; the annual demographic growth rate is 2.4 percent. Vulnerability coefficients are applied to this data on the basis of poverty criteria gathered in 2000, allowing regional vulnerability coefficients to be determined. There are evident disparities between the estimated and the real numbers of vulnerable persons.

23. In contrast with what happened in Mali, the WFP regional bureau undertook a VAM study in October 2002, using complementary information from national organizations and other sources. This survey provided supplementary nutrition data in some risk areas, but has not provided all necessary information.

³ Among others are adequate pluviometry, well distributed in time and space, floods, riverbed conditions, practical activities, agricultural potential, mobility of populations, existence and structure of cereal markets and livestock.

⁴ Among other things: pluviometry, cultural issues, pasture issues, other income-generating activities, prices and food supplies, health and nutritional status, infrastructures and development activities.



24. Many selection criteria have been used for geographic targeting and to set food quotas. The analysis of the other economic factors, however, would have enabled a greater analysis of the effects of seasonal drought on structural food insecurity, and redefined the role of food aid in this context.

Recommendation

- Favour greater cooperation and increased collaboration between the national services that monitor the development of food security and WFP's VAM unit in order to harmonize their approaches and the indicators they use to detect vulnerability to crises.

Targeting Food Beneficiaries in Mali

25. There was no targeting of food aid to beneficiaries because the methods of implementation was designed for the distribution of 27 kg of cereals per person for three months to the entire vulnerable population registered in the targeted communities. Still, the discrepancy between population data of the locality and EWS meant that actual rations varied from 13 kg to 35 kg per person.

Targeting Aid Beneficiaries in Mauritania

26. The project document anticipated a general distribution of full rations to targeted groups with refined targeting at the village level. The number of families targeted is based on quotas for each village allocated by the department committees, then divided into planned rations. It was not a matter of targeting food-insecure families, but estimating which people could benefit from allocated food. The difference from geographical targeting is that the criteria of developing quotas for each village are very subjective and depend on arguments presented by representatives and village authorities.
27. WFP's implementation methods anticipated that four non-governmental organization (NGO) partners⁵ and FSC would be in charge of beneficiary selection and the reception, storage and distribution of food in collaboration with village committees and local authorities. Despite a coordination meeting in November 2003, however, the NGOs chose different approaches. Their criteria varied according to site. It included households headed by women, handicapped people, household activities, working members of households, poverty, sick people, vulnerable and destitute households, family size, women heads of households with handicapped or orphaned children, divorcees or widows, and sick or disabled orphans and heads of households.
28. An indicator of food insecurity that is not always considered concerns loans of food made by some poor families. Households borrow food from traders during the lean period at a time when prices are high. Reimbursement occurs at the time of harvest and at market value, when prices are low. Theoretically, a sack of food is loaned at a value of 100 and is reimbursed at double that, but according to the current prices. At the harvest period, the value of the sack can drop to 50. Because prices have dropped by half, it is necessary to reimburse the double the market value of the loan, which is four times more than the initial quantity borrowed. The technical documentation used to target beneficiaries of food aid inadequately describes these interdependencies and the systematic recourse to debt that constrain vulnerable households in many communities. The debt system practiced in

⁵ Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD), the Lutheran World Federation, Oxfam-UK and World Vision.



Mauritanian communities is a form of usury and contributes to keeping households in poverty.

29. No vulnerable household was identified in 6 of the 15 sites visited. More than 900 families were officially targeted but more than 2,200 received food aid. The idea of targeting households implies that those targeted will be the final consumers of the food aid, assuming it is were possible to isolate targeted individuals from the social environment and separating the links between people's daily lives and their society. It is necessary to adapt targeting to culture and incorporate social realities in the intervention, rather than attempt to adapt reality to a model.
30. WFP directives, reports on vulnerability and VAM studies have indicated that a detailed vulnerability analysis is necessary because an initial brief evaluation does not allow for a thorough analysis of food insecurity. The field EMOPs manual states that a thorough analysis of previously-mentioned causes and survival strategies is indispensable in establishing vulnerability. This should allow the groups concerned to meet existing conditions and involve communities in refined targeting that is understood and accepted by all. The manual further stipulates that households should be defined according to socio-cultural customs of the area. Nutritional vulnerability is well defined in the food and nutrition manual, but the criteria should consider, in addition to food, additional fundamental conditions, notably health and well-being.
31. The WFP emergency field operations manual also states that if general distributions are suddenly necessary but precise instructions are not available, geographical targeting is the only initial method possible; rations will then be reduced to allow for wider distribution. Mechanisms of community redistribution would generally be implemented. As mentioned in the WFP food and nutrition manual, the more targeting is streamlined and dependant on external structures, the more expensive it becomes. It is therefore preferable and more realistic to allow for errors of inclusion rather than of exclusion.
32. In selecting beneficiaries, the various criteria used and the phenomena of redistribution, reduce the efficiency of targeting, and the dilution of rations inevitable. It is therefore slow, costly and inefficient to conduct refined targeting without incorporating the phenomenon of redistribution in the analysis. The fact that the consumption unit is not always the household adds to the difficulty of setting precise criteria. It is more appropriate to consider social mechanisms in targeting and delegate responsibility to village committees to allocate aid according to their own criteria. Operational partners could have a supervisory role in order to avoid abuses especially in mixed villages where groups have differing social customs.



Recommendations

- Ensure better understanding of socio-cultural environments and their support mechanisms, and the interdependence in vulnerability analysis that serves as a basis for targeting aid beneficiaries. In targeting, integrate the phenomenon of food sharing and redistribution from the start, especially where there is inadequate data, little time available for collecting information and low capacity.
- Ensure greater cooperation among parties concerned and to better define the roles and responsibilities of each. For example, the selection of food aid beneficiaries by the community and its representatives, as well as the supervision of this targeting by the implementing partners, would avoid the repetition of efforts in systematic redistributions.

RESULTS

Results of the Operation

33. The general aim of the EMOP was to save lives (corresponding to the impact level in the logical framework), and was therefore beyond scope of WFP activities alone. In the framework of this evaluation, results relating to changes in the malnutrition rate are of particular interest in Mali and Mauritania, in which the operation emphasizes satisfying nutritional needs. At the level of outcomes, the nutritional goal is met if malnutrition rates are maintained or improved in a situation where no emergency intervention has taken place. Regarding outputs, the number of food-aid beneficiaries and tons delivered on time are useful performance indicators. Two levels of results will be examined.

Outcomes

34. There was no systematic monitoring of outcomes, except for some studies and periodic surveys to monitor impact of food aid. It is therefore impossible to attribute all changes in the malnutrition rates to WFP activities. The VAM nutritional surveys can serve as a supplementary source of information, useful for triangulation. The national monitoring mechanism should be capable of furnishing enough reliable information to measure the results. The available data are not consolidated however, and are not consistently accompanied by performance indicators; they could not serve as the basis of systematic analysis of outcomes. It is therefore impossible to evaluate the extent to which specific objectives were met.
35. Confusion exists concerning the regional role of VAM. WFP country offices delegate national monitoring authority to VAM, whereas VAM's primary responsibility is to analyse vulnerability with the assistance of surveys, then use them for mapping. Many current directives concern monitoring and evaluation in disaster-relief situations, which can be useful for developing monitoring mechanisms.



Recommendation

- Ensure the implementation of national, systematic monitoring mechanisms capable of demonstrating that an operation has obtained the desired results. There is a risk that VAM may be regarded as primarily responsible for collecting data on the outcomes of the operation. The regional VAM unit, which is responsible for evaluating needs and organizing sporadic surveys, is often considered by national bodies as the main national monitoring mechanism.

Results of Outputs

36. Some results were apparent at the output level.

TABLE 1: AID DISTRIBUTED AT THE END OF THE LEAN PERIOD (AS OF 30 SEPTEMBER 2003)*				
	Planned distribution in 2003	Actual distribution (as of 30 September)	Percentage planned versus actual (as of 30 September)	Percentage of regional emergency/country/ total
CAPE VERDE				
- EMOP 10249.0	2 394	0	0	0
- Development Project 06263.0	3 473	2 399	69	
Total	5 867	2 399		
THE GAMBIA				
- EMOP 10249.0	2 340	2 860	122	33
- Development Project 5932.01	7 026	4 550	65	
- Development Project 2729.03	2 120	1 280	60	
Total	11 486	8 690		
MALI				
- EMOP10249.0	4 000	4 000	100	28
- Country Programme 10205.0	9 375	10 336	110	
Total	13 375	14 336		
MAURITANIA				
- EMOP 10249.0	43 632	18 502	42	53
- EMOP 10147.0 (surpluses)	10 000	10 000	100	
Total EMOPs	53 632	28 502	53	
- Country Programme 10209.0	11 500	6 458	56	
Total	65 132	34 960		
SENEGAL				
- EMOP 10249.0	2 999	1 428	48	31
- Country Programme 10088.0	6 000	3 114	52	
Total	8 999	4 542		
TOTAL EMOP 10249.0	55 365	26 790	48	41
GRAND TOTAL	104 859	64 927		
Total Country Programmes + Development Projects	39 494	28 137		

*This does not take into account surpluses left by other previous projects in Mali and Senegal.



37. It is interesting to note that the regional EMOP only represents 50 percent of WFP total quantities planned in the five countries. Almost 40,000 mt come from other WFP projects, notably country programmes and development projects. The quantities distributed are globally higher for development projects, at 71 percent of the annual quantities planned. With regard to the EMOP, there are large variations among the countries in terms of planned and actually distributed food aid. Indeed, only half of the commodities were distributed on average in the five countries even though all of it should have been distributed, either after nine months or at the end of the lean period. This shows that it is essential to account for national contexts and absorption capacities in the regional operations.

**TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION PLANNED AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2003,
ACCORDING TO AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES (10249.0)**

	Actual food needs	Food actually received	Food actually distributed	Percentage receive/needs	Maximum percentage distributed* /received
Cape Verde	2 394	0	0	0	0
The Gambia	2 340	3 318	2 860	142	86
Mali	4 000	4 000	4 000	100	0
Mauritania	43 632	36 565	18 502	84	51
Senegal	2 999	1 199	1 428	40	119
Total	55 365	41 082	26 790		

* 4,000 mt were loaned from the Malian National Security Stock.

38. Particular attention must be given to actual and planned distributions as at 30 September 2003 in terms of food received relative to needs and food distributed relative to quantities received, because the operation received 100 percent of resources. The proportion of food distributed was more than 100 percent of needs for The Gambia, considering the available supplementary quantities. Nevertheless, if based on quantities actually received, the distribution rate only represents 86 percent. In Mauritania, the quantities received could have covered 84 percent of needs, but the quantities distributed only reached 42 percent out of a possible total of 51 percent. The average of two EMOPs in Mauritania brings the distribution rate covering needs to 53 percent as a result of large surpluses of 10,000 mt. The quantities received cover 40 percent of needs in Senegal, but the quantities distributed reached 48 percent of needs against a maximum of 119 percent. Mali had received nothing at the time of evaluation; however, the distributions had covered 100 percent of needs, food having been borrowed from Mali National Security Stock. WFP only planned to reimburse 750 mt, for reasons not clarified in the evaluation. Finally, no distribution took place in Cape Verde. The Gambia and Mali are the two countries that respected the distribution schedule during the lean period and prior to harvest.
39. In Mauritania, the four WFP implementing partners were responsible for the targeting and distribution of 34,000 mt under the regional EMOP, to which surpluses were added in 2002. At 31 December 2003 the food distributed by implementing partners in the twin operations in Mauritania accounted on average for 67 percent of the quantities planned, varying from 47 percent to 75 percent according to the partner. The surpluses represented 33 percent of the food distributed in these two operations.



40. Delay in the arrival of food aid is one of the basic reasons why only half of the quantities planned had been distributed according to schedule. However, taking into account the large surpluses from previous operations distributed in 2003 – 25,000 mt – the absorption capacity of aid in Mauritania must be called into question. This capacity was limited by many factors, particularly (i) the lack of a serious analysis of WFP needs in human resources and equipment to handle an operation of this scope, (ii) significant logistics constraints such as port traffic and storage capacity, (iii) the near monopoly of the transport situation, (iv) difficulties of delivery to final delivery points, (v) withdrawal of personnel to cover other operations, (vi) the costs of changing implementation methods and introducing NGO partners, all of which called for some experience. Finally, commercial imports of 80,000 mt of cereal caused logistics blockages. These constraints inevitably affected the level of implementation and results in terms of outputs and outcomes.

Recommendation

- To supply supplementary efforts in all drought situations in order to respond quickly, consistently and adequately to food needs, especially in lean periods. The internal mechanisms of resource allocation should take project objectives into account to ensure greater and more timely availability of food while lives are at stake. The ongoing effort to improve WFP procedures should resolve these issues. The ongoing effort to improve WFP procedures should resolve these issues.



ANNEX: EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE — SAHEL REGIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATION (EMOP 10249.0)

Recommendations to WFP (November and December 2003)	Action by	Management response and actions taken (July 2004)
Intervention strategy		
Regional strategy		
<p>Prioritize greater integration with national structures, especially for cyclic or slowly-developing catastrophes, in order to support national cooperation and strengthen national capacities for. These benefits are more important than the comparative advantages of regional operations, such as resource mobilization and the submission of a single document.</p>	<p>Country offices, in collaboration with the programme unit of the regional bureau and the policy division.</p>	<p>The analysis contained in the evaluation of the problems of a regional approach is not supported by a precise statement. It is understood that the choice of a regional operation had a specific practical aim in the Sahelian context of autumn 2002. This regional bureau decision was based on the administration capacities of five country offices and a donors' request for a guarantee that control of resources would be exercised in case of need.</p> <p>It is essential to specify that all operational activities were entirely the responsibility of country offices. The intervention strategy was prepared in collaboration with national teams and respected the will of partners in each country. In Mauritania, the data available at FSO and the Mauritania EWS were consulted and used as well as VAM surveys to determine the intervention strategies and the targeting areas. FSO also participated in VAM field surveys, expressed its willingness to participate in the analysis with the WFP VAM unit and asked for VAM technical assistance.</p> <p>In July 2003, the Mauritania office obtained funding to work more closely with FSO; the regional VAM office will supply technical support to FSO through 2004. In Mali, at the request of the country office, the strategy adopted was to work closely with the Malian Government and financial backers through the PRMC. The roles of each in the country offices and regional office were honoured, until shown to the contrary.</p>
Efficiency and effectiveness of targeting methods		
Geographic targeting		
<p>Favour greater cooperation and increased collaboration between the national services that monitor the development of food security and WFP's VAM unit in order to harmonize their approaches and the indicators they use to detect vulnerability to crises.</p>	<p>Country offices in collaboration with the VAM unit of the regional bureau.</p>	<p>As far as geographic coverage is concerned, two sources were used: FSO through its EWS in Mauritania and the 2002 VAM survey. The two sources used the following indicators to evaluate the food security situation of communes and the households: (i) price and availability of food and animal feed, (ii) access to markets and other infrastructures, (iv) available sources of income, (v) food consumption, (vi) survival strategies, (vii) migration data, (viii) malnutrition rates and (ix) the health situation. All of these indicators were analysed under a framework that followed WFP VAM directives and those of other organizations.</p> <p>Nonetheless, WFP considers that the VAM concepts and techniques could be better explained and should be transferred to national institutions so that targeting is seen from the same viewpoint. Accordingly, the WFP office in Mauritania, in collaboration with the VAM regional unit, has set up technical collaboration with FSO.</p>



ANNEX: EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE — SAHEL REGIONAL EMERGENCY OPERATION (EMOP 10249.0)		
Recommendations to WFP (November and December 2003)	Action by	Management response and actions taken (July 2004)
Targeting aid beneficiaries		
Ensure better understanding of socio-cultural environments and their support mechanisms, and the interdependence in vulnerability analysis that serves as a basis for targeting aid beneficiaries. In targeting, integrate the phenomenon of food sharing and redistribution from the start, especially where there is inadequate data, little time available for collecting information and low capacity.	Country offices	This recommendation is not very clear. At the start of the operation, WFP defined the criteria of beneficiary selection in Mauritania in collaboration with partner NGOs, FSO and other local actors in the development field on the basis of the reports and evaluations already mentioned. Free distributions took place in Mauritania and Mali according to the recommendations of partners, donors and the country offices. The traditional phenomenon of redistribution of food within a community, for example, should be part of NGO strategy for distributions. The country office will formulate a targeting method that privileges the village unit and is better adapted to the social context for PRRO 10359.0 in Mauritania, starting in January 2005.
Ensure greater cooperation among parties concerned and to better define the roles and responsibilities of each. For example, the selection of food aid beneficiaries by the community and its representatives, as well as the supervision of this targeting by the implementing partners, would avoid the repetition of efforts in systematic redistributions.	Country offices	In Mauritania, a meeting to redefine the roles and responsibilities of partners took place in November 2002. Correspondence was addressed to NGOs on their responsibilities in the targeting and distribution process. The selection criteria were proposed. It would have been interesting to examine why the implementation methods could not be respected everywhere by the NGOs. The experience of collaboration with NGOs in Mauritania is recent and an evaluation could have oriented future collaborations insofar as collaboration with NGOs in the field is considered by all financial backers as a symbolic breakthrough. Since the beginning of 2004, WFP has chosen to re-examine the agreements with NGOs for the purpose of improving beneficiary targeting. The country office collected information on the targeting process and on the community distribution by the WFP office in Tanzania. The discussions involved partners with the aim of adaptation and application in the Mauritanian context.
Results		
Outcomes		
Ensure the implementation of national, systematic monitoring mechanisms capable of demonstrating that an operation has obtained the desired results. There is a risk that VAM may be regarded as primarily responsible for collecting data on the outcomes of the operation. The regional VAM unit, which is responsible for evaluating needs and organizing sporadic surveys, is often considered by national bodies as the main national monitoring mechanism.	Country offices in collaboration with the results-based management division.	VAM is not concerned with monitoring operations as such; this is the responsibility of the country offices and partners in the field. VAM evaluated three elements in this operation: (i) the impact of drought on the food situation of households – VAM 2002; (ii) the food situation of households after the lean period of 2003 – VAM October 2003; and (iii) the nutritional situation of children throughout 2003. During the operation, weakness at the national monitoring level were observed by the country bureau and partners. Measures were taken within the framework of the new policy of results-based management, a concept that had not been established at the time of implementation in 2003. The following measures were planned to improve the case files of the monitoring of indicators of food-security mechanisms, in collaboration with FSO and partner NGOs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ establishment of the logical framework of the operation in the 2005–2007 PRRO;



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Recommendations to WFP (November and December 2003)	Action by	Management response and actions taken (July 2004)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ expert consultations in January and February 2004 and formulation of follow-up indicators; ➤ pilot survey from 13 to 17 June 2004; ➤ establishment of a baseline planned for the 3rd trimester of 2004.
Results of the outputs		
<p>To supply supplementary efforts in all drought situations in order to respond quickly, consistently and adequately to food needs, especially in lean periods. The internal mechanisms of resources allocation should take project objectives into account to ensure greater and more timely availability of food while lives are at stake. The ongoing effort to improve WFP procedures should resolve these issues.</p>	<p>The regional bureau in collaboration with the Programming Service (ODP) and the Resources and External Relations Division (RE)</p>	<p>The West Africa Regional Bureau brought together all financial backers of the region in July, September and December 2002. Missions in London and Brussels and many discussions in Nouakchott and Rome took place. The problems did not concern greater awareness of the humanitarian issues so much as inherent logistics delays. The debate goes well beyond the framework of this consultation in that it was not specific to West Africa.</p>



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ACORD	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
CILSS	<i>Comité inter-États de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel</i> (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
EMOP	emergency operation
EWS	early-warning system
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWS/NET	Famine Early-Warning Systems Network
FFT	food for training
FFW	food for work
FSC	Food Security Commission
FSO	Food Security Observatory
MSF	<i>Médecins sans frontières</i>
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRMC	Programme for Restructuring the Cereal Market
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping

