

# Strategic Evaluation

## Four Strategic Evaluations on the Transition from Food Aid to Food Assistance: A Synthesis (Full Version)

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*Measuring Results, Sharing Lessons*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Findings .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Evaluation Recommendations.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Annexes .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Annex 1: Concept Note: Four Strategic Evaluations .....	11
Annex 2: Executive Summaries: Four Strategic Evaluations.....	15
Annex 4: Synthesis Methodology .....	24
Annex 5: Matrix of Recommendations (in summary).....	26
<b>Acronyms .....</b>	<b>27</b>

## **Executive Summary**

1. This synthesis identifies common findings from four, independent, strategic evaluations concerned with WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance, the core of its vision in the Strategic Plan 2008-2013. Conducted midway in the Plan period, these evaluations were intended to provide timely and relevant learning to the organization about progress on four different aspects of this transition, and each offers a unique contribution with regard to the specific topic considered. The following common lessons are drawn from this cross-evaluation synthesis.
2. The persistence of hunger for large numbers of people justifies WFP's continuing efforts. The transition from food aid to food assistance reflects a necessary shift in approach and in programme tools in response to a changing context, particularly in post-crisis/non-emergency situations. However, the emerging programme adaptations have substantive organizational implications and are generating an expansive process of change at all levels within WFP.
3. While the changes initiated under the strategic shift have the potential to enhance WFP effectiveness in addressing hunger, organizational support for the transition remains weak, including leadership of the initiative, clarity of goals, and development of supporting systems. Adaptations of systems, procedures, guidance and staff capacities have been initiated but lag behind practice.
4. The need to improve clarity of the conceptual framework, a theoretical understanding of new approaches, program prioritization and operating principles is the foremost corrective measure identified in the four evaluations. This corrective in turn is expected to impact on performance, credibility and funding.
5. Various other corrective measures were identified as important, including further programme adaptation, a more proactive problem-solving/support approach, and the development of internal systems, procedures, and guidance to enhance change efforts. Developing more effective methods for needs assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and ways to better target various types of assistance were identified as priorities. Enhancing communication and understanding with partners were identified as fundamental to clarifying roles and enhance partnerships.
6. All evaluations recognized a strong cadre of WFP staff but also found the need to move forward more assertively in the areas of recruitment, promotion and expertise related to the food assistance approach. The need for new technical expertise, partnering expertise, and skills in policy making and advocacy was recognized as requiring priority attention.
7. All evaluations found the need for a funding system that better assures predictable, long term funding to support the type of activities undertaken in the food assistance approach. The inadequacy of the processes available to WFP to acquire multi-year, predictable funding was found to be a significant operational barrier, creating a cascade of undesirable effects for effective programming.
8. In conclusion, the strategic shift from food aid to food assistance has the potential to enhance WFP effectiveness in addressing hunger. Important adaptations and innovations have been made on the 'front line'. However, halfway through the Strategic Plan cycle, organizational support for the transition is weak, including leadership and management of the initiative, clarity of goals, development and/or adaptation of the necessary supporting systems and staff capacity. Work on these has started, but lags behind need and has not yet matched the level required by the scale of change envisaged. Maximizing WFP's impact will depend on concerted organizational efforts to address this.

## 1. Introduction

1. This synthesis identifies common messages emerging from a set of four strategic evaluations commissioned by the Office of Evaluation during the 2010-2011 biennium to inform WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance which is at the core of the vision in the Strategic Plan 2008-2013. The overarching concept note for these strategic evaluations is located in Annex 1. The foci of these four evaluations<sup>1</sup> were: WFP's contributions to social protection; WFP's role in ending long-term hunger; WFP working in partnerships; and more generally, how country offices adapt to change. Each evaluation was independently commissioned and conducted by a different team of independent consultants. Each evaluation was submitted to the Executive Board and is publicly available. Summaries of the individual evaluations are provided in Annex 2.
2. These evaluations were conducted midway in the Strategic Plan period and were intended to provide timely and relevant learning to the organization about progress on this transition. However, the evaluations were not an evaluation of the Strategic Plan itself.
3. The Strategic Plan authorised WFP to make more choices on how it responds to needs. WFP has repeatedly demonstrated its capacity to respond rapidly and with agility to emergencies. Conscious that the Strategic Plan foresees a similar agility to adapt programmes to recovery and development situations as they emerge and retreat in cycles with emergencies, these evaluations gave considerable, but not exclusive, attention to post-crisis and non-emergency contexts.
4. The four evaluations drew evidence widely from across WFP programming in country offices. Annex 3 contains descriptions of the coverage in each evaluation. In summary, 19 countries were included in these evaluations<sup>2</sup>. Teams visited 16 countries with three others included through desk review, including telephone interviews with key stakeholders in country in these evaluations<sup>3</sup>.
5. The evaluations focused on three different dimensions of the WFP strategic shift: operationalization, responsiveness and programme effectiveness. The evaluation on partnering and partnerships address a core implementation consideration in how WFP programming is operationalized. How country offices are adapting to change offers an assessment of the responsiveness of country offices to a changing context. The evaluations on WFP's engagement in social protection and the extent to which WFP core programmes are addressing long-term hunger provide insight into WFP's programme contributions towards improving social protection or ending long-term hunger.

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<sup>1</sup>The four Strategic Evaluations: 1) WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets; 2) WFP's Role in Ending Long-Term Hunger; 3) From Food Aid to Food Assistance – Working in Partnership; and 4) An Evaluation of How Country Offices Adapt to Change. These evaluations will be referred herein as the social protection evaluation, the long term hunger evaluation, the partnership evaluation, and the change evaluation.

<sup>2</sup>Countries visited or reviewed: **Africa:** Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia. **Asia:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, Georgia, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal. **Latin America/Caribbean:** Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti, Guatemala.

**Table 1: Focus and Evaluation Topics** (as categorized in this synthesis)

<b>Focus</b>	<b>Evaluation Topic</b>
<b><i>Operationalization</i></b>	Partnerships
<b><i>Responsiveness</i></b>	How Country Offices Adapt to Change
<b><i>Programme effectiveness</i></b>	Social Protection Ending Long-Term Hunger

6. For consistency, the four evaluations addressed the same four basic questions: 1) The extent and quality of WFP performance, 2) external factors that affected performance, 3) internal factors affecting performance, including both systems and capacities, and 4) providing recommendations for improving alignment with the strategic plan.
7. They also employed similar methodologies. These included case studies, analysis of databases, review of programme documents and wider literature. Interviews were held with a wide range of external stakeholders (in countries and globally) and with WFP staff at different levels and locations. The Partnership evaluation included two quantitative surveys. The Long-Term Hunger evaluation held focus group discussions with beneficiaries.
8. The common structure of the evaluations facilitated subsequent analysis of patterns and divergences in the findings and synthesis of common messages. The methodology used for synthesising is described in more detail in Annex 4. However, this synthesis does not replace the findings and recommendations of each evaluation. Rather, it specifically highlights common themes predicated on the assumption that findings emerging in common from independent evaluations are likely to be of particular note. A summary of the recommendations from each evaluation is presented in Annex 5.

## **2. Findings**

9. Striking similarities emerged in the findings and conclusions of the four evaluations. These are synthesised in the seven messages below.

**Message 1: The shift from food aid to food assistance is relevant, widely welcomed and very demanding.**

10. The shift from food aid to food assistance as envisioned in the Strategic Plan is relevant to on-going changes in the highly dynamic context of shifting needs, responses and funding environment in which WFP operates.
11. Hunger persists as a global problem for which preventive and remedial action is required. Both the Change evaluation and the Long-Term Hunger evaluation quoted the FAO estimate that nearly a billion people are categorized as ‘hungry’ and noted various global agreements calling for action to address the hunger challenge. The evaluations noted the interconnected effects of climate change, financial and economic upheaval and demographic shifts (such as population growth and urbanization) that have led to increasing need and shifts in the nature of hunger. The presence of food is no longer the primary limitation, but rather access to food and food of sufficient quality for long term

health and nutrition. They also noted the likelihood of increased shocks and overlap between short term shocks and long term crises.

12. The Social Protection evaluation noted the increasing importance of social protection and safety net programming to address issues of vulnerability. The Partnership evaluation did not specifically discuss the extent of hunger but did imply that more elaborate and strategic forms of partnering were being required to address a significant social need. The Change evaluation and the Long-Term Hunger evaluation noted that existence of hunger is recognized as the core justification for WFP involvement in both emergency and non-emergency contexts.
13. The Long-Term Hunger and the Change evaluations noted that the funding environment is uncertain and changing and food aid is a declining modality for hunger related programmes in non-emergency contexts. The Accra and Paris accords reflect a shift by donors toward direct support through national systems and for national systems development. Global economic fragility has also led to a reduction in funding support by some traditional donors. New donors offer additional collaboration opportunities, but considerable uncertainty remains as to whether funding stability can be achieved for programme needs in non-emergency contexts.
14. The evaluations found wide agreement by stakeholders – both external and internal - on the need for WFP to have made adjustments to its programme approaches, particularly in post-crisis/non-emergency contexts. The dynamic context reinforces the importance for WFP to be adaptive and maintain organizational flexibility. The external factors above were generally cited as drivers to the development of the Strategic Plan (rather than barriers to its implementation). The newly endorsed tools and operating principles for implementing this programme shift also have broad support.
15. At the same time, the shift is very demanding and the related changes have significant organizational implications. The Change evaluation suggested that the current process is probably the most substantive strategic shift since WFP was founded, impacting on virtually every aspect of WFP’s approach and operations, with implications beyond simply modifying existing approaches or adding a few new tools.

**Message 2: Expansive and positive change is under way.**

16. The evaluations all found an expansive process of change underway within WFP at all levels with positive adaptations and innovations towards the new strategic direction. Descriptions of performance included new forms of strategic engagement as well as modifications to “traditional” WFP interventions. At the same time, WFP has maintained strong performance in emergency preparedness and response – both individually and as a partner – especially in logistics.
17. Examples of positive changes include:
  - a. increased use of non-food aid in operational modalities, including initiatives to enhance local production and local purchase, and the use of vouchers and cash;
  - b. expanded collaboration with a wider array of partners, especially government entities and UN agencies, including greater integration into existing social protection programmes and more coordination with other on-going government programming;
  - c. re-structuring of the nature and quality of WFP’s partnering relationships with an overall increase in the absolute number of partners but decrease in

the number of operational partners. There are more multi-partner relationships and partnerships with more knowledge and capacity building partners.

- d. increased involvement in such non-operational arenas as policy development, advocacy, and participation in inter-agency coordinating bodies;
  - e. initiation of a more strategic programme planning approach through country strategies.
18. Each evaluation also found positive performance within its area of focus. For example, the Long-Term Hunger evaluation noted that WFP's core programme interventions have a positive effect on human need. The Partnership evaluation found that WFP is overall considered a good partner. The Social Protection evaluation concluded that WFP is making contributions to safety nets and social protection in certain circumstances. The Change evaluation noted that there has been substantive innovation occurring in country offices.

**Message 3: But to enhance effectiveness, greater leadership, guidance and support are needed to this process of change.**

19. Each of the evaluations also concluded that the effectiveness of WFP performance on its specific evaluation topic was weak enough to require substantive corrective measures and that effectiveness could be increased if corrective measures were adopted.
20. There was striking consensus on the underlying issues and factors affecting these weaknesses. All four evaluations found that the principal constraints to improving effectiveness in the transition from food aid to food assistance are internal and systemic – within WFP's control – and relate largely to how WFP has approached implementation of the Strategic Plan. While all the evaluations examined the role of external factors in performance, these were generally cited as drivers to the development of the Strategic Plan, rather than as barriers to its implementation.
21. According to the Change evaluation, the approach to managing implementation of the Strategic Plan has been to provide overall strategic direction, giving country offices the authority to adapt and innovate, with gradual development of support systems and structures. Leadership, guidance and support have lagged behind innovation in the field.
22. Enhancing organizational support to the on-going process of adaptation was considered by the Change evaluation to be important for improving performance. All four evaluations pointed to three major areas in need of attention: increased clarity regarding the conceptual frameworks, the necessity to continue to modify existing internal systems, and the need to develop staff capacities in new areas of expertise. These are taken up in the following 'messages'.

**Message 4: Lack of clarity on concepts and programme priorities leads to multiple interpretations and uncertainty among external stakeholders about WFP's positioning.**

23. At the heart of it, all the evaluations reported an absence of conceptual clarity and frameworks to underpin the new ways of working, which leads to multiple interpretations of core concepts from 'food assistance' itself to 'safety nets', to 'partnership'. They each found ambiguities and uncertainties among stakeholders – both within and outside WFP – as to what the shift to 'food assistance involves, particularly



related to “what” WFP should do differently and “how” it should carry out those functions.

24. The evaluations noted two ways in which the new strategy is impacting WFP’s comparative advantages. First, the new strategic approach is requiring WFP to re-define its role *vis-a-vis* other stakeholders. This was explicitly stated in the Change evaluation and implied in the other three. Greater awareness and articulation of WFP’s comparative advantages would enable new roles to be more clearly defined in consultation with other partners and stakeholders. The Change Evaluation found actual and potential role clashes, especially with FAO and UNICEF, which required corrective action.
25. Secondly, the evaluations recognized that the adaptation to the new vision requires new forms of engagement. There was interest in drawing on WFP’s traditional strengths as a means engaging in these new arenas rather than completely reinventing the organization.
26. Certain comparative advantages of WFP emerged in the evaluations. WFP is seen as having a strong organizational capacity for vulnerability mapping and targeting. These skills were seen as important for helping to target need more accurately within a context of shifting complexity. WFP is also recognized as having extensive operational knowledge of field dynamics. Finally, WFP is seen as an organization with a high level of credibility among local partners and governments. The motivation and commitment of the staff, the problem solving ethos, and the strong “can do” orientation were cited as factors contributing to this sense of credibility.
27. Greater clarity is needed on the conceptual framework, programme prioritization and operating principles. Conceptual clarity drives programme direction and priority setting, investment decisions regarding systems and staff competencies, and – ultimately – programme performance and WFP’s credibility. These in turn drive the ability to establish strategic partnerships and attract funding.
28. *Clarity of Conceptual Framework.* The Change evaluation noted the challenge for WFP in switching from a task-oriented, logistics-focused, food aid based programming approach to an approach to address national capacity building, long-term causes of hunger, policy development, and systemic issues. The implications of this shift lead to a wider range of choices available for programming intervention that are often more “sophisticated” in the sense of utilizing strategic approaches beyond concrete project modalities. The evaluations noted the importance of developing a mechanism for setting priorities within this more complex milieu.
29. For example, the Long-Term Hunger evaluation noted that the lack of a shared conceptual framework on the nature of long-term hunger led to the development of an array of interventions that were aligned to government priorities but not conceptually aligned within a program prioritization. The Social Protection evaluation also noted the lack of strategic alignment for an array of interventions in social protection. The Partnership evaluation noted that the term “partner” was used to encompass a range of distinct relationships and also purposes. The Long-Term Hunger evaluation noted a similar dynamic in the use of the operational modalities.
30. Given these findings, all four evaluations emphasized the importance of developing a strong theoretical understanding of new concepts, including social protection approaches, the nature of long term hunger, and developing a shared understanding regarding the principles of partnering. The Long Term Hunger evaluation recommended a conceptual approach that integrates long term and short term crises.

31. *Programme Prioritization.* Without conceptual clarity, there is no clearly articulated framework for coherent program prioritization nor adequate understanding of WFP's role and positioning in the larger system of actors. The emergent operating principles found to underpin adaptations include: a needs-based/gap-filling approach, enhancing national capacity, promoting government ownership, a greater role in policy and advocacy, encouraging widespread participatory engagements, ensuring general alignment with government priorities, and harmonization with UN general strategies.
32. Other aspirational principles include: the need to give priority to building long-term engagements predicated on predictable funding, moving from partnering for operational purposes to more strategic partnering relationships, and maintaining high flexibility in the organization to respond to situational shifts.
33. While these operating principles are valuable and derive from expectations related to the Strategic Plan, they are not enough alone to ensure coherence. In particular, the needs-based approach has been frequently interpreted as "gap-filling" and not sufficiently focussed on specific objectives. It forms a weak foundation on which to build operations and organizational capacity. It has led in some instances to a diverse array of interventions, offering a certain contribution and in line with government priorities, but lacking conceptual coherence and prioritization and leading to ambiguity about WFP's role. The Change evaluation suggested that a core competency approach would aid WFP in programme coherence and provide a basis for capacity building.

**Message 5: That clarity of concepts, WFP's role and programme priorities needs to be communicated widely.**

34. The lack of clarity prevents WFP from being able to communicate clearly on the 'front line' about how the new ways of working flow from WFP's mandate and how WFP envisions its roles and responsibilities in relation to other actors in the larger humanitarian and development system. The absence of clear communication feeds a common perception among external stakeholders of lack of focus, questions about how the expanded activities fit within WFP's mandate, concerns about duplication and fears of "mission creep".

**Message 6: Changes to internal WFP systems and processes are lagging behind the needs arising from new ways of working.**

35. One of the issues implicit in the Change evaluation is that WFP faces the need to maintain a system and structure that works for both emergency and non-emergency situations. As mentioned above, the Long-Term Hunger evaluation recommended a conceptual approach integrating long-term and short-term crises. The Partnership evaluation noted that the partnering mix and the nature of relationships were different for emergency contexts than for non-emergency contexts.
36. The evaluations concluded that several internal WFP operational systems to support the shift from food aid to food assistance lag behind innovations occurring in the field. The internal systems which were most commonly cited in the evaluations were: funding; planning, monitoring and evaluation; targeting and needs assessment; support to learning (knowledge management); and partnering mechanisms.
37. *Funding.* The lack of dependable funding was found to be a major limiting factor to implementation of the Strategic Plan. However, the foundation for this lack of dependable funding was ascribed differently in the various evaluations. The Long-Term Hunger evaluation noted that the current funding process created funding uncertainty. The Social Protection evaluation asserted that a project-focused funding model made it

difficult to create sustainable strategic interventions. The Change evaluation found the need for a new basis for funding WFP activities particularly in non-crisis situations.

38. The Social Protection evaluation noted that the development of a New Financial Framework within WFP (approved in late 2010) intended to remove some of the funding obstacles and enable capacity development work. However, the subsequent evaluations noted that roll-out of the New Financial Framework had not yet reached country level (as at mid-2011).
39. *Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation*. All four evaluations noted that, although some advances had been made, the existing planning, monitoring, and evaluation systems are largely geared to the food aid and project approaches, rather than more complex, strategic programme approaches.
40. Three of the evaluations noted that, when done well, the Country Strategy planning approach aids systematic engagement in analysis and identification of new ways in which WFP can constructively contribute to the hunger challenge. However, the Partnership and Social Protection evaluations found that where a short-term project approach was practiced, it inhibited the full potential of the planning process. The Change evaluation suggested that this tool could help address many potential challenges facing the organization, depending on how it is operationalized.
41. The Long-Term Hunger, Social Protection and Partnerships evaluations all found that current monitoring systems need significant re-design to better serve the programme aims in the shift to food assistance and to enable outcome level monitoring. Currently the monitoring systems are largely geared to a project-oriented food aid approach. The Social Protection evaluation observed specifically that the current monitoring report templates do not allow for the reporting and analysis of the wide variety of non-food aid and non-operational engagements by country offices - a concern also reflected by donors. The Long-Term Hunger evaluation noted that 'decentralized' evaluations (not managed by the Office of Evaluation) were impeded by a lack of conceptual clarity regarding the nature of hunger (see above) and the establishment of appropriate indicators. The Partnerships evaluation encouraged wider learning from early experiments with improved practice for promoting mutual accountability between WFP and partners.
42. *Needs Assessment and Targeting*. All the evaluations noted that the importance of better targeting and priority setting within this more complex environment and for more sophisticated programming has led to an increasing importance on targeting approaches and needs assessment. WFP's expertise in vulnerability analysis and mapping was repeatedly recognized as a core strength, a comparative advantage and a positive contribution to partnerships. It is a service on which country offices are building. Its further development is essential to support the transition to food assistance, and could provide an expanded basis for planning country strategies.
43. *Support to Learning (Knowledge Management)*. The Change evaluation was the evaluation that focused the most attention on knowledge management, but the other three evaluations noted high staff interest in peer-to-peer exchanges. Three elements were noted that affected support to the country offices.
  - a) Proactive support: The evaluations found affirmation of the importance of a culture of support, proactive problem-solving, guidance and help as staff and partners grapple with innovation and adaptation in the changing context. While there are on-going efforts to provide this, suggestions for enhancing support included building capacities at each level in WFP, funding to make

support activities possible, and greater coherence in support activities between administrative levels.

- b) Knowledge management: The evaluations found a number of learning events, papers, and exchanges, regarding the shift to food assistance but concluded that the process required further systematization and coherence. The Long-Term Hunger evaluation and the Partnership evaluation both noted a strong interest on the part of CO staff for more peer-to-peer exchanges as a means of promoting practical learning regarding the strategic direction and also found that these exchanges were not yet systematically managed or developed. The Social Protection evaluation found that some peer-to-peer knowledge sharing opportunities exist within the area of safety nets and social protection, especially in Latin America, but noted that the experiences with social protection in Latin America country offices could be further systematized and more widely shared with country offices not as advanced in social protection.
- c) HQ organizational structures: The evaluations of Long-Term Hunger, Partnerships and Change all reported perceptions among interviewees of the need for internal role clarification and better alignment of organizational structures. While a full intra-organizational analysis was beyond the scope of these evaluations, examples of dispersed responsibilities, ambiguities of role, and uncertain coherence were commonly reported, especially concerning the Regional Bureaux which the Change evaluation also found under-resourced.

44. *Partnering Mechanisms.* The Partnership evaluation found that many of the existing MOUs with sister agencies or governments pre-date the new Strategic Plan and are predicated on assumptions not related to food assistance type activities. The language of the current MOU partnership templates are reported as inadequate for new partnerships because they are predicated on delivery contract relationships rather than strategic partnering relationships. While only the Partnership evaluation provides this specificity, the Change evaluation and the Social Protection evaluation also noted challenges for WFP in engaging in strategic partnering within what was called a “project approach” in WFP systems.

**Message 7: Staff commitment, creativity, and problem solving capacities are a strength of WFP. However, investment is needed to ensure sufficient technical expertise and skill sets to implement fully the ‘food assistance’ approach – whether within WFP or among partners.**

- 45. All the evaluations found that WFP staff remain highly committed to addressing the hunger challenge with drive for addressing need and for organizational improvements. Even in the face of ambiguities and uncertainties, staff remain innovative and dedicated to positive action. Staff are seen as having strong problem-solving capabilities, flexibility, and an overall “can do” attitude. Staff also displayed a strong interest in knowledge management and exchanges for learning in areas related to WFP’s new strategic directions.
- 46. Other assets noted in the evaluations included extensive operational knowledge of actors and socio-political dynamics of the field. In particular, WFP’s expertise in vulnerability mapping and analysis was repeatedly recognized and seen as a positive contribution to the partnering mix in the Partnership evaluation, and to a potential expanded basis for Country Strategy planning according to the Long-Term Hunger evaluation. The Social Protection and Change evaluations also found that WFP’s expertise in logistics and food aid delivery was widely recognized by partners.

47. However, the four evaluations noted a diverse range of issues related to human resources. While varied, the principal concerns relate to the need to assertively adapt recruitment, promotion and development of capacity and expertise in the new fields into which WFP programmes are expanding as part of the new strategic direction and “food assistance” approach.
48. This concerns technical expertise in new sectors , such as understanding long-term hunger, nutrition, social protection; monitoring expertise (e.g., research skills for enhanced analysis in new fields and for developing the measures of progress toward attainment of new objectives); partnering expertise (e.g., skills and principles); and skill sets for new roles in national policy development and national capacity development.

### **3. Evaluation Recommendations**

49. The four evaluations presented a total of 24 recommendations. Annex 5 shows the recommendations for each evaluation. Although the four evaluations were focused on four very different dimensions of the transition from food aid to food assistance, common threads in the recommendations for increasing effectiveness can be clustered into the following six lines of action:
  - a) Adapt and strengthen systems for management support to the change process.
  - b) Clarify conceptual ambiguities and programme priorities and sharpen WFP’s strategic positioning, building on existing strengths.
  - c) As part of (B), enhance communication and understanding with partners.
  - d) Adapt WFP’s internal systems and procedures to support and enable the changes required (or accelerate where already in hand). These include strengthening monitoring and evaluation to provide the evidence base to demonstrate effectiveness.
  - e) Developing a funding system that better assures predictable, long-term funding to support the type of activities undertaken in the food assistance approach.
  - f) Assertively adapt human resource development plans and/or partnering strategies to ensure the technical expertise and skill sets needed for the new or expanding fields of endeavour.
50. All of these lines of action can be found in the recommendations of each of the four evaluations, although the emphasis varies between the evaluations according to the particular needs of the dimension of the transition from food aid to food assistance that each assessed. Thus the Safety Nets, Long Term Hunger and Partnership evaluations make strong recommendations concerning developing conceptual clarity and strategic positioning in their respective thematic areas (Line B), while the Change evaluation puts greater emphasis at a more generic level (Line A), including recommending an internal review of ways to strengthen structures and functions supporting change, as an integral step in the corrective process. Likewise, the Partnerships evaluation found the need for a higher number of specific recommendations on adaptation of WFP systems and procedures than do the others. Overall, the six lines of action represent an inter-dependent package
51. Most of the recommendations (20 of the 24) require concerted action and broad participation involving various units in HQ, regional bureaux, and country offices

because they address trans-departmental, systemic issues. The Change evaluation also concluded that emphasis should be given to a pragmatic, problem-solving process, rather than the establishment of a single unit to support the process of organizational change.

52. With regard to funding mechanisms, participation could involve the Executive Board, donors and other stakeholders. Consultation with other agencies may be required to resolve issues of role. The importance of leadership in the process of taking these changes forward was clearly confirmed in the evaluations.
53. **In conclusion**, the changes initiated under the strategic shift from food aid to food assistance have the potential to enhance WFP effectiveness in addressing hunger. Important adaptations and innovations have been made on the ‘front line’. However, at this juncture halfway through the Strategic Plan cycle, organizational support for the transition is weak, including leadership of the initiative, clarity of goals, and development of supporting systems. Adaptation of the systems, procedures, guidance and staff capacity has started, but has been slow in implementation and is lagging behind the trajectory of change in the field. Investment in leadership and management of the process of implementing the Strategic Plan has not yet matched the level required by the scale of change envisaged in it. Maximizing WFP’s impact will depend on concerted organizational efforts to address this.

## **Annexes**

### **Annex 1: Concept Note: Four Strategic Evaluations<sup>4</sup>**

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**STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS 2010–2011 CONCEPT NOTE  
ANNUAL CONSULTATION ON EVALUATION  
4 May 2010  
World Food Programme – Rome, Italy**

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#### **Continuing with a biennial plan for strategic evaluations**

1. The Office of Evaluation (OE) introduced in the 2008–2009 biennium a new approach to strategic evaluations that uses a consultative process for their selection to ensure that they are highly useful, and chooses evaluations that cover related areas to gain greater depth of analysis and support synthesis of findings. The Executive Board and senior management expressed appreciation for the approach during consultations for the 2010–2011 Biennial Plan for Strategic Evaluations.
2. At the 2009 Annual Consultation on Evaluation (ACE), an options paper<sup>1</sup> was discussed so that the Board could provide guidance on the strategic focus of evaluations in the forthcoming biennium. The options paper had been extensively discussed with senior management and selected operational staff and revised based on their inputs prior to the ACE. In the options paper and at the ACE it was made clear that only one of the options would be selected and undertaken; each option included four strategic evaluations.
3. This concept note expands on the selected option “Choosing the Right Responses to Hunger Needs”. It:
  - a) provides OE clients with information on how the evaluations will serve WFP’s corporate needs;
  - b) explains in broad strokes what the evaluations will address; and
  - c) provides the framework within which the evaluations will be carried out to ensure that they complement each other.<sup>2</sup>
4. The evaluation manager for each evaluation will prepare its terms of reference (TOR). These TOR will be discussed with stakeholders and will reflect the pertinent points of this concept note.

#### **The 2010-2011 strategic focus**

5. The focus area for the 2010–2011 strategic evaluations was chosen in light of the WFP’s Strategic Plan 2008–2013 and the “historic shift from WFP as a food aid agency to WFP as a food assistance agency” called for in the Plan. As stated in the Strategic Plan, this shift implies “a more nuanced and robust set of tools to respond to critical hunger needs” – which increases the range of response options and the need for making choices that ensure WFP meets the priority needs of the hungry poor.

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<sup>4</sup>**NOTE:** This is a Word version copied from the .pdf submitted to the evaluation team and omits the footnotes for formatting ease. The official version of this document can be found on the WFP website in the Office of Evaluation files.

6. The strategic evaluations focus on how WFP uses its response options to provide the most efficient and effective hunger solutions to save lives, meet the needs of the vulnerable and complement the responses of other actors. An improved understanding of the conditions under which different options – strategies, approaches and tools – work best will contribute to improved decision-making at the country, regional and headquarters' levels.
7. The 2010–2011 strategic evaluations will generate a better understanding of WFP's experience and how it prepared the Programme to meet new challenges. The Strategic Plan was designed to prepare WFP to respond to changing demands; the strategic evaluations aim to generate insights and lessons from WFP's experience to help in this process. They deliberately place more emphasis on learning to support WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance and aim to provide timely and relevant inputs to country offices as they adapt.<sup>3</sup>
8. The strategic evaluations will focus on questions about how WFP has exercised choices: What can be learned from this experience? How can these lessons be applied to choices that need to be made? The evaluations will highlight issues that may require changes at corporate level to ensure necessary support is provided for delivering on WFP's mission at country and regional levels.
9. The four strategic evaluations will focus on the changes that the Strategic Plan has brought or can bring about for: i) the people who are at the heart of WFP's mission: the most vulnerable suffering food insecurity and undernutrition; ii) the governments, which play a central role in ensuring the food security of the people they govern by providing sustained safety nets; iii) the partners with whom WFP works and fulfils its mission; and iv) WFP as it is responding to changing needs and demands.

## **The 2010-2011 Strategic Evaluations**

### **Evaluation One: People at the Centre**

10. The food security crisis, which started with increased food and fuel prices and continued through the financial crisis, endangers gains made to reduce poverty and hunger. The incidence of poverty had started to decline, but in absolute numbers 1 billion people are now food-insecure. Their livelihood systems and food security are exposed to market factors, security risks and environmental factors.
11. People are at the heart of WFP's mandate and Strategic Objectives: saving lives, protecting and rebuilding livelihoods after shocks, serving the vulnerable and food-insecure, and breaking the inter-generational cycle of hunger. The vulnerable groups include internally displaced persons and refugees, people living with HIV and AIDS, and other vulnerable people. In addition, the Strategic Plan sets out overarching approaches that include, among others, being "responsive to the principles related to the right to food, and based on the practical wisdom and needs of local populations wherever possible"; and to provide assistance "as targeted and connected as possible to the needs of the most vulnerable".
12. This evaluation will focus on the effectiveness and efficiency of select programme activities or operations designed for specific target groups. In so doing, the evaluation will aim to identify conditions under which programmes targeted towards one group or another are more effective and efficient than others, and discuss the trade-offs between different options. It will take into account WFP's overarching goal of finding long-term solutions to hunger. The evaluation will produce a number of case studies that will illustrate the challenges and choices involved in focusing on the various target groups.



## **Evaluation Two: Working with Governments – The Role of WFP Assistance in Social Protection and Safety Nets**

13. High-level meetings such as those held in Paris and Accra resulted in resounding commitments to increased government ownership and a greater role of partner governments in determining and managing assistance. Partner countries committed to strengthening their capacities, and donors and international organizations to supporting these processes. Capacities for social safety nets and social protection systems exist and are being assisted by a number of actors. However, the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis noted, “While progress has been made in aligning and coordinating nationally funded and externally supported aid programs and in improving program efficiency [...], there is much to be done to improve coverage of socially vulnerable groups with benefit levels that will cover their basic needs.”<sup>4</sup>The task force includes a number of short-term and longer-term measures in this respect, making explicit reference to types of programmes typically supported by WFP.
14. WFP adopted a policy on food-based safety nets in 2004,<sup>5</sup> which sets out concepts and gives directions for programming. This policy received a boost in the Strategic Plan (2008–2013). The Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of integrating assistance into national social protection strategies so that “safety nets help prevent duplication of effort and assist governments in developing sustainable food-assistance systems”. It sets goals for safety nets to strengthen the resilience of communities to shocks and sees its assistance as a “critical enabler for re-establishing livelihoods through productive safety nets”. WFP programmes often entail resource transfers that are typical for safety net measures; if the programmes are to be gradually handed over for greater government ownership, they will have to fit into and complement national safety net systems.
15. Assistance programmes, by virtue of transferring resources to individuals and households, provide some kind of social safety net measure, whether designed as such or not. An evaluation of WFP’s experience will bring to light factors that play a role in making assistance programmes an integral and supportive part of sustainable food-based safety net systems. These insights will help systematize WFP experience and support country offices when they need to adjust programmes to support national safety net and social protection systems.

## **Evaluation Three: Working in Partnership – Implications of the Shift from Food Aid to Food Assistance**

16. The international community, through a variety of initiatives, high-level task forces and meetings, has repeatedly expressed its commitment to partnerships. In July 2009, at the G8 meeting in L’Aquila (Italy), heads of states pledged “to advance by the end of 2009 [...] the implementation of the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security”, which had also been discussed at the Madrid high-level meeting earlier in the year and at the FAO Summit in June 2008. This partnership should be developed through a consultative process engaging a cross-section of stakeholders. The United Nations and humanitarian reforms also strive to improve how partners work together at country level.
17. The Strategic Plan (2008–2013) recognizes the importance of partnerships – “Success will depend not only on WFP’s own capacity, but also on the extent to which WFP manages to be a partner for others” – and acknowledges the broad cross-section of WFP’s partners. Embedded in the Strategic Plan are a number of roles for WFP for fostering partnerships: identifying gaps and working with partners to close them;

developing partner capacities in preparation for hand-over; engaging in policy dialogue on hunger, food and nutrition security issues; and continuing to play an effective role within the United Nations system. It recognizes the importance of WFP's non-governmental partners and the private sector.

18. This evaluation will focus on the change in WFP's role – and therefore its partnerships – implied in the shift from food aid to food assistance and further changes that may come about in light of the Global Partnership. The evaluation will analyse WFP partnership experiences at country, regional and global levels to help understand better the extent to which partnerships could potentially be changed and to identify lessons that can be applied to situations where WFP chooses new roles, partners and/or partnership arrangements.

#### **Evaluation Four: WFP Responding to Changing Needs**

19. Governments, civil society and the public at large are increasingly exposed to shocks, whether caused by people or by nature. The increased number and severity of natural disasters leads to more emergency situations. The food and fuel price and financial crises have led to even greater need for longer-term solutions to food security.
20. WFP's Strategic Plan, together with a changing operating context, put WFP country offices in a position to make more choices than in the past. The Programme has demonstrated its capacity to respond rapidly to emergencies, but will need a similar agility to adapt programmes to recovery and development situations as they evolve, possibly more rapidly than before. These adjustments are more challenging than merely expanding or reducing logistics capacities and programmes, because objectives change depending on circumstances.
21. This evaluation will focus on WFP's experience in shifting its response capacities among emergency, recovery and development contexts, looking at how country offices have redefined their roles and adjusted their objectives and consequently their portfolios and logistics capacity. The evaluation will analyse the demands placed on the capacities of country offices by this need for adaptability; identify strengths that could be replicated; and ascertain any gaps that require corporate responses to ensure that WFP is prepared for implementing its Strategic Plan.

## **Annex 2: Executive Summaries: Four Strategic Evaluations**

### **How Country Offices Adapt to Change:**

1. This is one of four strategic evaluations concerning the shift from food aid to food assistance called for in WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2013). The evaluation assesses country offices' ability and capacity to adapt to change, as the Strategic Plan envisages considerable change to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of WFP's contribution to meeting hunger needs. The evaluation also explores the factors that facilitate or limit this ability and capacity, using a recognized conceptual framework of "change space".
2. The principal data collection methods were document review and semi-structured interviews with 156 stakeholders, including WFP staff, government partners, donor agencies, other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other partners in five countries and at WFP regional bureaux and Headquarters. The primary criterion for selecting countries was the reported extent of programme adaptation since the approval of WFP's Strategic Plan 2008–2013. The countries were at various stages in the transition from post-emergency to development contexts. Country offices engaged in major emergency operations were excluded, so the evaluation does not cover the transition from food aid to food assistance in emergency operations.
3. The evaluation found that all the country offices reviewed were making significant changes to their programme approaches. These changes reflect a strategic change for WFP, and are more than merely the adoption of new tools or incremental programme adjustments. Although the country contexts varied considerably, the organizational issues that arose were common. The changes in programme approach were driven mainly by multi-dimensional changes in the country context, with WFP's Strategic Plan 2008–2013 playing an authorizing and contributing role. Key drivers from within WFP were country office leadership, funding shortfalls – which were often severe – and staff commitment to relevance and effectiveness. The delinking of programme activities from food aid has expanded and widened programme choices in ways that are consistent with the broad principles in the Strategic Plan, but clear focus and boundaries are lacking. While this broader spectrum enhances the opportunities for WFP to increase its relevance and effectiveness, it also carries the risk of programmes becoming scattered and difficult to support.
4. Overall, country offices' adaptation to change demonstrates a tendency to resist adaptation beyond transactional improvements, unless forced to change; changes have generally been more reactive than proactive; and the decision to change has tended to be practical and opportunistic. Without diminishing the many achievements to date, the evaluation found that the success of country offices' efforts is uncertain because of weak support from the larger organization, notably regional bureaux and Headquarters.
5. In institutionalizing and operationalizing the new programme approach, the change process is still at an early, formative stage. Full transition will require considerably more concerted action, more stable programme funding, and a dedicated organizational strategy with a long-term perspective. The evaluation makes five recommendations, which address the need for WFP to adopt a more dynamic problem-solving culture for organizational change, to facilitate resolution of the challenges faced.

### **From Food Aid to Food Assistance – Working in Partnership:**

6. This evaluation of WFP's partnerships is one of four strategic evaluations undertaken in the 2010–2011 biennium that relate to the shift from food aid to food assistance as called for in WFP's 2008–2013 Strategic Plan. The evaluation analysed how WFP's partnerships and its role within them are affected by this strategic shift. Recognizing that the shift is an ongoing process and that the evaluation took place at the mid-point of the strategic planning cycle, the evaluation aimed to support organizational learning.
7. The evaluation was conducted by a five-member independent team. Methods included: visits to three country offices and three regional bureaux; desk reviews of work in two countries; a survey of WFP's external partners and stakeholders; a survey of WFP managers and senior professionals; benchmarking with good-practice standards; and document review.
8. Partnership was defined as a voluntary collaboration sustained over a period of time in which each party shares benefits, costs and risks to achieve jointly defined objectives. Three types of partnerships were considered: delivery partnerships; knowledge building/skills-transfer partnerships; and framework-setting/policy partnerships. The evaluation focused on two domains: nutrition and health; and emergency preparedness and response.
9. The evaluation found that the implications of the shift from food aid to food assistance are not uniformly understood among WFP staff and partners. There is also no commonly accepted definition of partnership in WFP, and the terminology is applied to a variety of relationships. There is limited understanding of what makes an effective partnership, the principles of good partnership and how to monitor the effectiveness of partnerships. Communications about these issues have been uneven.
10. In spite of this, the evaluation found that over all, WFP is seen as a valued and respected partner. Most partners reported that working with WFP is a positive experience that results in an increased impact on beneficiaries. Most WFP staff also value working in partnership, which they see as contributing to WFP's effectiveness and enhancing its ability to serve its beneficiaries.
11. In the area of nutrition, lack of clarity about WFP's roles and responsibilities, and lack of capacity affect WFP's credibility as a partner. National governments are WFP's most important partners, but limited resources for capacity development, work planning systems that are too short-term and project-based, and other factors affect WFP's ability to partner in a manner that increases government ownership.
12. WFP's planning, monitoring and reporting systems have not yet been adapted to support an enhanced level of partnership. Little investment was seen in staff training for partnership and collaboration. In order to build WFP's partnering capacity, action will be needed in a range of areas in addition to training, such as staff orientation, management incentives and leadership. In addition, many of WFP's framework agreements with major partners have not yet been updated to reflect the current strategic direction.
13. The evaluation team made seven recommendations regarding how to make partnerships more effective, which were related to: developing a partnership strategy for WFP; WFP's strategic positioning with partners and the agreements that govern these relationships; and WFP's internal systems and capacity.

## **WFP's Role in Ending Long-Term Hunger:**

14. In 2011 WFP's Office of Evaluation carried out four strategic evaluations related to WFP's strategic shift from food aid to food assistance. This strategic evaluation analysed WFP's role in ending long-term hunger. It was carried out by a team of independent consultants.
15. Three WFP activities were identified to contribute to ending long-term hunger: providing better nutrition and health (mother-and-child health and nutrition); improved education (school feeding); and community assets for poverty reduction (food for work and food for assets). Previous evaluations have considered each of the three activities; however no previous evaluation has examined the activities with a view to their role in ending long-term hunger.
16. The six case studies included field visits to Bolivia, Nepal, and Zambia, and desk studies of mother-and-child health and nutrition in Guatemala, school feeding in Bangladesh and food for work and food for assets in Ethiopia.
17. The five evaluation questions, common to all four strategic evaluations in this series, were related to:
  - a) Integrating the three WFP activities into national solutions to end long-term hunger;
  - b) The appropriateness and effectiveness of the three WFP activities in breaking the long-term hunger cycle;
  - c) Factors in the external operating environment affecting WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions;
  - d) Factors related to WFP's organizational capacity that affect its ability to adopt long-term hunger solutions; and
  - e) Factors related to the capacity of WFP staff that affect its ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions.
18. The evaluation team concluded that long-term hunger cannot be tackled in isolation. Several findings led the team to propose that WFP should approach hunger holistically, considering hunger as one issue rather than targeting the short and long terms separately. At the beneficiary level, the factors causing short-term shocks and those causing long-term hunger are interconnected.
19. All three activities were found to be appropriate for addressing long-term hunger – provided that correct targeting and delivery methods are used. However, the current WFP funding model is better suited to short-term emergencies, and the artificial division between short-term emergency response and development impedes integrated programming of the three activities.
20. The team found that there is not yet a clearly articulated programming model for identifying WFP's comparative advantages and integrating them into the larger context of addressing long-term hunger. Despite forging excellent relationships with governments as strategic partners, WFP does not appear to be considered a development player. WFP's ability to alter donor perceptions and to define its role within the multi-stakeholder context of humanitarian assistance will determine its future role in addressing long-term hunger.
21. With regard to internal adaptation, the team concluded that WFP needs to improve its monitoring and evaluation systems, which are inadequate to demonstrate effectiveness and adjust staff career pathways in order to enable optimal use of relevant technical skills. The success of food security analysis could be expanded by widening its net to

cover long-term hunger. The evaluation team made six recommendations, including one broad recommendation with respect to overall findings and five recommendations related to each of the five evaluation questions.

## **WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets:**

22. This strategic evaluation analysed WFP's role in social protection and safety nets, which are increasingly seen as important mechanisms for promoting development. The evaluation assessed the extent and quality of WFP's performance, and the factors that affect WFP's ability to deliver social protection and safety net programmes effectively.
23. The evaluation was carried out between September 2010 and February 2011 by a team of independent consultants. Methodologies included visits to five country offices and two regional bureaux, desk reviews of two countries, benchmarking against good practice standards, document review, and interviews with key stakeholders.
24. The evaluation found that WFP is already contributing to social protection and safety nets, especially for some activities. However, institutionalizing these approaches more broadly within WFP will require changes in the way WFP operates, and increased efforts to build WFP's organizational and staff capacity.
25. WFP contributes to social protection and safety nets in ways that range from the implementation of transfer programmes to helping to design food components of national social protection systems or advising governments on related policy. WFP's work in social protection and safety nets was seen as relevant and effective and as having the potential to go beyond life saving towards building resiliency and promoting livelihoods, especially when traditional WFP instruments are combined with new approaches – such as school feeding linked to local or national agricultural production or take-home meals, the establishment of rice banks or grain reserves, and food- and cash-for-work projects that develop capacity for disaster resilience – and when projects are well targeted, of sufficient duration and linked to government priorities.
26. To be most effective as a safety net or part of a broader social protection system, WFP transfers should be adequate to meet people's needs; provided in a timely manner – on time and when needed; predictable, so people know that the transfer will be available when needed, and can plan for it; and financially and politically sustainable.
27. Problems that limit WFP's ability to provide effective social protection or safety nets include inadequate duration and amount of transfers; pipeline breaks due to annual funding cycles and gaps and delays in funding; and short-term or unpredictable transfers. As governments become able to implement their own safety nets and social protection systems, WFP can remain relevant by shifting from an operational role towards the provision of policy and technical support, capacity development and advocacy.
28. The evaluation team made six recommendations, two related to improving the quality of WFP's work in social protection and safety nets, and four related to improving WFP's organizational capacity for this work.

### Annex 3: Overview of Strategic Evaluation Coverage & Methods

#### WFP's Role in Social Protection and Safety Nets

Year	Countries	Evaluation Team	Methodology
2011	<p><b>Field Visit:</b></p> <p>Georgia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda</p> <p>Ethiopia, Guatemala</p> <p><b>Desk Review:</b></p> <p>Colombia</p> <p><b>Regional Offices:</b></p> <p>Central and West Africa</p> <p>East and Southern Africa</p> <p>Rome HQ</p>	<p>1 Team Leader</p> <p>1 Social Protection Expert</p> <p>1 Nutrition/Livelihoods Expert</p> <p>1 Research Assistant /Evaluator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desk review of literature; programme records; evaluations on relevant topics; normative guidance; and WFP plans related to safety nets and social protection;</li> <li>• Benchmark with good practice when available/possible, to analyze how WFP's practice compares with international good practice standards for safety nets and social protection;</li> <li>• Field visits to country offices and regional bureaux;</li> <li>• Key informant interviews including briefings with key WFP staff, stakeholders in the countries such as partners in governments, NGOs, and communities, the evaluation reference group for the evaluation, and possibly an external expert review group, if appropriate;</li> <li>• Focus groups and/or surveys of relevant stakeholders and partners;</li> <li>• Debriefings in the countries at the end of the visit and one at WFP Headquarters at the end of the evaluation to provide stakeholders with an early overview of initial findings for initial validation.</li> </ul>



## From Food Aid to Food Assistance – Working in Partnership

Year	Countries	Evaluation Team	Methodology
2011	<p><b>Field Visit:</b> Laos, Kenya, Haiti</p> <p><b>Desk Review:</b> Bangladesh, Niger, Ethiopia, Colombia, Guatemala</p> <p><b>Regional Offices:</b> Middle East (Cairo) Central and West Africa (Dakar) East and Southern Africa (Johannesburg) Rome HQ</p> <p>Quantitative Survey all WFP Staff</p>	<p>1 Team Leader</p> <p>1 Nutrition Expert</p> <p>1 Humanitarian Expert</p> <p>1 Partnership Adviser</p> <p>1 Economics Adviser</p> <p>2 Research Assistants</p>	<p>In addition to semi-structured interviews, four specific instruments were used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An survey of 400 external partners and stakeholders</li> <li>• An survey of 199 WFP managers and senior professionals</li> <li>• A Partnership Agreement Scorecard, applied to some 80 agreements, MOUs or other similar documents</li> <li>• A Good Partnership Health Checklist used in interviews with NGOs at the country level</li> </ul>

## WFP's Role in Ending Long Term Hunger

Year	Countries	Evaluation Team	Methodology
2011	<p><b>Field Visit:</b> Nepal, Zambia, Bolivia</p> <p><b>Desk Review:</b> Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala</p> <p>Rome HQ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Team Leader</li> <li>• 2 Senior Evaluators</li> <li>• 1 Senior Advisor</li> <li>• 1 Research Assistant</li> </ul>	<p>The methodology of this strategic evaluation differs from the others in that it seeks to evaluate each of three WFP activities (Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition, School Feeding, Food For Work/Assets) in terms of its respective role in ending long-term hunger. In order to assess the role of each of the three WFP activities in ending long term-hunger, this strategic evaluation takes a comprehensive contextual case study approach, integrating a strong historical entanglements approach to the different levels of analysis (global, regional, national and local) looking at the years since 1974, when the commitment to hunger eradication was made and a strong global entanglements approach emerged to cope with increasing globalisation, population growth, speculation, asymmetric consumption desires and new G-20 donors. The methodology will also include a study of inter-relationships between Departments, Divisions, Services and Units within WFP Headquarters (HQ) as they interact and coordinate in pursuing the strategic objectives, in particular, how they ensure feedback and follow-up as they relate to the activities being examined by the evaluation team.</p>

## How Country Offices Adapt to Change

Year	Countries	Evaluation Team	Methodology
2011	<p><b>Field Visit:</b></p> <p>Indonesia, Cambodia, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi</p> <p><b>Regional Offices:</b></p> <p>Asia Pacific</p> <p>East and Southern Africa</p> <p>Rome HQ</p>	<p>1 Team Leader</p> <p>3 Topic Specialists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A desk review of literature, WFP strategies and programmes, normative guidance, relevant evaluations, etc.;</li> <li>• Benchmark with good practice to analyse how WFP's organisational change process compares with international good practice standards;</li> <li>• Key informant interviews, focus groups and/or surveys with key stakeholders;</li> <li>• Multi-country case studies.</li> </ul>

## **Annex 4: Synthesis Methodology**

1. The evaluation team was invited by OE to carry out a meta-synthesis of four strategic evaluations. The methodology adopted is based on the conceptual frameworks elaborated by one of the foremost theorists of qualitative evaluation, Michael Quinn Patton. The principles drawn on are summarized in his reference work *Qualitative Research Methods*, 3rd Edition .

### **Conceptual Overview:**

2. The method adopted is based on the concept that a meta-synthesis is not simply an evaluation of the evaluations, but rather an analysis of the content – themes, patterns, and topics emerging from each evaluation. This project therefore does not aim to evaluate the quality of the evaluation processes but rather seeks to generate a synthesis of the findings.
3. In this philosophy, it is agreed that the general process will follow standard qualitative analysis practices, using the evaluation documents as the source material. While the methodology draws heavily on the frameworks found in reference materials of Michael Patton, the general processes are not unique to Patton.
4. It is accepted that this approach would be iterative and evolutionary. It starts with a set of initial organizing concepts or guiding questions that serve for the preliminary identification of the themes. As the themes are placed into patterns and developed into categories, new organizing concepts or categories should emerge. This is usually done through three processes:
  - a) Merging clusters of themes into a larger meta-pattern
  - b) Splitting clusters of themes into sub-categories
  - c) Developing new categories from themes that are not easily located in pre-existing categories
5. The process of merging, splitting, or creating categories is expected to generate new insights regarding the findings. This process is usually halted when no new insights are being generated through the reorganization.
6. The methodology adopted is conceived as involving six structured tasks:
  - a) Identify emergent themes in each of the reports
  - b) Cluster the emergent themes into common patterns
  - c) Name these clusters to generate insights
  - d) Make connections between the reports to identify common insights
  - e) Develop meta-categories of common insights to generate key messages.
  - f) Draw on these key messages to structure the final report.

### **Summary of the Methodology Used**

7. In this particular synthesis the initial organizing structure was based on the framework found in the initial concept paper for the strategic evaluations, specifically the five strategic questions that were to be addressed in all four evaluations:
  - a) Extent of Performance
  - b) Quality of Performance

- c) External Factors
- d) Internal Factors (Systems)
- e) Internal Factors (Staff Capacities)

8. The final categories presented in the meta-synthesis report differed from these initial categories, but the guiding questions for the evaluations served as the de facto entry point into the analysis.
9. The process started with the identification of what might be called “thematic units” – actual quotes or sentences found in the narrative and recommendations of the reports. Each evaluation was read paragraph by paragraph and for each paragraph one or two key themes were listed that were associated with the five guiding questions.
10. Themes usually emerged multiple times throughout the paragraphs and recommendations of a single evaluation report. A simple Excel Spreadsheet was established for each evaluation as a way of organizing the themes identified throughout the evaluation. Themes for each evaluation were described and each theme was then followed by a list of all paragraphs in the evaluation that mentioned this theme.
11. Theme entries were then examined for duplication and condensed for ease of analysis. For example, some themes that were very similar to each other were combined into a single larger thematic unit.
12. Themes were then clumped into larger clusters. Each cluster was named with the intention of demonstrating insight into the emerging pattern--for example, “staff highly committed and motivated” or “lack of clarity”. Particularly illuminative quotes (sentences in this case) from the evaluations were linked to themes to illustrate the flavor of each category.
13. This approach was used both for the analysis of the narrative of “Findings” section of the evaluations as well as the “Conclusions” and for the “Recommendations” of each evaluation. After general clusters were identified for each evaluation, these were then combined onto a single Excel spreadsheet and examined collectively.
14. Clusters that appeared in more than one evaluation were highlighted based on the assumption that those themes emerging across multiple evaluations would be of particular note. These “multiple evaluations” clusters were collected in a separate Excel Spreadsheet tab and then further clustered and condensed for organization to highlight significant implications. These implications eventually became distilled into the seven key messages found in the final report.
15. As a mechanism for triangulation and confirmation, the themes, groupings and synthesis were repeatedly reviewed and discussed by the evaluation team, and draft reports were submitted to the OE for comment. These iterative discussions with OE staff helped to build a more robust analysis with a larger pool of analysts.

## Annex 5: Matrix of Recommendations (in summary)

<b>Long Term Hunger</b>	<b>Social Protection</b>
<p>WFP should approach hunger holistically, integrating short term and long term hunger solutions</p> <p>WFP should ensure that those who are vulnerable to hunger are actively engaged in shaping and implementing the hunger solutions that affect them</p> <p>WFP should adopt a lifecycle approach</p> <p>WFP should work with donors and UN sister agencies to develop a funding model consistent with long term hunger solutions and challenge donor governments to meet their food security related funding commitments</p> <p>WFP HQ should develop a model to demonstrate WFPs comparative advantage in addressing long term hunger</p> <p>WFP should have core-funded long term career paths up to senior level for technical specialists which are performance assessed in terms of ending long term hunger for promotion</p>	<p>Focus WFP Safety Net and Social Protection Efforts based on comparative advantages</p> <p>Develop WFP organizational capacities for safety nets and social protection</p> <p>Develop WFP staff capacities for safety nets and social protection</p> <p>Position WFP safety nets and social protection efforts in the external environment</p> <p>Contribute to the development of national social protection systems</p> <p>Continuously improve adherence to social protection standards of good practice</p>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>Change</b>
<p>WFP should establish a senior management level committee reporting to the Executive Director to articulate a comprehensive “partnership strategy” including a communications strategy</p> <p>WFP should consider additional resources to strengthen its capacity in nutrition and health in particular and in the exercise of good partnership skills in a more general sense</p> <p>WFP should enter into discussions with UN system partners and UNICEF, FAO, and WHO in particular to clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to WFP’s shift to a “food assistance” model and specifically with respect to mutual roles and responsibilities in relation to nutrition</p> <p>WFP should amend its set of global, and if relevant, regional framework agreements with other UN organizations to reflect new conditions and to specifically incorporate into them aspects of good partnering agreements.</p> <p>WFP legal services and other units should consider developing a mechanism to complement the standardized field level agreements and lay out mutual expectations between WFP and a local partner</p> <p>WFP needs to consider amending its project planning and reporting systems to include specific references to good partnership and partnership related outcomes.</p> <p>WFP should expand and formalize the country level partnership evaluation system based on the principle of mutual accountability – an example to build on was seen in Kenya.</p>	<p>Clarify the basis on which WFP change efforts are to be considered and implemented – including mandate, core commitments, programme priorities, and authority frameworks.</p> <p>Strengthen internal change management processes</p> <p>Enhance efforts to mobilize support and build consensus for change</p> <p>Address the financial base for non-emergency activities</p> <p>Mount a special initiative to address critical challenges and limitation impacting the current change initiative.</p>

## Acronyms

CO	County Office
EB	Executive Board
EMOP	Emergency Operation
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFW/A	Food for Work/Assets
HR	Human Resources
HQ	Headquarters
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health Nutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memo of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation
OE	Office of Evaluation
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PME	Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RB	Regional Bureau
SF	School Feeding
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WB	World Bank
WFP	UN World Food Programme

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**World Food Programme**