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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT MADAGASCAR PRRO 10442.0

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

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

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BACKGROUND

1. This document presents the Secretariat's response to the recommendations of the Summary Evaluation Report of Madagascar PRRO 10442.0.
2. The Secretariat recognizes the importance of implementing the report's recommendations to improve the effectiveness of natural disaster and food insecurity interventions, and will take action to address the recommendations.
3. The Secretariat's responses to the recommendations are presented in the matrix.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE			
Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
1. Extend the use of medium-duration protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) in situations of recurrent natural disasters to enable a more rapid and efficient response in such cases; integrate recovery within the emergency response phase and extend it for a sufficient length of time, and implement prevention activities on a larger scale than that of emergency operations.	Headquarters Programme Design Service (OMXD)	Medium-term duration PRROs are used by WFP in situations of recurrent natural disasters. Examples in the southern and eastern Africa region include Ethiopia, Malawi and Mozambique. These allow country offices and partners to implement a rapid relief response and integrate recovery activities into the emergency phase. The duration of PRROs (up to three years) allows disaster mitigation and recovery activities to be systematically implemented as appropriate.	Ongoing
2. Simplify and streamline administrative procedures for country offices and their partners (approval of project proposals submitted by partners, payment authorization), ¹ because the procedures are a serious administrative burden requiring significant resources in terms of staff and time, involving a cost that WFP will ultimately have to bear. This is especially true for small country offices like Madagascar's, which faces an almost impossible task: to act with speed and flexibility while complying with complex procedures that make sense only in contexts involving far greater resources.	Headquarters Interagency, Library and NGO Service (RERI) and OMXD	Noted. In consultation with the country office and divisions at Headquarters as appropriate RERI will provide further guidance and assistance to country offices as needed with respect to the implementation of non-governmental organization (NGO) partnerships. The guidance for field-level agreements (FLAs) was revised in 2007; a January 2007 memorandum of the Senior Deputy Executive Director clarified those FLA-related issues discussed during consultation with NGOs and WFP country offices in 2005 and 2006. It included guidance notes for the preparation of NGO budgets for food distribution and monitoring. A training module is being developed and tested that will help country offices plan and implement FLAs. In 2008 RERI trained WFP and partner staff in some regions, including southern Africa. The WFP <i>Programme Guidance Manual</i> includes a section on partnering with NGOs that includes directives and a standard implementing partner field agreement. A series of WFP guidance notes facilitate allocating NGO costs to WFP's project cost categories.	Ongoing

¹ This observation applies to WFP operations in every area.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>3. Allow country offices to develop their own outcome indicators specific to each operation, rather than reporting directly on WFP Strategic Objectives. Strategic Objectives should be considered to be goals, reported on through impact indicators.</p>	OMXD	<p>The new strategic results framework presents outputs, outcomes and indicators to be measured and monitored; these are aligned with the five Strategic Objectives. It will allow country offices to align their projects' logical frameworks to the Strategic Objectives and use relevant indicators that permit measurement of outcomes and that provide information on project management. The <i>Indicator Compendium</i> is being revised in 2009 and will also facilitate this process.</p>	Ongoing
<p>4. The project document of any future PRRO, especially the content of the recovery component, should be improved, as should the way the PRRO is integrated into development activities (country programme or other) and the hand-over strategy.</p>	Country office	<p>An international consultant hired by the country office will review current operations and, through consultation with stakeholders, provide an outline of the components of the new PRRO. In addition, ongoing consultations and needs assessments will help establish realistic objectives, outcomes and hand-over strategy for the next PRRO and ensure better coherence, synergies and complementarity between the PRRO and the country programme (CP). With support from Headquarters, future PRROs will make the suggested improvements; they will focus on early recovery components where feasible given the unpredictability of cyclones and limited number of development partners and activities in cyclone-affected areas. Steps are taken to identify partner capacities and study risk trends in order to explore ways to better link the PRRO with development programmes. This is more feasible for slow-onset disasters such as drought than for cyclone-prone areas.</p>	February 2009 through May 2009
<p>5. Food-for work (FFW) activities should continue to be run jointly within the PRRO and the CP, while ensuring that: i) all FFW activities, whether of the CP or the PRRO, are managed in a consistent manner so as to ensure continuity with cooperating partners and favour the transition from the recovery phase to medium-term development; ii) the country office consider increasing funds allocated to other direct operational costs (ODOC) and guarantees a basic level of non-food inputs for use in FFW activities. This implies choosing partners that also have their own resources or complementary ones, or, when that is not possible, increasing the ODOC budget line for partners with limited complementary resources.</p>	Country office	<p>The recommendation is noted and complementarity between the CP and the PRRO will be explored, particularly in the South; the situation with cyclone-prone areas in the North poses certain limitations, as noted above.</p> <p>In the absence of cooperating partners and local capacities, WFP will support only those emergency response and early recovery activities that: i) can be systematically implemented and monitored while other cooperating partners build up capacity; and/or ii) comprise a set of low-tech, low-risk activities that can be handled by the communities themselves with limited technical support. These activities will be identified and designed by local partners and community decision-makers.</p> <p>The country office will advocate for more ODOC resources but in the meantime will prioritize interventions that require limited non-food inputs. It will budget a higher level of ODOC in the next PRRO.</p>	May 2009





RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>6. The country office should be involved for the transition phase of making the EWS operational, until it becomes part of an official Malagasy institution. At the same time, it should continue to support the BNGRC to get the national early warning system (NEWS) working.</p>	Country office	<p>In January 2009 the country office took over management of the EWS in the South through a two-year bilateral project funded by the Government. By 2011 it is expected that the NEWS will be fully deployed and integrated at the institutional level. BNGRC would benefit from local capacity-building for disaster risk management with the support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WFP.</p>	2011
<p>7. Cost savings should be sought by: i) studying the possibility of sub-contracting the management of WFP's main warehouses to a third party and/or introducing a sub-contracting system whereby WFP would only pay for storage on the basis of real volume recorded daily; ii) improving communications between the Headquarters' Shipping Branch (OMLS) and shipping lines or shipping agents in order to obtain preferential treatment for container contracts; and iii) accelerating the disbursement of internal transport, storage and handling funds paid by the regional bureau in Johannesburg.</p>	Country office	<p>The country office and OMLS have negotiated preferential treatment for demurrage and an extension on the waiver period from Maersk Line and the Mediterranean Shipping Company S.A. (MSC), the main shipping companies used for WFP cargo.</p> <p>In 2009 the country office will review the cost-effectiveness of WFP's warehouse management and explore the feasibility of sub-contracting some services.</p> <p>The country office has created a new international post, Head of Logistics, which was filled in January 2009. Priority will be given to strengthening ITSH funds management with the aim of having it delegated to the country office by the end of 2009. Monitoring of landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) funds use will be strengthened to ensure more timely release of funds required for operations.</p>	December 2009
<p>8. Monitoring of outputs and outcomes must be improved immediately. The evaluation mission recommends that the country office attempt to acquire special funds, for example from trust funds, to finance such an essential improvement, from the design of an integrated system through to implementation. The evaluation of results – the degree to which objectives have been achieved – should be based on a comparison between: i) joint assessments to establish the amount of damage and risks immediately after a disaster; and ii) regular monitoring linked to systematic ex-post evaluations.</p>	Country office	<p>The PRRO formulation mission will provide additional advice for strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of outputs and outcomes; the country office will seek to increase staff working on M&E and this will be reflected in the new PRRO budget. A more systematic and action-oriented M&E system will be designed by mid-2009, within the limits imposed by the budget; to be cost-effective, post-distribution monitoring will be carried out in sample locations only. All PRRO distributions are monitored systematically either by WFP's implementing partners (in accordance with FLAs) or, where there is no such presence, directly by WFP staff, based on standard check lists.</p>	Mid-2009



RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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<p>9. A staff member should be designated as responsible for monitoring and ensure that the field monitors have checklists and monitoring plans. S/he should also ensure that data is captured in relation to the objectives and specific components of the PRRO.</p>	Country office	<p>An additional budgeted post for M&E will be included in the new PRRO; terms of reference are being prepared. The context of unpredictability and rapid onset of cyclones makes establishing monitoring plans more challenging.</p>	Mid-2009
<p>10. The quality of partnerships should be improved, based on principles clearly formulated and promptly communicated to partners. The recently adopted communications and transparency mechanisms should be promoted and replicated. The country office and its partners should also pursue their joint efforts to reduce payment delays.</p>	Country office	<p>A number of workshops and training sessions have been organized on FLA and partnerships issues, reporting aspects and M&E requirements. The country office will continue to: i) offer additional clarifications; ii) explore ways to improve communications and streamline and accelerate payment procedures in line with corporate requirements; and iii) sensitize and support partners to encourage prompt submission of reports and supporting documentation in order to avoid delays.</p>	December 2009
<p>11. The successive phases of a single project should be brought together under a single Letter of Understanding, with the country office being able to launch the follow-up phase of a project by means of a simple e-mail or written communication. This would lighten the administrative load of the country office and its partners, reduce waiting time and make management of activities easier. Instead of functioning in fits and starts, operations could be implemented with a medium- and longer-term view.</p>	Country office	<p>The recommendation is pertinent in the context of FLAs for strategic repositioning of commodities; these could be replaced by LOUs covering repositioning and eventual relief or recovery interventions to be implemented with the commodities, as has already been done with some FLAs. However some partners have indicated that they do not prefer such a system because of the uncertainty of scope, type and costs of activities in the aftermath of a disaster.</p> <p>In consultation with the regional bureau and Headquarters, the country office will continue to explore avenues for implementing this recommendation. For other projects, it is country office practice to sign LOUs for the duration of the project when proposed by the partner.</p>	December 2009

ACRONYMS IN THE DOCUMENT

BNGRC	<i>Bureau national de gestion des risques et des catastrophes</i> (National Office for Risk and Disaster Management)
CP	country programme
EWS	early warning system
FFW	food for work
FLA	field-level agreement
ITSH	internal transport, storage and handling
LOU	Letter of Understanding
LTSH	landside transport, storage and handling
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NEWS	national early warning system
NGO	non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODOC	other direct operational costs
OMLS	Shipping Branch
OMXD	Programme Design Service
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
RERI	Interagency, Library and NGO Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme