**Executive Board
Second Regular Session**

Rome, 22–26 October 2007

EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 6

For consideration

EVALUATION OF WFP'S STRENGTHENING EMERGENCY NEEDS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004, WFP formulated a three-year Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan to improve needs assessments. This evaluation reviews the first two years of implementation.

The conclusion is that the initiative is appropriate, if ambitious. In conjunction with work elsewhere in WFP, it has enhanced needs assessment capacities and improved the quality and credibility of assessments. It has quickly improved institutional transparency and accountability and demonstrated the importance of improved analysis as a basis for designing programmes that meet the needs of food-insecure populations more proportionately and appropriately.

The evaluation also identified shortcomings in design and implementation that can be used to refine assessment even further and to achieve optimal balance between the cost, rigour and timeliness of assessments. Comparability is still elusive. The evaluation identified the need for (i) objective measures of accuracy, (ii) ways to make assessments comparable and (iii) improvements in the linkages between assessments and programming decisions. Improved response recommendations, greater emphasis on surveillance rather than assessment and greater participation by food-insecure people are also called for.

The process of strengthening needs assessment is far from complete: improved methods have yet to be consolidated and applied, capacities are fragile and institutional acceptance is still partial. This evaluation therefore suggests ways in which the initiative can be developed and integrated into WFP's operations.

The evaluation supports the objective of mainstreaming the extra-budgetary Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan into the Programme Support and Administrative budget. However, in the current financial situation in WFP it may not be possible to sustain progress in the short term, so continued donor assistance may be required.

WFP

DRAFT DECISION*
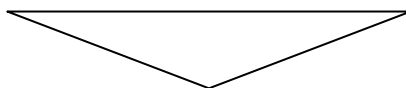
The Board takes note of "Evaluation of WFP's Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan" (WFP/EB.2/2007/6-A) and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

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* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document (document WFP/EB.2/2007/15) issued at the end of the session.

CONTEXT, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

1. There has been increasing attention in recent years to making humanitarian assistance more "proportionate and appropriate"[1] to beneficiaries' needs. Any strategy to achieve this must include sound assessments of the needs of food-insecure populations.

2. In 2003, donors expressed to WFP a concern that food aid needs may be overestimated and that options for non-food interventions to address food insecurity were not adequately examined. In response, and recognizing the need to enhance assessment processes, WFP established the initial 30-month Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan (SENAIP), whose four aims are:

➢ increase accountability and transparency;

➢ enhance methods and guidance;

➢ improve the availability of pre-crisis information; and

➢ augment assessment capacities and partnerships.

For the purposes of the evaluation, a suggested results hierarchy is given in the diagram below.

Suggested SENAIP Results Hierarchy

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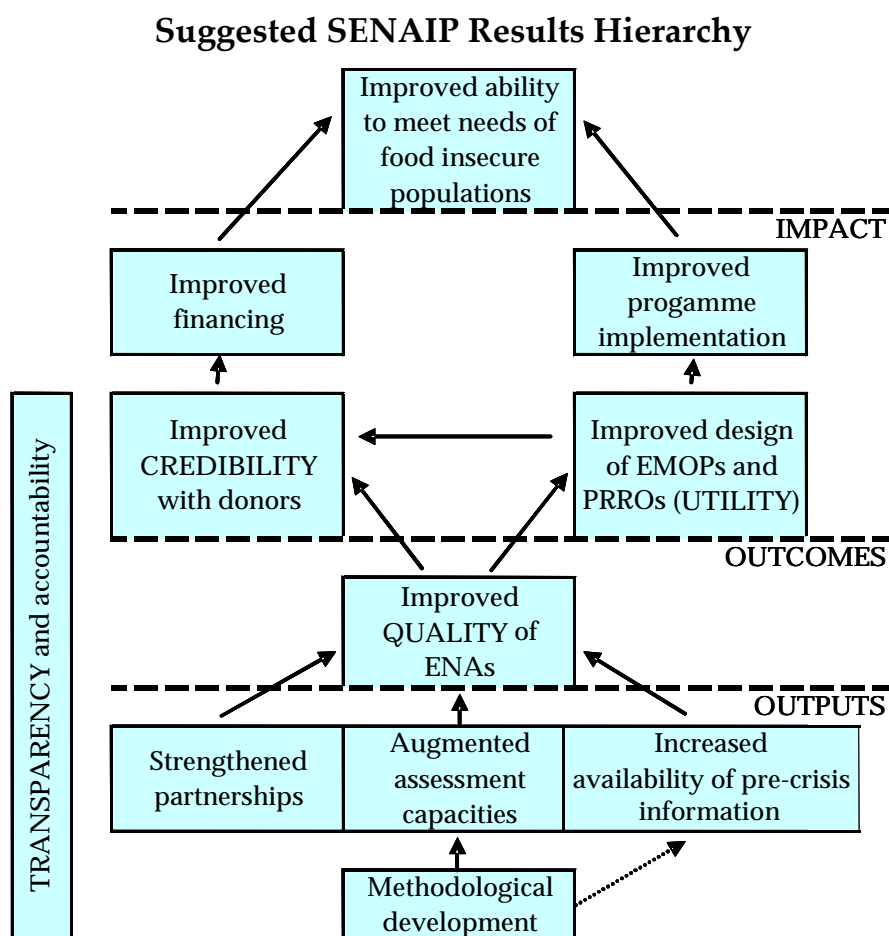
[1] Darcy, J. and Hofmann, C.-A. 2003. *According to need? Needs assessment and decision–making in the humanitarian sector*. Humanitarian Policy Group Report 15. London, Overseas Development Institute.

3.   SENAIP was implemented for a three-year period from 2005 to 2007, with an annual budget of US$7 million. Of the various donors that supported it through the Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity (SENAC) project, the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO) made the largest contribution.

4.   This independent evaluation of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of SENAIP between January 2005 and December 2006 was commissioned by the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) to provide (i) accountability for the expenditure of public funds and (ii) guidance on the competencies and procedures to be mainstreamed in the budget for the 2008–2009 biennium.

5.   The evaluation methods included interviews with stakeholders and a review of reports, products, electronic surveys and case studies in Chad, Nepal, Rwanda and Zambia. It was not possible to include the most recent SENAIP activities in this evaluation, which acknowledges that some are not yet complete.

Relevance[2]

6.   The evaluation elicited positive feedback regarding the relevance of the SENAIP programme design in a context where donors expressed concern that WFP's operations exaggerated the need for food aid and paid insufficient attention to alternative responses. The need to improve the proportionality and appropriateness of humanitarian assistance is recognized. SENAIP identified improvement in the quality of emergency needs assessment as the best way to address these concerns.

7.   The breadth of the SENAIP initiative is commended: it was intended to enhance needs assessment methods and guidance, improve availability of pre-crisis information and augment related capacities such as appointing skilled assessment staff. These were complemented in the design by measures to improve internal accountability for assessments and achieve greater transparency in methods and products.

8.   On the basis of prior consultations, SENAIP initially identified five areas of research. In particular, there is agreement on the urgent need for WFP assessments to incorporate improved understanding of the role of markets in emergencies and the effect of food aid on markets.

9.   There are, however, areas where the design could have been improved. The initial focus was on improving the quality of assessment products. But in addition to the quality of assessments, WFP is concerned with the ways in which assessment information is utilized by decision-makers. SENAIP subsequently incorporated an analysis of the linkages to decision-makers, but this could have been done earlier. Greater attention to these linkages is still needed.

10.   The SENAIP design paid insufficient attention to the participation of food-insecure people in assessment processes. This is a significant gap: WFP has a long-standing commitment to ensuring that food-insecure people participate. There is evidence that the participation of vulnerable people in assessments is an effective way of ensuring that needs are correctly identified and appropriately met.

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[2] For further details, see paras 66–99 of the evaluation report: OEDE/WFP. 2007. *SENAIP Evaluation Report*.

WFP

11. SENAIP focused on improving an element of a larger information system by focusing on emergencies, whereas WFP works in a variety of contexts that include building resilience before and after crises. The main focus of SENAIP is improving needs assessment rather than providing the full range of information that assists decision-makers, for example baselines, early warning and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).[3]

12. This initial focus may have been justified in terms of achieving results in a short time. But it should be recognized that a balance should be struck among these analytical instruments to obtain the best possible information for programming.

13. The evaluation heard divergent views on the role of WFP in identifying responses. For many donors, SENAIP is a means to improve analysis of potential responses to food insecurity; for many in WFP, on the other hand, SENAIP is about improving analysis of the need for food aid. There is still uncertainty, given its current mandate, as to WFP's role in identifying non-food responses to food insecurity.

Outputs[4]

14. The evaluation examined the main SENAIP outputs: development of needs assessment methods, development of guidance for conducting needs assessments, the learning programme, production of pre-crisis information and greater partnership.

15. The evaluation concluded that the areas of research were appropriate. The most practical improvements in methods were in market analysis. Work is ongoing to improve the measurement of food insecurity using the dietary diversity indicator and to make it more comparable by using the integrated phase classification (IPC).

16. A considerable amount of research has been done, but there is little to show so far in the form of tested methods that can be applied by generalists and that are demonstrably relevant to decision-making. Future research should be more focused and more directly applicable.

17. Before SENAIP, assessment methods tended to vary according to circumstances, with the exception of joint assessment missions (JAMs) and crop and food supply assessment missions (CFSAMs). SENAIP has helped to systematize assessment processes through the Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook,[5] which provides a standard against which recent assessments can be judged.

18. The Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook is widely disseminated and is most useful to WFP and partner staff. Feedback about it was positive; constructive suggestions were made as to ways to improve future editions. The planned release of a second edition in 2007 may be premature, however, given the limited progress in improving assessment methods since the first edition.

19. SENAIP identified insufficient in-house capacity as a major constraint to meeting peak demand for emergency needs assessments (ENAs). SENAIP has accelerated training programmes to improve skills in planning, managing and implementing needs assessments; 800 WFP and partner staff have been trained in basic, intermediate and advanced skills.

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[3] SENAIP supports pre-crisis information systems, but it does so from the narrow perspective of the links to emergency needs assessment.

[4] See paras 100–245 of the evaluation report.

[5] This was developed with the Department for International Development (DFID) funding before SENAIP was implemented.

20. Under SENAIP, specialist staff were recruited and posted to regional bureaux and Headquarters. The evaluation noted the critical importance of the 11 regional assessment officers (RAOs) to the success of the programme: five of them support market analysis; the other six are responsible for emergency food security assessment (EFSA) training and for assessments in their regions.

21. A detailed assessment of the SENAIP training programme was conducted, including an electronic survey of trainees, whose feedback was positive as to its quality and, where they had had an opportunity to apply it, its practicality. The main suggestions for improvement included more practical training, more emphasis on analysis, ways of developing response recommendations and more post-training mentoring.

22. SENAIP has to some extent balanced the enhancement of the assessment skills of generalists, many of whom work at the country level, with the establishment of a number of specialist assessors at Headquarters and the regional bureaux. The evaluation endorses this strategy: a body of experienced assessors is critical to maintaining the quality of assessment.

23. The evaluation recognizes the importance of increasing assessment capacity at the local level. Responsibility for initial assessments, which are influential in the formulation of programmes, often rests with front-line staff. Countries are seeking greater responsibility as a means to increase the relevance of assessments to local programming decisions. Continued training in assessment methods is needed to compensate for staff attrition and to enhance capacity at the country level.

24. SENAIP recognized the need for training to build assessment capacity among government counterparts. Three pilot studies were conducted by SENAIP with a view to developing a strategy to achieve this. But there seems to be little enthusiasm among donors for financing the development of government assessment capacity through WFP or any other agency.

25. Improving vulnerability assessment is a long-term process. The initial priority of vulnerability assessments was to identify and map the location of food-insecure people, but the assessments were improved into comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessments (CFSVAs) in 2004. CFSVAs can serve various purposes, but the 16 commissioned under SENAIP in high-risk countries were intended to support subsequent ENAs. It is too early to confirm the utility of CFSVAs in this context, but there are indications that their analytical aspect may be more relevant than the data they collect. Further investigation is needed to determine whether the data needs of an ENA may be met more relevantly and cheaply through a food security monitoring system (FSMS); this has a bearing on CFSVA methods and costs.

26. The evaluation emphasizes that CFSVAs are primarily used in designing protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs), especially those focused on building resilience. CFSVAs could be made more useful by developing a learning process similar to that rolled out for EFSAs to address the limitations in (i) timeliness, (ii) cost, (iii) analysis, including the response recommendations on vulnerability reduction, and (iv) approach – they are not generally aligned with the PRRO programme cycle.

27.   The food security monitoring system has received relatively little attention under SENAIP. The evaluation highlights the importance of monitoring to trigger an ENA; but ongoing surveillance aligned with M&E is critical to checking initial programming assumptions and adjusting interventions. A major conclusion of the evaluation is that more emphasis should be placed on monitoring, altering the current bias towards large one-off assessments such as CFSVAs and EFSAs.

28.   WFP has shown its competence in operating FSMS, including those outside SENAIP. The experience and best practice in community and household surveillance (CHS) in southern Africa could be consolidated as a basis for expanding investment in FSMS.

29.   A final output of the SENAIP strategy is increasing the involvement of partners in needs assessment. The evaluation found that WFP staff at all levels appreciated the value of partnership in assessment, which could increase assessment resources and capacities, mitigate agency bias and build consensus and commitment with regard to recommended responses.

30.   The principle of partnership in assessment predates SENAIP: few assessments have been conducted independently by WFP. The evaluation found a healthy degree of partnership in most needs assessments: partners included governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Decisions on partnership appear to be made at the country level; the role of Headquarters in enabling stronger partnerships may be marginal.

31.   The main issue of partnership is that WFP continues to dominate the needs assessment process. Despite United Nations reform, there is little evidence of multi-agency platforms evolving that are suitable for supporting needs and response recommendations.

Effectiveness[6]

32.   The evaluation examined ways in which the outputs combine to improve the quality of ENAs, including instances where SENAIP staff have led ENAs and the indirect impact of SENAIP investments in developing methods, training, capacity-building and enhanced partnerships. The evaluation is informed by subjective opinions and by "scoring" a large number of EFSA reports against a checklist.

33.   There is consensus among external observers that the quality of WFP ENAs is good when compared to assessments by other United Nations agencies; and it is improving. This is a testament to the effectiveness of SENAIP, given the short period of implementation.

34.   SENAIP is part of an ongoing process in WFP of developing capacity and methods to improve needs assessment. The evaluation was not always able to attribute responsibility for observed changes.

35.   The achievement of SENAIP in promoting greater transparency in assessment methods, processes and products is commended. Quality expectations are clearly articulated and monitoring mechanisms such as the quality monitoring checklist have been established. The significance of this may be greater than is immediately apparent in that it ensures a cycle of comment and improvement. The institutional shift in WFP to achieve this deserves recognition.

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[6] See paras 246–309 in the evaluation report.

36.   Nearly all ENAs provide core information on the scale of needs, particularly the number and location of food-insecure populations. SENAIP has defined a package of activities that will improve the accuracy of these estimates, but the ability to assess this, even after the event, is still lacking.[7] The scope of the evaluation did not include addressing this question.

37.   A dangerous but common assumption among WFP's partners was that assessments exaggerate food needs. As a result, improved accuracy is often confused with lower assessed needs. In the absence of objective assessments of accuracy, this assumption is likely to persist, in which case the efforts of SENAIP could count for little.

38.   There is a lack of comparability between the severity of needs in different crises. The evaluation was unable to compare the level of needs in objective terms between any two of the assessment reports reviewed. Comparability is essential if a proportionate response is to be made. Underlying this is the question of how to measure food insecurity.

39.   The evaluation concludes that guidance is urgently needed for greater standardization and comparability. No single method will be universally applicable, but WFP should develop a toolkit of complementary methods, guidelines on applying them and a framework for comparing the results of different approaches.

40.   There is evidence that the quality of contextual analysis in assessments – the ability to explain the causes of food insecurity – is improving. But the weakest part of the assessment process is arguably the link between contextual analysis and response recommendations: the justification for a proposed response, even when it is provided, is rarely clear. There has been little progress in broadening the scope of recommendations beyond food transfers.

41.   To rectify this weakness, the evaluation suggests that WFP prioritize the development of simple decision-making tools to guide the choice of response recommendations. This should build on models developed by other organizations and researchers. The evaluation recognizes, however, that the continuing lack of a structure that facilitates multi-sectoral analyses, recommendations and responses is a major constraint.

42.   The timeliness of ENAs remains an issue. According to the survey of country offices, most believe that the timeliness of ENAs is improving. But half of the country offices also reported instances where assessment findings arrived too late to be useful for programme design.

43.   The evaluation suggests a dual response to this problem. There is a fundamental need for stakeholders to accept less detail as a way to increase the utility of assessments. The minimum expectations of assessments in different contexts should be defined and EFSA guidelines revised to reflect this; measures to ensure timely access to skilled assessment staff and to budgets should be put in place.

44.   The importance of annual re-assessment of beneficiary needs in multi-year programmes is noted. There is a formal requirement for this, but it is not apparent how it should be conducted or monitored. The evaluation suggests that programme management should obtain information about trends through surveillance systems rather than the periodic re-assessments. In southern Africa, for example, CHS complements initial needs assessment and provides operational information.

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[7] Although strictly outside its scope, the evaluation noted that a proposal entitled "Evaluating the Accuracy of ENAs: a Preliminary Study for Standards and Norms" is being prepared; final outputs are to be delivered by the second quarter of 2008. Therefore no recommendation is made for further action.

45.   The quality of assessment depends to a large extent on the quality of the staff involved. WFP should recognize this in its personnel policies and do more to attract and retain suitable staff. There is also a need to retain the RAOs funded by SENAIP: the market RAOs in particular have unique skills that could be used to embed market analysis in WFP's operational systems.

Efficiency[8]

46.   The efficiency of SENAIP is examined in terms of organizational arrangements in WFP, performance of monitoring systems, adherence to the implementation schedule and the suitability of its financial and human resources.

47.   The evaluation concludes that integrating the functions of the Emergency Needs Assessment Branch (ODAN) and the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Branch (ODAV) would increase the coherence of information gathering and analysis and result in considerable technical benefits and savings. The evaluation recommends that ODAV, ODAN, M&E and nutritional staff be brought together at the regional bureau level in a single food security analysis unit to support WFP's information needs.

48.   SENAIP uses various mechanisms to monitor the progress of implementation: progress reports to the Board, a steering committee of donors, an advisory group to monitor technical progress, and reports to individual donors. The fact that there is a steering committee of donors is a strong indication of WFP's willingness to open its management to scrutiny at this level.

49.   An innovative feature of SENAIP was the establishment of an advisory group on research, development of methods and tools, and coordination with related work; WFP and the advisory group were of the opinion that its skills and experience should have been used more fully. WFP should consider maintaining the advisory group when SENAIP ends.

50.   The budget for SENAIP is justified in relation to WFP's overall budget and the potential cost savings on programmes. There is a strong argument for continuing substantial budgetary support; when extra-budgetary support ends, current activities will have to be scaled back. It is hard to identify areas where savings can be made without affecting performance; candidates include Headquarters staff costs, research and the advisory group.

51.   Cost savings may be found in the assessments. Average EFSA costs are reasonable, but the more elaborate and rigorous models are not recommended because they are relatively expensive and take time. Substantial costs savings in CFSVAs may be achieved by shifting the focus from data collection to secondary data analysis.

Impact[9]

52.   The evaluation examined evidence of the impact of improved needs assessments on programme design, donor perceptions of credibility and financing. The impact on programmes cannot be judged because SENAIP has been operational for only two years. However, these preliminary findings are pertinent to mainstreaming decisions.

53.   SENAIP has made WFP managers accountable for ensuring that needs are assessed in some way. In May 2004, the Senior Deputy Executive Director issued a directive that made WFP regional and country directors accountable for ensuring that all new emergency

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[8] See paras 310–371 of the evaluation report.

[9] See paras 372–440 of the evaluation report.

operations (EMOPs) and PRROs be adequately supported by either a needs assessment or a VAM exercise. This accountability is followed up through the Programme Review Committee (PRC).

54.   The evaluation found that ENA results are routinely used to guide the implementation of WFP food-assistance programmes, in particular providing the basis for targeting, beneficiary numbers and food needs.

55.   Many ENAs do not provide fully justified response recommendations. Where ENAs provide response recommendations outside WFP's mandate, the agency responsible for following up is not always specified and the recommendations are often ignored.

56.   The evaluation concluded that improved market analysis is not fully utilized in support of WFP decisions in that there is a lack of dialogue between the RAO market analysts and WFP staff tasked with procuring food. This indicates a systemic issue: more work is needed to generate understanding among decision-makers of the value of assessment work; decision-makers need to value assessment work to a much greater extent.

57.   A principal concern of SENAIP was to improve the credibility of WFP assessments among donors. There are indications that credibility has improved, especially among those close to SENAIP. The improvements in levels of expertise and transparency under SENAIP have increased WFP's credibility as an organization.

58.   It should be borne in mind, however, that donor perceptions of the credibility of WFP are formed primarily on the basis of EMOP and PRRO proposals rather than on the quality of the supporting assessment. In this context, changes in credibility are unlikely until changes in programme content are evident. Because WFP responses are limited to food transfers, the perception that self-interest will influence assessments may persist.

59.   Little immediate impact on donors' funding decisions was observed. In addition to the remaining questions regarding credibility, donor decision-making procedures remain poorly aligned to decision-making on the basis of needs. A clearer incentive system would encourage improved needs assessment in WFP.

60.   The relationship between WFP and donors should not, of course, be the only reason for WFP to adopt sound assessment procedures. Generating sufficient resources is a valid concern, but a major consideration should be the relationship between WFP and food-insecure populations: better needs assessment would help WFP to use resources to meet the needs of food-insecure people proportionately and appropriately.

Sustainability and Mainstreaming[10]

61.   SENAIP has rapidly improved the quality of assessments and the credibility of results. It has made accountability and transparency integral features of assessment practice, which should result in sustained high quality assessments and fruitful use of their results.

62.   The process of enhancing needs assessment is far from complete, however: improvements in methods have yet to be consolidated and applied, capacities are fragile and institutional acceptance is still only partial. In the absence of clear incentives and policies, the ambitious assessment approaches introduced by SENAIP would not be sustained. It is therefore important to develop and integrate the work done so far.

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[10] See paras 372–440 of the evaluation report.

63.   In the short term, sustainability will depend on transferring budgetary responsibility from extra-budgetary funds to the Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) budget. WFP is committed to this change, but in the current period of extreme budgetary pressure in WFP it would be in the interests of donors and WFP to extend the current period of extra-budgetary support to sustain the momentum of SENAIP.

64.   The evaluation concludes that sound assessment depends on more than methodological rigour. Other factors that need to be considered are:

➢   hiring and retaining skilled technicians;

➢   establishing a supportive environment and a greater sense of ownership at the country level; and

➢   creating an enhanced incentive system to reward sound assessment.

65.   The main recommendations of the evaluations and the management response are in the Annex.

ANNEX: RECOMMENDATION MATRIX AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE		
Recommendations	**Action by**	**Management response and action taken**
1. Financing		
a) The objective of mainstreaming SENAIP activities in PSA is commended. However, continued short-term extra-budgetary support may be justified during 2008 to ensure that activities are sustained and transitioned to PSA funding. Paragraph 433 of the evaluation report.	Analysis, Assessment and Preparedness Division (ODA) Donor Relations Department (FDD)	Mainstreaming SENAIP has been the objective from the outset. WFP management has made food security assessment and analysis a priority and is reviewing it as part of the preparations for the Management Plan (2008–2009). ODA is consulting SENAIP donors as to their willingness to extend extra-budgetary funding in priority cases.
2. Assessment Strategy		
a) A strategy should be developed to increase the participation of food-insecure populations in food security baseline assessments, monitoring and needs assessment. Paragraph 276 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV	In the third year, WFP is giving priority to improving its qualitative tools to enable food-insecure populations to articulate needs and identify solutions. It should be noted that some situations are not suitable for full beneficiary participation because of conflict and access constraints.
b) SENAIP activities should be integrated into a food security analysis system that supports decision-makers with information related to relief and resilience building. Paragraph 274 of the evaluation report.	ODA	Agree. In the context of reorganizing ODA (see 3a), a food security information management plan will be developed to promote an integrated approach at all levels to enhance the links between food security assessment, analysis, monitoring and decision-making.
c) The capacity to design, implement and analyse needs assessments and other food security studies should be enhanced at the country level. Budget control should be developed to the lowest competent level. Paragraph 322 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV	During its final year, 2007, SENAIP is giving priority to building the capacity of WFP staff and partners at the country level. Regional bureaux are leading the identification of skills and staff gaps and developing strategies to address these. ODA will issue a toolkit for ENA facilitators and on-line learning tools in 2007. In 2007, an updated operations directive to all staff will underline the principle that workplans and budgets should be managed at the country level where feasible.
d) Guidelines should be developed for supporting FSMS, drawing on SENAIP-funded and other ODAV-supported monitoring systems. WFP should allocate significant additional resources to initiating and institutionalizing food security monitoring systems in line with this guidance, either from PSA or extra-budgetary sources. Paragraph 223 of the evaluation report.	ODAV FDD	FSMS guidelines are being developed for dissemination in 2008. ODAV is collaborating with country offices to budget sufficient funds to support FSMS and seeking extra-budgetary funds when required. As part of a food security information management strategy (see 2b), country offices will be encouraged to mainstream support for FSMS.

ANNEX: RECOMMENDATION MATRIX AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE		
Recommendations	**Action by**	**Management response and action taken**
3. Institutional and Staffing		
a) The two units of ODAV and ODAN should be combined into a single unit under ODA to provide a single source of direction on food security analysis. Paragraph 316 of the evaluation report.	ODA	Agree. Rationalizing ODAN, ODAV and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch (ODAP) into a single unit is the focus of an ODA review this year. The outcome will be implemented in the context of the Management Plan (2008–2009). The linkages between food security and programme information sources will be set out in the food security information management strategy (see 2b).
b) The regional bureaux should consider establishing a food security analysis unit that brings together ODAV, ODAN, M&E and nutritional staff under unified management to provide coordinated information. Paragraph 317 of the evaluation report.	Office of the Associate Director of Operations (ODO)/regional bureaux ODA Programme Management Division (ODM) Policy, Strategy and Programme Support Division (PDP)	Agree. ODA has promoted the idea in the regional bureaux; some are moving in this direction. The model is under discussion as part of the preparations for the Management Plan (2008–2009).
c) It is imperative to maintain enough skilled assessment staff at the regional level to backstop assessments and make sure that lessons learned are institutionalized. Priority should be given to retaining the five RAO market analysts, whose primary function should be to develop and mainstream market assessment tools and skills. Paragraph 368 of the evaluation report.	ODA Human Resources (ADH) ODO/regional bureaux Economic Analysis Service (PDPE)	Agree. A management priority is ensuring decentralized capacity for food security analysis with Headquarters providing normative guidance and quality assurance. Staffing levels are under discussion as part of the preparations for the Management Plan (2008–2009). Collaboration between regional bureaux, PDPE, ODAN and ODAV has resulted in a number of market tools for field staff and the integration of market analysis into regular vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) and assessment products. During the final year of SENAIP, capacity-building has been a priority, incorporating market analysis and on-the-job training.
d) The attrition rate of other WFP staff trained as assessors should be monitored. If excessive, WFP senior management and those who develop and review agency personnel policies should find ways to retain ENA-related needs-assessment officers in whose training WFP has invested. Paragraph 371 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV ADH	In consultation with ADH, ODA will identify the best way to monitor attrition: this will be through the ODA database of ENA and VAM trained staff, StaffNet or WINGS II. ODA and ADH will discuss ways to improve the career path of these staff as an incentive to remain in their positions.

ANNEX: RECOMMENDATION MATRIX AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE		
Recommendations	**Action by**	**Management response and action taken**
e) The advisory group should be maintained for the duration of the SENAC project, after which similar but much smaller group(s) to support research and innovation should be considered. Possible areas of support would be market analysis, response analysis, CFSVA and FSMS and measurement of food insecurity. Paragraph 337 of the evaluation report.	ODA	Agree. At the end of 2007, the SENAC advisory group will be convened for a final time in its current form. Smaller groups of experts, for example in markets or CFSVA/FSMS, are proposed for 2008. In the context of the multi-agency IPC initiative – WFP is a partner, and a priority topic is response analysis – a food security advisory group will also be formed.
4. Linkages to Decision Making		
a) Seminars should be organized as soon as possible for senior field managers to build awareness of the benefits of improving needs assessment and to clarify their responsibility for facilitating timely needs assessment, to provide an overview of assessment best practices and to show how assessment findings should be used in programme formulation and implementation. Paragraph 188 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV	As part of the longer-term objective of changing the organizational culture, ODA will continue to promote this at annual meetings and training sessions for country directors and through the Project Review Committee (PRC) (see 4d). Responsibility for the assessment function was recently added to the terms of reference for country directors. An awareness-raising module for country directors will be disseminated later in 2007.
b) Guidance is needed on the minimum reporting requirements for the initial, rapid and in-depth levels of assessment to clarify expectations of reporting (i) the number, location, severity and duration of needs, (ii) the contextual analysis and (iii) the accuracy and scope of response recommendations. Paragraph 295 of the evaluation report.	ODAN	Agree. This guidance is being incorporated into the updated *EFSA Handbook*, which will be published early in 2008.
c) Measures should be taken to ensure that assessments differentiate between assistance necessary to save lives and assistance necessary to save livelihoods. Paragraph 280 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV	Agree. This will be covered in the updated *EFSA Handbook* and refined during the multi-partner development of a common approach to analysing and classifying food insecurity on the basis of IPC.
d) The EMOP and PRRO proposals should include a one-page annex showing the recommendations taken from the assessments, with an explanation for any discrepancies in the programme proposal. Paragraph 391 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV ODO	Agree. In collaboration with ODO, ODA will develop this annex in 2007 with a view to institutionalizing it as a requirement for the PRC.
e) ODAN/ODAV and those responsible for food aid procurement should collaborate on market analysis and the utilization of ensuing recommendations. Paragraph 402 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV Food Procurement Service (ODTP) PDPE	Agree. During 2007, the four divisions intensified their collaboration; regional assessment and procurement officers cooperated in field-led studies in Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Sudan. PDPE has been involved in the Home-Grown School Feeding and Power of Purchase projects in support of smallholders in Africa; procurement is important in both.

ANNEX: RECOMMENDATION MATRIX AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE		
Recommendations	**Action by**	**Management response and action taken**
5. Technical Quality of ENAs		
a) Progress in SENAIP thematic research should be reviewed. On the basis of this review and the findings of this evaluation, future resources should be allocated to themes where the most pressing needs coincide with the highest probability of producing applied products relevant to field assessment methods. Other research themes should be concluded. Paragraph 134 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV	As planned, SENAIP thematic research is being reduced in the third year; the focus now is on integrating the results of earlier research in the form of methods and tools in the updated *EFSA Handbook*. Ongoing priority research identified in consultation with the advisory group and SENAIP donors includes: (i) diet diversity/frequency as a food security indicator, (ii) strengthening the link between nutrition and food security analysis and (iii) developing a common classification of food insecurity.
b) Guidance on the measurement of food insecurity should be developed for the field. This should include a toolkit with a few alternative methods, advice on selecting methods or combinations of methods in a particular context and guidance on triangulating methods to reach comparable conclusions on the severity of different crises. Paragraph 261 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV	The updated *EFSA Handbook* and CFSVA guidance will set out quantitative and qualitative approaches and standardized ways of measuring the severity of food insecurity in terms of diet diversity and the frequency with which certain foods are consumed. WFP's collaboration in the multi-agency initiative for a standard food security classification promotes collegiate conclusions.
c) Simple decision tools should be developed to facilitate selection of alternative responses, building on models developed by other organizations and researchers. Paragraph 270 of the evaluation report.	ODAN ODAV	The updated *EFSA Handbook* will include clearer guidance on analysis of response options, drawing on the current approaches of partners through the organizations represented on the advisory group.
d) The evaluation team concurs with the stated intention to integrate market analysis into CFSVA, FSMS and ENA. To maximize progress, RAO market officers should prioritize this activity during the remainder of 2007. Paragraph 209 of the evaluation report.	ODAN/regional bureaux ODAV/regional bureaux	Agree. During the final year of SENAIP – 2007 – work is ongoing at regional bureaux and country offices to integrate market analysis into assessments and VAM analyses. Examples of good progress include CFSVAs in Cameroon, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Liberia, and EFSAs in Darfur and Madagascar.
e) The primary purpose of CSFVAs should be acknowledged as supporting the design of programmes to build resilience to food insecurity, whether EMOP, PRRO or country programme (CP). The comprehensive learning strategy proposed by ODAV should develop methods, models, guidance and training to enhance the capacity of country offices to conduct analyses for this purpose. Paragraph 208 of the evaluation report.	ODAV	Agree. In 2007, ODAV is undertaking an analysis of gaps in VAM skills with a view to developing a learning strategy. One focus will be to enhance causal analysis in CFSVAs to improve programming guidance in ways of reducing vulnerability to food insecurity. Training sessions have been held in 2007 and will continue into 2008.

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ANNEX: RECOMMENDATION MATRIX AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE		
Recommendations	**Action by**	**Management response and action taken**
f) An external assessment of the CFSVA in the Lao People's Democratic Republic should be organized to examine the degree to which technical and process limitations identified by the advisory group and the Development Information Services International (DISI) report, have been addressed. Routine external technical advice for and reviews of future CFSVAs should be invited. Paragraph 209 of the evaluation report.	ODAV	The use of external technical advice has been a fundamental principle of SENAIP; external peer reviews of core products are ongoing. Members of the SENAC advisory group will continue peer reviews of CFSVAs, including the one for the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The results will inform the CFSVA guidance to be completed this year.
g) A study should be commissioned to compare the relative utility and cost efficiency of CFSVAs and FSMS in providing data to support a subsequent ENA. Paragraph 200 of the evaluation report.	ODAV ODAN	The development of a food-security information management strategy (2b) will include a review of the mix of CFSVAs, FSMS and ENAs in different country contexts.
h) Additional guidance, or a companion volume to the handbook, should be developed that is shorter, simpler and directed at a less specialized audience. This version should focus on initial assessment for generalist staff and provide rapid assessment tools that are easy to use. Paragraph 143 of the evaluation report.	ODAN	Agree. This is ongoing in 2007 as part of the update of the *EFSA Handbook*. The revised modular format will allow this chapter and others, for example on market analysis, to be used as stand-alone guidance.
i) From a technical perspective, consideration should be given to delaying the production of a second edition of the *EFSA Handbook* until new tools have been tested. Paragraph 147 of the evaluation report.	ODAN	The revised *EFSA Handbook* will be in a modular format so it can be easily updated as tools for market analysis, measuring diet diversity etc. are tested. Given the knowledge and experience gained during the past two years, ODA believes it is the right time to update the *EFSA Handbook* so that field staff has easy access to state-of-the-art knowledge. Delay could slow down the process of improving the quality of assessments.
j) A robust ENA training programme should be continued and supported with a budget and training staff. Paragraph 179 of the evaluation report.	ODAN	This is the priority during the final year of SENAIP, as reflected in the allocation of staff time and budgets. In 2007, regional bureaux are developing learning strategies based on analysis of gaps at the country level and identifying funding.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

ADH	Human Resources Branch
CFSAM	crop and food supply assessment mission
CFSVA	comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment
CHS	community and household surveillance
CP	country programme
DFID	Department for International Development
DISI	Development Information Services International
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission
EFSA	emergency food security assessment
EMOP	emergency operation
ENA	emergency needs assessment
FDD	Donor Relations Department
FSMS	food security monitoring system
IPC	integrated phase classification
JAM	joint assessment mission
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODA	Analysis, Assessment and Preparedness Division
ODAN	Emergency Needs Assessment Branch
ODAP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch
ODAV	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Branch
ODM	Programme Management Division
ODO	Office of Associate Director of Operations
ODTP	Food Procurement Service
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
PDP	Policy, Strategy and Programme Support Division
PDPE	Economic Analysis Service
PRC	Project Review Committee
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSA	Programme Support and Administrative
RAO	regional assessment officer
SENAC	Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity
SENAIP	Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Implementation Plan
VAM	vulnerability analysis and mapping

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