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**Executive Board  
First Regular Session**

**Rome, 4–6 February 2008**

## **EVALUATION REPORTS**

*Agenda item 7*

*For consideration*

# **E**

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## **MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE PEER REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AT THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME**

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## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE PEER REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AT THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

1. WFP leadership appreciates the efforts of the Peer Review and the contributions made by each Panel member. The Panel worked under difficult circumstances: not only was WFP undergoing substantial changes, but the Office of Evaluation (OEDE) had also initiated a systematic process of upgrading the quality and effectiveness of its work. This meant that the Panel members had to review “a moving target” as changes were continuously implemented throughout the period of its work. For these reasons, the Panel’s report is not entirely up to date and does not accurately reflect evolving good practices in evaluation that OEDE has been introducing in the course of 2007.
2. WFP is fully committed to improving its evaluation function. The organization demonstrated this commitment by hiring a professional evaluator, Caroline Heider, to head OEDE. Ms Heider introduced a concerted effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of evaluation at WFP. The analysis of the Peer Review Panel confirms many of the opportunities for improving WFP’s evaluation function, both centrally and at the decentralized level, which Ms Heider identified and started to address when she joined the organization. Many of the Panel’s recommendations picked up on and support the ideas that OEDE started implementing as the Peer Review was underway. We take the Panel’s report as a reaffirmation of the direction of change that OEDE started to pursue even before the Panel commenced its work.
3. WFP leadership appreciates the wish of the Executive Board to play a greater role in overseeing the evaluation function, as reaffirmed and recommended by the Panel. In the 1996 document “Methods of Work and Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board” (WFP/ExB.1/96/3), principles were agreed that ensured that all Board members be present in the discussion of important issues, such as evaluation reports, so that a common understanding and position of the Board could be reached. OEDE developed a process to engage the Board in the strategic directions of evaluation at WFP through the annual informal consultation. In 2008, the new draft evaluation policy and plans for strategic evaluations during the biennium will be discussed internally and with the Board.
4. Accountability and learning is fundamental to a well-functioning organization. WFP leadership, under the guidance of the Executive Director, is fully committed to ensuring a corporate culture that does not perpetuate or repeat mistakes. The transition that WFP is undergoing requires critical reflection on what works and what does not work, so that only the positive experiences are repeated. OEDE will be spearheading a programme to strengthen the evaluation capacities in Regional Bureaux and country offices. Having such capacities at decentralized levels will make WFP a stronger partner in the field.
5. Detailed responses to each of the recommendations in the full report are contained in the matrix that follows.



**ANNEX: RECOMMENDATION MATRIX AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE\***

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<b>Relationship between the Office of Evaluation and the Executive Board</b>			
1. Establish a Board sub-committee on evaluations in line with the existing practice at International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This sub-committee could then be tasked to meet at regular intervals with OEDE to discuss such issues as planned strategies, budgetary allocations, strategic use of evaluations and evaluation follow-up.	Executive Board		To be decided after Board discussion and decision
2. Furthermore, future appointments and contract extensions of the Director of the Office of Evaluation should be discussed with the Board prior to their implementation. It would be appropriate to ask a Board Member (possibly the head of the potential evaluation sub-committee) to participate in future interview panels.	Executive Board		To be decided after Board discussion and decision
<b>Evaluation policy and strategy</b>			
3. OEDE should develop an evaluation policy that encapsulates and consolidates the previous evaluation policies and fully meets all United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation.	OEDE	Agreed. In the coming months, OEDE will draft a new WFP Evaluation Policy to be presented for approval to the Second Regular Session of the Executive Board.	October 2008
4. This policy should be actively shared with the Executive Board, WFP staff, WFP partners and evaluation teams engaged by OEDE or for decentralized evaluations.	OEDE	Agreed. The Evaluation Policy will be on WFP's website and disseminated within the organization.	Following approval
5. The evaluation policy should then be translated into action through the development of an evaluation strategy which would specify how OEDE would implement this policy.	OEDE	Agreed.	End 2008



\* This matrix was built on the basis of the full report and does not necessarily follow the structure of the Executive Summary contained in document WFP/EB.1/2008/7-A.

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6. Given that an increase of the OEDE evaluation budget is unlikely, the Panel feels that in the medium-term OEDE should approach key donors for short-term funding of specialist staff positions, junior professional officers, evaluation posts in regional bureaux and support to modify, develop and test appropriate tools and guidelines.	OEDE	Partly Agreed. The possibility of receiving evaluation expertise on secondment from other partner agencies for specific evaluations will be explored. However, the suggestion to use extra-budgetary funding of evaluation posts in regional bureaux would require a careful assessment of the extent to which these could be mainstreamed at the end of donor support. The experience with Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity (SENAC) should be taken into account in this respect.	During 2008
7. The role and purpose of and relationship between (a) self-evaluation, which essentially means self-reflection on performance using, for example, After-Action Reviews (AAR) as one method, (b) decentralized evaluations and (c) external evaluations should be studied. It should be clearly articulated in both the evaluation policy and also in the overarching policy and strategy documents of WFP.	OEDE, Policy and External Affairs Department (PD)	Agreed. This was planned under OEDE's Support Programme, included in the 2008–2009 Management Plan. The consultation will involve a range of WFP stakeholders, including colleagues in the field. The result of these consultations will be included in the Evaluation Policy or the Evaluation Strategy, whichever is more appropriate.	During 2008
<b>Office of Evaluation mandate</b>			
8. The mandate for OEDE should form part of the WFP's evaluation policy. This mandate should include the nine points listed by the Panel in the Peer Review Report (pages 61–63).	OEDE	Agreed.	October 2008
<b>External accountability: relations with partners and stakeholders</b>			
9. OEDE should develop an "accountability map" of key WFP stakeholders, both internal and external, to help in clarifying roles and responsibilities.	OEDE	Partly agreed. Accountability maps are important and link well with the stakeholder analysis introduced into OEDE's evaluations with its new Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS). However, OEDE believes that these accountability maps should be done for specific evaluations rather than WFP as a whole, which would result in a complex accountability map that would be difficult to manage given the number of WFP stakeholders.	From 2008
10. Based on this "accountability map", OEDE should develop guidance both for WFP staff in functional units and partners identified in the map as key stakeholders to help them in fulfilling their accountability responsibilities and enhancing communications.	OEDE	Agreed. The model of an accountability map in the Peer Review will be reviewed, revised if necessary and included in EQAS. Once EQAS is rolled out through the Support Programme, accountability maps will become more widely used within WFP.	2008



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11. OEDE should ensure that WFP field staff are provided with appropriate support and guidelines to facilitate participatory approaches during evaluation processes. This may start with guidance to ensure that WFP staff are aware that sharing of draft terms of reference (TORs), reports, etc. with external stakeholders is not only authorized, but also encouraged.	OEDE	Agreed. This is part of EQAS and the Support Programme included in the 2008–2009 Management Plan.	From 2008
12. OEDE staff should as much as possible “model” participatory approaches, both in their roles as evaluation manager or periodically, as a team member. OEDE staff could also assist in facilitating at advising on country office-organized workshops to disseminate results of evaluations.	OEDE	Agreed. This is also part of the Support Programme.	From 2008
13. OEDE should use communication and learning strategies to support the above efforts.	OEDE	Agreed. The communication and learning strategy will be part of the overall Evaluation Strategy (see recommendation 5).	End 2008
<b>Management response</b>			
14. WFP should both in principle and in practice, establish a clear division of responsibility regarding management response between the evaluation function and the organization’s line management. After an evaluation has been submitted to the Executive Director, the Evaluation Office should not be involved with drafting or compilation of responses from different parts of the organization; the general principle is that the Executive Director has the overall responsibility for management response whether the actual drafting is delegated or not to other parts of WFP.	Executive Director	The Division for Change Management in the Office of the Executive Director will be responsible for the management response mechanism.	Beginning 2008



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>15. The management response mechanism should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ include rules about the timeframe for the response and procedures for follow-up of the management response as well as for reporting to the Executive Board and the OEDE about the results of the follow-up;</li> <li>➤ whenever appropriate, distinguish between short-term and long-term responses as well as between operational measures directly related to the subject matter for the evaluation and general lessons to be learnt by WFP and its partners; and</li> <li>➤ include justification for not accepting a specific recommendation.</li> </ul>	<p>Office of the Executive Director (OED) OEDE</p>	<p>The management response mechanism will be set up in line with good practice standards currently under development by the United Nations Evaluation Group.</p>	<p>Mid-2008</p>
<p>16. A similar system for management response should be used for decentralised evaluations. The same kind of division of responsibilities can for obvious reasons not be established when, for example, a Country Director both commissions an evaluation and decides on management response. But it is still essential that ways are created for formal responses to such evaluations. Follow-up should also be the country office's responsibility with reporting on the results upwards in the organisation.</p>	<p>OED, OEDE, regional bureaux, country offices</p>	<p>This recommendation will be considered as part of the programme to strengthen decentralized evaluations.</p>	<p>End 2008</p>
<p>17. The management response and follow-up mechanism should be transparent with relevant documents easily accessible for WFP and partners and routinely posted in electronic form.</p>	<p>OED</p>	<p>This recommendation will be considered when designing and setting up the management response mechanism.</p>	<p>Mid-2008</p>
<p>18. Mechanisms should be found to improve the quality, credibility and ownership of evaluation recommendations. Such mechanisms may include developing recommendations in dialogue with primary stakeholders and /or leaving recommendations up to those responsible for decisions and action in the organization, based upon engagement by primary stakeholders around the findings and conclusions of the evaluation report.</p>	<p>OEDE</p>	<p>Agreed. EQAS has some initial provisions for guiding the drafting of recommendations. The quality assurance part of EQAS aims to put into practice making evaluation recommendations meaningful. Working through recommendations in a more participatory process could be tested in one or two evaluations and the experience built into an update of EQAS.</p>	<p>Testing during 2008; possible revision end 2008 or 2009</p>



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<b>Evaluation quality</b>			
19. The current emphasis placed on improving the quality, rigor and harmonization of OEDE's work as well as the focus on systematic processes, quality checks and tools such as stakeholder maps and evaluation matrices are highly encouraged.	OEDE	The recommendation acknowledges OEDE's work on EQAS and encourages OEDE to continue its efforts in this direction. Therefore, no separate follow-up action is needed.	Under implementation
20. In addition to the ongoing systematization of processes and the development of templates and codes of conduct the Panel recommends that the five first points of Section 6.6 of the Peer Review Report (page 65) be implemented.	OEDE	These recommendations are in line with EQAS; therefore no separate follow-up action is needed.	Under implementation
21. In order to maintain the OEDE staff capacity as well as stimulate interest in the evaluation field and encourage professionalism, it is recommended that ample time should be allocated and incentives should be provided for staff to keep up with new developments in the field of evaluation.	OEDE	This recommendation is in line with OEDE's plans for the Support Programme, included in the 2008–2009 Management Plan, which foresees extensive training for OEDE and other WFP staff, and some partners, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources.	Under implementation
<b>Organizational learning</b>			
22. OEDE should establish mechanisms to systematically harvest lessons from evaluations. Such lessons should then be proactively shared, using internal knowledge management fora and tools such as the Practice Sharing Knowledge System (PASS <small>it-on</small> ), as well as external knowledge sharing fora such as Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and relevant partners.	OEDE	Agreed. This will be part of OEDE's communication strategy/website improvement programme.	2008 and ongoing
23. Innovative methods for extracting and sharing of evaluation lessons should be investigated, building on the experiences of other organisations with extensive experience in this field. Amongst others, the four methods listed in section 6.7 on page 66 of the Peer Review Report should be investigated.	OEDE	Agreed. Following EQAS, the management of the evaluation process should be transparent and encourage learning. Tailor-made communication tools for evaluations will be explored if/when financial resources are sufficient to test innovative approaches. The meta-analysis of evaluations will be enabled through the introduction of EQAS and done on an annual basis in the Annual Evaluation Report.	2008



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Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<b>Monitoring and results-based management</b>			
24. WFP should give high priority to address the disconnection between its various results-focused data collection, reporting and analysis tools. A thorough review of existing field monitoring systems and applications is vital to ensure that evaluations as well as the corporate monitoring system have access to more reliable, relevant and comparable data.	Programme Design and Support Division	This recommendation is largely overtaken by the events such as the development of a planning and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) module in WFP Information Network and Global System II (WINGS II). The suggested review took place long ago and the results were used in connection with the design of the new M&E system.	Synchronized with WINGS II implementation
25. Ways should be developed and maintained to ensure that all interventions are linked to proper monitoring mechanisms, both at local and corporate levels, and include objectives and indicators that facilitate evaluations which satisfy WFP as well as external stakeholders.	Programme Design and Support Division	In addition to the module in WINGS II mentioned above, an M&E toolkit builder has been developed. This tool will be used to define or plan the M&E system. The WINGS II M&E module will then be used for the actual monitoring and evaluation.	Synchronized with WINGS II implementation
<b>Team selection and procurement of external evaluation expertise</b>			
26. OEDE should develop a transparent, rigorous and competitive approach to the selection of team leaders. This should include advertising the evaluation consultancies on appropriate listserves, shortlisting based on expression of interest, shortlisting and selecting team leaders based on the submission of an approach note and on interviews. If possible, team leaders should be identified early on and be involved in the identification and selection of the rest of the team.	OEDE	Agreed.	Immediate
27. All evaluation teams should include at least one evaluation specialist, preferably the team leader, who has sufficient knowledge about and experience with current evaluation approaches and methods.	OEDE	Agreed.	Immediate



**ANNEX: RECOMMENDATION MATRIX AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE\***

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<b>Staffing of the Office of Evaluation</b>			
28. WFP should allow OEDE to select internal staff based on a professional recruitment process rather than through the standard reassignment exercise. This should include a selection process based on the staff member's interest in work in OEDE, the extent to which their competencies match the ones needed by OEDE, and a competency-based interview of the top three candidates.	Human Resources Division (ADH)  OEDE	When filling three vacancies at the end of 2007, OEDE followed a systematic selection and interview process. For <i>internal</i> candidates all candidates were ranked based on their qualifications against specific, job-related criteria. The top seven or eight candidates were interviewed by telephone, or in person if they were in headquarters. All candidates interviewed had relevant monitoring and, to a lesser extent, evaluation experience. The selected candidates were presented to WFP's Reassignment Committee, in line with WFP's personnel procedures. The selection process for <i>external</i> candidates followed the first two steps of the process for internal candidates (with the exception that all interviews were conducted by phone), but was complemented by a third step that consisted of interviews in person, including a written test. The recruitment process followed standard WFP recruitment procedures.	Action taken in 2007 recruitment process
29. WFP should continue to allow external recruitment of evaluation specialists.	Chair, Staffing Committee	This was the case in 2007. The revised Evaluation Policy (see recommendation 3) will contain provisions to this effect.	October 2008
30. WFP should base OEDE's staff profile on the profile of evaluators developed by UNEG.	ADH	In August 2007, WFP compared the UNEG job profiles with the WFP generic job profiles for equivalent evaluation officers. The duties and responsibilities enlisted in WFP generic job profiles cover all main duties and responsibilities listed in the UNEG job profiles, using generic terms. In order to reinforce the application of United Nations Evaluation Norms and Standards and Code of Conduct for Evaluators, specific reference to them was added to the generic job profiles.	Implemented



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31. WFP should consider how to ensure an appropriate career path for evaluation specialists within the organization and within the United Nations System.	ADH	<p>Career management at WFP is defined as the process by which staff members assume responsibility for their careers and are supported by the organization to plan, organize and pursue careers that meet organizational needs and requirements.</p> <p>In order to meet organization needs within the Division of Evaluation, a portion of WFP's evaluation specialists are hired externally to fill specialist positions. Should evaluation specialists develop the skills, knowledge and interest to become functionally or geographically mobile, they may choose to participate in the WFP rotational process, which provides them with an alternate career path within WFP. Care is taken to ensure that having worked as an evaluation officer does not lead to manager bias or conflict of interest for the staff member in relation to a different role; WFP has adopted a six-month mandatory waiting period for evaluation officers between when they finish an evaluation and when they can apply for a position in the duty station or organizational unit covered by that evaluation.</p>	Implemented
<b>Budget for evaluations</b>			
32. WFP's senior management should devise ways to safeguard the considerable funding allocated to evaluations for the next biennium. In this respect, it is critical that the Executive Director and senior management ensure the full use of direct support costs (DSC) funds by holding managers accountable for (not) implementing decentralized evaluations.	Senior management	Partly agreed. The funding mechanism set up for evaluations (see response to recommendation 33) will contain an incentive and accountability mechanism for conducting decentralized evaluations.	Under implementation
33. Management should consider to " earmark " strategic and sensitive decentralized evaluations for OEDE management to thus reduce the risk that offices seek to bypass OEDE and to ensure full independence where most needed.	Senior management	Partly agreed. The Evaluation Policy aims to provide selection criteria for evaluating operations and for determining whether and when OEDE should manage an evaluation and when the evaluation should be decentralized. Establishing criteria reduces the subjectivity of such decisions and increases transparency and independence.	October 2008
34. The establishment of a centrally managed fund (budget line) for evaluation (both OEDE evaluations and decentralized evaluations) should be investigated.	Senior management, OEDE	Agreed. The 2008–2009 Management Plan foresees that such a fund be set up. Instructions were issued and relevant details will be incorporated into the Evaluation Policy.	Under implementation



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## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

AAR	After-Action Reviews
ADH	Human Resources Division
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
DSC	direct support costs
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OED	Office of the Executive Director
OEDE	Office of Evaluation
PASS <sub>it-on</sub>	Practice Sharing Knowledge System
PD	Policy and External Affairs Department
SENAC	Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity
TOR	Practice Sharing Knowledge System
TOR	terms of reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System