



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

Executive Board
Annual session
Rome, 29 June–3 July 2020

Distribution: General

Agenda item 7

Date: 21 May 2020

WFP/EB.A/2020/7-D/Add.1

Original: English

Evaluation reports

For consideration

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

Management response to the recommendations from the synthesis of evidence and lessons from WFP's policy evaluations (2011–2019)¹

Background

1. This document presents the management response to the recommendations set out in the synthesis of evidence and lessons from WFP's policy evaluations for 2011–2019 prepared by the Office of Evaluation.²
2. The synthesis brings together evidence and lessons from nine policy evaluations conducted between 2011 and 2019.
3. The evaluation made six recommendations.
4. The organization, at its highest levels, confirms its commitment to managing a corporate policy framework.
 - This is reflected in WFP's programme excellence priority. Programme excellence can only be achieved through a coherent policy framework that supports the delivery of country strategic plans. WFP's policy framework and related guidance must therefore be relevant and realistic, preparing the organization for regional and country-level programme design.

¹ For evaluation syntheses, synthesis reports are equivalent to summary reports on individual evaluations.

² WFP/EB.A/2020/7-D.

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- The corporate priority on simplification and efficiency has given further incentive to streamline the corporate policy framework, guided by the principle of policy coherence. Under the guidance of the Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department, this work will be undertaken by the policy cycle task force, chaired by the Director of the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division.
 - WFP has transformed its Executive Management Group into the Oversight and Policy Committee (OPC), which is made up of senior management from across the organization, including the Director of the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division. The OPC is dedicated to the agreement of policies and instruments of policy as well as the implementation of oversight recommendations and corporate risk management.
5. The bulk of the work entailed in implementing recommendations 1–5 of this synthesis report will be undertaken under the guidance of the Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development and the direct supervision of the Director of the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division as chair of the policy cycle task force. The task force, which was set up in the fourth quarter of 2019, will become a corporate work group over the course of 2020.
 6. The matrix below sets out the planned actions and implementation timelines.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SYNTHESIS OF EVIDENCE AND LESSONS FROM WFP'S POLICY EVALUATIONS (2011–2019)			
Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action to be taken	Priority/ implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Clarify and confirm the policy cycle procedure.</p> <p>Specific actions</p> <p>Update the 2011 policy formulation document to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a set of definitions that differentiate between WFP rules and regulations, strategies, policies, guidance notes, etc. and includes definitions for each item; ➤ a clear policy typology that clarifies the normative hierarchy and differentiates between (at a minimum) programmatic, cross-cutting and corporate thematic documents; ➤ updated classifications of policies for submission to the Executive Board, whether for approval, consideration or information; ➤ defined criteria for when a policy (as opposed to another document type) will be triggered; ➤ A revised policy cycle, including the accountability lines for different types of documents (see recommendation 2, below); and ➤ requirement for a policy timespan of five years, at which point approval – following an evaluation – should be required for its revision, updating or decommissioning (see recommendation 2). 	<p>Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division (as chair of the policy cycle task force); Executive Board Secretariat</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Under the guidance of the Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development, the Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division has established a policy cycle task force.</p> <p>The task force will oversee the review and updating of the 2011 policy formulation document. An updated document should be ready for review by the OPC by June 2021.</p> <p>The task force has already begun to revisit guidance provided in the original document and to make recommendations in line with recommendation 1 of this synthesis report.</p>	<p>June 2021</p>

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<p>Recommendation 2: Clarify policy governance and accountability procedures.</p> <p>2a. Confirm responsibility for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) activating a policy for any given issue (rather than leaving the responsibility with individual units); ii) ensuring policy coherence through the policy framework (see recommendation 3, below); and iii) approving strategies and providing provisional approval for policies prior to Executive Board approval (for all policies). <p>2b. Require a regular interface – through the Policy and Programme Division and the Executive Board Secretariat – with the Executive Board in relation to policy approvals and updates on implementation.</p> <p>2c. Confirm the process for policy decommissioning.</p>	<p>Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, (as chair of the policy cycle task force); Oversight and Policy Committee; Executive Board Secretariat</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The policy cycle task force will seek to provide guidance and parameters for policy content owners related to policy activation, coherence with corporate frameworks and approval processes. b) The Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division reviews the programme of work prepared by the Executive Board Secretariat and provides feedback on the relevance and feasibility of policy topics and timelines. c) The policy cycle task force, with direction from corporate stakeholders such as the Legal Office and the Office of Evaluation, will provide guidance and parameters for policy content owners on when a policy may be decommissioned. 	<p>February 2021</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3: Define the policy universe through an updated WFP policy framework, applying coherence as a key principle.</p> <p>3a. Applying the typology within the updated policy formulation document above, rationalize (including decommissioning/merging where appropriate) the range of WFP policies.</p> <p>3b. Reflect the resulting streamlined set of policies in a WFP policy framework aligned with the current strategic plan that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) determines substantive coverage of key issues by policy, strategy etc.; ii) identifies thematic intersections (e.g. between school feeding, social protection and capacity strengthening) and fills relevant policy gaps; iii) identifies the coverage (and gaps) of cross-cutting themes such as gender, protection and the humanitarian principles; and iv) clearly specifies areas of internal and external policy coherence. 	<p>Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, as chair of the policy cycle task force</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>WFP confirms its commitment to managing policies from the early stages of the identification of policy needs through policy evaluation and redesign and to presenting all corporate policies within a WFP policy framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The policy cycle task force will provide guidance to policy content owners on the application of typologies and the rationalization of the policy cycle process.¹ b) Given the array of corporate policies that fall under the current strategic plan, the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division will begin to review and update the compendium policies related to the strategic plan in connection with the preparation of the next iteration of the strategic plan. This process will be guided by recommendations 3b. The policy framework will also be taken into account during the formulation of the next strategic plan. 	<p>June 2021</p>

¹ For example, a set of approximately 20 policies would be within the range of the policy frameworks of other United Nations agencies.

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<p>Recommendation 4: Adopt a “policy-building” approach with clarified standards for staff.</p> <p>4a. Require all new policies being developed to adopt a “policy-building” approach that draws together a comprehensive evidence base and consultation with employees at all levels.</p> <p>4b. Include in the revised policy formulation document (or an Executive Director circular) mandatory requirements for all policies, such as an analytical basis, a vision and theory of change, positioning in relation to other actors, accountabilities and reporting mechanisms, a results framework and financial requirements.²</p> <p>4c. Require peer review of new policies coming on stream by technical experts and the policy cycle task force.</p>	<p>Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division as chair of the policy cycle task force</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>a) The policy cycle task force will provide guidance on policy building to policy content owners.</p> <p>b) Under the purview of the Director of the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division and the other members of the policy cycle task force, the 2011 policy formulation document will be reviewed by the task force.²</p> <p>c) Policy content holders who are planning to formulate new policies will be advised to follow guidance on policy building and policy cycle management. Guidance from the policy cycle task force will stipulate that technical expertise is required during the policy formulation process and that the task force will review and provide advice on the process used to formulate a new policy.</p>	<p>February 2021</p>

² The Office of Evaluation's top 10 lessons for policy quality documents will be revised to incorporate new learning from this synthesis and could be used as a reference for policy quality requirements.

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<p>4d. Clarify the essential “implementation package” required by policies, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) an agreed roll-out plan reflecting the various levels of implementation (headquarters, regional, country-specific); ii) a dissemination and communication strategy, internal and external; iii) guidance documents; iv) a funding and human resources strategy; and v) a monitoring and evaluation plan. 		<p>d) The policy cycle task force will issue guidance to policy content owners on an essential implementation package and key success factors for launching new policies.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>Overhaul the current policy compendium. Replace the current policy compendium presented to the Board each year with annual updates to the policy framework, also to be presented to the Board. These should comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • qualitative insights into areas of progress, outstanding gaps, etc., with a particular focus on systemic issues; and • updated information on progress against evaluation recommendation implementation. 	<p>Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, as chair of the policy cycle task force</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Director, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, will lead a review of the policy compendium by key policy content owners. The review will require qualitative updates related to policy implementation progress and evaluations.</p>	<p>November 2020</p>

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<p>Recommendation 6:</p> <p>Review the processes for developing high-quality management responses to evaluations and ensuring follow-up actions on evaluation recommendations.</p> <p>6a. Conduct business process mapping of the steps required to prepare management responses to evaluations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ providing mechanisms for quality checking the relevance and feasibility of proposed follow-up actions; ➤ ensuring cross-functional responsibilities for issues requiring systemic change; ➤ ensuring that management responses to individual policy evaluations are reviewed for internal coherence; and ➤ establishing appropriate timelines for developing management responses. 	<p>Director, Corporate Planning and Performance Division</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>The Corporate Planning and Performance Division will launch a review of the current management response process in consultation with all stakeholders in order to ensure the development of high-quality management responses. The processes used to track actions related to evaluation recommendations are currently being revised as part of the development and roll out of an issue management module in a new corporate risk and recommendation tracking tool (R2), for tracking and reporting on the implementation of recommendations and actions.</p> <p>a) Business processes will be mapped against the current process used to follow up on recommendations and revised as required to ensure that adequate timelines are set for the development and review of management responses. This work will include ensuring that proposed follow-up actions are checked for relevance and feasibility before management responses are finalized; cross-functional responsibilities are in place; and that there is corporate coherence of management responses. The Executive Management Group will be invited to endorse the outcome of this review and standard operating procedures and guidance will be updated to reflect any changes.</p>	<p>June 2021</p>

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<p>6b. For follow-up on actions agreed to in response to evaluation recommendations, and taking account of the existing commitment to revamp the corporate management response system, consider including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ standards for reporting on progress against evaluation recommendations; ➤ provision and verification of supporting evidence; ➤ formal review of progress by the EMG (including systems for escalation where agreed actions are insufficiently addressed); and ➤ progress reporting, including quantitative assessment and qualitative analysis of performance and gaps. 		<p>b) The issue management module is scheduled for global roll-out in September and October 2020. The Corporate Planning and Performance Division and the Office of Evaluation have been working closely with the RMR project team to ensure that the module includes provision for the verification of supporting evidence and senior management review and approval for the closure of actions and recommendations. Training and guidance materials will specify standards for reporting on the follow-up of implementation.</p> <p>The planned review of management response processes will also seek to improve escalation and management oversight of the follow-up of recommendations in order to provide updates to the Executive Management Group including for regular consideration by the Evaluation Function Steering Group.</p> <p>R2, the new corporate risk and recommendation tracking tool, will significantly improve qualitative and quantitative reporting capabilities. Report customization options are being developed in order to improve oversight by headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices and reporting to the Board on performance.</p>	