

Country Portfolio Evaluation

Afghanistan: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio

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Fact Sheet: Afghanistan

Timeline and funding level of Afghanistan portfolio operations

Operation	Title	Time Frame	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011				
PRRO 200063	Enhancing Resilience and Food Security in Afghanistan	Apr 10 - Mar 13	LEGEND Funding Level > 75% Between 50 and 75% Less than 50%					Req: \$1,100,364,923 Contrib: \$454,967,745	2013			
SO 200092	Provision of Common Humanit. Air Service to UN Ag., NGOs and Counterparts in Afgh.	Jan 10 - Dec 11									Req: \$39,726,786 Contrib: \$27,844,278	
SO 107080	Provision of emergency telecom. service to humanitarian community in Afghan.	Oct 07 - Feb 08					Req: \$323,212 Contrib: \$323,212					
SO 105140	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service	Apr 06 - Dec 09	Req: \$67,404,174 Contrib: \$57,624,699									
PRRO 104270	Post-Conflict Relief and Rehabilitation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	Jan 06 - Mar 10	Req: \$877,317,083 Contrib: \$688,552,577									
P4P	Purchase for Progress	Mar 10 - Mar 15						Req: US\$ 31,114,170	2015			
Food Distributed (MT)			114,515	217,008	248,807	275,955	145,267	n.a				
Direct Expenses (US\$ millions)			94.8	133.7	204.8	206.6	168.8	n.a				
% Direct Expenses: Afghanistan vs. World			4%	5%	6%	5%	4%	n.a				
Beneficiaries (actual)			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
			2,467,675	2,262,834	3,450,009	3,314,867	4,521,773	4,173,494	4,734,855	4,291,055	3,397,888	3,158,159
Total of Beneficiaries (actual, thousands)			4,730,509	6,764,876	8,695,267	9,025,910	6,556,047	n.a				

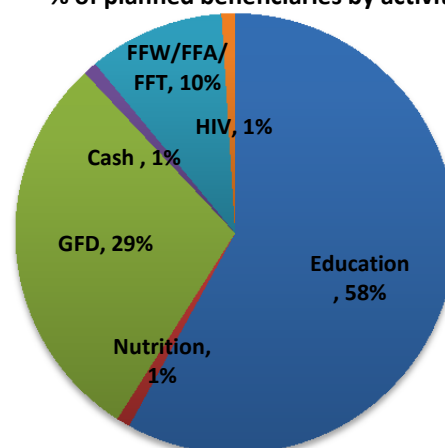
Source: last SPR available, Resource Situation (3 October 2011), APR 2006 - 2010
Requirements (Req.) and Contributions (Contrib.) are US\$ millions

Activities by operation and beneficiary share

	Education	Nutrition	GFD	Cash	FFW/FFA/FFT	HIV
PRRO 200063	X	X	X		X	X
PRRO 104270	X	X	X	X	X	X
SO 200092	-	-	-	-	-	-
SO 107080	-	-	-	-	-	-
SO 105140	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planned % of beneficiaries	58%	1%	29%	1%	10%	1%
Actual % of beneficiaries	55%	1%	26%	1%	16%	1%

Source: WFP Decata

% of planned beneficiaries by activity



Top 5 donors: USA, Japan, India, United Kingdom, Australia

Partners: Government of Afghanistan, 7 International Agencies and 80 NGOs

Executive Summary

Introduction

Evaluation Features

1. This country portfolio evaluation (CPE) covered WFP activities in protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 200063 from April 2010 to June 2012.¹
2. The objectives of the CPE were to facilitate learning, by evaluating how and why decisions were made, and accountability, by measuring the performance and results of the PRRO. It focused on three key evaluation questions: i) the country office's alignment and strategic positioning given the particularly challenging humanitarian situation and complex geopolitical context; ii) the factors that have driven, and the quality of, WFP's strategic decision-making; and iii) the performance and results of the operations over the portfolio period.
3. The evaluation findings complement the ongoing development of a WFP country strategy and the preparation of the next PRRO, to begin in April 2013.²

The Afghanistan Context

4. Afghanistan has been a fragile state for decades, both politically and in terms of development indicators. International actors – the military, donor agencies, the United Nations and others – have dominated the country's stabilization and development agenda, particularly since 2001. By 2012, aid was contributing 91 percent of the Afghan Government's public spending. Poverty and, particularly, food insecurity kill more Afghans than conflict. Food security indicators rely on data from 2007, but they continue to be some of the worst in the world. Afghanistan is subject to cyclical weather patterns, with poor harvests often followed by relatively good harvests, and a perennial dependence on grain imports from neighbouring countries. Land utilization rates are very low, and seasonality and topography are important determinants of food security. The long-term development solution lies in improving infrastructure, landownership, watershed management and technology for increasing productivity. The correlates of poverty – few assets, poor health and low income – are intensified by social and power relations from the village level upwards. Many of the causes of social exclusion and gender disparity lie in political and cultural practices that vary across the country. Increasing displacement resulting from drought and conflict – with about 450,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2012 – tends to exacerbate these issues.
5. Aid distorts the economy. With unemployment at about 36–40 percent, there is overreliance on service-sector jobs based on the presence of international actors. Corruption is a major source of discontent in the population; it is caused by a combination of weak state institutions and rule of law, the illicit drug market, vertical layers of contracting and subcontracting, and the huge inflow of foreign funds.
6. The intended reduction and departure of the bulk of International Security Assistance Force combat troops under North Atlantic Treaty Organization command by the end of 2014 has intensified the debate over medium-term development priorities, particularly in basic health and food security. Although funding levels may

1 Evaluation of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service special operation is reported separately as an Annex to the main evaluation report.

2 There will also be a budget revision to the PRRO in 2012.

be retained in the immediate future, they are likely to decline in subsequent years, requiring all international actors to make strategic and difficult decisions regarding priorities.

WFP's Portfolio in Afghanistan

7. Total official development assistance (ODA) to Afghanistan in the period 2006–2010 exceeded US\$25 billion.³ The PRRO was launched in April 2010 with a target over three years of 816,882 mt of food costing more than US\$1.2 billion. As planned, it was the second largest PRRO in the world, representing 9 percent of WFP's total global budget.

8. The PRRO aimed to enhance food security and improve the human and productive capital of 7.6 million food-insecure Afghans. Its intended outcomes were to:

i) stabilize acute malnutrition and improve food consumption (WFP Strategic Objective 1);

ii) establish early warning, contingency and monitoring systems (Strategic Objective 2);

iii) improve access to assets in transition situations, school enrolment and access to education, and increase household capital (Strategic Objective 3);

iv) increase fortified food production capacity and improve the success of tuberculosis (TB) treatment (Strategic Objective 4); and

v) increase market opportunities through local purchases by WFP, and make progress towards government-owned hunger solutions (Strategic Objective 5).

9. From mid-2011, funding constraints and the onset of drought forced reprioritization of the PRRO to 4.5 million beneficiaries, through a reduction in food for education (FFE) and the shifting of activities in 14 drought-affected provinces to an emergency operation. Operating in 34 provinces, the PRRO comprises the following activities.

⇒ **Relief**

i) *Emergency food assistance*. Provides general food distribution (GFD) to populations affected by shocks, IDPs and returnees, mainly in rural areas. Where possible, food for assets (FFA)/food for work (FFW) is undertaken.

ii) *Urban safety net project*. Operates a cash/food voucher system, primarily for households headed by disabled people or widows with limited employment opportunities who are not supported by other safety net mechanisms.

iii) *Mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN)*. Provides targeted supplementary feeding for children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women, alongside partners' activities in therapeutic feeding and growth monitoring.

⇒ **Recovery**

iv) *Food for assets/food for training (FFT)* Provides primarily micro-catchment watershed management, irrigation systems and vocational training in disaster-prone areas. Targeted at vulnerable groups such as IDPs and returnees.

³ US\$25.50 billion in net ODA receipts for the period 2006–2010 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] Aid Statistics 2012).

v) *Food for education/food for training (FFE/FFT)*. Provides high-energy biscuits, and a take-home ration incentive for girls, to schools in food-insecure districts with poor education/education and gender indicators. A wet feeding pilot has operated in eight provinces. FFT includes vocational training and literacy training activities targeting women as a priority.

vi) *Support to the national TB programme*. Provides food assistance packages to patients receiving directly observed treatment, shortcourse (DOTS) medication at clinics.

⇒ ***Capacity development***

vii) *Strategic grain reserve and community storage facilities*. Provides support to the government for a strategic grain reserve complemented by community-level storage facilities, and support to silo construction and training.

viii) *Purchase for Progress (P4P)* (pilot). Aims to link farmers' associations to local markets and purchase farmers' produce for the PRRO. High wheat prices prevented purchases from taking place, but WFP supports efforts to increase productivity and improve storage for wheat and soya.

ix) *Flour fortification*. Includes providing micro-feeders and training to private millers for fortifying flour for commercial use, with some purchases by WFP.

x) *Establishment of a vulnerability and surveillance system and market analysis*. Includes capacity development for the forthcoming National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA), a national early warning system, and collection of market information.

Evaluation Findings

Alignment and Strategic Positioning

10. The PRRO was designed in 2009 in a very different environment from that of mid-2012. Up to 2009, the main discourse on Afghanistan focused on state building and development. As a result, WFP's major donors encouraged it to "think big" in the PRRO design.

11. However, during the first year of the PRRO, the climate in the country changed dramatically. A marked deterioration in security led to a reduction in operational scope and increased security concerns and costs for all international actors.⁴ WFP's major donors adopted a more conservative financial outlook, leaving the PRRO only 45-percent funded in 2011, with further reductions anticipated for 2012.

12. At the same time, WFP's capacity to closely monitor its activities was drastically reduced. Government of Afghanistan priorities were also shifting away from reliance on multilateral support, towards bilateral and international financial institution funding.

13. WFP has had to reduce the direct expenditures of food delivery considerably, while also restricting the geographical scope of operation. Although it continued working in 34 provinces, it could no longer travel in large areas of southern Afghanistan and many areas in the east. Starting in mid-2011 there was a serious

⁴ WFP's staff, office and vehicle security costs increased by almost US\$15 million in 2010–2011.

reappraisal of the portfolio, based on external analysis commissioned by WFP – and to which this CPE contributes – to examine the possibilities available in an increasingly constrained security environment.

⇒ ***Alignment with the Government***

14. The evaluation found that WFP was appropriately and closely aligned with the evolving general architecture of government policy, despite there being some incoherence over national strategies relating to food security. Together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WFP has agreed to support six thematic areas in food security, which are in line with the overarching 2009 Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Communication with some – although not all – key line ministries had been good.

⇒ ***Alignment with WFP policy***

15. The objectives of the PRRO were in line with WFP corporate objectives, the corporate shift from a food aid to a food assistance agency, and the four emphases of the WFP Management Plan (2010–2011): cash/vouchers, targeted supplementary food, school feeding, and hand-over strategies. However, improved food consumption (Strategic Objective 1) was too broad an objective to be meaningful or measurable in Afghanistan. Disaster risk reduction at the village level (Strategic Objective 2) became a main priority for WFP, particularly through FFA. As FFW/FFA activities tended to be communal rather than individual, monitoring was based on community asset scoring, and household capital data were not gathered for each sub-project; there is thus no evidence of changes in household capital (Strategic Objective 3).

⇒ ***Alignment with international good practice***

16. “Taking context as the starting point”⁵ requires a thorough and sound information base. The evaluation found that the original PRRO design had not undertaken or applied a thorough conflict analysis. Without this, the PRRO was never likely to be sufficiently adaptive and responsive to contextual changes as they emerged.

17. Reacting to volatility meant that WFP had to make two major budget revisions to the PRRO in just two years. The portfolio had to shift towards what is feasible rather than sticking to its original ambitions.

18. Since mid-2011, WFP has sought to improve the analytical base of its programming, and risk identification and mitigation measures have been put in place. However, changes have been driven mainly by operational necessity rather than the strategic revisioning desirable in the current and expected future political, economic and security context.

19. Declining humanitarian space in Afghanistan has been an acute issue for WFP, given its relationship with a government whose legitimacy is challenged by some sections of the population, and its placement within the United Nations integrated mission. WFP has lobbied – as yet unsuccessfully – for a separation of the roles of Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, to increase advocacy for access to contended areas/populations.

⁵ OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). 2007. Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States. Paris.

⇒ **Alignment with development partners – United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, donors**

20. WFP has cooperated closely with the complex aid architecture of Afghanistan, and made significant inputs at the strategic level, such as with the United Nations country team, and on Afghanistan National Development Strategy priorities. WFP co-leads with FAO the food security and agriculture cluster, and in targeted areas has close working relationships with FAO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Working Group on Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture.

⇒ **Alignment with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**

21. The ratio of government to non-government partners implementing WFP’s portfolio by early 2012 was about 65 to 35. WFP has sought to increase the number of national NGOs it works with, but with some difficulties. The major constraint has been national capacity, but there have been also financial problems when the food tonnage – and therefore fee – is less at implementation than originally intended and the NGO has already met initial set-up costs. These costs are more easily met by international NGOs, which often have access to complementary funds through other projects in the same area. Although NGOs are concentrated in the east of the country, the evaluation found the supposed dearth of NGOs was not as severe as usually depicted. The challenge is to identify viable, mainly local NGO partners with local knowledge. Some NGOs questioned the desirability of working with a United Nations agency, given the problems of associating with an international agenda aligned with an ‘occupying force’. Some donors still insist on the presence of national logos on assistance products, even in areas where this may endanger recipients.

Factors Driving WFP’s Strategic Decision-making in Afghanistan

22. WFP’s responses to the operational limitations over the evaluation period were assessed, including the portfolio’s beneficiary coverage and targeting; efforts to improve the availability and use of knowledge and information; approaches to capacity development; and efforts to make maximum use of WFP’s internal technical capacity.

⇒ **Coverage and targeting**

23. WFP reached roughly the number of beneficiaries planned in the PRRO document, covering 34 provinces, but with reduced volumes of food (see Table 1). This reflects the “breadth-over-depth” approach that has characterized WFP’s programming over the period.

Table 1: Planned And Actual Beneficiaries And Food

Beneficiaries	Planned	Actual	% of planned
2010	7 052 200	6 556 047	93
2011	7 317 475	6 972 839	95
Tonnage (mt)	Planned	Actual	% of planned
2010	197 115	145 267	74
2011	273 022	163 806	60

Source: WFP standardized project report data.

24. At the programme level, WFP's geographical and group-based targeting mechanisms were clearly and explicitly justified in relation to contextual needs. For example, the FFE programme targeted food-insecure districts within the 34 provinces and which also had poor education indicators. Within this initial targeting, the more specific criterion for targeting the take-home ration incentive for girls was the districts with a gender gap of more than 25 percent in enrolment rates.

25. The main groups identified for targeting – IDPs and returned refugees (GFD), pregnant and lactating women and malnourished children under 5 (MCHN), TB patients (TB support), children in school (FFE), and women lacking literacy skills (FFT) – approximate the vulnerable groups identified in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. However, these groups are being targeted by a range of actors simultaneously, and fieldwork for this evaluation indicated a marked lack of coherence in WFP's targeting at the operational level until recently.

26. This situation is now changing with more coordinated models in place via the food security and nutrition cluster. Afghanistan has also been selected as a pilot for the United Nations' Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System, expected to begin in late 2012.

27. In Afghanistan, the gap between targeting theory and practice is undoubtedly wide, although the evaluation was not in a position to quantify it. WFP takes a tolerant view of endogenous community systems of redistribution, but there have been serious concerns over diversion and/or leakage. The country office set up a Compliance Unit in January 2011 with a remit to improve the management and governance of WFP commodity distribution. Its efforts are showing promising results, including, in one instance, of the return of misappropriated goods. However, access and staffing constraints make it unlikely that this problem will be tackled comprehensively.

28. The risk of diversions and inclusion/exclusion errors associated with access constraints and remote management is high and likely to increase if the political-economic context deteriorates further. The evaluation team was not able to identify WFP's risk management strategy through which an explicitly defined threshold of diversion would trigger specific management actions, including activity suspension or closure. The institutional improvements cited in the previous paragraph have gone some way to mitigating donor and WFP concerns, but balancing a pragmatic acceptance that diversion exists with official intolerance of it remains a difficult equation for WFP in a country as challenging as Afghanistan.

⇒ ***Monitoring and evaluation***

29. Security and access seriously constrain WFP's ability to monitor its food distributions in Afghanistan. WFP's strategy has been to contract private programme assistance teams (PATs)⁶ that travel to the growing number of areas inaccessible to United Nations staff.

30. WFP's learning curve on PAT recruitment has been steep.⁷ The evaluation found that issues encountered are being proactively addressed, and are likely to lead to significant improvements over time.

⁶ In mid-2012, WFP had contracted 143 PATs at a net additional cost of US\$2.5 million per year.

⁷ Challenges identified included high staff turnover, capacity limitations, the near-absence of women in PATs, management challenges at the field office level, and disputes over differing salary levels.

31. There has been a lack of robust or systematic approaches to monitoring. Changes made since 2011 include the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation unit and systems – including key performance indicators – that enable real-time collection of distribution data. These systems functioned discretely, however, and there is a need for harmonization.

32. There have been some good – although not systematically applied – approaches to supporting national data collection systems, such as Education Management Information Systems in the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Public Health’s collation and analysis of health and nutrition data.

⇒ ***Gender, protection and Do No Harm***

33. Afghanistan is an extremely complex and challenging environment for gender work by international agencies. However, given that the links between addressing gender inequalities and improving food security are well-documented and central, for WFP and others,⁸ it is one of the most pressing and important issues facing the country office’s work.

34. Despite some useful support to national systems, including to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and to development of a gender marker system for the Consolidated Appeal Process, WFP is far from meeting its commitments on gender in Afghanistan. Efforts have been generally shallow and unsystematic; lacking a clear institutional vision of WFP’s goals in gender and food security over the PRRO period; without guidance on implementation strategies; lacking partnerships with other agencies for achieving what WFP alone cannot achieve; and without clear accountability processes or comprehensive internal training.

35. Certain protection issues were identified through regular monitoring missions, but these were not addressed in programming, although protection training was carried out. WFP needs a far more robust and explicit response to gender and protection. A full *Do No Harm* analysis, which would inform this response, was not evident.

⇒ ***Use of partnerships***

36. WFP relies heavily on its operational partnerships to deliver on its mandate in Afghanistan. Over the evaluation period, it worked most extensively through the Government, although also through NGOs.

37. However, there have been major concerns about partners’ efficiency and capacity to deliver. A mapping exercise currently under way will help develop a revised partnership model for community-based assistance. The Government will remain an important partner, but 2013 may see an appropriate shift in implementation modalities, with more focus on non-government actors at delivery level.

⁸ WFP’s protection policy is clear on these links. Other examples are Institute of Development Studies (IDS). 2012. Innovative Approaches to Gender and Food Security. *Food Security and Gender Insights* 82, July. Brighton, UK (available from the Eldis resource centre at www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/food-security/food-security-and-gender&id=59402&type=document); and FAO’s resources at www.fao.org/gender/gender-home/gender-why/why-gender/en/

⇒ **Approaches to capacity development**

38. Despite the PRRO’s objectives, capacity development has remained subsidiary – not core – within PRRO implementation, with no concerted, coherent, planned and implemented efforts. An institutional mind-set from “can do” to “enabling others to do” has yet to happen. There was little evidence of planned and monitored approaches to hand-over other than for P4P.

⇒ **Use of WFP’s internal technical capacity**

39. Impressive and creative efforts were made to tackle staffing constraints and improve internal national capacity.⁹ As international engagement decreases and transition takes hold, the drive for nationalization will intensify and the international footprint will be further reduced. A scenario planning exercise will provide an opportunity to devise appropriate strategies and tools for this.

Portfolio Performance and Results

40. Data paucity in Afghanistan continues to be a major constraint for WFP in assessing the effectiveness and impact of its programmes. The complex interplay between pipeline breaks and access constraints also confounds efforts at robust measurement.

41. Pipeline breaks, particularly within GFD and FFE, have negatively affected WFP’s ability to deliver to its beneficiaries in a timely way. This has affected WFP’s relationships with its partners and beneficiaries.

42. Table 2 shows summary findings about PRRO activities.

Table 2: Findings about PRRO activities

Relief	
GFD and FFW	Performance was affected by pipeline breaks, donor contributions over time, closures of the Pakistan border at key points, and some access difficulties. Despite being gratefully received by beneficiaries, GFD was the least robust of WFP’s activities in terms of meeting its primary objectives, because of poor targeting, intermittent delivery and some diversions. However, GFD makes an important contribution to welfare in highly vulnerable populations where hunger is pervasive.
Prevention of acute malnutrition	WFP, along with United Nations partners, has led the debate and pushed for greater coherence for nutrition in government policy, such as the new Food Security and Nutrition Policy. A collaborative programme with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on preventive and curative activities has delivered good results; the Ministry of Public Health is seeking to integrate this approach into its basic package of health services and has requested WFP to expand its programme beyond emergencies. However, sustainability in terms of food procurement is not yet feasible.
Urban social safety net	Urban social safety net activities experienced teething problems – including a six-month delay in Mazar-e Sharif – relatively high transaction costs, and conceptual confusion. Targeted populations have been the chronically vulnerable, who qualify for long-term safety net assistance rather than emergency assistance or livelihood enhancement. The pilot schemes have however opened new avenues for WFP to explore safety net assistance for the urban poor, pending development of a national social protection strategy and safety net scheme.

⁹ Including by using short-term consultants, developing a roster of local staff to fill gaps, proposing an internship programme with local universities, and appointing a capacity development officer. There is no corporate requirement for psychological screening for new recruits to conflict zones.

Table 2: Findings about PRRO activities

Recovery	
FFE	School feeding accounted for 25 percent of total PRRO resources. Resource shortfalls led to significant variance between planned and actual beneficiary numbers. Reasons for underperformance included the closure of supply routes via the Pakistan border, food losses while in storage in Pakistan, and quality and supply issues with the Indian supplier. FFE has suffered from design shortcomings and conceptual confusion; its original design as an emergency response mechanism to get children back into school after a period of conflict is no longer applicable in a country where demand for education now outstrips supply. WFP has worked hard to correct these problems during implementation of its FFE programme, but the challenges will be difficult to overcome without a major redesign.
FFT	The targeting of this relatively small component has been among the more successful of any WFP activity. FFT has been highly valued and in demand from communities. However, to maximize effectiveness it needs a solid and comprehensive partnership strategy that matches the quality of delivery with guaranteed food supply.
FFA	This programme has undergone internal redesign, adopting a more focused and integrated approach over time. FFA exceeded its asset creation targets and has been highly valued by participants. It has experienced some implementation challenges and there are concerns about the sustainability of some of the assets built. Although it could have greater coherence with other activities, FFA was one of the more relevant and effective programmes.
TB support	This programme has also suffered pipeline breaks, especially in wheat. Targeting has been pragmatic, with no distinction between food-insecure and non-food-insecure patients. Anecdotal evidence found strongly positive results in incentivizing patients to complete DOTS. However, results are not available beyond the incentive effects. More real-time monitoring, particularly of patient needs, would support delivery.
Gender equality	Targets for WFP's Enhanced Commitments to Women indicators are relatively low and progress against them has been mixed. Some indicators – such as on women in leadership positions in food management committees in 2011 – showed that good results are possible where concerted efforts are made. However, a more systematic approach and concerted effort are needed.
Capacity development	
Capacity development across the portfolio	There was no evidence of coherent capacity development efforts of the form or intensity intended in the PRRO design. Important contributions were made in some ministries – such as data collection and analysis in the Ministry of Public Health – but overall, capacity development has remained a subsidiary part of PRRO implementation. The PRRO objective of developing Community Development Councils has relied heavily on partners with limited capacity to develop the councils' capacity. The contractual nature of relationships between WFP and cooperating partners does not lend itself to achieving the PRRO's capacity development goals.
P4P	In 2011, unprecedented procurements of wheat were made from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, and WFP has worked hard to implement the P4P programme as a means of improving local purchasing from farmers. However, production volumes have been extremely limited compared with needs. WFP has helped increase productivity and improve storage for wheat and soya. Private sector processing plants are receiving assistance in producing soya and wheat products, such as high-energy biscuits, including for WFP projects. Three factories produced 100 mt of biscuits in 2011, increasing to 867 mt in 2012. This is a positive result, but does not yet meet the high requirements of the WFP programme.
Disaster preparedness	WFP assistance has contributed significantly to Afghanistan's information base for national intervention planning, through support to the national vulnerability and surveillance system, market analysis, and capacity development in preparation of the updated NRVA in 2012. However, disaster preparedness requires closer work with communities in the design and implementation of lasting projects that offset the effects of drought and displacement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

43. It has rarely been necessary for a country office to reconfigure a PRRO as radically as that of Afghanistan in 2011–2012. This is an ongoing process, and key issues identified by the CPE include the following.

⇒ *Breadth versus depth*

44. The initial ambition of WFP's portfolio in Afghanistan reflected the optimism of the time, but funding and intensified conflict have caused operational constraints that have reduced what could reasonably be achieved within the timeframe. Reaching close to planned numbers of beneficiaries over successive years of PRRO implementation was a considerable achievement, but can mean less than optimal use of resources in areas where WFP is spread too thinly. Reduced frequency of food rations, for instance, diminishes the intervention's impact over time and compromises objectives of improving food security.

45. WFP has responded to operational constraints by reducing its scale, but retaining the same portfolio. With high-value food commodities – such as fortified biscuits for FFE – being no longer financially viable, and the PRRO operating at only about half of its projected funding, this approach is no longer tenable. Changes in vision and strategy should be reinforced by the new corporate guidance that focuses on results.

⇒ *Portfolio results*

46. Mother-and-child health and nutrition projects have shown some encouraging results, particularly where inter-agency collaboration has improved. In terms of actual versus planned outputs, the poorest performing portfolio activities in 2011 were FFE, FFT and cash/voucher schemes. Targeting has been a problem across all activities, especially GFD and cash/voucher schemes. Inclusion and exclusion errors have been most severe where food aid is distributed to conflict-displaced communities, partly because of access difficulties.

47. The humanitarian imperative will remain, not least because of the increase in conflict displacement that occurred in 2012. WFP will be obliged to answer the growing demand for food aid from those displaced or cut off in the winter months. The cross-agency approach to address acute malnutrition is encouraging.

48. For recovery activities, greater depth of coverage in selected geographical areas will build on WFP's comparative advantage, with increased integration and tracking of results within its own portfolio, combined with joint programming with other development actors in the field.

⇒ *Conflict analysis*

49. More thorough conflict analysis at the PRRO design stage may have enabled the PRRO to respond more proactively to volatility, such as by enabling greater awareness of likely risks, identifying priorities in the sequencing of activities, and developing mitigation and management strategies where changes and shifts – including reductions in scale and scope – were needed. Risk analysis – a fundamental element of conflict analysis – is now being undertaken more comprehensively, but there is need for more explicit recognition of the full spectrum

of risk, including political, strategic and those related to the political economy of the country, rather than merely operational risk.

50. WFP has been mainly reactive to operational constraints, rather than proactively designing conflict-sensitive activities. With such high-value commodities at its disposal, WFP has also been a victim of diversions and of poor cooperating-partner accountability, although ongoing institutional reforms – including efforts related to the compliance and operations units – should help address this.

⇒ ***Coherence***

51. WFP's alignment with national priorities has been strong, although subject to donor priorities. There is need for increased joint programming; declining funds make “go-it-alone” activities no longer viable. Recent collaboration in food security and nutrition policy and field practice with FAO and UNICEF should be continued and extended.

52. WFP has a strong voice in both the food security and nutrition clusters. Capacity development across the portfolio as a whole has not been as fruitful as it could have been; there has been a tendency to use partners as service delivery agents, rather than creating lasting institutional resources.

⇒ ***Political space, partnerships and future strategy***

53. There are increasing risks related to the operational and political ‘space’. The legitimacy of the Government is contested in some areas of Afghanistan. Revised partnership agreements will be crucial as WFP steers the difficult path between supporting government institutions and maintaining appropriate political neutrality that allows access to all communities in need.

54. A crucial prerequisite for future programming will be identifying the most appropriate delivery partners. A pragmatic solution, already under-way, is to build partnerships with non-government actors, while simultaneously helping to develop the Government's capacity in oversight, coordination and information management.

55. Afghanistan is likely to continue to be highly volatile over the medium term, resulting in a shrinking operational space for WFP, and reduced funding. To avoid repeating its earlier adaptive decision-making, WFP needs to balance its focus at the level of operational delivery with a more strategic and conflict-sensitive vision of the future.

Recommendations

56. The CPE make the following recommendations for action by the country office.

57. **Recommendation 1:** Reconfigure the overall portfolio in accordance with national priorities, the operating environment, and staff capacities.

1a) Use the ongoing strategic review and realignment process to concentrate the scope of the portfolio around key priorities in the medium term, possibly working in fewer communities, whilst retaining a longer term vision. Ensure a full conflict analysis to drive decision-making in the PRRO budget revision, including sequencing of projects, institutional capacity development, the use of strategic risk analysis, *Do No Harm Plus* tools, etc.

1b) Given the need to nationalize staff posts and increase remote management, increase resources and staffing for compliance issues and provide communities with a greater voice over accountability and reporting.

1c) Review internal management, staff training and capacity to better reflect the more concentrated portfolio and incorporate the need for ongoing risk assessment.

58. Recommendation 2: Ensure that WFP is strategically positioned for maximum effectiveness.

Refine targeting throughout the PRRO cycle through a regularly updated NRVA complemented by improved data collection using vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), focusing on areas of highest food insecurity. The new data from the NRVA and VAM should be combined with ongoing United Nations assessments of access. Continue to work through the food security and agriculture cluster and the nutrition cluster to press for enhanced targeting, integration and joint programming.

59. Recommendation 3: Make programming fit for context.

3a) Retain the capacity for emergency response (GFD/FFW and MCHN) while reducing the time lag in the assessment process, particularly for conflict-displaced populations.

3b) Prioritize recovery operations based on monitoring feedback on their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency over the preceding period, with FFA linked to community resilience taking a prominent role.

3c) Retain the TB incentive programme, but with clearer reporting on objectives.

3d) Consider a scale reduction and redesign of FFE.

3e) Use the limited urban safety net initiative where feasible to underpin the development of a national social protection policy.

60. Recommendation 4: Improve operational partnerships.

4a) Scale up joint programming opportunities with complementary United Nations and donor initiatives.

4b) Devise clear criteria for cooperating partner selection, based on effectiveness and efficiency of delivery, and develop relationships based on clear and detailed contracts that specify expectations, roles and responsibilities for both parties.

4c) Examine ways to enhance NGO partnerships through a combination of implementation and capacity development. Long-term relationships with fewer communities are likely to be the way forward.

4d) Increase community level communications and advocacy for entitlements; these should include a gender perspective.

4e) Introduce staff incentive structures that reflect time spent in coordination and collaboration as part of joint planning and initiatives with other development actors.

61. Recommendation 5: Increase focus on national ownership.

5a) Develop a stronger and more explicit focus on developing national capacity for coordinating and facilitating service delivery.

5b) Increase support to the Central Statistics Office for the development of, for example, a rolling NRVA.

62. **Recommendation 6:** Improve the focus on gender and protection quality issues in WFP programming.

6a) Renew emphasis on gender and protection analysis in activity design and implementation strategies for targeted and mainstreamed programmes and for monitoring and reporting, drawing on strategic partnerships and in-country resources. This would include the development of a series of immediate, short- and medium-term actions to improve focus on and accountability for gender equality. A country office vision statement should be developed, with intended results and delivery strategies for gender equality. Conduct a gender audit of the portfolio, leading ultimately to a full gender mainstreaming strategy for the new country strategy and redesigned PRRO. Draw on strategic partnerships and in-country resources.

6b) Conduct a full “*Do No Harm Plus*” analysis of the portfolio, leading ultimately to a statement on how protection issues will be addressed in the new country strategy and PRRO redesign.

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation Features

1. The World Food Programme (WFP) Office of Evaluation (OE) commissioned an independent country portfolio evaluation (CPE)¹⁰ for Afghanistan that encompasses the entirety of WFP activities from April 2010 to June 2012. The evaluation results will complement an on-going process of developing a WFP Country Strategy and an extension of PRRO 200063. This in turn will lead to the preparation of the next protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO), to begin in April 2013.

2. The rationale for this CPE is to provide evidence-based insights on the positioning of WFP in Afghanistan, its strategic partnerships, programme design, and implementation, and to evaluate the performance and results of the portfolio as a whole.¹¹ Associated with this is a review of the comparative advantage of WFP Afghanistan in a particularly challenging environment, the priorities and strategies of Government and other non-state actors, and good practices in humanitarian/recovery response while working in fragile/conflict states. The final report presents a balance between retrospective accountability (March 2010 – December 2011 of the PRRO) and a more updated assessment of events and trends (first quarter of 2012).

3. The Afghanistan CPE took place nearly two-thirds of the way through its major relief and recovery operation (PRRO 200063). Afghanistan is a country at war; its ongoing conflict presents serious security and access difficulties. In such a volatile and fluid setting it has been important to weigh risks against potential gains and to highlight what works best in such a difficult context.

4. In addressing its dual objectives of accountability and learning this report:

(i) assesses and reports on the performance and results of the country portfolio in line with the WFP mandate and in response to humanitarian and development challenges in Afghanistan (accountability); and

(ii) determines the reasons for observed success/failure, drawing lessons from experience to produce evidence-based findings that allow the country office to make informed strategic decisions about positioning itself in Afghanistan, form strategic partnerships, and improve operations design and implementation whenever possible (learning).¹²

5. The evaluation began with a document review and an Inception Visit and Report that included a brief mission to Kabul by the Team Leader and Senior Evaluator, plus the Evaluation Manager and consultant/assistant from OE Rome, from 10-14 March 2012. Immediately after this, a 5-person National Team of independent evaluators undertook field missions in five locations corresponding to five WFP area offices. They spent seven days in each location interviewing stakeholders and recipients of WFP assistance and validating the qualitative data

¹⁰ Country Portfolio Evaluations help country offices in the preparation of Country Strategies and provide lessons that can be used in the design of new operations (Terms of Reference – see Annex 1)

¹¹ Terms of Reference (see Annex 1)

¹² Terms of Reference (see Annex 1)

contained in regular country office reports against a structured questionnaire and methodology (see Inception Report, separately available). A comprehensive evaluation matrix was applied to develop evaluation judgements based on the evidence available. The full list of persons met is set out in Annex 2, and the methodology for the study in Annex 3.

6. The 3-person international team completed the evaluation in Kabul from 6-13 May, interviewing members of the WFP country office, government officials, United Nations agencies, key donors and NGO (non-governmental organization) representatives (see list of Persons Met in Annex 2). Finally, the Team Leader and Senior Evaluator revisited Kabul (with the Director of OE and Evaluation Manager from OE, Rome) from 23-28 June to validate findings with the country office and an invited group of government, donors, United Nations agencies and NGOs.

7. The volatile and insecure environment of Afghanistan imposed far higher levels of risk and greater limitations than in less challenging country contexts. The main limitations to evaluability are linked to this context, as below:

(i) The difficulties of security and access constraints linked to Afghanistan's ongoing conflict. These severely limited both time available in the field and the ability of the international team to travel outside Kabul. The use of an Afghani national team partially mitigated this difficulty, given their greater ability to travel to area offices and beyond, though this team was also subject to challenging security constraints.

(ii) The extreme data paucity¹³ common to conflict zones but particularly intensive in Afghanistan affects all donors and agencies, including WFP. This has been mitigated as much as possible through e.g. adopting a mixed-method approach, using multiple sources and a standardized format for field site reporting. The evaluation has consequently adopted a more qualitative approach.

(iii) Time lag constraints; the evaluation period is 2010-2011, presenting methodological challenges in accruing data (qualitative and quantitative) over the previous two years. Efforts have been made to focus on the institutional memory, as far as it exists, over the period, and also to capture current developments as they have occurred.

1.2 Country Context

8. Afghanistan is a country, not a war. If seen purely through the prism of war, the short-term demand for 'stabilization', defined essentially by external actors, engulfs and obscures those developmental concerns whose trajectory is much longer than the latest phase of foreign occupancy. The departure of the bulk of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) combat troops under NATO (North Atlantic Treaty

¹³ These include extremely limited national datasets (the last census in Afghanistan took place in 1979; the national food security dataset (the NRVA, described below) dates from 2006/7. Other national datasets have similar weaknesses. WFP's own internal monitoring and evaluation systems only became fully operational in 2011 and have suffered from significant data quality constraints also. Other challenges include the extreme difficulties of security and access for both WFP and the evaluation team, including national team members, plus the very limited institutional memory available given the high turnover of staffing within international agencies and Government in Kabul.

Organisation) command by the end of 2014 has to some extent sharpened the debate over medium-term priorities in this ‘fragile’ state – and perhaps no more so than in basic health and food security.

9. The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA) 2007/08, a sample of over 20,000 households from all 34 provinces in Afghanistan conducted over the previous two years, provides the following starting point for this evaluation:

10. *“Afghanistan faces a severe problem of poor nutrition and food insecurity. Chronic malnutrition among Afghan children is one of the highest in the world. More than half (54 percent) of Afghan children under age five are stunted (chronically malnourished) and over a third (34 percent) are underweight. Around 72 percent of children (under age 5) suffer from the deficiency of key micro-nutrients (such as iron and iodine). These poor nutritional outcomes are closely linked to the state of food security in the country. More than a quarter (29 percent) of Afghan population cannot meet its calorie requirement, that is, it consumes less than 2100 calories per day. Twenty percent of the population consumes a diet that lacks adequate dietary diversity, thus affecting their micro-nutrient intake. Moreover, the problem of food insecurity compounds in lean seasons (for example during the spring season) when 33 percent of the population suffers from calorie deficiency and 24 percent from poor diet.”*¹⁴

Wheat production

11. Notwithstanding the outdated (up to seven years) data upon which this is based, some further caution is required in depicting Afghanistan’s food deficit as a ‘crisis’. In the post-2001 period, a humanitarian agenda drove the initial international response and was based on assumptions of destruction and disaster, even if field evidence did not support such an interpretation. Grain markets did not “fail”, other than in the broad sense of not providing sufficient for the population.¹⁵ It would be more accurate to describe a cyclical pattern of good and bad years of drought and relatively good harvests, with an underlying perennial dependence on grain imports from neighbouring countries. Pakistan accounts for around 50 percent of the wheat and flour import sources, with additional substantial imports from Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. But this has rendered Afghans susceptible to global and regional food price fluctuations, particularly following the dramatic rise in international food prices from 2007-2008. During this period, Afghanistan experienced several shocks that led to a disruption of its food supply network, causing prices to soar throughout the country.¹⁶

12. Agricultural production is constrained by an almost total dependence on erratic winter snows and spring rains for water. Despite the fact that only 12 percent of total land area is arable and less than 6 percent is currently cultivated, more than

¹⁴ World Bank, ‘Poverty and Food Security in Afghanistan’, February 2012.

¹⁵ A. Pain and J. Sutton, ‘Introduction: Reconstructing Agriculture in Afghanistan,’ in *Reconstructing Agriculture in Afghanistan*, ed. A. Pain and J. Sutton, 1-10 (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization and Practical Action, 2007).

¹⁶ In 2008 prices of domestic wheat and wheat flour rose by over 100 percent and the urban food consumer price index (CPI) increasing nearly 60 percent. Because of the lack of dietary diversity, many households including the poor were forced to engage in negative quality-quantity tradeoffs or coping strategies comprising changing the composition of their diet from meat, fruits and vegetables toward lower quality, cheaper foods like wheat in order to maintain caloric intake (WFP Strategic Review, 2011).

80 percent of Afghanistan's population is involved in farming, herding or both.¹⁷ Yet subsistence wheat production in Afghanistan cannot compete, price-wise, with imported wheat, and in lean years (and out of season) Afghans depend on cash to purchase food when levels of own-production are insufficient. The onus is then shifted towards seasonal production of alternative cash crops (fruit, nuts, and opium) and the agricultural infrastructure and watershed management required to sustain these. Low productivity is exacerbated by the lack of an enabling institutional environment. Irrigation and water management is poor and most farmers continue to use rudimentary production technology. Research and extension services and input and output markets are inaccessible particularly to smallholder farmers in rural areas.¹⁸

13. Wheat is both the major crop and staple; wheat flour contributes 57 percent to the total caloric content of the average bundle of food items of the relatively poor with rice, maize, barley, vegetables, fruits and nuts playing minor roles.¹⁹ Because of the country's semi-arid to sub-humid climate, seasonality is a critical determinant of food security as is topography. Temperatures vary dramatically from hot summers to frigid winters, and climate in the highlands fluctuates with elevation. Roads in high mountainous areas are frequently blocked throughout the winter due to heavy snow accumulation, reinforcing the importance of food pre-positioning, and recurring flooding and droughts adversely impact food production due to inadequacy of engineered systems in irrigated areas and continued dependence on rain-fed cultivation.

14. Afghanistan has, however, the potential for high agricultural output and has good water sources. Only 30 percent of existing water sources are used. Reconstruction of irrigation systems and investments in watershed management could increase food production to the extent that arguably the country could become self-sufficient in food and agricultural production.²⁰ Yet a recent study found that from 2002-2009 changes outside of poor people's control - including drought, the ban on opium poppy cultivation and rising global food prices - has led to large decreases in agricultural production, threatening food security. Meanwhile, families in more remote regions have fewer viable options for market production, pointing to the necessity to improve subsistence production as part of a social protection strategy, rather than rely wholly on a market economy.²¹ The skewed distribution of land and the impunity of land grabbing by local elites continues to be a source of frustration.²²

Local power structures

15. Geography is of huge importance and location is linked to other processes associated with shifting markets (opium poppy, for example), reconstruction efforts,

¹⁷ USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) 'Agriculture in Afghanistan', briefing paper.

<http://www.fas.usda.gov/country/afghanistan/us-afghanistan.asp>

¹⁸ Pesticides and/or herbicides are used by less than 2 percent of agricultural households due to lack of access and knowledge. (MIAL. Draft Food for Life NNP. 2012).

¹⁹The World Bank. Rising Food Prices and Coping Strategies: Household-level Evidence from Afghanistan. Anna D'Souza and Dean Jolliffe. The World Bank South Asia Region, Economic Policy and Poverty Team. November 2010.

²⁰ Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), Report on the Situation of Economic and Social Rights in Afghanistan - IV Qaws 1388 (November/December 2009)

²¹ Paul Kantor & Afdam Pain, 'Running out of options: tracing rural Afghan livelihoods', AREU, January 2011.

²² IS Academie (2011), Food Security and Land Governance Factsheet, April 2011

insecurity and climate effects (drought and flooding, for example). While all of this exists within the wider environment of the statebuilding exercise in Afghanistan, the strength of informal and local structures in rural Afghanistan exist precisely because of the long history of conflict and problematic relations with the state. Regional identities are closely linked to political contention with the Afghan state. Even in very recent history new provinces have been created to accommodate and assimilate powerful individuals. Throughout its history, a political equilibrium between competing elites has been reached in Afghanistan without the central state achieving an overall monopoly of power, force or revenue collection²³.

16. Poverty kills more Afghans than those who die as a direct result of the armed conflict. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights states bluntly: “(Poverty) is both a cause and a consequence of a massive human rights deficit. The deficit includes widespread impunity and inadequate investment in, and attention to, human rights. Patronage, corruption, impunity and over-emphasis on short-term goals rather than targeted long-term development are exacerbating a situation of dire poverty that is the condition of an overwhelming majority of Afghans.”²⁴

17. The language of poverty reduction in Afghanistan often assumes that the correlates of poverty—few assets, poor health and low income, for example — are the causes of poverty. This can sometimes overlook the structures that give rise to poverty differences — within the village, between villages, between districts and between provinces. The starting point for any useful contextual analysis of Afghanistan’s predominantly rural society is the immediate environment of the village and the social and power relations within it – for example those of gender and exclusion. Beyond this are the associated social and political relations. Recent research has confirmed that broadly speaking the more egalitarian, less hierarchical subsistence societies are in the north and central mountain areas (Badakshan, Balkh, for instance), whereas the relatively richer but socially less equal, and more hierarchical, agricultural surplus societies are in the plains (Kandahar, Helmand, Nangarhar, Herat, for instance).²⁵

Health and education

18. In terms of health and education Afghanistan has some of the region’s worst social indicators. Only about 15 percent of Afghans have access to basic health services; life expectancy at birth is 40 years for Afghan men and 44 years for women.²⁶ Access to prenatal and postnatal care as well as skilled attendance during birth are limited, resulting in record high mortality rates.²⁷ Adult literacy rates are the lowest in the world.²⁸ Post-Taliban initiatives such as the back-to-school campaign increased school enrolment seven-fold between 2002 and 2009, culminating in school attendance of 6.2 million pupils in 2008 compared with

²³ Jana Imrichová (2011), ‘The Afghan power structure: towards effective governance’ Euro Atlantic Quarterly, 14th December 2011

²⁴ UNHCHR (2010), ‘Human Rights Dimension of Poverty in Afghanistan’, Kabul, March 2010.

²⁵ Adam Pain and Paul Kantor, ‘Understanding and Addressing Context in Rural Afghanistan: how villages differ and why’, AREU, December 2010.

²⁶ World Health Statistics 2010

²⁷ Maternal mortality rates are 1,800 per 100,000 live births, infant mortality of 165 per 1,000 live births and under 5 mortality of 257 per 1,000 live births Cited in World Food Programme. Protracted Relief & Recovery Operations - Afghanistan 200063 - Relief Food Assistance to Tackle Food Security Challenges. February 2010.

²⁸ 12 percent for women, the lowest in the world, and 39 percent for men.

1 million in 2001.²⁹ But despite this achievement, up to 1.2 million children – though registered – are permanently absent from school³⁰ and of the over 4.8 million children registered in primary classes in 2009, only 39 percent were girls. Literacy issues among teachers are problematic.³¹

Displacement and migration

19. By early 2012 the total displaced population in Afghanistan stood at about 500,000.³² Conflict-induced displacement rose rapidly in the previous year (186,000), and conditions for some were made even worse by the particularly harsh 2011-2012 winter. Long-term displacement is a feature of the conflict: UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) figures for March 2011 showed that a quarter of IDPs (internally displaced persons) were displaced before December 2002 both by natural disaster and conflict.³³ The top five provinces receiving IDPs are Helmand, Nangarhar, Herat, Kandahar and Farah; while the top five provinces emitting IDPs are Helmand, Badghis, Faryab, Farah and Khost. The IDP crisis has not only humanitarian consequences but also wide reaching political and social consequences, ranging from ethnic tension between displaced groups, localised conflict over resources, to extremist militant recruitment of discontented displaced males.³⁴

20. Equally, urbanization and underemployment have political consequences. Although 80 percent of the population live in rural areas, with increasing mobilization and internal displacement urbanization the city population is rapidly increasing. The three main cities of Kabul, Kandahar and Herat have populations of 2.5 million, 450,000, and 350,000 respectively. Seasonal labour migration, especially with neighbouring Pakistan and Iran, is common as are the corresponding remittances.

21. The United Nations has led a series of Consolidated Appeals Processes (CAPs) for Afghanistan. In 2011 the drought-related CAP was for US\$679 million.³⁵ About a third of this was for food security and agriculture (with the largest percentage going to WFP).³⁶ At government level it is the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) that is the principal institution with the mandate to coordinate and manage all the aspects related to disasters mitigation, preparedness and response through its national and provincial offices. With assistance from UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), a new National Disaster Management Plan was prepared in 2010, to be managed by a National Commission.³⁷ This takes into account the current status of risks, in terms of hazards, vulnerability, infrastructure availability, institutional capacities and constitutional clarity.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰MoE, Initial Assessment of the Afghanistan National Education Strategic Plan (NESP II) 1389-1393, June 2010.

³¹ Key informant interview, Inception Visit, Kabul March 9-14.

³² Amnesty International, 'Fleeing War, Finding Misery: the plight of the internally displaced in Afghanistan', 2012.

³³ UNHCR, 'UNHCR Afghanistan – Statistical Summary of Internal Displacement in Afghanistan (updated as of 31 March 2011)'.

³⁴ *Why Afghan returnees could become Taliban recruits*, article by Teri Schultz, Global Post, June 20, 2011.

³⁵ In 2012 the CAP (with an emphasis on displacement) requested just over US\$437 million).

³⁶ <http://ochaonline.un.org/cap2006/webpage.asp?Page=1999>.

³⁷ Manu Gupta (UNDP), 'National Disaster Management Plan 2010 Afghanistan', ANDMA, October 2010.

Policy and Governance

22. The Afghan Government with support from the international community has over the last four years embarked on the process of developing and beginning to implement a poverty reduction strategy paper – the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Within the food security and agricultural sector, the National Agricultural Development Framework (NADF) was developed in 2009/10 and emphasizes improved physical infrastructure and market development.

23. Despite its considerable rhetoric about pro-poor growth and inclusion, critics have pointed to the missing analysis of Afghan social life and the presence of social inequality and unequal power relations, and their role in creating and maintaining poverty.³⁸ This has important consequences for the scale and complexity of the WFP portfolio and the levels of monitoring possible within it.

24. Corruption has become a major concern in Afghanistan. The NRVA identified four main causes of Afghanistan's vulnerability to corruption: weak state institutions and rule of law, the illicit drug market, vertical layers of contracting and sub-contracting; and the huge inflow of foreign funds. Afghan 'opinion surveys' - the latest tool in a country awash with political analysis³⁹ – suggest that spending too much too quickly with too little oversight in insecure environments is “a recipe for fuelling corruption, de-legitimizing the Afghan Government, and undermining the credibility of international actors.”⁴⁰ Most surveys underline the fact that corruption is a key source of discontent, and that international aid organizations rarely appreciate, let alone address, the danger that their assistance will exacerbate this.⁴¹

Aid management

25. The amount of international aid disbursed to Afghanistan since 2001 – US\$57 billion against US\$90 billion pledged – has entirely reshaped the economy.⁴² Just two United States of America government agencies – the State Department and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) – spend US\$320 million per month on development in Afghanistan.⁴³ With aid estimated at US\$15.4 billion in 2010/11 and international military spend exceeding US\$100 billion, the World Bank has raised concerns over severe economic distortion.⁴⁴ For example, with unemployment at about 36-40 percent, there is an overreliance on service-sector jobs based around the presence of international actors

³⁸ Paula Kantor and Adam Pain, 'The Role of Social Resources in Securing Life and Livelihood in Rural Afghanistan', Working Paper No.12, January 2011, Bath Papers in International Development, University of Bath.

³⁹ The Asia Foundation, ICG and Tufts University have headed the plethora of opinion surveys currently available. There has been some concern that these polls have disproportionate influence. See, for example, Oliver Lough, 'Reading the Asia Foundation's Afghan Voter Behaviour Survey', <http://registan.net/index.php/2012/04/25/behind-the-numbers-reading-the-asia-foundations-afghan-voter-behavior-survey/>

⁴⁰ Wilder, Andrew & Stuart Gordon (2009) 'Money Can't Buy American Love', *Foreign Policy*, December 2009, with findings derived from the Fishstein/Wilder research report 'Winning Hearts and Minds: examining the relationship between aid and security in Afghanistan', Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, January 2012.

⁴¹ Civil-Military Fusion Centre, 'Corruption and Anti-Corruption Issues in Afghanistan', February 2012.

⁴² Mohammed Latif (2011), 'Foreign Aid and Economic Development in Afghanistan', University of Erfurt.

⁴³ United States Senate (2011) Evaluating US Foreign Assistance to Afghanistan: Report for the Committee on Foreign Relations (8 June).

⁴⁴ World Bank Afghanistan Country Team (2011) 'Issues and Challenges for Transition and Sustainable Growth in Afghanistan: DRAFT' (26 July).

(e.g. guards, drivers, the property letting market), and a property bubble exists in the main cities.

26. Total aid to Afghanistan represents 40-50 percent of GDP, and contributes 91 percent of the Afghan Government's public spending. By contrast, only about 20 percent of total non-military aid has passed through the Government.⁴⁵ At the Kabul conference in February 2011, a commitment was made to raise this to 50 percent in a bid to enhance Afghan ownership. This was further promoted through pledges totalling US\$16 billion committed at the Tokyo Conference in July 2012.⁴⁶

The United Nations Integrated Mission

27. The Integrated Mission has provided a platform to strengthen synergy between the political mandate of UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) and the development and humanitarian work of other United Nations agencies in-country. Under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) was developed for complementary action, defining five additional priorities for collaboration: 1) Peace, reconciliation and reintegration; 2) Human rights; 3) Governance and rule of law; 4) Maternal and newborn health, and 5) Sustainable livelihoods. This relationship has had both benefits (security support in terms of flights, co-locations in insecure areas) but also challenges (public confusion of the political versus development mandates of the United Nations, perceived collusion with foreign military because of political mandate etc.). WFP and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) have, along with many of their NGO partners, argued for the separation of the Humanitarian Coordinator role (and person) from the 'triple hat' duties of Deputy SRSG to ensure that humanitarian and access issues are not confused with the political mandate of the mission. Though they have not been successful in this endeavour, the debate continues.

1.3 WFP's Portfolio in Afghanistan

28. The Afghanistan protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) was launched in April 2010 with the aim of enhancing food security and improving the human and productive capital of some 7.6 million food-insecure Afghans. The projected target was 816,882 mt of food costing more than US\$1.2 billion, making it the second largest PRRO in the world and representing 9 percent of WFP's total global budget.⁴⁷ The PRRO was re-prioritized to 4.5 million beneficiaries over the next period from mid-2011 through a reduction in food for education (FFE) and the passing of activities in the 14 drought-affected provinces to the Emergency Operation (EMOP). Over three years it comprises the following activities:

Relief

(i) **Emergency food assistance:** general food distributions (GFD) to populations affected by shocks, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees, mainly in rural areas. Through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

⁴⁵ International Crisis Group, 'Aid and Conflict in Afghanistan', Asia Report No 210, 4 August 2011.

⁴⁶ Reuters, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/07/08/afghanistan-aid-idINDEE86700820120708>.

⁴⁷ WFP Management Plan 2012-2014, Executive Summary, Follow-Up Briefing, 5 October 2011.

(UNHCR) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), food packages are provided to the displaced population. Where possible food for assets / food for work is undertaken.

(ii) **Urban safety net project**, primarily for households headed by disabled people or widows with limited employment opportunities and who are not supported by other safety net mechanisms. This is a cash/food voucher system.

(iii) **Mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN)**: to stabilize acute malnutrition, targeted supplementary feeding for children under 5, pregnant and lactating women. The activity, based in health centres, is done in conjunction with other partners' activities such as therapeutic feeding and growth monitoring.

Recovery

(iv) **Food for assets/training (FFA)**: in disaster-prone areas, FFA projects are primarily micro-catchment watershed management, irrigation systems, etc in central highlands, north and east, and vocational skills training. With beneficiaries selected by the Community Development Councils/shuras, the assistance is primarily for vulnerable groups such as IDPs and returnees.

(v) **Food for education and food for training (FFE/FFT)**: FFE is targeted at food-insecure districts with poor education indicators, with the aim is of improving enrolment and retention. For all area-selected primary schools, the main commodity it delivers are high energy biscuits (consumed at school). For some schools with particularly poor gender enrolment ratios, it includes a take-home ration incentive for girls. A Wet Feeding pilot has operated in 8 provinces⁴⁸ which provide on-site meals of around 645 Kcal per day to the individual. FFT includes vocational training and literacy training activities targeted firstly (but not exclusively) at women - widows, woman-headed households, disabled people and unemployed young people are given priority.

(vi) **Tuberculosis (TB)**: through local health clinics where patients receive their DOTS (directly observed treatment short-course) medication, food assistance packages are provided to improve nutritional status and increase adherence to treatment and completion rates.

Capacity Development

Capacity development is a cross-cutting component of the PRRO with the intention to "continue to enhance the capacity of the Government (and partners) to analyze food security and manage food assistance programmes with progressive handing over of responsibilities whenever possible".⁴⁹ These outcomes cover all sub-programmes, but more specifically the following four portfolio activities are interventions with a particular emphasis on capacity development:

- **Strategic grain reserve and community storage facilities**: this activity provides technical and financial support to Government for the provision of a strategic grain reserve complemented by community-level storage facilities as well as support to silo construction and training of government staff in procurement, logistics, storage and handling, and early warning identification.

⁴⁸ Laghman, Nangarhar, Panjsher, Daikundi, Balkh, Sar-e-Pol, Herat and Badakhshan from 2009.

⁴⁹ PRRO document, 2010.

- **Purchase for Progress (P4P):**⁵⁰ still at the pilot stage, the ambition was to link farmers associations with the local market and to purchase their produce for the PRRO. Local purchase was relatively limited, but food processing and production through the private sector has progressed (for results, see section 2.3.3)
- **Flour fortification:** this includes micro-feeders and training provided to private millers to fortify flour for commercial use, including some purchases by WFP.
- **Establishment of a vulnerability and surveillance system and market analysis:** capacity development towards the production of the new forthcoming National Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (NRVA) (Central Statistics Office), a national early warning system, and the regular collection of market information (including cross-border monitoring).

29. A Strategic Review and realignment began in mid-2011, a process that is still ongoing and one to which this evaluation will contribute. The review, undertaken by the WFP country office, reflects three changes in the working environment: worsening security (a curtailment of operational areas and uncertainties surrounding the drawdown of ISAF troops in the coming two years), donor retraction (much reduced from the initially over ambitious PRRO budget), and the shifting priorities of the Government of Afghanistan as they increasingly move towards bilateral and International Financial Institution (IFI) funding and away from reliance on multilateral support. For WFP it has been necessary to considerably reduce the direct expenditures associated with delivering food commodities, while also curtailing the geographical scope of activities in less secure areas. Conceptually, the PRRO remains as it was – a food assistance programme designed to alleviate food insecurity and address acute and chronic malnutrition - but operationally its scope is being concentrated on what is feasible and can be accounted for in an increasingly difficult environment. In short, the WFP portfolio over the next two years is likely to be less than a third of what was forecast in early 2010, a situation that has demanded a fundamental reappraisal of the PRRO strategy, with priorities still very much under debate.

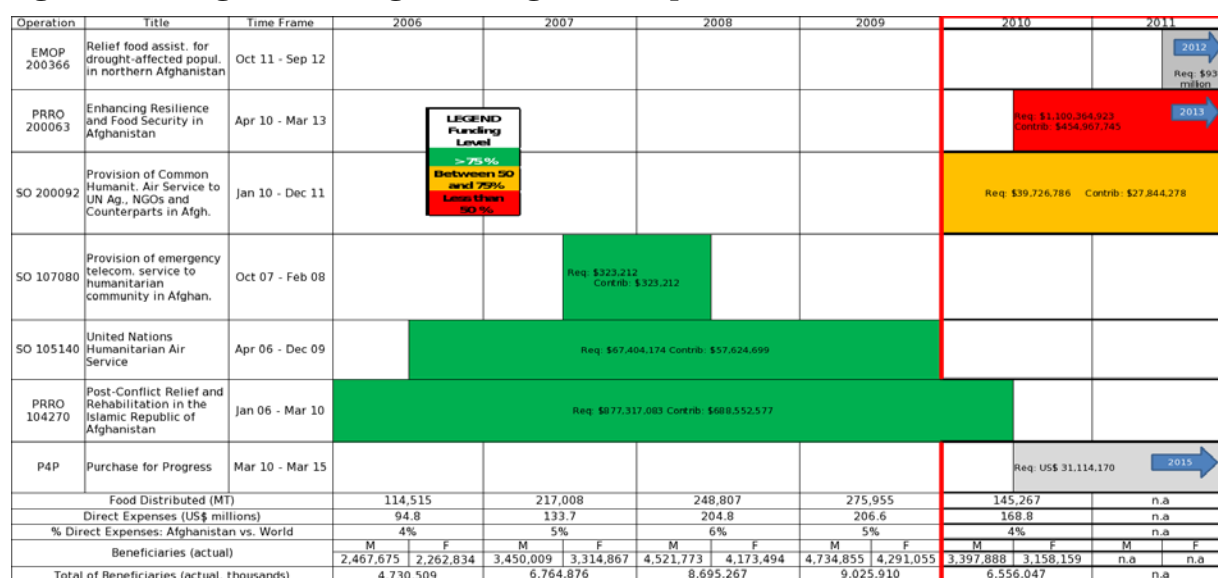
30. Figure 1 indicates the continuity within the WFP portfolio over the last five years or so. It now includes four elements: the PRRO, the Special Operation (SO, the common humanitarian air service managed by WFP), the Emergency Operation (EMOP, begun in December 2011) and the Purchase for Progress (P4P). Although the P4P is separately funded, it is treated as an element within the PRRO, and is covered by the evaluation. The EMOP is not evaluated, though elements within the PRRO were transferred to the EMOP in 14 drought-affected provinces at the end of 2011. In short, the evaluation covers only the PRRO (including the P4P) and the SO.

- (i) **Special Operation (air services):** WFP runs the United Nations Common Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) to United Nations Agencies, NGOs, Diplomatic Missions and Media agencies in Afghanistan. The service operates on a partial cost recovery basis. In 2010 to 2011 UNHAS expected to cover approximately 60 percent of the costs through ticket sales, while the

⁵⁰ P4P is not technically part of the PRRO since it is funded through a global WFP project. However, since it is an integral part of the country portfolio, we have included it in the CPE.

remaining 40 percent was raised through donor contributions. This service was to provide three aircrafts, operating on three different routes within and out of Afghanistan. Due to insufficient donor resources in 2010, WFP cancelled the use of one of the three aircrafts (B-200) in order to make best use of available resources. As an additional part of this operation an emergency medical evacuation service to Kabul and/or Dubai is made available to aid workers requiring urgent medical treatment. A full review of this service is covered in Annex 4.

Figure 1: Timing and funding of the Afghanistan portfolio



31. Table 1 indicates original planning figures for the current PRRO. The evaluation comments below on changes in the delivery and percentages across the portfolio. Table 2 gives an overview of required expenditures and actual receipts over a five year period.

Table 1: Distribution of portfolio activities PRRO 200063

	Education	Nutrition	GFD	Cash*	FFW/FFA/FFT	HIV/TB
PRRO 200063	X	X	X	X	X	X
Planned % of beneficiaries	43	4	43		7	3
Actual % of beneficiaries	45	3	39		9	4

Source: WFP Dakota

* Beneficiary share not available for PRRO 200063 as activity was implemented in Feb. 2011

Table 2: Portfolio direct expenditure over 5 years

Requirements vs. Direct Expenses - Afghanistan (US\$, millions)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Gross Requirements	185.5	331.6	339.5	357.0	385.3
Direct Expenses*	133.7	204.8	206.6	168.8	194.2
Gap	51.8	126.7	132.9	187.9	<a 191.0
D. Exp. Vs. Requirements (%)	72%	62%	61%	47%	50%

Source: WFP ODXR Unit (2010 figures from ODXR PoW 18 August 2011); APR 2010 and 2008 (*).

Gross Requirements: Needs (US\$, millions); Direct Expenses (US\$, millions); Excludes PSA costs.

*2009 & 2010 expenses are according to IPSAS and not comparable to 2008 & previous years' values based on UNSAS.

2. Evaluation Findings

32. This chapter presents findings about the substantive choices made by WFP ('did they do the right thing?') and the methods applied to achieve results ('did they do things in the right way?'), plus the results consequently generated. The three following sections cover some key questions as follows:

i) **Alignment.** The strategic alignment of the country portfolio in relation to needs, government priorities, partners on the ground, and international good practice in relation to fragile states;

ii) **Strategy.** The factors that have driven strategic decision making, including contextual analysis, levels of technical expertise, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems, targeting, coverage, gender analysis, funding patterns and security constraints;

iii) **Results.** Efficiency, effectiveness and measurable results of the portfolio, 2010-2011. The section is sub-divided into relief, recovery and capacity development (with the various portfolio activities).

2.1 Strategic alignment

33. The first section concerns relevance and coherence; that is, the alignment and strategic positioning of the country portfolio with national needs and the policy priorities of key actors in the country.

34. The design stage of PRRO 200063 in 2009 took place in a very different environment from that of mid-2012. For the previous eight years the dominant discourse in most international circles on Afghanistan focused on statebuilding and development, the assumption being that a linear path towards improved governance and a state-owned development agenda was achievable if linked to high levels of international engagement. WFP's major donors encouraged it to 'think big' in the design of the PRRO – hence the large figures within a 36-month portfolio, of almost 817,000 metric tons of food assistance costing some US\$1.2 billion.⁵¹

⁵¹ Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations – Afghanistan 200063, submitted to the WFP Executive Board in February 2010.

35. Within the first year of the PRRO, the climate in Afghanistan had changed dramatically. Exogenous factors included a marked deterioration in security that had begun two years before but gained pace in 2009-2010 with a commensurate reduction in the operational scope of the programme and increasing concerns (and cost) of security for all international actors.⁵² The security transition process that formally began the exit strategy for international forces in March 2011 was accompanied by a more conservative financial outlook by WFP's major donors and an overall reduction that saw the PRRO funded only to 45 percent in 2011, with even further reductions anticipated in 2012. Related endogenous factors included a far reduced capacity to closely monitor outputs, with the realization that diversion of high-value food commodities was of increasing concern and likely to get worse unless a radical reappraisal of WFP's operational scale and scope was undertaken.

36. The original PRRO design did not undertake or apply, and therefore did not rest upon, a thorough conflict analysis.⁵³ In its absence, the PRRO was never likely to be sufficiently adaptive and responsive to contextual changes as they emerged. A carry-over of some 100,000 metric tons of food from the previous PRRO enabled the Organization to operate at almost the planned scale in 2010. Yet, at the same time, WFP became increasingly aware that the distribution of large quantities of food commodities carried increasing risks of corruption and/or mis-targeting; and this in itself provoked something of a crisis over accountability as the operating environment contracted. Despite the appropriate shift from food aid to food assistance, only from mid-2011 onwards has there been a serious reappraisal of what is possible given the increasingly constricted operational landscape.

WFP Objectives and needs on the ground

37. Despite the considerable evidence of the NRVA, the related UNICEF-led Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)⁵⁴ and the Emergency Food Assessment carried out in drought-affected districts in 2011, all of which point to chronic food insecurity as a major national challenge, WFP acknowledges that, given the extremities of the context and reduced funding available, they are unable to make a significant inroad into addressing this at scale in Afghanistan. They can only contribute, as far as resources permit, to reductions in food insecurity in certain targeted populations. Indeed, there is still some debate over the utility of food aid in Afghanistan, other than the provision of food commodities for immediate life-saving relief and targeted nutritional needs.⁵⁵

38. An important question is whether, despite the extreme constraints under which it is operating, WFP nevertheless can make a significant contribution to responding to needs within the limitations of its resources and using its available modalities effectively. WFP's corporate de-emphasis on food aid, and the commensurate shift towards food assistance has been appropriate to Afghanistan.

⁵² For WFP, there was almost a US\$15 million increase in staff, office and vehicle security costs in 2010-2011.

⁵³ Security and access concerns were considered, but a full conflict analysis would include such issues as causes of conflict, stakeholders and risk, sequencing and prioritization, validation etc. See for example OECD (2011), Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility: Policy Guidance, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD Publishing. DFID also has conflict analysis tools available.

⁵⁴ Being conducted by UNICEF, with efforts being made to harmonize efforts with WFP through e.g. use of PAT teams.

⁵⁵ The debate is obviously wider than Afghanistan, but a new report has again examined the relationship between food aid, conflict and corruption in weak states: Nathan Nunn & Nancy Qian, 'Aiding Conflict: The Impact of U.S. Food Aid on Civil War', National Bureau of Economic Research, January 2012, Washington.

The question is whether food commodities as a form of transfer (GFD, FFA, and FFT) deliver their intended results and meet cost-efficiency requirements. If cash is an alternative, the caveat is that the country is subject to high levels of corruption, geographical isolation and a weak banking system in many areas.

Alignment with Government

39. The evaluation found WFP to be closely aligned with the evolving general 'architecture' of government policy. Yet, despite the Government's overall commitment to food security, there has been some incoherence over national strategies in this respect. The mandate for food and nutrition security has been dispersed across several agencies - Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) and the Ministry of Education (MoE). And their partnership with the international community through a cluster system (Agriculture and Rural Development; Human Resources; and others) focuses only on specific aspects of the problem.⁵⁶ For instance, the National Agricultural Development Framework was developed in 2009/10 and emphasizes improved physical infrastructure and market development. Despite an emphasis on wheat imports, food aid and a strategic grain reserve to counter food price increases and drought-related food shortages in 2011, MAIL is emphasizing fodder production, increased access to agricultural inputs, watershed protection and irrigation, and integrated pest management.⁵⁷ We further note that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has, with MAIL, developed guidelines regarding food production, safety and quality.⁵⁸

40. In an attempt to address competing demands within government ministries, WFP has, together with FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), agreed to support six thematic areas in respect of food security: (i) support to national food and nutrition security policy development; (ii) support feasibility planning and analysis of national strategic grain reserve; (iii) grain purchase through cooperatives; (iv) watershed management programs; (v) food and nutrition security information systems; and (vi) food safety. These are in line with the overriding 2009 Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).⁵⁹

41. There have been questions over ownership and design of the ANDS. The 2010 Joint Evaluation of the Paris Declaration in Afghanistan depicted the ANDS as 'a foreign, not an indigenous document, influenced, written and designed by foreigners and now symbolically led by the Government but influenced by international advisors'. Moreover, the ANDS reportedly lacked adequate national consultation during its preparation and with the exception of the programmes already ongoing

⁵⁶ The Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) cluster which comprises MAIL, MRRD and the Ministries of Counter Narcotics (MCN) and Energy and Water (MEW) is responsible to 'develop prosperous rural and pastoral communities'⁵⁶. The mandate for nutrition under ANDS's economic and social development pillar lies in the Human Resource Development cluster; a key member of the pillar is the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) which has legal authority for overseeing nutrition programmes and has promulgated related policy and strategic frameworks.

⁵⁷ 2011 Agriculture Prospects Report. Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock.

⁵⁸ MoCI/MAIL (2011), 'Implementing the SME Strategy: Action Plan for Developing Afghanistan's Agri-Business Sector' (May 2011-April 2013).

⁵⁹ Rationale, Status and Process of the Development of a Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan: Concept note prepared by Chris Toe & Manfred Metz.

during the ANDS development, ‘very few new programs to translate ANDS sector strategies into action have been developed’.⁶⁰

42. Nonetheless, at the July 2011 Kabul Conference, the Government of Afghanistan presented its priorities in the form of 22 broad National Priority Programs (NPPs) that were endorsed by the donors. The costing of many of the NPPs is not yet complete and thus many of them are yet to be reflected in the Government’s budget.⁶¹ In turn, the NPPs are at a nascent stage and ‘do not cover the poverty oriented ANDS sectors and projects’.⁶² For instance, WFP has yet to develop a clear approach regarding food-based safety nets, something that falls under the remit of MoLSAMD. Reflective of greater capacities within the associated ministries, WFP has, however, had an active engagement particularly with the cluster of NPPs under the Agriculture and Rural Development Cluster (ARD),⁶³ the Skills Development NPP and the Health for All Afghans NPP.

Alignment with WFP Corporate Strategy

43. The WFP Strategic Plan 2008–2013 marked an historic shift from WFP as a food agency to WFP as a food assistance agency, with a more nuanced set of tools at its disposal. The emphasis now is on supporting government and global efforts to find long term solutions to hunger. WFP Afghanistan’s stated objectives under PRRO 200063 in accordance with corporate Strategic Objectives (SO 1-5)) are:

- (i) To ***stabilise*** acute malnutrition, and, to ***improve*** food consumption. (SO1)
- (ii) To ***establish*** early warning, contingency and monitoring systems. (SO2)
- (iii) To ***improve*** access to assets in transition situations, school enrolment and access to education, and, to increase household capital. (SO3)
- (iv) To ***increase*** fortified food production capacity, and, to ***improve*** the success of TB (Tuberculosis) treatment. (SO4)
- (v) To ***increase*** market opportunities through WFP local purchases, and, ***make progress*** to Government owned hunger solutions. (SO5)

44. All five of the Strategic Objectives are addressed by the Afghanistan portfolio, though two sub-elements in the above list highlight conceptual challenges facing WFP. First, as we have seen, the improvement of food consumption (Strategic Objective 1) is perhaps too broad an objective to have any meaningful, or measurable, currency in Afghanistan. Second, an increase in household capital (Strategic Objective 3) would be difficult to argue given that activities under FFW/FFA have tended to be communal rather than individual, and monitoring is based on Community Asset Scoring, with household capital data not referring directly to each

⁶⁰ Afghan Ministry of Finance, Joint Evaluation of the Paris Declaration Phase 2: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2010). The finding was reiterated in Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), report on poverty in Afghanistan, 1387 (2008/09).

⁶¹ The UK Government joined other donors in pledging to channel up to 50 percent of their funding through the core budget of the Afghan Government by 2012, thus aligning their spending with national priorities.

⁶² Afghan Ministry of Finance, Joint Evaluation of the Paris Declaration Phase 2: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2010).

⁶³ In early 2012 these were: National Water and Natural Resource Development, National Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development, National Rural Access Program (NRAP), and Strengthening Local Institutions. However the final Cluster of NPPs was yet to be decided.

sub-project. The revised global Management Plan for WFP⁶⁴ gives added focus to four key areas of work: cash vouchers; targeted supplementary food; school feeding; and hand-over strategies. In Afghanistan school feeding in 2010-2011 was the largest component of the portfolio in terms of designated beneficiary numbers and cost (see Section 3: Results).

45. Disaster risk reduction has also become a main priority area for WFP within the PRRO period. In particular, the FFA activities within the portfolio have included support for community-based disaster management.

Alignment with international good practice for non-state providers

46. In a volatile and ever-changing conflict environment WFP has had to be reactive to events. To a large extent this explains why there have been four budget revisions to the PRRO to date⁶⁵, and why the weight of the portfolio has shifted increasingly towards what can be done rather than the intentions of the original document. The evaluation notes, however, that the recognition of risks and speculative mitigation strategies simply form part of the 'operational landscape' of proposed projects.⁶⁶ The fundamental design and approach remain the same, and where changes are made these are of operational necessity rather than acknowledging that the working environment and political economy of a war-torn country may require a wholly different starting point. For example, an effective appraisal of needs and risks would include a sequence of activities and a means of measuring progress against objectives. The drivers of conflict cannot always be conflated with social and economic deprivation. These may be the symptoms, not the causes of conflict. Equally, if not more important, are the proximate causes of violence - political tensions and relationships that can quickly flare up. These can be, for instance, the ambitions and ability of local 'strong men' to harness support through predatory activity, triggering violence.⁶⁷

47. 'Taking context as the starting point'⁶⁸ requires a thorough and sound information base. While the assumption that greater analysis leads to greater knowledge is a flawed one, Afghanistan is probably one of the most analyzed countries in the world.⁶⁹ As stated, there is little evidence of a strong analytical base being generated to inform PRRO design;⁷⁰ but to its credit, WFP has added to this body of knowledge by commissioning a series of independent 'think pieces' from mid-2011 to begin to explore this wider contextual reality as it relates to WFP

⁶⁴ WFP Management Plan 2012-2014, Executive Summary, Follow-Up Briefing, 5 October 2011.

⁶⁵ The first two budget revisions were done due to a cost increase on food and LTSH. The third was done to review how WFP could implement its project with less funding and with an objective of "nationalization of staff", and in response to donors' comments about a very expensive PRRO in terms of cost per ton. The fourth budget revision was to realign the original PRRO without the emergency component for the Drought affected Area as the EMOP was created to address this issue.

⁶⁶ The evaluation notes, for instance, that WFP has, since 2011, had a regularly updated 'Criticality Assessment' that rates likelihoods of risk and lists mitigation measures against each of its portfolio components.

⁶⁷ In recent years considerable work has been done on the issue of general Armed Violence Reduction in addition to (though separate from) the understanding of conflict resolution and reduction (See OECD DAC work on Armed Violence Reduction).

⁶⁸ OECD DAC Fragile States Principles.

⁶⁹ There are currently 13,000 titles listed in the library of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), an independent research institute in Kabul, Edwina Thompson, 'Losing the Ability to Dream: Afghan perceptions of UK aid', BAAG, 2012.

⁷⁰ The PRRO document itself is not conflict-sensitive, and there do not appear to have been supplementary analyses generated in the lead-up to design. The same applies to operational guidelines for sub-programmes.

programming. These studies asked why corruption is so pervasive, whether WFP might in some instances inadvertently provoke conflict, and whether a continuing close alignment with a perceived illegitimate government might incur unacceptable trade-offs in terms of project efficiency and effectiveness.⁷¹

48. The discourse over humanitarian space extends to ‘political space’. For WFP the issue is particularly acute in Afghanistan in two respects – its relationship to the Government, and its placement within a United Nations integrated mission. WFP’s political neutrality is enmeshed with its mandatory obligation to work closely with a government whose legitimacy and acceptance is questioned by significant sections of the population. The push towards a centralized state runs contrary to Afghanistan’s historical propensity for localized power bases, and the challenge is how to promote wider democratic practice (civil society, women) while retaining a working partnership with government institutions. The recently published ‘New Deal’ for engagement in fragile states re-emphasises country ownership and leadership, and will undoubtedly influence WFP’s key donors.⁷² Recognising the importance of statebuilding per se, it also challenges international donors to work more closely with NGOs/CDCs, shifting the emphasis from “supply” to more “demand-side” activities (such as support to civil society, anti-corruption awareness and to the media). In Afghanistan this would also imply a more thorough screening of NGOs for political affiliation and possible bias.

49. In the complex political landscape that has emerged over eleven years, the United Nations as a whole has not been able to establish clear boundaries between its own political and humanitarian objectives; hence the continuing demand (including from WFP) for a separate office (and person) as Humanitarian Coordinator outside the UNAMA structure. The evaluation heard of particular instances when WFP was warned by insurgents to keep its distance from UNAMA installations to ensure its own safety.⁷³ Outside the United Nations, the humanitarian field in particular has been compromised by military protagonists using aid - for example, there are some cited instances of ISAF using food aid in its efforts to win ‘hearts and minds’.⁷⁴ We are not able here to adequately convey full views of stakeholders on all sides of this issue, but simply note that WFP – funded by some of the countries that have as a matter of policy accepted the ‘joining up’ of military, aid and politics⁷⁵ - is embroiled in the disparate and ever-changing Afghan public opinion over the United Nations’

⁷¹ See, for example, the six papers presented by independent authors compiled in Samuel Hall (July 2012), ‘Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan’s Transition: a contextual analysis’, where authors were asked to elucidate implications of their analysis for WFP.

⁷² International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2011): ‘A New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States’, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/35/50/49151944.pdf>. This includes the adoption of a set of seven peacebuilding and statebuilding goals (PSG) that are to be considered at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2012. The PSG are: 1) Foster inclusive political settlements and processes, and inclusive political dialogue. 2) Establish and strengthen basic safety and security. 3) Achieve peaceful resolution of conflicts and access to justice. 4) Develop effective and accountable government institutions to facilitate service delivery. 5) Create the foundations for inclusive economic development, including sustainable livelihoods, employment and effective management of natural resources. 6) Develop social capacities for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. 7) Foster regional stability and co-operation. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/12/30/44927821.pdf>

⁷³ Both WFP and UNHCR cited examples from Nangahar and Kandahar over the last three years.

⁷⁴ The evaluation learned of several instances where ISAF forces contributed food through district or provincial authorities, and at least one incident where ISAF was invited to attend a local food security cluster meeting.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Kristian Berg, ‘Power Prevails: the failure of whole-of-government approaches in Afghanistan’, Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Policy Brief, April 2011; and Bennett, J, ‘Britain and Afghanistan: policy and expectation’, Humanitarian Practice Network, Issue 43, June 2009, Overseas Development Institute, London.

role. WFP is still dependent on a few bilateral donors with significant political military presence in Afghanistan.

Alignment with development partners (UN, international financial institutions, donors).

50. The commitment made by international partners at the Kabul Conference in February 2011 to progressively channel 50 percent of development assistance through the Afghan budget and to align 80 percent of aid to Government priority programmes remains a key issue for the Government and donors alike. This was further underpinned by a 100-day action plan intended for each of the 22 national priority programs (NPPs) proposed at the Kabul Conference. WFP itself is not able, through its mandate and institutional structures, to channel funds directly through budget support for the Government.

51. The multitude of formal and informal aid-coordination mechanisms in Kabul has presented significant challenges. A critical first step in supporting Government-led aid coordination is the strengthening of the United Nations (UN) own coherence through the Integrated Strategic Framework (July 2011 – December 2012). Its goal is “to promote the principle of ‘Delivering as one’ that is integral in ensuring the system’s mandated roles and activities remain consistent with the vision and priorities of the Government of Afghanistan.”⁷⁶ This builds on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and incorporates the mandate and work of UNAMA, covering both development and humanitarian action. The UNDAF Working Group on Sustainable Livelihoods and Agriculture facilitates collaboration and joint action among United Nations agencies in the areas of agriculture, natural resource management and other income-generation and livelihood opportunities. Through this, WFP has had a close working relationship with FAO, UNHCR and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) in specific targeted areas.

52. An impediment to the progress of the NPPs was the long impasse over the Kabul Bank, which was declared bankrupt and weakened confidence in the country’s financial system. Crucially, it also prevented the finalization of an agreement on a new IMF (International Monetary Fund) country programme and threatened the release of funds through the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF).⁷⁷

53. At a strategic level much of the cooperation between WFP and the UNCT (United Nations country team) has been around the National Development Strategy priorities (and subsequently the various clusters formed in response to the 3-year NPPs). The 18-month ISF has maternal and newborn health and sustainable livelihoods as two of its five priorities. The World Bank is also supporting the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and other entities with the preparation of a multi-sector plan of action for nutrition. FAO completed an inception mission in July 2011 at the request of MAIL to lay out the roadmap for a food and nutrition security strategy and is facilitating development of a supply-driven national programme for food security.⁷⁸ WFP co-leads the Food Security and Agriculture cluster with FAO. In early 2012 WFP signed a Letter of Intent with FAO in which they agreed to assist the

⁷⁶ United Nations Afghanistan. Integrated Strategic Framework (Draft).

⁷⁷ Report of the United Nations Secretary-General, March 2011, ‘The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for International peace and security’.

⁷⁸ ‘Rationale, Status and Process of the Development of a Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Food and Nutrition Security in Afghanistan’: Concept note prepared by Chris Toe & Manfred Metz (undated)

Government in the formulation of a multi-sector national food security policy and strategy (The working title is A Comprehensive Strategic Framework for Food and Nutrition Security).

54. The evaluation became aware of differences of opinion with respect to the launch of the EMOP in response to the 2011 drought, which have had repercussions on inter-agency relationships. With the advent of the drought a new EMOP appeal coupled with the United Nations Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) was launched. The EMOP subsumed 14 drought-affected provinces; however, some of the activities and much of the target population mirrored some of the activities in the content of the PRRO, though raising the scale of assistance to address hardships encountered by the drought.

55. The Government required the launching of the CAP before needs were identified through the (subsequent) Emergency Food Security Assessment.⁷⁹ Some donors and NGOs felt that WFP had used the CAP to obtain funds for activities that lay outside strictly humanitarian requirements.⁸⁰ WFP was caught in a dilemma: on the one hand some donors conditioned their funding solely to the CAP, so there could be no transfer across to the PRRO; on the other hand, the UNCT was insisting that WFP disaggregate humanitarian relief, early recovery and resilience activities in order to limit the size of the CAP appeal.⁸¹

56. The issue is reflective of a wider tension between the PRRO as in theory the more appropriate vehicle for a protracted response to seasonal food shortage exacerbated by drought, and the role of an EMOP in responding to emergency needs. Many of the designated population will continue to be at risk beyond the June/July 2012 closure of the EMOP, and the implementation vehicles – general food distribution and cash voucher schemes for urban populations - are likely to be re-absorbed under the PRRO.

Alignment with NGOs

57. NGOs have their own policy priorities in Afghanistan in relation to food security. Section 2 below discusses WFP's relationship with its partners. For NGOs, there is also the question of whether they wish to work with a United Nations agency at all, given the problems of association with an international agenda aligned with an 'occupying force'. Box 1 below sets out some of the issues facing WFP in its relationship with NGOs:

⁷⁹ The WFP-led Emergency Food Security Assessment was undertaken in two rounds – July and August, 2011.

⁸⁰ There was some criticism from NGOs in particular that the EFSA (emergency food security assessment) was not a collaborative exercise, and few agreed with the initial results. In part, this was a technical issue, since the data was transferred to software not shared with NGOs. There was also some merging of data across several seasons, confusing the analysis. These lessons have now been solved to the satisfaction of all.

⁸¹ These comments are drawn from four United Nations agency heads, plus several NGOs. The refocusing of the CAP to purely humanitarian needs has been accompanied by a reduction of the overall appeal from US\$535 million in 2010 to US\$470 million in 2012.

Box 1: Some challenges in working with NGOs

(i) The geographical spread of NGOs is not in itself a major constraint; rather, the question is whether they wish to work with a United Nations agency at all, given the problems of association with an international agenda aligned with an ‘occupying force’. This was a point of view expressed by representatives of umbrella NGO bodies ACBAR (Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief); BAAG (British Agencies Afghanistan Group) that the evaluation was not able to independently verify.

(ii) There have been some instances where WFP’s district-level targeting was slavishly adhered to, even when the designated partner NGO already had, for example, a cash distribution programme in that same area. In some cases this was due to the perceived necessity in WFP’s area office to achieve a ‘target’, and a corresponding misunderstanding of the level of flexibility they have to use the resources elsewhere.⁸²

(iii) WFP covers only those costs related to the delivery of its own activities and not the transaction costs related to setting up a project. The fee for an NGO has been based on the tonnage of food delivered,⁸³ but if this tonnage is less at implementation than at design stage (as is often the case), the initial set-up costs will already have been met by the NGO. The ‘loss’ is invariably absorbed by international NGOs that have other projects in the area, but not so for a national NGO solely working for WFP. Paradoxically, it is these national NGOs WFP could most benefit from, since they often have the better knowledge of and access to communities.

(iv) Some donors insist on having their logo on bags of food. Being associated with ‘foreign invaders/infidels’ can actually endanger recipients if they have to cross checkpoints controlled by insurgents.⁸⁴ In some cases, re-bagging is offered, but it is not always possible.

Conclusions

58. Within Afghanistan, WFP has made a concerted effort to align itself with national priorities as they have evolved over time. However, given the lack of coherence in Government policy,⁸⁵ it has been necessary for WFP to lead the debate from the front, both in terms of its involvement in the various food security, agriculture and nutrition clusters, and in terms of the promotion of policy for incorporation in the NPPs. Much of what the international community (including WFP) does is crafted according to donor requirements – strategic policy therefore follows from project inputs, and the dominant voice comes from the agency with the greatest resources. As a voluntary funded organization, WFP strategy is to quite a large extent directed by donor priorities, the more so if a whole portfolio activity (such as school feeding) depends on just one donor.

59. WFP has aligned with United Nations priorities around the NPPs and through its co- leadership with FAO of the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC). At the strategic level, dialogue is good and relationships relatively strong. Its operating constraints, however, include the wider tensions within the United Nations system

⁸² This was confirmed by the evaluation field work and by interviews with NGOs in Kabul.

⁸³ Though this is changing to time-bound Field Level Agreements under WFP’s new financial framework.

⁸⁴ Interviews with several NGOs and UNHCR, June 2012. Almost all reported incidents referred to USAID and the US Congressional ruling with respect to marking bags.

⁸⁵ A much-repeated maxim in Kabul is that one cannot speak of ‘Government’ as a homogenous entity; it comprises ministries and departments who quite often appear to compete among each other for resources, with a relatively weak coordination structure without commensurate political weight.

around policy coherence, and in particular the blurring of boundaries between the UN's own political and humanitarian objectives.

60. With 'good practice' in fragile states espousing statebuilding and ownership, WFP faces the inherent tension between this and the neutrality required to access populations across the whole political spectrum. Afghanistan does not have clear areas of government or insurgency "control", and the question "Should we work with insurgents?" is misplaced. The crucial issue is to build trust within local communities and let them be the buffer between aid providers and political protagonists. WFP's approach to 'outreach', both internally (through the Compliance and public information units) and externally (through humanitarian access working groups under OCHA) would be more strategic if it promoted humanitarian values through training staff and PATs (Programme Assistance Teams) on how to communicate these to its beneficiary audience. There might also be a more systematic mapping of interlocutors in provinces where WFP is able to work.

61. The larger question – other than issues of capacity and efficiency – is whether Government ownership pertains to facilitation of delivery (hence, greater concentration on policy coherence, coordination and information) or direct delivery. This is a difficult strategic choice when many government entities will lobby for the latter precisely because they need both the political capital and the funds that are accrued from direct delivery. This issue is discussed in Section 2.2 below.

2.2 Strategic choices

62. This section concerns the strategic choices made, and the factors which have driven these choices. "[Balancing] the need to deliver the urgent and visible while not losing sight of the long term and sustainable is major challenge in fragile and conflict-affected contexts."⁸⁶

63. WFP's generally good strategic alignment with national needs have positioned it well for the potential achievement of results. This section of the report considers its strategic choices in relation to the conflict environment of the country. Given the extremities in which it is working, and set against the ambitions of PRRO20063, has WFP 'done the right things in the right way' for maximum effectiveness, and consequently maximum results, in Afghanistan?

64. The major constraints surrounding the portfolio have been the rapidly shrinking operational space, plus the funding shortfalls described above.⁸⁷ The steep decline in population access – unanticipated in the general climate of optimism at the time of PRRO design – has meant that both information on beneficiary needs, and the monitoring of WFP's responses is highly constrained. WFP's responses to these very serious significant limitations over the evaluation period are assessed here through the following lenses;⁸⁸ coverage of the portfolio in terms of beneficiary numbers and targeting; efforts to improve the available knowledge and information

⁸⁶ OECD (2011), *Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility: Policy Guidance*, DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, OECD Publishing.

⁸⁷ As of May 2012 donor contributions stood at US\$519 million, less than half of the total anticipated resources. Internal financial data, WFP Afghanistan.

⁸⁸ As required by Office of Evaluation.

base; approaches to capacity development; and finally work undertaken to make maximum use of the organization’s own internal technical capacity.

Coverage – beneficiary numbers

65. Even given the very significant funding shortage, according to its internal data WFP’s number of total intended beneficiaries over successive years of PRRO implementation did not significantly depart from its original intentions, as Table 3 shows below:⁸⁹

Table 3. PRRO 200063 beneficiaries 2010-2011

Beneficiaries	Planned	Actual	%
2010	7,052,200	6,556,047	93%
2011	7,317,475	6,972,839	95% ⁹⁰

66. Reductions due to funding constraints had to come elsewhere, therefore. Commodity distribution over the period is shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4. PRRO 200063 Commodity distribution 2010-2011 (mt)

Metric tonnes	Planned	Actual	% ⁹¹
2010	197,115	145,267	74%
2011	273,022	163,806	60.0%

67. In very general terms, therefore: WFP has reached roughly the anticipated volume of beneficiaries but with reduced volumes of commodities overall – i.e. more people with fewer rations.⁹² The effects of these reduction in commodities for results in specific sub-programmes are described in Section 3 below, but is indicative of a ‘breadth over depth’ approach that has characterised WFP programming over the period.

Coverage - targeting assistance to need

68. Under the PRRO, WFP assistance to Afghanistan covers 34 provinces. Food assistance is targeted to the very highly food insecure (2.5 million people), but also to highly food insecure (1.3 million) and moderately food insecure people (3.5 million). The starting point is geographical targeting, down to district level, applying the food security data of the NRVA as the most widely accepted information source whilst recognising its limitations.⁹³

⁸⁹ SPR data 2010 and 2011.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² This is acknowledged in the 2010 SPR.

⁹³ Interviews with WFP staff in Kabul, plus group meetings involving external actors, showed some exasperation with the limitations of the NRVA data – but a broad acceptance of it as ‘the only viable source we have’.

69. At sub-programme-level, WFP's targeting mechanisms, both geographic and group-based, are clearly and explicitly justified in relation to contextual need. The FFE programme, for example, targets food-insecure districts⁹⁴ within the 34 provinces, and which also have poor education indicators. Within this sits the more specific instrument to target a take-home ration incentive for girls; the criteria are districts with a gender gap of above 25 percent.⁹⁵

70. The main groups identified for targeting - IDPs and returned refugees (GFD), pregnant and lactating women and malnourished children under 5 (MCHN – mother-and-child health and nutrition), TB patients (TB support), children in school (FFE), and women who lack literacy skills (FFT) - approximate to the vulnerable groups as set out in the ANDS.⁹⁶ However, these groups are being targeted by a range of actors simultaneously; and fieldwork for this evaluation, such as studies in Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad, showed a marked lack of coherence in WFP's targeting at operational level until recently, with some targeting of the same groups by multiple agencies.⁹⁷

71. This is changing, with WFP supporting the delivery of a new NRVA due to issue in 2012 and through the role of WFP's own VAM (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping) analysis, which supports the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster but remains under-resourced in relation to need.⁹⁸ The FSAC cluster itself has gradually moved to a more co-ordinated model of data gathering. Its work is being given momentum by Afghanistan's selection as a pilot for the UN's new Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System, which collates a number of relevant indicators and aims at providing a 'common currency' among agencies for assessing food security.⁹⁹

72. WFP also faces serious issues of matching of targeting theory with practice. In Afghanistan this gap is probably one of the widest in the world. Firstly, the socio-cultural context described above means that endogenous community systems of redistribution are widely prevalent. Area offices indicate that, at this level WFP takes a tolerant view given the wider context of food insecurity and the narrow thresholds between levels of vulnerability.¹⁰⁰ However, as Section 1 above explains, risks of food diversion or leakage as a result of capture by elites or through corruption are also extremely high in Afghanistan. Although this cannot be quantified, it has caused great concern over the period, as well as causing resentment within communities themselves.¹⁰¹

73. In response to donor signals of alarm, WFP has stimulated a range of actions, with potential for significant improvements in process. These include the creation of

⁹⁴ That is, those that are based on NRVA data have above 24 percent of their population being food-insecure.

⁹⁵ WFP FFE Implementation Guidelines, March 2011, Kabul.

⁹⁶ See Afghanistan National Development Strategy 1387-1392.

⁹⁷ Sub-programme documentation and corporate reporting do not explain how WFP's intended portfolio activities intersect with coverage by other donors; and interviews with both WFP and donor, United Nations and NGO partners indicated a consistent lack of co-ordination in selecting target caseloads for recovery activities particularly, and FFE and FFT specifically.

⁹⁸ The VAM unit had formerly more than 30 members of staff but in recent years has even lacked an international lead for several months from 2011 to early 2012.

⁹⁹ See <http://www.ipcinfo.org/>

¹⁰⁰ Area office focus group interview, Kabul, June 2012.

¹⁰¹ Field studies for this evaluation showed considerable resentment at local level where food commodities were diverted by elites from their intended beneficiaries.

a Compliance Unit in January 2011, whose remit is focused on improving the management and governance of WFP commodity distribution and whose work shows promising results so far;¹⁰² the piloting of a hotline for beneficiary reporting in two districts plus follow-on procedures;¹⁰³ as well as a supply chain review in 2012.¹⁰⁴ Some high profile cases of distribution suspension in two districts have also enabled WFP to make a clear and public statement on tolerance issues, though it may be challenging to tackle this on more than an ad hoc basis.

74. The wider debate is of course whether any ‘acceptable level’ of tolerance exists, particularly in a country where ‘leakage’ and redistribution is endemic and likely to get worse as remote management becomes the norm. WFP’s corporate position is of zero tolerance, but there is no explicitly defined threshold of diversion above which an activity would be closed. There is a difference between official tolerance of diversion, which is inadvisable, and a pragmatic acceptance that it occurs. The institutional improvements cited above have gone some way to mitigate donor and WFP concerns, but the difficult equation remains.

Monitoring and Evaluation

75. Security and access seriously constrain WFP’s ability to monitor its food distributions in Afghanistan. Many districts are off-limits to the United Nations or otherwise inaccessible beyond the main urban centres; it is enormously difficult to recruit and train female monitors in particular; and the recording of data in written form poses risks to monitoring staff. To monitor in the increasing number of districts which are United Nations ‘No Go’ areas, WFP’s strategy has been to contract private Programme Assistance Teams (PATs) which can travel to areas prohibited to United Nations staff. By July 2011 WFP was contracting 80 such teams, rising to 143 by mid-2012. PATs represent six different service providers, ranging from private human resources firms to consultancy firms, and NGOs, costing WFP over US\$2.5 million per annum. Despite the original purpose of PATs to reach out to Afghanistan’s ‘no-go’ areas, today they also work in many of the low-risk areas filling capacity gaps of Food Aid Monitors.

76. The learning curve for WFP on PAT recruitment has been steep.¹⁰⁵ Turn-over of staff remains high in high risk areas; capacity issues prevail; the gender balance is almost nil; and there are disputes over differing salary levels.¹⁰⁶ These issues are being proactively addressed through new Field Level Agreements arrangement, investments in intensive training, revised roles and responsibilities, and changed management and recruitment arrangements. Challenges of effective management at

¹⁰² The Compliance Unit have a range of functions, most of which are geared towards improving the management and efficiency of WFP commodity delivery; examples of success include improvements to the system of Field Level Agreements and efforts to improve the monitoring process. The evaluation found several anecdotal instances of attempted undue influence by local political factions being confronted and addressed by WFP, though clearly not all such instances can be tracked adequately due to staffing and access constraints.

¹⁰³ Take-up is reportedly higher than expected, though there is no clear strategy yet regarding the implications of scaling this up in a context of reduced staffing.

¹⁰⁴ Terms of Reference, Supply Chain Review, WFP 2012.

¹⁰⁵ A 2012 PAT Audit records some of the difficulties, which have been validated through interview; WFP initially used standard procurement methods in finding PATs. Going for the cheaper bidders meant a compromise on quality, but also each company could pay its own rates. There was also very poor gender balance, with most teams having no females (cf. 2012 PAT Audit). Since 2012 WFP has used Field Level Agreements, enabling it to set standard salary rates.

¹⁰⁶ Focus group with area offices, June 2012.

area office level remain, but the evaluation found significant improvements over time.

77. Data generated by PATs feed into WFP's internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. International guidance for fragile states that: 'Monitoring and evaluation should be a real-time activity that contributes to continuous learning and adjustments to strategy and implementation.'¹⁰⁷ Operationalizing this is a challenge not confined to Afghanistan but one that faces WFP corporately in difficult and volatile settings.¹⁰⁸

78. Prior to 2011, area office and sub-programme leads submitted individual monitoring reports to the country office via Excel spreadsheets. These focused on inputs and outputs rather than results. Even beyond the immense contextual difficulties of providing robust monitoring data in Afghanistan, they suffered from a range of methodological problems: a focus on beneficiary counting rather than commodity quantity, quality and frequency as the measures of success; double-counting of beneficiaries (where they benefited from more than one initiative); varying methodologies between area offices; and multiple and inconsistent reporting formats.¹⁰⁹

79. To improve matters, a dedicated M&E Unit was created in late 2010, with its systems becoming operational in 2011. Emphasis was placed initially on quality of data for corporate reporting; consequently, data collection followed a relatively cumbersome process which incurred delays and the information generated was insufficiently timely to inform immediate operational planning. Steps have been taken to resolve this through the launch of a full M&E online database in May 2012, and while this has encountered teething problems,¹¹⁰ several improvements have emerged. Data collection is now more systematic (though source data for outcome level reporting remains weak); distribution data is far closer now to real-time reporting (though data for TB and FFE still suffers from time-lags); and there is much greater independence of data since activity delivery is separated from the reporting of monitoring data. Consequently, as of the time of writing, the office can now report with a reasonable degree of robustness on Strategic Objectives 1-4¹¹¹ though not on Strategic Objective 5 (Capacity Development).

80. Faced concurrently with a need for more immediately relevant operational data, however, WFP management instituted a system of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in 2011. This included real-time collection of distribution data via phone from area offices by the newly-formed Operations Unit. This data's purpose was to inform immediate operational adjustments in programming, as well as some level of real-time performance monitoring on the ground.¹¹² The data emerging has its utility, and the KPI system provides a far stronger basis for internal accountability. Table 5 shows the different functions of the M&E and KPI systems:

¹⁰⁷ INCAF *op.cit.*

¹⁰⁸ Interviews with OE staff, June 2012 .

¹⁰⁹ Interviews with WFP staff, FFE reviews.

¹¹⁰ Including staff finding it too complex.

¹¹¹ For example, EMIS, nutrition - albeit with gaps and weaknesses in source data.

¹¹² Operations Unit datasheets, 2012.

Table 5: Monitoring and Evaluation and Key Performance Indicator reporting systems

Monitoring and Evaluation system	Key Performance Indicator system
Aimed in design at responding to corporate reporting requirements	Aimed at providing immediate information on programme delivery
Data collected is geared to WFP corporately-set Strategic Objectives, outcome and output indicators	Data responds to management priorities under set KPI headings: General management; compliance; programmes; pipeline; logistics; finance; procurement; security etc
Data collected from sub-programmes via a data trail from area offices up to Headquarters	Data collected directly from Headquarters via ongoing contact (phone) from area offices and Headquarters
Dedicated M&E focal points in area offices provide information	Sub-programme leads, Headquarters and area office staff provide information
Emphasis on veracity/validity of information to satisfy accuracy of corporate reporting requirements – tradeoffs in immediacy	Emphasis on immediate data gathering to improve accountability, management and control of programme delivery – tradeoffs in detail/results reporting
Data collated and reported via WFP corporate systems (Standard Project Reports)	Data collated and reported via internal management processes (monthly KPI reports and meetings)

81. However, during most of the evaluation period, these two functions – both of which were major institutional investments - have effectively operated as parallel systems. WFP recognized this, and a dedicated Information Manager came into country in 2012 to review coherence and make recommendations for improvement.¹¹³ This work was unfinished at the time of writing, yet integration e.g. in terms of rationalising information sources to reduce burdens on area offices; clarifying the roles of the respective information streams and identifying opportunities for streamlining; and harmonizing the collation and reporting of the valuable data generated, is sorely needed if WFP is to benefit sufficiently from the high-value information these separate systems contain.

82. Beyond food security, the evaluation has found some good – though not systematically applied – approaches to support national data gathering systems. Support to Education Management Information Systems within the MoE is highly valued by the Ministry for example, as is an ongoing support to the Ministry of Public Health in collating and analyzing health and nutritional data.

Gender, Protection and Do No Harm

83. WFP’s Strategic Plan 2008-2013 highlights the link between gender inequality and hunger and reaffirms WFP’s commitment to work at all levels to ensure gender sensitivity and equality.¹¹⁴ A corporate Gender Policy and associated Action Plan set out the framework and institutional processes required for the mainstreaming of gender into WFP’s policies, operational processes and programmes, at all levels.¹¹⁵

84. Afghanistan is an extremely complex and challenging environment for gender work by international agencies. However, given the well-documented centrality of the links between addressing gender inequalities and improving food security,

¹¹³ The exercise was suspended due to illness at the time of writing.

¹¹⁴ WFP Strategic Plan 2008-13.

¹¹⁵ WFP Gender Policy and Corporate Action Plan 2010-2011, Rome 2010.

including by WFP corporately,¹¹⁶ it is also one of the most pressing and important issues facing the country office's work.

85. A full analysis of the extent of gender mainstreaming and results arising from WFP operations in Afghanistan would be a separate study in itself. Annex 5 provides a brief review of performance against the commitments to gender in the corporate Action Plan, and also some suggestions to consider in the next budget revision of the PRRO. In summary, however, the findings of the Protection Mission of 2012 that 'We are far from meeting our commitments in Afghanistan [on gender]' hold true.¹¹⁷ Efforts to date have been unsystematic and shallow; lacking a clear institutional vision of WFP's intended goals in relation to gender and food security over the lifetime of the PRRO; without guidance on clear implementation strategies to achieve these; lacking partnerships with other agencies to achieve what WFP alone cannot; and, beyond data disaggregation, without any clear accountability processes or comprehensive internal training in place.

86. Recognizing these gaps, a strategic partnership with a collaborator agency is underway to provide some badly-needed technical support. In-country expertise does exist, however,¹¹⁸ and Annex 5 contains a list of 'immediate' suggestions to maximize the presence of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment issues within the budget revision for the PRRO, as well as a set of more medium-term suggestions to consider.

87. Protection issues, including the operational context, operating risks and potential effects on beneficiaries of WFP activities,¹¹⁹ have been assessed intermittently, with a mission in 2009 and another one at the start of 2012. Both mission reports provide useful guidance to WFP on how to begin the mainstreaming process for these issues. However, recommendations and trainings conducted have not yet filtered down into programming as yet, and even recent concept notes, such as those for FFA, pay scant attention to the issues. A full Do No Harm analysis, including the dynamics of Afghanistan's conflict as they relate to national food security; the role of inequality in affecting access to food for different groups, including women and girls; the links between the conflict and displacement; and the potential use of food commodities as political tools in the conflict, has not been conducted.¹²⁰ The strategic partnership above will include technical expertise in protection issues, as well as in gender. This is especially timely, given the opportunity presented by country strategy development and PRRO redesign for a more robust response to these very critical issues.

¹¹⁶ WFP's own global Protection Policy is clear on these; other examples are 'Food Security Insights January 2012 Issue 82: Innovative Approaches to Gender and Food Security' IDS, Brighton UK (available on the Eldis resource centre at <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/food-security/food-security-and-gender&id=59402&type=Document>) and FAO's resources at see <http://www.fao.org/gender/gender-home/gender-why/why-gender/en/>

¹¹⁷ Back to Office Report, Protection Mission, February 2012. The mission was requested by the country office).

¹¹⁸ For example UN Women have a well-staffed office in Kabul, and the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) Gender Adviser in Humanitarian Action has considerable Afghanistan and conflict expertise.

¹¹⁹ WFP Protection Mission Reports, 2009 and 2012.

¹²⁰ See for instance Bora et al (2011) Food Security and Conflict: Background Paper to the World Development Report 2011.

Use of partnerships

88. As an implementing agency, WFP relies heavily on its operational partnerships to deliver on its mandate in Afghanistan. However, given the scope of WFP's activities across 34 provinces, there have been considerable challenges in finding partners for some of the more remote or conflict-affected provinces. The relative ratio of Government to non-government partners by early 2012 was about 65 to 35.¹²¹ However, the supposed dearth of NGOs is not as severe as usually depicted; the issue is one of local knowledge, identifying existing potential NGO partners, and being sensitive to the reticence of some NGOs towards working with the United Nations (see Box 1 above).¹²²

89. By early 2012 WFP was working with 13 international NGOs and 204 national NGOs.¹²³ Along with government agencies, some of these in turn sub-contract to their own cooperating partners. In several cases the WFP project is just one part of a wider portfolio of activities undertaken by the NGO; there is thus a cumulative impact and complementarity of inputs that may benefit the objectives set by WFP. Conversely, for some national NGOs, the WFP project is a stand-alone activity in that particular area, and capacity provision and development comes to the fore.

90. The operating environment for NGOs across Afghanistan deteriorated significantly in 2011, with 163 incidents, up 20 percent from 2010. Sixty percent of these incidents were attributed to Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs)¹²⁴ and about 25 percent to criminal activity. Despite some individual exceptions, there appears to be no concerted effort to target NGOs - violence is seasonal, circumstantial and collateral in nature rather than suggesting any pattern of deliberate attack. The greatest number of incidents was in the eastern part of the country - Faryab, Balkh and Ghor - but this is also where there is the greatest per capita density of NGOs.¹²⁵

91. WFP has historically worked with District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and Community Development Councils (CDCs) as major implementing partners for community-based WFP-assisted projects.¹²⁶ Given concerns about efficiency and capacity of partners to deliver, WFP is currently undertaking a mapping exercise to develop a revised partnership model for community based assistance which will guide this shift.¹²⁷ Although the Government at all levels will remain an important partner, it is envisaged that 2013 may see a shift in implementation modalities, to focus more on non-government entities at delivery level.

Use of WFP's internal technical capacity

92. In common with most other agencies in Afghanistan, WFP operates under some staff constraints, with some key positions being vacant for lengthy periods. Gaps in staffing have been experienced for several months at a time, particularly at

¹²¹ See Terms of Reference for the Partnership Review study, WFP 2012.

¹²² Interview with NGOs and NGO umbrella bodies.

¹²³ Information provided by Operational Unit, WFP.

¹²⁴ AOGs are specifically Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan (Taliban), Haqqani Network and Hezb-i-Islami Hakmatyar (HiH), though there are also some smaller groups.

¹²⁵ Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, Data Report, January 2012.

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ANSO%2520Q4%25202011.pdf>

¹²⁶ CDCs are being developed under the MRRD as part of the National Solidarity Program, but are still generally very weak.

¹²⁷ Concept Note: WFP Partnership Feasibility Study (2012), report forthcoming.

area office level;¹²⁸ a high proportion of staff (14 of 65 posts in May 2012) operate at higher grades than they are technically qualified for; there are frequent resignations and requests for sick leave; and turnover rates are high, with consequent effects on institutional memory. The office faces immense challenges in recruiting technically capable and experienced national staff, particularly women.

93. Effects on effectiveness and delivery are well recorded within internal WFP documentation.¹²⁹ Yet in common with most donor agencies in Afghanistan, WFP is seeking to reduce its international 'footprint' in the country. There have been some impressive and creative efforts to tackle the challenges inherent to a limited staff, whilst simultaneously develop internal national capacity,¹³⁰ but as drawdown and transition take hold, some area offices will likely close, and the drive for nationalization intensify. The Strategic Review points out some of the possible implications for WFP and the need to develop strategies to minimize risks of harm to staff, and/or those of undue pressure.¹³¹ The scenario-planning exercise recommended by 2011's internal audit provides an opportunity to concentrate minds, and devise appropriate strategies and tools.¹³²

Conclusions

94. WFP's decision-making in Afghanistan has been shaped by the two major exogenous influences; reduced funding and the constraints imposed by an environment of active conflict. Its response has been generally proactive, at least in the latter period of this evaluation. A far better knowledge base has been generated through improved analysis; more robust M&E systems are helping to improve targeting and accountability; efforts are being made to co-ordinate targeting and food security data gathering; and the organization is moving towards a more strategic vision of partnership, founded on increased operational co-ordination. All this groundwork should pave the way for more evidence-based, strategic and context-sensitive programming going forward.

95. However, decisions thus far have mostly been operational rather than strategic; tactical rather than creative. Faced with shrinking resources and constrained operational space, WFP has opted to continue with breadth over depth, and, with some exceptions such as the cash and voucher pilot, to do broadly 'less of the same'. Beneficiary numbers have remained largely unaffected by the drastic reductions in budget; and operations siloed and discrete. WFP has countered by saying that it has not been possible to change key aspects of the PRRO in response to the changing situation 2011 until the budget revision of mid-2012. If so, the time lag is of concern. Key issues which such as protection and gender have not been

¹²⁸ Over the Evaluation period, several critical posts have been lain empty for several months, including a VAM officer, M&E lead and a P4P expert. Two potential Protection Officers have withdrawn from the process.

¹²⁹ See for example WFP's 2011 FFE Review: 'Insufficient staffing, high turnover rates and in some cases limited qualifications of personnel within WFP, was reported by the country office as a major constraint for the Programme Unit. At the time of the review, one-third of allocated positions remained unfilled.' Similar difficulties are noted in the 2011 Wet Feeding Review - 'insufficient staffing has compromised the quality and consistency in implementation, leading to the lack of a unified approach to supervision and monitoring across area offices.

¹³⁰ Including the use of short-term consultants, the development of a roster of local staff to fill gaps; developing an internship proposal, working with local universities; and the appointment of a Capacity Building officer whose remit centres on training and development. A gap remaining is psychological screening for potential new recruits, which is surprisingly not required corporately by WFP for its staff in conflict zones despite commercial tools being readily available.

¹³¹ Strategic Review 2012 (op.cit).

¹³² WFP Internal Audit 2012.

systematically mainstreamed. M&E improvements have been significant, but need integration with the sort of rapid management information required for a context of extreme volatility and risk. Different ways of doing business, such as joint programming and partnerships on the ground, have only recently become a priority.

96. Perhaps most importantly, conflict-sensitivity within the portfolio has remained at the level of its effect on operations. Probably because of the optimism of the prevailing environment at the time, the PRRO was less designed for context – in this case high levels of volatility and risk – but rather forced to respond reactively to the operational threats arising once deterioration began. The effects of this on sub-programmes are discussed in section 3 below, but the 2011 WFP Afghanistan Strategic Review made it clear that decision-making which functions at the level of the operational is no longer sufficient for a situation as volatile, uncertain and demanding as Afghanistan in the approach to 2014. In this respect, though, the Review findings had yet to be enacted at the time of this evaluation.

2.3 Portfolio Performance and Results

97. This section covers portfolio performance and results from April 2010 to December 2011. The evaluation acknowledges that some of the shortcomings highlighted here are being addressed in 2012, but in terms of composite results we limit the data to the stated period. There are three main components: Relief (including general food distribution, urban social safety net projects, and mother/child nutritional projects); Recovery (food for assets, food for education, food for training, support for the national tuberculosis programme) and Capacity Development (strategic grain reserve, P4P, flour fortification, vulnerability surveillance/early warning and market analysis). The evaluation is aware that a classification of this kind is not clear cut; for example, food for asset projects are also undertaken as part of a relief activity, and urban safety net schemes arguably traverse recovery activities. For the purposes of this evaluation, we comment mainly on effectiveness and efficiency issues, though where medium-term impact is measured this will be alluded to.

98. While beneficiary numbers remained relatively high overall, tonnage and, in some larger portfolio activities for example FFE and assistance to returning refugees, beneficiary numbers were reduced against original PRRO targets.¹³³ Funding levels do not equate precisely to tonnages (or cash) available because of the time lag and carry-over from the previous year. Nevertheless, 2011 saw the beginning of a significant reduction in the overall scale of operations.

2.3.1 Relief

99. The relief portfolio comprises: (i) general food distribution (GFD) and Food-for-Work (FFW) mainly to IDPs, returnees and the vulnerable urban population (until replaced by cash vouchers in 2011); (ii) supplementary feeding for children under 5 and pregnant/lactating women; and (iii) cash voucher pilot schemes in urban areas. In some of the literature, assistance to TB patients is also included in this category, but in accordance with the Terms of Reference and WFP Afghanistan's

¹³³ For example, in 2010, the number of children receiving school meals was 54 percent below target, and assistance to returning refugees was 32 percent below target).

own corporate reporting, we have placed this component in the Recovery portfolio below.

General food distribution and food for work

100. In 2011 GFD and emergency FFW accounted for about 45,000 mt distributed across 31 provinces; with the EMOP taking 14 provinces in the north, this reduced to a projected 14,500 mt for 2012. There were also changes in geographical distribution. In 2011, conflict-induced IDPs were mainly in the south but by 2012 there were increasing numbers in Herat, Nangahar, and the eastern border areas.

101. About 370,000 persons are internally displaced due to conflict or natural disasters. In 2011 some 112,600 refugees were repatriated mainly from Pakistan/Iran. Heavy floods in February of the same year affected around 200,000 households in 12 provinces resulting in high risk of food insecurity and malnutrition among children.¹³⁴

Table 6: GFD – general, IDPs and Returnees 2010-2011¹³⁵

	Total recipients, GFD	Of which IDPs	Of which returnees	% actual versus planned, GFD
2010	1,675,530	75,132	61,176	71.5%
2011	1,203,110	80,346	30,135	51.3%

102. Depending on availability and individual caseloads, the GFD would be either a full or reduced ration. WFP fleet and WFP-contracted transporters move the commodities from warehouses to extended delivery points and food distribution points. In some cases food from extended delivery points (EDPs) to final delivery points (FDPs) is facilitated by the cooperating partners and or communities, with each convoy being escorted by a PAT.

103. In terms of effective and efficient delivery, the evaluation notes the important changes made in favour of road delivery in 2011. A Special Operations appeal for 40 trucks was successfully undertaken in November 2011. The costs related to insurance, reinforced (small) vehicles and office/personnel security provisions increased hugely over the evaluation period. Moreover, pipeline breaks were exacerbated by the closure of the Pakistan border in November 2011 – this primarily affected the delivery of high energy biscuits from India. In general, however, road transport has not been unduly disrupted by either security or weather, other than what was expected.

104. Overall, the declining results in terms of food delivery against targets were mainly due to reduced donor contributions over time, the accompanying pipeline breaks (see Box 2), and some access difficulties. The evaluation also notes:

- (i) In 2010 and 2011, the number of IDP recipients (75,132 and 80,346 respectively) increased more than 50 percent above expectations due to a

¹³⁴ UNICEF Annual Report for Afghanistan, http://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Afghanistan_2010_Annual_Report.pdf

¹³⁵ PRRO 200063 Standard Project Report, 2010 and 2011.

significant increase in conflict-induced displacement. WFP gave some priority to this recipient group in response to requests through UNHCR and MoRR.

(ii) By contrast, actual against planned targets for returnees was only 68 percent in 2010, dropping to 33 percent in 2011.

(iii) WFP accepts that post-intervention measurements based on monitoring surveys can be of doubtful veracity, depending on the quantity and quality of surveys undertaken. The Food Consumption Scores (FCS) available are only indicative. They are not collected regularly across all geographical areas, are not disaggregated seasonally, and do not relate to specific portfolio activities. Nevertheless, they show relative improvements when measured against a baseline at the beginning of the PRRO, and also show that between 2010 and 2011 'acceptable' FCS improved overall, with the percentage of households with 'poor' FCS also decreasing.¹³⁶

Box 2: Pipeline breaks

105. Some seemingly technical issues made a significant difference to WFP's ability to reach targets. The 100,000 mt carry over from the previous PRRO in 2009/10 (mainly wheat) was all in-country, but it carried a lower level of associated costs to that of the new PRRO. For GFD activities this was absorbed by WFP, but the same could not be done for the sizeable FFA/FFW activities. This required additional cash funding that was becoming more difficult to acquire, so in some cases these activities were put on hold. WFP as a rule does not allow retroactive payment, so activities cannot be completed on a promise of bulk food payment at the end of the task.

106. Pipeline breaks relate not just to funding but also to the delivery schedules of the different food commodities, so some portfolio activities are more adversely affected than others. Non-cereals (those most important to supplementary feeding and FFE, for example) take longer to order (3-4 months average, as opposed to only 2 months for cereal), so it is necessary to secure earlier funding to ensure an unbroken pipeline.

107. In the event, the most severe pipeline break in 2011 – that of the delivery of the India-donated and produced high energy biscuits for FFE - was not in relation to funding as such, but rather to a protracted negotiation over the commitment, resulting in the biscuits arriving just before the winter months when many areas are cut off. The evaluation was unable to obtain details of precisely why this negotiation took so long, but WFP has admitted fault in this regard. This consignment was also adversely affected by the closure of the Pakistan border in November 2011.

108. Data paucity and anecdotal evidence would suggest some major questions with respect to the effectiveness of GFD in terms of Strategic Objective 1 (saving lives, protecting livelihoods). The evaluation field evidence confirmed that although GFD was 'gratefully received', poor targeting, intermittent delivery and some levels of

¹³⁶ PRRO 200063 Standard Project Report, 2010 and 2011.

diversion implies that this form of intervention is the least robust of all WFP activities in terms of meeting its primary objective.¹³⁷

109. For example, conflict-induced displacement is often localized, with families being accommodated by relatives or friends in the immediate vicinity; yet during this emergency phase WFP rarely has access, due to the fact that it is still within a conflict zone. By the time WFP food arrives and is distributed according to beneficiary lists provided by the local community leader (or Community Development Council - CDCs) – itself a problematic process subject to inclusion/exclusion – the acute emergency phase has passed and many people have returned home. A one-off 3-month food package, even if delivered according to plan and to the right people, would be only a temporary injection to the community at large – it neither saves lives (they have already been saved by the community) nor protects livelihoods (there is no sustainable element to the assistance).

110. Nevertheless, despite it being a blunt instrument, the wide consensus is that GFD is an important contribution to welfare in a highly vulnerable population where hunger is pervasive. Despite all the reservations expressed over targeting, no stakeholders expressed the opinion that GFD should be stopped (although FFW was often a preferred option), or indeed that WFP's methods of delivery could be much improved upon under current circumstances. We note that in the case of returning refugees, efficiency is high (because registration by UNHCR is thorough), but much less so for conflict-affected IDPs.

Prevention of acute malnutrition

111. WFP's most recent Nutrition Strategy¹³⁸ is aligned with the five areas of the *WFP Nutrition Policy* (2012) and Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 5 of the *WFP Strategic Plan* (2008-2013). In terms of national strategy, WFP supports the *Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Public Health* (2011-2015), in which nutrition-specific outcomes are articulated in the *Health and Nutrition Strategy* (HNSS 2008-2013) and its related *Public Nutrition Policy and Strategy* (PNPS 2009-2013). This latter document contains the overall objectives of the emerging Nutrition Action Framework (NAF), which is to reduce stunting in children aged 0-24 months by 10% by the end of 2016.¹³⁹ However, the funding and positioning of nutrition programmes in the hierarchies of key line ministries is low. The magnitude of the problem and the relationships between under-nutrition and morbidity and mortality is not fully appreciated.¹⁴⁰ In practice, this means that WFP, along with other United Nations partners, continues to lead the debate and push for greater coherence in government policy.

¹³⁷ All five field studies reported this. The point was reiterated in Bizzarri et al, 'Protection and Gender-Based Violence in Afghanistan: Mission Report, 6-26 March 2009', WFP Afghanistan.

¹³⁸ WFP Nutrition Strategy, WFP Afghanistan, draft April 2012.

¹³⁹ The goal is 'to reduce nutrition related mortality amongst mothers and children by protecting and promoting healthy nutrition for all Afghans, and by preventing chronic malnutrition and associated micronutrient deficiency disorders'. The NAF is a multi-agency plan of action that seeks to address the maternal and child undernutrition, with a focus on the 1000 days from conception through the first two years of life. Five core ministries involved in developing the coordinated programme are Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with MOPH officials, May 2012.

112. The comparative advantage of WFP is its efficient logistics, security risk management,¹⁴¹ and an extensive field presence and network of partners across food security sectors. The challenge of greater coherence between various nutrition activities has in part been met through the Food Security and Nutrition Clusters, and although there is yet to be reliable nutrition surveillance, one of the significant improvements of 2011 was the standardization of survey tools agreed under the Clusters.¹⁴²

Table 7: Mother and child health and nutrition, 2010-2011¹⁴³

	Total recipients, MCHN	Of which children 59 months	Of which pregnant/ lactating women	% actual versus planned	
				children	mothers
2010	117,455	64,029	53,426	80.8%	97.7%
2011	127,739	77,742	49,997	73.3%	154%

113. Under the mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) programmes of PRRO 200063 WFP has distributed household food rations and ready-to-use supplementary food to improve the nutritional status of mothers and children. Therapeutic treatment is delivered on a monthly basis in the form of ready-to-use products provided by WFP for those categorised as either severe or moderate acute malnourished.¹⁴⁴ From 2011 this has been increasingly absorbed under a collaborative programme with UNICEF on preventive and curative activities – the community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) that aims at tackling the intergenerational effects of under-nutrition – though WFP still works alone in areas such as Herat where UNICEF is not present.

114. In 2011, 100 health centres became the focus for both implementation and referral of the MCHN.¹⁴⁵ But the CMAM begins at village level, and by May 2012 it covered 251 sites in 17 provinces. NGO partners are responsible for screening the selection of recipients chosen by the communities, but there are some issues over the experience and training of those responsible for this.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the MoPH is seeking to integrate the approach into their Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) for Afghanistan and has requested WFP to expand its programme beyond purely emergencies. However, the products used are expensive and although capacities within the MoPH are increasing, sustainability in terms of commodity procurement is not yet feasible.

Urban Safety Net

115. Social dynamics in urban areas are different from those in more homogenous rural communities and the urban poor often do not have access to extended family or

¹⁴¹ UNICEF noted the high quality of third-party monitoring and risk management of WFP, particularly in areas of high risk such as the four provinces of Kandahar region. WFP's monitoring team (PAT) is also used by UNICEF in these areas.

¹⁴² The combined efforts of WFP, UNICEF, World Bank and European Union are pushing for the upgrading of the Central Statistics Office as the main repository of information and coordination.

¹⁴³ PRRO 200063 Standard Project Report, 2010 and 2011.

¹⁴⁴ Plumpy 'Doz and micronutrient powder to help stabilize the levels of acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under 5.

¹⁴⁵ WFP Standard Project Report, 2011.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with WFP Programme Officer, Nutrition. MoPH officials also indicated that the community selection – based on mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) – was not always reliable and does not identify the non-emergency issues of stunting or micro-nutrient deficiency.

charitable support during economic hardship. Although historically WFP has had urban safety net programmes (for example, the bakeries projects supported in the 1990s and early 2000s), the current urban projects were not started until the 2008 food price crisis. Prices are now substantially lower than 2008, and not enough analysis has been done to justify whether emergency food in urban areas is still a high priority. The evaluation heard of some instances (Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif) where the introduction of urban food aid had attracted temporary ‘migration’ to the city, though this was not quantified.¹⁴⁷ In 2010 (and in the previous PRRO) WFP was providing GFD to selected urban populations alongside some FFW schemes.¹⁴⁸ The target population, identified through the NRVA and Food Security System survey, was (and is) widows, woman-headed households and disabled, who were provided with a 3-month family (6 person) ration.

116. In October 2009 a cash voucher pilot scheme was launched in Kabul City as an alternative to GFD. Ten thousand households received about US\$28 worth of vouchers to spend in designated shops per month. This ran for 6 months and was internally evaluated in June 2010.¹⁴⁹ There followed a long delay before a similar scheme was tested in Jalalabad (1,500 households) from February 2011. Although designated for 6 months duration, it covered 10 months due to the temporary closure of Kabul Bank.¹⁵⁰ This was followed in August 2011 with a pilot in Mazar-e-Sharif (3,000 households) that ran for the planned 6 months. In 2012, the schemes extended to a re-opening of Kabul and new projects in Heart and Faizabad. In terms of efficiency, there was a dispute between ANDMA and MoLSA over which of these ministries should be the key implementer. ANDMA covered Jalalabad, to be succeeded by MoLSA in Mazar-e-Sharif. In both cases, there was a dispute over who should be on the project team,¹⁵¹ and how to reduce an inflated and outdated recipient list presented by the local ‘wakil’ (community leader).

117. It took six months to set up the Mazar-e-Sharif project. It could be argued that the long delays were ‘teething problems’, even though they are replicated each time a new scheme is opened. The main problems are (i) disagreement between government departments over the beneficiary selection process, (ii) security incidents (e.g. in Mazar-e-Sharif when the UNAMA compound was attacked, resulting in international staff being out for more than a month), and (iii) the internal process of Field Level Agreements and the printing of cards/vouchers.

Table 8: Urban Cash Voucher programme, 2011¹⁵²

	Total recipients, CV	% actual versus planned, CV
2011	35,952	39.4

118. The eventual implementation of the projects - for a much lower figure in 2011 than planned – was encouraging to the extent that once underway they worked quite smoothly. However, the transaction costs of setting up these schemes were again experienced in 2012 in the new towns. In the short term they offer opportunities for

¹⁴⁷ Discussions with WFP area office staff.

¹⁴⁸ For example, 100,000 Kabul residents received GFD in 2010.

¹⁴⁹ The evaluation showed over 50 percent of the voucher value was exchanged for wheat flour, 16 percent for oil, 14 percent for rice, 7 percent for sugar, and the balance for other items.

¹⁵⁰ As referred to in Section 2, the bankruptcy and closure of Kabul Bank was an unforeseen event.

¹⁵¹ The driving incentive for these ministries was an incremental salary for their staff. But WFP had already appointed its own staff to the committee.

¹⁵² PRRO 200063 Standard Project Report, 2011.

WFP cost-saving in terms of physical food transport, storage and distribution. In several respects vouchers have proven to be a more transparent means of transaction than cash since they are used within a limited geographical population and only in designated retail outlets. However, as the voucher system expands it could present the same risks of susceptibility to diversions as cash, with counterfeiting becoming an additional threat.

119. The evaluation is concerned about the conceptual confusion surrounding the urban 'safety net'. There is little doubt that cash voucher as a modality could, with appropriate safeguards, be replicable across other portfolio elements where populations have access to banking and retail outlets. But the currently targeted populations are the chronically vulnerable who should qualify for long-term safety net assistance, not to be confused with emergency assistance or livelihood enhancement. Corporately, WFP has stated that "in low-capacity contexts, the use of vouchers and cash transfers is unlikely to be the appropriate response in the immediate aftermath of an emergency".¹⁵³

120. The pilot schemes have, however, opened new avenues for WFP to look into safety net assistance for the urban poor. A MoLSA/World Bank Cash Entitlement Scheme is being piloted in three rural districts at present as part of the Social Protection Strategy. This in itself is not an appropriate entry point for WFP, but the combination of a national social protection strategy and a limited food-based safety net scheme is in line with WFP's corporate interests.¹⁵⁴ The challenge in Afghanistan is that unless this is undertaken within an existing larger government-owned programme, it risks raising unrealistic expectations of expansion beyond what WFP can, or should, undertake. At present, no such national scheme exists, so there is understandable reticence from WFP to become involved in any such safety net scheme beyond short term emergency assistance.

2.3.2 Recovery

121. The Recovery portfolio comprises four sub-programmes: food for assets, food for education, food for training and support for the national tuberculosis programme. They are mainly geared to WFP's Strategic Objective 3: Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situations.

Food for education (FFE)

122. Food for Education programmes are designed to increase enrolment for boys and girls and to reduce the very significant education gender gap in Afghanistan described in section 1 above. The primary intervention is the provision of a daily snack of 100 g of micronutrient-enriched biscuits providing 450 Kcal to an individual. A take-home food ration of vegetable oil incentivises the enrolment of girls; and a pilot initiated in 2009 also provided on-site wet-feeding in nine provinces. The programme also provides support to building monitoring capacity and EMIS systems via technical support.

123. School feeding is the single largest activity within the PRRO, representing 25 percent of total PRRO resources or roughly 202,000 metric tons of food.¹⁵⁵ The

¹⁵³ *Voucher and Cash Transfers as Food Assistance Instruments: Opportunities and Challenges*, WFP Rome.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, WFP (July 2011), 'WFP and Safety Nets: A Policy Guidance Note'.

¹⁵⁵ WFP FFE review 2012.

programme has operated across all 34 provinces, with a focus on the Central Highlands, the east, the northeast and pockets in the western provinces. Targeting has been on the basis of food insecurity, applying NRVA data, and low education indicators¹⁵⁶ plus specific gender gap indicators for the take-home ration incentive. The national framework has been the Government's National Education Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014¹⁵⁷ which does not include a nutrition component.

124. Resource shortfalls meant reductions in the original planned beneficiary numbers; from a planned 2.4 million in the PRRO, rising to over 3.5 million in the second and third years of operation, down to 2.5 million in 2011.¹⁵⁸ Actual numbers were as follows:¹⁵⁹

Table 9: Food for education 2010 and 2011

	Total recipients, FFE	Of which boys	Of which girls	% actual versus planned	
				Boys	Girls
2010	School meals 1,085,757	658,848	426,909	49.0%	42.1%
	Take home ration 417,156	-	417,156	-	n.a.
2011	School meals 2,573,000	1,118,346	611,662	101.1%	41.7%
	Take-home ration 514,180	-	514,180	-	72.3%

125. This underperformance in terms of beneficiary numbers reflects a 2012 quantitative analysis of commodity by dispatch and actual delivery:¹⁶⁰

Table 10: Quantitative Analysis of FFE food dispatches and distributions 2010 and 2011

Commodity	2010		2011	
	Food dispatches Planned	Food distributions Actual	Food dispatches Planned	Food distributions Actual
High Energy Biscuits	35,302	6,381	39,827	2,211
Wheat	-	-	6,818	682
Take Home Ration (total)	13,661	2,345	22,188	12,242
Total commodity	48,963	8,726	68,833	15,129

126. The explanations for these figures have been well documented by a number of WFP internal reviews of the programme¹⁶¹ and already recorded here; they relate to the closure of supply routes via the Pakistan border; food loss while in storage in Pakistan; and quality and supply issues on the part of the Indian supplier. The programme was almost paralyzed in late 2010, though donors, notably USAID, eventually stepped in to make up the shortfall.

¹⁵⁶ Specifically, the program targets food-insecure districts (above 24 percent food-insecure) with poor education indicators (below 61 percent net enrolment rate).

¹⁵⁷ Government of Afghanistan, National Education Strategic Plan 1389-1393 Kabul, 2010, Ministry of Education

¹⁵⁸ SPRs 2010 and 2011; WFP FFE Operational Guidelines Kabul 2011.

¹⁵⁹ SPR data 2010 and 2011.

¹⁶⁰ Quantitative Review of Afghanistan School Feeding Activity, WFP Afghanistan, 2012. This analysis found actual performance over the 2010 and 2011 period was 18 percent of that planned in 2010, and just 7 percent in 2011 in terms of commodity distribution.

¹⁶¹ See for example *ibid*; Strategic Review of the FFE programme; Education Strategic Outline 2012 etc.

127. Successive internal reviews have highlighted other constraints including: a targeting strategy that is inconsistently applied and marked by significant inclusion error; limited ownership by MoE; weak institutional arrangements; lack of storage facilities in the schools for the biscuits; limited linkages with development partner programming such as UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools; vulnerability to corruption and misappropriation through the logistical and implementation arrangements where resources are handed over to MoE officials at district level; and no comprehensive capacity development strategy or long-term hand-over strategy.¹⁶² Field studies for this evaluation found similar limitations.¹⁶³ WFP has worked hard in operational terms to correct these problems in the latter half of the portfolio period – e.g. through extending its efforts with UNICEF; and intensifying its engagement with MoE and support to the EMIS system - but the challenges are large and would be difficult to overcome without a major redesign.

128. The review of the wet school feeding pilot programme in October 2010 recommended a “cautious scale-up for selected areas”, subject to a number of pre-conditions being met.¹⁶⁴ However, given their failure to materialize, both the Strategic Review Mission of 2011¹⁶⁵ and WFP's own recent internal Education Strategy Outline¹⁶⁶ have recommended that the activity be curtailed.

129. The same successive reviews have struggled to confidently identify programme results against intended outcomes in nutrition (as a by-product) and education, with WFP's own new Education Strategy Outline for Afghanistan pointing out that, in the early period of the PRRO, the mere fact that HEB and oil were distributed to children and that national enrolment figures increased, was taken as proof of success.¹⁶⁷ Data limitations are the main constraint on robust measurement;¹⁶⁸ but 2012 analysis found enrolment ratios of students to be higher in non-assisted schools than in assisted ones, other than for boys' enrolment under conditions of extreme food insecurity. Effects on girls' enrolment were indeterminate, with the presence of a female teacher being a far more significant factor.¹⁶⁹ WFP's own SPR (Standard Project Report) data supports rather than contradicts these findings.¹⁷⁰

130. A more rigorous approach from late 2011 onwards has highlighted some of the conceptual, strategic fit, and design issues which explain these poor results. Firstly, like the urban social safety net above, FFE suffers from conceptual confusion. Its original design as an emergency response mechanism to get children back into

¹⁶² FFE review supported by interviews in Kabul / field reports.

¹⁶³ The Mazar-e-Sharif and Jalalabad field reports emphasize targeting issues particularly. WFP's own 2011 review of the FFE programme found minimal compliance with the eight quality standards of WFP's own corporate School Feeding Policy (2009, Rome).

¹⁶⁴ These included: evidence of clear buy-in by MoE and communities; security and access for WFP monitoring; increased staff capacity; and the availability of strong NGO partners. Aly, G, Sidaner, E and Baldi, G (2010) Review of the Wet Feeding Pilot project, Afghanistan (2009-2010). Internal WFP report.

¹⁶⁵ Strategic Review Mission, WFP, Internal Report, June 2011.

¹⁶⁶ Education Strategy Outline, WFP Kabul (2012).

¹⁶⁷ WFP Afghanistan Education Strategy Outline, July 2012.

¹⁶⁸ For example, students' names remain enrolment records up to three years after they have dropped out of school; with estimates that this applies to 18–25 percent of the students. Save the Children; CAP submission for 2012 Education Cluster Coordinator cited in Education Strategy outline 2012, WFP.

¹⁶⁹ WFP FFE Quantitative Analysis 2012, Kabul.

¹⁷⁰ SPR data 2010 and 2011. 2011 outcome data finds a slight increase in girls' attendance rates in WFP-assisted schools – from 82 percent to 90 percent over the period – but other indicators such as boys' attendance rates and overall retention rates had actually declined. The more robust Quantitative Analysis interrogates this data.

school after a period of conflict¹⁷¹ is undermined now by its huge scale and the fact that demand for education outstrips supply in many areas of Afghanistan.¹⁷² The objective of reducing gender disparities in education is also doubtful, since HEB occupy the bulk of the programme and are provided to girls as well as boys.

131. Finally, the 100 g ration is dwarfed by the 2,270 g/day ration of FFW and FFT programmes below. As the Quantitative Analysis points out, this means far greater effort on the part of WFP to distribute the same amount of food, albeit to higher numbers of beneficiaries but with significant inclusion/exclusion error and to doubtful effect. Field studies additionally found that the pipeline breaks of HEB have in some cases severely strained WFP's relationships with its partners at all levels. This has some potentially significant implications for maintaining trust, confidence in WFP operations, and protecting its own reputation.

Food for training (FFT)

132. Food for training is conceptualised within the portfolio as a component of the food for education (FFE) programme. FFT is a relatively small component of the portfolio, whose objectives are:

- (i) To provide food as incentives and compensation to enable for the vulnerable to come to training courses.
- (ii) To support the Government's efforts to expand skills trainings.
- (iii) To increase equal access to life skills opportunities through vocational skills training in order to improve human capital in vulnerable households and ensure sustainable livelihood [sic].¹⁷³

133. Guiding national frameworks are the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP), supported by the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2010-2014 and the National Literacy Action Plan (NLAP) 2010-2014.

134. FFT programmes are targeted at food-insecure districts with high levels of female illiteracy.¹⁷⁴ WFP has aimed at 60 percent women's participation (though it has not managed to meet this target), with target groups of widows and female heads of households ex-combatants and illiterate girls and boys who are past the average school age. Activities over the evaluation period included: functional literacy, vocational training and, in the early period, teacher training, (discontinued following a strategic review in 2010).¹⁷⁵ The ration provided was doubled after October 2010 to meet household rather than individual learner needs.¹⁷⁶ Table 11 below shows beneficiary numbers:

¹⁷¹ WFP FFE review, Kabul 2012.

¹⁷² With the exception of some areas where conflict conditions are affecting demand i.e. where the Taliban are preventing girls accessing schools – see Section 1 above.

¹⁷³ WFP FFT Activity Guidelines, Kabul 2011.

¹⁷⁴ I.e. districts below the 24 percent level specified by the NRVA, which in theory could mean within any of the 34 provinces covered by the PRRO.

¹⁷⁵ WFP FFT Review, Kabul 2012.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Inputs are provided at a rate of 1800 Kcal per day (nearly 60 kg of food for the month) for 198 days of the year. The ration is therefore substantial, though field studies heard complaints about its inadequacy.

Table 11: Food for training 2010 and 2011

	Total recipients, FFT	Of which men	Of which women	% actual versus planned	
				Men	Women
2010	135,127	30,884	104,243	45.0%	95.1%
2011	98,236	30,391	67,845	44.3%	61.9%

135. The lower proportion of beneficiary numbers reached reflect the pipeline breaks shared by GFD. However, the FFT programme has been one of the more successful WFP activities in terms of targeting, generally managing to reach those most in need, and with lower inclusion/exclusion error than other sub-programmes.¹⁷⁷ A 2010 review also found the training to be extremely popular among communities, with people actively wishing to attend them, e.g. via the health, nutrition and hygiene messages which were seen as instantly transferable and useful. Field studies endorsed this, with handicraft training for women especially valued within visited communities.

136. WFP does not collect data regarding beneficiary follow-up as part of its corporate monitoring system, but the FFT review found that actual number of trainees who took up employment post-training was extremely small. Field studies also reinforced this, but emphasized that the value to communities was seen less in the potential livelihood improvements and more in the process of training itself. This was particularly the case for female participants. Some (limited) complaints about the quality of the training were voiced by participants in the field studies, and at central level, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) were critical of the effective competition set up between WFP's incentivized training sessions and UNESCO's non-incentivised approach.¹⁷⁸

137. However, the appropriate targeting and successful outreach of the FFT programme, plus its high value and demand levels within communities, make it a relevant and useful addition to WFP's recovery toolkit. Its objective of providing livelihood opportunities is ambitious however in the context of what can actually be provided, without being backed by a solid and comprehensive partnership strategy where quality of delivery, matched by guaranteed commodity supply, can be ensured. With this in place, and as a complementary activity to others in the portfolio, it remains potentially valuable.

Food for assets (FFA)

138. The food for assets sub-programme's aim is to support households and communities in their efforts to create, retain and maintain their assets to reduce risks to hazard and improve disaster mitigation measures.¹⁷⁹ Activities have included agro-forestry and irrigation initiatives, road rehabilitation, the construction of community water ponds and the development of nurseries to target women. The programme is closely linked to disaster risk reduction, a critical issue in Afghanistan given the high

¹⁷⁷ The FFT review of 2011 found the programme successful in targeting poor families who were dependent on sending women out to work and in having child labour within their families (when compared to their communities). There were relatively minor critiques around e.g. children aged 11-15 attending, incentivised by the commodities available, and women between the ages of 16-30 being insufficiently represented.

¹⁷⁸ Interviews Kabul 2012.

¹⁷⁹ WFP FFA Operational Guidelines Kabul 2011.

level of dependence on subsistence agriculture and the extreme vulnerability of the country to environmental degradation.

139. There is no national framework for FFA activities specifically, but they support the delivery of e.g. the National Agricultural Development Framework (NADF) Food for Life, a component of the Comprehensive Agriculture Production and Market Development NPP, the Disaster Management Plan of ANDMA, and the Health for All Afghans and Food for Life NPPs.¹⁸⁰ FFA represents a shift in approach for WFP in Afghanistan, away from food for work programmes, which were more focused on supporting household food security as a relief activity, towards an approach more directed at recovery through asset creation and improved resilience.¹⁸¹

140. Beneficiary data for the FFA sub-programme is not easily accessible from within corporate reporting, but the programme has exceeded its targets in terms of asset creation.¹⁸² Results are documented in a new Concept Note for the programme going forward. Examples include:

- (i) 377 hectares of cultivated land treated with biological stabilization or agro forestry techniques
- (ii) 137 Classrooms rehabilitated
- (iii) 673 New nurseries established¹⁸³

141. Results are measured in terms of community asset scores: these have risen significantly over the period¹⁸⁴ but the data suffers reliability issues, as discussed above. Nonetheless, this is one of the few outcome measures to show a clear upwards trajectory over the period.

142. The sub-programme has undergone some internal redesign during the evaluation period. The early phase of activity focused on relatively discrete initiatives in remote food-insecure districts, identified mainly through NRVA combined with secondary analyses such as disaster risk analysis. The operational guidelines of 2011 recognized the shortcomings of this approach, committing to a more focused and integrated approach going forward.¹⁸⁵ This has been realized, with FFA operations taking place across 22 provinces in Afghanistan during 2010 and 2011, but with the number of activities – 199 in 2010 – reducing to a much lower number of new initiatives in 2011 (just ten being listed on the most recent activity map available).¹⁸⁶

143. WFP claims that some of the actual initiatives themselves have evolved from a collection of relatively discrete activities into a more strategic and integrated watershed management approach that provides a package of programme responses aimed at raising agricultural productivity and improving the resilience of communities to natural hazards.¹⁸⁷ The field studies for this evaluation were not able to systematically validate this claim, but did find that communities highly valued the

¹⁸⁰ Government of Afghanistan, all references.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² WFP SPR data does not easily record participants in FFA, but rather FFW participants (which can include FFA participants but also those participating in FFW activities as relief rather than recovery activities).

¹⁸³ Annex 1 to FFA Concept Note 2012: WFP assisted projects and future plan (FFA strategy).

¹⁸⁴ SPR date - From 27 at the start of the period to 40 by latest measurement.

¹⁸⁵ WFP FFA Operational Guidelines 2012.

¹⁸⁶ WFP FFA Activity Maps, Kabul 2010 and 2011.

¹⁸⁷ WFP FFA Concept Note, Kabul 2012.

interventions, feeling a sense of ownership over them and sensing wider benefits to the community.

144. The programme applies community-based targeting mechanisms within identified communities, supported by self-targeting via the exclusion of those involved in other forms of employment/productive activity. The theory is that ration sizes will support targeting, since the amount of commodities available – which is essentially the same as those provided for FFT; namely, nearly 60 kg of commodities for a household per month (22 days) – are low compared to average daily rates for paid labour. While this appears to have worked successfully in terms of facilitating self-targeting, both the FFE guidelines and the field studies for this research found the same concerns at community level about the adequacy of the ration as a contribution towards household food security.¹⁸⁸ Despite the fact that the main purpose of FFA is the creation of assets, this remains an important caveat. Gender is only recognised to a very limited extent within design,¹⁸⁹ and though involved in nurseries, women remain a proportionately small number of beneficiaries.

145. The main issues surrounding the FFA programme have been implementational; for example, concerning the quality of implementing partners, with some communities reporting a lack of oversight and direction once projects were underway,¹⁹⁰ and sustainability concerns, with processes for ongoing management and responsibility for maintenance often not clearly defined. Field studies also found the programme to be poorly linked in to national structures at provincial and district level, with local ministry representatives citing little or no knowledge of WFP's FFA activities outside the immediate urban area.¹⁹¹ Inclusion error in targeting has also been contentious, with both the 2011 Strategic Review and the field studies for the evaluation citing a need for strengthened engagement with CDCs regarding beneficiary selection.¹⁹² There has also been little internal coherence between FFA and FFE/FFT for example; FFA activities could – as the recent Strategic Outline for FFE has indicated – be used for school construction or rehabilitation. The recent Concept Note does recognize however an increased need for partnership with other agencies such as FAO, as well as the need to ensure horizontal co-ordination across activities.¹⁹³

Tuberculosis (TB) support

146. The TB programme supports the MoPH's National Tuberculosis Control Program (NTP) by providing (a) an incentive for TB patients to regularly receive medication at clinics, and (b) an important nutritional supplement to ensure a higher chance of cure over the 8-month treatment cycle. The incentive plays a key role in increasing take-up of TB medication - the evaluation was informed that 'people don't come from a distance just to receive a "white pill"'. The TB programme operates in all 34 provinces, providing a mixed food family ration (for six persons). The male caseload is higher than female, but interestingly 66 percent of the new sputum smear patients are women. Implementers are Office of Public Health and some NGOs.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid; field studies from Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul, Jalalabad and Herat.

¹⁸⁹ It is mentioned in very vague and non-specific terms in the 2011 Operational Guidelines and not at all in the subsequent Concept Note of 2012 (see section XXYY on Commitments to Women below).

¹⁹⁰ Field study data.

¹⁹¹ Field study data in Kabul and Herat.

¹⁹² WFP Afghanistan Strategic Review of Operations Kabul 2011.

¹⁹³ WFP FFA Concept Note. Kabul 2012.

Table 12: TB support (household numbers, not actual patients) 2010 and 2011

	Total recipients, TB	Of which men	Of which women	% actual versus planned	
				Men	Women
2010	Participants 174,690	89,092	85,598	105.0%	105.0%
2011	Participants 142,241	72,543	69,698	59.9%	59.9%

147. Table 12 points to household figures (i.e. multiplied by 6 for each patient). In 2010, WFP provided assistance to 29,115 TB patients and 23,707 in 2011. However, the annual incidence rate is estimated at 53,000 new cases/year with a case detection rate of approximately 70 percent. The reduced achievement figures in 2011 were due to higher targets being set (237,400 intended household beneficiaries in 2011), achievement against which were then adversely affected by pipeline breaks. The worst break in the pipeline was with wheat, which is highly valued by participants.

148. The TB programme currently does not distinguish between food insecure patients and non-food insecure patients, nor malnourished versus non-malnourished, with all receiving the incentive package from WFP. While this is contentious in targeting terms, the main reasons for it are: a) pragmatism (it would be unrealistic to have selective targeting within a patient list) and b) efficiency (bringing food for just a few persons would not be cost-effective).

149. WFP is aware of capacity issues among its partners, having received complaints and struggled with the poor quality and late arrival of reports. Reporting delays also mean that knowledge is always up to 6 months behind,¹⁹⁴ constraining responsive operational decision-making. Corruption is reportedly easy, but not easily detected by WFP in the absence of constant in-clinic monitoring. To tackle this, WFP has increasingly liaised with WHO through the TB Task Force in order to minimize risks of diversion. Field studies reiterated some very significant delays in delivery of commodities.

150. In terms of results, WHO (World Health Organization) data showed approximately 28,000 new TB patients in 2010 Afghanistan¹⁹⁵ MoH official statistics cite coverage of 80 percent of these, though WFP cast doubt on this figure internally, citing a more realistic coverage rate of 50-55 percent.¹⁹⁶ Detection rates are low in Afghanistan because of the extremely poor access to health facilities, particularly outside urban centres, and the incidence rate is not decreasing.¹⁹⁷ Both the Strategic Review and the field studies for this evaluation found anecdotal evidence of the incentive delivering strongly positive results – the Strategic Review cites findings from a field visit to Jalalabad, where the provision of WFP food was cited as responsible for 96 percent of TB patients successfully completing their DOTS course of treatment.¹⁹⁸ Field studies found similarly positive anecdotal evidence to support this.

¹⁹⁴ NTP only reports on a quarterly basis.

¹⁹⁵ WHO figures cited at

https://extranet.who.int/sree/Reports?op=Replet&name=/WHO_HQ_Reports/G2/PROD/EXT/TBCountryProfile&ISO2=AF&outtype=html, accessed 6.7.12.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with WFP staff, Kabul June 2012.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ WFP Strategic Review 2011.

151. However, WFP measurement is limited to input and output data derived from clinic reports alongside confirmation of deliveries of food commodities by the Co-operating Partner. As for other programmes, results are not measured in terms of (a) whether the nutritional supplement is effective in terms of patient recovery rates or (b) (in this case) whether there is a number of malnourished patients who would need a different course of treatment. The evidence available simply shows that the food package provides an effective incentive for patients to come to the clinic – though this in itself is a significant gain.

152. Despite the shortcomings in monitoring and relatively high inclusion error in targeting, the TB programme does what it sets out to do: incentivises patients to come to clinics and supports their household’s food security in doing so. In this, it is well aligned to need and delivers clear and demonstrable benefits. Going forward, more real-time monitoring of patient need in particular would support delivery – akin to the KPI monitoring by the Operations Unit of food dispatches – plus the possible use of alternative transfer mechanisms (the TB programme would be a likely candidate for cash and voucher initiatives, for example).

Gender Equality

153. WFP records progress on gender through the Enhanced Commitment to Women indicators on its annual reports. Table 13 shows the 2010 and 2011 results in Afghanistan:

Table 13: Enhanced Commitment to Women indicators 2011 and 2012

	Planned	Actual 2010	Actual 2011
Proportion of household food entitlements (on ration cards or distribution list) issued in women’s name in GFD	40%	44%	19%
Proportion of women in leadership positions in food management committees	25%	13%	32%
Proportion of women receiving household food rations at distribution point in GFD	40%	26%	26%

154. Targets are therefore relatively low and no clear explanation has been available on their rationale. Progress against them is mixed, but the achievement of 32 percent of women in leadership positions on food management committees in 2011 shows that good results can be delivered where a concerted effort is made, and a robust stance taken by WFP. Results could be improved by extending this more systematically in future. Annex 5 contains some suggestions accordingly.

2.3.3 Capacity Development

155. The PRRO makes a strong statement¹⁹⁹ on the requirement for intensive capacity development at all levels; beneficiaries, civil society, government counterparts and partners for successful implementation of all activities under the PRRO. Two of the five WFP global WFP Strategic Objectives have specific reference to capacity building; however, the PRRO also recognizes that there is ‘insufficient

¹⁹⁹ Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations – Afghanistan 200063, submitted to the WFP Executive Board in February 2010, para 28.

capacity among government partners at national, provincial and district levels preventing cohesion in programmes or complementary inputs'.²⁰⁰

156. The articulation within the PRRO document around capacity development reflects a rather routine, fragmented and WFP-centric approach. Despite the significant emphasis given to capacity development within the strategies for implementation of the PRRO, there is no evidence of a concerted, coherent, planned and implemented effort on capacity development in a form or intensity that matches the original PRRO intention. There have been some important contributions within some ministries – for example, the collection and analysis of data within the MoPH - but overall, capacity development has remained subsidiary - not core - within the implementation of the PRRO.

157. Further downstream, the PRRO intention to further develop Community Development Councils relies heavily on partners who themselves have major capacity limitations in their ability to build the capacity of CDCs. The contractual nature of the relationships between WFP and co-operating partners does not lend itself to the ambitions stated in the capacity development agenda.

158. In May 2011 – 13 months into the PRRO - a 'Capacity Development Options' exercise was undertaken that mapped six options for approaching capacity development in a more strategic manner.²⁰¹ Subsequently WFP undertook an analysis exercise of MoLSAMD and MRRD capacities, gaps and opportunities²⁰² from which a draft concept note for capacity development of MRRD has been developed. This has not, however, yet crystallised into anything that has been formally approved or implemented.

159. Apart from enhancing the capacity of counterparts, WFP's intention has been to build national capacity and engagement to enhance food security in four specific areas:

- Strategic grain reserve and community storage facilities
- Establishing private sector local production through Purchase for Progress (P4P)
- Enhancing the capacity of private millers to fortify flour
- Establish vulnerability and surveillance systems (early warning), and market analysis, within government structures.

160. In 2011 unprecedented procurements of wheat were made from MAIL/SGR, and WFP has worked hard to implement the P4P programme as a means of improving local purchasing from farmers, but production volumes are extremely limited compared to need. However, WFP has helped with increasing productivity and storage improvement for wheat and soya. Private sector processing plants are assisted to produce soya and wheat products, some of which are used for WFP projects (e.g. high energy biscuits). Three factories are currently producing biscuits

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Capacity development options for WFP Afghanistan, Mission Report May 2011, Piet Vochten & Nasser Nazari.

²⁰² Final Report on Government's Capacity Development, period covered Sept 2011-March 2012, WFP Afghanistan (internal doc).

(100 mt in 2011, increasing to 867 mt in 2012). This is a positive result, but unable yet to meet the high requirements of the WFP programme.

161. The four areas of capacity development cited above are highly diverse activities that would be challenging from a capacity development perspective irrespective of the operating context. The evaluation has found little evidence of a deliberate planned and monitored approach being taken to a hand-over strategy for any of the activity areas beyond P4P.²⁰³ This is also reflective of the fact that staff resourcing and monitoring arrangements around capacity development ambitions [e.g. for Strategic Objective 2 – ‘adequate and credible structures are in place’, Strategic Objective 5 – ‘Ministry capacity strengthened and staff retained’] have been weak. The gaps in staffing (post vacancy) and the resulting dearth of capacity development specialists contributes towards this.

2.3.4 Conclusions

162. Data paucity continues to be a major constraint, particularly with respect to attempts to go beyond input/output figures and measure impact over time. The main difficulty is consistent access over time; WFP partners and PAT teams are often only able to have ad hoc visiting patterns to recipient communities. With so many variables at play – including seasonality and population mobility - this is insufficient for more than a cursory examination of programme impact. The complex interplay between pipeline breaks and access constraints further confounds the endeavour.

163. Overall, costs of delivery are very high in Afghanistan. In 2010 transport costs amounted to 3.26 percent of Direct Project Costs, and 3.5 percent in 2011.²⁰⁴ The previous PRRO aimed to raise funds for air transport and monitoring of commodities; these resources never materialized, but the deterioration in the operating environment meant a commensurate increase in transport, storage and security costs.²⁰⁵ Simple cost comparisons with WFP operations in other countries would therefore be meaningless; the question is more whether WFP has maximized efficiency where feasible to do so given the constraints of the context.

164. The pipeline breaks described above, particularly within GFD and FFE, have badly affected WFP’s ability to deliver in a timely way to its beneficiaries. The resulting interruptions in supply have not only impaired the objectives but also WFP’s relationships with its partners and beneficiaries. Similarly, the inefficiencies in targeting described above, particularly within FFE and TB, have negative effects which extend to reputational risk and some resentment within the communities it seeks to support. We should be cautious, however, in assuming that this exacerbates conflict; our field evaluators report that rural communities in particular are generally grateful for whatever is received under adverse circumstances, and WFP is still one of the few ‘visible’ agencies on the ground.

²⁰³ Corporate guidance refers to hand-over as *‘the final element in a process which begins with assessing the capacity of national and local institutions to take ownership for anti-hunger programmes and measures and ends with the transfer of that ownership to national counterparts participating in the capacity development process’* Operational Guide to strengthen capacity of nations to reduce hunger (pp 48).

²⁰⁴ SPR reports for 2010 and 2011.

²⁰⁵ The WFP Afghanistan Finance Office estimates the additional costs of security to be from US\$10-15 million for the PRRO.

165. WFP has actively sought to tackle these problems firstly through experimentation with alternative delivery modalities, and secondly through the use of local procurement. On the first: the cash voucher pilot project does mark a shift towards more efficient delivery models despite the conceptual confusion surrounding it. Given the generally functioning nature of food markets in Afghanistan other than in times of crisis, and pending the assessment of other conditions set out in WFP's corporate guidance,²⁰⁶ cash voucher transfers can provide major efficiency gains. The limitations of the pilot project have constrained these, but much valuable learning has been gathered and WFP is now much better positioned to capitalize on these. Cash vouchers schemes need to be reconceptualised and implemented as a transfer mechanism for WFP's existing target groups and sub-programmes.

166. Options for local procurement of commodities are limited in Afghanistan. In 2011 unprecedented procurements of wheat were made from MAIL/SGR, and WFP has worked hard to implement the P4P programme as a means of improving local purchasing from farmers. But production volumes are extremely limited compared to need. Probably a greater efficiency gain than local procurement has been the sheer scale of the operation, which has meant efficiency gains in terms of purchasing and transporting commodities, and contracting with implementation partners on the ground.

167. WFP's efforts to minimize commodity leakage and loss are partly documented above, but include the very significant institutional reforms through, for example, the formation of the Compliance and Operations units, the devolution of decision-making to area offices up to certain thresholds, and revisions to Field Level Agreements. Data is now being collected much more systematically and robustly on leakage and loss, and mitigation strategies developed. This has been a notably proactive aspect of the office's work in the latter half of the evaluation period.

168. Finally, there are examples where the tradeoffs between efficiency gains and effectiveness issues have worked poorly. In its efforts to secure best value for money in PAT recruitment for instance, WFP selected teams on the basis of the cheapest tenders. The lowest price did not always correspond to capacity to carry out the work, and WFP is aware that the price paid in declining effectiveness has outweighed the cost savings incurred. Similarly, the decision to purchase HEB from an Indian supplier for the school feeding programme encountered major difficulties in quality and supply. Table 14 presents a brief summary of results and progress against the five WFP Strategic Objectives. This also refers back to the previous sections on strategy. Results under Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) are primarily at output level only. The relatively 'controlled' environment for nutrition programmes (clinics) allows SO1 to be monitored for results over time which is now beginning to show positive results, though still weighted towards outputs. Overall the activities under Strategic Objective 3 (SO3) on rebuilding livelihoods and Strategic Objective 4 (SO4) on meeting the needs of those affected by TB have shown the most progress against objectives. Capacity development and disaster preparedness activities under Strategic Objective 5 (SO5) and Strategic Objective 2 (SO2) respectively show slow

²⁰⁶ These include: programme objectives as they relate to need; market functioning; implementation capacities; and beneficiary preferences. WFP Vouchers and Cash Transfers as Food Assistance Instruments: Opportunities and Challenges WFP Rome (undated)

progress – partly due to contextual limitations but also to design flaws and an unclear vision at the outset of the PRRO.

Table 14: Summary of progress against WFP Strategic Objectives

<p>SO1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies <i>Support conflict and disaster-affected people, IDPs and other vulnerable groups whose food security has been adversely affected by shocks</i></p>	<p>Appropriate prioritization of groups against declining results (food delivery against targets) mainly due to reduced donor contributions and pipeline breaks. GFD the most susceptible part of the portfolio to targeting, re-distribution and diversion. Cash and voucher suffers from conceptual confusion leading to mis-targeting. GFD well targeted in returning populations; less so in emergencies (natural disasters, conflict-affected IDPs) where access difficulties are compounded by re-distribution and inclusion errors. MCHN generally well targeted, with results indicating appropriate interventions, but needs stronger partners. Link with severe malnutrition in CMAM leads to better referrals.</p>
<p>SO2: Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures <i>Strengthen the capacity of the Government to prepare for, assess and respond to acute hunger arising from disasters</i></p>	<p>Investments in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) beginning quite late in PRRO cycle, with few discernible results yet.</p>
<p>SO3: Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situation <i>Support the re-establishment of the livelihoods of communities and families affected by shocks</i></p>	<p>Mixed results overall, with some high-performing sub-programmes (FFA) and some weaker ones (FFE) dragging down overall performance. Constraints partly due to features of the context, but also to design flaws.</p>
<p>SO4: Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition including through hand-over strategies and local purchase <i>To meet the food and nutrition needs of those affected by HIV and AIDS, TB and other pandemics</i></p>	<p>Local purchase minimal in P4P but some progress on capacity building. TB programme well received and meeting targets though measurement needs improvement.</p>
<p>SO5: Strengthen the capacity of countries to reduce hunger <i>Support sustainable development of local food security systems and the country's capacity to predict and reduce hunger</i></p>	<p>Some strong activities e.g. work with MoPH, but unsystematic and not supported by a clear vision or statement of capacity development. Momentum increasing in latter period of evaluation but more to do.</p>

3. Conclusions

169. Rarely has it been necessary to reconfigure a PRRO in such a radical manner as that of Afghanistan in 2011-2012. This is not simply because of changing donor priorities, but also because a 36-month activity portfolio (in fact finalized as early as mid-2009) is inherently unrealistic in a country where changes in the operational landscape are rapid and unpredictable. Contrasting this with the relatively successfully funded EMOP in 2011-2012, one might question whether a 3-year PRRO is a suitable vehicle at all for present-day Afghanistan when events on the ground strongly influence annual contributions received from a handful of donors. Several of these donors are subject to a broader foreign policy agenda in Afghanistan that determines how and through whom money is channelled.

170. **Breadth versus depth.** The initial ambition of WFP's portfolio in Afghanistan reflects the optimism of the time. Since then, funding and the intensification of conflict have caused operational constraints which have necessarily limited what could reasonably be achieved within the timeframe. WFP's number of total intended beneficiaries over successive years of PRRO implementation did not significantly depart from its original target - hence doing less with the same number of people (breadth over depth) was the rule of thumb. In some respects this is a considerable achievement, but it can mean less than optimal use of resources in areas where WFP is spread too thinly. WFP has responded to access and resource constraints by reducing its scale, but retaining the same portfolio. This is no longer viable. The Strategic Review opened the debate by suggesting the paring down of the portfolio only to those in most critical need, while accepting that underlying levels of chronic food insecurity would not diminish in the short term.

171. **Portfolio results.** In terms of results, the poorest performing portfolio activities in 2011 when measuring actual versus planned outputs were FFE and FFT (as a result of pipeline breaks), and cash voucher schemes (bureaucratic delays). Targeting is a problem across all activities, though more so in GFD (displaced) and cash voucher schemes. Despite the current lack of an overarching safety net scheme in the country, WFP has built experience and operational knowledge that could, in the longer term, complement a co-funded national programme. Inclusion and exclusion errors were most severe where food aid is distributed to conflict-displaced communities, not least because of access difficulties. A better understanding of not just how WFP is working but what it is aiming for is essential. New corporate guidance focused on results orientation should support this shift, as should much of the helpful groundwork already underway.

172. Meanwhile, the humanitarian imperative will remain, not least because of the increase in conflict displacement that occurred in 2012. War and displacement are inextricably linked, and WFP will be obliged to answer the growing demand for food aid from those displaced or cut off in the winter months. The cross-agency approach to address acute malnutrition is an encouraging development.

173. Strategically, WFP's comparative advantage lies in its strength in advocacy and policy advice, and in piloting those schemes that relate to medium-term priorities in nutrition and livelihoods. In its recovery activities, this would imply a greater 'depth' of coverage in chosen geographical areas, with increased integration and tracking of results within its own portfolio, combining this with joint programming with other development actors in the field. The CMAM initiative in community nutrition is a good example of this, as is the potential new approach being sought with FAO in food-for-assets work on rural watersheds and other infrastructure. By contrast, some of the legacy activities that have been core to WFP's programme for many years have been less accountable or less easy to assign impact to (FFE, TB, and FFT).

174. **Conflict analysis.** The evaluation suggests that a more thorough conflict analysis – including a review of community security and protection - at inception may at least have made the PRRO more responsive to change, particularly if accompanied by priorities in the sequencing of activities, and a realistic reduction in the scale and scope of such a broad portfolio. Such a shift in perspective - one in which conflict is not just a 'background risk' but something that should be accounted

for as part of programme design – would suggest that targeting and pipeline issues may themselves contain risks of exacerbating tensions, inequalities and power relations.

175. Risk analysis is now being undertaken in a more comprehensive manner, but we note that gender issues in particular are still not sufficiently prominent. The centrality of the links between addressing gender inequalities and improving food security is recognised, yet WFP has to date lacked a clear institutional vision of intended goals in relation to gender and food security over the lifetime of the PRRO. There has been little guidance on clear implementation strategies, a lack of partnerships with other agencies and, beyond data disaggregation, no clear accountability processes or comprehensive internal training in place.

176. WFP has been largely reactive to operational constraints, rather than proactive in the design of conflict-sensitive activities. Very much related to the volatile political environment is the issue of corruption. With such high-value commodities at its disposal WFP has been victim to diversions and poor accountability; and if it cannot meet the entitlements promised to communities it becomes part of the problem rather than the solution. There are, of course, constraints: some donors earmark contributions, and WFP is bound by existing MOUs (with Government and UN) that oblige it to continue providing assistance to populations in need irrespective of access impediments and possible diversion. The evaluation asks a question which is not easily answered: in pragmatic terms, what is the threshold of tolerance in accountability beyond which an activity would be closed?

177. WFP undertook major organizational reviews and restructuring in 2011. The deteriorating operational arena compelled new approaches in two respects: first, an intensive examination of the political economy and context under which the Organization was working; and second, a restructured office to respond more readily to demands from the field. External contextual analysis was commissioned and internal compliance, communication and more rapid data analysis began to be acquired. The results have yet to fully felt, but the right questions are being asked.

178. **Coherence.** WFP corporate emphasis on food assistance as opposed to food aid is particularly pertinent to those portfolio activities in Afghanistan with a longer timeline - infrastructure, capacity provision and partnership training. In a climate of decreasing resources, they also point to the need for increased joint programming with other donors and specialized agencies. WFP's alignment with national priorities, in so far as they are articulated, has been strong, though in the intensely donor-driven environment of Afghanistan policy tends to be driven by what is funded. Coherence with other international agencies has, as in so many countries, been coincidental. Declining funds make 'go it alone' activities no longer viable; the weakness of some earlier portfolio activities was precisely this lack of integrated joint programming. In 2011-2012 WFP made greater efforts to build collaboration with FAO and UNICEF in food security and in nutrition policy and field practice; these need to be continued, built upon and extended.

179. The principle of passing increased responsibility and ownership to the Government allows WFP to extend its influence to national policy, and in particular the way in which data is gathered and used to inform strategic decisions. Capacity

constraints remain, but also WFP’s insufficient staff numbers impede progress. WFP has a strong voice in both the food security and nutrition clusters. Piloting innovative ways of using food assistance is one way WFP has successfully steered new approaches to urban relief and safety nets (cash voucher) and indigenous production (P4P). Capacity development across the portfolio as a whole has also not been as fruitful as it might have been; there has been a tendency to use partners as service delivery agents, neglecting to create lasting institutional resources.

180. **Political space and partnerships.** There are increasing risks related to operational and political ‘space’. The legitimacy of the Government is contested in some areas of Afghanistan for a number of reasons (capacity, corruption, but above all because they are aligned with the counter-insurgency campaigns spearheaded by United States of America and European governments and troops). Without recourse to judgement on this matter, WFP recognises that too-close an alignment with Government could compromise its neutrality, particularly at the point of delivery. In this respect we believe that WFP should continue to advocate for a separation of the Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator roles, working more closely with the Humanitarian Coordination Team. Revised partnership agreements will be crucial as WFP steers the difficult path between supporting government institutions and maintaining appropriate political neutrality that allows access to all communities in need.

181. A crucial prerequisite for future programming, therefore, will be to identify the most appropriate delivery partners. A pragmatic solution, already underway, is to build partnerships with non-governmental entities (private sector, NGOs, CDCs, etc) while simultaneously helping to build the Government’s capacity in oversight, coordination and information management.

182. WFP decision-making needs to move up a gear, from the level of operational delivery to a more strategic and conflict-sensitive vision of the future. The following recommendations look towards key medium term priorities that in turn relate to a longer-term vision of WFP’s role in the country, with portfolio activities being both predictable and sustainable, building trust at community level. Afghanistan will continue to be highly volatile, resulting in a shrinking operational space for WFP as well as reduced funding.

4. Recommendations

183. Arising from the evidence above, this study makes the following recommendations for action by WFP Afghanistan.

Table 15: Recommendations

Main recommendation	Sub-recommendations
<p>1. Reconfigure the overall portfolio in accordance with national priorities, the operating environment, and staff capacities</p>	<p>Use the ongoing strategic review and realignment process to concentrate the scope of the portfolio around key priorities in the medium term, possibly working in fewer communities, whilst retaining a longer term vision. Ensure a full conflict analysis in the budget revision of the PRRO (including sequencing of projects, institutional capacity building, the use of strategic risk analysis, <i>Do No Harm Plus</i> tools etc.) to drive decision-making.</p> <p>In light of the necessity to nationalize staff posts and increase remote management, increase resources and staffing around issues of compliance and the manner in which communities can</p>

Main recommendation	Sub-recommendations
	<p>have greater voice over accountability and reporting.</p> <p>Review internal management, staff training and capacity to better reflect the more concentrated portfolio and incorporate the necessity for on-going risk assessment.</p>
<p>2. Ensure that WFP is strategically positioned for maximum effectiveness</p>	<p>Through a regularly updated NRVA (complemented by improved data collection through VAM), refine targeting throughout the PRRO cycle, focussing on areas of highest food insecurity. The new data from NRVA + VAM should be combined with on-going United Nations assessments of access. Continue to work via the Food Security and Agriculture and Nutrition clusters to press for greater targeting, integration and joint programming.</p>
<p>3. Make programming fit for context</p>	<p>Retain the capacity for emergency response (GFD/FFW + MCHN) whilst reducing the time lag in the assessment process, particularly for conflict-displaced populations.</p> <p>Prioritize recovery operations based on evidence of their relevance, effectiveness and efficiency over the last period, with FFA taking a prominent role (linked to community resilience).</p> <p>Retain the TB incentive programme, but with a clearer means of reporting on objectives.</p> <p>Consider a reduction in scale and redesign of FFE.</p> <p>Apply the limited urban safety net initiative as feasible to underpin the development of a national social protection policy.</p>
<p>4. Improve operational partnerships</p>	<p>Scale up joint programming opportunities with complementary United Nations and donor initiatives.</p> <p>Devise clear criteria for co-operating partner selection, based around effectiveness and efficiency of delivery, and develop relationships based around clear and detailed contracts which specify expectations, roles and responsibilities on both sides.</p> <p>Look at way to increase NGO partnerships through a combination of implementation and capacity development. Long term relationships with fewer communities are likely to be the way forward.</p> <p>Increase community level communications and advocacy around entitlements; these should include a gender perspective.</p> <p>Introduce incentive structures for staff that reflect time spent in coordination and collaboration in joint planning and initiatives with other development actors.</p>
<p>5. Increase the focus on national ownership.</p>	<p>Develop a stronger and more explicit focus on building national capacity to co-ordinate and facilitate service delivery.</p> <p>Increase support to the Central Statistics Office (for the development of, for example, a rolling NRVA)</p>
<p>6. Improve the focus on gender and protection quality issues in WFP programming</p>	<p>Place a renewed emphasis on gender and protection analysis in the design and strategies for implementation (targeted + mainstreamed), monitoring and reporting, drawing on strategic partnerships and available in-country resources.</p> <p>This would include the development of a series of immediate, short-term and medium-term actions to improve focus on and accountability for, gender equality. A country office vision statement should be developed, with intended results and strategies for delivery on gender equality; as well as conducting a <i>gender audit</i> of the programme, leading ultimately to a full <i>gender mainstreaming strategy</i> for the new country strategy/PRRO redesign. Draw on strategic partnerships and available in-country resources.</p> <p>Conduct a full <i>Do No Harm Plus</i> analysis of the programme,</p>

Main recommendation	Sub-recommendations
	leading ultimately to an office statement on how protection issues will be addressed in the new country strategy and PRRO redesign.

Acronyms

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ANDMA	Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ARTF	Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund
BAAG	British Agencies Afghanistan Group
BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CDC	Community Development Council
CMAM	Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
DDA	District Development Assemblies
EMOP	Emergency Operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Food For Assets
FFE	Food For Education
FFT	Food For Training
FSAC	Food Security and Agriculture Cluster
GFD	General Food Distribution
HEB	High-Energy Biscuits
HCT	Humanitarian Coordination Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(S)
IFI	International Financial Institution
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MCHN	Mother and Child Health and Nutrition
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MoE	Ministry of Education

MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MOUs	Memoranda of Understanding
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
mt	Metric Tons
NADF	National Agricultural Development Framework
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NESP	National Education Strategic Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLAP	National Literacy Action Plan
NPP	National Priority Programs
NRAP	National Rural Access Program
NRVA	national risk and vulnerability assessment
NSDP	National Skills Development Programme
NTP	National Tuberculosis Control Program
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OE	Office of Evaluation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PAT	Programme Assistance Team
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
SO	Special Operations
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHAS	United Nations Common Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping

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