Progress Update against 2012 APC Action Plan & the Way Forward:

Innovation & Technology; Planning for 2025

At the 2012 APC, the working paper “New Objectives – New Tools – New Partnerships” established rationale for food assistance to modernise in three respects: selecting programme strategies from an expanding range of alternatives; developing new tools to execute chosen strategies; ensuring the underlying capacities needed to carry out new responsibilities.

It emerged in discussion that operational agreements too often lack opportunity, flexibility, and financing for Partners to collaborate with WFP in early design of new programme tools and approaches. As one way to expand this critical space for collaboration, the Executive Director committed to a programme innovation fund – now developed in continuous consultation with partners, internally financed by WFP, and recently launched as the Cooperating Partners’ Innovation Fund (CPIF).

For 2013, the CPIF is differentiated by its enhanced attention to a key focus of the initial APC paper – innovation around cash and voucher based food assistance.

Instead of issuing a ‘challenge’ to solve a narrowly circumscribed problem, the 2013 CPIF invites partners to define a programme need or opportunity as well as to propose its potential solution.

The CPIF also tolerates risk. Experimentation is encouraged, recognizing that important learning emerges even if trials of new ideas don’t immediately generate the desired or expected results.

The first round of proposals from Partners to the CPIF closes 15 November. Submissions will be compiled and sent out of house for ranking by independent, reputable, technical reviewers.

Depending on Partner interest and the success of the mechanism in attracting sound ideas – and funds permitting -- WFP anticipates working with Partners to sharpen the mechanism, refine programme focus, enhance participation from ‘the crowd,’ and call again for a new round of proposals with winners to be selected in open forum such as at the 2014 APC.
How to Better Manage Risk Together

As a result of the WFP 2012 Annual Partnership Consultations, WFP made a commitment to address the issue of risk sharing with partners. Following a review of existing risk frameworks of collaborating/participating agencies to identify common risk assessment processes and tools to actively manage shared risks, it was decided that case studies would be undertaken in order to ensure an understanding of how risks can be shared in field environments. Missions were undertaken in Zimbabwe (May 2013) and to South Sudan (October 2013) where WFP partners were invited to participate in risk sharing workshops. Discussions were also held with Cooperating Partners in Rome HQ in June 2012.  

Observations

Cooperating Partners were aware of risk management concepts, even though there may be different frameworks underpinning this process in each organization. There was a good understanding of the interconnectedness of risks and how risk management and risk appetite/acceptance is affected by the identity, profile and mandate of each organisation.

Risk sharing was evidently facilitated when partnerships were viewed strategically, with the mid to long-term requirements outlined and when cooperating partners were explicitly recognized as being integral to achieving objectives.

Positive steps towards effective risk sharing were evident at the field level, with mechanisms for risk sharing placing emphasis on transparent communication. In both case studies, the relatively ready availability of Cooperating Partners presented options when considering implementation, mitigating the risk of failing to deliver on programme objectives. Along with active engagement and efforts to develop and maintain these partnerships, this supported the risk sharing process.

The missions highlighted the role of government in partnerships and the impact that governments can have on risk sharing. Where opportunities were taken to present a joint message between WFP and Cooperating Partners, risks could be better mitigated, although in some cases it was difficult to completely mitigate these inherent risks.

Discussions also highlighted that security is a key component in the effectiveness of and the ability to share risk with partners. Clearly where security concerns were not prevalent, access was less of a concern and partners were not being requested to adopt risks (particularly to life) on behalf of WFP; this made risk-sharing less contentious, ultimately making it easier to ensure effective risk-sharing between partners.

The risk sharing workshops appeared to be an effective way to openly discuss risks, particularly where the size and/or scope of operations preclude effective risk sharing mechanisms and/or there are concerns about sharing risk registers and risk management documentation. WFP and Cooperating Partners may therefore wish to undertake further risk management workshops run by country offices, in order to identify common risks and mitigation actions.

1 Plan International, JAM, World Vision and Catholic Relief Services
Value for Money

WFP developed further its approach to Value for Money

• Since APC 2012, WFP has adopted the OECD-DAC results chain definitions (input, activity, outputs, outcomes, impacts) and framework for Value for Money, including the ‘three E’s’: economy, efficiency and effectiveness
• For WFP, Value for Money can be summarized as “Getting the best results for our beneficiaries by wisely using our resources”
• This means that we strive to achieve the best outcomes by making the best possible choices in using our funds to purchase inputs, such as food and in turn transforming those inputs into the best possible outputs (ensuring the right food assistance is in the right place at the right time)
• WFP is currently building a corporate framework for pursuing Value for Money across the organization, taking into account the many measures currently in place

WFP and Partners shared experience on Value for Money

• WFP formed a small working group to share experience on Value for Money with Save US, Concern and World Vision
• WFP shared several examples on how the organisation is pursuing Value for Money, incl. forward purchase planning and a new facilities management system
• WFP’s ‘Omega Value’ was also highlighted as a tool that was created in order to compare the potential ex-ante nutrient cost effectiveness of food baskets delivered by different types of interventions (e.g., in-kind vs. cash and vouchers)

Current focus and next steps

• The working group developed and sent out a short survey on Value for Money to its NGO partners
• The group will evaluate the survey results and compose a paper on tools that can be used to enhance Value for Money
• The paper summarizing ideas and approaches to efficiency and effectiveness/Value for Money will be circulated