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Agenda Item 7

WFP/EB.A/2017/7-B*

Evaluation Reports

For consideration

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Summary Evaluation Report of the Corporate Partnership Strategy

Executive Summary

This policy evaluation of WFP's Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017) was commissioned by the Office of Evaluation and covered the period from the strategy's approval by the Executive Board in June 2014 until November 2016. The strategy was included in the Policy Compendium to aid implementation of WFP's Strategic Plan (2014–2017).

Although the strategy had been implemented for only two and a half years, the evaluation was timely considering the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of WFP's Integrated Road Map (2017–2021).

The evaluation questions were:

- How good is the strategy?
- What were the initial results of the strategy?
- Why has the strategy produced the results that have been observed?

The strategy outlined a clear vision for WFP's partnerships, filling a gap in WFP's strategic framework and reflecting contemporary thinking about partnerships. However, in light of recent developments that have shaped WFP's partnership vision as outlined in the Integrated Road Map, the strategy's applicability is now limited.

The evaluation found the strategy's implementation to be uneven as a result of limited ownership and accountability beyond WFP's Partnership and Advocacy Coordination Division. Despite a lack of knowledge of the strategy, however, WFP's portfolio of partnerships reflects the spectrum of collaborative relationships envisaged in the strategy, and its partnering behaviours reflect the expected results.

Guidance materials, tools and training modules developed by the Partnership and Advocacy Coordination Division to implement the strategy are of good quality but have not been widely accessed by staff outside Headquarters. WFP has strengthened its ability to collect quantitative data on partnerships, but more can be done to take advantage of the analytical potential in corporate information

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platforms. Many partnerships appear to contribute to increasing the reach and/or quality of programming, and to minimizing the duplication of effort.

Factors enabling partnerships include i) a global consensus on the importance of partnerships in humanitarian and development contexts; ii) the commitment to partnering of individual WFP staff members and managers; and iii) WFP's recognized organizational strengths. Internal factors limiting partnerships include insufficient recognition of the time required for partnering work, and legal frameworks that are not conducive to long-term relationships based on trust.

The evaluation concluded that WFP's limited financial investment in implementing the strategy is incongruent with its commitment to partnering as articulated in the Integrated Road Map. The absence of agency-wide ownership of and accountability for implementation affected the strategy's impact. While the strategy includes a focus on gender equality and equity concerns, guidance is required to ensure that gender and equity principles are appropriately integrated into all partnerships.

The evaluation's six recommendations focus on implementing the partnership pillar of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021) and include the need to support partnerships with an organization-wide action plan, guidance and tools; strengthen partnership skills in regional bureaux and country offices; develop systems to improve reporting on effectiveness, efficiency and innovation; and revise priority partnership agreements.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of “Summary Evaluation Report of the Corporate Partnership Strategy” (WFP/EB.A/2017/7-B*) and the management response (WFP/EB.A/2017/7-B/Add.1), and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

* 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 and Evaluation Features

1. The WFP Executive Board approved the Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017) (CPS) in June 2014. Although it was called a strategy, the CPS was included in WFP's Policy Compendium to aid implementation of the Strategic Plan. While the CPS had been implemented for only two and a half years before being evaluated, this policy evaluation is timely given the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the development of WFP's Integrated Road Map (IRM) (2017–2021).
2. This policy evaluation posed three main questions:
 - How good is the strategy?
 - What were the initial results of the strategy?
 - Why has the strategy produced the results that have been observed?
3. Between June and November 2016, evaluation data were collected at the global, regional and country levels through the following lines of inquiry, which were fully triangulated during the data analysis phase:
 - a retrospective construction of a theory of change underlying the CPS;
 - extensive document and literature review;
 - field missions to country offices in Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Honduras, Mozambique and Somalia, the regional bureaux in Bangkok, Johannesburg and Nairobi, and WFP offices in Dubai and New York, representing a cross-section of WFP's operating environments;¹
 - review of comparator organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, through document reviews and interviews;
 - analysis of WFP's partnership data, particularly from Standard Project Reports and WFP's country office tool for managing effectively (COMET); and
 - key informant interviews with staff at WFP Headquarters.
4. Limitations to the evaluation included the absence of comprehensive and reliable data on partnerships prior to the roll-out of COMET in 2016 and the low response rate to the survey of Board members,² which could not be used as a separate line of evidence. Despite these limitations, the evaluation team was able to develop valid findings and conclusions.

Context

5. The evaluation applied the definition of partnership provided in the CPS:³
 - Partnerships refer to collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people WFP serves by:
 - combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds;
 - working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; and
 - sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability.

¹ Different criteria were used to make these selections. For country offices: data availability, including the number and types of WFP partners reported; contributions from the host government; the availability of draft regional partner engagement strategies; cluster activity; country income status; and inclusion in piloting of country strategic plans or the Financial Framework Review. For regional bureaux, the main selection criterion was progress in the roll-out of COMET. WFP offices were selected based on their reporting relationship to WFP's Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department, Operations Management Department, Government Partnerships Division or Communications Division; coordination features; and the efficiency of travel arrangements within the brief evaluation timeframe.

² Of approximately 400 Board members and observers contacted, 12 – 3 percent – responded to the survey.

³ WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017).

- Partnerships serve to achieve objectives (both the collective partnership's objectives and individual partner goals) that could not be achieved as efficiently, effectively or innovatively alone, and where the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved.
6. In the CPS, “types of partners” refers to the nature of the partnerships between WFP and other entities. They include:
 - *resource partners* providing human, financial and technical resources;
 - *knowledge partners* contributing information, evaluation and analysis;
 - *policy and governance partners* working on WFP's own policies and governance, regional and country hunger and nutrition policies, and hunger and institutional governance;
 - *advocacy partners* supporting WFP's work to advocate for food security and nutrition; and
 - *capability partners* supporting the design and implementation of programmes and operations.
 7. For WFP, partnership sits at one end of a continuum of collaborative relationships. At the opposite end of this continuum are transactional relationships, which are purely contractual or quasi-contractual. The CPS does not attach a value judgement to either.
 8. During the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, the importance of partnerships for humanitarian assistance was reaffirmed. WFP and several of its partners committed to deepening collaborative action.
 9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirms commitments to partnership as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development in 2012. SDG 17 calls on actors to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
 10. WFP's increased focus on partnerships was described in the Strategic Plan (2008–2013). The 2012–2016 Fit for Purpose process and subsequent organizational restructuring led to the creation of the Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department in 2013. The focus on partnerships was reiterated in the Strategic Plan (2014–2017) and is reflected in the IRM (2017–2021).⁴
 11. Prior to approval of the CPS in 2014, WFP defined its approach to partnering in various policy documents⁵ covering partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, the Rome-based agencies and the private sector. Despite this, the 2012 evaluation “From Food Aid to Food Assistance: Working in Partnership” revealed that there was “no commonly accepted definition of partnership in WFP [and] limited understanding of what makes an effective partnership, the principles of good partner and how to monitor the effectiveness of partnerships.”⁶ It recommended that WFP develop an organization-wide partnership strategy, increase training for staff, conduct direct outreach to partners, and develop internal incentives for managers to promote the partnership strategy.⁷

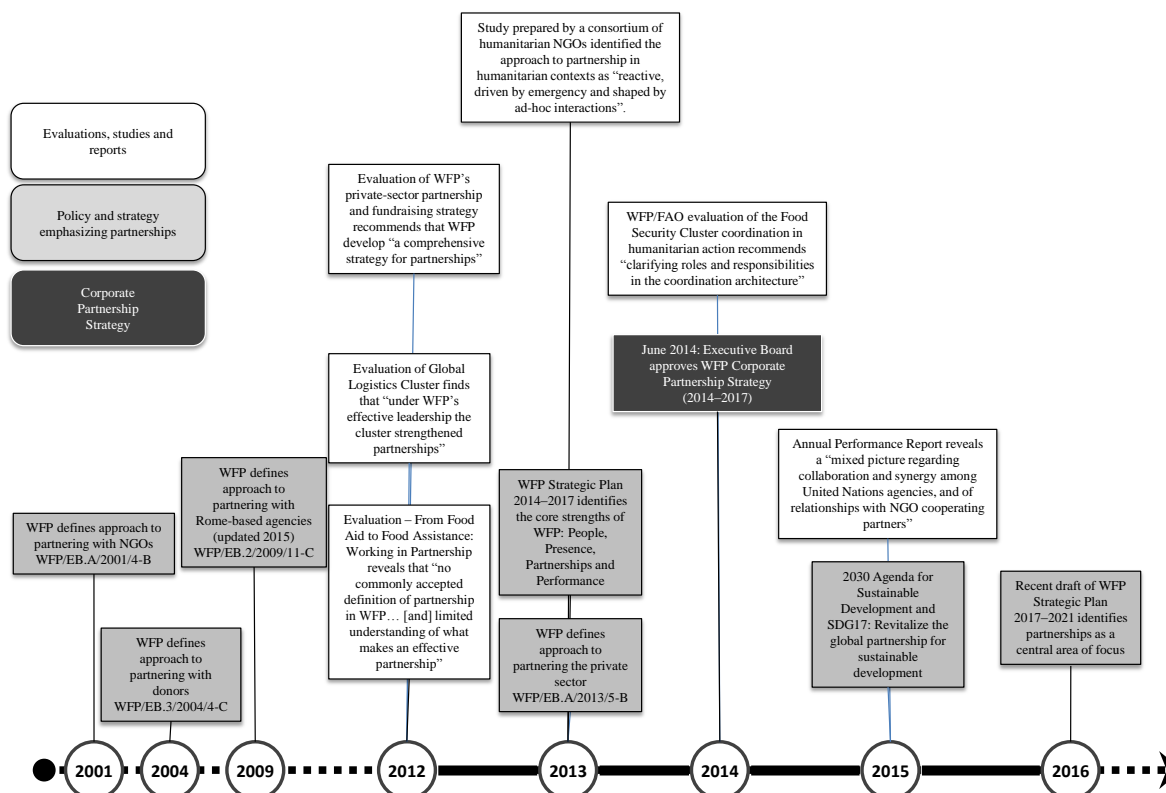
⁴ In particular, in the Strategic Plan, the Policy on Country Strategic Plans and the Corporate Results Framework.

⁵ “WFP Working with NGOs: A Framework for Partnership” (WFP/EB.A/2001/4-B); “New Partnerships to Meet Rising Needs – Expanding the WFP Donor Base” (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-C); “Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies” (WFP/EB.2/2009/11-C, with updates in 2011, 2013 and 2015).

⁶ WFP/EB.1/2012/6-A.

12. The evolution of WFP's work on partnerships is captured in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Evolution of WFP's work on partnerships



13. WFP approved the CPS (2014–2017) to establish a sound basis for excellence in partnering, with the aim of becoming the “partner of choice”⁷ in food assistance.
14. The CPS seeks to promote excellence in partnering by: i) establishing principles and practices to govern WFP's partnering arrangements and guide the selection and development of partnerships; ii) bringing together insights from past and current partnership work; iii) providing an overarching vision for WFP's work in partnerships; and iv) reinforcing the evolution of WFP's culture from “we deliver” to “we deliver better together”.
15. Resources for CPS implementation were deliberately kept to a minimum to encourage the mainstreaming of partnering as an operating modality rather than a stand-alone initiative requiring substantial additional funding to ensure implementation.
16. Following CPS approval, WFP's Partnership and Advocacy Coordination Division (PGC) drafted the CPS Action Plan (2014–2017). To date, PGC has completed tasks in the following areas of the action plan:⁸
- strategy – conducting an annual partnership mapping exercise since 2014;
 - advocacy – developing and disseminating the WFP Advocacy Framework;
 - engagement strategies – developing and disseminating a strategy for engagement with NGOs;
 - partnership agreements – developing a new template for trust fund and emergency field-level agreements;
 - relationship management – compiling contacts of Headquarters-based partnership focal points for major partners;

⁷ WFP/EB.A/2014/5-B.

⁸ CPS Implementation Approach and Priorities 2015 (May 2016 update) and PGC Action Plan 2014 (as of August 2016).

- partnership management – creating a network of partnership focal points in regional bureaux; and
 - implementation support:
 - creating and managing the Intranet partnership page, including the online Partnership Resource Centre;
 - developing training materials and facilitating WFP-wide training;⁹
 - implementing training and training of trainers in core partnering skills, facilitated by PGC; and
 - implementing a training course on engaging with host governments.¹⁰
17. Other WFP evaluations conducted since 2012¹¹ confirmed that partnerships play a central role in WFP’s work. This can be noted in WFP’s role as leader or co-leader of the logistics, emergency telecommunications and food security clusters.¹² Areas for improvement include: i) missed opportunities for synergies resulting from WFP’s engagement in predominantly contractual relationships; ii) an inability to partner with other United Nations agencies because of disagreements over mandate boundaries; and iii) the short-term nature of WFP’s funding, which limits longer-term partnerships.

Key Findings

Quality of the Strategy

18. The CPS outlines a clear vision of partnership for WFP, but most WFP staff and partners consulted were not familiar with the strategy or its partnership vision. However, the definitions of “good partnering” provided by most respondents were similar to those in the CPS.
19. The CPS notes that to be meaningful, the term “partnership” should not be applied to every collaborative relationship that WFP engages in, but only to those at the “partnership” end of the continuum. WFP’s current practice in the field does not yet reflect this, however. The term “partnership” is still used inconsistently in WFP.
20. The CPS reflects good partnership practices as outlined in the literature at the time of its design, including the conviction that partnerships should be driven by agreed goals and that transparency, accountability and communication are fundamental to successful partnering.¹³
21. The CPS and accompanying action plan fully or partly reflect six of the seven recommendations from the 2012 evaluation. The recommendation to articulate a comprehensive partnership strategy, define “partnership” and articulate partnership principles has been addressed. Recommendations noted in the CPS and action plan that have not been fully addressed include the development of clear incentives for WFP staff and managers to engage in stronger partnering, and an explicit communications strategy for partnerships.
22. The vision and principles for partnership outlined in the CPS are similar to those in the partnership strategies and practices of FAO, UNICEF and Save the Children, which also consider partnering as essential to fulfilling the organization’s mandate and emphasize that partnering must be based on shared values and objectives; be transparent and results-oriented; and involve shared ownership and accountability.

⁹ Such as the Policy and Programme Division’s Learning Journey and Human Resources Division’s Leading for Zero Hunger.

¹⁰ This training was created and facilitated by the Centre for Political and Diplomatic Studies.

¹¹ These include country and regional portfolio evaluations completed between 2013 and 2016, annual evaluation reports for 2012 to 2015, three policy and six strategic evaluations conducted between 2012 and 2015, and syntheses of operations evaluations since 2014.

¹² WFP leads the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters, and co-leads the Food Security Cluster with FAO.

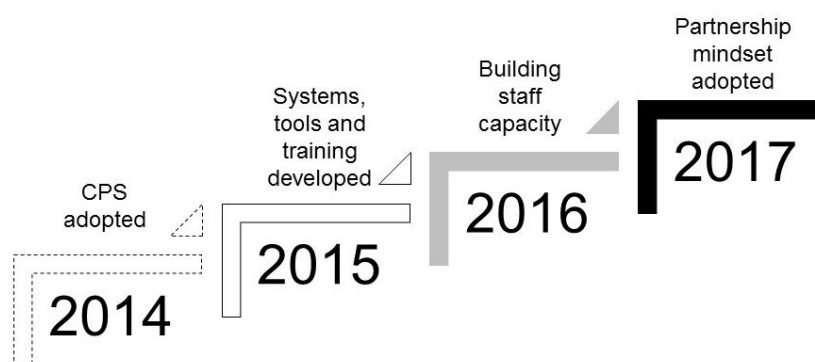
¹³ For example, Witte, J.M. & Reinicke, W. 2005. *Business UNusual: Facilitating United Nations Reform Through Partnerships*; Selsky, J.W. & Parker, B. 2005. Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address Social Issues: Challenges to Theory and Practice. *Journal of Management*, 31(6): 849–873; Dahan, N.M., Doh, J.P., Oetzel, J. & Yaziji, M. 2010. *Corporate-NGO Collaboration: Co-creating New Business Models for Developing Markets*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee. 2014. *Empowered Leadership* (concept paper); and Bexell, M. 2012. *Global Governance, Gains and Gender*.

23. The CPS was relevant to WFP's partnership-related commitments at the time of its approval.¹⁴ While the strategy remains broadly relevant in light of major external developments, its direct applicability to the IRM (2017–2021) is limited.
24. The CPS filled a gap in WFP's strategic framework by providing definitions of partnership and related principles. However, the views of WFP staff consulted about the strategy's relevance to their work varied. Some staff members involved in developing partnership strategies or their equivalents noted that the CPS provides them with high-level guidance and inspiration to "think outside the box". Most other staff members who had read the CPS noted that it is too generic to be of practical use. At Headquarters, several staff members reported that the CPS is primarily a document "for PGC", with limited relevance to their units.
25. The CPS reflects gender equality and equity considerations, positively distinguishing itself from the strategies of comparator organizations, with the exception of FAO. However, at the time of the evaluation, there was no guidance available to ensure that partners complied with gender and equity principles.

Initial Results of the Strategy

26. While the CPS does not include an explicit results framework, it outlines key milestones (Figure 2) and expected results.¹⁵ Given the early stage of implementation, the evaluation team did not limit its assessment to changes that were directly attributable to CPS implementation, but also explored the extent to which the partnering behaviours of country offices, regional bureaux and WFP offices are aligned with or indicate progress towards the strategy's vision and expected results of partnership.

Figure 2: Key milestones in CPS implementation



Quality, availability and applicability of CPS-related guidelines and tools

27. PGC has produced and disseminated a range of guidelines and tools on partnerships and partnership management. These materials reflect the principles of good partnership in line with the CPS; draw on current literature; are usually concise and clearly articulated; and address acknowledged gaps in the knowledge and skills of WFP staff. However, most materials are available only in English and the materials on engaging with host governments are insufficiently adapted to the WFP context.
28. To date, WFP's resources have been accessed primarily by staff at Headquarters and WFP offices, who constituted 84 percent of traffic to the online Partnership Resource Centre and

¹⁴ These include commitments to: the 2007 Principles of Partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform; operating in the cluster approach adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2005; enhancing inter-agency cooperation as reflected in the Delivering as One initiative; strengthening system-wide coherence by partnering and coordinating with other agencies and programmes on implementing the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review; and collaborating with other Rome-based agencies.

¹⁵ These are: i) range of best practice tools, guidance, training and support to help country offices select and manage partnerships; ii) strategic focus on partnerships at the global, regional and country levels; iii) consistent approach to the selection, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of, and reporting on, partnerships; iv) common understanding throughout WFP of the benefits and principles of partnership; and v) cost-effective collaboration, reduced overlap and duplication, and minimized transaction costs.

74 percent of traffic to the partnership homepage.¹⁶ Most respondents from country offices and regional bureaux had never heard of the Partnership Resource Centre.

29. The development of regional partnership strategies is taking longer than anticipated. At the end of 2016, only three of the six regional bureaux – Bangkok, Nairobi and Panama – had drafted regional partnership documents.¹⁷ Uncertainty also exists about the role of the regional partnership strategies in guiding country-level roll-out of the CPS.

Importance and centrality of partnerships in WFP plans and operations

30. Since 2014, WFP has made progress in integrating partnership into its evolving policies, systems and tools. The evaluation found explicit reference to the importance of working in partnership in WFP policies and strategies developed since 2014; operational guidance documents such as planning and reporting templates; the four partnering capabilities that are now reflected in all job profiles; and WFP Strategic Plans for 2014–2017 and 2017–2021. However, these documents do not uniformly reflect the full spectrum of partner types outlined in the CPS, and most do not reflect the gender or equity dimensions of partnering.
31. WFP has undertaken organizational restructuring at Headquarters and regional bureaux to improve its focus and work on partnerships, including by creating PGC to facilitate CPS implementation and establishing a network of partnership focal points. Some WFP offices are also making changes to improve partnering; most of the country office leadership consulted did not see a need for significant restructuring given that most limitations to partnering were related to other factors.

Strengthening partnership-related monitoring and reporting

32. Since 2014, WFP has strengthened its data collection and reporting on partnerships. At Headquarters, WFP collects data on many aspects of partnering, including with the private sector, with NGOs and in the context of South–South collaboration. Finalizing the roll-out of COMET in 2016 enhanced WFP’s data collection on partnerships by capturing information on new areas such as partner type.
33. Despite this progress, WFP staff do not yet fully utilize COMET and other information systems¹⁸ to capture and analyse data on the effectiveness and efficiency of partnerships. Standardized data available through platforms such as COMET and the WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS)¹⁹ are not able to capture complementarities among partners, duplication of efforts or innovations from partnering.

Expanding collaboration beyond transactional relationships and forming more sustainable partnerships

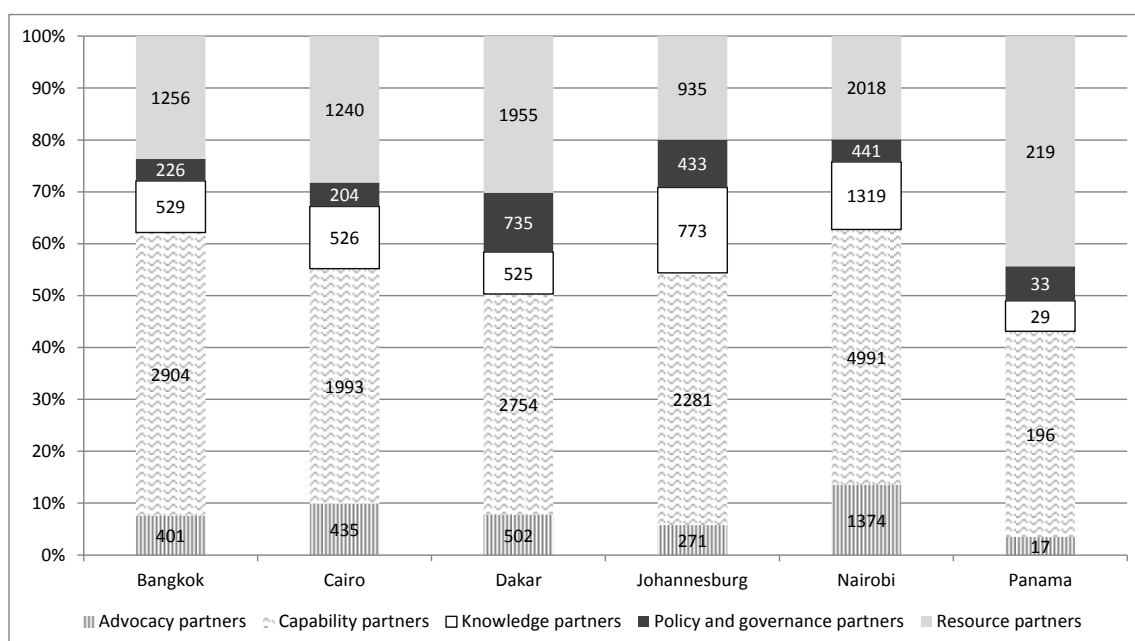
34. According to COMET data from November 2016, WFP partners with 2,951 entities worldwide in 31,515 reported “types” of partnership, indicating that relationships with a single organization tend to serve multiple functions. While multi-functional partnerships were already observed in the 2012 thematic evaluation on partnerships,⁷ data collected in this evaluation reflect a positive trend in expanding partnership functions and engaging in longer-term relationships, although this trend was not directly influenced by the CPS.

¹⁶ Google Analytics report – Partnerships for the period 15 July 2015–17 February 2016. There were 3,282 individual visits to the homepage during this period and 942 visits to the Partnership Resource Centre.

¹⁷ The Regional Bureau Johannesburg finalized a draft regional partnership strategy in January 2017.

¹⁸ These systems include Standard Project Report Intelligent Next Generation (SPRING), the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS) and new online platforms such as Insight/Foresight (IN/FO).

¹⁹ WINGS is used to manage WFP’s programme planning and implementation, procurement, logistics, finance travel and human resources.

Figure 3: Partner type by region*

* Total partnership types: 31,515.

Sources: PGC report “Mapping of WFP Partnerships at the Global Level”; COMET Data, November 2016.

35. WFP’s relationships with national NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) still tend to focus on delivery and be primarily contractual. However, the evaluation found evidence²⁰ that these relationships are broadening. The 2012 evaluation on working in partnership noted that 91 percent of NGOs working with WFP in 2009 were defined as “cooperating partners” with which WFP had primarily transactional relationships. According to COMET data from November 2016, only 67 percent of NGO and CBO partners were classified as cooperating partners, while 31 percent were listed as both cooperating and complementary, and approximately 1 percent were listed as complementary partners.²¹
36. Most WFP partners consulted described their relationship with WFP as generally consistent with the CPS partnership principles of equity, transparency, complementarity, results orientation and responsibility. However, some NGOs noted room for improvement on administrative arrangements and the need to continue expanding NGO partnerships beyond transactional relationships. Other partners noted that WFP takes unilateral decisions without adequately listening to or consulting partners.

Synergies and cost efficiencies resulting from partnering

37. By drawing on complementary strengths and reducing duplication of efforts, partnering enhances the reach and/or quality of programming by WFP and its partners. This has been illustrated by WFP’s leadership in the cluster system; however data on the benefits derived from other partnerships are uneven and largely anecdotal.

²⁰ Based on evidence from document reviews, stakeholder consultations and partnership data presented in the 2012 evaluation and COMET.

²¹ Complementary partners have shared objectives and common target groups and are not involved in transactional relationships with WFP. This definition excludes partner organizations that have signed field-level agreements with WFP, which are referred to as “cooperating partners”. The cooperating and complementary partner categories are used in COMET but not the CPS, which describes a continuum of collaborative relationships from transactional to partnership. However, the two terms are sufficiently aligned to justify the assumption that cooperating partners tend to be transactional, while complementary partners engage in partnerships as outlined in the CPS.

Explanatory Factors for Results Achieved

External context – enabling factors

38. WFP's operating environments have changed since 2014, requiring new partnership modalities to respond to the demands and commitments deriving from the 2030 Agenda.
39. Regional and country contexts are shaped by the fact that a growing number of countries have reached or are approaching middle-income status, which often includes strengthened public-sector capabilities. Thus, there is an increasing appetite among host governments to engage with development and humanitarian actors in partnerships that go beyond transactional service provider–recipient interactions. WFP engages in partnerships related to policy, governance, knowledge and advocacy in all regions, especially in middle- and upper-middle-income countries.

External context – limiting factors

40. There have been successes related to enhanced collaboration within the United Nations; however some agencies view WFP as a competitor in countries where food assistance is no longer required and where WFP is strengthening government capacity. Issues related to effective collaboration among the Rome-based agencies were highlighted in the Board discussions leading to approval of the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021).
41. In least-developed countries and countries experiencing or recovering from acute crises, WFP plays a significant role in food or cash transfers. During the period under review, global crises placed high demands on WFP to provide humanitarian assistance. To fulfil this role, the organization works with numerous implementing partners, especially NGOs. The sheer number of WFP's partners, the absence of dedicated resources for strengthening partners' capacity and the imperative for rapid response make it difficult for country offices to engage with NGOs in anything but transactional relationships with one-way accountability.

Internal context – enabling factors

42. WFP's perceived organizational strengths make it a strong and desirable partner. These strengths include its field presence and the "can-do" attitude, technical expertise and skills of its staff, especially in such areas as vulnerability analysis and mapping, logistics, supply chains and transport. Most United Nations agencies and some NGOs highlight WFP's strong performance as a leader in humanitarian clusters.
43. While some large NGOs perceive WFP as a competitor for donor resources, many local and international NGOs appreciate WFP as a financial partner and provider of infrastructure and logistics support in challenging environments. In the country offices, regional bureaux and WFP offices visited, partners also highlighted the constructive attitude, commitment and leadership of individual WFP staff members and managers.
44. In WFP's internal discourse, partnership has been prominent for several years. This is likely to have contributed to staff's awareness of the issue irrespective of knowledge of the CPS. The inclusion of partnership as a core competency for assessing managers' performance will help to strengthen results in this area.

Internal context – limiting factors

45. Despite the emphasis on partnership within WFP, implementation of the CPS has been hampered by inconsistent and narrow ownership of the strategy and a lack of accountability. While the CPS assigns responsibility and accountability for its implementation to all Headquarters units, regional bureaux and country offices, only PGC has been held accountable. There is no organization-wide workplan to define milestones for other units, several of which consider the CPS to be "for PGC, but not for us".
46. The financial investment in CPS implementation is incongruent with WFP's aspirational vision for partnership as outlined in the IRM. Commensurate with available resources, CPS implementation has focused largely on the Partnership Resource Centre, staff training and integrating partnership dimensions into internal systems and tools. The results of CPS implementation have yet to reach the country level; country offices, regional bureaux and WFP

offices have not received adequate resources for country-level partnering or partnership-related staff training.

47. While there are differences among individual WFP offices and units, the staff consulted for this evaluation agreed that WFP's culture still tends to focus on delivery and short-term impact. Legal frameworks used to manage collaborative relationships focus on audit and control, impeding the development of sustainable partnerships based on mutual trust. WFP's efforts to expand partnerships with the private sector face particular challenges. Field staff noted difficulties in distinguishing a "vendor" from a "private partner", and that WFP's procurement, due diligence and cost-recovery processes limit the organization's ability to develop complex, multi-faceted relationships.
48. WFP staff also indicated the need to enhance their partnership-related knowledge and skills, especially in relation to strengthening national capacities, engaging in high-level policy dialogue and advocacy with governments, and country- and regional-level partnering with the private sector.

Conclusions

49. Although the CPS includes a clear vision for partnership, several conditions for its successful implementation have not been met.
50. The CPS includes attention to gender equality and equity concerns, but there is a lack of guidance to ensure that these principles are appropriately integrated into all partnerships.
51. WFP is making progress towards most of the five results outlined in the CPS, but there remains considerable scope for increasing the strategy's impact.
52. WFP's partnership practices are both positively and negatively affected by a variety of internal and external factors. The evaluation highlighted:
 - the limited financial resources invested in CPS implementation to date, which are incongruent with WFP's aspirational commitments to partnership;
 - the absence of organization-wide ownership of and accountability for CPS implementation;
 - the need to ensure that existing guidance and tools on partnering are disseminated and used, and that data collection and reporting on partnerships are strengthened; and
 - an internal environment within WFP that has improved but is not yet consistently conducive to partnering.

Lessons

53. The 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review all highlight the importance of partnerships in humanitarian response and sustainable development. WFP's IRM (2017–2021) reflects the organization's commitment to this partnership mind set. However, mainstreaming of a partnering approach that underpins the way in which WFP operates requires a significant organizational transformation with consistent leadership, accountability, resources, capacities and systems able to capture and report on change.

Recommendations

54. The following six recommendations are derived from the evaluation findings and conclusions and were informed by a February 2017 workshop attended by staff from across WFP. They reflect recent changes in WFP's approach to partnerships, including the "whole of society" approach to zero hunger.²²
55. **Recommendation 1:** By the end of 2017, the IRM steering committee should finalize a costed action plan for implementing the partnership pillar of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021) that builds

²² The Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department is integrating the "whole of society approach" into roll-out of the IRM. The approach commits WFP to investing in civil society organizations, governments, national disaster management agencies, national NGOs, the Red Cross and other organizations.

on the principles outlined in the CPS, clearly identifies major milestones by unit and is aligned with the Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021).

56. **Recommendation 2:** WFP should immediately include the development of a partnership action plan as a mandatory component of each country strategic plan and interim country strategic plan, with resources allocated to partnering activities in country portfolio budgets.
57. **Recommendation 3:** By the end of 2017, WFP should update guidance and revise or develop practical tools that enable staff to engage in a broad range of partnerships, including long-term, multi-functional and non-commodity-based partnerships.
58. **Recommendation 4:** By June 2018, the Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department should assist country offices and regional bureaux in strengthening their partnering skills by developing guidance on the preparation of country-level partnership action plans, working with regional bureaux to prepare and roll out context-specific country-level partnership training modules, and developing tools for partnership-related knowledge management and dissemination.
59. **Recommendation 5:** By the end of 2018, WFP should strengthen its systems for capturing qualitative data on partnering and develop templates that include a requirement to report on the effectiveness, efficiency and innovative nature of partnerships.
60. **Recommendation 6:** By the end of 2018, WFP should ensure that prioritized partnership agreements with United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, private-sector actors, international and regional financial institutions, regional economic organizations have been revised to support the partnership pillar of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021).

Acronyms Used in the Document

CBO	community-based organization
COMET	country office tool for managing effectively
CPS	Corporate Partnership Strategy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IRM	Integrated Road Map
NGO	non-governmental organization
PGC	Partnership, Policy Coordination and Advocacy Division
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System