



World Food Programme

A Report from the Office of Evaluation



*Full Report of the Evaluation of the Tajikistan
PRRO 10231.0
Food Assistance to Vulnerable Groups and
Recovery Activities*

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Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report rests solely with the authors. Publication of this document does not imply endorsement by WFP of the opinions expressed.

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Acronyms

AAH	Action Against Hunger
AKF	Aga Khan Fund
CFSAM	Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission
CFW	Cash-for-Work
CO	Country Office
CSB	Corn-soybean blend
DDU	Delivered Duty Unpaid
DoE	Department of Education (Provincial)
DoH	Department of Health (Provincial)
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment Short-course
DRD	Direct Rule Districts (ex-RRS)
DSC	Direct Support Costs
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
EDP	Extended Delivery Point
EMOP	Emergency Operation
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FDP	Final Delivery Point
FFE	Food-for-Education
FFE/TH	Food-for-Education/Take Home
FFT	Food-for-Training
FFT/IG	Food-for-Training/Income Generation
FFW	Food-for-Work
FO	Field Office
FS	Food Security
GAA	German Agro Action
GBAO	Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous <i>Oblast</i> [Badakhshan Province]
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
<i>Hashar</i>	Community self-help labour
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<i>Hukumat</i>	Government/local government
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IF	Institutional Feeding
IG	Income Generation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IP	Implementing Partner
<i>Jamoat</i>	Sub-district
<i>Mahalla</i>	Neighbourhood/village
MDR	Multi-drug Resistance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health



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MSDSP	Mountain Societies Development Support Programme
MT	Metric tons
MTR	Mid-term Review
NDS	National Development Strategy
<i>Oblast</i>	Province/Region
OEDE	Office of Executive Director – Evaluation
PRA	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RB	Regional Bureau
RBM	Results-based Management
RRS	Regions of Republican Subordination (see DRD)
SF	Supplementary Feeding
SFC	Supplementary Feeding Centre
SO	Sub-Office
SP	(WFP) Strategic Objective
TB	Tuberculosis
TF	Therapeutic Feeding
THR	Take-home Ration
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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1 Somoni	=	US\$0.306



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Executive Summary

Although Tajikistan remains the poorest of the countries established after the break-up of the former Soviet Union, the civil war ended in 1997 and the 2000-2002 drought emergency has been over for several years. The purpose of the evaluation was to inform a strategic discussion on the future shape of WFP's programme in Tajikistan in the face of dwindling resources. The evaluation mission was to focus particularly on the role of WFP and food aid in Tajikistan. To this end, the evaluation documents the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of WFP assistance, and its connectedness with the strategies of government and other donors.

Funding has been an issue throughout the life of the project. Food aid is still relevant for livelihood recovery but donors are not responding to WFP appeals. In response to declining resources and withdrawal of many partners, the Country Office (CO) is to be commended for questioning the continued need for and relevance of food aid and for concerning itself with sustainability and exit strategies. The CO currently faces the risk of a severely downsized operation followed by withdrawal from Tajikistan in the near future.

WFP corporate policy calls for all projects to include an exit Strategy. However, in the case of PRRO 10231.0, little thought was put into elaborating and negotiating an exit strategy with other partners including Government at the time of design. A number of donor agencies have recently pulled out of Tajikistan with no exit strategy. The Tajikistan PRRO evaluation points to the need for WFP to develop a **responsible** exit strategy aimed at ensuring that what was built jointly by WFP and government during the project does not collapse when the WFP assistance is withdrawn.

A responsible exit strategy aims at increasing the likelihood that the benefits of its activities to households can be sustained. Although it is not a requirement that the **activities** themselves be sustained beyond the end of the project, it is desirable that solutions be found to enable the most promising activities – in this case FFE, TB support and supplementary feeding – to continue with other resources. Since it is not in WFP's interest to let what it has build collapse upon its withdrawal, a new PRRO is needed, to enable the CO to implement a definitive exit strategy, by consolidating and phasing-out existing WFP support and incorporating the activities in the regular government budget. WFP should make the inclusion of each activity under the new PRRO conditional on the adoption of a **time-bound exit strategy** negotiated and jointly agreed by government and WFP that includes **cost sharing agreements** in which WFP's percentage contribution would decrease to zero by the end of the project's final year.



1. INTRODUCTION

This report synthesizes the findings of the evaluation of the Tajikistan Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 10231.0 which visited Tajikistan from 5-28 April 2006 on behalf of WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEDE)¹. According to WFP's evaluation policy all programmes have to be evaluated once in the project cycle². According to policy the main purpose of evaluation is to render accountability to the Executive Board and to enable WFP and its partners to learn from experience at national, regional and international level. This particular evaluation was requested by the Country Office (CO) to inform the design of a new phase of the assistance after December 2006. The objective of the evaluation has been to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and connectedness of PRRO 10231.0 with particular focus on the role of WFP and food aid in Tajikistan, to inform a strategic discussion on the future shape of the programme in the country. (See Annex 1 for the mission's Terms of Reference).

Evaluation methods included desk review of relevant documentation including analysis of food distribution, VAM and monitoring data; stakeholder interviews with WFP staff, Government ministries, UN agencies, donors and implementing partners; visits to WFP Sub-offices (SO) in Khujand, Kulyab and Kurghon-teppa; site visits to 33 projects in 15 of the 22 priority districts³; and on-site interviews with local authorities, sub-project committee members, participants and beneficiaries. Evaluation findings were shared through wrap-up meetings with the CO, regional bureau (teleconference), government of Tajikistan (GoT), UN/NGO stakeholders and Headquarters staff in Rome. (See Annex 2 for the Mission's Itinerary, Annex 3 for Persons Met and Annex 4 for Projects Visited).

The evaluation was managed by OEDE, but the mission was led by an external and independent team-leader and her team. Partners and other principal stakeholders were involved at strategic points in the process such as discussion of TORs and the draft report to ensure the relevance of the findings to the operational context, and to address stakeholders' issues and concerns with WFP's assistance in Tajikistan.

¹ The core evaluation team consisted of Alice Carloni (Team Leader/Food Security and Livelihoods Specialist; consultant), Steffenie Fries (Assessment, Programming, Monitoring and Health Specialist; consultant), Payam Foroughi (Socio-economist; consultant). Pernille Hougesen, Evaluation Officer OEDE, WFP managed the evaluation from WFO HQs, participated in all the field work in Tajikistan and contributed to the section on Implementation. Mr. Luay Basil, Evaluation Focal Point from the WFP Regional Bureau (RB) in Cairo, participated in the team, partly to build evaluation capacity in the RB, and partly to facilitate the learning at RB level to the benefit of similar programmes in the region.

² WFP/EB3/2003/4C.

³ Geographically, the PRRO has covered 44 out of 58 districts. As of 2006, due to resource constraints, implementation of all activities except FFE has been concentrated in 22 highly food insecure districts of two regions – those visited by the evaluation. Two regions (Rasht Valley and Gorno Badakhshan) were not visited because they absorb a relatively limiter share of project resources and WFP is in the process of closing its sub-offices in the regions.



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2. CONTEXT FOR PRRO 10231.0

2.1 Country Context

Tajikistan is a landlocked low-income food-deficit country that became independent in 1991 on the break-up of the former Soviet Union. It continues to be the poorest country among the universe of post-communist states of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with an estimated per capita GDP of only US\$316 per annum.

Tajikistan is still recovering from the triple shocks of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and an ensuing bloody civil war (1992-1997), which took the lives of at least 50,000 people and a severe drought from 2000-2002. After 1991, GDP growth sharply declined due to breakdown of the command economy, transition to a market-based system, changes in relative prices, collapse of economic ties with republics of the former USSR, end of budget allocation from Moscow (which used to finance 40 percent of the country's budget) and a lengthy civil war. High inflation rates reduced real income, contributed to growing inequality and undermined the investment climate. Lack of domestic production led to reliance on imports, balance of payment deficits and currency devaluation. External debt rapidly grew and despite a major overhaul of its external debt in recent years, Tajikistan's foreign debt stood at over US\$800 million by April 2006, equivalent to a debt-to-GDP ratio of about 35 percent.

Despite the impressive economic growth rates of recent years⁴ (whereby the estimated average annual rise in the GDP was equivalent to 9.4 percent for the five-year period 2001-2005), the overall size of the economy by the end of 2005 had only recovered to less than two-thirds (63 percent) of the communist era in 1990. The World Bank estimated that based on a poverty threshold of per capita earnings of US\$2.15/day on purchasing power parity (PPP) basis, by 2003, 64 percent of households in Tajikistan were living below the poverty line, as compared with 81 percent below the poverty line in 1999. And if one looks at the poverty threshold of per capita earnings of US\$1.08/day on PPP basis, by 2003, 20 percent of households in Tajikistan were living below the poverty line, as compared with 33 percent in 1999. Furthermore, acceleration of GDP growth has been accompanied by a large and widening income gap⁵ between the well-to-do, whose numbers are still relatively low, and the majority of the population who continue to live below the poverty threshold.⁶ The richest 20 percent of the population consume four times more than the poorest 20 percent, while the latter spend almost 80 percent of their income on foodstuffs.

Roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population (74 percent) is rural. Rural poverty accounts for 76 percent of total poverty countrywide, with 65 percent of the rural population living below the poverty line compared to 59 percent of the urban population. The average monthly wage was \$107 (US\$34) by the end of 2005, up 8 percent from 2004. According to a GoT survey in August 2005, monthly wages were lowest in agriculture (\$41 or US\$13). Growth in the cotton industry did not contribute towards any results in poverty reduction,⁷ since the highest levels of poverty continue to be found in high-growth cotton-growing areas such as Khatlon.

⁴ Based on data from the Economist Intelligence Unit.

⁵ The Gini coefficient for expenditure rose from 0.33 in 1999 to 0.35 in 2004 and from 0.47 to 0.51 for income during the same period.

⁶ World Bank, *Republic of Tajikistan: Poverty Assessment Update*, Report No. 30853-TJ, Feb. 2005.

⁷ GoT, *Second Progress Report on PRSP Implementation*, 2005.



Although the emergency stage is over, Tajikistan remains in a state of transition, with nearly two thirds of its rural population living in poverty and food insecurity. Despite commercial imports and international food aid, access to food remains a major challenge, especially for an estimated 1.4 million⁸ people living in marginalized food deficit areas. The FAO figure of 1.4 million food insecure used in the PRRO design was revised downward to 1.05 million food insecure by VAM Rural Household Food Security and Vulnerability Survey undertaken in late 2004. The VAM survey results indicated that 10 percent of the rural population is chronically food insecure (approximately 350,000 people) and 17 percent are very vulnerable to food insecurity (approximately 700,000 million people).

Social indicators fell after the break-up of the Soviet Union and have yet to regain previous levels, due to poverty and deterioration of basic health, education and social infrastructure and services. Tajikistan has the highest IMR in Central Asia with 89 deaths per 1000 live births. Incidence of infectious diseases remains very high, including malaria and tuberculosis. A national nutrition survey carried out in 2003 found that prevalence of global acute malnutrition and global chronic malnutrition are 7.6 percent and 31.4 percent respectively, and the highest global acute malnutrition is found in Khatlon Province, which is the country's primary cotton-growing area. The education system is plagued by falling attendance rates, a widening gender gap, growing barriers to full participation of vulnerable groups, outdated curriculum, low teacher salaries and deteriorating infrastructure⁹.

As many as 800,000 Tajik citizens (or an estimated 20 percent of the labour force - mostly men of prime working age) have emigrated to the CIS countries (90 percent to Russia), where they are able to earn substantially more income than in Tajikistan. As a result of this mass economic migration, a large share of the households in Tajikistan rely on the remittances of family members in Russia for their survival. An IMF study puts the cash remittances of Tajik workers abroad as anywhere from US\$400 million to US\$1 billion annually. As such, Tajikistan's estimated remittances/GDP ratio of around 50 percent is among the highest in the world, with one of the next highest being that of Moldova with only 25 percent.¹⁰

In spite of recent improvements in the country's political and economic stability, Tajikistan faces a series of internal and external challenges, from continued economic displacement, a slow and corrupted privatization process, very limited arable land per capita, a weak democracy and lack of ethno-regional pluralism in the composition of Government. Furthermore, the country is not only landlocked and distant from main global trade routes, but faces problems from neighbouring countries that close their borders to Tajik citizens. There are also other regional issues that might have spill over effects on Tajikistan, including ongoing armed conflict in Afghanistan and possible social and political unrest in neighbouring countries.

⁸ FAO/WFP CFSAM, 2002.

⁹ GoT, *Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment*, 2005.

¹⁰ IMF, *The Macroeconomics of Remittances: The Case of Tajikistan*, by Alexei Kireyev, IMF Working Paper WP/06/02, Jan. 2006.



2.2 WFP Country Operations Context at Design

WFP began its operations in the country in 1993 by launching the emergency operation (EMOP) 5253.00 to assist the nearly 500,000 of the war-affected people in the Khatlon province. In mid-1994, the EMOP's focus shifted to a countrywide programme for vulnerable groups, reflecting the general deteriorating social and economic conditions of the country. At the time, around 50 percent of the beneficiaries were pensioners, another 40 percent were single-parent families, and 10 percent were residents of social institutions. After three expansions of EMOP 5253.00 (1993 to 1999), during which WFP delivered 101,000 MT of relief assistance, in 1999, the Executive Board approved PRRO 6087.00, indicating the beginning of a recovery phase that addressed the needs of a broader and still vulnerable population, reaching around 370,000 beneficiaries with nearly 46,000 MT, some through FFW, mainly used towards the rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure and land-lease programmes for female-headed households. By 2000, Tajikistan was in middle of a two year drought, the worst in its entire 75 year history. In October 2000, WFP launched EMOP 6288.00, with 127,821 MT of food aid to reach 1.16 million rural people directly affected by the drought. Continued food deficit prompted WFP to extend the EMOP through December 2003. PRRO expansion 6087.01 was also approved in May 2001 with a commitment of 86,213 MT (subsequently increased to 95,520 MT) to assist 575,000 vulnerable people through June 2003. As of June 2003, prior to the approval of PRRO 10231.0, a total of US\$172 million had been approved in support of the Government of Tajikistan. Table 1 (below) reveals that PRRO 10231.0 is the largest project in the series in terms of planned food resources and beneficiary numbers. The average planned food allocation per beneficiary (96 kg) at design was already lower than that of previous projects and was further reduced in February 2006, when the project budget was revised downward. The trend toward spreading resources more thinly is worthy of note.

Table 1: WFP Assistance to Tajikistan 1993-2006

Project	Started	Original end date	New end date	Planned Resources (MT)	Planned Beneficiaries (number)	Average Kgs per Planned Beneficiary
EMOP 5253.00	Jul-93		Jun-99	101,000	500,000	202
PRRO 6087.00	Jul-99	Jun-01		45,815	370,000	124
PRRO 6087.01	May-01		Dec-04	95,520	575,000	166
EMOP 6288.00	Oct-00		Dec-04	127,821	1,160,000	110
PRRO 10231.0	Jul-03	Jun-05	Dec-06	142,084	1,482,600	96
PRRO 10231.0			Dec-06	95,000	1,482,600	64

Computed by Evaluation Mission from OEDE Evaluation of EMOP 5253.00 and MTR Report on PRRO 10231.0



2.2 Description of PRRO 10231.0

PRRO 10231.0 was launched in mid-July 2003, with the aim of reaching 1,482,600 beneficiaries with a food commitment of 142,084 MT¹¹ and an estimated value of US\$75 million. The stated objectives of the PRRO are to improve household food security, preserve/rehabilitate assets, increase food production and promote investment in human capital. The design called for a combination of relief assistance (through vulnerable group feeding, institutional feeding for mental patients and a contingency fund for natural disasters), and recovery activities (supplementary/therapeutic feeding of malnourished children and their caretakers, support to TB patients, FFW, FFT/income generation, food security and FFE). Resource allocation was 65 percent for recovery and 35 percent for relief. The original assumptions about resources and beneficiary numbers are shown in Table 2 (below).

Table 2: PRRO 10231.0 Design: Planned Ration Recipients and Planned Resources (MT) by Activity

Activity	Year 1		Year 2		Total for PRRO		% of Total MT
	Ration Recipients	Planned (MT)	Ration Recipients	Planned (MT)	Beneficiaries (HH members)	Planned (MT)	
Contingency (disasters)	5,000	196	5,000	196	10,000	390	0%
FFT/income generating	3,000	1,361	5,000	1,361	56,000	3,630	3%
FFW	25,000	11,344	30,000	11,344	385,000	24,957	17%
Food security	15,000	9,094	15,000	9,094	180,000	18,188	13%
FFE	360,000	15,228	370,000	15,228	370,000	30,879	21%
TB/TF/SF/IF	14,400	8,170	13,400	8,170	181,600	15,740	11%
Vulnerable groups	300,000	28,980	200,000	28,980	300,000	48,300	35%
<i>Total</i>	722,400	74,373	638,400	74,373	1,482,600	142,400	100%

PRODOC of PRRO 10231.0

2.3 Constraints External to WFP

The main factor constraining the implementation PRRO 10231.0 has been reduced levels of donations by traditional food aid donors. Key partners in the humanitarian aid community are currently withdrawing on the grounds that the country is no longer in an emergency situation. In particular, USAID and ECHO have announced their intention to stop providing food aid to Tajikistan. The larger donors' shift away from food-based assistance is also affecting a number of international NGOs that depend on USA or EU for their funding.¹² Reputable NGO partners are increasingly scarce, since some NGOs are uncertain of future funding and other traditional NGO partners are questioning the relevance of food aid.

On the government side, the main constraint has been that central ministries in Dushanbe (the capital city) are not as responsive to food aid-based assistance as provincial (*oblast*), district (*hukumat*), sub-district (*jamoat*) local government authorities and communities. Food aid is not perceived by central government as a resource on a par with international grants and loans. Food aid-based

¹¹ WFP, *Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation-10231.0*, Feb. 2003.

¹² CARE Tajikistan, Save the Children USA, Counterpart International, Mercy Corps, German Agro Action. Action Against Hunger is also affected by decreased ECHO funding.



assistance is also inadequately reflected among the Government's National Development Strategy (NDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and sector strategies and priorities.

At the level of rural communities, the main constraint has been slow and incomplete implementation of reforms (e.g., full privatization of farm land and agricultural liberalization) that would enable small farmers to achieve greater food security through self-provisioning production, coupled with severe deterioration of basic rural infrastructure and health, education and social services. Social safety nets remain insufficient in spite of some improvement.

2.4 Constraints Internal to WFP

Diminished project resources led to a lower operating budget (DSC) with same operational and reporting requirements as for larger country operations. Staff members are overstretched to meet both operational and reporting requirements including reports originating in regional offices and headquarters. Reporting is constrained by the absence of a proper sub-project database and limited data analysis capacity at the level of potential data users. The CO and their partners are to be commended for the surprising range of studies completed¹³ considering the small size of the country operation.

2.5 Consistency of the PRRO with National Development Strategies

The PRRO 10231.0 project document objectives were worded to correspond with the UN's 2003 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal, which called for efforts to prevent of the loss of lives as a result of malnutrition; reduce extreme poverty through improved food security and access to social services; and support income-generating opportunities which would lead to increased employment and fair distribution of the benefits of economic growth. As such, the PRRO's activities such as FFE, FFW, FFT/IG, VGF, supplementary and therapeutic feeding and support for TB patients have all been in line with the overall objectives of the various UN programmes in Tajikistan. And although the PRRO activities have also been in overall agreement with the GoT's objectives, and generally welcomed and accommodated especially by province, district, *jamoat*, and village level governments, the PRRO's specific activities and objectives cannot always be clearly identified in key GoT documents, namely the National Development Strategy (NDS), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Needs Assessment report.

National Development Strategy. The pillars of the NDS are economic growth, institutional reform, economic policy reform, strengthening of social sectors and institution building to support government strategies. The PRRO supports NDS pillar 3 – strengthening of social sector investment - through food-based support for primary education, health and nutrition and social infrastructure.

Poverty Reduction Strategy. The PRSP¹⁴ (2002), which is normally a three-year strategy paper required from the GoT by the IMF and World Bank, states that the GoT has identified four elements

¹³ VAM study 2003, VAM survey 2004-5, VAM follow-up survey in Rasht Valley and Badakhshan, National Nutrition Surveys, Nutrition Follow-up Survey in Khatlon, VGF surveys in Khatlon, Sughd etc.

¹⁴ GoT, *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, Dushanbe, June 2002.



towards its overall objectives of poverty reduction in Tajikistan: (a) encouraging accelerated, fair and labour-intensive economic growth with an emphasis on exports; (b) provision of basic social services; (c) targeted support to the poor; and (d) efficient governance with improved security. The document emphasizes the issues of privatization, export-led growth and reform of the public administration. It also talks about the need for social assistance to the poor. The main chapters of the Poverty Reduction Strategy include macro-economic management and growth; public administration reform; social protection; education sector reform and rehabilitation; health sector reform and rehabilitation; agricultural sector reform and productivity enhancement; privatization and private sector development; investment in infrastructure and communications; and environmental protection and tourism. There is no mention of food aid – either in support of education, health or social protection – except for a reference to the need to decrease the country’s dependency on imported food – both private imports and international food assistance.

Through specific activities, the PRRO has the potential to contribute to several of the objectives of the national poverty reduction strategy, namely universal access to basic education (through primary school feeding and take-home rations for girls in grades 5-11), reduction of contagious diseases (through food assistance to patients under the TB DOTS programme) and reduction of global acute malnutrition (through supplementary/ therapeutic feeding of malnourished children); community-based infrastructure rehabilitation and development (through food-for-work); smallholder agricultural productivity enhancement (through food security); social protection (through vulnerable group feeding); and employment generation (through food-for-training/income generation).

Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment. The MDG Needs Assessment¹⁵ is a document approved by the GoT, produced by the a UN team, in collaboration with various government working groups in food security, education, gender, health, water, and sanitation—nearly the same format and identical working groups as involved in the preparation of the NDS and the PRSP. The 2005 report identifies a set of overarching structural reforms in the areas of good governance, public administration, tax administration, private sector development and public utilities that it considers as essential for forming an environment for achieving the MDGs in Tajikistan. Like the NDS and the PRSP, but to a lesser extent, the MDG report also emphasizes macroeconomics and ultimately seeks to resolve existing problems of poverty through accelerated export-led economic growth and subsequent trickle-down effects of growth on poverty reduction. However, the MDG Needs Assessment document is much more specific on the targeted goals of and required costs for poverty reduction and improvements in health and nutrition.

There is a relatively strong correspondence between the activities supported by the PRRO and the priorities expressed in the MDG Needs Assessment document. For instance, to achieve the MDG of halving the number of primary school drop-outs by 2015, the MDG document calls for GoT to establish national school feeding programme covering 50 percent of primary school students country wide, at an estimated cost of US\$160.2 million for ten years (2005-2015). In support of efforts to halve global acute malnutrition, it calls for GoT to finance a country-wide programme of mother/child health, nutrition education and supplementary feeding for malnourished children. And in support of efforts to halt the spread of contagious diseases like TB, it calls for GoT to provide food to patients undergoing treatment through the DOTS programme. All three of the above-mentioned recommendations would involve the gradual mainstreaming by GoT of activities currently supported by WFP under PRRO 10231.0. Unfortunately, there is little indication that GoT

¹⁵ GoT and UNDP, *Investing in Sustainable Development: Millennium Development Goals Needs Assessment - Overview*, Dushanbe, May 2005.



has “bought into” or actively “owns” and supports the strategies set forth in the MDG Needs Assessment document. It is widely believed that the MDG Needs Assessment expresses the point of view of the international donor community more than that of GoT.

2.6 Consistency with Government Sector Strategies

The GoT is also in the process of formulating its 2006 sector strategies in education, health and nutrition, food security and agriculture, environment, and the investment climate. The sectoral documents, still in draft format, appear unfocused and lack broad analysis and suggested systematic measures required to alleviate specific sector problems.

In the working paper on the **education** sector, there is only one paragraph mentioning how WFP’s “pilot school feeding programmes had a dramatic effect” on attendance of children from regions where traditionally both boys and girls in grades 9-11 would abandon school. There is no specific mention of the ongoing school feeding programme for grades 1-4. More importantly, the draft report appears not to have a specific plan as to how and at what cost GoT plans to achieve its educational goals with or without the presence of WFP and other international organizations. A reference to school feeding is said to have been inserted in the latest draft document, in response to comments from WFP¹⁶. The project document of the World Bank-supported MDG Fast Track Initiative in the education sector makes no reference to school feeding or to WFP as an education sector donor, in spite of the fact that WFP has invested US\$22 million in food aid to support school feeding.

In the **health** sector, the focus is on sector reform aimed at shifting resources from urban to rural areas and from hospital-based treatment to primary health care, upgrading/retention of suitably-qualified health personnel and improving quality of services. Treatment of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis is an explicit priority, whereas nutrition is treated in a cross-reference to food and agriculture (below).

In the **agricultural** sector, GoT’s draft food security strategy report identifies a series of constraints that currently prevent farmers from achieving higher yields, including lack of credit, insufficient machinery and an undeveloped agrarian market. GoT hopes to alleviate existing food shortages by modifying existing land reform legislation to provide additional rights to individual farmers; reforming of the cotton sector with a view to resolving the debt crisis (estimated to surpass US\$300 million by mid-2006); developing the private sector in rural areas; reforming of agricultural management systems; promoting agricultural intensification and diversification; and improving nutritional status. GoT hopes to reduce its dependency on food aid in the near future and allow the free market agricultural system to satisfy the country’s food requirements.

The cost of reducing **malnutrition** is estimated at US\$9.3 million, which government would use for food fortification and promotion of healthy nutrition. This suggests that GoT tends to see malnutrition as a problem of poor diet, as opposed to a wider problem stemming from limited access to land under direct household control, very low purchasing power, poor child care and weaning practice (due to women’s heavy workload, which forces mothers to leave pre-school children in the

¹⁶ Unfortunately, the mission was not able to see the section on school feeding, as the new draft has yet to be finalized for circulation to stakeholders.



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care of older siblings), and low food assimilation due to illness and diarrhea (exacerbated by lack of access to drinking water and sanitation).



3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Funding and Procurement

Funding has been an issue throughout the life of the project. 2004/2005 saw a significant drop in donor interest, resulting in a critical funding crisis for the PRRO. At a time when the PRRO was originally scheduled to end, due to low funding levels, the PRRO was extended in time until December 2006. In February 2006, since the PRRO was still only 52 percent resourced, the CO opted to cut 47,067 MT from the planned resources, thereby reducing the budget to \$51,685,535.

In November 2005, the Government of Russia contributed 13,350 MT of wheat flour to the PRRO. This means that – with the latest budget cuts - the operation now has achieved 108 percent of its revised targets for food commodities and 88 percent of its revised funding target, and will have enough wheat flour for the rest of the project. The recent Russian contribution, which was the first of its kind, constitutes 12 percent of the total resources received by the project.

55 percent of the funds allocated to the PRRO were in-kind contributions. Most cash contributions coming from Japan and various European bilateral donors were used to purchase wheat and pulses in Kazakhstan, bringing down the total cost of these commodities (including transport) to almost half. About 37 percent of total purchased commodities were procured in Kazakhstan. Average total cost delivered to WFP warehouses for in-kind contributions in 2005 was US\$515/MT compared to US\$221/MT to buy the same goods in Kazakhstan (DDU). This means that cash contributions would buy 2.3 times more food for the same amount of money. Furthermore the in-kind donations take 4-5 months to arrive compared to 2-3 months for wheat procured in Kazakhstan. The only commodity that the CO buys in Tajikistan is salt, because there is no surplus production of other food commodities for WFP to purchase. Apart from limited local production, most of the wheat and wheat flour marketed in Tajikistan is imported from the region, principally from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The Russian contribution was US\$6 million in cash for purchase of wheat flour in Russia. It came at a crucial time for the operation, as in its absence the CO would have faced a major pipeline break. However, the price was quite high at US\$315/ MT compared with US\$221/ MT from Kazakhstan – about 43 percent higher.

Table 3: Local Market Prices versus Costs of WFP Assistance by Procurement Source in 2005 Somoni/kg

Commodity	Average price of the commodity in the provincial capitals	Cost of WFP food at EDP if sourced from USA in kind	Cost of WFP food at EDP if sourced from Kazakhstan	Cost of WFP food sourced elsewhere
Wheat	1.22	1.66	0.71	
Veg. oil	3.10	3.47		2.69
Pulses	2.28	1.57	1.14	
Sugar	2.33			1.96
Iodized salt	0.50			0.04

Computed by Evaluation Mission from CO spreadsheets

Once the food arrives into WFP warehouses, it is transported to the intermediate delivery point by private transporters hired directly by WFP, not through implementing partners like in other



countries. In the case of FFE, the cost of transportation from the district warehouses to the schools is borne by local government.

3.2 Resource Allocation

Despite low funding levels, between mid-2003 and mid-2005, the CO maintained the original project targets. No review of the strategy or of operational costs was undertaken until mid-2005, which resulted in overspending of Direct Support Costs (DSC) compared to the level of contributions. Since mid-2005, in response to the operating budget shortage, 22 staff posts have been cut, two storage facilities have been shut down and sub-offices in Khorog (Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast) and Gharm (Rasht Valley) will be phased out from June 2006.

In terms of programming, the resource shortfalls resulted in reduced implementation rates for 2004 and 2005. As contributions dried up, the CO chose to focus scarce resources on activities that were likely to show the most impact, such as FFE, and where WFP had commitments with partners receiving complementary funding from other donors for the activity (such as TB support and supplementary/therapeutic feeding and a limited number of FFW projects). VGF distributions were reduced, as was the beneficiary caseload. Support for TB patients increased, whereas supplementary/therapeutic feeding decreased due to problems of local absorptive capacity. FFW continued on a reduced scale. Shortages also had the effect of reducing the number of months per year that VGF beneficiaries had access to food assistance.

Table 4: Actual Resource Distribution (MT) by Activity by Year and a Percentage of Total Food

Activity	2003 (actual distribution)		2004 (actual distribution)		2005 (actual distribution)		2006 (planned distribution)	
	MT	% of total	MT	% of total	MT	% of total	MT	% of total
Contingency	22	0.1%	32	0.1%	173	0.8%	392	1.0%
FFE – Hot meal	7,834	38%	12,075	39.2%	12,195	52.9%	10,658	28.3%
FFE – Take home	430	2%	1,036	3.4%	2,171	9.4%	6,654	17.7%
FFT/IG			237	0.8%	532	2.3%	275	0.7%
FFW	784	3.8%	3,878	12.6%	1,638	7.1%	4,084	10.8%
Food security	756	3.7%	1,144	3.7%	519	2.3%	0	0.0%
Institutional feeding	59	0.2%	110	0.4%	48	0.2%	0	0.0%
Supplementary/ therapeutic feeding	1,278	3.6%	413	1.3%	340	1.5%	326	0.8%
TB patients support ¹⁷	0	0.0%	456	1.5%	1,391	6.0%	2,484	6.6%
HIV/AIDS	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	414	1.1%
VGF	9,488	45.8%	11,413	37.1%	4,033	17.5%	12,420	32.9%
Total	20,609	100.0%	30,793	100.0%	23,040	100.0%	37,707	100.0%

Computed by Evaluation Mission from CO spreadsheets

After the budget revision in February 2006, the CO completely did away with food security activity, as well as FFT/income-generating activities and assistance to psychiatric patients. Resource allocation for FFE hot meals in 2006 were slightly reduced, but take-home rations were increased by 100 percent compared to 2005 and by almost 500 percent compared with 2003 and 2004.

¹⁷ Food was distributed under PRRO 6087.01 in 2003.



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As shown in Table 5 (below), cumulatively, as of 31 December 2005, the project delivered 74,443 MT against a planned figure of 142,084 MT, or 52 percent of planned resources. Actual cumulative deliveries over the 3-year period averaged 116 percent of plan for FFE, 58 percent for contingency funds for disaster relief and 50 percent for VGF. For health and nutrition, achievements averaged 26 percent of plan; for FFW, 25 percent of plan; for FFT/income generation 21 percent of plan and for food security only 13 percent of plan.

Table 5: Actual Cumulative Food Delivered (MT) by Activity in Relation to Plan plus Planned and Actual Distribution by Activity as a Share of Total Project Resources, 2003/2005

Activity	Planned MT in prodoc	% of planned MT	Actual MT Delivered	Activity as % of total MT	Actual as % of Planned
Contingency (disasters)	392	<1%	226	<1%	58%
FFE/School feeding	30,771	21%	35,741	48%	116%
FFT/income generating	3,622	3%	769	1%	21%
FFW	24,938	17%	6,299	8%	25%
Food security	18,188	13%	2,419	3%	13%
Health & nutrition TB/TF/SF/IF	15,835	11%	4,095	6%	26%
Vulnerable groups	49,560	35%	24,893	33%	50%
<i>Total</i>	143,306	100%	74,443	100%	52%

Computed by Evaluation Mission from CO spreadsheets

It is difficult to get an accurate estimate of total beneficiary numbers over the 3.5-year implementation period due to possible overlap between beneficiaries of FFE, VGF, disaster response and institutional feeding from one year to the next. According to Table 6, total beneficiaries were 1.19 million. Since food delivered to date is around half of planned resources, the beneficiary target could only be reached by spreading resources more thinly.

Table 6: Estimated Beneficiary Numbers by Activity for PRRO 10231.0

Estimated Beneficiary Numbers	Beneficiaries by Year			Number of beneficiaries		
	2003	2004	2005	Total	Direct recipients	Recipients & family members
FFE direct	330,629	378,393	394,925	394,925	394,925	0
FFE/TH	94,453	94,684	89,965	94,684	0	94,684
VGF	242,747	218,748	180,869	242,747	242,747	0
TB	0	7,328	19,424	26,752	0	26,752
IF/Psy	1,287	1,289	1,297	1,297	1,297	0
TFC/SFC	36,132	22,440	14,155	72,727	72,727	0
FFW	35,428	151,908	53,023	240,359	0	240,359
FS	28,228	37,887	16,839	82,954	0	41,477
FFT/IG	0	5,260	16,859	22,119	0	11,060
Contingency	1,352	2,389	9,053	12,794	12,794	0
<i>Total</i>				1,191,358	724,490	414,332

Computed by Evaluation Mission from CO spreadsheets.



Figure 1 (below), which compares cumulative planned and actual MT by activity, shows that there is a gap between planned and actual distribution for all project activities but the gap is particularly significant for VGF and food security. FFE is the only activity that met its distribution targets.

Figure 1: Cumulative Planned versus Actual Food Delivery (MT) by Activity

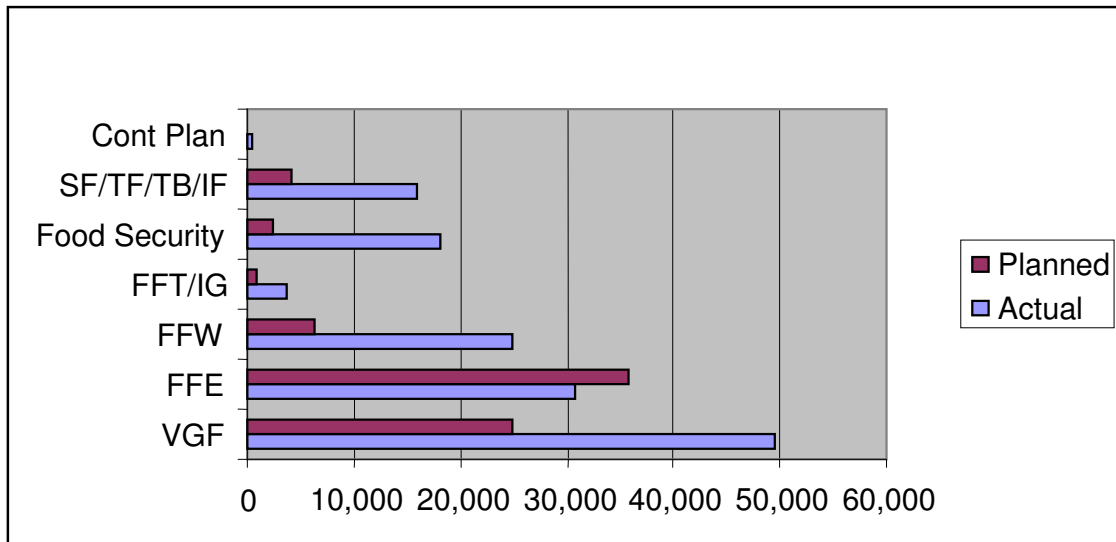


Figure 2 below reveals that Sughd Province cumulatively absorbed the most food, followed by Khatlon, Rasht Valley and Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBO) in that order. DRD absorbed the least.

Figure 2: Actual Food Distributed by PRRO 10231.0 by Region, 2003-2005

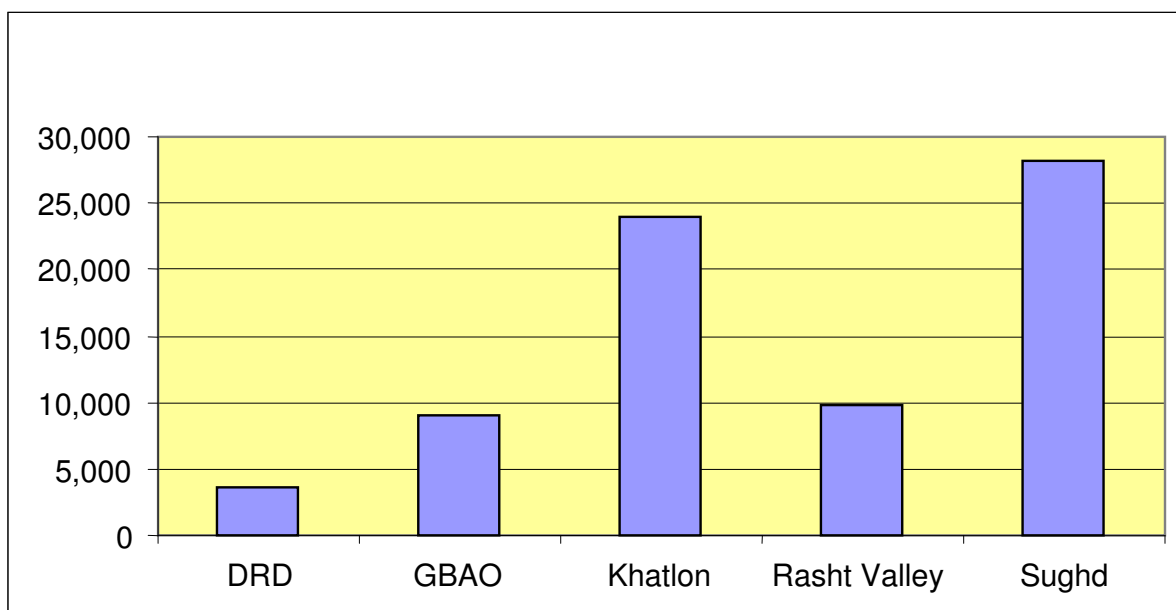
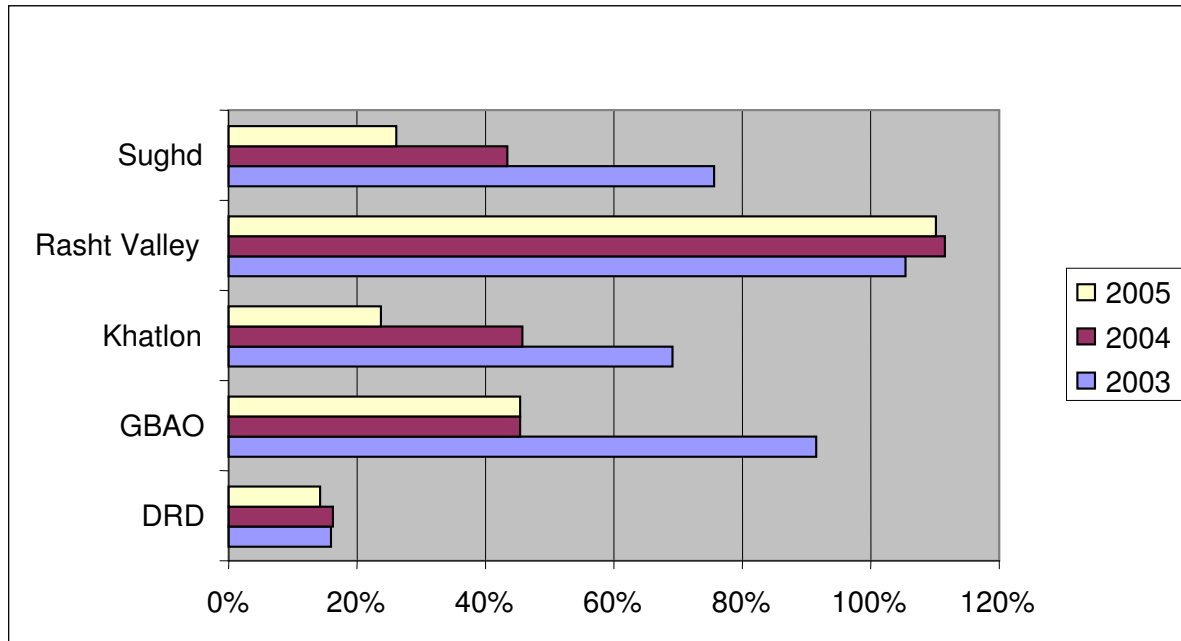




Figure 3 (below) reveals that Rasht Valley – which is the most food secure region of the country - consistently over-achieved its regional distribution targets while all of the other regions failed to achieve their targets.

Figure 3: Planned Versus Actual Food Distribution (MT) by Region, 2003-2005



3.3 Analysis of Cost Efficiency by Activity

Efficiency is a measure of how economically inputs are converted into results. Difficulties in quantifying the results achieved limit this analysis to the cost efficiency of delivering the inputs based on **alpha value analysis**¹⁸. From Table 7 (below) we can conclude that when WFP is able to purchase regionally, it can bring in the food cheaper than it would cost the beneficiary to buy the same ration in the local market, or expressed in a different way, the ration is worth more to the beneficiary than it costs WFP to bring it to them. This is because the majority of commodities sold in the local market are already imported from Kazakhstan, and WFP can deliver it more cheaply since it buys in bulk.

For the in kind contributions, the more cost efficient activities are FFE (hot meals), TB, VGF, supplementary feeding and therapeutic feeding. This is because the rations include pulses or sugar, which is cheaper to bring in kind than to buy in the local market. In cases where food rations are only wheat flour plus a little salt (FFE/TH, FFW and FFT), and the contribution is received in kind,

¹⁸ Alpha value is the ratio of the local market price to the total cost to WFP to deliver the commodity from an external source to the locality. The closer to 1 the value is the more cost neutral is the transaction. Below 1 it is cheaper in the local market above 1 it is cheaper for WFP to bring it in. The local prices are taken as an average from commercial centres in WFP project areas.



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it is less cost efficient to bring in the wheat from abroad than it would cost to buy it locally. In these cases cash assistance would probably be more cost efficient.

Table 7: Local Daily Food Cost per Beneficiary vs. the Cost of WFP Food (incl. transport to EDP) in Somoni

Category	Daily food ration per activity						Total daily food cost ¹⁹ / recipient in local market	Total daily food cost ²⁰ / recipient to WFP (in kind)	Alpha value	Total daily food cost/ recipient to WFP (regional purchase)	Alpha Value
	Feeding days	Wheat flour	Oil	Pulses	Sugar	Salt					
FFE (hot meals)	180	150	15	30		3	0.30	0.35	0.86	0.19	1.58
FFE/TH	180	556				11	0.68	0.92	0.74	0.40	1.70
TB patients	180	400	15	40		5	0.63	0.78	0.81	0.39	1.62
VGf	180	400	15	40		5	0.63	0.78	0.81	0.39	1.62
SF-TFC-Child	21	75	10			10	0.15	0.18	0.83	0.11	1.36
SF-TFC-Mother	21	150	20			20	0.29	0.36	0.81	0.22	1.32
SF-SFR-TH	70	325	45			15	0.57	0.72	0.79	0.42	1.36
FFW	90	600				5	0.73	1.00	0.73	0.43	1.71
FFT	60	300				5	0.37	0.50	0.74	0.21	1.75
Disaster victims	90	400	30			5	0.58	0.77	0.75	0.39	1.49
Food security ²¹	250	1800				25	2.21	2.99	0.74	1.28	1.73

Computed by Evaluation Mission from CO spreadsheets

There are of course other and less tangible concerns that should be taken into account when comparing the costs to results. On the result side there is the investment in human capital that is difficult to quantify. On the cost side, there are running costs of the operation that are not considered in the Alpha value calculation. If it is very much cheaper to buy a commodity in Kazakhstan than to ship it from abroad, as in this case, there is a risk that large volumes of food imports could affect the local market. However, given the very small quantities actually distributed during the PRRO, the food aid is unlikely to have had any significant impact on prices and markets (see Section 5 – Cross-Cutting Issues).

¹⁹ The local cost is an average of market prices from commercial centres of the WFP project areas. These are the same areas as the EDP, therefore it makes sense to compare these two costs. The transport costs and their effects on the prices at FDP are assumed to be the same for local purchase as for international procurement.

²⁰ The cost of WFP food is based on average prices from 2005.

²¹ Including seeds and fertilizer.



4. RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND CONNECTEDNESS BY ACTIVITY

4.1 4.1 Food for Education

The objectives of the FFE component are to increase enrollment and attendance of children in primary school. The initial plan was that this activity would absorb only 21 percent of project resources. However, when WFP found that the activity was effective for increasing the attendance rates at school, with strong cooperation from the local authorities, it opted to extend FFE to around 50 percent of total schools country wide. In the end, FFE absorbed 35,741 MT or nearly 50 percent of total project resources between 2003 and 2005. When overall project resources began to decline, the CO gave FFE top priority for resources by reserving enough food commodities to ensure consistent coverage throughout the school year. The operation covered up to 395,000 school children through on-site feeding and 18,800 girls through take-home rations during this period. In 2005 FFE benefited 1,692 schools in 44 districts of all regions, or roughly 50 percent of all schools country wide. The component also rehabilitated 172 schools, 155 school kitchens and provided 1,627 schools with kitchen utensils.

Relevance to NDS, PRS and sector strategies: Since FFE's objectives are to increase primary school enrolment and attendance, the component is highly relevant to national and international objectives of poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs, including WFP Strategic Objective 4. School feeding is highly appreciated by district governments (*hukumats*), sub-district governments (*jamoats*), Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members and school children. Nonetheless, school feeding is inadequately reflected in national education sector strategies.

Effectiveness. The objectives of FFE as stated at design were to increase school enrolment and attendance rates. School feeding is unlikely to have been effective for increasing school enrolment because the baseline was already nearly 100 percent before FFE, but it has been highly effective for increasing school attendance rates from around 85 percent before FFE to nearly 100 percent with FFE. Teachers also reported that providing a hot meal at school increased children's attention span and activeness. In the higher grades, whenever the take home ration for girls in grades 5-11 has been implemented, it has proven effective for decreasing the gender gap in enrolment. Because primary school teachers eat with lunch their pupils, school feeding appears to have been effective for increasing teacher attendance from a baseline of 94 percent to nearly 100 percent. A challenge for demonstrating the effectiveness of school feeding for attendance has been the fact that official MoE statistics show attendance as nearly 100 percent. Headmasters tend to underreport absences in the non-assisted schools to avoid pressure from the authorities on the parents and school management.

Low attendance rates are attributable to poverty and livelihood reasons. Many families have difficulty covering costs associated with sending children to school such as clothing, shoes, books, pencils and exercise books. Others withdraw their children from school to help work in the fields or to care for younger siblings while the mother is at work. The fact that the government has initiated in 2004 a school allowance for poor households of \$0.15 per child per month confirms that poverty is one of the main causes behind the decline in education performance.



Although one of the stated objectives of the FFE component was to increase school enrolment, no improvement could be shown because the baseline enrolment rate was nearly 100 percent in primary grades without WFP assistance. The lesson – for WFP in general – is to strengthen the linkage between assessment and project design. Design of FFE components should be based on an assessment of problems and their causes before setting objectives and strategies to meet them.

Effectiveness of Food vs. Cash. It was reported by a World Bank staff member that a recent social protection mission to Tajikistan concluded that school feeding is more effective for increasing the primary school attendance among poor households than the government's cash school allowance.

Effectiveness of targeting. Broad targeting has been satisfactory whereas geographic and gender targeting have been weaker. FFE currently covers roughly 50 percent of all rural primary schools in Tajikistan and within assisted schools it covers all children in grades 1-4 regardless of their family's food security status. The decision to focus primarily on grades 1-4 and to target only the rural areas²² was appropriate, as was the decision to provide a take-home ration for secondary school girls in the Rasht Valley in an effort to reduce the growing gender gap in enrolment in that region²³. However, prior to 2006, there has been limited CO effort to target school feeding to the most food insecure districts. FFE coverage is currently based on historical precedents inherited from NGO implementing partners and supply side considerations such as monitoring capacity and the physical condition of school kitchens or canteens. For instance, in Badakhshan, due to historical precedent, school feeding with hot meals covers **all** children in grades 1-11 and in Aini District (Sughd Province) it covers all children in grades 1-9. For similar historical reasons, in Rasht Valley, boys get hot meals at school whereas girls of 5-11 grades receive take-home rations of wheat flour and iodized salt.

Efficiency of FFE. FFE is the most cost-efficient of all the PRRO activities. Because the ration includes pulses, which are expensive on the local market, it only costs 0.05 somoni (\$0.02) more per student per day for WFP to bring the food from USA than it would cost the beneficiary to buy the same food locally. The cost to WFP per pupil per day is only 0.35 (\$0.12) for a hot meal.

Sustainability. Improvements in school attendance and pupils' ability to concentrate on their lessons could easily be lost if WFP were to withdraw from school feeding. Since the activity is highly dependent on food aid, it would most likely collapse if the WFP assistance were to stop. On the positive side, there is some indication that GoT might initiate a school feeding programme (based on likely inclusion of school feeding in NDS and PRS).

Connectedness. School feeding uses short-term food assistance to improve human capital for future generations. WFP's decision to move away from NGOs as implementing partners to the education departments at the regional level has helped to build local ownership for school feeding at the level of district *hukumats*, *jamoats* and communities. FFE is well integrated in local government and department of education programmes at province (*oblast*), district and sub-district (*jamoat*) level. The provincial governments support the programme by instructing the districts to budget for transport of food from district centre to schools and to provide staff for monitoring of school feeding. *Jamoat* governments, collective farms, PTAs and community members are donating

²² Although World Bank poverty assessments report higher drop-out rates in urban areas, the urban drop-outs appear to be due to greater employment opportunities rather than food insecurity.

²³ Isfara in Sughd province has similar gender gaps but does not benefit from take-home rations for girls.



cooking fuel, vegetables and condiments to complement the WFP food rations. The community also supplies the labour for meal preparation.

While the cooperation between WFP and the Ministry of Education at the central level is not very strong, the mission found very good cooperation at the regional/district levels between WFP sub offices and the local government in the FFE activity. The local authorities are providing the transportation of food from the FDPs to all schools while the communities are providing firewood and complementary food on regular basis. The government/ community contributions have become systematic and consistent. Local spirit of contribution appears to be an opportunity that WFP could capitalize on as a strong element in an exit strategy.

Future strategies. As per the latest VAM results, half of the districts where WFP is currently working are categorized as less vulnerable than before. For 2006-07, CO proposes to concentrate school feeding exclusively on 22 VAM priority districts and to withdraw from the rest. The decision to pull out of existing “yellow” districts appears to be driven by considerations of CO/SO monitoring capacity and resource availability more than by need. Disengagement from those districts could result in the loss of what has been achieved, including (a) local government contribution and capacity, (b) school attendance rates and (c) community self-help in support of school feeding.

The evaluation sees the need to buy time to consolidate gains in ongoing school feeding sites before withdrawal. Since there is only 7 months remaining under the project, in the evaluation mission’s view, it would be preferable to defer the withdrawal from school feeding in the yellow and green districts until the next project. The CO decision to re-programme FFE exclusively in the 22 most food insecure districts starting in the 2006-2007 school year comes too late in the project, with only half a year remaining (see conclusions below).

The mission proposes that the CO should use the time between now and the end of the project to initiate a set of pilot initiatives aimed at defining an exit strategy for FFE. Two activities are proposed for the CO’s consideration. First, the CO could – with government’s agreement – phase out school feeding from one or two the “green” or highly food secure districts as a basis for documenting what happens to attendance and children’s concentration and learning ability in the absence of school feeding. The findings would be useful as a basis for further policy decisions.

Secondly, WFP could propose to the local governments that it would consider continuing to support the “yellow” districts if the government is willing to share the cost on a 50:50 basis; i.e., if the government provides half of the requirement of the food commodities currently provided by WFP. WFP would work with GoT and provincial governments to build their capacity to procure, move and manage food during the new phase. It was noticed that Sughd Province - where WFP has its biggest operation in the north of the country - has the economic potential to do so.

In Sughd, there would need to be a negotiated agreement among the provincial government (*Oblast*), department of education and WFP on cost-sharing for school feeding. An agreement could also be negotiated with the provincial department of agriculture to supply wheat from state or collective farms to the district governments for use in school feeding.

It is recommended that the CO should use the next 12 months to negotiate this or a similar plan with central or provincial governments. This requires a commitment of resources to avoid defaulting, as the risk of default could seriously jeopardize the plan. A certain level of guaranteed donor funding



would be necessary to enable the CO to embark on any such negotiations. This plan could be integrated with the national FFE program in the draft PRS to ensure sustainability.

4.2 Vulnerable Group Feeding

It was originally expected that, under VGF, WFP would provide 62,100 MT to some 300,000 beneficiaries for 7 months per year throughout the life of the project. Actual resources distributed to date are 24,893 MT, or only 40 percent of the original target. Although VGF's share in total project resources (33 percent) is very close to the planned figure (35 percent), VGF achieved only 14 percent of its planned distribution target in 2005. The failure to achieve distribution targets is mainly attributable to reduced levels of funding.

The activity reached the highest number of beneficiaries at its start in 2003 with 86 percent of the planned 300,000. By the end of 2005, WFP was covering 110 percent of the planned 200,000 beneficiaries while distributing 20 percent of the planned tonnage.²⁴ This means that the operation was stretched out very thinly with cuts in the number of covered months and food commodities.²⁵ In the face of diminishing resources, the project opted to make one distribution in late fall (100 kg per household), followed by a second distribution to the same households late in the spring (150 kg per household) to take them until the harvest in early July. Depending on the size of family, this usually leaves a two-month gap in food supply in the middle of winter.

Relevance of VGF. VGF remains relevant because, according to VAM 2005, an estimated 1.05 million people are either chronically food insecure (10 percent) or highly food insecure (17 percent of rural Tajik households).

Effectiveness of targeting. Targeting of VGF is done on three levels: (a) geographic (VAM status of districts), (b) within district, and (c) within communities. The evaluation mission has doubts about targeting effectiveness on all three levels. With regard to geographic targeting, both Tajik and non-Tajik partners told the evaluation mission that they have serious reservations about the 2005 VAM study findings and their utility as a basis for district-level targeting (see section 4 – Use of Assessment Data - for details). With regard to within district targeting by *jamoat* and village, VAM surveys are not designed to provide judgments on differences in food-security status within districts.²⁶ The mission's visit to Penjikent district revealed that allocation of VGF resources per capita varies greatly between *jamoats*, with limited relationship to total population and an unclear relationship to poverty and food insecurity status. For example, in Jabbor Rasulov district, the mission's discussions with *jamoat* and *mahalla* heads responsible for drawing up the initial VGF lists revealed that the proportion of the population benefiting from VGF also varies widely between villages within the same *jamoat*.

Targeting effectiveness at the level of household selection within communities is doubtful due to lack of consensus on beneficiary selection criteria, weakness in screening checklists, rotation of people on beneficiary lists and redistribution of food. Although the involvement of local government

²⁴ Data from project document and 2003 and 2005 SPRs.

²⁵ CO stated in 2005/06 cycle, WFP covered 5 months rather than 7. Perhaps we need to check with CO on 2004/05 and whether food was reduced in addition to period covered.

²⁶ One information source – the joint DFID/national statistical office Socio-economic Atlas of Tajikistan, disaggregates per-capita food expenditure by *jamoat*.



and village authorities in drawing up the initial beneficiary lists has been hailed as one of the VGF's greatest strengths, the CO rightly insists on retaining WFP direct control over key aspects of the process such as (a) house-to-house verification of people on beneficiary lists and (b) actual food distribution to individuals on the beneficiary lists, upon presentation of passports, identity cards or birth certificates for each household member. Nearly half the households proposed by the village heads are rejected as a result of door-to-door screening visits by WFP food monitors. Were the process to be entirely handed over to local government, it is unlikely that the most food insecure households would get top priority for resources.

One of the main shortcomings of VGF as an instrument for livelihood protection has been its unpredictability at the level of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries who are on the VGF lists at one time of year never know when the next distribution is likely to take place. Nor do they know whether or not they are likely to be included on the list for a second time. Part of the unpredictability stems from resource constraints affecting the whole project. When forced to choose, the CO opted to earmark resources to ensure that the school feeding programme does not experience any pipeline breaks during the school year, and to give second priority to VGF for whatever additional resources are available.

Unpredictability is exacerbated by rotation of 30 percent of the households on beneficiary lists each time. In spite of house-to-house screening by WFP food monitors, the chronic food insecure are not reliably covered due to lack of consensus on beneficiary selection criteria. The seven criteria specified in the project document are so broad that 70-80 percent of households would meet at least one criterion²⁷. The WFP beneficiary screening checklist is of little assistance in distinguishing between households in the bottom 70 percent of the rural population. It only helps to screen out the households owning vehicles, television sets and satellite dishes – who are likely to be among the richest 10 percent of villagers.

The evaluation mission heard reports from WFP staff and NGOs of cases in which the food rations collected by individuals on the distribution list were collected at the distribution points, hauled back to the village by tractor, and redistributed by village leaders to every household in the village regardless of their poverty and food insecurity. Although the mission was unable to verify any cases of redistribution, the principle of food redistribution defeats targeting efforts.

Effectiveness of VGF for livelihood recovery. To assess the effectiveness of WFP for livelihood recovery, a household consumption survey was carried out among VGF beneficiaries in Khatlon in 2005. The survey concluded that as a result of access to WFP food assistance, beneficiaries were able to reduce their cash expenditure on food. In the absence of food assistance, they spent 74 percent of total income on food, whereas during the period of WFP assistance they spent less than half (49 percent) of their income on food. However, the food purchase displacement effect lasted no longer than a couple of months. As soon as the food assistance ended, food expenditure increased to the previous level. With the exception of some women in a remote mountain village (Farob *jamoat*, Penjikent District, Sughd Province) who reported to the evaluation team that VGF was responsible for saving their children's lives, no one else reported that it had any lasting effects on livelihoods. The money saved on food was spent on other short-term consumer items like clothing. VGF is therefore largely ineffective for livelihood recovery because the assistance is thinly spread, the

²⁷ An OEDE evaluation of EMOP 5023 in 1998 asserted that 74 percent of the VGF population at the time were "not able-bodied" but the 2006 OEDE evaluation was not able to find any similar evidence.



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livelihood effects are ephemeral and targeting is weak in spite of house-to-house verification by WFP.

Sustainability of VGF. VGF is not sustainable as there is no exit strategy. VGF operations are well connected with local government through involvement of *jamoats* in drawing up beneficiary lists and in distribution. WFP directly verifies beneficiary lists and oversees food distribution. Connection with existing village organizations could be strengthened to offset possible elite domination by appointed *jamoat* and village heads. Connection with Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Welfare needs strengthening to integrate with social assistance systems.



4.3 Food for Work

According to the original design, FFW was expected to absorb 24,957 MT or 17.5 percent of total project resources. Due to a shortage of food resources in the project as a whole, FFW had to be cut down. At the time of the evaluation, it had only absorbed 6,300 MT, or 25 percent of the original target and its share in total project resources was only 4 percent.

Relevance of FFW. Rural infrastructure rehabilitation and development is a high priority for NDS and PRS but the strategy documents make no mention of food aid as a tool for achieving this objective. FFW is highly relevant to WFP strategic objective 2 – livelihood protection and recovery.

Relevance of food aid. Food aid continues to be relevant as a tool for infrastructure construction or rehabilitation in food deficit areas with limited access to markets and for poor people with limited access to land. Elsewhere, cash-for-work would be more appropriate. In the highly food insecure districts, beneficiaries are keen to get FFW in spite of low value of food ration relative to daily wage²⁸. Many workers who have the economic means to emigrate to Russia in search of employment said that they would be happy to forego a trip to Russia in order to get 2-3 months of continuous employment through FFW in their home village. Employment in FFW is perceived to be more secure than higher-paying cash employment in daily labour outside the village. For this reason, the stronger and more enterprising households try to get FFW and this tends to crowd out the more disadvantaged households. The mission had the impression that in food insecure areas, WFP rations are too valuable to be self-targeting to the poorest among the able-bodied labour force.

Effectiveness of FFW. FFW has been effective for **asset creation** (development). However, the food transfers through FFW are of doubtful effectiveness for protecting the livelihoods of the recipients. On the one hand, the quality of the assets created or rehabilitated appears to be good. One reason for the good quality of assets appears to be that the CO and SOs have chosen to work almost exclusively with partners who have sufficient financial resources to pay for adequate non-food inputs as well as human resources for supervision of the engineering aspects. Another reason for good quality of assets is that food rations are only released to beneficiaries when completion of the work has been certified and a user committer is in place to maintain them. The assets benefit the whole community (including women) and the sustainability of the infrastructure beyond the end of project appears to be promising.

The contribution of FFW to the **livelihoods** of those who receive the employment is difficult to document. FFW has not been very effective in enabling poor households to bridge the lean season food gap, because – due to resourcing constraints - the final installment for FFW tends to slide well into the post-harvest season.

Effectiveness of targeting. In several of the projects visited during the evaluation, direct beneficiaries of FFW were limited to a few people per community (between 6 and 19 workers), whereas in other sub-projects, the large proportion of households benefited from the employment in addition the assets. When the number of beneficiaries is small, it appears that FFW is not always reaching the most food insecure or disadvantaged people among the able-bodied labour force at village level. Because it is more secure than casual wage labour, WFP food assistance continues to attract the better-off among the poor. In Khovaling District (Khatlon Province), there were several

²⁸ The value of a daily ration is roughly 1/3 of the daily wage for casual labour.



teachers and skilled workers (welders, tractor drivers) among beneficiaries. In food insecure areas, WFP rations are not self-targeting to the poorest among the able-bodied labour force because employment in FFW is more secure than higher-paying wage employment.

Effectiveness for livelihood recovery. Although the objective of FFW as stated in the CO RBM matrices is “increased ability of food insecure households to manage shocks,” most beneficiaries report that the assistance had no long-lasting effect on their lives. They used the money saved from not having to buy food to buy clothing and, occasionally, to pay for children’s schooling. The contribution to livelihoods is highly localized, short term and ephemeral.

Efficiency of FFW. The mission’s alpha value calculations suggest that FFW is the least cost-efficient of all activities. Because the FFW ration is mainly wheat flour, which has a low price on local markets, the cost of bringing 1 kg of food from USA is 1 somoni compared to 0.73 Somoni to buy the same food locally. This suggests that cash-for-work would be more efficient in geographic areas with good market access. In three cases out of 11 sub-projects visited, the WFP food rations constituted no more than 5 percent of the total sub-project budget. In cases where food rations make up less than 5 percent of the total sub-project cost, it would be less of a bother for the implementing partner to pay cash-for-work instead of calling upon WFP to organize FFW. It is not cost-effective for WFP to organize FFW for small quantities of food due to high overhead cost of monitoring the sub-projects.

Sustainability of FFW. Assets created or rehabilitated as a result of FFW appear likely to be sustained. In all cases visited by the evaluation mission a user group was in place to operate and maintain them. However, in one case, even though a user group was in place, the village had failed to maintain a mud flow channel after it was filled up by a minor flood. In the latter case, the village leaders asked whether WFP would be willing to give them additional FFW to rehabilitate the mud flow channel that had been constructed with FFW. The food monitors explained to the community that WFP assists only one time per village and that, thereafter, the user groups formed to undertake the sub-project are responsible for maintaining the asset. Although there is always a need to guard against the risk that FFW could undermine local self-help initiative (as in the case of the mud flow channel above), FFW can sometimes act as a catalyst to stimulate local self-help initiative (see the box below).



How FFW Mobilized Community Self-help for Irrigation

In Veshob village, Shamtuch jamoat, Aini District, the evaluation mission visited a site where FFW was a catalyst for further self-help irrigation efforts. With an expenditure of 104.9 MT (US\$54,800) in food plus US\$71,700 for pipes and cement, 386 small farmers (of which 145 in Veshob) were able to bring new irrigation to 80 ha of rainfed land on spurs above the narrow valley bottom. According to one of the leaders, initially “it was inconceivable for us to think that we could collectively accomplish such a feat.” During the course of the FFW, they learned how to do it by themselves, including sourcing the construction materials, digging the canals and fitting the irrigation pipes. One year later, we found the same 146 farmers digging the hillside to lay pipes to bring irrigation to an additional 50 ha of land. This time the labour was done entirely on a self-help basis, without FFW, in partnership with an official from the sub-district (*jamoat*) government, who is mobilizing contributions cement and pipes from a couple of wealthy villagers who own private businesses in Dushanbe. According to the leader, although they can do the work now without FFW, they never could have done it the first time without FFW. They needed FFW to support them for 105 working days to enable them to devote full time to the irrigation project. They also needed outside partners to guide the work and to teach them how to do it themselves. Above all, they needed to convince themselves that the effort would pay off.

Project FFW/2005/25 “Reconstruction of Irrigative and Drinking Water Systems in Aini District”

Connectedness of FFW. For implementation of FFW sub-projects, WFP has generally relied on UN and NGO partners. According to the CO, it is becoming more and more difficult for WFP to find reputable partners for FFW²⁹, because some NGO partners have their own food pipeline and others are questioning the relevance of FFW. Some SOs – especially Khujand SO -office - have successfully harnessed partnerships between the district local government (*hukumat*), district agriculture and water departments, sub-district governments (*jamoats*) and communities for FFW implementation (see box above).

Although connectedness and partnerships are critical for success of projects, they should not be the sole determining factor for taking up sub-projects. WFP should think twice about partnering with other agencies when the value of its own food assistance is only a small share (often less than 5 percent of total sub-project cost). Given the WFP’s staff constraints, it might make more sense to concentrate on sub-projects where the WFP input will make a critical contribution to the vulnerable communities in need.

²⁹ CARE and GAA have their own FFW pipeline; other former partners are questioning FFW. USAID announced its intention to restrict food assistance to emergency assistance (which does not include FFW).



4.4 Disaster Response

Contingency is the smallest category of project activities, accounting for less than 1 percent of total resources. It is used mainly to respond to small-scale natural disasters such as floods, avalanches, landslides and tremors. The amount per year is highly variable depending on the number of people affected by natural disasters such as floods, mud slides, avalanches and earthquakes. Immediately after the disaster, emergency food distributions are made to people directly affected by loss of their home, land, possessions, food stocks and livelihood – either at the disaster site or in a designated resettlement area. This is often followed some months later by FFW for house construction (or reconstruction) in connection with the NGO Shelter for Life. Since the shelter sub-projects are classified as FFW, the CO activity for contingencies underestimate the amount of resources allocated for emergency relief. Resettlement areas also benefit from school feeding and food security initiatives.

The four resettlement sub-projects visited by the evaluation team were satisfactory. Houses were built on time and are of satisfactory quality. The main complaint of beneficiaries was that they did not have enough voice in resettlement planning. For instance in Sarazm resettlement area of Panjikent District (Sughd Province), many beneficiaries complained that the 3-room houses are too small for a large extended family, resulting in overcrowding, forced intimacy and a lack of privacy. In Panjikent, beneficiaries are required to wait 5 years before adding onto their houses, whereas in another resettlement scheme in Aini *jamoat* of Khuroson District (Khatlon Province), beneficiaries appeared to be free to wall their compounds and to construct cattle pens and stables and storage barns next to their houses.

Relevance and effectiveness of food aid in the disaster context. Use of food for relief of natural disasters continues to be relevant. WFP food assistance is reported to be timely and effective, and to have reduced indebtedness of disaster victims. There is a good linkage between emergency food distribution for disaster victims and FFW for house construction in resettlement areas.

Sustainability of benefits. A major shortcoming of the disaster relief programme is that it only addresses the symptoms of natural calamities as opposed to the causes of the disasters. It could be useful to build a stronger linkage between disaster relief and upstream disaster risk management (including preparedness and prevention).

Connectedness. WFP disaster relief is well connected with that of government (Ministry of Emergency Situations) and other donors – at least on paper. WFP is a member of REACT (Rapid Emergency Assessment Coordination Team). Although REACT tries to organize joint emergency assessments, donors often end up carrying out separate assessments because of time constraints.



4.5 Health and Nutrition Activities

Due to poor health conditions of the country's population, as indicated by: high rates of global malnutrition among children (particularly those under 2.5 years), widespread incidence of micronutrient deficiencies, and a high prevalence of TB in the country – the PRRO aimed at reaching these specific vulnerable groups through in-clinic and take-home rations. Institutional feeding at psychiatric hospitals, although initially included as a project activity, was subsequently discontinued.

Food for Tuberculosis Treatment

This activity has increased from 0 percent of project resources in 2003, to 1.5 percent in 2004, to 6 percent in 2005 to 7 percent in 2006. Beneficiaries (including household members) increased rapidly from 7,328 in 2004 to 19,424 in 2005. It has cumulatively absorbed 1847 MT of food and benefited 26752 people.

Relevance of support for tuberculosis treatment. A strong correlation exists between poverty and susceptibility to the disease of tuberculosis – in part through weakened immunity as a result of poor nutrition. Rates of TB in the country are very high; the WHO estimates that 127 out of 100,000 people are infected. In 2002, the Directly Observed Treatment Short-course, or DOTS, was introduced for TB patients in Tajikistan. Thirty-five DOTS centers now operate in the country. Of these, WFP provides food for 11 of the centers, working in conjunction with two NGO implementing partners. This support is seen as highly relevant: Government places a high priority on addressing the issue, and this intervention reaches some of the most vulnerable people in the country.

Relevance of food aid for the activity. To be a TB patient carries a social stigma in Tajikistan, and as a result such patients are reluctant to come forward for testing and treatment. According to clinic staff, food provides a strong incentive to attract patients to the centers. Detection rates in the country are improving, and where provided, food may be contributing to this trend, although this has not specifically been studied. What has been determined – albeit with a relatively small sample – is that food has proven effective at retaining patients for significantly better treatment outcomes.

Effectiveness of food assistance. Systematic comparisons between patients with and without food assistance³⁰ showed that 94 percent of patients who received WFP food assistance completed their treatment whereas only 54 percent of the patients completed their treatment in the absence of food assistance. When food assistance was provided to patients and their families, the cure rate was 88 percent, whereas when no food was provided, the cure rate was only 63 percent. The food supplement group also showed a lower default rate, as only 1 percent of those receiving food defaulted from the programme vs. an 11 percent default rate among patients who received no food. Finally, it is medically clear that good nutrition works hand and hand with promoting the efficacy of the drug intervention.

Sustainability. The benefits of successfully treated and cured TB patients extend far beyond the individual level – including such important public health benefits as reduced disease transmission, as well as prevention and curtailed spread of multi-drug resistant (MDR) organisms. As cases of MDR

³⁰ Using Incentives to Improve Tuberculosis Treatment Results: Lessons from Tajikistan,” Project Hope, 2005.



TB have recently been confirmed in the country, this aspect of containment becomes critical from both health and financial standpoints. While drugs used to treat uncomplicated TB cost between US\$10-20, the treatment for MDR TB takes 3-4 times as long and costs thousands of dollars per person.

Complementarity. There is good complementarity between WFP's short term provision of food aid and long-term strategic benefits of the DOTS programme, and the centers are well connected with the MoH.

Supplementary and Therapeutic Feeding

The activities – carried out by WFP's partner AAH - consist of village-based and health centre-based screening of the nutritional status of children under 5; provision of nutrition education (including advice on home gardening) to mothers of malnourished children; MCH-centre based distribution of pre-mixed formulas for home-based supplementary feeding of children having -2 z scores of <80 percent of standard weight/height); and hospital-based therapeutic feeding for infants suffering from severe acute malnutrition (-3 Z scores or less than 70 percent of standard weight/height) and their mothers. Supplementary and therapeutic feeding have cumulatively absorbed 2,030 MT (or 2.3 percent of project resources) and benefited an estimated 72,727 people since 2003. The activity's share in project resources was 6.2 percent in 2003 but reduced to 1.5 percent in 2004/2005.

Relevance of Supplementary and Therapeutic Feeding. The causes of malnutrition in Tajikistan are multi-faceted and complex: poor nutritional intake, concurrent lack of safe water with prevalence of infectious disease, child caring practices which are directly impacted by women bearing the main workload in the family, and few income earning opportunities are only some of the contributing factors. The population also suffers from high rates of micronutrient deficiencies: prevalence of anemia in women has been estimated at 41 percent, and the rates of iodine deficiency and goiter are alarming. While therapeutic and supplementary feeding are clearly relevant to the beneficiaries and to WFP's strategic objectives, the issue receives surprisingly little mention in the Government's health sector strategies.

Relevance of Food Aid for the Activity. Food is seen to be highly effective in attracting extremely vulnerable women and their children to the centers. Once there, food acts as a catalyst in the process of recovery: not only does it treat the condition of malnutrition, it allows the mother to stay with her child for the duration of the treatment. This is seen as significant, as culturally there are many pressures on the woman to return home; food contributes to keeping the default rate relatively low at 5-10 percent. In addition, while at the centers, women are given key health education and nutrition messages, as well as instruction in home gardening. This ultimately contributes to addressing the causes, and not just the symptoms of malnutrition.

Effectiveness of WFP Assistance. Therapeutic feeding has been effective at saving the lives of small but important numbers of severely malnourished infants. Therapeutic feeding mortality rates decreased from a baseline of 10 percent in 2003, to 2 percent in 2004 to 1.7 percent in 2005. Therapeutic feeding recovery rates were 75 percent at the baseline in 2003, increased to 83 percent in 2004 and decreased to 70.9 percent in 2005. **Supplementary feeding** enables malnourished infants to regain of 85 percent of standard weight in 3 months in most cases (although some need 4 months). Supplementary feeding default rates decreased from a baseline of 15 percent in 2003 to 10



percent in 2004 to 8.8 percent in 2005. Supplementary feeding deaths at the baseline in 2003 were 3 percent, declined to 1 percent in 2004, but rose again in 2005 to 5.5 percent. The recovery rate for supplementary feeding increased from a baseline of 75 percent in 2003, to 87 percent in 2004 and fell to 74.2 percent in 2005. The reasons for declining recovery rates in both programmes in 2005 may be due in part to a reduction in partner funding, along with an increase in infectious disease, particularly cholera. In addition, further analysis is needed to determine whether hand-over to government may also be affecting performance. Although one of the secondary goals is behavioural change in mothers as a result of nutrition and health education, unfortunately such changes are not yet tracked. It would be important to track them in the future.

Sustainability. Sustainability of the immediate nutritional benefits appears to be good, as readmissions to therapeutic feeding centres are few (2-3 cases reported in KTY in past year) but higher for SF. Sustainability of the activity itself in the absence of WFP food assistance is questionable. Significant reduction of operations in 3 centres handed over MoH is a source of concern. Screening visits to villages to identify malnourished children are reduced. The number of new cases admitted sharply reduced as a consequence. There was also high medical staff turnover due to low wages. Continuation of the activity depends on AAH funding beyond April 2007, which is currently uncertain.

The PRRO initially aimed to provide a take-home family ration for patients at the centers, as well as a ration of corn-soya blend (CSB) and sugar for children at the Therapeutic Feeding Centres. However, both of these were rejected: in the case of the family ration, the implementing partner opted for a take-home ration specifically for the malnourished child instead, as it was reported that the family ration was attracting too many people who were not eligible, and the resulting confusion was paralyzing the center's activities. With regard to CSB, it was felt by the partner that the same nutritional results could be reached with the ration of flour, oil and sugar that WFP is providing.

The PRRO also called for rations to be distributed to expectant and nursing mothers, starting from the third trimester of pregnancy and lasting three months into breastfeeding. However, no specific assistance has been given to this group outside of those women targeted through VGF. The CO's main justification for not implementing the activity is lack of government budget to operate the Mother/Child Health centres from which the assistance was to be given.

Effectiveness of Targeting. A final targeting issue is inconsistency in results between the 2004 VAM study and the 2004 National Nutrition Survey. The nutrition study showed global acute malnutrition rates to be seriously high in both Kulyab and Kurgan-Teppe areas of Khatlon province, whereas VAM classified the Kurgan-Teppe area as relatively low priority in terms of food security.

Sustainability. While the number of readmissions to the TFC is low, suggesting sustainability to the patients, when three of the centers were handed over to the Government, a high turnover in staff combined with inadequate resources resulted in a significant reduction in the centers' operations.

Connectedness. The therapeutic feeding is connected to MoH in that it takes place at the government pediatric hospital. However, all of the therapeutic feeding staff (apart from the head doctor) are contracted by the WFP implementing partner, Action Against Hunger (AAH). Supplementary feeding activities are also connected to MoH because the AAH teams use the government-run mother/child health (MCH) facilities as a base for delivering their services. The connection with the MCH centres is looser because each AAH team covers roughly 12 MCH centres per week, in rotation, and stays in each centre no more than a few hours per week. Although AAH



has made a concerted effort to involve MoH in the activities of the supplementary and therapeutic feeding centres, the response on the government side has been disappointing. Ministry staff do not participate in the implementation teams, and it is clear that the activity is not yet sustainable in the absence of a MoH buy-in.

WFP assistance for TB treatment is relevant and effective, and should be continued. As research has found that food is an incentive that can substantially increase regimen completion and cure rates among vulnerable patients, and as 24 of the 35 DOTS centers are *not* covered by food assistance, there is a solid rationale for potential scale-up to those centers, provided they are adequately covered by an effective operating infrastructure and partner.

As TFC/SFCs are poorly connected with the MoH, any further WFP project should make use of the opportunity to negotiate an exit strategy with the MoH. MoH staff should be part of the TFC/SFC teams; a cost-sharing agreement whereby WFP pays DSA for MoH staff could be implemented, following the model currently used with the MOE in school feeding activities.

Despite the VAM 2004 survey results, therapeutic and supplementary feeding should *not* be dropped in western Khatlon where malnutrition rates are nearly as high as those found in Kulyab area of eastern Khatlon .

Institutional Feeding for Psychiatric Patients

The PRRO initially called for the provision of food to 1,300 patients in psychiatric hospitals in Tajikistan. The activity cumulatively absorbed only 217 MT or less than 0.3 percent of project resources. However, in 2006 this activity was discontinued; the evaluation supports this decision. An external study was carried out in early 2006 which assessed the overall condition of the hospitals, and quantified a food shortfall in the 17 institutions. However, the study also noted that the MoH had acted upon WFP's suggestion to initiate gardening at the hospitals, and reported that 5 of the 17 institutions had been producing food. The argument has been presented that discontinuing WFP food has had humanitarian consequences; however, no evidence exists that the food was responsible for saving lives, nor is making a contribution to livelihood recovery or development. Instead, it is the mission's view that the food was acting as a resource transfer to the MoH, and as such is not sustainable.



4.6 Food Security (Food for Agriculture)

This activity aims at kickstarting post-disaster food crop production in highly food insecure districts. Disadvantaged groups are provided a one-off grant in the form of food rations plus good quality seeds and fertilizer to enable them to start growing wheat or potatoes. The underlying assumption is that beneficiaries can achieve food security during the year in which they get the assistance and save enough seed and money to pay for the next year's farm inputs. Under PRRO 6087.01, households got seeds and fertilizer plus food rations for up to 12 months in addition to seeds and fertilizer. Under PRRO 10231.0, planned support was to last 250 days but was subsequently reduced to 5 months. Since 2003, food security activities have absorbed 3.25 percent of project resources (2420 MT) and benefited an estimated 83,000 people. The number of beneficiaries started at 28,000 in 2003, peaked at 37,000 people in 2004 and decreased in 2005 to around 16,000 people.

WFP began to support the activity in the late 1990s, just after the civil war. At the time, farmland was still mostly collectivized and the collectives were bankrupt. Land was lying idle due to shortage of money to rent in land from the collective and to pay for land preparation, seeds and fertilizer. Food security sub-projects were originally connected with NGO efforts to lease land for allocation to highly vulnerable groups like war widows for food crop growing.

Land lease projects originally met with high enthusiasm (a 1998 OEDE evaluation identified them a highly promising activity with good potential for scaling up). Later, enthusiasm declined when it became apparent that the NGO partners could not enforce the land leases beyond the end of a particular sub-project. The collective farms often repossessed the plots and ousted the widows and vulnerable households.

During the 2000-2002 drought emergency the food assistance appeared to make sense because most farmers had lost their seeds and depleted their household assets. They needed emergency assistance to enable them to start planting crops again. They also needed food aid to free them from having to migrate, and to enable them to invest their family labour in their own household gardens and small plots of "presidential" land under individual control.

Relevance of the Activity. Support for food crop production by vulnerable groups is relevant to MDG 1 aimed at halving the population suffering from hunger. Food security is also relevant to the NDS and the agricultural sector strategies. The activity addresses causes of food insecurity and not just the symptoms by enabling food insecure households to meet more of their food requirements through self-provisioning production.

Relevance of Food Aid for the Activity. Although food aid may have been needed to restart food production by vulnerable groups in the immediate aftermath of the civil war and the drought emergency, it is no longer relevant. What small farmers really need is not food aid but sustainable access to good quality seeds and fertilizer, access to seasonal production credit and – above all - clarification of their land rights, as well as their right to share in the profits and to decide which types of crops they wish to grow.

Effectiveness of Targeting. Because they have access to land, most FS beneficiaries are less vulnerable than VGF beneficiaries. It is therefore somewhat inappropriate that the project design called for more food assistance per person (110 kg) under food security than for vulnerable group feeding or food for work (83 kgs). The actual quantities of food per beneficiary under FS average



around 35 kg per year, with wide variations between districts with as low as 15-20 kgs to as high as 40-50 kgs per beneficiary per year.

Effectiveness of Food Security Activities. From a series of self-evaluations undertaken on food security projects approved between 2002 (under PRRO 6087.01) and 2004³¹ it transpired that yields achieved by beneficiaries were almost always lower than anticipated, because of late seed delivery, delayed land preparation and delayed planting. In many cases, the grain was not fully mature at the harvest season. Although the groups were expected to harvest the wheat and plant a second crop, in many cases the first harvest was too late to enable them to follow it with a second crop. Unfortunately, none of the self-evaluations analyzed what happened to the farmers after the WFP assistance ended. To what extent did the assistance provided in year 1 enable them to carry on farming and to obtain similar yields in year 2?

When food assistance was provided to land under collective ownership and management, as in the case with one collective farm (*kolkhoz*) in Hamadoni District (Khatlon Province), the *kolkhoz* used the WFP food rations to “pay” the farm workers for 9 months while the crop was maturing. When the food aid ended, the *kolkhoz* reverted to paying the workers low salaries (<\$5 per month) and pocketed the profits. Even on the collective *dehqon* (private) farms, the labour force are “co-owners” only on paper. All decisions are still taken by the *dehqon* farm manager and the other members of the *dehqon* farm are only land leases or sharecroppers or farm workers. The self-evaluations revealed that food security support is only effective on land directly under individual farmers’ control such as home gardens, “presidential” land and individual *dehqon* farms (as opposed to farmland that is still under the control of the collective).

It is important for WFP project designers to find out whether or not the planned beneficiaries are independent small farmers who intend to plant food crops on land under their household control. If the land belongs to the collective and is only leased or sharecropped by the beneficiary, the project is unlikely to make a lasting contribution to livelihood recovery of vulnerable groups. When the beneficiaries are co-owners, the benefits of the food assistance accrue to them directly whereas when the beneficiaries are merely workers, the food assistance may well represent a mere resource transfer to the collective farm.

Food security efforts were criticized by the 2004 Mid-term review (MTR) mission on the grounds that the assistance was not having the desired impact on production. Yields were much lower than anticipated due to a combination of factors including poor germination and late delivery of seed, lack of complementary inputs such as fertilizer, poor farming skills and inadequate access to agricultural extension advice. It also questioned the sustainability of benefits beyond the first year. The MTR recommended that WFP should only support food security projects when it can ensure a full package of seeds, plus fertilizer plus technical advice in addition to the food rations.

Starting from 2005, food security activities were phased out, partly due to a shortage of overall resources and partly in response to the MTR mission criticism. The current PRRO 10231.0 evaluation mission was only able to visit two food security sub-projects, one near Kulyab District

³¹ FAD/2001/81-12 “Food for Agriculture Development” (Vose district); FAD/WFP/USAID01/27-2 “Seed Multiplication Project” (Hamadoni district); FS/2002/04 “Food Security” (Hamadoni district); FS/FAD/2002/03-08 “Seed Multiplication” (Shartuuz district).



and one in Sarband District, both in Khatlon Province. In both cases, the food security assistance was rightly given for extremely small plots of land under households' direct control. The majority of beneficiaries interviewed had less than 0.1 ha of land in two separate plots. Yet, because they **do** have some land under personal control, the food security beneficiaries are somewhat less food insecure than the population targeted by vulnerable group feeding.

Sustainability of Food Security Activities. Interviews with beneficiaries in Sarband and Kulyab suggest that sustainability is eroding. A one-off grant of seeds and fertilizers and food assistance is enough to enable the beneficiaries to start food crop production but it is not enough to enable them to sustain the same production levels in successive years. With less than 0.1 ha of land, none of the beneficiaries was able to achieve food self-sufficiency. They still had to work in the cotton fields to buy food to survive. In spite of the group leaders' concerted efforts to encourage the beneficiaries to save some money to pay for the next season's land preparation and fertilizer, none of them managed to save enough money to buy the same quantity of fertilizer that they received from the project. Since they are using only around half of the required fertilizer, they are expecting lower yields expected this year compared with last year. This means that they will need to buy more food on the market and will have to spend proportionately more of their time working outside their own farms. They are trapped in a vicious circle. The more they are forced to work outside their own land to get money to buy food, the less time they have to tend their own crops. The less time they spend on their own crops, the lower the expected yield. The lower the yield, the more food they need to buy. The more food they need to buy, the more time they need to work outside their own farms.

To be self-sustaining in the long run, food security beneficiaries need to be able to produce enough crops to enable them to save enough for the next season's seeds, fertilizer and land preparation and irrigation fees.



4.7 Food for Training/Income Generation

WFP support for food-for-training/income generation is targeted almost exclusively to women. It uses food as an incentive to attract poor women to participate in skills training courses. Later, when the training is finished, food is used as an incentive to enable trainees to start an enterprise. Under PRRO 6087.01, women received WFP food assistance for up to 9 months (2-3 months during skills training, followed by another 6 months of food rations after the training). The PRRO 10231.0 project document called for 5 months assistance including support during and after training, but later the CO limited assistance to a total of 60 days during the actual skills training. FFT/IG activity was planned to be 7 percent of the PRRO project budget but actually absorbed only 1 percent of total resources (770 MT). The assistance benefited an estimated 22,000 people, starting with 5260 beneficiaries in 2004 and scaling up to 16,860 beneficiaries in 2005.

The assessment is based on a series of self-evaluation reports from sub-projects implemented under the PRRO and site visits to two FFT/IG sub-projects in Khatlon, one involving baking and the other a sewing group.

Relevance of FFE/IG. Support for employment generation through vocational skills training for vulnerable women continues to be relevant to national employment strategies and for women's empowerment.

Relevance of Food Aid for Income Generation. Food aid appears to be relevant for enabling poor women to take part in skills training courses but – once they are trained – food aid is no longer a relevant or appropriate as a way of supporting an income-earning enterprise. The same objective could be achieved more effectively by linking the trainees to micro-finance organizations that provide seed capital for purchase of equipment and working capital for purchase of raw materials and to business-oriented NGOs that can assist them with supplier credit and marketing. NGO partners such as CARE and GAA have shifted away from food aid in favour of micro-finance.

Effectiveness of FFT/IG Support. The vocational skills training was effective. The employment results are variable. The self-evaluations suggest that in some cases only about half of the women trained are gainfully employed. The two enterprises visited by the mission are economically viable. The beneficiaries earn enough that their families are food secure. Gender targeting is good (nearly all beneficiaries are female) but the poverty targeting is variable. The women in the groups visited are town-based and appear to be substantially better off than other women. It is not clear how needy and vulnerable they were prior to the project and whether or not it was the project that helped them to get out of poverty.

Effectiveness of Targeting. The PRRO cannery sub-project described in the self-evaluation report appears highly problematic. The women received WFP food assistance for 9 months, including 3 months of training and 6 months after training. After 9 months, the NGO partner hired the trainees as workers. The women were paid by the piece and earned approximately US\$10 per woman per month. The women workers are not co-owners or shareholders in the canning enterprise. After deducting salaries (17 percent) and production costs, the profits from the sales of canned vegetables appear to have accrued to the NGO partner and were not divided among the women workers. The food assistance was therefore mainly an income transfer to the NGO, who used the food rations to “pay” the trainees for the first 6 months of their apprenticeship.



The write-up of the self-evaluation of the two sewing projects was equally unclear about whether the trainees became employees of the NGO enterprise and how the profits are divided among the women workers. In the sewing group visited by the evaluation mission, the profits accrue directly to the group members, not to an NGO. Each group member works independently and has her own customers who place orders for the clothes. Each group member earns more or less depending on the number of customers she has and the number of garments that she can produce in a month. Some women who own good sewing machines and work long hours earn 5 times more per day than those who work without a sewing machine. The group members merely procure the raw materials jointly and share the cost of the building where they work and display their products.

It is important for WFP project designers to find out whether the planned beneficiaries are co-owners of a group enterprise as opposed to employees who work for the NGO partner who assists with project implementation. When the beneficiaries are co-owners, the benefits of the food assistance accrue directly to the training participants whereas when the beneficiaries are merely workers, the food assistance represents a resource transfer to the NGO partner who would otherwise have to pay wages to the graduates from the training course. Partners should not be encouraged to use WFP food rations in lieu of beneficiary wages.

Efficiency. Each sub-project is very small scale and uses relatively few food resources in comparison with other WFP-supported activities. The backstopping of the activity is time consuming for WFP in the absence of an NGO partner able to organize and backstop many women's groups in a single umbrella project. For this reason, the CO has stopped financing new projects.

Sustainability. The employment generated in the groups visited appears to be sustainable.

Connectedness. The short term food assistance appears to generate longer term employment. The successful groups need a good connection with an NGO partner and with local government.



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5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

5.1 Assessment

Three vulnerability assessments have been undertaken in connection with PRRO 10231.0 with widely differing methods and results. The first assessment was a desk study based on secondary statistics,³² which identified 27 (out of 58) districts as food insecure and designated them in the project document as priority districts for intervention. A second set of 18 priority districts was identified by a more elaborate VAM assessment survey conducted in 2004-2005. The conclusions of the second assessment differed radically from the first. Not even one of the 7 “red” (or highly food insecure) districts identified by the 2003 assessment coincided with any of the 12 “red” districts identified by the second VAM assessment. The 2003 assessment classified Badakhshan and Rasht valley as highly food insecure whereas the second VAM classified it as highly food secure. Moreover, in Khatlon, only 4 districts out of a total 19 districts were classified as highly food insecure, and the rest were classified as mildly food insecure (“yellow”) even though the region is known to have the highest poverty and global acute malnutrition rates in the whole country. In only two cases out of 58 did a district have the same food security rating in the new VAM survey as it had in the original assessment.

The results of the second VAM were so controversial and politically sensitive that a third assessment had to be undertaken in Rasht Valley and Badakhshan in an effort to resolve the controversy. Although the follow-up study confirmed that the Rasht valley was generally food secure with the exception of two districts, in Badakhshan, not one of the 2005 VAM classifications was confirmed. Four districts that were previously classified as highly food secure (“green”) were found to be highly food insecure (“red”) and the rest were mildly food insecure (“yellow”) instead of highly food secure (“green”). At the end of the process, the CO identified 22 priority districts based on the combined results of VAM 2004-2005 and the follow-up study.

5.2 Linkage between Assessment Data and Programming

As shown in the table below, there is a poor correlation between assessed need and quantities of food programmed in the priority districts as defined by the two main VAM studies. Numbers in the table represent the percentage of food insecure people reached in each region, and contrast the resources programmed in districts considered by assessment data to be of greater priority, with resources programmed in districts of lesser priority – districts which nevertheless contain numbers of food insecure people.

³² The 7 parameters used by desk study to rank districts on food insecure included land per capita, livestock per capita, access to government salaries, dependency ratio, remoteness, indebtedness, and female headed households.



Table 8: Average Percentages of Food Insecure Population Reached in Priority vs. Non-priority Districts

Region	Average Percentage of District Food Insecure Population Reached ³³					
	2003		2004		2005	
	Priority districts	Remaining districts	Priority districts	Remaining districts	Priority districts	Remaining districts
Sughd	68%	82%	95%	107%	39%	93%
Khatlon	37%	50%	34%	52%	64%	38%
GBAO	99%	163%	106%	93%	210%	606%
DRD	13%	4%	18%	9%	34%	13%
Rasht Valley	289%	278%	383%	333%	153%	462%

Both over- and under-programming are evident, with the following possible explanations:

- The low adherence to programming the most resources into the highest priority districts may represent a fundamental disagreement with assessment data results. However, this then becomes a key issue requiring a solution.
- Activities may be programmed on criteria other than assessment data, as in the case of FFE and TB districts. As FFE consumes roughly half of the costs of the operation, this may explain over-programming in GBAO. Nevertheless, the PRRO design document states that priority will be given to food-deficit districts.
- Pockets of food insecurity and disaster relief have also been identified and programmed, independent of VAM data.

5.3 Use of Assessment Data

The mission found the general issue of assessment data to be a central one. As the purpose of this data is to directly inform programming decisions, it is of key importance. And yet, as seen in the analysis of resource allocation, making this linkage has proven challenging. In terms of rapid assessment capacity, a primary mechanism is the inter-agency Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) which has been in existence since 2001. This mechanism functions unevenly; a recent UNDAC mission highlighted the need for better coordination by sector, and suggested the creation of a possible Rapid Response Team.

WFP staff recently took part in an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) training held in conjunction with the dissemination of new corporate guidelines. Funds permitting, as a follow-up, relevant sections of the guidelines will be extracted and adapted for use in the local context, and translated into Russian. This aims to improve the current capacity for conducting rapid assessments, many of which occur due to natural disasters.

Much consideration was given to the “VAM – Household Food Security and Vulnerability Survey in Rural Tajikistan,” conducted in November 2004. WFP staff and stakeholders alike commended the

³³ Priority districts in 2003 and 2004 defined per VAM '03 data, as “highest and high” categories of food insecurity. Priority districts in 2005 defined per VAM '04 data, as “red” districts+ VAM Resurvey '05 as “dark blue” districts.



study's macro descriptions in their usefulness for understanding the big picture; however, the following weaknesses were articulated:

Study Methodology

- The approach of cluster creation as a function of agro-ecological zones was controversial and ultimately rejected by users of the data, as artificially lumping together incongruous groups of vulnerable people.
- Averaging done across communities within a district, and particularly across districts within a zone often resulted in an inaccurate aggregate picture. This had the effect of complicating rather than clarifying targeting.
- Reliability of the overall sampling frame was questioned when it was discovered that sample points disproportionate to the population size had been drawn.
- Users of the data found it difficult to use the data accurately for district level targeting, and virtually impossible to apply at a sub-district level.

Data Integrity

- Overall data integrity was questioned subsequent to concerns including: non-uniformity of enumerators (different qualification levels resulting in surveyors not using the same 'measuring stick'), main-road bias and skepticism as to whether all selected communities had been visited as planned.

It was felt that while the overall survey approach may be statistically valid in theory, this particular application of the theory did not yield a sound basis for informing programming decisions. As such, it has low operational usefulness, as was not cost efficient.

As the current disputed survey cannot be utilized reliably in the preparation of further project documents, the mission recommends a follow-up survey in the western Khatlon region, and other disputed districts, to be financed by HQ. An intermediate solution could a re-validation exercise, in which in-country experts validate/readjust the data based on selected vulnerability criteria.

5.4 Targeting

The PRRO calls for beneficiary targeting at three levels, aiming to identify food insecure people: 1) geographically by district, 2) in communities at the sub-district level, and 3) with-in communities at the household level.



Table 9: Targeting Responsibility and Evaluation Findings by Administrative Level

Targeting Level	Responsibility	Evaluation Findings
Geographic	VAM survey reports assess need. Programme allocates resources.	District level data contentious; poor correlation of programming with priority districts – both over- and under-programming.
Sub-district (communities)	Area Offices and implementing partners	Difficulty in using assessment data for community targeting. Close partnerships with IPs and Govt. as implementing partners.
Household	<i>Mahalla</i> (village-level committees)	Some questions at this level, based on reports of redistribution, rotation of beneficiaries, disputes and lack of consensus on selection criteria.

Geographic targeting has been weak, both over time, and across project activities. While the lack of conclusive assessment data has presented a challenge to district-level targeting, programming at this level has also not linked well with the VAM baseline survey, “Situation Analysis of Food Security in Tajikistan, Baseline Chronic Food Insecurity,” done in 2003 and which was used to prepare the project document. In terms of activities at the geographic level, FFE districts seem to have been inherited as a phenomenon of historical accident, rather than correlating with the identified food insecure districts.

At the sub-district (community) level, there is some concern that targeting criteria are not tight enough, especially in FFW projects. While most assets created from the projects are judged to be relevant, some question exists as to targeting of specific communities; there is also improvement needed in targeting at the household level, where some weakness exists in reaching the most vulnerable individuals. The house-to-house verification of beneficiary selection within communities is highly time-consuming. This makes improvements in targeting particularly challenging in a context of declining staff resources.

While the *Mahalla* (village-level committee) is a relevant mechanism for identifying the neediest households in the communities, improvement is needed with VGF targeting in particular. Problems which require improvement include: a lack of consensus on selection criteria, lack of transparency, poor screening checklist, rotation of people on beneficiary lists, food redistribution, chronically food insecure individuals not reliably covered, and individuals covered who are not in greatest need of the assistance. Since the village heads who draw up the lists are not elected by citizens, for the sake of transparency, it would be desirable to require public posting of selection criteria and beneficiary lists and to involve elected or pluralistic village organizations³⁴ in the selection process whenever these exist.

³⁴ This includes organizations intended to represent the interests of the whole community such as Village Organization (VOs), Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Parent/Teachers Associations (PTAs), but does not include Common Interest Groups (CIGs) such as women’s groups or farmer groups.



Priority is required to establish reliable assessment data on which sound programming decisions can be made – and which will allow for tighter targeting at all levels. Better selection criteria are needed for VGF beneficiaries. Assets created in FFW projects are one important objective of the activity, but care should also be taken to target the neediest able-bodied individuals, and not simply the most able. It should be borne in mind that improvement of targeting comes at a cost, requiring people, money and time. This is a recurring issue in small COs, which, if they are not fully funded, lack sufficient direct support costs to enable them to improve targeting accuracy.

5.5 Monitoring

The mission noted a substantial overall effort at monitoring in the operation, as well an awareness of the issue of possible double-counting when reporting beneficiary figures. Since the beginning of the PRRO, a corporate shift to RBM (Results-Based Monitoring) has occurred; Tajikistan received training in this new approach. The operation has made a commendable effort at outcome monitoring as a result, particularly in health and education indicators. However, improvement is required in FFW and VGF outcome reporting.

Good feedback exists from the CO to each of the Area Offices on monthly reporting, although a challenge to the general functioning of the system is the lack of a database to effectively capture information, and to aid in the analysis of monitoring and reporting data. As much work has gone into standardizing the system formats, as well as clarifying activity objectives, the lack of a central database risks losing some of the fruits of this effort. A well-functioning database can also reduce the burden imposed by manual compilation of formats.

Linkage between monitoring and assessment is weak, as it is difficult to use the VAM survey results as baseline information against which to measure either output or outcome results.

At the activity level, some adjustments could be made: FFE formats are numerous and could be reduced; the VGF screening checklist should aim to identify the most vulnerable, and not simply exclude the most wealthy; and FFW monitors are spending an inordinate amount of time writing and translating proposals.

Funding should be earmarked for the completion of a Country Office monitoring and reporting database. The issue of a standardized database is a corporate one, for which a system is currently being designed. Tajikistan could be a good candidate for the piloting of this initiative. Outcome monitoring in FFW and VGF should be improved to the level currently being demonstrated in the health and education activities.



5.6 Capacity Building

WFP Strategic Objective 5 is to help governments to establish and manage national food assistance programmes. Within PRRO 10231.0, WFP has made a concerted effort to build local capacities in connection with its activities. However, successful capacity building requires a willing partner and central government has not always demonstrated a willingness to participate.

The greatest success with capacity building under PRRO 10231.0 has been at district level and below in connection with FFE. The PRRO evaluation team's site visits to schools in Sughd and Khatlon confirmed that local government, school officials and parents are systematically engaged in, and appear to possess the capacity for, implementation of school feeding activities in their communities. In implementing the FFE activity in many parts of Tajikistan, WFP has thus been able to rely on district and local government and communities to serve as *de facto* implementing partners. Among other things, the delivery of food stocks from warehouses is done via government-funded transport. The storage of food stocks in schools (and at times neighbourhoods in communities which the school does not have a storage house) is undertaken by local communities in line with WFP imposed regulations and procedures and spot checks by WFP monitors. The formation of the parent-teacher associations (PTAs) has been another success story, where each school covered by the FFE activity has a PTA that solicits food items (such as vegetables and fruits) to complement the wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses and iodised salt provided by WFP, together which the items can make a viable lunch for the daily nourishment of the mostly 1-4 grade students.

It is to be noted however, that in connection with FFE (and to a lesser extent other activities) the capacity and commitment of the central Government has been much weaker and slower to be built than desired. This lack of synergy between the center and decentralized levels of government is not necessarily the fault of WFP. The CO, for example, has made consistent efforts to encourage the Ministry of Education (MoE) to establish a national FFE unit within the MoE HQs in Dushanbe. WFP even paid for two MoE-selected officials to make a study tour to a successful MoE-supervised FFE programme in Egypt in 2005. Unfortunately, MoE is not showing sufficient interest nor making satisfactory progress in becoming systematically involved with the FFE activity. The involvement of the central government is critical for a successful transfer of FFE activity upon the withdrawal of WFP from Tajikistan and/or the phase-out of FFE activity in certain parts of the country upon completion of PRRO 10231.0.



5.7 Commitments to Women

Although – due to the legacy of the USSR - Tajik women are much better educated and more emancipated than their sisters across the border in Afghanistan, conservative traditions are gradually being reintroduced. Gender differences in school enrolment are on the rise, especially in the rural areas that have more traditional socio-cultural patterns. Given the large number of men of prime working age who have migrated in search of work, to the city or to Russia, women are taking on heavy responsibilities as providers for their families. Rural women carry most of the work burden in crop and livestock production, not only on the family farm but in wage labour. Evidence from the nutrition follow-up study in Khatlon suggests that women's heavy labour burden is a major factor in child malnutrition, especially when mothers are forced to leave their infants at home in the care of their sisters and brothers.

Standard progress reports (SPRs) for 2003-2005 suggest that 51 percent of total project beneficiaries have been female. Adult women constitute 54 percent of beneficiaries of VGF, 33 percent of participants in FFW and 99 percent of FFT/IG beneficiaries. Primary school children receiving a hot meal are 47 percent female and 53 percent male. In addition, around 18,000 children per year receive a take home ration, 100 percent of whom are female. Under supplementary and therapeutic feeding, 49 percent of the malnourished children assisted are female. In addition, all of the mothers of severely malnourished children (100 percent female) were assisted at the therapeutic feeding centres. The 2005 SPR also reports that PRRO 10231.0 has met and exceeded all of its targets for WFP enhanced commitments to women: 55 percent of persons in leadership positions in food management committees (especially school PTAs) are female compared to a target of 50 percent female, 66 percent of persons receiving VGF rations at food distribution points are female and 63 percent of food entitlements are issued in women's name compared with planned targets of 60 percent for both items.

Although 55 percent of leaders in local food management committees are reported to be female, this appears to hold more for school-feeding related activities that work through PRAs than it does for other activities. The local government *jamoat* and *Mahalla* heads who assist in drawing up VGF lists are almost exclusively male. It appears that the CO has not enforced the requirement that 50 percent of the people on the committee that draws up the lists should be female.

The proportion of females among direct participants in FFW projects visited by the evaluation mission was substantially lower than the 42 percent reported by the SPR (under 5 percent), except for shelter projects for disaster victims in resettlement schemes. In the resettlement schemes, around 40 percent food assistance was given in the wife's name. In the households interviewed, the woman managed the food, but the hard physical work was mainly done by male labourers (relatives and hired workers). The male labour was hired with food rations.

The main project activities that benefit women more than men are FFE take-home rations for girls, FFT/IG and mothers who receive nutrition education in connection with supplementary and therapeutic feeding. The CO's decision to scale up take home rations for girls from Rasht valley throughout the red districts has a good potential to improve benefits to females. It makes sense for the next PRRO but it does not make sense to start a new activity when the project is within 6 months of closing date. Although the CO's decision to drop FFT/IG is likely to reduce the proportion of females among beneficiaries, the evaluation mission endorses the decision to drop the activity,

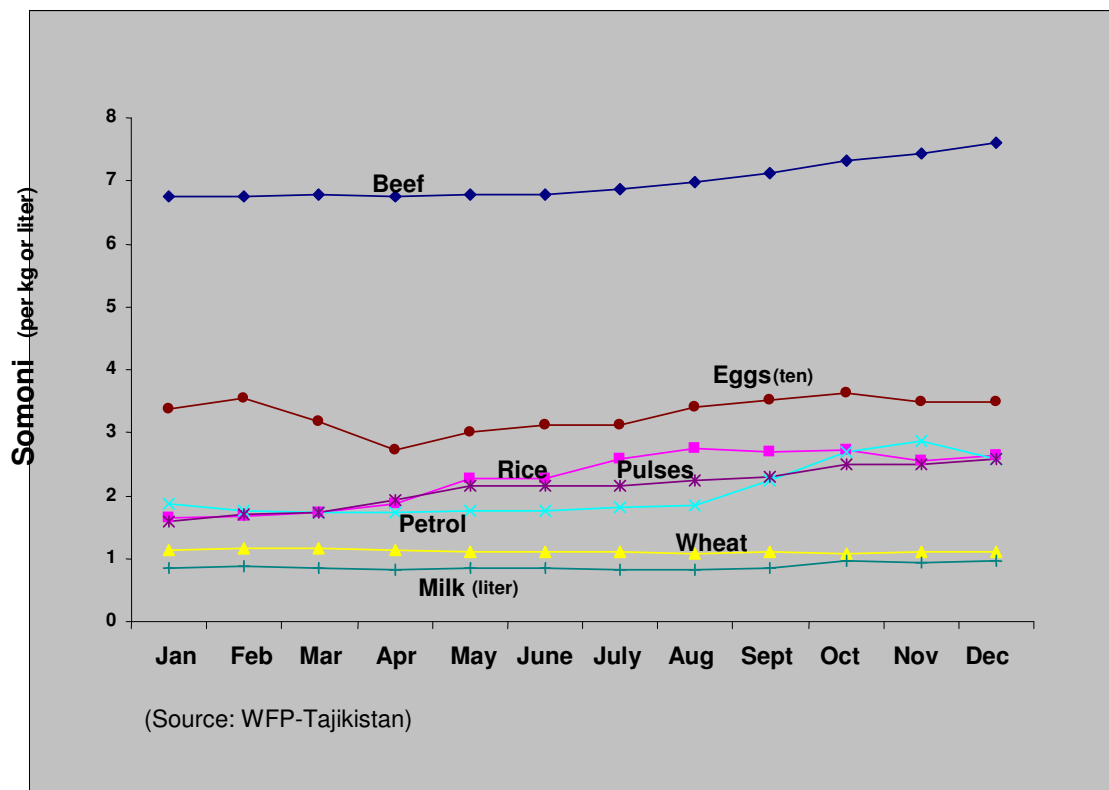


because proper implementation and follow-up of FFT/IG requires more staff resources per MT than other activities, and staff are already overstretched.

5.8 Impact of Food Aid on Prices and Markets

Although beneficiary households reduce food purchases during the months when they receive food assistance, the substitution effect only lasts for a few weeks after each distribution³⁵. There is no evidence that food aid imports to Tajikistan have had any significant negative impacts on producer prices and markets. On the contrary, as shown by Figure 2 below³⁶, there is little or no seasonal variation in price of wheat and only a slight variation in the price of pulses. Moreover, as explained in the FAO Market Study (below), food aid constitutes an insignificant share of total food imports, especially for wheat flour.

Figure 4: Average Market Prices in Tajikistan, 2005



Though local market prices may be **temporarily** affected by WFP food distributions (of wheat flour, cooking oil, and pulses), such fluctuations—based on information observed from the PRRO Evaluation Team’s field visits and interviews—are not thought to have been significant or long-

³⁵ WFP Tajikistan, VGF Household Expenditure Survey KTY, Revised version, 2005.

³⁶ The table, which is based on WFP-Dushanbe data, refers to the average prices of major agricultural commodities based on prices in key towns and cities where WFP had field offices during 2005 (Dushanbe, Khujand, Kurghon-teppa, Kulyab, Gharm and Khorog).



lasting. Furthermore, the price of the major food commodity dealt with by WFP - wheat flour - appears to have been extremely stable throughout 2005—having remained at around S1.1 (US\$0.35)/kg throughout the year.³⁷

A FAO-led Crop Assessment mission to Tajikistan estimated that cereal production for 2005 (including pulses) was expected to reach 874,000 MT, or around 73 percent of Tajikistan's consumption requirements. The study also estimated that aggregate imports of cereals (private imports plus humanitarian aid) for 2005 were expected to be around 354,000 MT of which 33,000 MT was estimated to have been food aid imports (wheat flour and pulses).³⁸ Since the total cereal consumption for 2005 was around 1.3 million MT, humanitarian wheat and pulses aid constituted only 9 percent of total cereal imports and a mere 3 percent of the total available cereal and flour available in Tajikistan during 2005 from local production plus imports.

The 2005 FAO-led study also concluded that the average quality of locally-produced cereals was Class 4 (suitable mainly for animal feed) whereas the quality of wheat flour supplied by WFP much higher (Class 1). Not surprisingly, the PRRO Evaluation team was told in one instance by a WFP field monitor that due to the superior quality of the WFP wheat flour as compared to the locally-produced flour, some beneficiary households choose to trade their food aid flour with locally-produced flour—possibly at a ratio as high as a 1:2, i.e. one sack of food aid flour in exchange for two sacks of the locally-produced flour.

5.9 Assessment of the Roles of WFP and other Players

The evaluation mission's assessment of the Tajikistan CO, as the mission saw it in April 2006, is positive for a number of reasons. In response to declining resources and the announced intention of key humanitarian partners like USAID and ECHO to discontinue food assistance, the Country Office (CO) has begun to question the continued need for and relevance of food aid situation and to concern itself with sustainability and exit strategies. The CO is focused on ensuring development outcomes and not just maximizing food or coverage. Staff members have a reputation for high professionalism, caring and closeness to beneficiaries. The evaluation team was impressed with the highly qualified and motivated staff in CO and SOs as well as the high sense of accountability for ensuring that food aid goes to the right people and is used as intended. Staff is to be commended for seriousness about targeting the most food insecure. The evaluation found encouraging evidence that lessons learnt from previous operations are incorporated in programming (e.g., the decision to implement FFE and VGF through government and instead of outsourcing it to NGOs as specified in the design). Partnering with local government on FFE in particular has helped to contribute to local ownership, capacity building and local resource mobilization. Prior to mid-2005, the CO could be criticized for over-optimism about future project funding and failure to recognize and act on the funding crisis, by downsizing the project and reducing operating costs to sustainable levels. Between 2003 and mid-2005 the CO can also be faulted for weak targeting and insufficient linkages between assessment and programming.

³⁷ Average exchange rate for 2005 was S3.12 per US\$1 (Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Tajikistan*, London, March 2006).

³⁸ FAO, Ministry of Agriculture of GoT and WFP, *Crop and Food Supply Assessment, Tajikistan 2005*, Oct. 2005. Of the estimated nearly 874,000 MT of cereals (and pulses) balance sheet for Tajikistan during 2005, 607,000 MT or 73 percent is thought to have been in the form of wheat, 112,000 MT (13 percent) was estimated to have been maize, 60,000 MT (7.2 percent) barley, and 55,000 MT (6.6 percent) milled rice.



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The contribution of WFP Headquarters has been disappointing in the face of the funding crisis. The CO deserves more support especially with regard to resourcing, assessment/programming and exit strategies. The support received from the Regional Bureau – for instance on Results-based Management and the 2005 VAM follow-up survey - has been positive and greatly appreciated by the CO.

The contribution of local government partners at provincial, district and sub-district level to implementation has been positive (especially in Sughd province), whereas the contribution of some of the concerned ministries at central level has been less satisfactory. The role and contribution of UN and NGO partners has been variable. Some agencies have been highly supportive, while others have been instrumental in pushing the CO to question the continued relevance of food aid in the post-emergency situation.



6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The mission made the following recommendations:

1. Funding

WFP Headquarters should be proactive and provide a funding forecast for future operations instead of waiting for a project to be approved before it starts looking for resources.

WFP should enquire into the interest of non-traditional donors to Tajikistan such as Russia, Turkey, and China, and lobby for cash donations to improve the efficiency of the operations.

In case of serious shortfalls for the next phase of the operation, WFP should ensure sufficient funds to allow the exit strategy to be implemented in order to avoid defaulting on phase-out negotiations with government, e.g. through multilateral funds.

2. PRRO design

New PRRO designs should specify different sets of activities and targets for different funding scenarios; project designers should avoid over-optimistic assumptions about resourcing, especially for a second PRRO and adjust resource targets and outputs to likely funding scenarios.

All PRRO designs should include a time-bound exit strategy that is negotiated and agreed with government and partners and involves gradual transfer of activities as well as their funding to the appropriate government agency.

3. Vulnerable Group Feeding

WFP Tajikistan should scale down VGF to cover only the 10 percent chronic food insecure or discontinue it completely. It should liaise closely with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Welfare, and in order to ensure that the VGF caseload is adequately taken into account in government social protection strategies.

4. Contingency fund/disaster relief

WFP should continue to earmark contingency funds for disaster relief.

5. Food for education/direct feeding

School feeding should continue in the existing caseload of schools until the end of the PRRO; phase-out of VAM “yellow” districts should wait until the next PRRO.

If resources are too scarce to enable FFE to continue covering all the VAM “yellow” districts, WFP should offer to cost-share 50:50 with local government and communities. HQs should earmark resources for these pilots to enable the country office to honour its share in the agreement.

If WFP withdraws from FFE in some of the VAM “green” districts it should, through the Department of Education, document what happens to school attendance rates and children’s concentration on their lessons after school feeding stops.



6. Food for education/take home

WFP should not start-up FFE/take home in new schools during the last year of the current project, deferring the start-up until the next PRRO

7. Food for training/non-formal education

WFP should not pursue FFT/IG under the next PRRO.

Food rations should not be used in lieu of wages to support enterprise development in non-emergency situations and WFP should always monitor how profits are divided between the implementing partner and the workers

8. Food Security

WFP should only implement food security sub-projects in emergency situations and only on land under household control; in case of sub-projects on *dekhan* farms, it should monitor whether the food assistance is a resource transfer to the collective farm as opposed to the workers; WFP should monitor what happens to beneficiaries' production one year after the food assistance has ended.

9. Institutional Feeding

WFP should only support institutional feeding in emergency situation as it is a resource transfer to government and has no lasting impact on livelihoods; there should always be an agreed exit strategy.

10. Assessment

WFP should assist the country office to adapt and refine the 2005 VAM findings in order to make them useful for programming, using secondary data and key informants.

WFP should prepare guidance for COs on how to use a VAM assessment for programming and how to refine geographic targeting by triangulating VAM information with other surveys, secondary statistics, local knowledge and/or RRA.

11. Linkage between vulnerability assessment and programming

Linkage between assessment, programming and monitoring should be strengthened at all levels. A system should be established to permit a comparison of planned and actual delivery with assessed food needs at district level to ensure that the food goes to the neediest.

12. Targeting

Adequate resources should be targeted to the most food-insecure districts and stricter adopted criteria for targeting within districts and within villages

13. Monitoring

WFP should assist the CO to develop a sub-project monitoring and reporting database that captures the linkage between assessment, programming and monitoring



14. Capacity building

WFP should build capacity of government to continue FFE, TB support and school feeding and therapeutic feeding after it withdraws from the country.

15. Connectedness

WFP should negotiate implementation and exit strategy agreements for FFE directly with provinces if an agreement cannot be made with central government.

16. WFP's future programme in Tajikistan

WFP could extend the current PRRO until end-June 2007 to enable it to cover the entire school year, and to have time to prepare a new PRRO with the objective of phasing out responsibly based on an exit strategy negotiate with government.



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7. LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

WFP corporate policy calls for all project documents to have a section on Exit Strategies. However, in practice, the exit strategies tend to be one-sided WFP strategies that are rarely negotiated and agreed by other partners including Government prior to project approval. When resources are abundant, hard choices about exits tend to be postponed. In a context of diminishing resources, exit strategies only receive attention as default options as the end of the project draws near. Few COs succeed in building an agreed exit strategy with partners and putting it into action.

The PRRO 10231.0 project document has a single paragraph on exit strategies which says that “the government’s poverty reduction strategy aims at sustainable growth, which in turn would lead to gradual rise in the living standard of the poorest segment of the population. But the government’s capacity to implement its PRS is constrained by scarcity of domestic resources and very limited foreign investment. Therefore continued support to Tajikistan by international donors and humanitarian aid is essential. Political and economic conditions permitting, the PRRO would enable WFP to gradually phase out relief assistance and set the stage for a development programme.”

Such statements, with hindsight, reveal their inadequacy. No one questioned at the time that the outcome of PRRO 10231.0 would be a development programme or that the CO would continue to operate. However, under present circumstances, it would be difficult to transition from relief to a development programme because WFP’s overall access to finance for development is rapidly dwindling. Available resources for country programmes are already programmed for the next two years and Tajikistan does not figure among the recipients.

It is not enough for WFP project designers to insert a paragraph on exit strategies in the appropriate section of the project document. WFP needs to actually negotiate an agreed exit strategy with government from the start.

The Tajikistan PRRO evaluation points to the need for WFP to develop a responsible exit strategy aimed at ensuring that what was built jointly by WFP and government during the project does not collapse when the WFP assistance is withdrawn. A responsible exit strategy aims at increasing the likelihood that benefits to households can be sustained and that key project activities can continue beyond the end of the project. The activities might be entrusted to other international agencies, or handed over to appropriate government departments and gradually integrated in the regular government budget.



7.1 Connectedness and Partnerships

Connectedness refers to the degree of fit between WFP inputs in the short term and longer term strategies and perspectives of other players, including government, UN agencies, IFIs, bilateral donors, NGOs and civil society. In Tajikistan, WFP's short term assistance is highly complementary to the inputs of government and other social sector donors and contributes to longer-term development outcomes in support of MDGs concerned with hunger, malnutrition, health and education. However, WFP needs to link its short term support for vulnerable groups to longer-term strategies for reform of the social protection system.

WFP has a long history of presence in Tajikistan and of successful cooperation with a variety of government, UN, bilateral and NGO partners. Nonetheless, the CO expressed its concern that partnership and networking efforts are mostly on paper, whereas concrete cases of cross-sectoral collaboration and UN joint programming are few. Partnership building seems to take more time and effort than in other countries and results are often disappointing.

The GoT is clearly pleased with the activities and presence of WFP, although the level of connectedness with the central Government varies, with the Ministry of Emergency Situations and MoH, being more connected with WFP activities and the MoE being less so. At provincial and district level, collaboration is strongest with the education department. Part of the problem at national level stems from high turnover of central Government ministers and the political nature of appointments. WFP is encouraged to continue its close links with provincial leaders, where they already exist (such as in Sughd), and to develop closer links with provincial leadership where such links appear to be less strong.

In general, it was a pleasant discovery by the Evaluation Team to see the overall connectedness and partnership of WFP-Tajikistan with regards to the PRRO activities especially in province level, district *hukumats* (Governments), *jamoats*, and village level communities. The connectedness with such non-central GoT entities is critical for the success of PRRO activities and the sustainability of the same upon termination of this PRRO and eventual departure of WFP from Tajikistan. As was mentioned above in this report, the largest activity of the PRRO, the FFE, has benefited from close links especially on the *jamoat* and village levels with local officials and organized communities. The PTAs and grass roots entities (such as the MSDSP-encouraged VOs) have played a critical role in the smooth implementation of the FFE activities. WFP should continue to build and strengthen such connectedness where they exist and nurture similar links where they are non-existent or weak. It should likewise link with existing organizations with proven track record of community-based organizing such as MSDSP and Oxfam to encourage the formation of village organizations where needed.

Though connectedness and partnerships are critical for success of projects, they should not be the sole determining factor for taking up projects. The Evaluation Team observed in its visits to FFW activities, for example, that communities with links to other agencies (such as MSDSP) often approach WFP for a FFW component, which in the two examples visited by the Team³⁹, the value of the donated food stocks constitute a mere 5 percent of the total project cost. It is the opinion of the Evaluation Team that in such cases the overall cost to WFP may not be worth the small input it

³⁹ Central *Mahalla* (FFW water project) and Golzar village (FFW road project), Khovaling district, April 18, 2006.



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makes relative to the overall project cost. It is also highly likely that such community projects will be successfully carried through without WFP food component. Thus, given the cost-benefit aspect of such projects when the WFP input is extremely small, and the reduced resources of the CO, it is wise to only concentrate with projects where the WFP input will make a critical contribution to the vulnerable communities in need.



7.2 Lessons Related to the PRRO as a Category

The experience from PRRO 10231.0 supports many of the conclusions from the thematic evaluation of the PRRO category. The original design of the PRRO was too ambitious and overly optimistic about resources. It assumed that the Tajikistan PRRO appeal could attract 142,000 MT in resources which would enable the programme to cover 1.4 million beneficiaries. Although the civil war and drought emergencies were over at the time when it was designed, the PRRO 10231.0 design called for a larger and more ambitious project than any of the previous operations. The designers included nearly every activity conceivable for a WFP project, with insufficient regard for likely resourcing. WFP guidelines for the design of PRROs give insufficient guidance on how to determine the right balance between relief and recovery activities. In the evaluation mission's view, project designs should foresee different activity mixes and targets for depending on the resourcing scenario. Since the CO operating budget varies as a function of the number of MT handled, in planning for different types of activities, it is important to consider human resources likely to be available to the CO.

Future PRRO designs should include various scenarios with different hypotheses on activity mixes and coverage depending on actual resource levels. In the absence of a new crisis, project planners should beware of over optimism about resourcing, especially when a new PRRO is a follow-on to a previous PRRO.

The initial PRRO design also called for implementation by UN and NGO partners as under the EMOP. Implementation arrangements as designed were overly dependent on external partners and insufficiently integrated with regular government programmes. Although the project document mentioned handover of selected project activities to government as a possible exit strategy, the design of project implementation arrangements was inconsistent with such an exit strategy because it bypassed government.

Even if the activities they finance are similar, implementation arrangements under a PRRO are likely to differ from those under an EMOP. When government is too weak to respond to an emergency, it can be acceptable for an EMOP to implement its activities mainly through UN and NGO partners. But if WFP's ultimate objective in a PRRO is to facilitate a transition between emergency and development, and if the WFP exit strategy depends on a seamless handover to government, it is necessary for PRROs to work hand-in-hand with local government and line ministries from the start.

The activities available for inclusion in a PRRO are the same as for an EMOP or a development-oriented country programme, but the ways of designing them differ. In designing FFW under a PRRO, WFP should pay attention to the food transfer aspects in addition to asset creation. It is more important in a PRRO that beneficiaries should be selected from among the most food insecure of the able-bodied households than it is in a development-oriented Country Programme.

WFP wants to be more socially responsible, by making every effort to ensure that benefits of its activities can be sustained beyond the end of the project. Although it is not a requirement that the activities themselves be sustained beyond the end of the project, it is desirable that solutions be found to enable the most promising activities – in this case FFE, TB support and supplementary feeding – to continue with other resources. It is not in WFP's interest to let what it has build collapse



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upon its withdrawal. Therefore in the mission's view, a new PRRO is needed, to enable the CO to implement an exit strategy.



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8. WFP'S FUTURE PROGRAMME IN TAJIKISTAN

The decline in resources provides an opportunity for the CO to refocus country operations. Resources should be reallocated consistently with a judgment on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of each activity and its likely contribution to national and international priorities including the MDGs. The evaluation mission endorses the CO decision to focus its scarce resources mainly on FFE plus health and nutrition (TB+TF/SF), while continuing to support for VGF and FFW on a reduced scale. It should continue to earmark contingency funds to enable it to respond to natural disasters. In the mission's view, it is acceptable for the CO to drop FS, FFT/IG and institutional feeding for patients in psychiatric hospitals.

The mission recommends that follow-up studies and consultations be undertaken by the CO, with support from the RB, to reassess the food-security status of contested districts which are felt by local experts to be wrongly classified. One option would be for the CO to organize a consultation to share detailed VAM findings with local experts and have them validate or readjust the food insecurity classifications based on selected criteria.

The mission recommends that WFP HQs, RB and CO sound out the interest of non-traditional donors (e.g., Russia, Iran, Turkey, China). The CO should review operational costs including international-to-national staff ratio. The CO should build the capacity of government including local government to gradually take over FFE and health.

The mission recommends that WFP extend the project closing date to end-June 2007, to enable FFE to cover the entire school year, using existing resources, and to buy time to negotiate the design of a new PRRO. The follow-on PRRO would be aimed at consolidating and phasing-out existing WFP support and incorporating the activities in the regular government budget by the end of 2009.

WFP should impose conditionalities for future WFP support, by making the inclusion of each activity under the new PRRO conditional on the adoption of a time-bound exit strategy negotiated and jointly agreed by government and WFP. WFP should develop cost-sharing agreements in which WFP's percentage contribution would decrease each year of the new PRRO. In mobilizing the government's share of the future PRRO budget, capitalize on existing contributions of district governments and local authorities and communities. Design of the new PRRO should be flexible to enable the CO to adjust programme activities and targets in line with different resourcing scenarios.

In the mission's view, WFP should remain in Tajikistan for the next 2-3 years to enable it to consolidate and hand over key activities before phasing out of the country. Since Tajikistan is the poorest country in the former Soviet Union, WFP may wish to maintain a presence in Tajikistan as a base for possible actions to address crises elsewhere in the region.

Annexes



ANNEX 1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

for the PRRO Tajikistan 10231.0

Background

Tajikistan is a landlocked low-income food-deficit country. Only seven percent of its land is arable. The 1992-1997 civil war and the 2000-2001 drought depressed the already fragile economy. Although the progress report on the PRS¹ process talks about positive macroeconomic development (GDP growth exceeds 10 percent, and declining inflation since 2004), concerns remain at the micro level. Rural poverty is 64 percent (coming down from 88 percent), employment opportunities are scarce (estimated 1 million labour migrants, mostly to Russia), there are serious gaps in the education and health sectors, and agricultural production is very low. Despite commercial imports and international food aid, access to food remains a major challenge, especially for an estimated 1.4 million² people living in marginalized food deficit areas. WFP/VAM carried out a Rural Household Food Security and Vulnerability Survey in late 2004 indicating that 10 percent of the rural population is chronically food insecure (approx 350,000 people) and 17 percent are very vulnerable to food insecurity (approx 700,000 million people). A national nutrition survey carried out in 2003 shows that prevalence of global acute malnutrition and global chronic malnutrition are 4.7 percent and 36.2 percent respectively.

WFP has been assisting the Government of Tajikistan since 1993 with emergency operations in support of people affected by the war, and later on other vulnerable groups were added. In 1999 the first PRRO was approved introducing recovery activities e.g. school feeding and FFW/FFT in support of the agricultural production. Until 2003 when the current PRRO (10231.0) was approved for the total cost to WFP of USD 75 million, a total of USD 172 million had been approved in support of the Government of Tajikistan. PRRO 10231.0 began implementation in July 2003³, and the overall goal is to improve household food security, preserve/rehabilitate assets, increase food production and promote investment in human capital for and estimated 1.4 million people. This is being implemented through a combination of relief assistance for vulnerable groups, and recovery activities such as supplementary feeding to malnourished children and their caretakers, support to TB patients, FFW, FFT, and school feeding. The proportion between relief and recovery is approximately 75-25 percent.

2004/2005 saw a significant drop in donor interest, resulting in a critical funding crisis for the PRRO. After 2.5 years, and at a time when the PRRO was scheduled to end, it was only 44 percent funded. As contributions dried up, the CO chose to focus scarce resources on activities that were likely to show most impact like FFE – (poor children in rural areas guaranteed of one meal/day for 6 months) and where WFP had commitments with partners receiving complementary funding from other donors for the activity (TB, nutrition programme) and some FFW projects. VGF distributions were reduced, as was the beneficiary caseload.

¹ The Government of Tajikistan has been implementing PRS since 2002.

² FAO/WFP CFSAM, 2002.

³ PRRO 10231.0 was initially approved for 24 months, but was since then extended three times due to lack of funding making the total period 42months (three and a half years) until December 2006.



The Government of Tajikistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was endorsed by Parliament in June 2002. Five of the poverty reduction targets in the PRSP are based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which the Government signed on to in 2000. The GoT has committed to integrating the MDGs into its national development policies and has been working with the UN Country MDG Needs Assessment team to identify overall resources needed to achieve MDG targets. The policy priorities and financial estimates emerging from the MDG Needs Assessment are to be integrated into a revised PRSP.

Within the UNCT WFP collaborates directly with UNDP (FFW). International NGO partners include Shelter For Life (FFW), Action against Hunger (Health - TF/SFP), Project Hope (TB), Project Sino (TB) and Merlin⁴ (TB).

Purpose

According to WFP's evaluation policy all programmes have to be evaluated once in the project cycle⁵. According to policy the main purpose of evaluation is to render accountability to the Executive Board and to enable WFP and its partners to learn from experience at national, regional and international level. This particular evaluation is suggested by the CO to be undertaken in April 2006 in order for the findings to inform the design of a new phase of the assistance after December 2006.

Evaluation objective

To evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of PRRO 10231.0 with particular focus on the role of WFP and food aid in Tajikistan to inform a strategic discussion on the future shape of the programme in the country.

Scope

The PRRO 10231.0 was approved for a period of 24 months, and began implementation in June 2003. It has since then been extended in time until December 2006. The evaluation will cover the period from June 2003 to March 2006. Geographically, the PRRO has covered 44 out of 58 districts. WFP has offices and activities in each of the 5 regions. Due to resource constraints the mission team will only go to specific locations based on criteria still to be determined. The range of activities to be evaluated will be GFD, FFW, FFT, TB, therapeutic and supplementary feeding, and school feeding.

Key issues and questions

Following is a list of key issues and questions to be looked at by the evaluation team.

Relevance

- Is WFP's assistance relevant to the needs identified? What are the causes and symptoms of food insecurity in Tajikistan, and does WFP's assistance respond to this?
- Is the recovery strategy and activities relevant to national priorities as expressed in the NDS/PRS/MDG needs assessment?

⁴ Refer to SPR report for full list of partners, including local partners).

⁵ WFP/EB3/2003/4C.



- And to WFP's core mandate as expressed in the strategic plan and WFP policies such as "From Crisis to Recovery," and WFP's Commitments to Women?
- Are WFP's activities relevant to needs as expressed by beneficiaries and partners? If not, why not, and how can it be improved?
- What is the comparative advantage of Food aid to other aid forms e.g. cash?
- Donor development strategies for Tajikistan and their view of WFP's role. Funding priorities for coming years e.g. support to NDS.
- Is the PRRO as opposed to CP or development project the right programme approach considering the needs addressed by WFP and the NDS that WFP is supporting?

Effectiveness

- Do the assessments on which the strategy is based seem valid and in sync with what is considered to be the situation by other stakeholders? How have food insecurity, vulnerability and beneficiary figures been assessed at country level, community level and household level? How effectively is vulnerability assessment linked to programming?
- Does the targeting seem reasonable? How successfully has the project targeted targeting poor, vulnerable and food insecure households in food insecure areas? How effectively is the project ensuring female participation in sub-project selection and in programming?
- What evidence is there to show that the desired results (outcome and output) are being achieved?
- Has the assistance been effective in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness? (e.g. Are the right beneficiaries being reached at the right time? Are the food rations adequate and supplied for an adequate duration? Are the target groups benefiting from the assets created? Have there been other unintended results or spin off effects, negative or positive, such as effects on agricultural production, prices and markets or labour market dynamics?)
- What monitoring systems are in place for assuring programme quality? (M&E plan, capacity building of IPs, involvement of stakeholders, etc.) and how are they linked to programming?
- How effective are partnerships with other national and international actors on the ground? To what extent does WFP play a catalytic role in leveraging national resources to reduce food insecurity?

Efficiency

- Does the operation seem to be achieving an optimum relationship between cost quality, time and results?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the benefits of WFP's assistance likely to be sustained after the end of the project?
- Is a time bound and feasible exit strategy complete with a set of triggers to assist in deciding when and how to withdraw the WFP assistance? If not what should that look like? What could these triggers be? Who should take over from WFP? Is there a need for capacity building?

Connectedness



- To what extent is the operation taking into account longer term needs and problems as identified by the NDS/UNDAF/PRS?

Evaluation approach

The evaluation will be managed by OEDE, but the mission will be led by an external and independent team-leader and his/her team. A resource person from RB will participate in the team, partly to build evaluation capacity in the RB, and partly to facilitate the learning at RB level to the benefit of similar programmes in the region. Partners and other principal stakeholders will be involved at strategic points in the process such as discussion of TORs and draft report to ensure the relevance of the findings to the operational context, and to address stakeholders' issues and concerns with WFP's assistance in Tajikistan.

Hopefully much of the data to support the evaluation would be made available to the team already before they arrive in country through the CO's M&E system and/or other WFP databases. The data collection will start as soon as possible in order to ensure that the team can spend the time analyzing and validating data with CO, sub offices, beneficiaries and partners when they arrive in country.

Method

The evaluation team is required to use WFP's evaluation guidelines and evaluation standards made available to them as part of a preparation package. WFP's evaluation standards are inspired by ALNAP and Sphere likewise included in the preparation package. The standard methods used in WFP's evaluations include collection and review of both quantitative and qualitative data from WFP databases, document review from internal and external sources, and primary data collection through interviews with beneficiaries in projects sites still to be identified, WFP staff at CO, RB and HQ level, stakeholders (government, UN and other international organizations and local NGOs). These interviews can be shaped as individual or group interviews. The method will be specified in detail by the team leader.

Documents to consult prior to the visit in the field:

- PRS Tajikistan + updates
- Project document and Standard Project Reports 2004/05
- VAM baseline 2003, follow up study 2005
- National nutrition Survey 2004 and follow up study in Kulyab, WFP/AAH
- Market study by FAO expert
- Tajikistan RB mission report 2004
- TB reports
- Draft of WFP exit strategy paper

Team composition

Team leader: Rural sociologist, expert in food security and livelihoods
Team member: Expert in food aid programming in relief/recovery contexts
Team member: Expert in local socioeconomics, markets, culture, etc.
Evaluation manager
RB member: For the purpose of building evaluation capacity in the region



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Timing

- Mission in country (5-27 April 2006)
- Deadline first draft: 29.05.2006
- Deadline final draft 25.08.2006
- Submission to EB.2/2006

Outputs

- Short Aide Memoire with preliminary findings and recommendations presented to CO and stakeholders before leaving Tajikistan.
- Evaluation report (max. 60 pages).
- Summary for EB presentation (max. 5000 words + management response matrix).



ANNEX 2 OEDE EVALUATION MISSION ITINERARY

- Tajikistan – 5/28 April 2006

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
Wednesday 5 April	01:15	Dushanbe airport	Arrival of AC, PH from Moscow (airport pick-up by the office) Accommodation: Hotel Kayon II
	10:00 – 17:00	WFP CO	Meeting with CO [free day for mission to plan their work]
Thursday 6 April	8:00 – 17:00	WFP CO	[free day for mission to plan their work]
Friday 7 April	03:05	Dushanbe airport	Arrival of LB from Istanbul (airport pick-up by the office) Accommodation: Hotel Kayon II
	09:00	UNDP	Security briefing with Field Security Office (FSO)
	10:00	UNDP conference room	Meeting with the Government counterparts
	14:30	WFP conference room	Meeting with the Stakeholders/WFP partners
Saturday 8 April	01:15	Dushanbe airport	Arrival of SF from Moscow (airport pick-up by the office) Accommodation: Hotel Kayon II
Sunday 9 April	09:30		Pick-up from Hotel Kayon II
	11:00	Dushanbe airport	Flight to Khujand (AC, SF, PF, PH, LB)
	11:50	Khujand airport	WFP Khujand Sub Office to organize pick-up from the airport Accommodation: UNDP guest house in Khujand (in UN compound)



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DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
Monday 10 April	08:30	Khujand	Departure from UN Compound
	10:00 – 11:00	Khujand	Meeting with the Deputy Head of Sughd Oblast - Mr. Jaborov (TBC – if a meeting with the Head of Oblast is scheduled for Friday, this meeting will be cancelled, and instead, we will plan a meeting with partners.)
	12:15 – 13:15	Nov	Project visit: FFE/2005-2006/02 – Visit to schools in Farmonqurghon
	13:45 – 14:45	Nov	Project visit: VGF/2005/16 - Food distribution in Farmonqurghon
	14:45	Nov	Lunch
	16:00	J.Rasulov	Project visit: FFW/2005/35 - Rehabilitation of drinking water system with UNDP
	18:00	Khujand	Return to UN Compound
Tuesday 11 April	08:30	Khujand	Travel to Penjikent district via Shahristan pass
	17:00	Penjikent	Accommodation: Hukumat guesthouse
Wednesday 12 April	08:45	Penjikent	Meeting with the Hukumat Chairperson of Penjikent District
	09:45	Penjikent	Departure from Hukumat for Sarazm
	10:15	Sarazm	Site visit: FFW/2005/34 – Resettlement project for disaster victims with Shelter for Life
	11:45	Penjikent	Lunch in Penjikent centre
	12:30	Penjikent	Departure from Penjikent centre for Farob
	14:45	Farob	Meeting with the VGF beneficiaries in Farob Jamoat (possible visit to FFE)
	15:45	Farob	Departure from Farob for Penjikent
	17:45	Penjikent	Back to Hukumat guesthouse



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DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
Thursday 13 April	08:30	Penjikent	Departure for Aini-Urmetan
	10:00-10:30	Aini-Urmetan	Site visit: WFP/GAA joint completed FFW projects Back to Aini centre
	12:00	Aini	Lunch
	13:00-13:45	Aini	Meeting with the Chairperson of Aini Hukumat
	13:45-15:45	Aini-Veshab	Travel to project site
	15:45 -16:30	Aini-Veshab	Visit to project site FFW/2005/21 - Rehabilitation of irrigation canal
	16:30 - 18:30	Aini	Travel back to Aini Accommodation: Hukumat/German Agro Action guest House
Friday 14 April	08:30 -14:30	Aini-Khujand	Travel back to Khujand
	14:30 -15:30	Khujand	Meeting with Cooperation Partners in Sughd
	16:30 - 17:20	Khujand-Dushanbe	Flight back to Dushanbe
Saturday 15 April		Dushanbe	Analysis of field trip findings in Dushanbe
Sunday 16 April	15:00 - 18:00	Dushanbe-Kulyab	Travel to Kulyab (3 hours by car) – AC, SF, PF and LB.
Monday 17 April	08:00 - 08:30	Kulyab	Meeting with the Head of Kurgan-Tyube Sub Office & OIC of Kulyab Field Office
	08:30 - 11:30	Kulyab	Visit to TFC Kulyab City/SFC Jamoat Ziraki, Kulyab district (HN/2006/01)
	11:30 - 12:30	Kulyab	Project visit: support for TB patients, TB Center, Kulyab (Project HOPE)
	13:30 - 14:30	Shurobod	Travel to Shurobod district (35km)
	14:30	Shurobod	Project visit: FFW/Reconstruction of Water Supply System in Shurobod & FFE/School No.1 in Shahrak Jamoat, Shurobod District
	16:10 – 17:10	Kulyab	Travel back to Kulyab
	09:00	MoE - Dushanbe	Meeting with the Deputy Minister of Education, Mr. Khushvakhtov (PH only)
	10:00	AKF - Dushanbe	Meeting with Mr. Yodgor Faizov, Chief Executive Director, AKF (PH only)



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Date	Time	Location	Details
Tuesday 18 April	08:00 – 10:00	Kulyab - Khovaling	Trip to Khovaling (75km)
	10:00 – 11:00	Khovaling	Project visit: FFW ‘Rehabilitation of infrastructure assets’ (FFW/2006/03)
	11:00 – 12:00	Khovaling	Project visit: School No.14 at Jamoat Lohuti, Khovaling district
	12:20 – 13:30	Baljuvon	Lunch - Travel to VGF distribution site
	14:00 – 14:30	Baljuvon	Site visit: VGF distribution process
	14:30 – 16:30	Baljuvon	Visit to Bakery (FFE); food support project for TB patients, Dangara District (Project SINO)
Wednesday 19 April	08:00 – 08:30	Kurgan-Tyube	Briefing by the Head of Kurgan-Tyube Sub Office
	08:30 – 08:50	Kurgan-Tyube	Meeting with the Head of Khatlon Education Department & FFE Programme Coordinator
	09:00 – 10:00	Kurgan-Tyube	Meeting with Food Coordination Group at WFP office
	10:00 – 12:30	Kurgan-Tyube; Sarband	Site visits: Action Against Hunger TFC/SFC (Ms. Florence Kadir, the Head of Mission/AAH will join); Food Security/wheat cultivation project (FS/2004/03) - meeting with the committee; FFT/IG: Women Skills enhanced small business (IG/2004/05), Sarband District (16km)
	13:30 – 16:30	Kurgan-Tyube Khuroson & Jomi districts	Project visits: FFW/2004/39 with Shelter for Life ‘aftermath of natural disaster reconstruction’ Jamoat Aini; IG/2004/05 Women Skills enhanced small business, Khuroson District; FFW/2005/33 with Shelter for Life ‘aftermath of natural disaster reconstruction’ Ghalaba village, Jomi District.
	17:00 – 18:30	Kurgan-Tyube - Dushanbe	Travel back to Dushanbe
	10:00	UNICEF Dushanbe	Meeting with Ms. Yukie Mokuo, Representative of UNICEF (PH only)
Thursday 20 April	9:30	19, Semashko street, Dushanbe (TBC)	Meeting with Mr. Usmon Rahmanov, Policy Adviser, NDS/PRS Support Project (all team).



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DATE	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
	11:00	CARE office	Meeting with Ms. Becky Myton, Assistant Country Director of CARE
	14:00	GAA office	Meeting with Mr. Hubertus Rueffer, Regional Director for Central Asia, German Agro Action
	16:00	MoH	Meeting with the First Deputy Minister Temurov, MoH
Friday 21 April	9:30 – 11:30	Dushanbe	Project visit: VGF/2006/02 “Support to TB patients under DOTS and their families” (Project HOPE)
Saturday 22 April		Dushanbe	Team brainstorming and SWAT analysis; drafting Power Point presentations and Aide Memoire
Sunday 23 April		Dushanbe	Analysis of findings; drafting power points and aide memoire
Monday 24 April	10:00	GTZ	Meeting with Mr. Daniel Passon is a Program Advisor of German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).
	12:00	World Bank office Dushanbe	Meeting with Ms. Saodat Bazarova, Human Development Program Coordinator World Bank
	14:00	Dushanbe	Debriefing with CO; Continue writing Aid Memoire
Tuesday 25 April		Dushanbe	Continue writing Aid Memoire; Debriefing with Regional Bureau (by teleconference)
Wednesday 26 April	10:00	UNDP conference room	Debriefing with the Government counterparts
	14:30	WFP conference room	Debriefing with the Stakeholders/WFP partners
Thursday 27 April	8:25	Dushanbe airport	Departure of AC, SF, PH to Moscow
Friday 28 April	5:05	Dushanbe airport	Departure of LB to Istanbul



ANNEX 3 PERSONS MET

Name	Organization and Title
Ms. Daniela Owen	WFP Country Director, Tajikistan
Ms. Anne Marie VandenBerg	WFP Deputy country Director
Mr. Belliapa Kodendera	WFP Logistics Officer/CO Security Focal Point
Ms. Nora Poghosyan	WFP Admin/Finance
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Mr. Asomidin	Civil Engineer, Shelter for Life, Sarazm village resettlement area, Panjikent district
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Mr. Obloqulov Rahmonkul	Head of Jamoat Urmetan, Aini district
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Mr. Davlamad Abdulloev	Responsible for FFE. Muminobod District
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Mr. Sobirjon Safarov	Kurgan-Tyube Area Manager, SCF/US,
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Mr. Saidbek Qibilov	Group Leader, project FFW/2004/30, Ghozimalik district
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Ms. Sharifamoh Laqaeva	Group Leader, NGO Marifat, Ghozimalik district (IC/2004/05)



ANNEX 4 PROJECTS VISITED

Oblast	District	Jamoat	Village	Project Type	Partner
Sughd	Spitamen (ex-Nov)	Farmonkurgan	School 11	FFE	DoE
Sughd	Spitamen (ex-Nov)	Farmonkurgan	VGF distrib. Point	VGF	Jamoat
Sughd	Jabbor Rasulov	Kurghoncha		FFW water	UNDP
Sughd	Penjikent	?	Sarazm	Disaster FFW	Shelter for life
Sughd	Penjikent	Moghiyon	Sor	FFE	DoE
Sughd	Penjikent	Farob	Farob	VGF	Jamoat
Sughd	Penjikent	Shing	Vaghashton	Disaster VGF	DoEmergency
Sughd	Penjikent	Khurmi	Surkhobi-Nav	Disaster FFW	Shelter for life
Sughd	Penjikent	Khurmi	Surkhobi-Nav	VGF	Jamoat
Sughd	Penjikent	Khalifa Khasan	Shurcha	FFW mud flow	GAA
Sughd	Penjikent	Amondara	Shingak	FFW river bank	GAA
Sughd	Aini	Urmetan		FFW water	GAA
Sughd	Aini	Urmetan		FFW mud flow	GAA
Sughd	Aini	Shamtuch	Vaishob	FFW irrigation	Jamoat, DoA
Sughd	Aini	Shamtuch	Vaishob	VGF	Jamoat
Khatlon	Kulyab	Kulyab City	TB Centre	TB/VGF/2006/02	Project Hope
Khatlon	Kulyab	Ziraki		TFC/SFC HN/2006/01	AAH
Khatlon	Kulyab			FS/2003/13	DoA
Khatlon	Muminobod			FFE	DoE
Khatlon	Shurobod	Shahrak		FFE, School #1	DoE
Khatlon	Shurobod	Shahrak	(water)	FFW/2005/09	MSDSP
Khatlon	Khovaling			FFE, School #14	
Khatlon	Khovaling			Non-FFE school	
Khatlon	Khovaling			FFW 2006/03	MSDSP
Khatlon	Khovaling			FFW H2O	MSDSP
Khatlon	Balijuvon	Tojikiston		VGF	Jamoat
Khatlon	Balijuvon			FFE bakery	Hukumat
Khatlon	Dangara	Town	TB Centre	TB	SINO
Khatlon	Kurgon-Tyube	City		TFC.SFC	AAH
Khatlon	Sarband			FS/2004/03	
Khatlon	Sarband			IG/2004/05	
Khatlon	Khuroson	Aini		FFW/2004/09	Shelter for life
Khatlon	Khuroson	Aini		IG/2004/05	



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ANNEX 6 - CHARTS

Chart 1 – Actual Food Distributed by PRRO 10231.0 by Region, 2003-2005

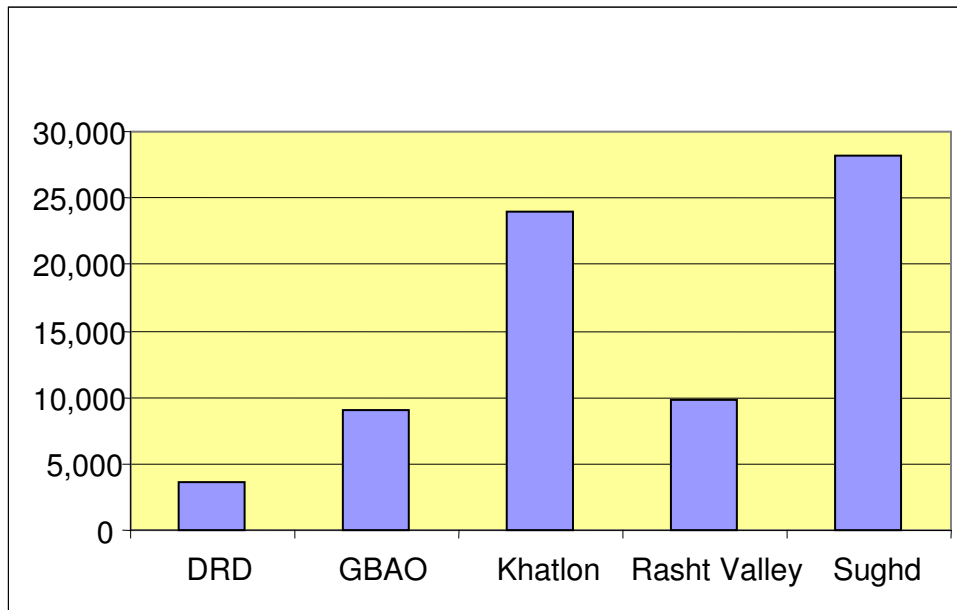


Chart 2 – Actual Food Distribution by PRRO 10231.0 by Region as a Percentage of Total, 2003-2005



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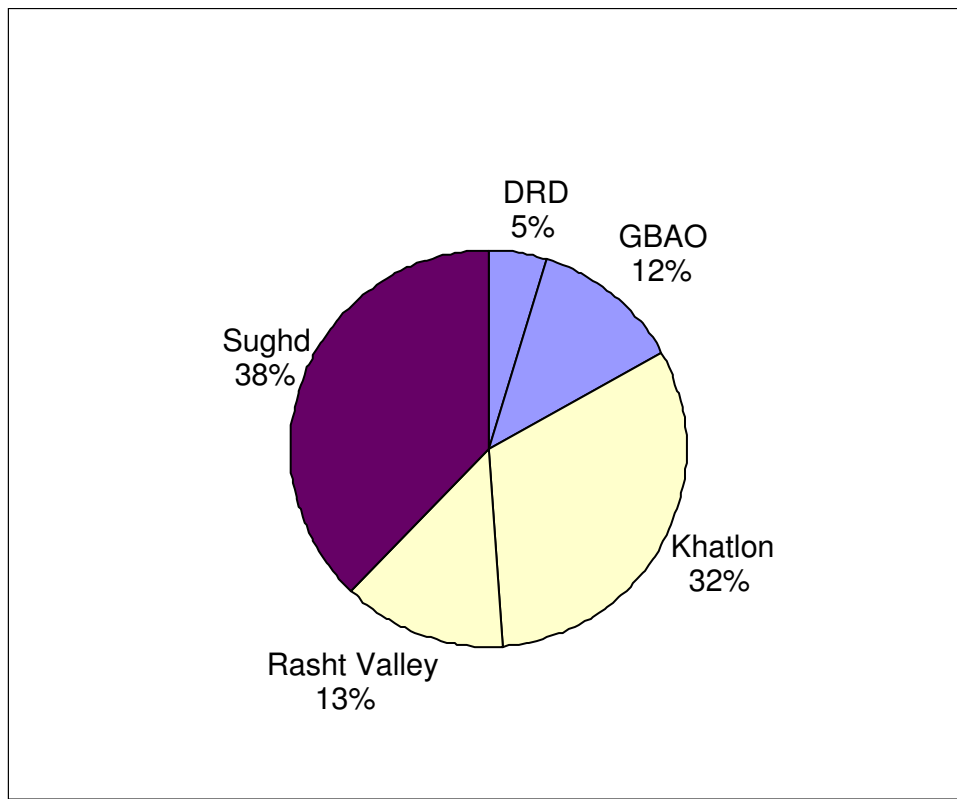


Chart 3 – Total Actual Food Distribution (MT) by Activity, 2003-2005

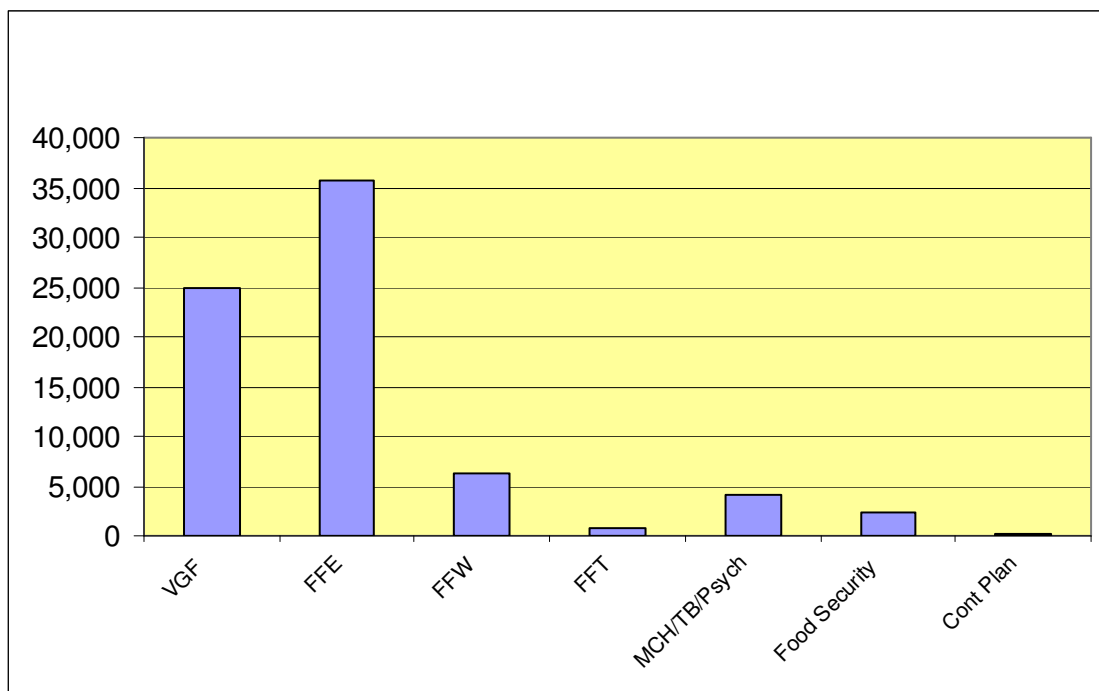


Chart 4 – Pie Chart of Food Distribution by Activity, 2003-2005



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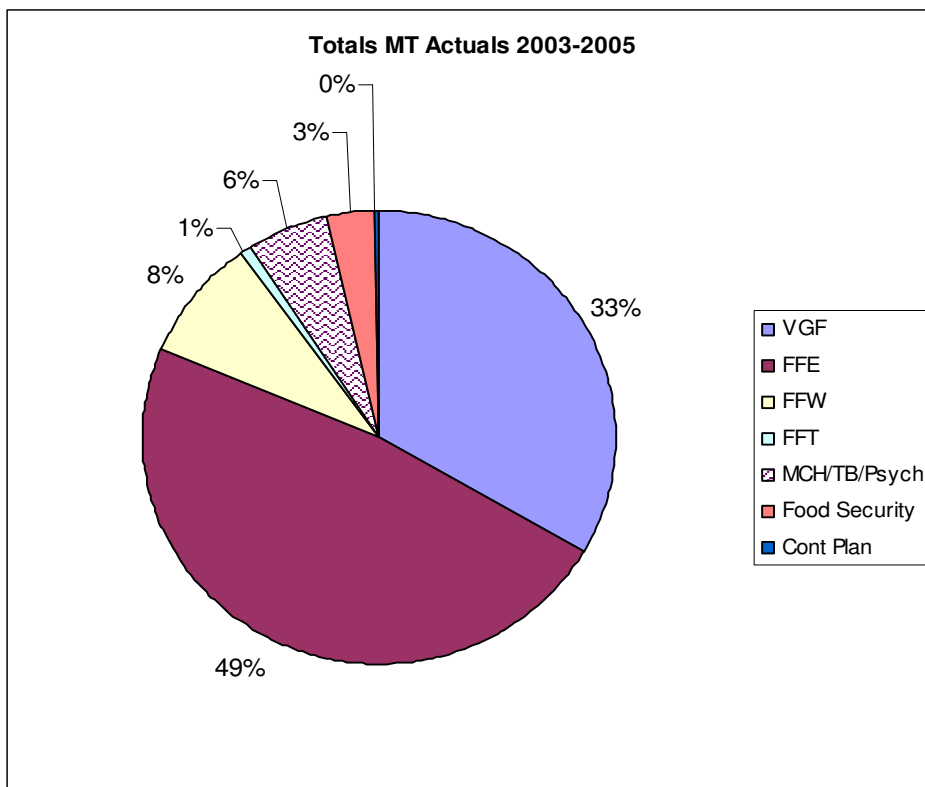


Chart 5 – Planned Versus Actual Food Distribution (MT) by Region, 2003-2005

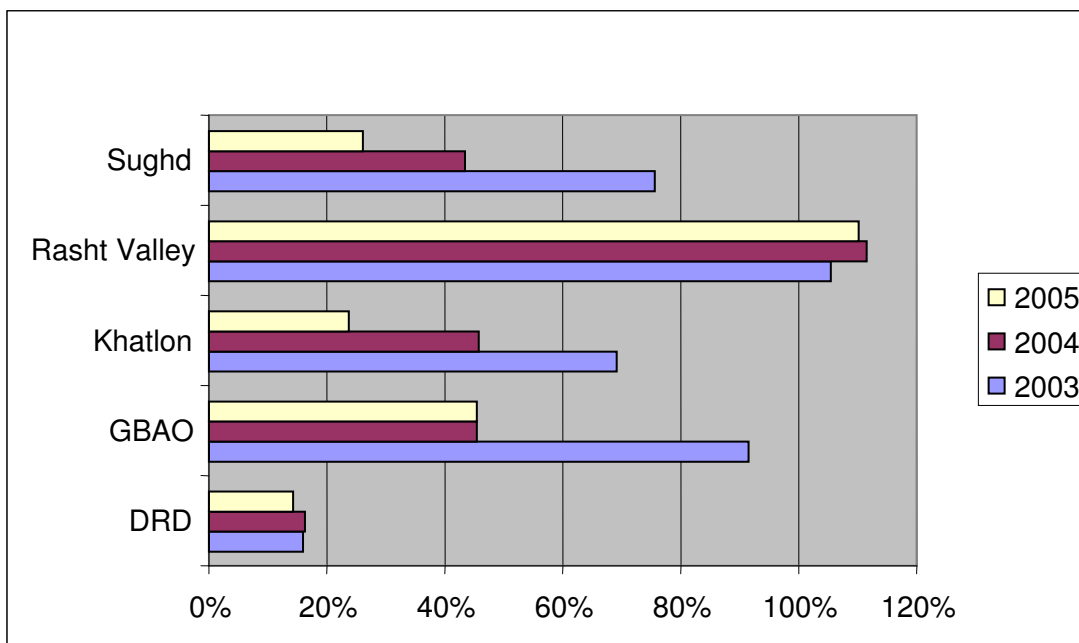


Chart 6 – PRRO 10231.0: Cumulative Planned versus Actual Food distribution by Region, 2003-2005



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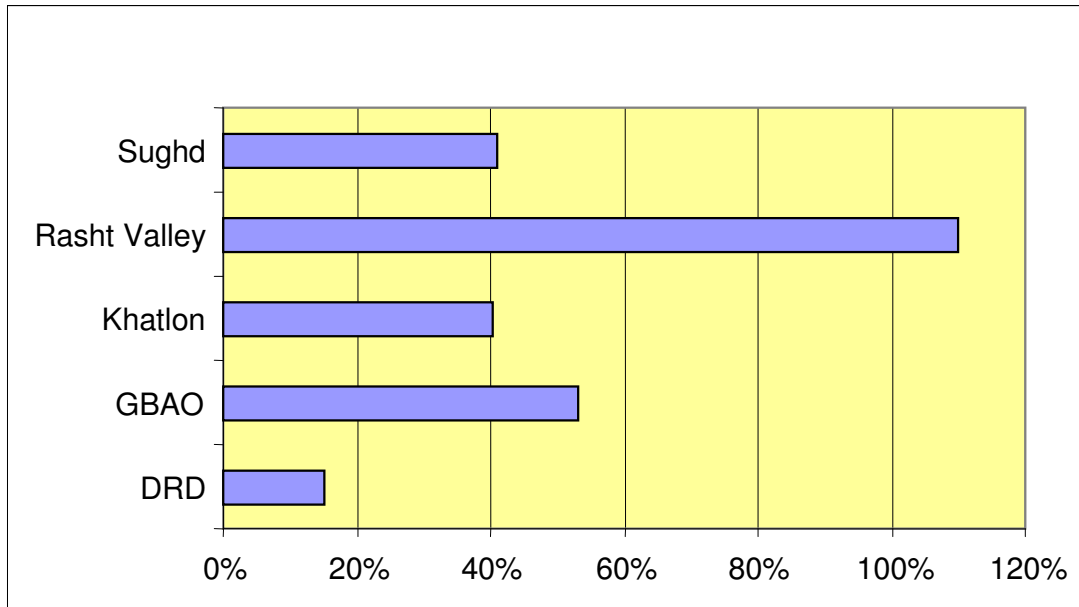




Chart 7 – Cumulative Planned versus Actual Food Distributed (MT) by Activity, 2003-2005

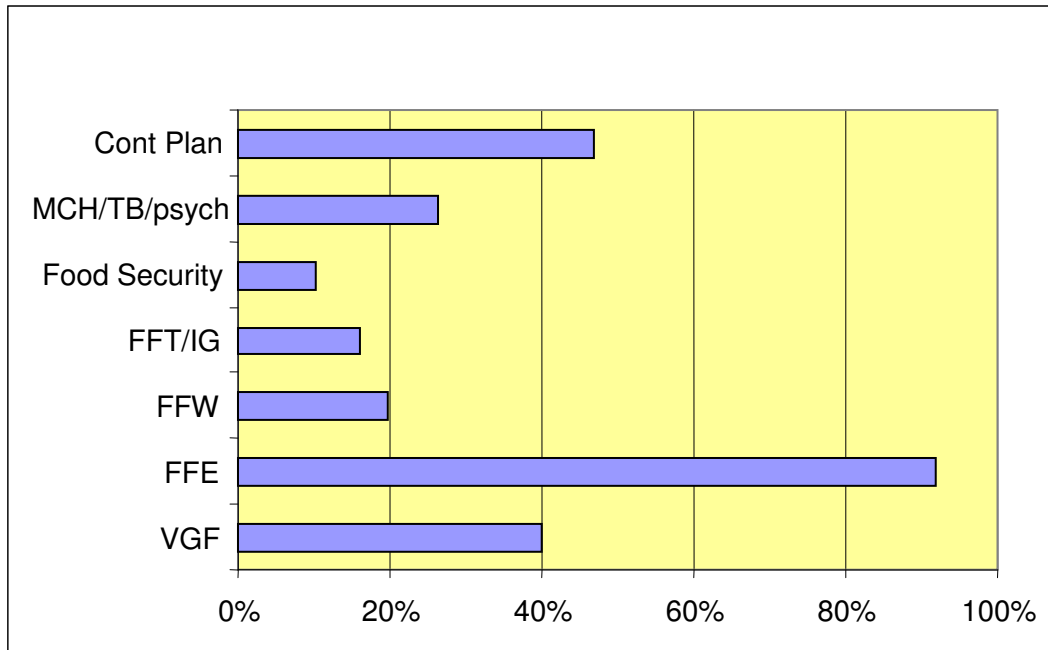


Chart 8 – PRRO 10231.0: Actual Food Distributed by Year by Region, 2003-2005

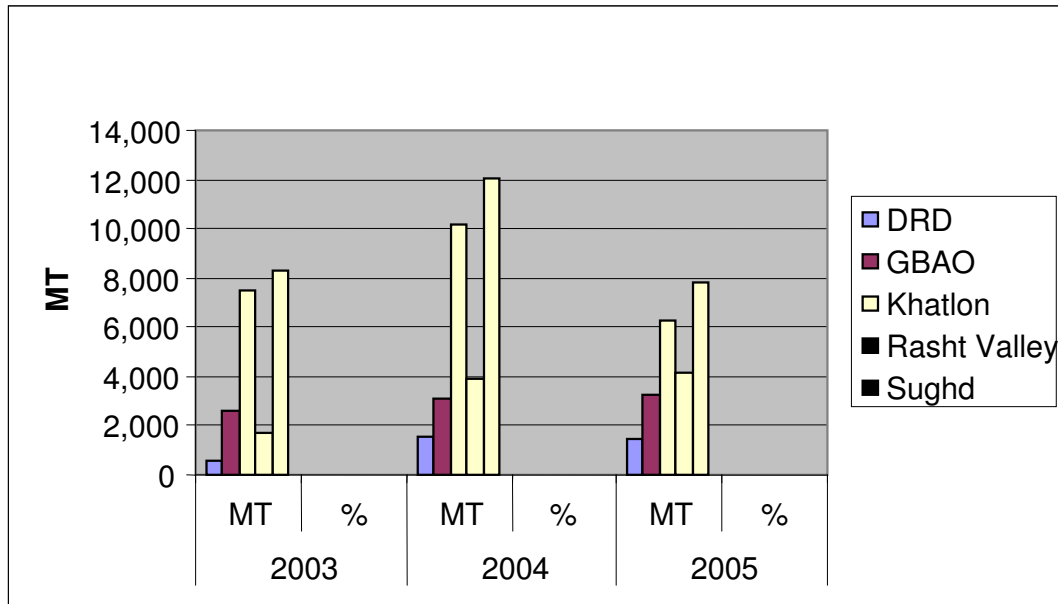




Chart 9 – PRRO 10231.0: Actual Food Distribution (MT) by Year by Activity, 2003-2005

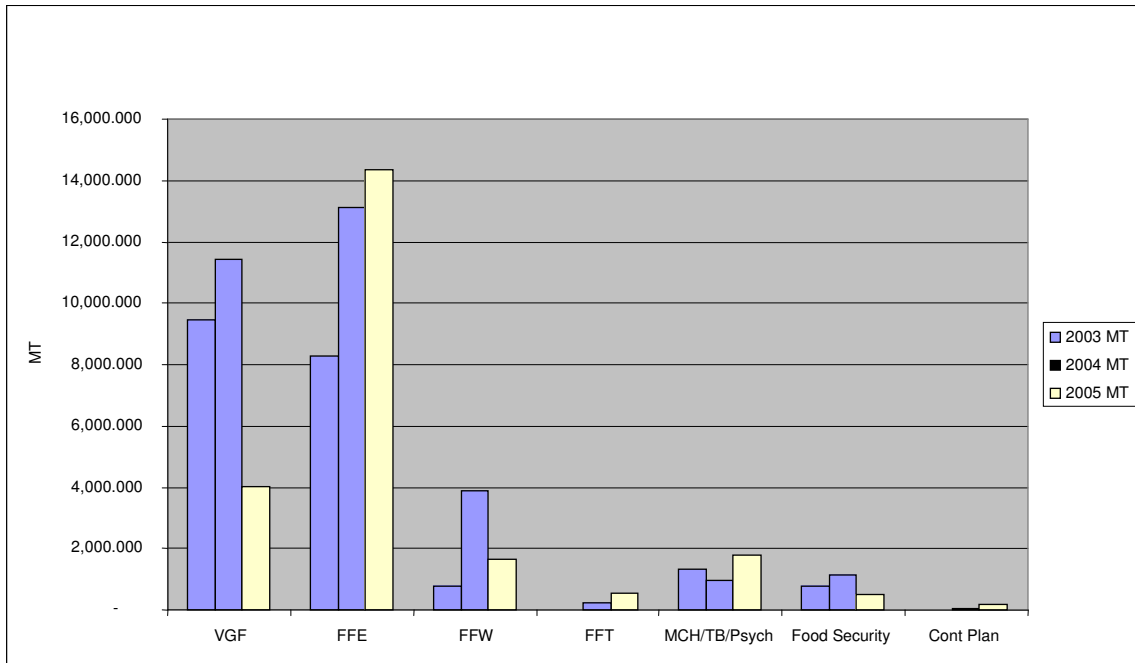


Chart 10 – Planned versus Actual Food Distribution by Year by Region, 2003-2005

