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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE THEMATIC EVALUATION OF THE PRRO CATEGORY

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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.

Director, Office of Evaluation (OEDE): Mr K. Tuinenburg tel.: 066513-2252

Evaluation Officer, OEDE: Mr S. Green tel.: 066513-2908

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 1998, the Executive Board introduced the protracted relief and recovery operation category. During its sessions in October 2000 and February 2001, the Executive Board raised questions about the funding of such operations and the effectiveness of the new category, and endorsed a review to be undertaken by the Office of Evaluation.

This summary report presents the findings and recommendations of an evaluation of early progress in implementing the protracted relief and recovery operation category, which was undertaken to (i) determine the relevance of the protracted relief and recovery operation innovation, (ii) assess the value-added of such operations to WFP's operations, (iii) determine whether WFP currently has adequate capacity to support the implementation of the category and (iv) identify external factors influencing WFP's ability to implement such operations.

The evaluation concludes that the category is a relevant, innovative creation that is consistent with the evolving needs of WFP beneficiaries, the changing nature of WFP's corporate mission and of current crises, many of which are increasingly of a protracted nature with cumulative negative consequences for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. In such a context, well articulated recovery strategies are most useful.

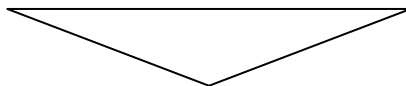
Introduction of the protracted relief and recovery operation category has, as anticipated, brought important benefits. Overall, these operations are associated with a lower level of general relief food assistance; they have increased the flexibility of field operations and have evidently had a positive impact on WFP's ability to mobilize additional resources. Most WFP staff consider the category to be a valuable programming tool; the policy of moving from emergency operations to protracted relief and recovery operations has largely been followed, albeit with some exceptions. Protracted relief and recovery operations appear to be supporting core relief functions effectively; in politically stable settings, recovery activity targets are close to being met.

The evaluation was, however, unable to confirm all the intended value-added features of this programme model: it found limited evidence that the introduction of the category had been associated with systematic targeting improvements, and no evidence that sufficient strategic planning and thinking had taken place in all cases. Enhanced programme synergies among WFP programme categories have not yet materialized. The evaluation finds recovery to be a challenging concept in the humanitarian world generally; translating it into actual programmes poses dilemmas for WFP and for the humanitarian community as a whole. Ensuring quality recovery programmes has so far proved challenging: corporate action is required to strengthen and support their quality.

The evaluation identified best practices and made recommendations on ways to improve design, implementation and management of protracted relief and recovery operations.



DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of the recommendations contained in this evaluation report (WFP/EB.1/2004/6-A) and of the management response set out in the annex. The Board encourages further action on the recommendations, with considerations raised during the discussions taken into account.

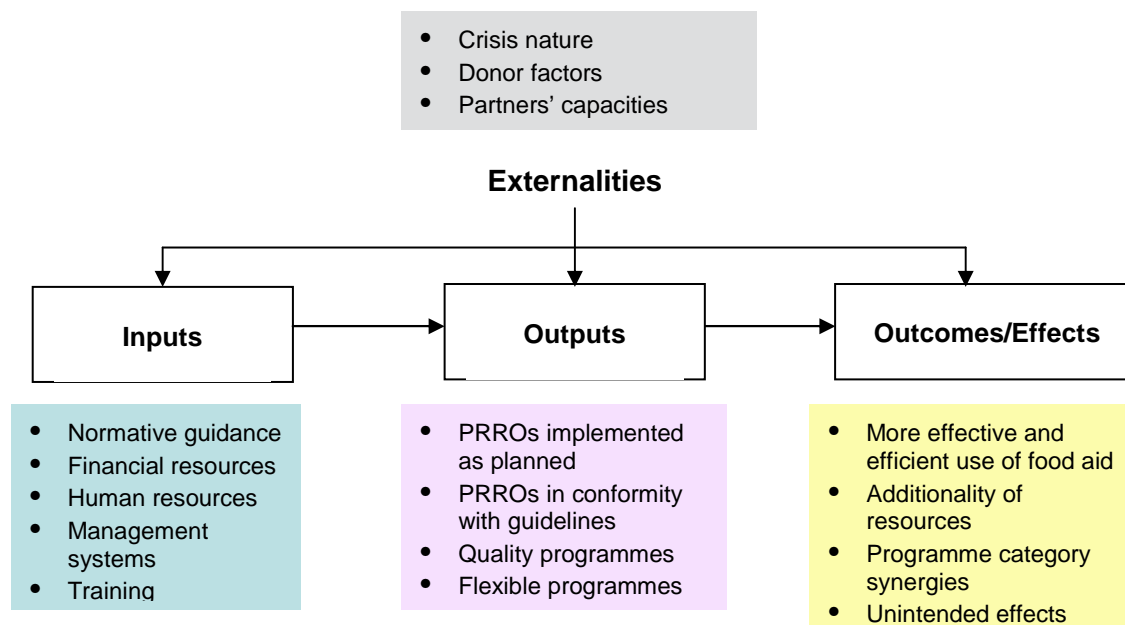
* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

1. The thematic evaluation was undertaken between September 2002 and December 2003, based on individual evaluations between 1999 and 2002 of protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) by the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) and on constructed case studies using multiple information sources.
2. The primary goal was to determine the value-added of the PRRO programme category and to identify recommendations for its future development. Collaborative multi-method evaluation techniques were utilized, including document review, constructed comparative case study analysis, interviews with Executive Board members, WFP staff and United Nations partners, a survey of Country Directors and an analysis of WFP statistical data. An inter-departmental workshop and a meeting with Executive Staff were held in early 2003 to test evaluation findings and formulate recommendations; further feedback on the results was obtained at a programme quality workshop in Rome in November 2003.
3. The evaluation is based on 17 PRROs.¹ An intervention model was developed that distinguishes this programme category from emergency operations (EMOPs). The analytical model for evaluating value-added is shown in the following diagram. The model anticipates the value-added effects of the PRRO organizational innovation and assumes logical relationships among inputs, outputs and outcomes. The Annex specifies the indicators used to assess value-added at each level.
4. This summary report gives an overview of the evaluation model and the major findings and recommendations of the full thematic evaluation. Details can be found in the full evaluation report, which is available as an information paper.

ANTICIPATED VALUE-ADDED OF THE PRRO CATEGORY



¹ The 17 cases were based on the following sources: nine OEDE-managed evaluations in Angola, Azerbaijan and Cambodia, the Great Lakes Regional Operation, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda, and eight constructed cases studies using multiple information sources, reviews, appraisals and some OEDE supplementary field visits involving Algeria, the Central American Regional Operation, Guinea Bissau, Colombia, Georgia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the West Africa Coastal Operation.



RELEVANCE OF THE PRRO CATEGORY

5. The PRRO category is a relevant, innovative creation. The intended change introduced by the PRRO is consistent with the needs of beneficiaries, the evolving nature of crises and the international community's response, and to WFP's evolving corporate mission.
6. The nature of emergencies and international responses is changing: emergencies are increasingly protracted crises—for example the current Southern Africa crisis, in which HIV/AIDS is a significant long-term factor that may in future affect other regions. International terrorism and related instability similarly raise concerns of a protracted nature.
7. Humanitarian and international development literature stresses the close relationship between crises and underdevelopment, and the importance of more developmental forms of relief and of improved linkages between relief and development. The chronic nature of the effects of these crises on poor and vulnerable people suggests that recovery strategies will remain relevant to the needs of WFP beneficiaries well into the future.
8. WFP has been a trendsetter in the United Nations community in developing approaches to linking relief and development. The PRRO innovation is consistent with Commitment 5 of the World Food Summit Plan of Action, parts of which call for improved linkages between relief and development operations.
9. The new category provides a reasonable planning horizon and requires strategic planning, and is flexible enough to accommodate the dynamics of protracted crises, as in Angola and Somalia, where one PRRO handles a range of relief and recovery needs.
10. The PRRO was found to be compatible with and complementary to decentralized programming insofar as it is intentionally flexible and requires local judgment and authority on the part of field managers. Such changes are consistent with international management practices favouring decentralized programming and planning.

VALUE-ADDED/RESULTS OF THE PRRO CATEGORY

More Effective Uses of Food Aid

11. The evaluators anticipated the following programmatic changes through the introduction of PRROs: (i) more developmentally sound relief operations, (ii) exploitation of recovery opportunities and (iii) improved synergies among the four WFP programme categories at the country level.
12. Overall, the evaluation concludes that PRROs appear to be supporting core relief functions, and so undoubtedly saving lives. The extent of this success has been difficult to quantify, however, because quantifying lives saved is not easy and because WFP does not yet have an adequate system for monitoring the outcomes of its programmes, which is a common problem in the humanitarian community. The evaluation team nevertheless concluded that on the basis of ten of the 17 cases for which some evaluative information on beneficiary outcomes was available, WFP was successful in achieving relief objectives. In Sudan and Uganda, however, concern was expressed that recovery functions may at times compromise WFP's capability to implement core relief functions.



13. Evidence that PRROs are effective in protecting and creating livelihoods and durable assets is more difficult to assess. Quantitative evidence about nutritional status was provided in only six of the 17 case studies; quantitative information about livelihoods was available in only four cases.
14. One of the main anticipated changes associated with the introduction of PRROs was decreased levels of general relief food distribution in favour of more targeted interventions promoting self-reliance and asset creation. This objective seems to have been partly achieved: in 2002, for example, there was a substantial difference in the amount of free relief assistance provided by the PRRO—55 percent—compared with the EMOP category—74 percent.
15. Recovery objectives were partially met in eight of the 17 cases reviewed. Activity targets were met in two cases, and although recovery activities were unquestionably closing food gaps, it was difficult to determine whether sustainable assets were created. Recovery objectives relating to health, education and training appeared positive and promising. In cases where education and training were available in post-emergency settings, food was generally associated with higher attendance levels. The case of Iran was interesting: food aid was successfully used as an incentive for families to increase girls' enrolment in schools.
16. A related consideration is the developmental quality of PRROs. Table 1 shows that the most commonly cited deficiencies in programme quality in the 17 cases reviewed related to targeting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and partnerships. The evaluation found similar deficiencies in EMOP designs.

TABLE 1: FACTORS IMPEDING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRROs	
Programme element	Number of cases identified as weak among the 17 PRRO cases reviewed by the evaluation
Targeting	9
Needs assessment and M&E	12
Partnership strategy	7
Local participation and capacity-building	6
Environmental soundness	3
Coordination	6
Durable benefits of assets for beneficiaries	3

17. The general weakness in targeting, assessment and M&E is of particular concern. One of the anticipated advantages of moving from EMOPs to PRROs is improved targeting, which depends on good assessments and outcome information. The evaluation concluded that this problem limits the effectiveness of PRROs; the humanitarian action evaluation community recognizes it as a problem for the humanitarian community as a whole, and not specific to



WFP.² It is recognized that WFP has undertaken measures aimed at strengthening monitoring and needs assessment.

18. Most recovery strategy documents need to be improved. Six of the 17 cases reviewed contained the five required sections dealing with recovery strategies, four did not include a section on the role of food aid and six were missing two or more of the required components of a recovery strategy. The evidence base used by field offices for development of the PRRO recovery strategies remains variable.
19. A promising practice in this context is routine use of vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM); the emergence of VAM units in country and regional offices is encouraging. VAM has a good reputation in the field and is increasingly recognized as a source of sound information about food insecurity in many settings.
20. Recovery planning and implementation are affected by the context of a PRRO, which may be (i) unstable, (ii) politically stable, or (iii) a long-term refugee operation.
21. PRROs have understandably been most problematic in highly unstable contexts where insecurity makes access and implementation difficult, such as Angola, the Great Lakes, the West Africa Coastal Operation and Uganda. Relief needs tended to overwhelm programme resources and recovery objectives were generally not achieved. Country offices were often found to be setting unrealistic or inappropriate recovery targets, including premature moves towards resettlement and reduced rations that could cause harm, as in Uganda.
22. The evaluation found that in politically stable settings recovery targets are close to being met; it was not always clear, however, whether durable assets had been created. These cases generally have articulated recovery strategies, but programme implementation often suffers from lack of beneficiary needs assessment and participation, insufficient technical support and many of the limiting factors that affect development programmes.
23. Long-term refugee settings are often relatively stable operations in which strategies for creating self-reliance or human assets should be promoted. In these cases, WFP interventions were not found to have changed significantly as a result of the PRRO category conversion. Unrealistic targets and rations for repatriation have sometimes been established.

Enhanced Efficiency

24. The evaluation model anticipated that the shift to PRROs would result in greater overall efficiency, but lack of data has made it impossible to reach definite conclusions on efficiency gains so far; the fact that there is less general relief food associated with the PRRO suggests some gains. The Uganda case study in particular revealed that efficiency gains were possible as a result of consolidating a previous protracted relief operation (PRO) and EMOP into a PRRO.
25. Assuming that the shift from an EMOP to a PRRO would typically involve lower transport costs, the evaluation examined budgeted internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) costs for all EMOPS converted to PRROs between 1999 and 2002. It found that budgeted ITSH costs were only slightly lower for PRROs than for EMOPs. The one striking difference was Somalia, where significant economies were realized by using local transport; the evaluation regarded this as a best practice in the PRRO category.

² See for example recent ALNAP Annual Reviews for 2001, 2002 and 2003.



Enhanced Programme Synergies and Changes of Attitude

26. The evaluators anticipated that creating a category that bridges relief and development would create more synergies among emergency interventions and development operations, but they found no significant evidence of it.
27. Senior field staff and Headquarters personnel appreciate the value-added of the PRRO category.³ They believe that the PRRO provides greater value-added than the other programme categories, which results in more relevant recovery programming, improved relief programming, enhanced flexibility and greater potential for resource mobilization.

Attracting Additional Resources

28. The PRRO category has resulted in some additional resources for WFP, although the team found it difficult to assess the magnitude of this effect. The category has to date been well resourced, and arguably the best resourced of all WFP programme categories in terms of needs versus requirements. WFP's ability to attract resources through the PRRO is indisputable: between 1999 and 2002, contributions to the category reached 86 percent of overall needs; in 2002, contributions met 95 percent of requirements; in the same period, EMOPS were resourced up to 74 percent of overall needs.

Unintended Outcomes

29. The evaluation team considered whether introducing PRROs might have negative consequences, such as introducing unrealistic recovery strategies before core relief functions have been completed. They found evidence in three of the 17 PRROs reviewed that beneficiaries may have been taken off relief rations before viable alternatives for self-reliance had been developed. The cases of the Sudan, Uganda and Algeria raised concerns about untimely introduction of recovery strategies, but ultimately it was not possible to assess whether negative outcomes occurred, given the lack of systematic monitoring of beneficiary status in virtually all field programmes.

Policy Implementation

30. The evaluation concludes that in most cases the two-year conversion rule has been followed. Table 2, however, shows that in 15 of 57 cases, EMOPs were not converted within the two-year timeframe. Some of the exceptions are very large operations that account for a substantial percentage of WFP's annual expenditures; the EMOP for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), for example, has been in place for over seven years and the budget of the current phase is more than US\$200 million. The Sudan also has a long-running EMOP with a current budget of more than US\$123 million; Afghanistan, which had been converted back to an EMOP from a PRRO, was recently reconverted to a PRRO.

³ Based on an e-mail survey and extensive staff interviews.



TABLE 2: CONVERSION OF EMOPS/PROS TO PRROs	
EMOP/PRO launched and converted to a PRRO as per two-year guide. No other EMOPS launched.	Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Iran, Iraq, Nepal, Somalia, Uganda, Yemen, Serbia/Montenegro, Guinea Bissau.
EMOP launched and completed within two years.	Chad, Cameroon, Ecuador, India, Lao People's Republic, Mozambique, Republic of Congo.
EMOP launched and not converted to a PRRO within two years. ⁴	Albania, DPRK, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Madagascar, Namibia, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Russia, Zimbabwe (local EMOP absorbed into regional EMOP), Indonesia, Kenya, Balkans region, Afghanistan (reverted from PRRO to EMOP for three years before re-launching the PRRO).
EMOP/PRO converted to a PRRO Subsequent EMOPs launched	Bangladesh*, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti*, Ethiopia*, Eritrea, Sudan*, Georgia, Indonesia, Kenya*, Mali, Senegal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Tadjikistan, Zambia*, Central America Regional (El Salvador), West Africa Coastal (Côte d'Ivoire), Great Lakes Regional (Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania*).

* Refugee-only PRRO

31. In 18 of the 36 cases where PRROs were ongoing, subsequent EMOPs had been approved. These findings suggest that in some cases the EMOP-to-PRRO transition and the use of PRROs to accommodate fluctuating circumstances is not yet being carried out with sufficient discipline at the corporate level. On the other hand, the decision to launch an EMOP alongside an existing PRRO is in some cases fully justified, for example in the seven cases of a drought- or flood-related EMOP in a country with a PRRO that was assisting refugees only. The full evaluation report reviews the factors that affect the decision to launch an EMOP when a PRRO is already in place; such decisions depend on the local situation.

Formulation of Realistic Recovery Strategies

32. In ten of the PRROs reviewed, recovery objectives were found to be unrealistic. Typical problems included unrealistic resettlement targets, over-emphasis on physical rather than social assets, limited WFP staff capacity to design and implement the strategy and insufficient access to beneficiaries.

More Flexible Programming

33. The increased flexibility in field operations brought about by introduction of the PRRO category is appreciated by WFP staff; of the Country Directors surveyed, 65 percent felt that PRROs provided more flexibility than EMOPs. The case evaluations of the Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Uganda and West Africa Regional operations cited the importance of flexibility in the context of the crises they were addressing. The Uganda PRRO showed that it was able to accommodate a sudden increase in numbers of internally displaced persons from the planned 190,000 to 300,000, although this flexibility appears to have impaired the PRRO's recovery aspects.

⁴ The list includes some drought-related EMOPs. Opinions differ as to whether such EMOPs should be converted to PRROs.



Adequacy of Inputs to the PRRO Category

34. The thematic evaluation found deficiencies in the adequacy of inputs to PRROs and in implementation of an effective management system.

Normative Guidance

35. The evaluation team concludes that corporate guidance on PRROs does not provide a strong logical framework for programme design, even though such guidance was arguably state-of-the-art when it was launched in early 1999. Members of the evaluation team argued that PRROs did not have a sound logical basis and that they needed to be designed using a logical framework; recent guidance in the *Programme Design Manual* has been amended to include this requirement and requires that PRRO preparation be organized around relief, recovery or refugees. This activity-driven approach has at times resulted in field staff attempting to implement activities such as food for work or resettlement that may be inconsistent with the objectives of the PRRO category.
36. A difficulty with the three categories arises in budgeting, in that they do not separate three logically distinct categories: refugees are a category of beneficiary, whereas relief and recovery are intended to separate two programmatic emphases. Mixing two categories into one means that the field and Headquarters have inconsistent information about who is being reached by what type of activity: it is not always clear whether recovery is being targeted or achieved among refugees.
37. To the extent that food aid programmes constitute a significant economic force in crisis-affected communities, current PRRO guidance places little emphasis on local food aid procurement and local contractors as factors that support recovery efforts; this valuable element should be explicitly recognized in future recovery strategies as appropriate.

Management Systems

38. The two major sources of input supporting management and implementation of PRROs continue to be joint food needs assessment missions (JFAMs) in the case of refugee programmes and joint FAO/WFP food assessments, both of which provide useful inputs for adjusting the food aid requirements of PRROs. These assessments, however, do not provide full assessments of the effectiveness of WFP's overall performance in implementing PRROs, including progress towards meeting objectives and updating of the recovery strategy. The relief-to-recovery policy and current PRRO guidance call for periodic review and updating of all PRROs; some complex multi-year PRROs such as the Great Lakes had undertaken such reviews, which were considered best practice by the evaluation team. The evaluation was unable to confirm that this requirement has been consistently applied over the period under review.
39. The evaluation found that the Programme Review Committee (PRC) was not providing consistently useful technical inputs to PRRO preparation because its reviews tend to occur too late in the programme preparation cycle to be meaningful.

Financial Resources

40. Field evaluation teams and senior management frequently raised financial management issues. Given that recovery activities often consume less food than relief and that this food may move through the WFP logistics system more slowly, the cash resources available to country and regional offices can be adversely affected.



41. A related consideration is the uneven ability of country offices to manage PRRO budget information. This situation should improve, however, as WINGS is rolled out to the field; the required resources for rollout and support of PRROs are not yet sufficient at Headquarters or in the field.
42. PRRO programme documents rarely budget adequately for M&E, assessment and training. Only in the case of Cambodia did the team find that more than 1 percent had been budgeted for assessment and evaluation. The evaluation team expressed concern about the lack of provision for ongoing programme review and development in PRRO budgets; five PRROs contained no budget for project appraisal.

Human Resources

43. The 1999 PRRO guidelines indicate that development of recovery programmes requires sophisticated analysis and development, but the evaluation found that this expertise has not been systematically available to WFP field offices. The problem is evident from the quality of recovery strategies already noted; it was cited as a problem by the PRRO field evaluations in Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Uganda and was frequently mentioned during staff interviews, especially in the African region where PRRO successor documents had in some cases been prepared in an almost identical manner as those of the preceding EMOPs. Lack of programme capacity among field staff can be inferred from the programmatic weaknesses identified by the field evaluations in recovery strategies, assessment, M&E and targeting.

Awareness Raising

44. Many senior staff felt that a modified PRRO format was needed to strengthen the future resourcing potential of the category.

EXTERNALITIES AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF PRROs

Donor Policies

45. A number of country office and Headquarters staff stressed the importance of informing donors about the PRRO category and why its introduction is an important innovation. The evaluation found donor understanding of the PRRO category to be variable in donor agencies interviewed and between them. Four evaluations mentioned this as a problem; in one case the evaluation concluded that the problem may have resulted in funding shortfalls. Interviews with donor representatives support this finding. The case studies frequently pointed out that more education about the PRRO was needed at the donor headquarters level, where funding decisions are often made, and at the local level, where representatives may have a role in financing decisions.
46. Earmarking—and especially de-earmarking—by donors of certain countries has had consequences for regional PRROs. The Great Lakes PRRO, for example, has been negatively affected by earmarking, which has reduced regional flexibility in moving resources around the region. Earmarking has also reached high levels in the West Africa Coastal operations.

United Nations System Approaches to Recovery

47. There are very different programmatic and administrative mechanisms in the United Nations system for handling protracted crisis and transition contexts. These



differences invariably complicate coordinated strategic and operational planning and implementation. Differences in programme and project preparation cycles and resource mobilization strategies have greatly complicated inter-agency work in protracted crisis and recovery settings.

48. The absence of a common strategy for dealing with recovery has meant that WFP has frequently had to develop recovery strategies on its own, as in Angola. It is anticipated that the current work of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Transition will help to improve coordination.

Other Partners

49. Recovery programming requires unique strategic partnerships. It requires strong partners in technical areas such as protection, mother-and-child health, HIV/AIDS, basic and vocational education, engineering, rural development, participatory planning, M&E and poverty alleviation. The evaluation found that WFP needs to develop further such recovery partnerships.
50. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are important partners in protracted crisis and recovery settings. There is concern, however, that the current guidelines and frameworks for working with NGOs in these settings are too general to promote genuine strategic partnerships. Guidance on transforming initial response partnerships into partnerships that promote sustainable recovery and development should remain a priority; there is, however, a useful broad framework for NGO partnerships.

CONCLUSIONS

51. The PRRO is a positive organizational innovation and an important step towards rationalizing WFP's relief-to-development portfolio and towards more appropriate assistance for beneficiaries. The PRRO category has helped WFP to become a trend-setter in transition programming among United Nations agencies; it is a flexible system that allows WFP to capture opportunities to promote recovery and to respond to unstable situations.
52. The effect of the PRRO category on corporate performance has been more variable, and difficult to determine because of the lack of systematic data on beneficiary outcomes. Perhaps the greatest documented achievement is the association of the PRRO with lower levels of general relief distributions; it also appears that the PRRO has to some degree enabled WFP to offset the decline in development resources. The success of PRROs in meeting recovery objectives for beneficiaries is not clear, because systematic measurement of outcomes is rarely undertaken as yet.
53. PRRO recovery objectives have only partially been met because of factors related to corporate implementation of the category or to external factors beyond WFP's control, the most important of which is crisis context. Highly unstable contexts preclude definite planning for durable solutions; on the other hand, recovery planning needs to begin early and should always be part of the initial response framework. Protracted refugee operations are frequently challenged by host government policies and practices related to refugee entitlements. In stable settings, recovery outputs are often achieved but impact may be attenuated by lack of clear planning and of an M&E framework, demand-driven interventions and strong implementing partners.



54. The main focus of continued strengthening of the PRRO category will be to (i) develop corporate capacities in recovery programming, (ii) improve normative guidance, (iii) create corporate incentives that support recovery programming, (iv) address human-resources gaps, (v) improve management processes and (vi) develop recovery-oriented organizational partnerships.
55. The following recommendations were made:
- Review the implications of designing and supporting recovery-oriented planning, focusing on developing a corporate strategy for strengthening programming capacity at all levels as a starting point for enhanced recovery programming. WFP should consider increasing the number of senior programming specialists.
 - Develop procedures for enhanced tracking of human resources related to programming as distinct from finance and administration; the aim should be enhanced monitoring of programming capacity over time.
 - Enhance nutrition and programme evaluation capacities at the field and regional bureau levels; WFP should allocate more funds to research into intended and unintended effects of interventions.
 - Develop a corporate strategy for building national staff capacity in programme-support functions, including enhanced training, professional development opportunities in neighbouring countries and funds and incentives for staff to participate in degree courses relevant to recovery programming.
 - Develop a small group of specialized staff or a roster of consultants who could support recovery-oriented planning; consider personnel loans with other United Nations agencies.
 - Encourage inter-agency approaches to the formulation of future PRROs.
 - Develop a system for capturing recovery lessons from successful PRROs.
 - Improve normative guidance on recovery to reflect lessons learned; greater corporate clarity is needed regarding the use of terms such as recovery, transition, reconstruction and rehabilitation.
 - Place greater emphasis on enhanced monitoring of recovery-related outcomes, including improved nutrition, livelihoods and durable solutions.
 - Monitor and evaluate the risks associated with protracted food aid, including dependencies and economic distortions; include tools in VAM and normative guidance that assess the effects of food aid on markets.
 - Regularly review PRROs in terms of results. Standard project report processes should be enhanced to serve as an internal management review for country offices and regional bureaux to identify corrective actions.
 - Enhance preparation of PRROs by developing dedicated budget and technical support; the PRC mechanism needs to provide strategic, technical and operational inputs earlier in the process.
 - Consider dropping the relief, recovery and refugee budget categories for PRROs. Alternatively, the relief and recovery activities could be maintained, but with clearer definition of which activities belong in each category. Activity budget categories should be consistent with donor needs, to permit them to draw more transparently from different funding sources; this will assist WFP's internal financial tracking against budgeted items. For administrative purposes, a separate budget breakdown for



refugees should be maintained. In this way, relief and recovery components could be tracked for refugee and non-refugee beneficiaries.





TABLE 3: PRRO EVALUATION INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE BASE

Outcomes/Effects	Evidence Base
More effective use of food aid	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ More developmentally sound crisis operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved beneficiary nutrition and livelihoods ➤ Increased asset creation that benefits food-insecure people ➤ Improved recovery/developmental quality of crisis programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Seizes opportunities for recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lower levels of general food distribution ➤ Improved recovery content of programmes ➤ Recovery activities are implemented as planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Improved programme category synergies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identified examples of Country Programme/Development Project and PRRO connectedness
More efficient use of food aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lower direct operating costs per ton ➤ Lower cost/beneficiary ➤ Lower ITSH rates
Additional resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Total contributions to WFP increase ➤ Donors draw on resources that they cannot utilize for development operations
Improved corporate attitude towards relief-to-recovery programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ WFP staff have favourable view of PRRO innovation ➤ United Nations agency personnel have favourable view of PRRO and view WFP as key player in recovery/post emergency ➤ Donors and the Executive Board have a favourable view of PRRO and view WFP as key player in post emergency/recovery

PRRO EVALUATION INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE BASE	
Unintended effects	
◇ PRRO compromises core relief functions	➤ Frequency of problems in delivering relief as a result of recovery activities
◇ WFP creates inappropriate opportunities for continued presence	➤ Frequency of indication of market distortions or dependencies created by PRRO – frequency of mention of problems, especially by resource staff
Outputs	
PRROs are implemented according to policy and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Number and percentage of EMOPs converted within two years ➤ Frequency of launching new EMOPs when PRROs are in place ➤ PRRO documents conform to guidelines
PRRO recovery strategy is realistic	➤ Frequency of PRROs that do not meet recovery activity targets
Field resource planning is adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PRROs show increased direct support costs per ton when converted ➤ PRRO documents provide for increased requirements associated with M&E, project preparation and capacity building
Programmes are more flexible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PRROs accommodate surges in relief needs ➤ Staff judge PRRO to be flexible instrument ➤ PRROs include contingency planning/resources
Inputs	
Adequate normative guidelines	➤ WFP guidelines are clear, consistent, realistic and complete
Adjustment of management systems to support PRRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adequacy of process for preparation and approval of PRROs ➤ Appropriateness of mechanisms for programme review and revision ➤ Decentralization





PRRO EVALUATION INDICATORS AND EVIDENCE BASE	
Adequate financial inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indication of budget increases to support programme needs
Adequate human resources to support PRROs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frequency of staffing deficiencies noted ➤ Evidence of increased programme staff after PRRO introduction
Adequate WFP marketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Donor awareness of PRRO ➤ Quality of marketing documents—frequency of mention of problems, especially by resource staff
Externalities	
Donor policies and attitudes are favourable to PRROs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frequency and magnitude of earmarking/unearmarking ➤ Donor knowledge and attitudes towards the PRRO ➤ Donor preferences
United Nations agency policies and programmes are complementary to WFP's approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ United Nations agency senior staff attitudes towards relevance of PRRO
Capacities of partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frequency of partner capacity inadequacy as constraint to performance
Heterogeneous crisis contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Influence of crisis context on PRRO performance

ANNEX**THEMATIC EVALUATION OF THE PRRO CATEGORY MANAGEMENT
RESPONSE**

1. The following interim management response is provided to contribute to the Board's consideration of the Summary Report of the Thematic Evaluation of the PRRO Category (WFP/EB.1/2004/6-A). WFP is establishing an inter-divisional process to consider further the steps needed to enhance the effectiveness of PRROs, taking into account the views of the Board. This process will inform the development of a management response matrix, which will be presented at the Annual Session 2004.
2. WFP supported the need for a thematic evaluation of the PRRO category, given that over five years have passed since its introduction and in view of the findings of the previous review, which showed the large amount of resources requested and received in support of PRROs. As the evaluation team concluded, the PRRO is a "highly relevant and innovative creation which is consistent with the evolving needs of WFP beneficiaries, the changing nature of crises internationally and WFP's corporate mission." It is an important programming and resource mobilization tool that allows for longer-term strategic planning and the flexibility to adapt programmes. Other United Nations agencies have commented on its value in the field and in the context of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Working Group on Transition Issues.
3. In view of the importance of the thematic evaluation, WFP notes with concern that the methodology used may limit the viability of some findings. The thematic evaluation was largely retrospective, involving a desk review of country or regional evaluations completed or planned before it was conducted; these used different terms of reference and analytical frameworks, and the countries were not chosen to ensure appropriate regional representation.⁵ Most evaluations were of first generation PRROs that have moved into their second-generation or later, and that were substantially revised in light of the very recommendations that provided the basis for the thematic evaluation.
4. WFP is also concerned (i) that the report does not adequately consider the external factors that influence PRRO performance and (ii) that there is too much focus on the recovery element of the PRRO programme category, which is inappropriate because PRROs are used as much to support WFP's ability to programme emergency relief assistance in protracted crises as to support recovery. Switching from an EMOP to a PRRO is triggered after two years by time rather than by a changed situation, for example when viable options for peace are in place; this is consistent with WFP's policy framework. The situation at the beginning of a PRRO may therefore be no more conducive to recovery activities than at the beginning of the preceding EMOP. In such cases, the dominance of relief activities in a PRRO is necessary and appropriate. The evaluation team did not consider adequately other external factors that limit PRRO performance, such as the impact on WFP's activities when partners are unable to provide critical complementary non-food inputs and services.

⁵ In an attempt to address this shortcoming, the Office of Evaluation conducted eight case studies between August and December 2003 to collect additional information, but was not able to do evaluations in these countries.



5. The evaluation team's recommendations fall into five categories: (i) programme competence, (ii) results-based management, (iii) normative guidance, (iv) inter-agency matters and (v) budget. WFP offers preliminary feedback in the following paragraphs to inform the Board's discussion.
6. **Programme competence.** Many of the recommendations made by the evaluators address the need to strengthen programming capacity; other documents have also addressed this issue. WFP agrees that a continued process of building programme skills is needed in all categories of its work; the issue was the topic of a workshop in November 2003 at which Country Directors, regional programme advisers and Headquarters staff discussed programme quality in the light of results-based management. Efforts are now under way to provide further support for regional programme staff, who are the first contacts for country offices seeking assistance. Staff are working to clarify additional training needs, building on the food aid and development training, which included training in participatory approaches, logframes and other topics relevant to PRROs and other programme categories. It is important to note WFP's ongoing efforts to develop staff competencies as a basis for staff recruitment and performance monitoring, and to be aware of the on-line tools that allow improved tracking of staff qualifications and experience.
7. **Results-based management.** The Board is aware of WFP's ongoing efforts to introduce results-based management, as a result of which improvements in programme planning and outcome monitoring are already evident. Related efforts are under way to build staff skills and improve monitoring and evaluation in technical areas such as nutrition and gender.
8. **Normative guidance.** The report's comments on the need for improved PRRO guidance would have benefited from closer review of the *Programme Design Manual*, which has been in place since July 2000 as an authoritative web-based source of information. The PDM was relaunched in November 2002 with a new, more user-friendly format and included a major revision of EMOP and PRRO workflows.
9. **Inter-agency matters.** The work of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group on Transition Issues is directly relevant to WFP's programming in the context of PRROs and vice versa. The working group's recently completed report will be used to inform inter-agency efforts to develop systematic application of guidance notes and tools for use in post-conflict transition. WFP will continue to contribute to this process and will need to adapt its internal tools and mechanisms accordingly.
10. **Budget issues.** Some of the budget issues raised by the evaluators are being addressed in the context of the Business Process Review. With regard to PRRO budget categories, WFP will need to revisit the need for relief, recovery and refugee categories, taking into account internal reporting requirements and the needs of donors.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DSC	direct support costs
EMOP	emergency operation
ITSH	internal transport, storage and handling
JFAM	joint food assessment mission
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRC	Programme Review Committee
PRO	protracted relief operation
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
PDM	Programme Design Manual
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
VAM	vulnerability assessment and mapping

