

**BACKGROUND PAPER**  
**FIRST INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON**  
**EVALUATION POLICY (2016–2021)**  
**Revision 1**



**Informal Consultation**

**14 May 2015**

**World Food Programme**  
Rome, Italy

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper is not a draft of the revised evaluation policy. It is an update on progress in the revision of the 2008 evaluation policy, and highlights significant issues for the Board's consideration.

1. Preparation of the policy builds on internal and Board dialogue around the United Nations Evaluation Group–Development Assistance Committee (UNEG-DAC) peer review of WFP's evaluation function. This paper was prepared for the Board's annual evaluation consultation; a full draft of the policy<sup>1</sup> will be presented at a second consultation in July. To ensure that the policy is informed by international best practices, the evaluation policies of 14 comparator organizations have been reviewed.
2. The response to the UNEG-DAC peer review, presented to the Board at its Second Regular Session in 2014,<sup>2</sup> committed WFP to revising its policy in line with UNEG norms and standards, the findings and recommendations of the 2014 Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) assessment of the United Nations evaluation function, and a modified version of the peer review's model 2, characterized as “centralized evaluation with demand-led decentralized evaluation”.
3. In addition, the Board requested the Secretariat to develop a set of key performance indicators to support the Board's oversight of evaluation across WFP and to pay adequate attention to the need to have systems and processes in place to maximize the use of evaluation results in policy and strategy development, and in project and programme design.
4. The document provides a summary of the context for the policy and outlines the main areas requiring revision, the implications and the risks. It concludes with proposed oversight arrangements.

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<sup>1</sup> The policy is expected to have the following sections: i) Introduction; ii) Context; iii) Concepts and definitions; iv) Guiding principles; v) Purpose of the evaluation function in WFP; vi) Main elements of the evaluation function; vii) Partnerships; viii) Roles and accountabilities; ix) Resources; and x) Policy implementation, oversight, reporting and review.

<sup>2</sup> “Response to the Recommendations of the Summary Report of the Peer Review of the Evaluation Function at the World Food Programme” (WFP/EB.2/2014/6-D/Rev.1).

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## CONTEXT

5. The external landscape has evolved considerably since the 2008 evaluation policy was approved, with changing roles and structures in the United Nations system, framing of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals and national leadership of development processes. These shifts have implications for evaluation in the United Nations – as reflected in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system<sup>3</sup> and General Assembly resolution 69/237<sup>4</sup> – calling for an increased emphasis on country-led evaluation, joint evaluation and arrangements for system-wide evaluation. In the humanitarian system, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) arrangements for improved accountability and learning, also have implications for WFP’s evaluation function to which the revised policy must respond (see Annex I).
6. Internally, WFP is undergoing a process of organizational strengthening to enhance its ability to deliver on its mandate and Strategic Objectives, and contribute to the Zero Hunger Challenge and Sustainable Development Goals. The Framework for Action to ensure that WFP is Fit for Purpose includes commitments to instilling a culture of accountability for results and learning from experiences and challenges, putting country offices at the centre of WFP’s work. The new evaluation policy will be aligned with these commitments and will focus on building WFP’s evaluation function to support them.

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## AREAS FOR REVISION

7. In its response to recommendation 2 of the UNEG-DAC peer review, WFP commits to revising the 2008 evaluation policy to:
  - i) reaffirm WFP’s commitment to the role of the evaluation function in WFP’s accountability and learning system, and to international principles and safeguards for the independence of evaluation;
  - ii) clarify roles and responsibilities in WFP’s evaluation function, including those of the Board, senior management, the Office of Evaluation (OEV), regional bureaux, country offices and Headquarters divisions, in line with WFP’s Fit-for-Purpose and organizational strengthening processes;
  - iii) define terminology for and linkages among evaluation, monitoring, review and policy and programme design, in line with WFP’s new performance management system;
  - iv) establish coverage and resourcing requirements for centralized and decentralized evaluations; and
  - v) clarify WFP’s engagement in system-wide evaluation, including joint and inter-agency evaluations, and development of national evaluation capacity.
8. The rest of this section provides an update on the status of each of the above areas for revision.

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<sup>3</sup> Resolution 67/226 (QCPR).

<sup>4</sup> United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/237 (2014): Building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level.

- i) **Reaffirming WFP’s commitment to the role of the evaluation function in WFP’s accountability and learning system, and to international principles and safeguards for the independence of evaluation**
9. The response to the peer review reaffirms WFP’s commitment to using evidence and evaluation as a basis for improving accountability and learning, in line with international norms and standards for ensuring the independence, credibility and utility of evaluation. The corresponding UNEG evaluation principles<sup>5</sup> will continue to form the basis of WFP’s evaluation function.
10. As a new feature, the revised policy will require that the following United Nations principles to which WFP is committed<sup>6</sup> are considered throughout the evaluation process, as appropriate:
- a) *United Nations Charter*: equity, justice, human rights, and respect for diversity;
  - b) *humanitarian principles*: humanity, neutrality, impartiality, respect and independence;
  - c) *gender and protection frameworks*: UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality into evaluation, in line with the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender;
  - d) *ethics*: Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, UNEG’s standards, ethical guidelines and its Code of Conduct for evaluators;
  - e) *accountability to affected populations*: commitments to leadership/governance, transparency, feedback and complaints, participation, and design, monitoring and evaluation, endorsed by WFP as a member of the IASC;
  - f) *principles for working in fragile states* elaborated in WFP’s transition policy framework: i) understand the context; ii) maintain a hunger focus; iii) at a minimum avoid doing harm; iv) support national priorities where possible, but follow humanitarian principles where conflict continues; v) support United Nations coherence; vi) be responsive in dynamic environments; vii) ensure inclusivity and equity; and viii) be realistic; and
  - g) *Paris Declaration principles*: country ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for development results and mutual accountability.
11. A major implication of the Response to the peer review is the expansion from a mainly centralized evaluation function to one that encompasses demand-led decentralized evaluation, as illustrated in the theory of change in Figure 1. This expanded evaluation function will be designed and implemented in a phased approach, through improved guidance and capacity development in the field and at Headquarters. Enhancing the decentralized evaluation function will increase capacity for evidence-based decision-making throughout WFP. Along with increased use of evaluation findings and recommendations and better communication of results, WFP’s use of evidence in policy, strategy and programme development will improve its ability to fulfil its mandate. In line with WFP’s organizational strengthening process, this policy’s vision is for evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems

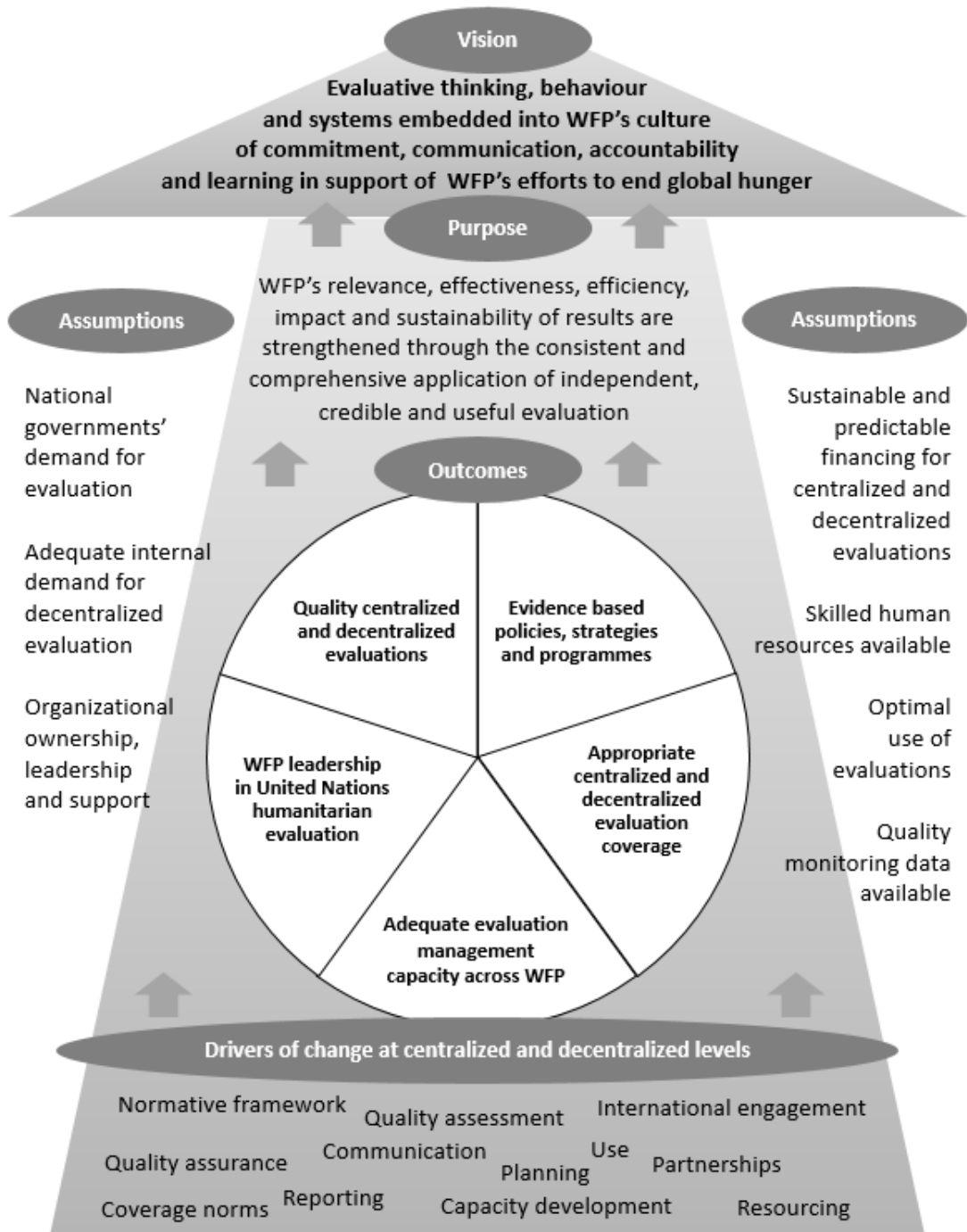
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<sup>5</sup> UNEG, 2005. Norms for Evaluation in the United Nations System.

<sup>6</sup> “WFP Strategic Plan (2014–2017)” (WFP/EB.A/2013/5-A/1).

to be embedded into WFP's culture of commitment, communication, accountability and learning, in support of its work to end global hunger.

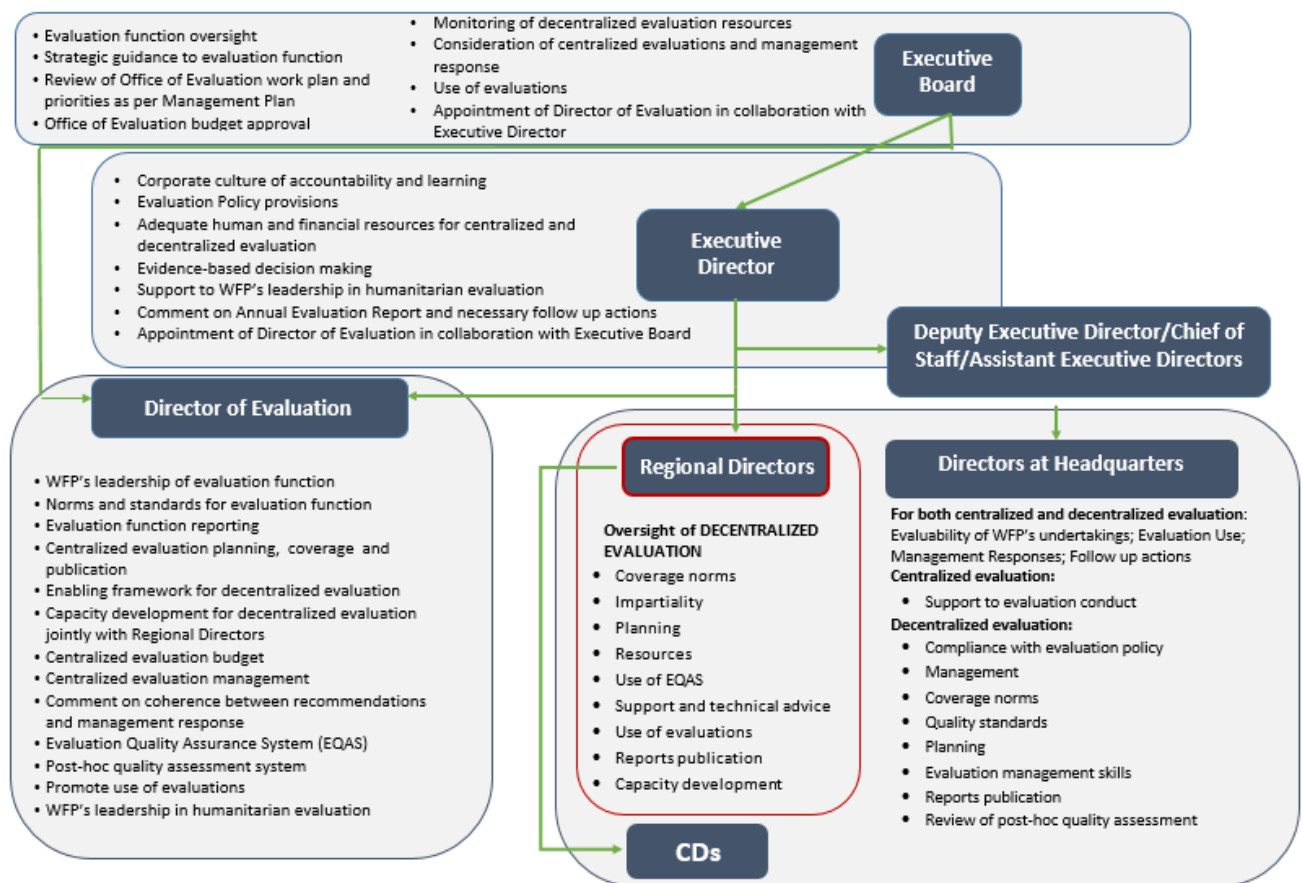
*Figure 1: Theory of change for the evaluation function*



**ii) Clarifying roles and responsibilities within WFP's evaluation function in line with WFP's Fit-for-Purpose and organizational strengthening processes**

12. An enhanced decentralized evaluation function will require an evolution of staff roles and accountabilities across WFP. One of the main changes implies that the Regional Directors and Country Directors will be responsible for planning and conducting evaluations on a larger scale than they do today; the new policy will clarify their roles and lines of accountability. Ongoing dialogue with Regional Directors is supportive of their ownership of evaluation in their regions, while emphasizing the need for additional human and financial resources. Figure 2 shows expected responsibilities at various levels under the new policy.

*Figure 2: WFP's evaluation function – roles and accountabilities*



**iii) Defining terminology for and linkages among evaluation, monitoring, review, and policy and programme design, in line with WFP's new performance management system**

13. The new policy will update evaluation terminology and typology to reflect current WFP practice, and will include the below definitions of centralized and decentralized evaluations that are particularly important in facilitating an understanding of the new evaluation function:

- Centralized evaluations are commissioned and managed by OEV and presented to the Executive Board. They focus on corporate strategic issues, WFP strategies, policies, programmes, operations and activities, and take place at the national, regional or global level.
- Decentralized evaluations are commissioned and managed outside OEV, in country offices, regional bureaux or Headquarters divisions and units; they are not submitted to the Board. They may cover operations, activities, pilot initiatives, thematic areas, country strategies, transfer modalities and other aspects of organizational performance, and take place at the sub-national, national or regional level.

**iv) Establishing coverage and resourcing requirements for centralized and decentralized evaluations**

14. While the 2008 evaluation policy sets coverage norms for operation evaluations only, the new policy will establish coverage norms for centralized and decentralized evaluations; these norms are currently being refined in consultation with internal stakeholders. For centralized evaluations, the new policy will formalize current practices, apart from those for the temporary operation evaluation series, intended to be decentralized during the implementation of the new policy. For decentralized evaluations the policy will identify new coverage norms as indicated in Table 1. Progress towards meeting these norms will be reported.

<b>TABLE 1: PROPOSED COVERAGE NORMS FOR EVALUATION</b>		
	<b>Centralized evaluation</b>	<b>Decentralized evaluation</b>
Current practice	Balanced coverage of major elements of the strategic plan, related strategies, priorities and operations <sup>7</sup>	
	Evaluation of each policy within 4–6 years of implementation	
	All corporate emergency responses evaluated, possibly through IASC mechanism	
	All country programmes evaluated in line with WFP's programme guidance manual <sup>8</sup>	
Additional proposed norms	Evaluation of portfolio of activities of the ten largest country offices every 5 years (two per year) and of the other country offices every 10–12 years (seven per year)	Evaluation of a substantial part of a country office's portfolio of activities at least once every 3–4 years <sup>9</sup>
		Evaluations of: i) pilots; ii) innovations; iii) prototypes before scale up; iv) high-risk interventions; and v) interventions before a third intervention of similar type and scope is implemented
	Evaluation coverage at the regional level based on programme expenditure level, geographic distribution and activity type	

#### **v) Clarifying WFP's engagement in system-wide evaluations and development of national evaluation capacity**

15. WFP will enhance its partnerships with national and regional experts in evaluation, particularly important for inclusion, ownership and credibility. WFP will work through the UNEG in light of the 2014 General Assembly resolution to meet its commitments for enhancing national evaluation capacity.
16. Joint and inter-agency evaluations contribute to increasing coverage and cost-efficiency, and promote a shared understanding among agencies. Wherever feasible, opportunities for such evaluations will be pursued, especially through inter-agency humanitarian evaluation mechanisms, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, Independent System-Wide Evaluation and other channels. Collaboration among the Rome-based agencies is particularly important, as envisaged under their 2013 Joint Statement of Intent.

#### **Use of Evaluations**

17. In its draft decision, the Board requested the Secretariat to pay adequate attention to the need to have systems and processes in place to maximize the use of evaluation results in policy and strategy development, as well as in project and programme design.
18. The policy will reaffirm the current practice of disseminating evaluation reports and making them publicly accessible. Decentralized evaluations will be included in the existing

<sup>7</sup> Core unit of WFP's planning, programming, implementation and reporting

<sup>8</sup> WFP template for country programme submission, April 2014.

<sup>9</sup> In countries with only one development project or country programme, evaluations can be carried out every five years.



repositories as centralized evaluations. Improved access and searchableness of an online evaluation database will enhance learning and the use of evaluation evidence in policy and programme design.

19. To promote the use of evaluations, the new policy will emphasize systematic communication of evaluation results tailored to the needs of different audiences. As well as using topical briefs, synthesis documents and workshops to enhance accessibility, WFP will also upgrade its use of the Internet and its own intranet and knowledge management system. The policy will set out how WFP intends to maximize the use of evaluation results in the design and approval of policies, strategies and programmes.

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## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Human Resources**

20. As recognized in the Peer Review, WFP does not have sufficient staff capacity or skills to manage evaluations in line with the current policy. This capacity gap will increase with the new policy.
21. OEV will collaborate with other units to provide the framework for developing decentralized evaluation capacity, including through guidance, training and technical advice. However, investment in additional professional human resources will be necessary.
22. OEV will continue to be staffed by a 50–50 mix of: i) externally recruited evaluation specialists with proven competency and experience; and ii) WFP staff with the required competency for evaluation, who are appointed in line with WFP's reassignment policy. This mix ensures an appropriate combination of evaluation expertise and knowledge of WFP's operations and work environment.

### **Financial Resources**

23. The policy's proposed provisions for strengthening evaluation, especially its coverage norms, have implications for the financial and human resources required. Management's response to the peer review recommendations recognized that sustainable financing and resourcing for evaluation are priorities, and management is committed to a phased approach to policy implementation.
24. The 2014 JIU assessment of evaluation functions in the United Nations system indicated that funding levels should be between 0.5 and 3 percent of an organization's expenditure, depending on the mandate, size and role of the evaluation function in the accountability system of the organization. The policies of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) all set targets of between 1 and 3 percent, while the target of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is 0.8 percent.

25. During recent consultations, management has indicated its commitment to meeting international standards for evaluation resourcing over the longer term. Building on the response to the peer review, management also committed to reaching 0.8 percent progressively over the life of the new policy, from the current estimated 0.25 percent of WFP's contributed income. Ways of meeting this target in a phased manner, consistent with the application of the coverage norms, will be considered during preparation of the Management Plan.

## Risks

26. Figure 1 highlights several assumptions for an effective evaluation function: adequate internal and external demand for evaluation; organizational leadership, ownership and support; availability of systems for optimal use of evaluation; and adequate human and financial resources. If these assumptions do not materialize, WFP's evaluation function will be constrained and coverage of centralized and decentralized evaluations will not meet the norms, limiting WFP's credibility as an accountable and learning organization.

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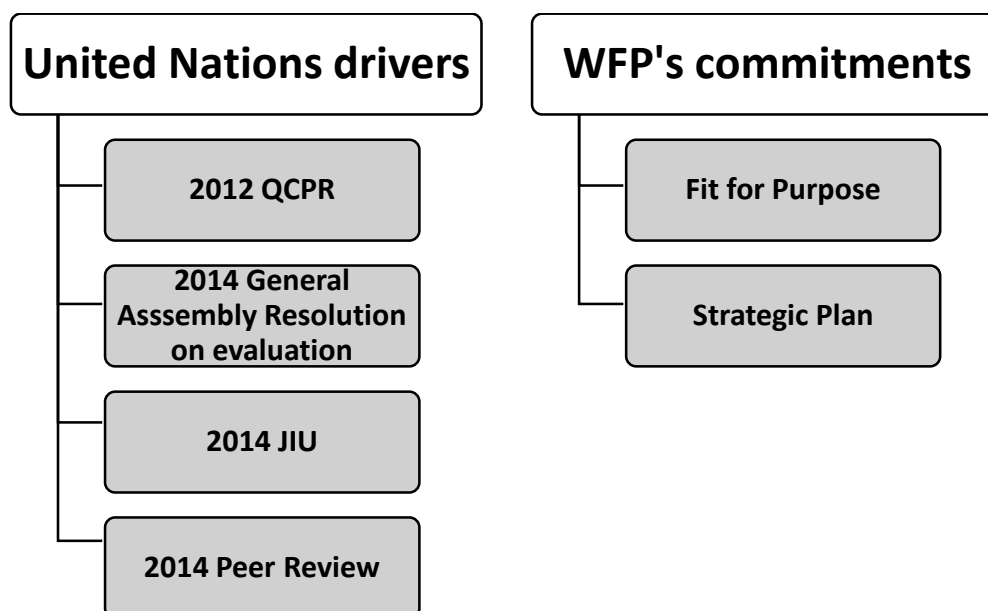
## OVERSIGHT OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

27. As requested by the Board, oversight of the evaluation function will be supported by reporting on progress against critical provisions of the new policy. The most important areas for reporting should include:

- i) *embedding the evaluation function in WFP* – progress in establishing the institutional framework, systems and processes for a sustainable and independent evaluation function throughout WFP, and targets for building evaluation capacity and competence;
- ii) *resourcing the evaluation function* – changes in human and financial resources dedicated to centralized and decentralized evaluations;
- iii) *evaluation coverage* – the number, type and geographical focus of planned and completed evaluations;
- iv) *quality of evaluations* – ratings from post-evaluation quality assessments according to United Nations system-wide standards;
- v) *learning from and use of evaluation* – the accessibility and transparency of evaluation evidence, and the extent to which findings are used in programme and policy design, and decision-making; and
- vi) *partnerships for effectiveness and efficiency* – the number and type of joint evaluations; engagement in system-wide evaluations and collaborative ventures on scaling up evaluation coverage and quality.

28. In line with WFP's provisions for policy formulation, the evaluation policy will be evaluated after four to six years of implementation. An additional UNEG-DAC peer review may also be considered.

## BUILDING BLOCKS FOR WFP'S NEW EVALUATION POLICY



### United Nations Drivers

#### 2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review – A/RES/67/226

The General Assembly:

- *Emphasizes* the importance for organizations of the United Nations development system of having independent, credible and useful evaluation functions, with sufficient resources, and promoting a culture of evaluation that ensures the active use of evaluation findings and recommendations in policy development and improving the functioning of the organizations; (para. 173)
- *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish an interim coordination mechanism for system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system composed of the Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Evaluation Group, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of Internal Oversight Services [...]; (para. 181)

- *Encourages* the United Nations development system to institute greater accountability for gender equality in evaluations conducted by country teams by including gender perspectives in such evaluations; (para. 84)
- [...] *requests* the funds and programmes and the specialized agencies to develop evaluation plans that are aligned with new strategic plans and are an integrated part of monitoring systems. (para. 174)

### **2014 General Assembly resolution: Building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level – A/RES/69/237**

The General Assembly:

- *Invites* the entities of the United Nations development system, with the collaboration of national and international stakeholders, to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation, in accordance with their national policies and priorities; (para. 2)
- *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide an update, in 2016, on progress made in building capacity for evaluation, based, inter alia, on inputs from Member States and the United Nations development system, including the United Nations Evaluation Group, as well as the Joint Inspection Unit, to be considered during the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in 2016. (para. 3)

### **2014 JIU Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System – JIU/REP/2014/6**

- (...) the central evaluation function of most United Nations system organizations is largely under-resourced. It operates on average with 0.3 percent of organizational expenditure. The analysis indicates that a **0.3 percent investment is not adequate for organizations to operate a high-quality function** to enable the United Nations system to understand the difference it makes in the world and in the lives of the people whom it is entrusted to help (para. 73);
- The legislative bodies should request the executive heads of United Nations system organizations to develop **comprehensive budget frameworks** and resource allocation plans for their respective evaluation functions, based on the cost of maintaining an **effective and sustainable evaluation function** that adds value to the organization. The plans should be submitted for consideration to the legislative bodies within existing budgetary and reporting mechanisms and processes (Recommendation 3).

Extracts of peer review recommendations relevant to the evaluation policy	WFP's commitments
<p><b>1. Selection of evaluation models for WFP:</b> WFP management should take decisions concerning the most appropriate model for the evaluation function in WFP.</p>	<p>Develop a modified version of the peer review model 2, characterized as centralized evaluation with demand-led decentralized evaluation.</p> <p>Adopt a phased and prioritized approach based on WFP's resource and capacity constraints.</p> <p>Identify sustainable arrangements for financing and resourcing evaluation as a priority in WFP's modified model 2.</p>
<p><b>2. Evaluation policy revision:</b> WFP should revise the 2008 evaluation policy in line with the selected evaluation model.</p>	<p>Revise the evaluation policy in line with UNEG norms and standards, the selected evaluation model and findings and recommendations of the 2014 JIU assessment of the United Nations' evaluation function.</p> <p>Develop a medium-term evaluation strategy to guide policy implementation, monitoring and reporting.</p>
<p><b>3. Oversight of the evaluation function:</b> The Board should request the development of a set of key performance indicators to support its oversight of evaluation across WFP.</p>	<p>Develop a set of key performance indicators to facilitate the Board's oversight of the evaluation function, ensuring that systems and processes are in place for the use of evaluations in policy, strategy and programme design.</p>
<p><b>4. Management response:</b> WFP management should improve the quality and effectiveness of management responses to evaluations, in particular by giving due attention to the ownership of follow-up. This requires the active engagement of relevant senior managers and other stakeholders during the evaluation process and beyond.</p>	<p>Explore ways of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of management responses, while noting that these depend in part on the quality of the evaluation recommendations.</p> <p>Increase management's engagement and consultation with OEV during the evaluation process to ensure coherence between recommendations and responses.</p>

Extracts of peer review recommendations relevant to the evaluation policy	WFP's commitments
<p><b>7. Utilization of evaluation:</b> In redesigning its project and programme planning and approval process, WFP management should ensure that evaluation evidence is taken into account.</p> <p>OEV should strengthen its inputs to WFP's revision of project and programme planning, design and approval processes to encourage the use of evaluation evidence and improve arrangements for evaluation within projects.</p>	<p>Take evaluation findings into account in programme design and review, and reflected in WFP programme guidance.</p> <p>Address this recommendation with OEV, in line with available capacity and the need for independence of evaluations.</p>
<p><b>9. Roles and responsibilities:</b> WFP management should clearly delineate the roles of OEV and the Performance Management and Monitoring Division.</p> <p>Regional Directors [should] take responsibility for reviewing management responses to the evaluations in their regions.</p> <p>Internal Audit and OEV should agree how to identify audit risks ... and should develop standard questions for testing compliance [with the WFP evaluation policy].</p>	<p>Address this recommendation in policies and administrative guidance, subject to resource availability.</p>
<p><b>11. Evaluation strategy:</b> OEV should develop an evaluation strategy in line with the selected model for evaluation. The evaluation strategy, separate from the monitoring and review strategy, should set out how WFP will develop evaluation capacity, resourcing, selection, coverage, and utilization across the organization.</p>	<p>Prepare an evaluation strategy as the basis for policy implementation, setting out a phased approach to achieving the modified model 2 and taking into account the forthcoming monitoring strategy and developments in the United Nations system.</p>
<p><b>12. Role and designation of the Director of Evaluation:</b> The Board should request the Director of OEV to oversee and report on the evaluation function across WFP.</p>	<p>Re-designate the Director of OEV as the Director of Evaluation, retaining responsibility for WFP's centralized evaluation function while also overseeing and reporting on the evaluation function across WFP, including decentralized evaluation.</p>

Extracts of peer review recommendations relevant to the evaluation policy	WFP's commitments
<p><b>14. Evaluation expertise:</b> WFP management should ensure that the WFP People Strategy includes the development of a staff cadre for assessment, monitoring and evaluation in WFP, so that regional bureaux and country offices have the human resource capacity and expertise to implement the evaluation strategy.</p>	<p>Focus on building skills and capacities for mission-critical roles, including monitoring and evaluation, and job deployment through the WFP People Strategy, which outlines responsibilities for ensuring that the workforce receives appropriate skills development.</p>

### WFP's Commitments

<p><b>2012 Fit for Purpose – WFP's New Organizational Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant <b>improvements</b> can and will be made with respect to monitoring, reporting and evaluation (...) integrate the corporate monitoring and reporting system, supported by a <b>field-based evaluation function</b> (page 7).</li> </ul>
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<p><b>WFP's Strategic Plan 2014–2017</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To further support results measurement for the Strategic Plan, WFP will: (...) support <b>independent evaluations and build country office capacity to undertake self-evaluations</b> of programmes for improved project design, implementation and risk management (para. 66).</li> </ul>
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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OEV	Office of Evaluation
QCPR	quadrennial comprehensive policy review
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group