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For approval

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Interim report of the Executive Board working group on the governance review: Proposed recommendations for direct implementation by the Secretariat

Executive summary

At its 2023 second regular session, the Board established a “working group” on the governance review, to conduct a review of its governance structure, based on the recommendations provided by an independent consultant in the May 2023 governance review report, to consider other governance initiatives which the “working group” may deem appropriate, and to prepare and submit to the Board an implementation plan for all the selected recommendations.

This interim report provides a progress update on the work of the “working group” and presents a first set of recommendations, as requested in its terms of reference, that could be immediately implemented by the Secretariat upon the Board’s approval. These include recommendation 1 on revisiting the format and agenda of the formal Board sessions, sub-recommendation 2.1 on the reinforcement of word limits for Board documentation, recommendation 8 on redesigning the induction session and the development of a delegates’ handbook, recommendation 9 on digital transformation, initial action in response to recommendation 10 on the introduction of global ethics and integrity benchmarks, and recommendation 13 on designing an induction session and a handbook for Executive Board Bureau members.

Focal point:

Mr P. Ward
Secretary to the Executive Board
Executive Board Secretariat Division
email: philip.ward@wfp.org

Draft decision*

Having considered the interim report of the Executive Board working group on the governance review set out in document WFP/EB.A/2024/12-A/Rev.1, the Executive Board:

- i) *approves the costed implementation plan for a first set of recommendations that would be implemented by the Secretariat as set out in Annex I of this document, and requests the Secretariat to immediately implement these recommendations, as follows:*
 - 1) sub-recommendation 1.1: align the three formal Board sessions according to the governance frameworks by focusing the first regular session on strategy and policy, the annual session on oversight and accountability, and the second regular session on other policy matters and the programming and planning of activities for the coming years, noting that certain flexibility should be exercised to accommodate the shifting of items especially when it concerns time sensitive matters; and specify which items belong to each governance framework, as provided in Annex II of this document;
 - 2) sub-recommendation 1.2: conduct a one-day “strategic dialogue” at WFP Headquarters to create an informal space for Board members and observers and WFP management to discuss strategic issues – the “strategic dialogue” would be held early in the year, immediately followed by the first regular session; and submit to the Board an assessment of this recommendation two years after its implementation to determine its added value and identify potential areas for improvement;
 - 3) sub-recommendation 1.3: continue with the current practice of having the Executive Director deliver opening remarks during formal sessions, which shall include an overview of current and future opportunities and challenges to inform a strategic exchange with the Membership;
 - 4) sub-recommendation 1.4: include on meeting agendas only mandatory items and reports that require strategic discussion or decision, including by reducing the categories of items to two categories (for decision and for information); introducing an optional written correspondence procedure for information items that are raised for discussion; defining a timeframe for the addition of new items on Board agendas that require documentation; and discontinuing the following items on the Board agenda: the update on WFP’s response to HIV and AIDS, the report on the joint meeting of the Executive Boards (which would be circulated to the membership and posted on the Board web page), and the implementation status of evaluation recommendations (which would be embedded in the annual evaluation report);
 - 5) sub-recommendation 1.5: limit side events to a maximum of two per session and identify ways to improve their format to increase engagement;
 - 6) sub-recommendation 2.1: reinforce the word limits set by the Board in the 2004 information paper “Streamlining Board Documentation”, with a request to the Secretariat to produce a revision of the 2004 paper that reflect the latest Board document categories;
 - 7) sub-recommendation 8.1: conduct two in-person induction sessions per year and develop a digital refresher module on governance;
 - 8) sub-recommendation 8.2: develop a delegate’s handbook;

- 9) recommendation 9: implement the digital transformation initiatives proposed by the Executive Board Secretariat, which include sub-recommendations 9.1) meetings management services, 9.2 documentation and translation services and 9.4) streamline service management and data and reporting;
- 10) sub-recommendation 10.1: defer the matter on the introduction of a cooling off period for Board member representatives when joining WFP as staff members to the WFP Secretariat for its further determination;
- 11) sub-recommendation 13.1: conduct a half-day introductory session for new Bureau members; and
- 12) sub-recommendation 13.2: develop a handbook for Executive Board Bureau members focusing on their roles and responsibilities, including those for List Convenors.

* 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.

Introduction

1. At its 2023 second regular session, the Executive Board established a working group on the governance review to conduct a thorough review of its governance structure, based on the recommendations provided by an independent consultant in the [governance review report](#) of May 2023, and possibly suggest additional recommendations from other governance initiatives, which it may deem appropriate. Based on its review, the working group would prepare and submit to the Board a final report with an implementation plan for all the selected recommendations.
2. As set out in its terms of reference,¹ the working group was also tasked to establish a roadmap for its work, establish a first set of recommendations for immediate implementation by the Secretariat with an indicative timeline, a list of key stakeholders and any budgetary requirements, and engage with relevant WFP senior managers and responsible persons of the oversight functions, during the review process to obtain their input and suggestions.
3. Following a call for nominations by the Executive Board Bureau, the working group was constituted in December 2023 with three members per electoral list, adding up to a total of fifteen members across all five electoral lists. In addition to the members, several observers have also participated in working group meetings and contributed actively to the discussions.

Progress to date

4. To date, seven working group meetings have been held. Following its inaugural meeting in December 2023 and the election of a chairperson and two vice-chairs at its second meeting in January 2024², the working group focused its efforts on the establishment of a roadmap. As a first step, the working group discussed and agreed on the scope of its review, which would include:
 - All 14 recommendations and their corresponding sub-recommendations from the independent consultant's report, distributed in two groups: i) group 1 would include recommendations that could be directly implemented by the Secretariat (recommendations 2.1, 8, 9, 10 and 13); and ii) group 2 would include recommendations which would require more extensive discussions and analysis by the working group (recommendations 1, 2.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12).
 - Recommendations from other governance initiatives, including the Report on the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU): Review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN Women, Report of the External Auditor on delegation of authority to the Executive Director, and the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of WFP 2023/24.

¹ "Proposal for the review of the recommendations stemming from the governance review and establishment of a working group of the Executive Board" (WFP/EB.2/2023/10-A/Rev.1).

² The elected individuals are Mr. Tomás Duncan Jurado, Counsellor and Permanent Representative of Panama, as chairperson, and Mr. Roman Diatka, Counsellor and Permanent Representative of Czechia, and Ms. Elizabeth A. Petrovski, Finance and Oversight Specialist and Alternate Permanent Representative of the United States of America, as vice-chairs.

5. By March 2024, the working group had concluded its review of most recommendations from the independent consultant's report, that could be directly implemented by the Secretariat (group 1), which are presented in this document for the Board's approval. These include sub-recommendation 2.1 on the reinforcement of word limits set by the Board in the 2004 information paper "Streamlining Board Documentation", recommendation 8 on redesigning the induction session for new Board members, recommendation 9 on digital transformation, and recommendation 13 on designing an induction session and a handbook for Bureau members.
6. From April 2024, the working group commenced its review of group 2 recommendations from the independent consultant's report, including recommendation 1, sub-recommendation 2.2 on rationalizing and simplifying Board documents to facilitate strategic discussions and decisions, and recommendation 12 on revisiting the roles and responsibilities, tenure, and the ways of working of the Executive Board Bureau.
7. A preliminary review was also conducted on the JIU report on the review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of the New York-based UN funds and programmes. It was decided that relevant JIU recommendations be discussed in tandem with related recommendations from the independent consultant's report to complement the discussions. JIU recommendations not addressed in the independent consultant's report would be addressed separately. In addition, the working group requested the Board Secretariat to produce an analysis to determine if WFP's normative framework aligns with the benchmarks set out in recommendations 8 and 9 in order to assess whether further action by the working group would be required.
8. Given the importance of ensuring a comprehensive and thorough review of the governance recommendations and the consideration of insights from other governance initiatives – some of which would only be available from June 2024 – the working group determined that it would require additional time to complete its work, likely until November 2024. Following consultations with the Bureau which expressed support for the proposed extension, the working group will continue its review of the remaining recommendations in the second half of 2024 and will aim to submit its final report to the 2024 second regular session instead of the originally envisaged 2024 annual session.

Proposed recommendations for direct implementation by the Secretariat

9. Following a detailed review of the recommendations from the independent consultant's report, the working group has identified a first set of recommendations that could be immediately implemented by the Secretariat. A costed implementation plan for these recommendations is provided in Annex I, outlining key actions to be taken, an indicative timeline, a list of key stakeholders and budgetary requirements, as applicable.

Recommendation 1: Revisit the format and agenda of the formal Board sessions

10. This recommendation seeks to identify ways to reconfigure and streamline current Board sessions in order to make Board discussions more strategic, so that the Board may be positioned to provide the best possible strategic advice and support to WFP. It includes five sub-recommendations, which are outlined below:
11. *Sub-recommendation 1.1: Align the sessions with the governance frameworks (strategy, policy, oversight and accountability):* Following a review of the structure and content of current Board sessions, the working group would propose to realign the three formal sessions according to the original governance frameworks defined by the Board in 2005, as follows: the first regular session would focus on strategy and policy matters; the annual session would focus on oversight and accountability matters, with a clear emphasis on the reporting on activities from the previous year (including annual reports of WFP and the oversight

functions); and the second regular session would focus on other policy matters and the programming and planning of activities for the coming years, and would include items such as the management plan, country strategic plans (CSPs), CSP evaluations and other operational matters.

12. Notwithstanding the need to refocus the Board sessions, the Board should exercise certain flexibility to accommodate the shifting of items from one session to another when necessary, particularly (but not exclusively) when it concerns a time sensitive matter for the organization. In addition to the above frameworks, the working group would also propose to specify which items belong to each governance framework, as provided in annex II.
13. *Sub-recommendation 1.2: Introduce an annual strategic dialogue for the Board members and WFP leadership team:* The working group would propose to conduct a one-day "strategic dialogue" at WFP headquarters to create an informal space for Board members, observers and WFP management to discuss strategic issues. The "strategic dialogue" would be held early in the year, immediately followed by the first regular session. An external facilitator could be engaged to moderate the discussions and the agenda could be jointly developed by the Bureau and the external facilitator in close dialogue with management. Participation would be open to both Board members and observers. The meeting would take place under the Chatham house rules, and a non-binding note could be produced summarizing the proceedings and outcomes of the strategic dialogue. The Executive Board Secretariat would handle the logistics of the meeting and cover the costs through its regular budget. An assessment of the annual strategic dialogue should be conducted two years after its implementation to determine its added value and identify potential areas for improvement.
14. *Sub-recommendation 1.3: Start every formal Executive Board session with a strategic discussion with the Executive Director:* Currently, the Executive Director already provides opening remarks on the overall activities, operations and priorities of WFP. The working group would propose to continue with the current practice of having the Executive Director deliver opening remarks during formal sessions, with the inclusion of an overview of current and future opportunities and challenges in the Executive Director's opening remarks. This would then be followed by a strategic exchange and interactive dialogue with the Membership.
15. *Sub-recommendation 1.4: Include on meeting agendas only mandatory items and reports that require strategic discussion or a decision:* Following a review of a list of mandatory items as defined in article VI of WFP's General Regulations, and noting that the Board has the power to determine at any point in time which matter should or should not be considered and discussed during a Board session, the working group would propose a four-part action to further streamline Board sessions:
 - Reduce the current categories of items (for approval, for consideration and for information) to two categories: Items for decision (such decision could be to approve a proposal, to take note of a report, to adopt rules, etc.); and items for information (the purpose of which would be to provide information to the Board on a particular topic, with no need for the Board to provide guidance or direction to WFP).
 - Introduce an optional written correspondence procedure for information items prior to the Board sessions instead of raising such items for discussion during the session itself, which could be handled, in a similar manner as is currently done with the virtual consultations on the restricted area of the Board website.
 - Define a timeframe for the addition of new items on the agendas of the Board sessions that require documentation: the request for new items that require the elaboration of a pre-session document would be submitted no later than two months before the start of the session at which the item should be presented. The proposal would then be presented to the Bureau for its endorsement.

- Discontinue the following items on the Board agenda which require limited strategic exchanges between the members and management: the update on WFP's response to HIV and AIDS; report on the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, which would be circulated to the membership and posted on the Board webpage only instead of discussing it during the Board session; and implementation status of evaluation recommendations, which would be embedded into the annual evaluation report.
16. *Sub-recommendation 1.5: Limiting side events to a maximum of two per session and identifying ways to improve their format to increase engagement:* Side events take place on the margins of Executive Board sessions and are linked to items under discussion, showcasing WFP's work and partnerships in thematic areas. While many Board members have expressed that they often find it challenging to attend side events due to the busy Board schedule, side events still represent an important opportunity for the Secretariat and Member States to present specific topics of interest for strategic discussions. As such, rather than discontinuing them, the working group would propose limiting them to a maximum of two per session. Additionally, the Bureau and Secretariat should continuously identify ways to improve the format and interactivity of side events to encourage increased participation. Other options, such as holding side events outside of formal sessions could also be explored. The limitation of side-events does not apply to exhibitions, which could still be organised in addition.

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

17. There is broad recognition that Board documents have grown significantly over the years. The working group is proposing a two-part action in response to this recommendation: the first part entails reviewing the word limits for Board documents; and the second part entails a more in-depth review to assess ways to rationalize and simplify Board documents with a focus on their format and content to facilitate strategic discussions and decisions.
18. *Sub-recommendation 2.1: Word limits for Board documents:* The current word limit for Board documents was determined in the document "Streamlining Board Documentation", an information paper presented to the Board at its 2004 second regular session.³ An analysis conducted by the WFP Executive Board Secretariat showed that an average of 75 percent of the Board documents do not comply to the prescribed word limits. As such, the working group would propose that the Board reinforces the word limits set out in the 2004 paper and request WFP management to adhere to them. In addition, the Secretariat should also be requested to produce a revision of the 2004 paper to reflect the updated document types for operational matters, as a result of the introduction of the CSPs.
19. *Sub-recommendation 2.2: Rationalizing and simplifying the format and content of Board documents:* As the discussion on the format and content of Board documents relate to many other recommendations in the independent consultant's report, including recommendation 3 on policy formulation, and the rationalization and simplification of oversight and accountability documents under recommendations 5 and 6, the working group has decided to discuss this specific proposal alongside individual group 2 recommendations.

³ "Streamlining Board Documentation" (WFP/EB.1/2004/INF/7).

Recommendation 8: Redesign the induction session for new Board members and introduce training on good governance, refresher sessions during the year (online or in-person), delegates' handbook, and the automated monitoring of the outgoing and incoming member state representatives

20. Having reviewed the format and substance of current induction sessions for new Board members and observers, the working group recognises the need to redesign the induction sessions with a renewed focus on governance matters to allow new delegates to gain a stronger understanding of their governance role in accordance with the WFP General Regulations, General Rules and the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board. It therefore endorses the Executive Board Secretariat's proposal to conduct two in-person induction sessions each year (one early in the year with a focus on Board governance , and a second session in the fall with a focus on WFP activities), develop a self-paced, online module focused on Board governance to serve as a refresher course, and produce a delegates' handbook.

Recommendation 9: Digital transformation

21. This recommendation proposes a series of digitization efforts to improve existing Board processes including online consultation, Board meetings, meeting registration and documentation. Most of these initiatives are already included under the Executive Board Secretariat's current digital transformation roadmap for 2023–2028, which includes a series of projects aimed at transforming the way that the Board Secretariat provides services to the membership to facilitate and strengthen good governance.
22. The working group endorses the digital transformation projects proposed by the Board Secretariat as set out in annex I, namely sub-recommendation 9.1 on improvements to meetings management services including meetings registration and the monitoring of outgoing and incoming member state representatives, 9.2 on the implementation of a new documentation and translation platform, and 9.4 on streamlining data management, reports and analytics for the Executive Board Secretariat's operational and executive reporting, such as the annual analytical statistical report of the activities of the Executive Board, and also providing service managers with operational dashboards to support efficiency and effectiveness improvements of digital governance services.
23. The working group has decided to defer its review of sub-recommendation 9.3 on leveraging the current online virtual consultations platform for policy matters to a later stage and handle it as part of recommendation 11 on revisiting and improving the consensus building processes and platforms.

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

24. Following careful deliberation, the working group would propose to handle this recommendation in two parts: First, the issue of introducing a cooling off period would be deferred to the WFP Secretariat⁴ for its further determination, as this matter represents a potential conflict of interest for Board members and Member State representatives; second, further discussions would be required within the working group on the establishment of a code of conduct.

⁴ As defined in article VII of the General Regulations, this refers to the Secretariat of WFP headed by the Executive Director.

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

25. The working group endorses the Board Secretariat's proposal to transform the current Bureau-to-Bureau handover meeting into a half-day introductory session for new Bureau members with a focus on the role and responsibilities of the Bureau, its ways of working, governance matters, interactions within and across lists, and support provided by the Executive Board Secretariat. Further, the working group would propose to develop a handbook for Executive Board Bureau members focusing on their roles and responsibilities including those for List Conveners.

Next steps

26. In the second half of 2024, the working group will aim to finalize its review of all the remaining recommendations from the independent consultant's report and relevant recommendations from other governance initiatives as it deems appropriate, in order to provide a final report for approval at the 2024 second regular session. An informal consultation with the membership is planned for October 2024 to update members and observers on the outcomes of the working group's review and the proposed way forward on the recommendations ahead of the 2024 second regular session.
27. Moving forward, the chair will continue to provide regular updates to the Bureau on the progress made by the working group.

ANNEX I

TABLE A.1 – COSTED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION BY THE SECRETARIAT					
Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
<p>1. Revisit the format and agenda of the formal Board sessions in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align the sessions with the governance frameworks (strategy, policy, oversight and accountability) • Introduce an annual strategy retreat for the Board members and WFP leadership team • Start every formal Executive Board session with a strategic discussion with the Executive Director on a selected topic agreed by the Executive Board Bureau members • Include on meeting agendas only mandatory items and reports that require strategic discussion or a decision • Discontinue side events as they don't add any value to the governance role of the Executive Board. 	<p>1.1 Align the sessions with the governance frameworks (strategy, policy, oversight and accountability)</p> <p>Following a review of the structure and content of current Board sessions, the working group would propose to realign the three formal Board sessions according to the four interlinked governance frameworks as defined in the original governance project of 2005 and further streamline the Board sessions, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first regular session would focus on strategy and policy matters. It could also include other governance matters, covering any discussion that would normally be planned at another session, but which would have to be taken at this session for time sensitivity reasons or to avoid overloading other sessions (e.g. second regular session with CSPs). • The annual session would focus on oversight and accountability matters, with a clear emphasis on the reporting on activities from the previous year (annual reports of WFP and the oversight functions). • The second regular session would focus on other policy matters and the programming and planning of activities for the coming years, and would include items such as the Management Plan, CSPs and CSP evaluations and other operational matters. <p>Notwithstanding the above, the Board should exercise certain flexibility to accommodate the shifting of items from one session to another when necessary, particularly (but not exclusively) when it concerns a time sensitive matter and considering the humanitarian nature of WFP's work.</p>	<p>July – Dec 2024: Updates to the biennial programme of work for 2025-2026 based on the reconfigured Board sessions and redistribution of items</p> <p>From EB.1/2025: Implementation of the reconfigured Board sessions</p>	Executive Board Bureau, Executive Board members, Executive Board Secretariat, WFP management	N/A	More effective and efficient use of the Board's time during formal sessions More streamlined and strategic exchanges between the Board and WFP management

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	<p>In addition to the above frameworks, it is noted that the items on the Board agendas are distributed according to a number of broad sections which were established over time but did not directly match the defined frameworks (e.g. annual reports, policy issues, resource, financial and budgetary matters, evaluation reports, operational matters, etc.). The working group would propose to streamline these sections and specify which items belong to each governance framework, as outlined in Annex II of this document.</p>				
	<p>1.2 Introduce an annual strategic dialogue for the Board members and WFP leadership team</p> <p>The working group would propose to conduct a one-day “strategic dialogue” at WFP Headquarters to create an informal space for Board members and WFP management to discuss strategic issues. The “strategic dialogue” would be held early in the year, immediately followed by the first regular session.</p> <p>The objective of the strategic dialogue would be to facilitate informal engagement among Board members and with WFP management with a focus on strategic issues to set the stage for the work in the year ahead, build relationships across Lists and cultivate trust among Board members and strengthen alignment around WFP’s mandate and strategy. An external facilitator could be engaged to moderate the discussions. The agenda could be jointly developed by Board members (through List Conveners) and the external facilitator in close dialogue with management. Participation would be limited to a single representative from each Member State from the Board members and observers (ideally at the head of delegation level), together with the List Conveners and Alternates.</p>	<p>Sept – Dec 2024: Design of the first strategic dialogue to be held in early 2025</p> <p>February 2025: First strategic dialogue held at WFP headquarters</p>	<p>Executive Board Bureau, Executive Board members, external facilitator, Executive Board Secretariat, WFP management</p>	<p>N/A (to be covered under the Executive Board Secretariat's regular budget)</p>	<p>More strategic exchanges between the Board and WFP management</p>

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
	The meeting would take place under the Chatham house rules, with no recordings and no transcripts. A non-binding note could be produced summarizing the proceedings and outcomes of the strategic dialogue. The meeting would be held in the Board languages. The Executive Board Secretariat would handle the logistics of the strategic dialogue and cover the meeting costs through its regular budget.				
	<p>1.3 Start every formal Executive Board session with a strategic discussion with the Executive Director</p> <p>Currently, the Executive Director already provides opening remarks on the overall activities, operations and priorities of WFP. The working group would propose to continue with the current practice of having the Executive Director deliver opening remarks during formal sessions, with the inclusion of an overview of current and future opportunities and challenges in the Executive Director's opening remarks. This would then be followed by a strategic exchange and interactive dialogue with the Membership.</p>	From EB.2/2024 (November)	Executive Board Bureau, Executive Board members, Executive Board Secretariat, WFP management	N/A	More strategic exchanges between the Board and WFP management
	<p>1.4 Include on meeting agendas only mandatory items and reports that require strategic discussion or a decision</p> <p>Following a review of a list of mandatory items as defined in article VI of WFP's General Regulations, and noting that the Board has the power to determine at any point in time which matter should or should not be considered and discussed during a Board session, the working group would propose a four-part action to address this sub-recommendation in order to further streamline Board sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the categories of items to two categories: For decision and for information. Currently, each item of the Board agendas is classified according to one of the three categories: For approval, for consideration and for information. While items for approval are clearly defined as those which require a formal decision by the Board, there is 	From January 2025: Implementation of proposals	Executive Board Bureau, Executive Board members, Executive Board Secretariat, WFP management	N/A	More effective and efficient use of the Board's time during formal sessions More streamlined and strategic exchanges between the Board and WFP management

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
	<p>often little distinction between items for consideration and items for information. As such, the working group would propose to reduce these to two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Items for decision: such decision could be to approve a proposal, to take note of a report, to adopt rules, etc. These items should always be supported by background documentation, which should include a draft decision to be considered and approved by the Board during its formal sessions, which should provide direction and guidance to WFP. ➤ Items for information: the purpose of these items is to provide information to the Board on a particular topic, with no need for the Board to provide guidance or direction to WFP. • Introduce an optional written correspondence procedure for information items prior to the Board sessions instead of raising such items for discussion during the session itself. Upon members' request, these items could be subject to a written correspondence procedure, which could be handled in a similar manner as is done with the virtual consultations on the restricted area of the Board website. • Define a timeframe for the addition of new items on Board agendas that require documentation. Currently, no timeframe has been established by the Board for the addition of new items on the agendas of Board sessions. The working group would propose that new items that require the elaboration of a pre-session document be submitted no later than two months before the start of the session at which the item should be presented. 				

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discontinue items on the Board agenda that require very limited strategic exchanges between the members and management. Following an analysis of Board session agendas, the working group has identified some recurrent items that were added over the years with limited strategic value. It therefore proposes that the Board discontinue these items, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Update on WFP's response to HIV and AIDS: The initial HIV and AIDS policy was approved in 2010 and since then most of its activities have been streamlined into WFP's work; this information is also already largely available in other reporting documents such as the annual performance report; ➢ Report on the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP: Given the limited exchange on this report at formal sessions, the working group would propose circulating this report to the membership and posting it on the Board webpage instead of discussing it during the session; and ➢ Implementation status of evaluation recommendations: This document was issued for the first time at EB.A/2010, following the discussions of the WFP evaluation policy in 2008. The working group would propose embedding this information into the annual evaluation report or as part of the annual performance report. 					
	<p>1.5 Limit side events to a maximum of two per session and identify ways to improve their format to increase engagement</p> <p>Side events take place on the margins of Executive Board sessions and are possibly linked to items under discussion,</p>	From EB.2/2024 (November)	Executive Board Bureau, Executive Board members, Executive Board	N/A	Time and cost savings on the part of the membership and WFP management

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	showcasing the work of WFP in thematic areas such as resilience, nutrition, climate change and innovation in favour of programmes supported by the membership. While many Board members have expressed that they often find it challenging to attend side events as they are usually held during the lunch break, obligating them to choose between lunch, bilateral meetings and the side events, they still represent an important opportunity for the WFP Secretariat and Member States to present specific topics of interest. As such, rather than discontinuing them, the working group would propose limiting them to a maximum of two per session. Additionally, the Bureau and Secretariat should jointly identify ways to improve the format of side events so that they are more interactive and engaging to encourage increased participation from the membership. Other options, such as holding side events outside of formal sessions could also be explored. The limitation of side events does not apply to exhibitions, which could still be organised in addition.		Secretariat, WFP management		More efficient use of the Board's time during formal sessions
2. Rationalize and simplify Board documents to facilitate strategic discussions and decisions including formats, word limits and information provided to achieve smart reporting: “strategic input for strategic output”.	2.1 Reinforce the word limits set by the Board in the 2004 information paper “Streamlining Board Documentation” and request the Secretariat to produce a revision of the 2004 paper that reflect the latest Board document categories. The current word limit for Board documents was determined in the document “Streamlining Board Documentation”, an information paper presented to the Board at its 2004 first regular session. ¹ These are currently set within the range of 1,500 to 7,000 words by various document categories. The document also provides exceptions for specific documents such as the strategic plan, annual performance report, management	EB.2/2024: Presentation of the updated paper to the Board for approval From December 2024: Reinforcement of the word limits as set out in the updated paper	Executive Board, WFP management	N/A	Significant time and cost savings on the part of the membership and WFP management More strategic discussions between the Board and WFP management

¹ “Streamlining Board Documentation” (WFP/EB.1/2004/INF/7).

TABLE A.1 – COSTED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIRECT IMPLEMENTATION BY THE SECRETARIAT					
Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
	<p>plan and audited annual accounts, which have sometimes gone beyond 80,000 words.</p> <p>An analysis conducted by the WFP Executive Board Secretariat showed that an average of 75 percent of the Board documents were oversized compared to the prescribed word length, representing some 20 percent of additional volume of documentation to consider for the delegates. In addition, key documents were excluded from the word limits, and some have grown exponentially over the years. For example, the management plan and the annual performance report reached 65,000 and 73,000 words respectively in 2023, compared to 42,000 and 46,000 words respectively in 2014. Finally, a comparison with the documents produced for other Funds and Programmes in New York showed big differences in the size of documentation. For example, the equivalent of the CSPs for UNICEF and UNDP have an average length of 6,000 words while WFP's CSPs are beyond 11,000 words on average.</p> <p>Based on this analysis, the working group would propose that the Board reinforces the word limits 2004 information paper "Streamlining Board Documentation" and requests WFP management to adhere to them. The Board should also request the Secretariat to produce a revision of the 2004 paper in order to update the categories of documents.</p>	approved by the Board			
	<p>2.2 Formulate a proposal for rationalization and simplification.</p> <p>Once the word limits have been reinforced, the working group could then assess ways to rationalize and simplify Board documents to facilitate strategic discussions and decisions. As this topic relates to many other recommendations in the independent consultant's report, the working group would propose handling this item under group 2 recommendations to facilitate the formulation of holistic solutions.</p>	Deferred: To be discussed under Group 2	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
8. Redesign the induction session for new Board Members and introduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training on good governance • refresher sessions during the year (online or in-person) • delegates' handbook • automated monitoring of the outgoing and incoming member state representatives 	<p>8.1 Conduct two in-person induction sessions per year and develop a digital refresher module on governance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a first induction session on governance matters early in the year at WFP Headquarters with a focus on orienting new delegates to their governance role in accordance with the WFP Rules and Regulations and the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board. Topics could include the functions of the Board, the role of the President and the Bureau, objectives of Board sessions and informal consultations, negotiation dynamics and the workings of the Board as outlined in the current Rules of Procedure. List Conveners and more experienced Board members could also have a role in the design of the session to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to new delegates. • Conduct a second induction session on WFP activities in the fall of each year at WFP headquarters, mirroring the structure and format of the current fall induction session where new members and observers would receive an overview of WFP's work, its mission, structure, programmes, operations, partnership, among other topics. • Develop a self-paced, online module focused on governance to serve as a refresher course for delegates who wish to revisit the material on governance. This module could also be a useful resource for new delegates who arrive later in the year or those who may have missed the in-person induction. The module would be made available on the Executive Board website. 	July-Dec 2024: Session design Jan 2025: Roll-out of new induction sessions July – Dec 2024: Development of digital module Early 2025: Module launch	Winter session: Executive Board Secretariat (coordination with various stakeholders on session design), Bureau members and Board members (contributors) Fall session: Executive Board Secretariat, WFP management Online module: Executive Board Secretariat	USD 15,000 (approx.) for the design and facilitation of the governance induction session; no additional cost for conference servicing is foreseen as it is already included in the regular budget of the Executive Board Secretariat USD 20,000 (approx.) for the digital module	Strengthened understanding of the governance role of the Executive Board leading to increased efficiency Greater understanding of WFP activities contributing to more strategic advice and guidance to WFP management
	<p>8.2 Develop a delegate's handbook.</p> A delegate's handbook could be developed by the Executive Board Secretariat, drawing from examples of existing handbooks from the governing bodies of other UN entities. It could cover topics such as the functions and workings of the Board, an	July – Dec 2024: Handbook development Early 2025: Launch of	Executive Board Secretariat, Bureau members (contributors)	USD 5,000 (approx.)	Time and cost savings in written correspondence and exchanges for both

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
	overview of Executive Board sessions, informal meetings, decision making processes, Board activities, documentation, logistics of Board sessions, facilities and services for delegations, etc.	delegates handbook			the membership and the Secretariat
	8.3 Automate the monitoring of outgoing and incoming member state representatives. See the Activity 9.1 under recommendation 9: digital transformation.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
9. Digital transformation: - Digitalization of the relevant Board processes (e.g. online consultation), meetings, meeting registration and access and comment on Board documents would help representations with limited resources keep up with the busy Board calendar and engage more actively in Board discussions.	9.1 Meetings management services. Within the Seamless Experience programme of work to provide digital governance services to its stakeholders, the Executive Board Secretariat will continue the implementation of the digital transformation road map by progressively improving the modules involved in managing information related to Board meetings and delivering the features in the Meeting Registration Project which includes recommendations for membership update of information and registration management, and the monitoring of outgoing and incoming member state representatives.	Q3 2024: Minimal Viable Product released From 2025: Continuous improvement	Executive Board Secretariat, Executive Board Membership, WFP Staff	Funded under the Executive Board Secretariat's regular budget for 2024-2025	Streamlined meetings management services, time, and cost savings in managing the process on all sides
	9.2 Documentation and translation services. The Executive Board Secretariat has commenced the implementation of the Documentation and Translation Platform to retire legacy technology and consolidate all editorial and translation resources on one collaborative platform. This new platform will deliver a collaborative editing and translation environment that manages the end-to-end process from the initial requests to WFP divisions to delivering documentation to the membership. This contributes in part to recommendation 2 on the streamlining of documents preparation by bringing WFP content focal points into the Documentation and Translation Platform to monitor progress, provide automated alerts and reminders of deadlines, and provide real-time status dashboards that highlight bottle necks.	Q2 2024: Platform launch From 2025: Integration projects if funding is available	Executive Board Secretariat, WFP Staff	Funded under the Executive Board Secretariat's regular budget for 2024-2025	Streamlined documentation process for the Membership, time savings for all actors, and cost savings
	9.3 Leverage and expand the current Online Virtual Consultations Platform for policy matters. As this proposal closely relates to recommendation 11 on revisiting and improving the consensus building processes and platforms, the working group will handle this specific proposal as part of its review of recommendation 11 under group 2.	Deferred: To be discussed under recommendation 11 (Group 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
	9.4 Streamline service management and data and reporting. As part of the Executive Board Secretariat's digital transformation of its governance services and with the arrival of digital end-to-end support of processes and services, this project will invest in streamlining data management, reports and KPI analytics for the Executive Board Secretariat's operational and executive reporting such as the annual analytical statistical report of the activities of the Executive Board, but also providing EBS service managers with operational dashboards to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of digital governance services. This activity also contributes to recommendation 3 on the use of new technologies and digital tools to increase efficiency and engagement with the membership when it comes to the review of policy-related matters.	2024-2025: Initial reports published	Executive Board Secretariat, Membership, WFP Staff	Partially funded in 2024. Additional cost may be required in 2025: USD 50,000	Business value insights, time savings, potential cost savings
10. Introduce global ethics and integrity benchmarks, including a code of conduct for Executive Board members including a cooling off period for Board member representatives when joining WFP as staff members.	10.1 Defer the matter on the introduction of a cooling off period to the WFP Secretariat for its further determination. As the matter of introducing a cooling off period for Board member representatives when joining WFP as staff members represents a potential conflict of interest for Board members and Member State representatives, the working group would propose to defer this matter to the WFP Secretariat for its further determination.	From July 2024: WFP Secretariat to handle the matter on introducing a cooling off period	WFP Secretariat	N/A	Greater adherence to global ethics and integrity benchmarks
	10.2 Introduce a code of conduct for Executive Board members Following careful deliberation, the working group has determined that further discussions would be required on the establishment of a code of conduct for Executive Board members and will revert to the Board with a proposal at a later stage.	Deferred: Proposal under discussion by the working group	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Recommendation	Sub-recommendations and description	Timeline	Key stakeholders	Budgetary requirements	Long-term results / efficiency gains
13. Design an induction session and a handbook for Executive Board Bureau members focusing on their roles, responsibilities, and ways of working	13.1 Conduct a half-day introductory session for new Bureau members. Currently, new Bureau members are oriented to their new roles through a brief Bureau-to-Bureau handover meeting coordinated by the Executive Board Secretariat shortly after the election of new Bureau members. The proposal would be to transform this meeting into a half-day introductory session for new Bureau members to be held at WFP Headquarters, where new Bureau members would receive an introduction to the role and responsibilities of the Bureau, learn about its ways of working, governance matters, ways of interacting with members and observers of their respective lists, and the support provided by the Executive Board Secretariat. Previous Bureau members would also be invited to attend the session to share their experiences and facilitate the transfer of knowledge to the new Bureau.	First session to be conducted in early 2025	Executive Board Secretariat, Bureau members	N/A	Strengthened understanding of the governance role of the Bureau leading to increased efficiency
	13.2 Development of a handbook for Bureau members. The working group would propose to develop a handbook for Executive Board Bureau members focusing on their roles and responsibilities. The handbook should also define the general roles and responsibilities of List Conveners.	Early 2025: Launch of Bureau handbook	Bureau members, Executive Board Secretariat	N/A	Strengthened understanding of the governance role of the Bureau leading to increased efficiency
Total estimated cost for the implementation of group 1 recommendations					USD 90,000

ANNEX II

TABLE A.2 – DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS			
Governance framework	Current section	New section	Examples of items covered and actions by the Board
Strategic	N/A	Strategic matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic plan (A)¹
Policy	Policy issues	Policy issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New policies (A) - Revised policies (A) - Policy implementation updates (C) - Compendium of policies (I)
Oversight	Resource, financial and budgetary matters	Financial and budgetary matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management plan (A) - Audited annual accounts (with the updated format to be presented for EB.A/2024) (A) - Other financial matters mandated by the rules and regulations or requested by the Board (strategic financing mechanisms, report on contributions, reductions and waivers of costs, etc.) (I)
Oversight	Operational matters	Operational matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global and regional overviews (I) - CSP evaluations (C) - New CSPs (A) - Reports of field visits of the Board (I) - Update on United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (I) - Report on global losses (I) - Update on food procurement (I) - Security report (I)

¹ This change would require a modification of the general rules which currently indicate that the strategic plan should be submitted to the Board at its annual session.

TABLE A.2 – DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS			
Governance framework	Current section	New section	Examples of items covered and actions by the Board
Oversight	N/A	Oversight functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual report of the Inspector General (C) - Annual report of the IOAC (C) - Annual evaluation report (C) - Annual report of the Ethics Office (C) - Annual report of the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Service (C) - Strategic and policy evaluation reports and management responses (C) - Reports by the Joint Inspection Unit relevant to the work of WFP (C) - Management review of significant risk and control issues (C) - Workplan of the External Auditor (I) - Appointment of members to the IOAC (A)
Accountability	Annual reports	Annual reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual performance report (A)
Accountability	N/A	Reports of Board sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decisions and recommendations of the session - Summary of the work of the session
N/A	Administrative and managerial matters	Organizational and administrative matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biennial programme of work of the Board (A/I) - Address by staff representative bodies to the Board - Statistical report on international professional staff and higher categories (I)
N/A	Other business	Other business	To be used only for items not foreseen in other categories