

REGIONAL PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

Central America: An evaluation of WFP's Regional Portfolio (2007-2011)

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Disclaimer

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Fact Sheets: WFP Regional Portfolio in Central America

Timeline and funding level of Central America Regional Portfolio 2007 - 2011								
Operation	Title	Time Frame	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
REG DEV 104110	Capacity Building and Technical Assistance in Support of Food-Based Social Protection Programmes	Jul 05 - Dec 10	← 2005 Req: \$ 10,916,154 Contrib: \$ 8,227,955					
REG DEV 104210	Capacity Building of Integrated Micronutrient Programmes in the Central American Region	Jan 06 - Dec 10	← 2006 Req: \$ 8,070,456 Contrib: \$ 4,301,869					
REG PRRO 10444.0*	Assistance to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation among Marginalized Populations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua	Aug-07 Oct-11	Req: \$ 53,457,768 Contrib: \$ 36,066,678					
REG PRRO 200043	Assistance to Vulnerable Groups Affected by Natural Disasters and Other Shocks in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua	Jan 11 - Dec 12					→ 2012 Req: \$ 29,215,274 Contrib: \$ 20,060,276	
Food Distributed (MT)			2,728	6,708	11,400	18,190	6,905	
Total of Beneficiaries (actual)			225,066	492,114	680,160	986,068	543,475	

Source: Standard Project Reports' (SPR) 2006-2011, Resource Situations

Requirements (Req.) and Contributions (Contrib.) are US\$ millions

* REG PRRO 10444.0 ended in December 2010 for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. However, an extension in time was granted to Nicaragua to continue operations through October 2011 thus allowing the country additional months to complete the fully funded activities.

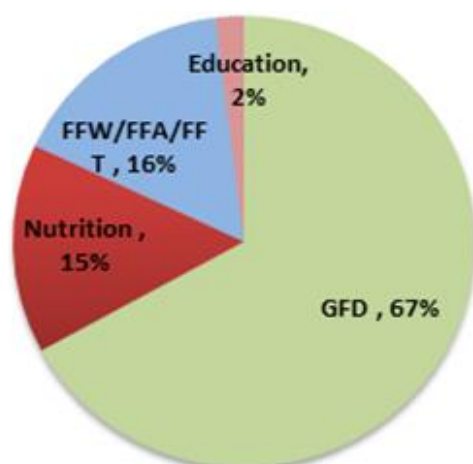
Distribution of Portfolio Activities by Beneficiary Type

Operation	Type of activity	GFD	Nutrition	FFW/FFA/FFT	HIV/AIDS & TB	Education	Cash and Voucher
REG PRRO 10444.0		X	X	X	X	X	X
REG PRRO 200043		X	X	X			
	Planned % of beneficiaries	46	41	12	0	1	0
	Actual % of beneficiaries	67	15	16	0	2	0

Source: Dacota, SPR's

*HIV and Cash and Voucher activities is 0% due to a low absolute figure not captured by the %

Actual % of beneficiaries by activity



**Top Donors: European Commission
UN CERF, Brazil, Japan, Australia, Spain**

**Partners: Governments of El Salvador,
Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua,
9 International Agencies and 26 NGOs**

El Salvador (country factsheet)

Note: this Country factsheet includes only single country operations (see the regional factsheet for the Regional operations), and does NOT include trust fund activities.

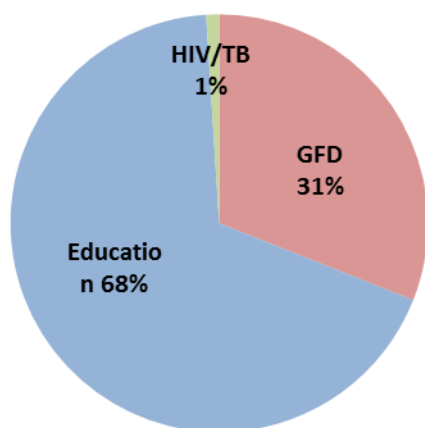
Timeline and funding level of El Salvador operations 2007 - 2011

Operation	Title	Time Frame	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
IR-EMOP 200089	Flooding Assistance for Damages Caused by Tropical Storm Ida	Dec 09 - Feb 10				Req: \$ 459,189 Contrib: \$ 406,287	
DEV 102260	Country Programme	Jan 04 - Dec 07	← 2004 Req: \$ 8,269,568 Contrib: \$ 4,886,100				
	Purchase for Progress	Jan 09 - Jul 14				P4P	→ 2014
Direct Expenses (US\$ millions)			\$ 2,734,000	\$ 3,837,000	\$ 16,274,000	\$ 25,859,000	\$ 18,142,000
% Direct Expenses: El Salvador vs. World*			0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Total of Beneficiaries (actual)			186,977	58,654	n.a.	160,302	n.a.
Food distributed (MT)			3,348	1,310	299	4,930	n.a.

Source: last SPR and Resource Situation available, APR 2007 - 2011

*0% due to a low absolute figure not captured by the %

Actual % of beneficiaries by activity



Activities by operation and beneficiary share

Operation \ Activity	GFD	Education	HIV/TB
IR-EMOP 200089	X		X
DEV 102260		X	
Planned % of beneficiaries	40%	61%	1%
Actual % of beneficiaries	31%	68%	1%

Source: Dacota, SPR's

Top 5 donors: Italy, UN CERF, Private Donors

Partners: Government of El Salvador, 3 International Agencies and 10 NGO's

Guatemala (country factsheet)

Note: this Country factsheet includes only single country operations (see the regional factsheet for the Regional operations), and does NOT include trust fund activities.

Timeline and funding level of Guatemala operations 2007 - 2011

Operation	Title	Time Frame	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
DEV 200031	Country Programme Guatemala	Mar 10 - Dec 13				Req: \$ 19,576,078 Contrib: \$ 9,659,272	2013 →	
EMOP 200111	Emergency Food Assistance to Families Affected by Recurrent Disasters	Apr 10 - May 11				Req: \$ 28,034,086 Contrib: \$ 9,848,253		
IR-EMOP 200155	Assistance to Victims of Flood & Landslides & Pacaya Volcano Eruption in the Centre, Southern & Western Highlands	Jun 10 - Aug 10				Req: \$ 487,990 Contrib: \$ 447,919		
IR-EMOP 200072	Food Assistance to Populations Affected by Undernutrition and critical Food Shortage	Oct 09 - Jan 10			Req: \$ 479,026			
PRRO 104570	Recovery and Prevention of Malnutrition for Vulnerable Groups	Jun 06 - Nov 10	Req: \$ 35,362,906 Contrib: \$ 15,828,739					
DEV 100920	Country Programme- Guatemala	Mar 03 - Mar 10	Req: \$ 20,839,447 Contrib: \$ 14,594,221					
Purchase for Progress*	Sep-08				P4P		→	
Direct Expenses (US\$ millions)			\$ 6,555,000	\$ 8,165,000	\$ 9,377,000	\$ 15,733,000	\$ 13,517,000	
% Direct Expenses: Guatemala vs. World**			0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Total of Beneficiaries (actual)			478,225	513,006	613,277	707,104	408,040	
Food distributed (MT)			9,037	9,281	9,911	17,490	9,302	

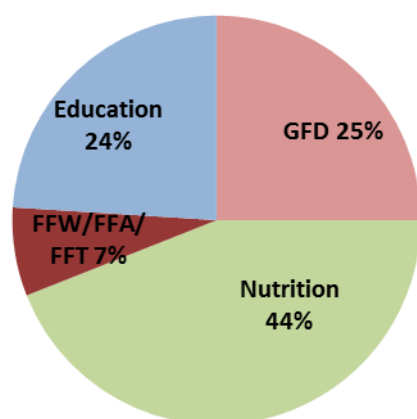
Source: last SPR and Resource Situation available, APR 2007 - 2011

*Different donors are involved with different timeframes. The EU Food Facility has terminated in Sept. 2012, the Howard G Buffett Foundation will terminate in July 2014 and Canada which will go until March 2015.

** 0% due to a low absolute figure not captured by the %

Top 5 donors: European Commission, USA, Canada, Spain, Private donors
Partners: Government of Guatemala, 7 International Agencies and 52 NGO's

Actual % of beneficiaries by activity



Activities by operation and beneficiary share

Operation	Activity	GFD	Nutrition	FFW/FFA/FFT	Education
DEV 200031			X	X	
EMOP 200111		X	X	X	
EMOP 104570			X	X	
DEV 100920			X	X	X
IR-EMOP 200155		X			
IR-EMOP 200072		X	X		
Planned % of beneficiaries		10%	70%	13%	7%
Actual % of beneficiaries		25%	44%	7%	24%

Note: no beneficiary figures available for IR-EMOPs
 Source: Dakota, SPR's

Honduras (country factsheet)

Note: this Country factsheet includes only single country operations (see the regional factsheet for the Regional operations), and does NOT include trust fund activities.

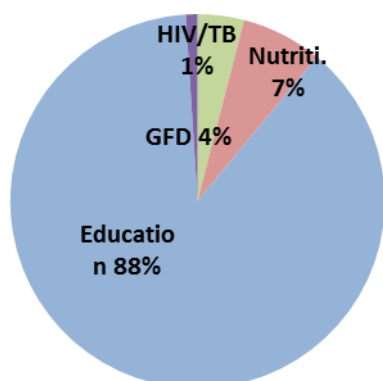
Timeline and funding level of Honduras operations 2007 - 2011

Operation	Title	Time Frame	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
DEV 10074.0	Country Programme	Jan 03 - Dec 07	2013 ← Req: \$ 24,285,028 Contrib: \$ 19,904,672				
DEV 105380	Country Programme	Jan 08 - Dec 11	LEGEND Funding Level > 75% Between 50 and 75% Less than 50%	Req: \$ 34,200,250 Contrib: \$ 27,503,171			
IR-EMOP 107930	Food Assistance to Victims of Floods (Tropical Wave 16)	Oct 08 - Jan 09		Req: \$ 500,000 Contrib: \$ 198,269			
Purchase for Progress		Jan 09 - Dec 13			P4P		2013 →
Direct Expenses (US\$ millions)			\$ 22,976,000	− \$ 983,000	\$ 28,014,000	\$ 28,439,000	\$ 37,022,000
% Direct Expenses: Honduras vs. World*			1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Total of Beneficiaries (actual)			388,283	302,364	214,382	667,540	601,727
Food distributed (MT)			7,499	3,646	5,324	8,602	12,891

Source: last SPR and Resource Situation available, APR 2007 - 2011

*0% due to a low absolute figure not captured by the %

Actual % of beneficiaries by activity



Activities by operation and beneficiary share

Operation \ Activity	GFD	Nutrition	Education	HIV/TB
DEV 10074.0		X	X	X
DEV 105380		X	X	X
IR-EMOP 107930	X			
Planned % of beneficiaries	3%	13%	83%	1%
Actual % of beneficiaries	4%	7%	88%	1%

Source: Dacota, SPR's

Nicaragua (country factsheet)

Note: this Country factsheet includes only single country operations (see the regional factsheet for the Regional operations), and does NOT include trust fund activities.

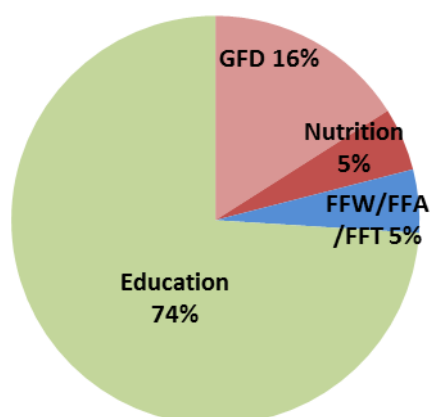
Timeline and funding level of Nicaragua operations 2007 - 2011

Operation	Title	Time Frame	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
IR-EMOP 200204	Assistance to populations affected by floods	Oct 10 - Jan 11	LEGEND Funding Level > 75% Between 50 and 75% Less than 50%				Req: \$ 498,740 Contrib: \$ 429,840	
DEV 105970	Country Programme	Feb 08 - Dec 12		Req: \$ 34,683,369 Contrib: \$ 27,196,589				2012 →
EMOP 107000	Emergency Food Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Felix	Oct 07 - Mar 09	Req: \$ 10,540,198 Contrib: \$ 9,546,379					
Purchase for Progress		Sep 08 - Jul 13			P4P			2013 →
Direct Expenses (US\$ millions)			\$ 7,595,000	\$ 15,893,000	\$ 9,174,000	\$ 6,103,000	\$ 8,640,000	
% Direct Expenses: Nicaragua vs. World*			0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Total of Beneficiaries (actual)			659,397	480,258	540,628	484,557	226,763	
Food distributed (MT)			13,021	15,215	11,979	6,992	6,950	

Source: last SPR and Resource Situation available, APR 2007 - 2011

* 0% due to a low absolute figure not captured by the %

Actual % of beneficiaries by activity



Activities by operation and beneficiary share

Operation	Activity	GFD	Nutrition	FFW/FFA/FFT	Education
IR-EMOP 200204		X			
DEV 105970			X	X	X
EMOP 107000		X	X	X	
Planned % of beneficiaries		18%	13%	5%	64%
Actual % of beneficiaries		16%	5%	5%	74%

Source: Dacota, SPR's

Top 5 donors: Canada, United Kingdom, Private Donors, Switzerland, Brazil

Partners: Government of Nicaragua, 2 International Agencies and 22 NGO's

Executive Summary

Introduction

Evaluation Features

1. This is the first regional portfolio evaluation (RPE) commissioned by the Office of Evaluation. RPEs aim to improve the evaluation coverage of countries with small country offices that have regional operations. This RPE provides a strategic analysis of the performance of WFP's regional operations in Central America, covering the four countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua and the regional bureau in Panama during 2007–2011. It focuses on the overall regional portfolio, and not on individual regional operations or the portfolios of country operations in individual countries.

2. The RPE aimed to: i) assess the performance of WFP's regional portfolio in four countries with a common context; ii) identify lessons; and iii) provide recommendations for WFP regional operations and strategy in Central America. It examined the five criteria of relevance, coherence/complementarity, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Regional Context

3. Central America comprises seven countries with a total population of 34 million people. WFP has a field presence in four of these countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. These are middle-income countries (MICs), but have high levels of poverty and economic disparity, with many poor people in marginalized groups such as indigenous or Afro-descendent communities: 75.7 percent¹ of the indigenous population in Guatemala and 71 percent² in Honduras live in poverty. Most indigenous communities in Nicaragua live on the Atlantic Coast, which is characterized by extreme poverty. Marginal lands, economic poverty, and political and economic exclusion are features of vulnerable communities across Central America.

4. Malnutrition in Central America is complex. The region faces the double burden of persistent undernutrition accompanied by emerging overnutrition. Micronutrient deficiencies are a critical problem, exacerbated by undernutrition and poor dietary diversity.

5. Rising food prices have made it increasingly difficult for poorer households to meet dietary requirements, particularly among market-dependent urban populations. Food access and availability are critical for food security. Limited access to food because of poverty is a major cause of nutrition problems and food insecurity in Central America.

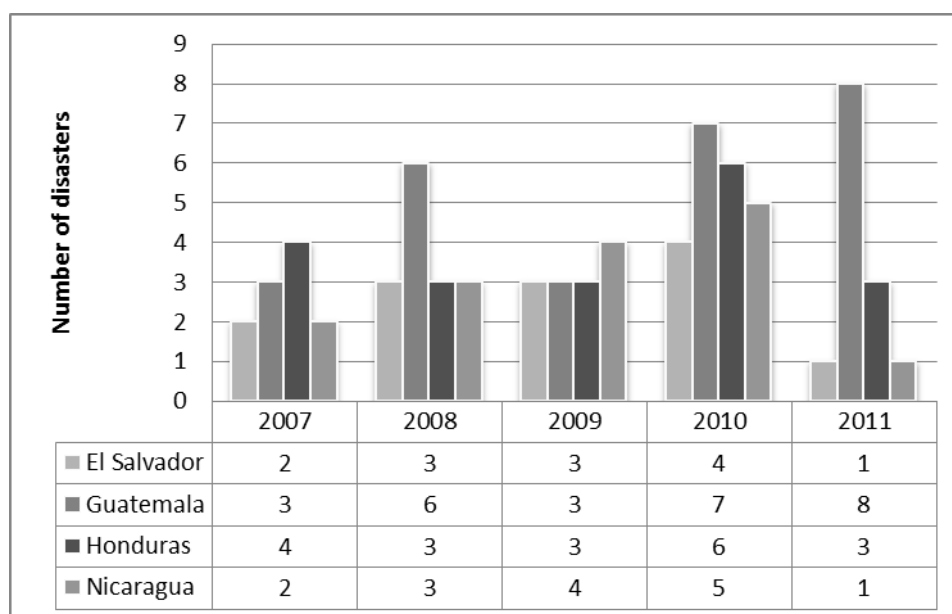
6. Vulnerable populations live on marginal lands and in poor housing with limited options for disaster prevention, preparedness or mitigation. Combined with recurrent natural hazards, (see Figure 1) this situation perpetuates a vicious cycle of increasing vulnerability, particularly in the dry corridor that cuts across western

¹ World Bank. 2009. *Guatemala Poverty Assessment: Good Performance at Low Levels, 2009*. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/07/08/000333038_20090708235221/Rendered/PDF/439200ESW0GToP1ICoDisclosed07171091.pdf

² World Bank. 2006. *Honduras Poverty Assessment: Attaining Poverty Reduction, 2006*. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2006/07/24/000310607_20060724154344/Rendered/PDF/356220v10HN0gr10iOFFICIALoUSEoONLY1.pdf

Guatemala, central Honduras, northern and central Nicaragua and western El Salvador.

Figure 1: Numbers of disasters by country, 2007–2011



WFP’s Regional Portfolio in Central America

7. In addition to assessing WFP’s regional operations from 2007 to 2011, the evaluation also assessed whether the Regional Strategic Vision for 2012–2013 set an appropriate direction. The evaluation period covered a critical time for the regional bureau as funding for country-level operations across the region began shifting from external donor sources to local investments through trust funds financed by national governments and the private sector. Trust funds started in 2005 in Honduras and in 2006 in El Salvador.

8. There were two regional development projects (DEVs) and two regional protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) during the evaluation period. Given the frequent natural disasters and hazards in Central America, in 2007 the regional bureau developed regional PRRO 104440 to address the food needs of the most vulnerable and to build community-level capacity to cope with disasters, aiming to reduce the need for WFP support over the longer term. PRRO 104440 also worked with partners and governments to improve monitoring, alerts and preparedness. The PRRO was implemented in all four countries and also received funds for Panama.³ Starting in 2011, PRRO 200043 expanded the efforts of PRRO 104440 to ensure effective and more timely response to natural hazards and disasters. It introduced pre-positioning for contingencies and expanded early recovery activities, including food for work (FFW),⁴ food for training and food for assets (FFA) to help restore livelihoods and market access and improve resilience to shocks.

³ WFP contributions of USD 44,537 from Spain and private donors.

⁴ Since 2011, WFP has preferred the term “food for assets” (FFA), but during the evaluation period, FFW was the term used. In interviews, reference was made to the potential shift from food for work towards cash for work, but no distinction was made between assets and *work*.

9. The two DEVs were the first regional DEVs to focus on capacity development in nutrition. They were implemented together under the umbrella of a regional initiative – “Towards the Eradication of Child Undernutrition in Central America and the Dominican Republic by 2015” – sharing staff and other resources. Both DEVs worked beyond the four countries of WFP’s Central American region, covering Latin America and the Caribbean. DEV 104110 aimed to generate a knowledge system to enhance awareness of hunger and malnutrition, emphasizing their high social costs in comparison with the costs of measures to reduce them. DEV 104210 worked to increase the capacity and commitment of Latin American and Caribbean governments in reducing hunger and chronic undernutrition among children aged 6–36 months through integrated micronutrient programmes.

Evaluation Findings

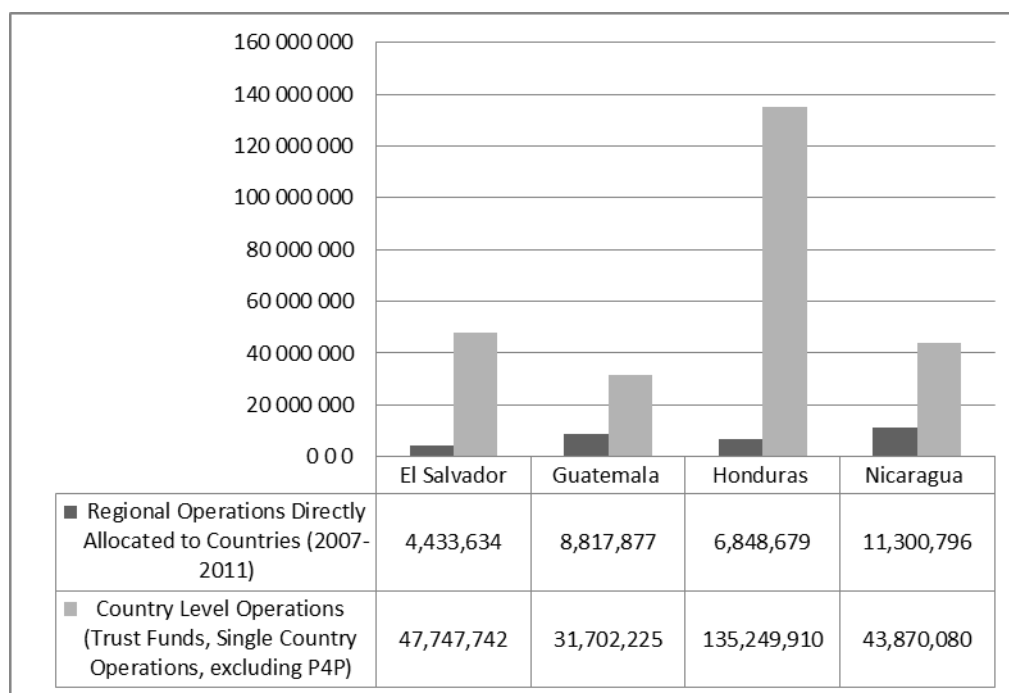
Relevance: The Portfolio’s Strategic Positioning at the Regional Level

10. The regional portfolio was appropriate to the development and humanitarian context; in line with current development theories and nutrition policies; and responsive to the recurrent natural hazards across the region, both rapid-onset, such as floods and storms, and slow-onset, such as droughts and the current coffee rust crisis. Numerous interviewees from national and local government, United Nations agencies and civil society cited as a strength WFP’s ability to respond rapidly to natural disasters and to assist authorities in responding themselves.

11. There were many examples of WFP’s alignment with country objectives and use of local systems. The evaluation found that WFP aligned well with national poverty reduction efforts by reinforcing civil protection as a component of hazard response under the PRROs, and through the DEVs’ increased investment in nutrition. WFP implemented government school feeding programmes through national trust funds in Honduras and El Salvador. Civil protection partners cited WFP’s work to improve the regional harmonization of customs procedures for donations during crises as a success.

12. From review of country portfolio activities and funding, and interviews with WFP country office staff, the evaluation found that regional DEVs and PRROs complemented country-level operations. For example, country office staff mentioned that the availability of regional PRRO funds facilitated responses to rapid-onset natural hazards that might not have been severe enough to warrant a separate emergency operation at the country level. Donors cited regional operations as an attractive investment mechanism for addressing natural hazard and nutrition challenges across the region. The DEVs complemented national and WFP country programmes by supporting work on nutrition and food security that was unlikely to be funded at the country level. Government agencies, donors and other partners did not distinguish between regional and country-level operations, further indicating their complementarity. Figure 2 compares the contributions of regional funds to country-level operations with the funds for single-country operations.

Figure 2: Comparisons of funding from regional and country-level operations by country, 2007–2011



13. Regarding WFP’s coordination with humanitarian partners, the evaluation received mixed feedback from United Nations system members. WFP was found helpful in harmonizing procedures under the United Nations Emergency Technical Teams for responding to hazards with governments. However, harmonization of specific areas such as assessments could be improved to mobilize a broader range of expertise and enhance information sharing with governments and United Nations agencies.

14. At the macro level, the regional portfolio was aligned with WFP’s Strategic Objectives, but there was limited alignment across WFP systems and processes at the operational level. There was almost no harmonization of vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis, or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) procedures across WFP offices within the region, limiting the opportunities for aggregation and analysis within and among countries.

15. Despite considerable efforts, the evaluation was unable to assess comprehensively the importance of trust funds to the regional portfolio. Trust funds were not recorded in WINGS 1, and WINGS 2 has only recently started recording them. They were not included in contribution reports from WFP Headquarters or in Standard Project Reports (SPRs); the current standard project reporting structure does not capture their role or impact.

16. Government interviewees indicated that governments invested in WFP through trust funds because WFP is a reliable and accountable partner that verifies expenses and demonstrates results. Country offices and the regional bureau frequently cited trust funds as a valuable mechanism for working efficiently with governments, the private sector and other non-bilateral WFP donors/partners. However, accountability and the documentation of achievements were not systematic

and did not extend beyond the country level, resulting in both local contributions and WFP accomplishments being undervalued.

Coherence/Complementarity and Factors Driving WFP's Regional Strategy

17. During the 2007–2011 evaluation period, there was no WFP regional strategy or strategic vision document to guide assessment of whether WFP efforts were consistent with and supportive of regional strategic objectives. The Regional Strategic Vision developed for 2012–2013 reflected the operating realities of the region and the context, but the evaluation found room for improved harmonization of measurements and monitoring systems across countries, to inform future regional planning and the assessment of performance against regional objectives.

18. The evaluation team considered appropriate WFP's prioritization of and contribution to emergency response and nutrition as a means of addressing the repetitive, cyclical and sometimes cumulative patterns of food insecurity that characterize the region, particularly certain hotspots – affected districts and communities – within each country. WFP was repeatedly recognized for these contributions.

19. However, WFP's efforts did not comprehensively address the underlying causes of undernutrition, hunger and food insecurity in the region. For example, in Honduras, of the 17 municipalities where the PRROs provided general food distributions (GFDs), 12 – approximately 70 percent – needed GFDs in three of the five years evaluated. While appreciating the assistance received, community leaders in one flood-affected community noted that their own priorities for enhancing resilience were improved resource management of rivers and land, and enhanced flood mitigation strategies. The Pan American Health Organization and core nutrition documents mentioned the importance of literacy for girls and women as an underlying factor affecting nutrition. However, there were no clear linkages between DEV activities and school feeding, and no engagement with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or other actors to complement WFP's efforts and facilitate more comprehensive solutions. From interviews with WFP staff, it appears that the new resilience initiative attempts to address these underlying issues. An operation for addressing nutrition and contributing to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) alliance and other 1,000-day initiatives has been developed, but funding does not yet appear to be available.

20. WFP is engaging increasingly with regional and national partners in strategic discussions regarding food security and recurrent crises. However, it has not yet defined an appropriate role for itself or identified how this role would complement those of other stakeholders in the region. Interviewees from governments, donors and other United Nations agencies noted a tendency for WFP to seek resources independently and solicit collaboration from partners with essential capacities after receiving funding and during the implementation stage, rather than engaging in joint planning with partners. A recent exception to this tendency is WFP's work with governments on 1,000-days nutrition efforts across the region. Stakeholders were involved in the design of this programme, but were confused by its delayed start and unaware of the lack of funding. Within WFP, country offices also expressed confusion about the status of this planned regional nutrition programme.

21. Country offices and the regional bureau have developed successful approaches to working with governments, moving beyond coordination to closer collaboration,

and allowing governments to lead with WFP in a supporting rather than a driving or directive role.

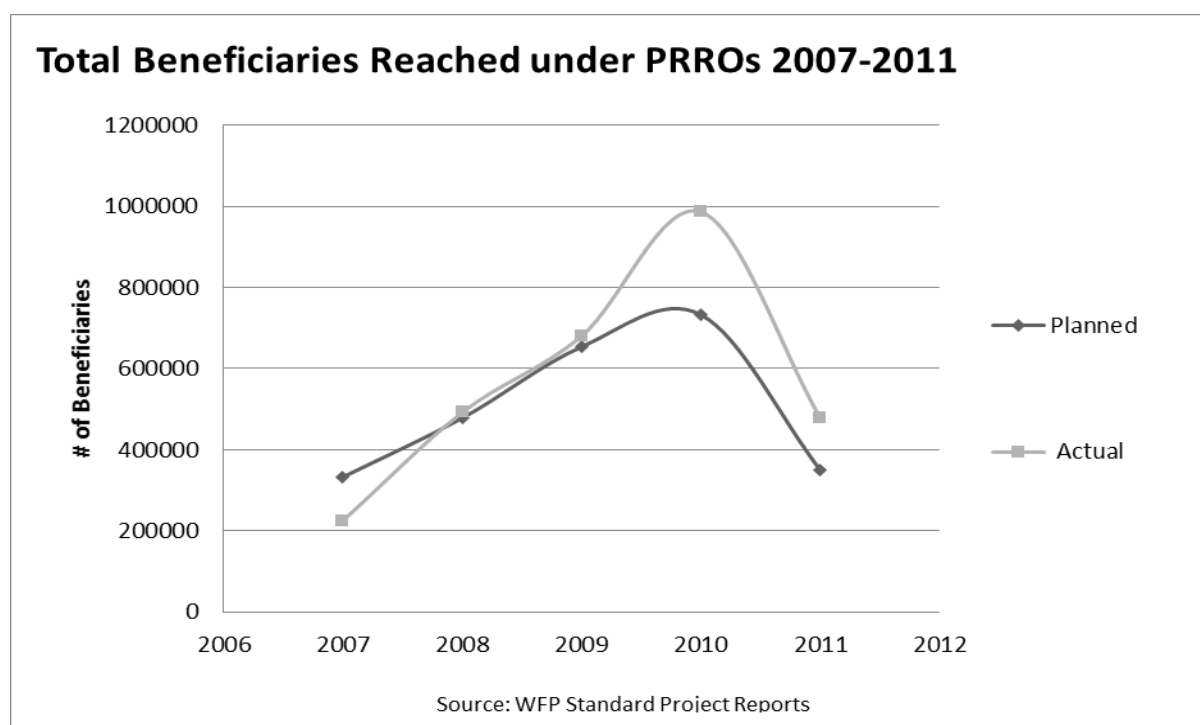
22. In interviews, WFP staff repeatedly mentioned that MICs present specific challenges, but to date there is no global strategy for WFP’s engagement in these countries. Corporate systems and policies for engagement with MICs were described as at best neutral, and at worst as obstacles to successful implementation. To address the poverty gap in MICs, efforts need to focus on the root causes of poverty and to transition from a vision of emergency response towards a vision of development.

Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability of the Regional Portfolio

Coverage

23. Under the regional PRROs, country offices collaborated with partners in the field on beneficiary selection based on established criteria. PRRO SPRs indicate that funding availability and delays were a challenge. However, under both PRROs, WFP managed to reach more beneficiaries with less food and money than planned. As Figure 3 indicates, both PRROs exceeded their target numbers of beneficiaries. The Honduras country office explained that beneficiary numbers were high because the PRROs operated in many small emergencies. The other country offices did not have clear explanations of why beneficiary numbers differed from planned. They stated that reporting exact numbers is a challenge because of, for example, double-counting of beneficiaries participating in several activities.

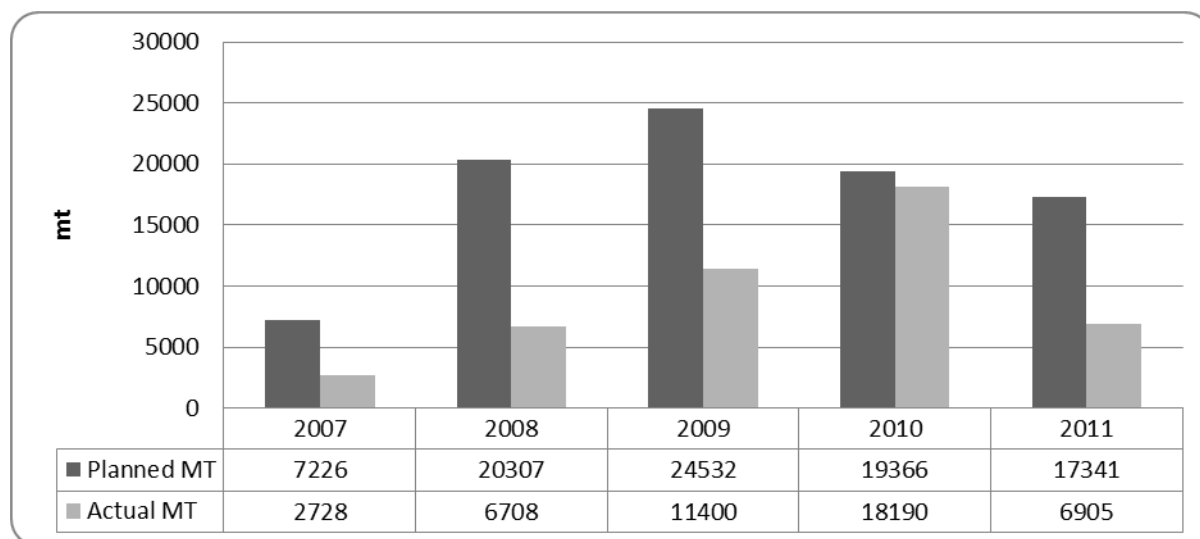
Figure 3: Total beneficiaries reached by assistance to strengthen disaster preparedness and mitigation among marginalized populations under both PRROs, 2007–2011



24. Figure 4 compares the planned and actual tonnages of food distributed across both PRROs during the evaluation period. In all but one year actual tonnage was less than 50 percent of planned. Interviews with WFP staff and review of the data

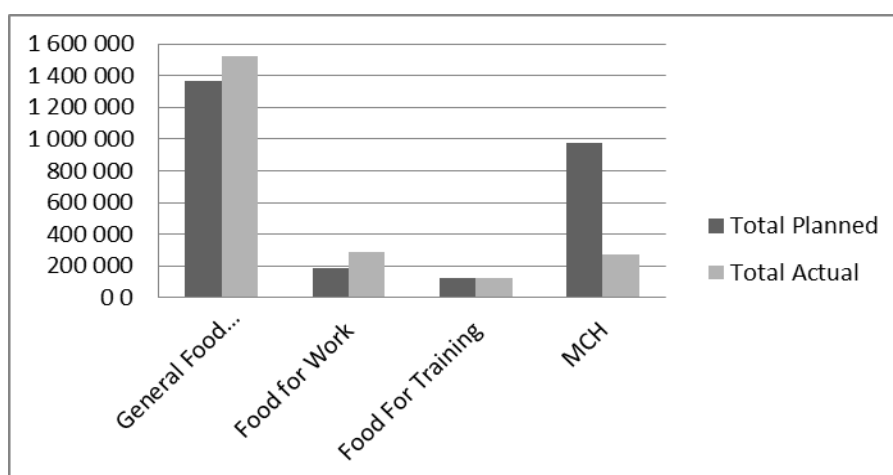
indicate that this was because of the limited availability of food resources, funding shortfalls, and the reduced duration of food distributions. During the evaluation period, PRRO 10444 received 67.5 percent of its required contributions and PRRO 200043 81.7 percent. These figures compare relatively well with those of other WFP operations. According to the Honduras country office, beneficiaries often chose to leave the shelters provided and return home after a few days or weeks, to protect their belongings and continue their lives, thus reducing the food distributed.

Figure 4: Planned and actual tonnages of food distributed under regional PRROs



25. The evaluation team found WFP’s geographic targeting accurate, and the food security and nutrition challenges facing vulnerable groups were well identified and described. However, WFP and other United Nations agencies have difficulty designing operations that target and reach these vulnerable groups – especially pregnant and lactating women, and children under 5 years of age – including in emergencies. The logistics and coordination of distributions for mother-and-child health (MCH) activities were frequently cited as challenging. SPRs and PRRO data also indicate low enrolment rates at health centres. WFP was 72 percent below targets for MCH activities. No targeting or programming strategies considered the needs of the most vulnerable in efforts to generate longer-term development impacts.

Figure 5: Cumulative totals of beneficiaries by activity under both PRROs, 2007–2011



26. It was not possible to calculate the number of beneficiaries reached under the two DEVs as these focused on enhancing capacities, policies and investments to address hunger and nutrition across the region. However, the evaluation found that the DEVs contributed to expanding the evidence and knowledge base on nutrition, producing more than 40 technical documents for the Latin America and Caribbean region.

Gender

27. Addressing gender issues and women's engagement in programmes is a challenge. Under both PRROs, the evaluation found efforts to issue rations and vouchers to women and to engage women as leaders in food management committees. However, over the evaluation period, the number of women in leadership positions appears to have declined in all countries except Honduras. SPRs disaggregated beneficiary data by sex, but the integration of gender issues into the design or implementation of efforts to address differences and potential disparities was unclear.

Sustainability

28. The best evidence of the sustainability of WFP efforts is continuing engagement with governments and increased capacity of governments and partners to address hunger, nutrition and food security challenges across the region. Although limitations in the durability of some of WFP's FFW programmes were acknowledged, the transfer of capacity and ownership to government and local civil society organizations was repeatedly highlighted as a strength of WFP, as was WFP's bridging role during changes in government leadership.

Performance and Results of the Regional Portfolio 2007–2011

29. Based on findings regarding the three dimensions described above, the team assessed the overall performance of the regional portfolio. The evaluation found that the regional portfolio was strategically positioned for operating in Central America. However, the desired medium- and long-term outcomes were difficult or impossible to measure because outcome indicators of efficiency, effectiveness or overall performance were not defined at the outset, measured or tracked consistently. Logical frameworks and reporting across the region were not standardized, and framework indicators were not always consistent with local VAM indicators and measurement.

30. Despite the absence of quantitative outcome indicators to measure performance, general qualitative feedback from interviewees suggested that WFP's efforts have helped to improve hazard management and response and the quality of nutrition interventions across the region. Trend data indicated improvements in the global hunger index and increasing investments in nutrition in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. However it was impossible to distinguish the specific contributions that WFP made to these improvements.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

Relevance: Strategic positioning at the regional level

31. Despite the absence during the evaluation period of a WFP regional strategy or an MIC strategy, the regional portfolio was strategically positioned to operate in Central America. WFP used food aid and other resources to deliver programmes that responded to specific needs and integrated local investments into national hunger and poverty priorities shared with WFP.

32. The evaluation concluded that the regional operations were relevant and complemented country-level activities. However, the limited tracking and reporting of activities funded by trust funds resulted in the undervaluing of significant local contributions and related accomplishments.

Coherence and complementarity

33. In most cases, WFP complemented and collaborated with government authorities across the region. Some partners and donors highlighted WFP's ability to identify gaps in nutrition and food security, but opportunities were missed for improving coordination with United Nations partners to improve effectiveness.

34. There was no uniform WFP strategy across the region and no document clearly articulated how regional operations were complementary to or improved the coherence of WFP's country-level efforts; vertical communications were also less than optimal in some areas, notably trust funds and the status of the SUN initiative. Nevertheless, the regional portfolio appeared to complement government efforts and those of WFP at other levels. For example, the regional PRROs complemented country offices' activities in response to local hazards.

Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability

35. Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the regional portfolio was challenged by the lack of clear targets at the outset of the evaluation period, and monitoring weaknesses. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that the PRROs exceeded their targets for beneficiaries reached, and were reported to provide effective and efficient services for natural hazard responses. These efforts are not yet sustainable because communities are affected by similar natural hazards year after year.

36. WFP's advocacy and capacity development efforts under the DEVs helped to improve the quality of national nutrition programming, and investments in nutrition support and micronutrients across the region appear to be sustainable.

Performance and results of the regional portfolio

37. Overall, the WFP regional portfolio exceeded many of its numerical targets, but did not always appear to reach the most vulnerable people. Based on interviews with a wide range of stakeholders and despite the limitations in quantitative data, the evaluation team concluded that WFP was perceived as a positive partner in the region, with some areas for improvement. WFP's engagement was perceived as a key resource for addressing hunger and poverty across Central America, particularly when natural hazards exacerbated conditions.

Lessons for the Future

38. Strategy and M&E are critical for monitoring the implementation of programmes and facilitating evaluation. If there is not a clearly defined strategy for the portfolio, portfolio evaluations have few data and reference points for assessing performance. Monitoring of performance is equally important. The WFP global indicators currently used to measure performance do not correspond sufficiently well to the needs of the region or to WFP's choice of responses, such as capacity development.

39. WFP's successful collaboration with governments is particularly important in Central America, where reliance on international donor assistance is declining. This success offers lessons for guiding WFP forward, not only in Central America, but also in other countries, particularly MICs.

40. WFP needs a strategy for working in MICs. WFP's internal concept note on MICs highlights the use of pilots and emphasizes partnerships with governments and others, but the descriptions of pilots do not clearly delineate MIC governments' role as donors/investors. Tracking and understanding of the role of trust funds is a core element of this gap.

41. WFP should continue to build on its strength in logistics – which is recognized by governments and United Nations partners – and should continue to move beyond providing logistics services to developing the logistics capacities of regional and country partners, such as it has been doing with the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC) and in Nicaragua with the National Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response System (SINAPRED).

42. The evaluation recommendations identify opportunities for improvement and change, as well as efforts that have shown promise and that WFP should continue and prioritize. To implement these recommendations, WFP should ensure that the functions of the regional bureau are adequately staffed and funded, in both operational and technical areas.

Recommendations

Opportunities for improvements and changes

43. **Recommendation 1: WFP regional and country operations should ensure that operational planning, implementation and monitoring efforts target the most vulnerable.**

- In planning, monitoring, and reporting, WFP should identify how its country offices will address the needs of vulnerable groups – both urban and rural – in regional operations. Specifically, WFP country offices and the regional bureau should identify how DEV efforts that focus on capacity are expected to address the needs of the vulnerable; how PRROs will reach the most vulnerable groups through GFD; and how WFP country offices and the regional bureau will monitor these efforts.
- Opportunities for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable include: i) country offices integrating gender issues into assessment, targeting, programme implementation and monitoring, and analysing and developing protocols that facilitate implementation and overcome logistical challenges to reach women and

children in the 1,000-day window; and ii) country offices identifying specific opportunities for integrating the most vulnerable into FFA activities.

44. Recommendation 2: The Regional Bureau and country offices should define WFP’s desired operational role in risk management and the prevention of hazards and their effects.

- Country offices and the regional bureau should use the recently defined Building Resilient Municipalities and Communities (ComRes)⁵ operation and the global WFP Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management released at the end of 2011 to develop and refine its role in resilience and risk prevention and management across the region.
- The regional bureau and country offices should consider developing knowledge management and advocacy efforts, possibly including a study similar to the Cost of Hunger study to improve understanding and raise awareness and investments.
- Once the regional bureau and country offices have clearly set out WFP’s desired role in risk management across the region, WFP Headquarters should provide commensurate corporate backing to networking with key stakeholders from government, donors and the private sector, and to identifying and raising funding to support implementation.

45. Recommendation 3: With significant inputs from country offices and regional bureaux, WFP Headquarters should develop a global MIC strategy that incorporates needs analysis, planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting guidance.

- The MIC strategy should build on WFP’s commitments to government ownership and be collaborative rather than directive.
- The regional bureau and WFP Headquarters should improve the documentation of successful South–South collaboration, and use it to exploit South–South collaboration effectively.
- WFP Headquarters and the regional bureau should document current collaboration efforts with the local private sector and draft guidance on facilitating and scaling up private sector collaboration.
- The MIC strategy should address MICs’ nutrition challenges, including both over- and undernutrition, and incorporating chronic, and not only acute, undernutrition.

46. Recommendation 4: WFP should clarify roles and communications among and within WFP offices – Headquarters, the regional bureau and country offices – engaged in regional operations.

- The regional bureau should formalize the roles of focal points for regional operations, with clear lines of communication within and among country offices to ensure clarity and continuity. Both the Regional Bureau and country offices should distribute relevant minutes/action items more widely to staff across the region.

⁵ Construyendo Comunidades y Municipios Resilientes en Centroamérica (ComRes) programme document.

- The regional bureau and country offices should develop a common understanding of their respective roles in, and responsibilities for, donor engagement to support regional operations.

47. Recommendation 5: WFP should organize a comprehensive evaluation of trust funds in Central America.

48. The evaluation would identify the strengths, opportunities, risks and weaknesses of the mechanism, and facilitate a fuller understanding of their current influence and potential role as part of WFP’s MIC strategy and programming.

Opportunities for continuing and prioritizing efforts

49. Recommendation 6: WFP should strengthen needs assessments, VAM and M&E so they contribute to regional programme performance and not only to standardized reporting.

- WFP Headquarters should review budget guidance to ensure adequate investment in staffing and resources to support an effective and regionally coherent and consistent approach to VAM and M&E in all countries, making fuller use of the regional bureau to support smaller country offices.
- The regional bureau and country offices should standardize approaches across regional operations. Country offices should use information from assessments and M&E to monitor and encourage performance across regional and country operations.
- WFP Headquarters should review current global indicators, assessments and monitoring systems to ensure there are adequate indicators available for use in Central America.
- As WFP introduces new modalities – Purchase for Progress (P4P), cash for work, community resilience – country offices should consider implementing pilots, with careful monitoring to ensure effectiveness before taking to scale.

50. Recommendation 7: The regional bureau and country offices should continue to build positive collaboration with governments and regional bodies, and South–South linkages.

- Specific technical areas for further collaboration include nutrition, agriculture production, markets, climate change, and risk management.
- WFP should continue to provide collaborative support and create innovative collaborative efforts such as improved stock positioning and logistics, increased government investment in nutrition, successful South–South collaboration, and leadership in the Dry Corridor Initiative.
- WFP should consider designing and submitting joint proposals with other United Nations partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNICEF to improve donor acceptability and the mobilization of expertise across the United Nations system.

51. Recommendation 8: The regional bureau and country offices should continue incorporating public policy into programme design and implementation.

- The regional bureau and country offices should continue to play an important role at the national policy level, promoting the food security and nutrition agenda

and linking WFP interventions effectively to public policies, projects and programmes to ensure continuity and sustainability.

- The regional bureau and country offices should continue to identify ways of providing continuity and leadership in food security and nutrition during government transitions.

52. Recommendation 9: The regional bureau and country offices should continue to work with governments, other regional stakeholders and donors to raise awareness of slow-onset hazards – coffee rust, drought, etc. – across the region and to develop nationally relevant protocols for response.

Country offices should provide assistance to civil protection authorities, clarifying response possibilities, and roles and responsibilities across ministries and departments in declaring and addressing slow hazards as emergencies.

Map



1. Introduction

1.1 Evaluation Features

1. The World Food Programme (WFP) introduced Regional Portfolio Evaluations (RPE) in 2013. The Central America RPE is WFP's first RPE. The **rationale** for the RPE is to review the comparative advantage and positioning of the WFP Regional Portfolio vis-à-vis the regional context, achieving WFP's goals and strategy, and working with country offices versus global or individual country operations.

2. This RPE serves dual **objectives** of accountability and learning. Five evaluation criteria guide the RPE: Relevance, Coherence/Complementarity, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability. The RPE aims to: 1) assess WFP's regional portfolio performance across four country programmes facing a common context, 2) identify lessons learned, and 3) provide recommendations for WFP regional operations and strategy in Central America. Annex 1 illustrates these questions across the criteria.

3. The **scope** of the Central America RPE are the regional operations covering the four countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, and the Regional Bureau (RB) in Panama during the period of 2007-2011, as well as the 2012-2013 Regional Strategic Vision as a reference. The RPE focus is the regional portfolio *as a whole*, and not each of the regional operations individually, or the portfolio of all country operations within each country.

4. The evaluation covered four regional operations covering the four countries⁶. Two Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs) aimed to ensure effective regional response to the numerous emergencies and natural hazards across the region by addressing food needs, as well as building community level capacity to cope with disasters and national agency technical capacities to monitor and assess food security conditions. There were two development operations (DEVs): one focused on elevating the profile of hunger and malnutrition and the second focused on micronutrients. During the evaluation period, there was not a regional strategy or strategic vision document to provide umbrella guidance. Subsequent to the evaluation's timeframe, the RB led the development of a 2012-2013 Strategic Vision.

5. The **stakeholders** for this evaluation include the broad range of actors with whom WFP collaborates in Central America. Stakeholders include: (i) *internal stakeholders*: across WFP RB in Panama, the 4 Country Offices (COs), and Rome based headquarters, as well as the Executive Board); and (ii) *external stakeholders*: government authorities across the region, United Nations (UN) Agencies within the region, Central American Organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and the private sector.

6. The RPE included three phases: inception, field-work, and analysis. Annex 2 provides a calendar of the RPE. The RPE **methodology** included qualitative techniques such as document and data review (February – August), stakeholder interviews and field visits (June), and analysis and report writing (June – August). Given the breadth of geographic coverage and time limitations for field-work, the

⁶ The ToR for the RPE focused on these four operations, however there were other regional and country-level operations during the evaluation period including a regional school feeding project DEV 200141 and the Latin America and Caribbean Emergency Response Network (LACERN) SO 10449.

RPE team met with most stakeholders identified in the inception report. RPE team analysis focused on the portfolio as a whole, but did not focus on analyzing each country programme, individual operation or components.

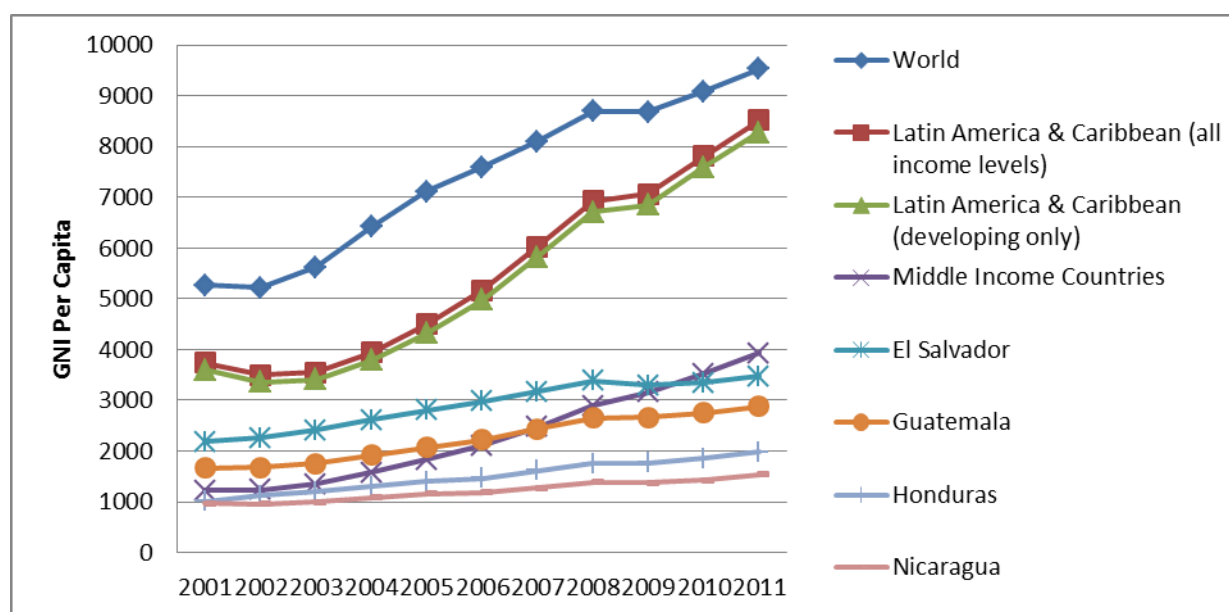
7. The **evaluation team** included professionals with expertise in capacity development, nutrition, food security, agriculture, disaster risk reduction and mitigation (description of team in Annex 4). The RPE team worked through in-person meetings, virtual consultation and document review to ensure quality and triangulation of findings throughout analysis and writing of the report.

1.2. Regional Context

8. Understanding the regional context is critical for appreciating and evaluating the regional portfolio. Central America includes seven countries, and over 34 million people. WFP has a field presence in four of the countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which are the focus of this RPE. All of these countries are middle income countries (MICs), but disparity and poverty within the region remains high. Marginal lands, economic poverty, as well as political and economic exclusion are characteristics of vulnerable communities across Central America.

9. There were limited changes across economic indicators during the period of the evaluation. Figure 1 below illustrates changes in gross national income (GNI) in \$US Dollars (USD) per capita from 2001 – 2011 using the Atlas Method. While there were increases in GNI, the trend data illustrates the region’s GNI did not grow as rapidly as the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, or other middle-income countries. Additional economic trend data is included in Annex 5.

Figure 1: Trend Analysis: Changes in Gross National Income per Capita in USD Atlas Method



10. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) classifies Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua as highly vulnerable to food insecurity and poor nutrition, based on levels of extreme poverty, undernutrition and their dependence on food imports. In particular, evidence of food insecurity and undernutrition is apparent in indigenous communities where stunting rates are as

high as 70% in some communities. Additionally, natural hazards/disasters frequently affect the most vulnerable, further exacerbating their food insecurity.

11. The four focus countries of the RPE continue to face health challenges, as evidenced by their mortality rates (see Annex 5). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that nutrition is linked to one-third of deaths of children under five and one-half of deaths of children under one year of age. WFP's Cost of Hunger Report under DEV 10411 demonstrated that undernutrition contributed to 40% of all child mortality up to 2004. Trend data reveals that mortality for children under five is falling across the region (see Annex 5). However, there is not enough evidence available to determine if the drops in under five mortality are due to increased investment in nutrition.

12. Malnutrition in Central America is a complex issue, as the region faces a double burden of malnutrition: undernutrition problems persist while overnutrition is emerging as a problem. Malnutrition is particularly problematic in poor and marginalized populations. Evidence of critical undernutrition challenges include low birth weight, stunting, underweight, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies. National and regional data systems do not yet monitor overnutrition, and many undernutrition indicators are not up to date. Latin America and the Caribbean is in the midst of a nutrition transition (see Table 9 in Annex 5).

13. Stunting and wasting are frequently also linked to gender inequities where women's lack of education is linked to higher rates of undernutrition⁷. Table 10 in Annex 5 illustrates undernutrition within the region and shows that Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua are on track to meet MDG 1, while El Salvador is making 'insufficient progress'.

14. Micronutrient deficiencies are a critical problem for Central America, exacerbated by undernutrition as well as poor dietary diversity. Poor food access before and during emergencies and natural hazards exacerbates ongoing micronutrient deficiencies within vulnerable communities. Food fortification is an ongoing effort; currently there are legal frameworks to support the iodization of salt, along with programmes for Vitamin A fortified sugar and fortification of wheat and maize with iron and folic acid. At present, micronutrient indicators are not included in the WFP country fact sheets. Table 11 in Annex 5 illustrates micronutrient deficiencies across the region; however, the majority of available data is from prior to the evaluation period.

15. Rising food prices have made it increasingly difficult for poorer households to meet dietary requirements. Rising food prices negatively impact diet quality; poor households are replacing more nutrient dense foods (meat, dairy, fruit, vegetables) with more affordable staple commodities that do not contain adequate levels of nutrients for proper child development and growth. Food access and availability are critical to food security. Limited food access due to poverty is the central nutritional problem of food security in Central America. The Executive Brief: Central America -Prices, Markets and Food and Nutritional Security in 2008 and the WFP Global Market Monitor Report (2011) highlight the challenge that increasing prices creates for food security. Figure 24 in Annex 5 illustrates the trend of rising consumer price index data for the four countries. Poverty, particularly extreme

⁷ FAO presentation on POLSAN at <http://www.slideshare.net/gwpcam/seguridad-alimentaria-y-nutricional-en-centroamerica-y-republica-dominicana-tendencias-y-desafos>.

poverty, can be proxy indicators of limited food access and therefore of food insecurity in the region.

16. Although all four countries have experienced improvements in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) score since 1990 (see Annex 5), Guatemala remains in the serious range and Nicaragua is on the high end of the moderate range⁸. Over the past decade, cereal yields have continually increased in Latin American overall, but Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador have experienced declines since 2007/2008.⁹ The Central American diet is very dependent on beans and cereals, maize in particular. The region is still a net importer of many foods and cereals. Figure 26 in Annex 5 illustrates that despite increases in production of maize, the gap between consumption and production has not narrowed. In real terms, world cereal and food prices have consistently risen since 2004, climbing sharply in 2008 (the onset of the global food price crisis)¹⁰ and have remained elevated throughout the RPF period. This dependence on imports makes the region more vulnerable to food price fluctuations within the global economy. The **global economic crisis** has further exacerbated food and nutrition insecurity within the region, making households more vulnerable to shocks. According to a 2010 UN report, recent gains toward achieving the MDGs appear to have halted.¹¹

17. Seasonality and agricultural production affect food insecurity and food availability across the region. As an example, Figure 27 in Annex 5 illustrates through a timeline and a map the seasonal food insecurity for Guatemala. As the figure illustrates, food insecurity changes over the course of the year, with the height of the hunger season coming in late summer, coinciding with hurricane season and the annual dry spell.

18. Historically, there has been underinvestment in nutrition in Central America. Governments in Central America have signed declarations against the scourge of hunger and undernutrition and policy documents to better prepare and respond to natural disasters, but problems persist and reflect the region's serious inequities. Thus engagement and support of governments have been critical components of WFP operations. Part of WFP's approach was to convince governments to understand the *costs of hunger* and increase government investment in nutrition. From 2007-2011, government health sector expenditures have increased in the region. Similarly, as part of the PRROs, WFP worked to engage governments to better prepare, respond and mitigate recurrent natural hazards and disasters.

19. All of the countries in Central America have achieved **MIC** status. As countries reach this status, international donors traditionally shift away from continuing development assistance. Some argue that aid should be concentrated on poverty reduction in the poorest countries. Although poverty exists in MICs, there is an impression that MICs have enough resources (both capacity and revenue) to address this gap internally. This local capacity (in terms of revenue) is partially reflected in WFP's own evolving donor strategy, where WFP funding for activities in Central America is shifting away from a reliance on international donor assistance to a mix of funding that also includes national government assistance through trust funds.

⁸ IFPRI. (2012). Global Hunger Index. The Challenge of Hunger: Price Spikes and Excessive Food Volatility

⁹ World Bank Data. www.worldbank.org

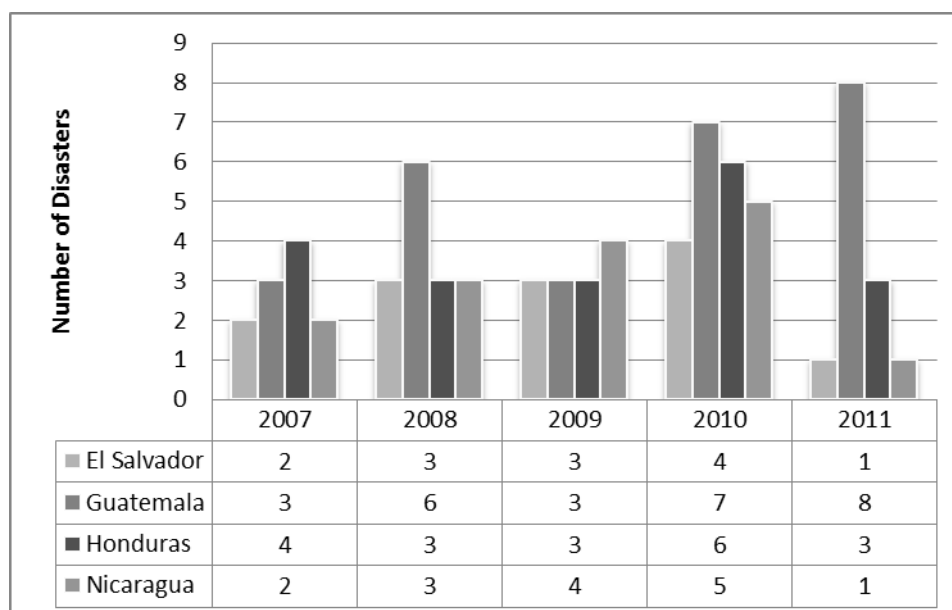
¹⁰ FAO World food price data. www.fao.org and www.USDA.gov

¹¹ "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals with Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean", United Nations under the coordination of ECLAC, 2010.

20. There are other perceptions that poverty levels in MICs should still qualify these countries for assistance because the majority of the world's poor now live in MICs and many of them are from **marginalized groups** and communities. In Central America, many of the poor are from indigenous or afro-descendant communities. For example, 75.7¹² % of Guatemala's indigenous population and 71¹³ % of Honduras' indigenous population live in poverty. In Nicaragua, most indigenous communities live on the Atlantic Coast, a region characterized by extreme poverty within the country.

21. The aforementioned development challenges create a vicious cycle with the recurrent cycle of natural hazards that the region faces on an annual basis. There are a number of factors influencing vulnerability within Central America including frequent natural disasters and hazards such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, and earthquakes. These hazards often translate into disasters, at least at local levels, because of high vulnerability of the population (who live on marginal lands, dwell in poor housing constructions, and have low levels of disaster prevention or preparedness, mitigation and prevention). In addition, a dry corridor cuts across the region (through western Guatemala, central Honduras, northern and central Nicaragua, and western El Salvador), which is affected by cycles of droughts and floods, also contributing to increased vulnerability. The figure below illustrates the ongoing trend of hazards and disasters affecting the region by country from the WHO Emergency Events Database.

Figure 2: Number of Disasters by Country 2007-2011



22. Recently, while causing severe damage, many emergency events could be described as natural hazards that translated into disaster situations. For example, tropical depression twelve (TD-12) in 2011 never reached the category of a named storm, but affected over 570,000 people from Mexico to Costa Rica. To date, there

¹² World Bank. Guatemala Poverty Assessment: Good Performance at Low Levels, 2009. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/07/08/000333038_20090708235221/Rendered/PDF/439200ESWoGToP1CoDisclosedo7171091.pdf

¹³ World Bank. Honduras Poverty Assessment: Attaining Poverty Reduction, 2006. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2006/07/24/000310607_20060724154344/Rendered/PDF/356220v10HNogr101OFFICIALoUSEoONLY1.pdf

have not been sufficient structural measures to address the underlying conditions affecting vulnerable populations. The same tropical depression in other parts of the world would not have the same disastrous impact due to lack of preparation and infrastructure challenges.

23. The increasing impact of climate change and natural disasters within the region remains a key challenge. According to the Global Climate Risk Index (GCRI), Honduras, Myanmar, and Nicaragua were the countries most affected by extreme weather events over time from 1992 to 2011¹⁴. Trend analysis illustrates that the region is severely affected, with Honduras ranking first overall with approximately 4.96 deaths / 100,000 inhabitants per year and GDP loss of 2.8% annually. The most affected countries for the year 2011 were Thailand, Cambodia, Pakistan, El Salvador and the Philippines (with Guatemala in the top 10). Table 10 in Annex 5 illustrates the social and economic impacts of climate risk for the four countries of the RPE.

1.3. WFP's Regional Portfolio in Central America

24. The first regional programs were Emergency Operations (EMOPs) in response to El Niño and Hurricane Mitch. Over time, regional operations have evolved to include PRROs and DEV Operations.

25. The RPE principally covers 2007-2011 WFP regional operations in Central America, as well as the Regional Strategic Vision (2012-2013). This period represents a critical time for the RB since country programmes across the region began shifting from being largely funded by external donors to having greater local investment through government funded trust funds. There were two regional DEV operations, as well as two regional PRROs.

26. During the evaluation period, WFP led, and collaborated in, a number of assessments to better understand and guide the development and implementation of operations. These included internal vulnerability assessment and mapping (VAM) activities; regional documents with other stakeholders including Regional Drought Synthesis, Central American Prices, Markets and Food and Nutritional Security; and country-level assessments to better guide and implement WFP operations.

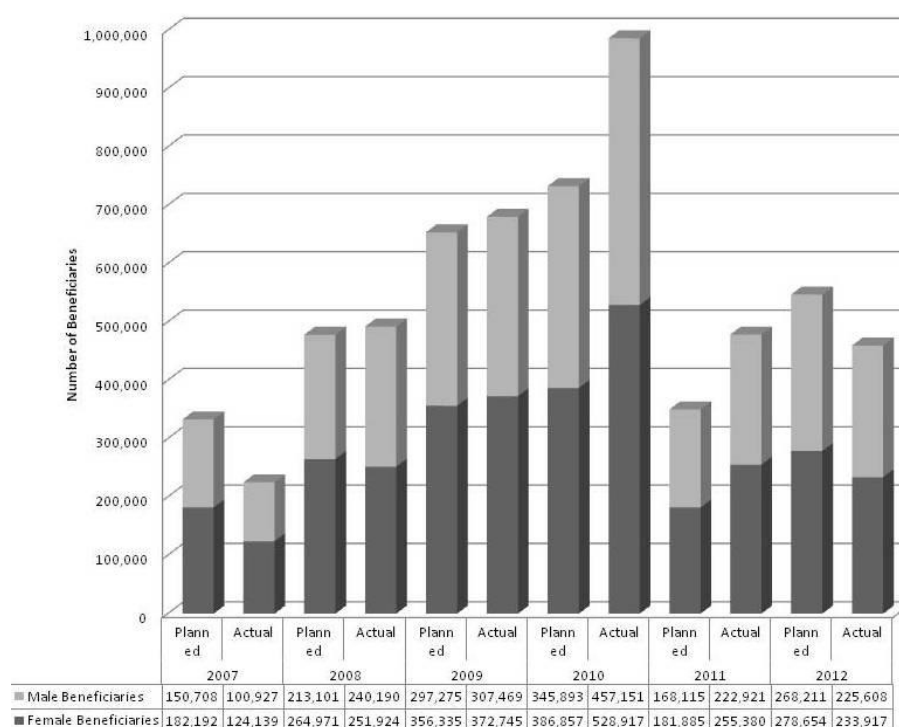
27. For the first time, there were regional DEVs focused on capacity development for nutrition; while defined as separate operations, these were implemented together under the umbrella of a regional initiative named "Towards the Eradication of Child Undernutrition in Central America and Dominican Republic by 2015," sharing staff and other resources. Both of the DEVs worked beyond the four countries of the Central American region and covered Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). DEV 104110 aimed to generate a knowledge system to elevate the profile of hunger and malnutrition, emphasizing high social costs in comparison to the cost of measures to reduce hunger and malnutrition. Similarly, DEV104210 worked to increase government capacity and commitments in LAC governments to reduce hunger and chronic undernutrition among 6 to 36 months old children through integrated micronutrient programmes.

28. Given the frequency of natural disasters and natural hazards in Central America, the RB developed PRRO 104440 to address the food needs of the most

¹⁴ GermanWatch. Global Climate Risk Index 2013. *Who Suffers Most From Extreme Weather Events? Weather-Related Loss Events In 2011 and 1992 to 2011*. <http://germanwatch.org/en/download/7170.pdf>.

vulnerable while simultaneously building capacity at the community level to better cope with disasters with the hope of phasing down the need for WFP support over the longer term. PRRO 104440 also worked with partners and governments to improve monitoring, alerts, and preparedness. PRRO 104440 worked to prevent the deterioration of the nutritional status of children and pregnant and lactating women in support of and complement to government plans and MDG goals. PRRO10440 worked in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (but also received funds earmarked for Panama)¹⁵. PRRO 200043 worked to extend the efforts of PRRO 104440 to ensure effective response to natural hazards and natural disasters, while adding speed and quickness through introducing prepositioning for contingencies and simultaneously adding resilience through expanding and adding to early recovery activities, including food-for-work (FFW), food-for-training (FFT) and food-for-assets (FFA), to help restore livelihoods, market access, and improve resilience to shocks. Both PRROs included FFW and beneficiary engagement strategies intended to promote longer-term resilience in addition to immediate response. The figure below illustrates the planned and actual number of beneficiaries for the two PRROs disaggregated by gender.

Figure 3: Planned and Actual Beneficiaries by Year for PRRO 10440 and PRRO200043 disaggregated by year and gender¹⁶

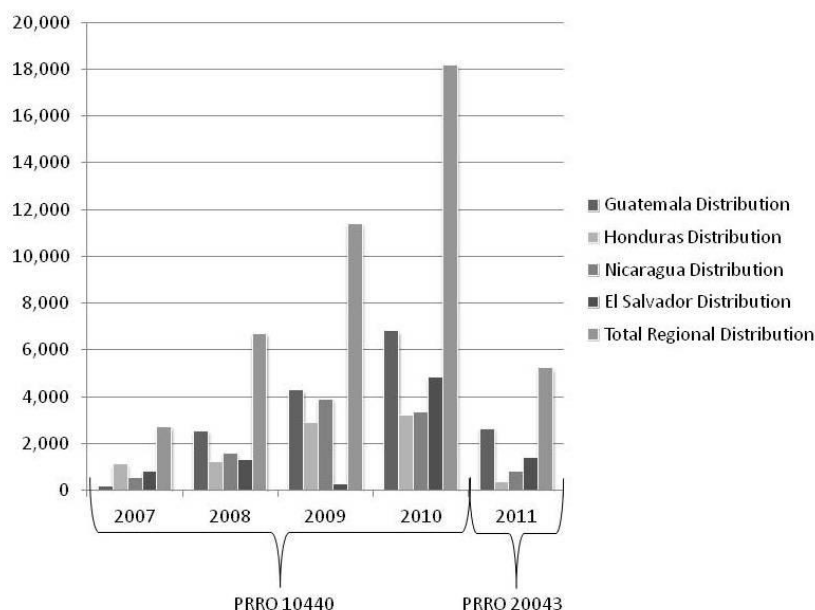


29. Food distribution was key to WFP’s PRRO operations within the region. Across the two PRROs during the period of the evaluation, WFP distributed 44,258 metric tonnes (MT) of food to beneficiaries. The figure below illustrates the distribution across each country for the time period of the evaluation.

¹⁵ WFP Contributions \$44,537 from Spain and Private Donors.

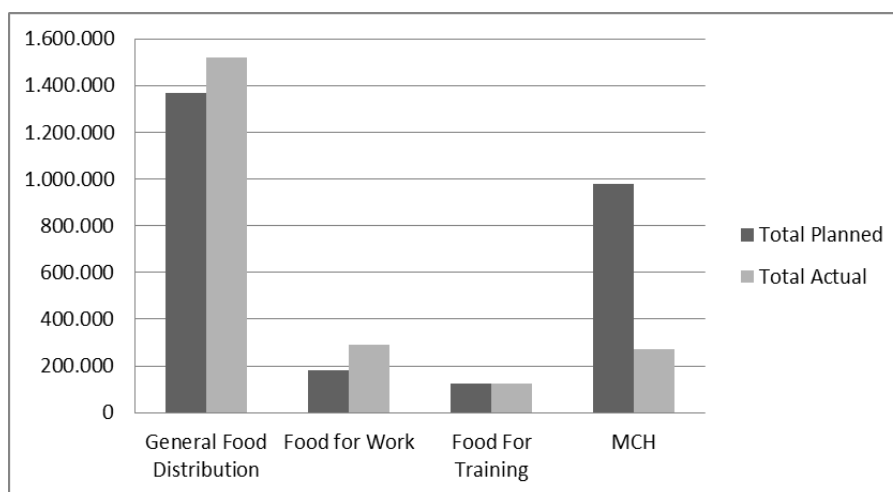
¹⁶ PRRO data provided by Regional Bureau.

Figure 4: Distribution of Food in MT across PRROs during the Period of the Evaluation



30. Many of the same communities received assistance from the PRROs year after year, as recurrent hazards affected the same municipalities. For example in Honduras, of the 17 municipalities where WFP provided general food distribution (GFD) through the PRROs, 12 or approximately 70% needed GFD three out of the five years of the evaluation period. When comparing the number of beneficiaries by activity, the bulk of the PRRO efforts were focused on GFD as the figure below illustrates. Logistics and coordination for maternal child health (MCH) distribution was cited frequently in interviews with WFP staff across countries as a challenge, Standard Project Reports (SPRs), indicate there were also challenges with low enrollment levels at health centers. The PRRO data confirm these challenges: WFP exceeded targets in other categories, but was 72% below their target for MCH activities.

Figure 5: Cumulative Totals of Beneficiaries by Activity for both PRROs 2007-2011



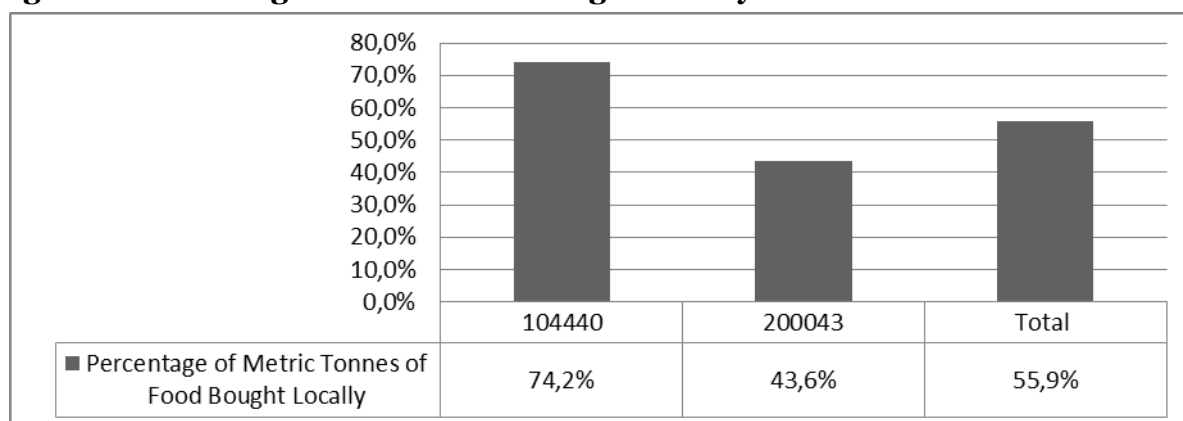
31. Counting beneficiaries and understanding how many people were reached under by the WFP regional operations is an ongoing challenge. For the DEVs there does not appear to be clearly established procedures or guidance for meaningful monitoring of projects that are not tied to food distribution and so capturing an accurate number of beneficiaries (either direct e.g. trained) or indirect through beneficiaries reached with improved government programming was impossible. For the PRROs, WFP reported exceeding the number of planned beneficiaries with less food (see figures 1 and 2 in the SER). WFP staff reported the difference was due to availability of food resources, funding levels, and the duration of food distribution for the PRROs, which is often shorter than planned. According to WFP Honduras CO, beneficiaries leave the shelters and return home after a few days or weeks to protect their belongings and continue their lives, and do not stay in the shelters unless they really have to, reducing the quantity of food needed for distribution. A closer look at the data reported for the PRRO reveals a disconnect between data when aggregated by total beneficiaries in comparison to data disaggregated by type of intervention as illustrated in the table below. When asked to explain this discrepancy, WFP offices reported that beneficiaries reached was linked to ration sizes, but confusion remained about the accuracy of the data as illustrated by the distinctions within the table below across the total by sex and the total by activity.

Table 1: Beneficiaries Reached by Sex and by Activity from Data Report for PRROs

			2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Beneficiaries	By Sex	Total Number of Beneficiaries	225,066	492,114	680,214	986,068	478,301
		Female Beneficiaries	124,139	251,924	372,745	528,917	255,380
		Male Beneficiaries	100,927	240,190	307,469	457,151	222,921
	By Activity	Total by Activity	153,560	364,304	415,429	532,215	450,556
		General Food Distribution	69,111	283,740	252,751	294,233	443,620
		Food for Work	9,158	29,665	52,769	125,185	6,936
		Food For Training	15,642	17,277	28,160	28,490	0
	MCH	59,649	33,622	81,749	84,307	0	

32. During the evaluation period, across the region, purchase for progress (P4P) expanded, as well as other initiatives to buy food locally. Given the transition to WINGS2, not all of the procurement source data was relatively available, and some data extends beyond the period of the evaluation, but of food purchased between 2009 – May 2013, approximately 55.9% was purchased locally (by MT). With P4P there is a growing emphasis on supporting local producers, under the two PRROs, 4,141 of food have been purchased from small scale farmer associations at a cost of \$1.9 million. Most of the food purchased from small scale farmers was maize, as well as some rice and beans.

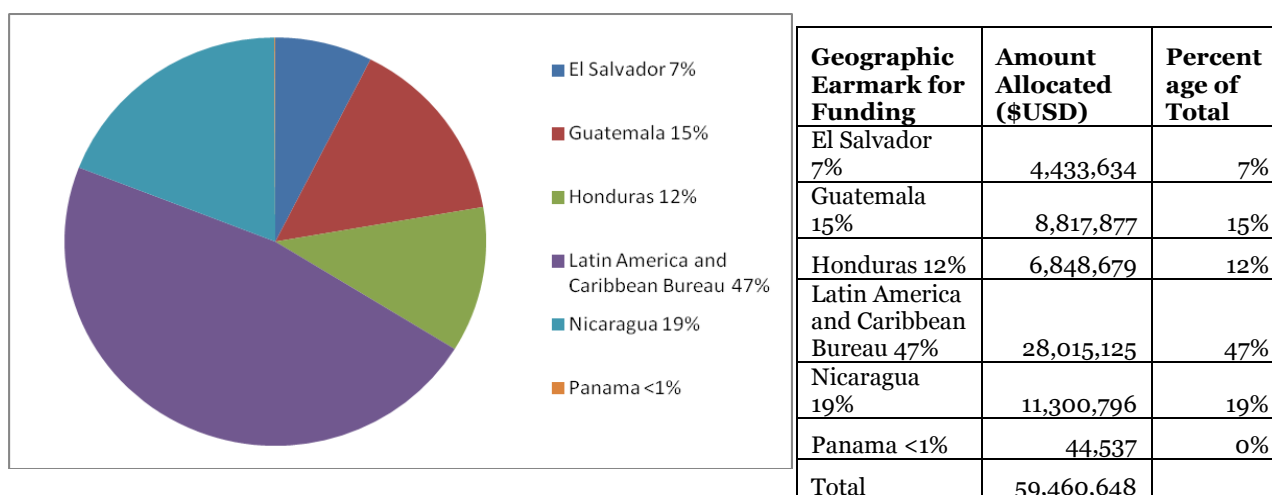
Figure 6: Percentage of MT of Food Bought Locally for PRROs



33. In addition to the ongoing impact of natural hazards in the region, changing government leadership created both challenges and opportunities for WFP to address in promoting investments in political leadership around hunger and nutrition. Table 13 in Annex 5 illustrates the political administration changes during the evaluation period.

34. During the evaluation period 2007-2011, total combined contributions to the four WFP Regional Operations that are the primary focus of this RPE amounted to US\$59,460,648. The principal **donors** to this amount were Spain (\$12,838,901 or 21.59%), UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) (\$9,718,809 or 16.34%), the European Commission (\$9,405,145 or 15.82%), Brazil (9,394,265 or 15.80%), and Australia (5,360,802 or 9.02%). Figure 28 in Annex 5 illustrates the amounts given by each donor to the four WFP regional operations. As the figure below illustrates, close to half of the funds were not earmarked to individual countries, but for the RB.

Figure 7: Geographic Earmarks for Contributions to Regional Operations (PRROs and DEVs)(2007-2011)¹⁷



35. While the RPE does not focus on or evaluate Central American country-level specific activities or operations, it is important to consider them and understand their breadth and focus in relation to the Regional

¹⁷ WINGS Files provided by WFP-Rome.

Portfolio to better comprehend the context, complementarity, strategy, and results for the regional portfolio as a whole. During the inception visit, the challenge of tracking in-country government trust funds emerged; they were not recorded within WINGS¹ or initially within the WINGS² upgrade, and are not included within the contributions reports provided by WFP-Rome Headquarters. Trust Fund financial numbers are now incorporated in WINGS²; however the list initially provided by the RB didn't include all of the Trust Funds from the region during the evaluation period. Honduras' Trust Fund programming was omitted, and so there appear to be potential tracking limitations.

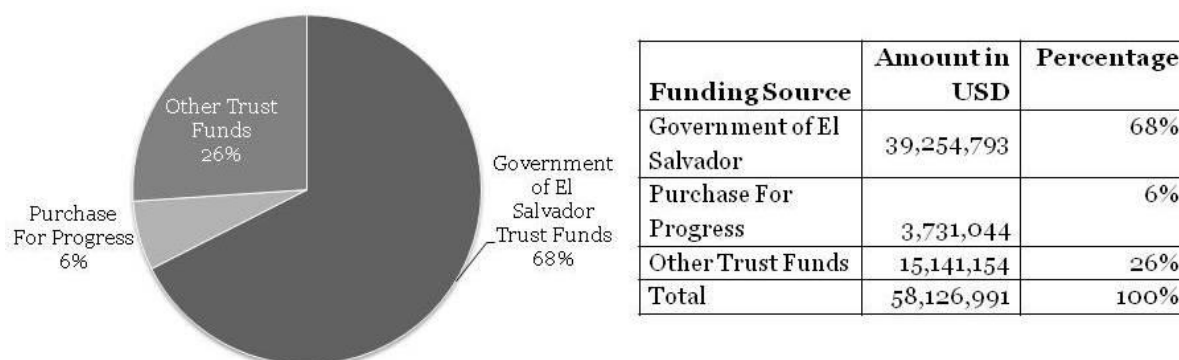
36. Country offices and the RB frequently cited Trust Funds as a useful and necessary mechanism in the region to work efficiently with Governments, the private sector and other non-bilateral WFP donors/partners. Given the lack of documentation in WFP global systems, there is not widespread clarity or understanding of their financial or technical magnitude.

37. Trust funds are tracked at country level. These trust funds are not insignificant: during the evaluation period, the WFP office in Honduras received \$107,136,370 to support school feeding. This is more than twice the size of the Country Programme Operations during the evaluation period. The limited ability to track Trust Funds within SPR reporting structures both under-values local contributions and WFP accomplishments. Government and private sector interviewees indicated Governments invested resources through Trust Funds in WFP because WFP is accountable - both verifying expenses and demonstrating results. Without integrating these results and monitoring into WFP ongoing global monitoring structures (like the SPR and consistently in WINGS²) this accountability and documentation of achievement does not extend beyond country level.

38. Annex 6 provides a summary of identified contributions from the contributions database as well as trust fund data provided to the evaluation team.

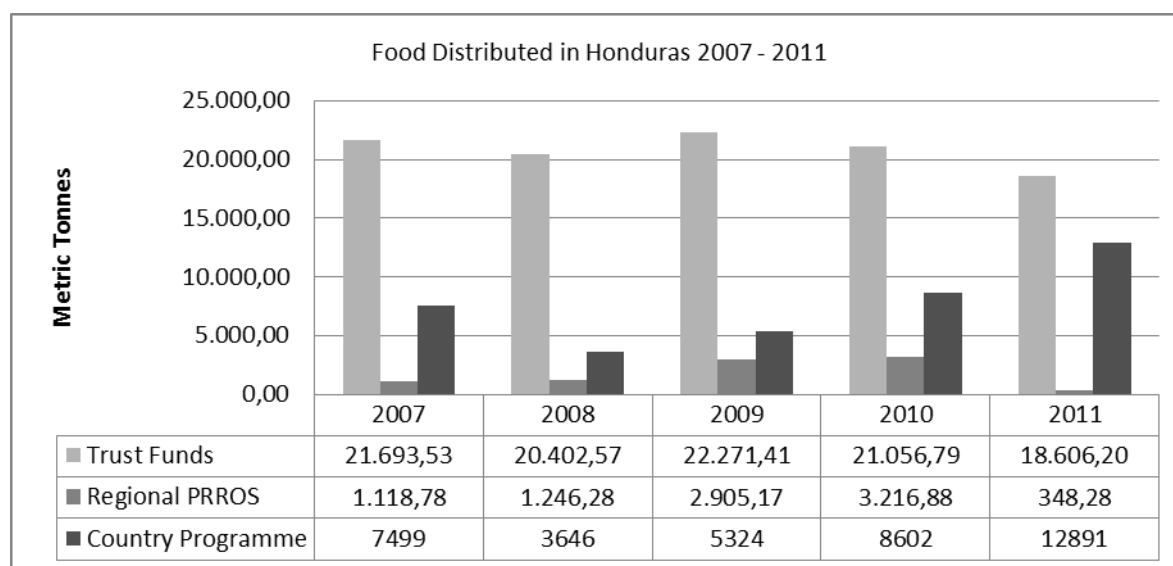
39. Globally, WFP uses trust funds to fund activities in a number of contexts. Uniquely in Central America, trust funds are emerging from national governments to support in-country operations; they started in Honduras in 2005 and in El Salvador in 2006. Traditional donor-funded single-country operations support ended in El Salvador in 2007 (with the exception of an EMOP for Tropical Storm Ida in 2009/10), but WFP in El Salvador continued to operate through trust funds and P4P. The Government of El Salvador began providing funding directly to WFP to implement a national school feeding programme in 2007. The figure below illustrates the support provided by the El Salvador Government to the (mostly trust funded) portfolio during the period of the evaluation. Trust fund support has recently ended and the El Salvador office will need to adjust its programming to available funding.

Figure 8: Distribution of Trust Funded Activities in El Salvador by Donor Type (2007 - 2011)¹⁸



40. Honduras also received trust funds from the government during the period of the evaluation. The figure below illustrates the scale of trust fund activities in relation to food distribution during the evaluation period.

Figure 9: MT of Food Distributed Across Trust Funds, Regional PRROs, and the Country Programme in Honduras



¹⁸ Trust Fund Data provided by Regional Bureau.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1. Relevance: Portfolio Strategic Positioning at Regional Level

41. In accordance with the TOR and the evaluation matrix of the Central America RPE, this section of the report focuses on the evaluation findings with respect to the strategic alignment of the WFP portfolio.

2.1.1 Alignment with Humanitarian and Development Needs

42. The humanitarian and development needs of Central America are characterized by a number of factors including food security and chronic under-nutrition, the effects of recurrent natural hazards, and frequent changes in Government leadership across the region. The evaluation team reviewed both of these areas to understand WFP's alignment.

2.1.1.a Alignment with Humanitarian and Development Needs – Nutrition and Food Security

43. The regionally produced *Cost of Hunger Study, 2007* merges documenting and communicating the humanitarian needs of undernutrition and food insecurity with long-term social costs and advocates for greater political investment. WFP now uses the *Cost of Hunger* model for other advocacy efforts in Africa. Interviews with government personnel who had a longer tenure with government were aware of the *Cost of Hunger* and cited it in conversations as a resource along with other documents. However, more recent political appointees (in particular El Salvador and Honduras) were less familiar with these documents. As governments change, it is worth considering a review of key advocacy and other materials to potentially share with new government counterparts to communicate food security and nutrition needs.

44. The focus of the two regional DEVs on undernutrition among under-five year old children and micronutrients was in line with global thought leadership around nutrition at the time as evidenced by the 2008 Lancet series on undernutrition¹⁹.

45. While being appropriately focused on undernutrition, there also appears to be a potential missed opportunity in addressing key underlying causes of undernutrition. Specifically, in documents produced by WFP with other UN partners, e.g. the Pan-American Alliance for Nutrition and Development's *Basic Document: Conceptual Premises and Strategic Principles*, as well as in interviews with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), lack of maternal education and low literacy are cited as key underlying causes for undernutrition in the region. Yet, there didn't appear to be any clearly established linkages between the DEVs and WFP school feeding efforts or efforts to integrate United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or other partners focused on girls basic education to address root causes of undernutrition beyond increased investment.

46. VAM efforts (with the exception of urban assessments during the soaring food price crisis) appear to prioritize focusing on rural areas rather than urban or peri-urban areas. There was no clear strategy for identifying or targeting the most vulnerable beyond communities affected by natural hazards and the rural landed

¹⁹ Available at http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/lancetseries_maternal_and_childundernutrition/en/ or <http://www.thelancet.com>

poor (engaged with P4P). For example, there were no clear programming or targeting strategies or interventions that specifically consider the needs of the most vulnerable for longer term development impact.

2.1.1.b Alignment with Humanitarian and Development Needs – Recurrent Natural Hazards

47. Recurring natural hazards within the region included both rapid-onset hazards such as floods and storms as well as slow-onset hazards such as droughts and the current coffee rust crisis. Numerous interviewees from government (national and local), UN agencies, and civil society cited WFP’s ability to rapidly respond to natural hazards as well as assist authorities to respond themselves as a strength.

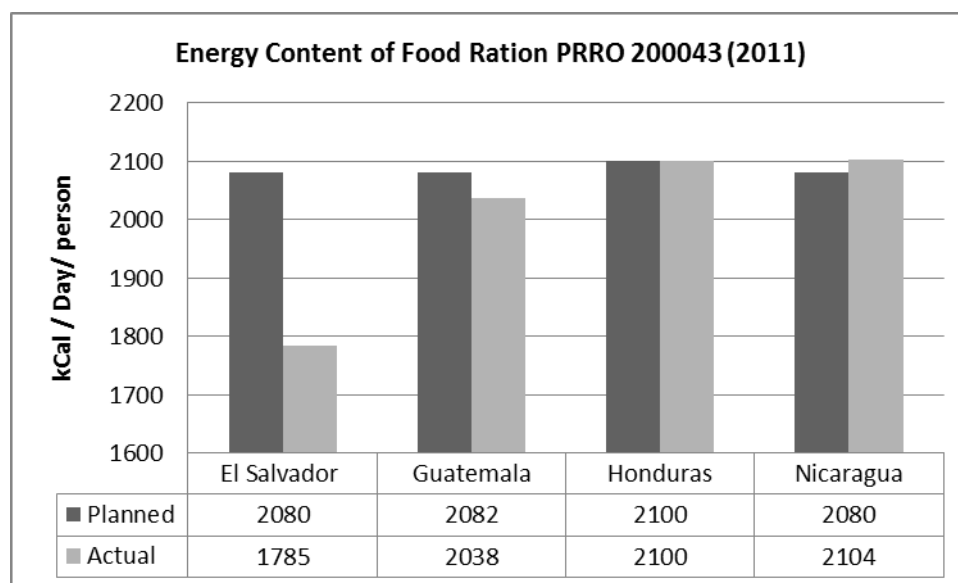
48. Many of the same communities are hit by similar natural hazards year after year, as evidenced by WFP’s trend analyses. WFP routinely responds to the same communities, demonstrating a clear need to move beyond disaster response and recovery to mitigation and prevention. Under the PRROs and in collaboration with CEPREDENAC²⁰, and Government authorities, WFP has supported simulation exercises across the region to improve early warning, preparedness, and disaster response and has supported increasing capacity of Government, particularly working with civil protection authorities, to improve planning for and responding to natural hazards.

49. For rapid onset hazards there are clear protocols across the region for who within Government has authority to declare an emergency, when and how, as well as protocols and standards for response. For slow-onset hazards, there is less clarity and protocols are not yet firmly established or understood. For example, who within Government is responsible for declaring an emergency *and once declared*, what are the next steps. Typically, the declaration of agriculture-related slow-onset emergency rests with the Ministry of Agriculture, which monitors crop performance, but it remains unclear how this links to mobilizing civil protection and other government agencies. In interviews with WFP regional bureau and country office staff, it appears that there is a potential strategy to work with coffee farmers during the coffee rust crisis, but it was unclear what the strategy was for working with other groups who will be critically affected such as migrant laborers working on the coffee harvest.

50. Interviewees from civil society and Government reported that in responding to natural hazards, the kilocalorie (kCal) content of food distributed across the region was appropriate and in line with government standards (see the figure below of available data from 2011). El Salvador’s distribution was below the recommended average of 2,100 kCal per day; however, El Salvador was the only country able to effectively use the high-energy-biscuits (HEBs), focusing on using them in times of acute crisis in hard to reach areas where shelters do not have cooking facilities. The other countries (Government and WFP staff) cited beneficiaries and government authorities viewing HEBs as “cookies” rather than nutritional food and as inappropriate as a component of food. In the case of Guatemala, the Government has indicated they will respond in the first 72 hours when HEBs are potentially needed the most.

²⁰ Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central / Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America

Figure 10: Energy Content of Food Rations Per Person (kilocalorie (kCal) per day) in 2011



2.1.1.c Alignment with Humanitarian and Development Needs – Changing Governments

51. One of the development realities in Central America is evolving political structures and governments. Table 13 in Annex 5 illustrates the changes in Government across the Region during the Period of the Evaluation. Several respondents from civil society, other UN agencies, and government authorities themselves indicated that WFP aligned well with this reality and served as a bridge during transitions of Government leadership around issues of food security and risk mitigation. However, there was also evidence that potentially WFP could better utilize assessments and key reports to brief governments when there are changes in leadership. E.g. potentially re-releasing/re-vamping key documents when Governments change to new administrations. Some Government interviewees were aware of the Cost of Hunger and were excited about it, but newer Government officials weren't as aware of the document or the broader agenda.

2.1.2 Alignment with International Good Practice and Humanitarian Response

52. To assess how WFP aligned with international good practice and humanitarian response, the evaluation team used the principles of the Paris Declaration: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results, and mutual accountability, illustrative examples of alignment or lack thereof are provided below.

53. WFP supported country **ownership** of poverty reduction by reinforcing civil protection as a component of hazard response (PRROs), and increased investment in nutrition (DEVs). WFP directly worked to implement Government school feeding programs through trust funds in Honduras and El Salvador.

54. **Harmonisation** is an ongoing challenge in the region across a number of areas. UN system members cited that WFP was helpful in harmonizing procedures under UN Emergency Technical Teams (UNETE) to respond to hazards, but that specific areas such as assessments could be further harmonized and improved to

leverage a broader range of expertise and better share information with the Governments as well as other members of the UN system. There is almost no harmonisation of VAM or M&E procedures across WFP offices within the region. This is an opportunity for harmonisation within WFP. Civil protection partners cited WFP's work to improve regional harmonisation of customs procedures for donations during crises as an ongoing successful effort.

55. WFP staff reported that monitoring systems are currently geared to respond to reporting requirements to headquarters in Rome and donors and not toward measuring impact. This misalignment in reporting creates a missed opportunity to document and reinforce WFP performance. As the evaluation team understands it, WFP global guidance is geared to monitor (if at all) acute undernutrition rather than chronic. While acute undernutrition is the more severe problem and should be monitored, systems should be responsive to the needs of MICs facing predominant challenges of chronic undernutrition. While there is no doubt, given numerous interviews with stakeholders from Government, donors, the private sector, and civil society in each country, that the PRRO and DEV operations achieved results, there is limited data to document or describe results.

2.1.3 Alignment with Governments and Country Efforts

56. There were numerous examples that WFP **aligned** with country objectives and used local systems. In Honduras, WFP works through national and local governments to prepare for, respond to and mitigate natural hazards as a part of PRRO efforts. In Guatemala, WFP worked through the Ministry of Health to distribute micronutrient “sprinkles” and leveraged the health system to distribute specialized foods to those identified as acutely malnourished.

57. WFP worked to support and strengthened Government processes, structures and resources. Specifically through support of school feeding efforts in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador, WFP supported Government nutrition and education priorities. WFP also worked with Government authorities to promote investment in nutrition working across health, food security and agricultural agencies of Government. For instance, in Guatemala work with the Ministry of Health to promote micronutrients under the DEV operations has translated into a current annual investment of 60 million Quetzales for micronutrient sprinkles reaching 90 % of children under five years of age with chronic mal/undernutrition.²¹ In Honduras WFP supported the Technical Food and Nutritional Security Unit (UTSAN) to develop their strategy for food and nutrition security.

58. Shared and direct investment of Government resources is another example of WFP alignment with Government priorities. In Honduras and El Salvador, the Governments directly invested (through trust funds) into WFP implementing school feeding. In Nicaragua, there was a complementary investment in school feeding, where the Government covered approximately 70% of the school feeding program and WFP complemented this with 30% from other donor funds.

59. There were examples of Governments using WFP information and analysis. Specifically, the Secretary for Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN) in Guatemala uses WFP's Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA), In Honduras, WFP collaborates with subnational food security working groups to conduct their own

²¹ While the investment came after the evaluation period, it appears to build upon the efforts of WFP during the evaluation period.

damage evaluations in emergency/post emergency situations, and for food security monitoring within sub-regions.

60. Governments provide warehousing within countries and the Government of El Salvador provides a regional warehouse to promote better emergency response. WFP standards for food control in warehouses are also being adopted by responsible national bodies, as is the case in Guatemala. Other illustrative examples in interviews of successful WFP assistance specifically to Government included personnel and supervision to ensure transparency and appropriate use of food during crises (Guatemala); capacity development support for South-South cooperation (across the region), equipment (across the region, but Civil Protection Centre in Honduras highlighted specifically), and food (across the region). WFP provided training and capacity building support under both DEVs and PRROs to governments.

61. More than one WFP senior staff expressed the sentiment that if WFP were not operating in line with Government priorities, it would not be permitted to operate. One way to measure **mutual accountability** is simply existence and survival within the region. Given that Governments are investing their own resources through trust funds for school feeding in El Salvador and Honduras (as well as planned investment in Guatemala to support food transport), there is evidence that WFP is accountable to Government for development results. However, without strengthened investment in M&E, measuring this mutual accountability will continue to be a challenge.

2.1.4 Alignment with Partners

62. In addition to Governments, WFP worked with a range of both humanitarian and development partners in Central America during the period of the evaluation, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs (most often as implementing partners), regional partners, donors, financial institutions (FI), and the private sector.

63. In interviews, UN agencies and other partners reported that WFP's portfolio 2007-11 is coherent with other actors' policies, strategies, and programmes, both Government and non-Government.

64. WFP collaborated with UN agencies across the regional portfolio. At country level, most UN agencies cited WFP as primarily a leader in emergency response rather than in development areas. WFP has been, and is an active player in the UNETEs in the region and leads the UN emergency assessments.

65. WFP is considered the 'eyes' of the UN agencies in the field. However, there is not yet an agreed upon emergency assessment tool across UN agencies in the countries, and some wish to include more indicators into the EFSAs (UNICEF), but there appears to be no funding or leadership mandate to achieve this. It is important to note that Government agencies and civil society are also using the EFSAs.

66. UNAIDS, PAHO, and UNICEF recognized WFP as a contributor to nutrition. There appeared to be some potential sources of friction in the areas of development with specific opportunities for improved coordination with UNICEF and FAO. For example, both FAO and UNICEF acknowledged the potential for "scope-creep" where WFP is potentially moving into more traditional FAO and UNICEF areas. Potential areas for closer collaboration include FAO continuing to work with households assisted by WFP during and after an emergency situation to promote on-going resilience.

67. Coordination among UN agencies does not always appear to be regular and systematic. It was noted though that coordination has improved (UNICEF). For instance, PAHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, and others are all working in nutrition and coordination is important. Donors, specifically Spain and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), cited that they want to see improved coordination across the UN systems to address development challenges.

68. WFP has a long history of collaborating with **civil society and NGOs** in Central America. They worked with NGOs as implementing partners for the PRROs in the 2007-11 period: from 10 in El Salvador to 52 in Guatemala (TOR). NGOs use WFP's food as a complement to their own and other contributions they might be able to access as part of their emergency response and recovery period.

69. NGOs generally considered WFP a flexible and serious partner that is engaged in development. Several NGOs across different countries mentioned that unlike others, WFP follows up, participates in the field, takes targeting seriously, visits sites, and hence does not 'just' act like a donor. Some NGOs recommended ration size should reflect the actual number of family members, instead of the standard 5 people (Guatemala, El Salvador).

70. An emerging number of NGOs consider WFP a potential partner for development activities, looking for long-term solutions to food and nutrition insecurity in the region.

71. WFP also works with **regional partners** in Central America. CEPREDENAC considers WFP a key programme and strategic partner at regional and national levels. CEPREDENAC works with WFP, the Red Cross, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on natural hazards. Though OCHA has the mandate to coordinate humanitarian response, the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) and others cited WFP as the real leader on the ground. CEPREDENAC supports WFP assuming a more comprehensive role in the future, embracing environmental and social vulnerability. CEPREDENAC's support was key for WFP to obtain funds from the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) for a WFP initiative in the dry corridor.

72. In 2005, WFP signed a memorandum of understanding with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). WFP continued to strengthen its relationship with ECLAC during the evaluation period and worked with ECLAC to develop several studies, most notably the Cost of Hunger Study. In the RB there was confusion about the selection of Brazil as a Centre of Excellence for school feeding (a model that reportedly is more engaged with Africa) rather than a regional Centre of Excellence that would benefit the broader LAC region such as ECLAC in Chile.

73. The regional Institute of Nutrition for Central America and Panama (INCAP) is mentioned as a partner in DEV 10411 SPRs for 2007 and 2008 and in the all DEV 10421 SPRs from 2007 to 2010. However, there is no description of INCAP's specific contributions to the DEVs in the SPRs and the mission did not manage to meet or talk to INCAP. WFP El Salvador referenced a joint study of vitamin A deficiency with INCAP, UNICEF, the private sector and WFP, which fed into the national micronutrient plan. Other interviewees did not mention INCAP.

74. WFP had good and regular communication with **donors** of the portfolio. Donors (AECID, Canada, ECHO, Brazil) consider WFP to be a strategic partner.

Illustrative evidence included WFP's reliability and trustworthiness as a key partner in the region. Donors caution WFP not to forget what they see as WFP's key strength: emergency response and logistics. Some donors indicated in interviews that if WFP wishes to engage more in development areas, it should be done in close coordination with other UN agencies to avoid rivalry and government and donor fatigue. A suggestion was to work more systematically with FAO on P4P where FAO can provide technical assistance to small(er) farmers. However, this kind of vision requires a strategic plan and UN coordination functioning more broadly.

75. Some donors and UN agencies recognized WFP's capacity to identify opportunities and gaps (The Cost of Hunger Study, emergency assessments, and information systems). However, it was highlighted that at times WFP could coordinate and collaborate better with other partners such as FAO, UNICEF, PAHO and ECHO, rather than filling the gap themselves.

76. It is important to ensure clear communications and expectations as WFP engages with new donors. The South-South investment with Chile supporting secondment of personnel, as well as Brazil's investment of food is an exciting area of regional investment. The benefits extend beyond MT distributed or beneficiaries reached according to interviews with WFP staff and Government counterparts, but the current SPR templates don't fully capture the depth of engagement or impact of these key development exchanges.

77. While WFP staff indicated that collaboration with the World Bank was an ongoing challenge, WFP did collaborate with CABI, a regional **financial institution**. CABI indicated in interviews that WFP is a trusted and valued partner working across the region, particularly in the dry corridor. CABI has funded some of WFP's recent resilience work and indicated a willingness to support WFP engagement in nutrition investments as well.

78. WFP senior country leadership indicated the importance of engaging with the **private sector** across Central America as a critical opportunity and challenge of working in a MIC environment. WFP's collaboration with the private sector in the region during 2007-11 includes trust fund contributions (e.g. YUM! Brands), investments to support school feeding from private foundations (Honduras), as well as working with milled foods processors to accept locally produced grains, and produce enriched products such as VitaCereal locally.

79. Private sector corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding appears to be a growing area. Given the growing nutrition challenge of overnutrition and obesity, there was some concern expressed by other UN and local staff about the ethical aspect of receiving funds to support nutrition from YUM! Brands (the world's largest fast food company), and WFP should evaluate pros and cons of private investment carefully. There was an example of WFP participating in a conference, where fast food companies were critiqued for contributing to overnutrition and WFP staff reported feeling unable to comment or contribute given support from YUM! Brands.

2.1.5 Alignment with WFP Corporate Strategy

80. The Corporate WFP Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012,²² and the Regional Strategic Vision (outside of the timeframe for the evaluation) 2012-2013 were used as reference points to evaluate whether the regional portfolio aligned with the WFP

²² WFP. "WFP Strategic Plan for 2008 – 2013." Rome, WFP

corporate strategy. Generally, the portfolio aligned with the Corporate WFP Strategic Plan, however there were not quantitative monitoring systems in place to document the portfolio's results beyond traditional SPR indicators of beneficiaries reached and MT of food distributed and a more thorough analysis of outcomes achieved that are linked to the Strategic Plan is not possible.

81. The team found that the DEVs and PRROs each aligned with at least one WFP strategic objective (SO). However, collectively the operations and country programmes were not necessarily integrated or purposefully complementary. Collectively, although not necessarily simultaneously since the implementation periods do not overlap, the operations aligned with all five SOs to varying degrees. While it's not always possible to clearly distinguish how resources are allocated to specific objectives due to complementarities across SOs and programming, available documentation indicates that the overall portfolio was geared to addressing undernutrition, more specially chronic undernutrition, but not to the exclusion of acute malnutrition where this was a concern.

82. PRRO 10444 and PRRO 200043 address SO1: "save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies." PRRO 10444 explicitly addressed the prevention in the deterioration of nutrition and health of children through a supplemental feeding program (SO1 and SO2) and PRRO 200043 emphasized stabilization of acute malnutrition and rehabilitation of livelihoods (SO1 and SO3).

83. In fulfillment of SO2 WFP efforts relate to building early warning capacities and capabilities (CEPREDENAC, Sistema de Alerta Temprana Para Centroamérica (SATCA) WEB), disaster risk reduction and preparedness for vulnerable populations began to take form with PRRO 10444. In Honduras, WFP worked closely with the government on crafting laws related to risk management. Creation of prepositioned regional food stocks in El Salvador expected to engender response flexibility and efficiency. FFW and Food for Training (FFT) rehabilitated damaged agricultural land and contributed to restoration of natural and man-made watershed aspects. Partnering with local agencies (e.g. COEN²³, COPECA²⁴, SESAN, SINAPRED²⁵), WFP also conducted risk monitoring, contingency planning and operations training for communities and NGOs. Capacity building continued under PRRO 200043.

84. The two PRROs directly contributed to SO3 (restore and rebuild livelihoods) as part of the response to natural hazards. During the period of the evaluation, the PRRO incorporations included FFW and FFT activities and began to explore cash and voucher programming.

85. SO4 (reduce chronic hunger and malnutrition) was the focus of both regional DEV operations. Given that WFP worked within a collaborative manner it's not possible to assess specific impacts of DEV resources and WFP efforts. However, WFP's efforts toward fulfillment of this SO were widely recognized and appreciated in interviews with Government, other UN agencies, and the private sector.

86. SO5 aims to strengthen capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through handover strategies and local purchase. WFP's efforts did include capacity building, but not all DEVs and PRROs envisioned handover strategies. Assessment of sustainability and appropriate handover plans for all response and development

²³ National Emergency Committee/Civil Protection – El Salvador

²⁴ Emergency Preparedness and Response Agency - Honduras

²⁵ National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation System - Nicaragua

efforts are critical components of any strategic approach. COs and RB need to perform regular and consistent assessments of capacities needed for effective handover to governments or other appropriate actors. El Salvador's School Feeding Program has been cited as an example of successful handover; although, the country office acknowledged that the handover was relatively sudden and unexpected.

87. Nutrinet, a web-based resource for nutrition supported by the DEVs had a comprehensive scope to share knowledge and therefore foster capacity, but there were insufficient funds and plans to update and maintain the sites. Nutrinet's resources were cited as useful by some Government agencies as well as other UN system partners, but some noted that the web-based platform was not always accessible or relevant in the field at local levels.

88. P4P has emerged as a component of WFP's strategy for local capacity and local purchase, but is largely still untested. Yet, it is viewed as an exit strategy and handover plan for procurement of food for school feeding, and a stimulus for poor smallholder market expansion as well as civil society engagement. At this stage of P4P, critical challenges remain, including: a significant amount of capacity development, constructing e.g., silos and other post-harvest handling facilities, and scoping out and facilitating market relationships and contract mechanisms. P4P remains a global pilot program without validation. FAO Honduras recommended a comparative cost analysis for P4P and other food procurement alternatives. An evaluation of P4P is necessary before it can be deemed suitable as a handover plan for national school feeding programs.

89. While WFP gender policy is constantly evolving²⁶, policy consistently stresses girls' access to education; women and children's undernutrition; women's entitlement to food, access to training and participation in decision-making bodies; collection of sex-disaggregated data, adoption of gender-sensitive assessment and analysis; and improved gender balance in staffing. Collectively, the school feeding programs, the regional DEVs and PRRO 10444 directly addressed girls' education, undernutrition and women's entitlements to food (see above discussion). P4P global objectives state the women should constitute 50% of the farmer organization membership. Central American P4P programs have achieved an average of 37%, ranging from 52% in Guatemala to just 24% in Honduras. These figures don't reflect women's voice within the organizations or leadership roles. All four P4P programs in the region have established linkages with local organizations to introduce gender assessments and training as well as activities to promote equity and women in leadership roles.²⁷

90. WFP M&E systems collect beneficiary and participant data disaggregated by sex, but there is little use of disaggregated data for analysis in reports, nor is there qualitative discussion on progress toward increasing women's role in decision-making or fulfilling other principles outlined in the Gender Policy and Action Plan with the exception of P4P.

91. The team did not evaluate the gender balance of staffing in the RB or COs, but did observe that in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua women held both key managerial and technical positions. In Honduras, the office staff composition was

²⁶ WFP, (various years). "Gender Policy" Rome.

²⁷ WFP (December, 2011). "Women: The Secret Ingredient for P4P." Talk of the Month, P4P Purchase for Progress Central America.

predominantly men in managerial and technical positions and women in administrative and support positions.

92. WFP staff in Rome and the region have acknowledged the way to proceed to address the needs of MICs is still under discussion. Senior-level leadership within the region appeared to have an understanding of the unique issues related to working in MICs, the ongoing process within WFP, and the pressing need to develop new implementation mechanisms.

93. WFP staff and their partners in all four countries and the region acknowledged the importance of taking a more collaborative and supportive approach to work with MIC Governments rather than a directive or independent role for WFP that might be appropriate in other contexts. From key informant interviews with WFP staff at the RB as well as in COs across the region, some distinguishing features of working in MICs are: greater Government investment in and ownership of food security and hunger challenges; Government willingness to contribute resources to various food-security related interventions such as school feeding, social protection, nutrition programs, extant laws and strategies related to food security, nutrition and response; Government ownership of food security and response efforts; and Government willingness to contribute resources to various food-security.

94. WFP developed a Regional Strategic Vision for 2012-2013. WFP's overarching goal in the region is to *support national governments to improve food and nutrition security and reduce the impact of emerging crises, natural disasters and climate change among vulnerable populations*. The goal of the Strategic Vision and the outlined activities appear very much in line with WFP's experience as well as the developmental needs and political context in the region.

2.2. Coherence/Complementarity: Factors Driving WFP Regional Strategy

95. In accordance with the TOR and the evaluation matrix of the Central America RPE, this section of the report focuses on the evaluation findings with respect to the factors guiding and quality of WFP Strategic Decisions in the Region including:

- its efforts to generate and use analytical information to guide decisions;
- its efforts to respond and address the operating environment of middle income countries;
- its priorities and operating model; and
- its efforts to design and implement contextually responsive strategies.

96. According to interviews with WFP senior staff from the RB, the regional office was faced with a number of critical challenges and ongoing questions during the evaluation period:

- Dwindling resources. Before the global financial crisis, interviewees reported that WFP resources in Central America were shrinking.
- Questions of identity: Should WFP be engaged in MICs? How should WFP be most relevant?

97. WFP responded coherently to these questions, but not as completely as possible, during the evaluation period by prioritizing and focusing on nutrition as a key development issue (DEVs) and addressing the ongoing challenges of hazards

across the region (PRROs). WFP did not fully address the most vulnerable groups. However, they were limited by funding sources, as WFP funding is provided for emergency response rather than long-term development assistance. More information is provided in the sections below.

2.2.1 Generating and Use of Analytical Information

98. Part of strategic decision-making is ensuring choices and decisions are informed by analysis and evidence. There was no single comprehensive food security strategy or assessment for the region as a whole. However, as the table below illustrates, WFP generated a series of assessments with a variety of methodologies across the region to better understand the humanitarian context.

Table 2: Illustrative Assessments during the Evaluation Period

Country	Title (Year)
Regional	Hunger Map, 2012 Study of Nutritional Dimension of Social Safety Nets in Central America and the Dominican Republic, April 2010 High food prices, markets and food and nutritional security in Central America, 2008 Food and Nutrition Insecurity in Latin America and the Caribbean, WFP/ECLAC, 2009 Cost of Hunger Study, WFP/ECLAC, 2007
El Salvador	Community Profiles for Cantón Puerto Parada Municipio de Usulután and Cantón San Antonio Panchimilama Municipio de San Francisco Chinameca
Guatemala	Mapping and analysis of chronic malnutrition, November 2012 Joint FAO/WFP crop and food security evaluation, February 2010 Drought EFSA, 2009; 2010 Results of a food and nutrition insecurity assessment in the departments of the dry corridor in eastern Guatemala, Quiche e Izabal, November 2009 Follow-up evaluation on the food and nutrition security situation in areas affected by tropical depression no.16 and a decrease in remittances, July 2009 Food and nutrition security monitoring report, 2009
Honduras	Monitoring Report: Food Security and Nutrition, 2011 Monitoring Report: Food Security and Nutrition, 2010 Tropical storm EFSA, 2008 Drought EFSA, 2007; 2008
Nicaragua	Drought EFSA, 2010 Impact of global economic crisis: Follow-up study, March 2010 Rapid food and nutrition security evaluation in North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), May 2009 Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Vulnerable Households, April 2009 VAM analysis, secondary data, November 2008 Food and nutrition security evaluation in areas affected by hurricane Felix in RAAN (municipalities of Puerto Cabezas, Waspan, Rosita y Bonanza), April 2008 Hurricane EFSA, 2007 and 2008 follow-up assessment; 2009

99. In addition to the reports listed in the table above, Honduras specifically cited use of Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) reports to monitor food security. Currently, all four countries have had an initial in-country training and analysis to use the IPC with support from the IPC partners, WFP RB and COs, and there is a regional IPC coordinator hosted by the RB²⁸.

100. The VAM Unit carries out WFP’s analysis of hunger, food security, and nutrition. VAM is a corporate initiative and counts on various guidelines for national studies. Support for regional studies, and defining roles of regional VAM, seem to be less developed. Despite this lack of corporate guidance on regional studies, there were regional assessments conducted during the evaluation time period included in

²⁸ Source: Interviews in Honduras as well as the IPC website. According to the IPC website, all four countries have been trained in the methodology. www.ipcinfo.org

Table 1. The VAM Unit in WFPs regional headquarters in Panama consists of one full-time person, with some assistance.

101. Analysing hunger, food security and nutrition issues allows for strategic positioning of activities and geographic targeting. WFP did not have a comprehensive written regional analysis of hunger, food security and nutrition, or a formulated strategy in place to guide the design of the regional portfolio or its components at the onset of the evaluation period, nor when the two DEVs were designed (2005). Several studies were developed during the 2007-11 period though, and the RB now has a 2 year strategy 2012-13, as mentioned elsewhere. There were national analyses though (see table above), which potentially contributed to design efforts.

102. WFP RB and COs were active players in UN, regional and national fora and knew of regional and national priorities. In regards to geographic targeting, the operations included in this RPE did not require prior beneficiary targeting: the DEVs were not distributing food, and the two PRROs responded to natural hazards. Geographic targeting was hence given by areas affected and not as a result of analysis.

103. The two DEVs responded to government requests and key regional and national food and nutrition security challenges at the time. More effort should have been assigned to incorporating within the assessment and design questions of sustainability and developing exit strategies. Nutrinet, (the web portal developed under the DEVs) for instance, does not appear to be working in any of the countries, according to interviewees, the only exception being a UNICEF employee in El Salvador. However, the site *nutrient.org* is up and running, even though the 'document' site is not updated and the 'database' is not accessible.

104. WFP does a good job at identifying and describing vulnerable groups' food and nutrition security challenges in the country VAMs, and has had success in placing these on the political agenda, and informing national policy according to interviews with donors and Governments. However, it remains difficult for WFP to design operations that target these groups and to reach them in emergency response situations (pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 in particular). According to UNAIDS, all agencies are trying to reach the most vulnerable, but reaching them is a challenge across UN partners.

105. WFP is recognized as generating useful food and nutrition security information, and is a main supplier of country level food and nutrition security analyses in the region. There are other initiatives though, that WFP could collaborate closer with and recognize. For instance FAO and their price and crop monitoring reports (in Guatemala), Mesoamerican Food Security Early Warning System (MFEWS) in early warning, and the IPC process. WFP has also been encouraged to continue and improve sharing of analyses with partners.

106. Data and analysis appears to be used to guide strategic decisions around areas of investment (e.g. EFSA data for designing emergency response), but it was not clear how data and analysis were used to guide on-going monitoring and implementation of extant efforts.

107. Output data is gathered, but it was not clear how it was used for management or reflection. Neither output nor outcome data appeared to be integrated or shared across projects. WFP staff reported there was limited funding available in budgets for M&E and that budget templates for support areas (including M&E) were frequently tied to MT distributed rather than program complexity or design needs to manage

and monitor performance. Thanks to the global financial crisis and increased donor investment in WFP, there was some investment in special studies, but not an investment in overall improved quality of M&E to guide implementation.

108. WFP has been effective in using analysis to place hunger (hunger maps), food and nutrition security (The Cost of Hunger, social security study, micronutrients etc.) on the national and regional agendas and played an important role in building national capacities to reduce hunger and undernutrition, and strengthen regional exchange and collaboration. These various studies, especially the *Cost of Hunger* and the micronutrient surveys have provided important input into national (Government) initiatives, policies and plans such as the Zero Hunger and 1,000 days efforts.

109. WFP has engaged with local and international researchers (e.g. RAND Corporation, ECLAC, Universidad Autonoma de Honduras, SATCA), Government agencies (SESAN-Guatemala), as well as other UN agencies (FAO) to conduct and share analysis.

110. The bulk of nutrition security analyses in Central America focused on rural areas (other than the urban assessments during the soaring food price crisis). However, urban food and nutrition insecurity is an emerging issue that is not yet being analyzed or addressed.

111. Based on interviews with Government officials, WFP regional and country office staff, and civil society representatives across the region, as well as review of reports, it is clear assessments and analyses were conducted, but it is unclear how these analyses explicitly informed on-going design and monitoring of WFP efforts across the region. Within WFP COs, there was frequently an analysis of hunger/food insecurity at country level, but rarely an overlay of analysis for how WFP operations and distribution efforts were in the same areas. There was no clear evidence from reports that assessment analysis informed operational planning, or that operational planning informed further assessment efforts.

112. It was difficult to gauge WFP's use of M&E evidence to assess and prioritize where WFP's contribution would be the most effective and efficient to address hunger issues within a country or the region. Discussion with WFP staff and review of documents suggest that the use and integration of assessment and monitoring data is quite limited. Program documents rarely reference VAM, Emergency Needs Assessments (ENAs) and M&E output in general. There is little evidence of these sources other than ENAs in emergency response.

113. There was no consistency in approach to analysis and assessment across the COs, with each office developing their own approaches and methodologies. For example, the Honduran office has recently invested considerable resources in the development of an integrated knowledge management system, which could be used to facilitate the uptake of information. While in El Salvador, they have been exploring new methodologies for assessments. Following TD-12, (which occurred outside the period of this evaluation), the Regional Bureau did review how EFSA and vulnerability assessments were conducted to try to streamline this, however in-country interviews illustrated that there are different approaches to country-level data collection and analysis.

114. At a macro-level, WFP used analyses and assessment to prioritize broad areas of intervention (hazard response/nutrition), but within operations and programmes,

it was difficult to see how analyses guides day-to-day management and priority setting.

2.2.2 WFP priorities consider realities of MICs operating environment

115. WFP staff repeatedly cited in interviews that MICs present unique challenges. Staff also cited that to date there is not a global strategy for WFP engagement in MICs. WFP-Rome systems and policies toward MICs engagement were described at best as neutral, at worst as obstacles to successful implementation. An example of systems creating challenges is the EFSA tool. EFSA uses dietary diversity as a basis to calculate food insecurity. The Central American traditional diet is diverse and this disguises the underlying food insecurity – further contributing to hidden hunger.

116. Hidden hunger and chronic malnutrition are problems across the region. As an example, Guatemala has chronic malnutrition rates close to 50%; to address these challenges, systematic assistance and collaboration with the government is needed to ensure maximum impact. One example of strategic linkages is WFP's work with the National Program for Food Security (PROSAN) in Guatemala where as children are identified as malnourished, they are linked to other government programs.

117. During the period of the evaluation, WFP's focus shifted from food aid to food assistance, which allowed them to contribute to development in an increasingly strategic manner. By focusing on nutrition issues and hunger, through continued technical assistance and capacity building, WFP efforts have helped the region position itself around key issues such as micronutrient deficiencies and development of expanded government programs to promote hunger eradication.

118. Economic challenges within middle-income countries include uneven and inequitable distribution of resources. To address the poverty gap in MICs, efforts need to focus on root causes of poverty, and transition a vision from emergency response towards development. WFP has been strategic in supporting countries to develop and implement better food policies. One example includes the Government of Nicaragua's policies around food assistance, defining when food aid is required and how it will be used to achieve development outcomes.

119. The RB and COs have successfully applied South-South Cooperation from within the region and other MICs as an important tool. South-South collaboration within the region represents a valuable tool for sharing information, technology and skills, highly appreciated by government counterparts and also WFP national staff in the region. Chile is supporting South-South technical assistance with Central America around key nutrition and capacity development issues.

120. Recognizing Government capacity, WFP has had mixed results in transferring and further developing local capacity to administer key programs. Successful examples include the transfer of the school feeding program to the Salvadoran government (cited as a success by the Government in El Salvador and by other UN agencies in the country) and the positioning of the school-feeding program in Nicaragua and Honduras to support increasing capacity for school feeding. The transfer of the DEV activities was not as successful – knowledge appeared to be transferred, but not the knowledge management systems and ongoing generation and sharing of knowledge to address nutrition across the region. Nutrinet, the knowledge portal, was a web-based tool for sharing information and resources. Some respondents from Governments as well as UN System partners indicated the tool was a helpful resource for looking for information. However, there were some observations that the system was not as useful for uploading or sharing information

and was not accessible at local levels due to internet connectivity issues. While there was an attempt at a transfer, the system materials are available on disk and no longer available online and there does not appear to be budget or capacity to maintain the knowledge management resource.

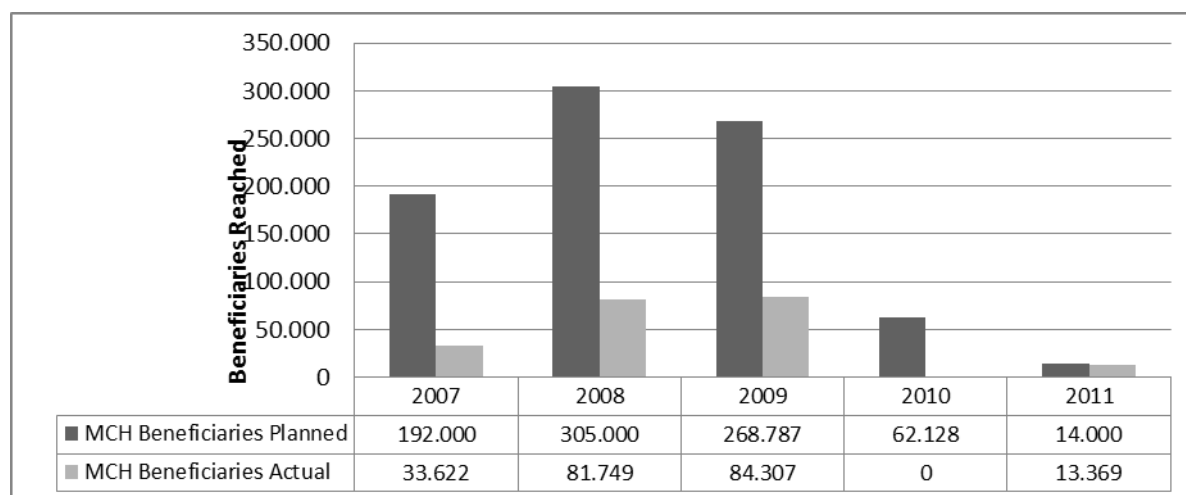
2.2.3 Priorities and Operating Model

121. While M&E data were limited, it appeared that WFP operational decisions and priorities were based on Government policies and shared understanding of humanitarian and development needs across the region. There was feedback from Government informants that overtime, WFP has shifted its operating model to be more aligned with Government leadership and ownership, moving away from directive engagement with Government to a more responsive (and described as relevant) approach to Government engagement across the region. In Guatemala, SESAN in particular highlighted WFP’s changing posture in working with the Government on nutrition challenges.

122. While not all respondents were familiar with the depth of WFP engagement, none of the interviewees (external to WFP) distinguished between DEV, PRRO, EMOP, or Country Programme activities in how they understood the work of WFP. This contributed to the team’s understanding, that while there could have been some specific instances of improved coordination across operations and country programmes, the portfolio was viewed and understood as linked rather than segmented and disjointed across multiple categories of operations or programmes. This is not necessarily evidence of integration, but at least evidence of the absence of clearly disparate programming.

123. Where trade-offs were made it appeared to be in prioritizing logistics and efficiency. There are positive and negative aspects of these trade-offs. Specifically, around specialized food for maternal and child health programs, in interviews with WFP staff, the logistics of these efforts appear to be an ongoing challenge. Reviewing the data from the PRROs, across all other categories targets to reach beneficiaries were exceeded, but not for MCH distribution as indicated in the chart below. Distribution to vulnerable groups resulted in larger logistical challenges because specialized rations were in addition to family rations, which translated into additional packing or re-packing. It was cited as easier to include specialized products such as corn soy blend (CSB) within family rations, although this potentially runs the risk that the ration is distributed across the family.

Figure 11: MCH Beneficiaries 2007 – 2011 for PRRO Operations in Central America



124. Within GFD efforts, expediency was prioritized by distributing available food, prioritizing hunger over food and traditional diet preferences so that greater numbers of people could be reached. For example, in Guatemala the traditional diet prefers maize, but in order to reach those who needed food, rice was included in food rations.

125. Another example of a trade-off comes from the HEB. A trade-off was made at apparently a regional level to push distribution of HEBs despite the fact that they weren't necessarily accepted. El Salvador appeared to use HEBs well immediately following hazards and reported their acceptability, particularly in areas that did not have access to cooking facilities and were without other food sources. In other countries within the region, HEBs are not viewed as nutritious foods, but "cookies."

126. Another trade-off within the regional operations was basic reporting over quality monitoring. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, there was limited consistency across the region in what data was collected and how. It is unclear if this trade-off was a purposeful decision to promote country ownership, or a direct result of limited resourcing for monitoring at both regional and country levels.

2.2.4 Developing informed response strategies

127. WFP's approach and strategies appear to be connected to Government goals, priorities, and policies across the region. Because WFP has actively supported governments in their formulation of policy, it is difficult to differentiate whether WFP's engagement is a response, catalyst or both to specific Government policies. In Nicaragua and Honduras, WFP supported governments to draft nutrition and food security strategies, plans, and policies. The WFP/Tegucigalpa office described in detail how the Honduran food security and nutrition law and other strategic documents orient the design and implementation of WFP's efforts. In Guatemala, WFP developed and presented a vulnerability evaluation, which contributed to the Government's *Hambre Cero/Zero Hunger initiative*. In addition, WFP recently worked closely with the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAGA) to design coffee rust response priorities. However, a review of the goals of government and partners suggests that WFP interventions aren't always informed by government policy. For example, WFP was involved in developing the *Plan de Sequia/drought plan* in Nicaragua, a plan that emphasizes community and local government ownership and capacity building. However, interviewees reported WFP has been slow to incorporate the plan's strategies to its programming.

128. At a macro level, it appears WFP was strategic in decision making, specifically - prioritizing hazard response and nutrition as key components of the regional portfolio (given global thinking on nutrition²⁹, available assessments, and monitoring data at the time), but as mentioned above, and throughout this report, there was not necessarily a robust M&E system in place during the period of the evaluation. This observation comes from a review of the limited data (which is not consistent across countries), reports, articles, interviews with WFP regional and country office staff, as well as other reports.³⁰

129. One aspect of being strategic is knowing when not to act. WFP is good at spotting vacuums (e.g., nutrition advocacy) and innovating (e.g. *Purchase for*

²⁹ Lancet Series 2008 on Nutrition and Maternal Child Health.

³⁰ Review Mission – Regional PRRO 20043 – draft report, ODXP, ODEP, PSC, 2012; Summary Report of the Evaluation of Central America PRRO 10212.0; and Audit Query on the Regional PRRO Panama 10444

Progress or P4P). Key informants noted WFP should consider not always filling these gaps, but strategically involving partners from design to implementation. WFP's P4P and school feeding integration efforts have established strategic linkages with local and regional agriculture-related institutes and organizations (e.g., Ministries of Agriculture, IICA³¹, Embrapa). It was repeated that in these instances, WFP could more frequently and consistently engage governments, the UN community, NGOs, and other partners through open and informed discussion and planning to identify WFP's appropriate role and efforts in terms of modalities (e.g. FFW, cash for work (CFW), capacity building) and geographic coverage.

130. One of the ongoing risks and challenges for WFP in Central America is the reality of funding cycles and availability of funding. The Regional PRROs and DEVs were reasonably well-funded during the course of the evaluation's time frame, however they did appear to leverage and innovate tools available to mitigate these risks. Specific actions included leveraging use of the forward purchasing facility (FPF), as well as seeking alternate sources of funding in each country through the country programmes, other operations, and the use of trust funds.

131. In addition to the risk of insufficient funding, WFP also faced an ongoing challenge of continual government change. Government, other UN system agencies, donors, and civil society staff reported that WFP did a good job of prioritizing the hunger and food security agenda and serving as a bridge across changes in government to ensure the continuity of programs. The one area where it seemed WFP could improve is in reviewing and re-releasing strategic documents to administrations/government appointees.

132. WFP's choice of programme categories (i.e. EMOP, PRRO, CP) within the Regional Portfolio was partly influenced by WFP policies and available resource options. The choice of PRROs and DEVs seem appropriate given the guidance from WFP on operational structure. An operation specifically addressing food security among vulnerable populations given the vulnerability assessments could have been useful; however there is no evidence that there was donor interest or disinterest in funding such an operation at the time. Nevertheless, the ultimate choices of operation type facilitated the implementation of WFP efforts within the countries and the region.

133. Donors cited the use of regional operations as an attractive mechanism for donor investment to address natural hazard and nutrition challenges across the region. Annex 6 illustrates funding requirements and donor contributions to WFP operations across the region during the evaluation. There do not appear to be significant differences in donor investment in regional vs. country level operations.

134. The RB cited that the regional operations reduced paperwork and made things easier for COs, however this benefit of improved efficiency was not recognized by WFP COs when asked.

135. There was no WFP regional strategy or strategic vision document in place during the RPE timeframe to guide the RPE's assessment of whether WFP efforts were consistent with, or effective in, supporting strategic objectives at the regional level. A subsequent Regional Strategic Vision was developed for 2012-2013 which reflected the operating realities of the region and the context. Nevertheless, it was the

³¹ Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

evaluation team's informed impression that WFP selected to prioritize and contribute to emergency response and nutrition as a means to address the repetitive, cyclical and sometimes cumulative patterns of food insecurity that characterize the region, and specifically certain hotspots (affected districts and communities) within each country. WFP was repeatedly recognized for these contributions.

136. WFP's efforts do not completely address the underlying causes of undernutrition, hunger and food insecurity in the region such as poverty, women's education and literacy, poor agricultural practices and resource management, limited and unstable employment opportunities, weak civil society engagement and capacity and insufficient risk management in terms of early warning, contingency planning, preparedness and mitigation. For example, in Choluteca, Honduras there was evidence of repeated severe flooding in the same communities. While appreciative of the response assistance received, community leaders noted that improved resource management (river and land use) as well as enhanced flood mitigation strategies were their priorities. Similarly, PAHO cited and it is mentioned in key nutrition documents, the importance of girls/women's literacy as an underlying factor for nutrition and there appeared to be no clear linkages between the DEV operations and school feeding or engagement with UNICEF or other actors to complement WFP's efforts and contribute to more comprehensive solutions. Based on interviews with WFP staff, it appears that the new PRRO is attempting to move toward more mitigation strategies to address these underlying issues. Similarly, a proposed operation to further address nutrition and contribute to the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement and other 1,000 day initiatives has been developed, however funding did not yet appear to be available to move the nutrition initiative forward.

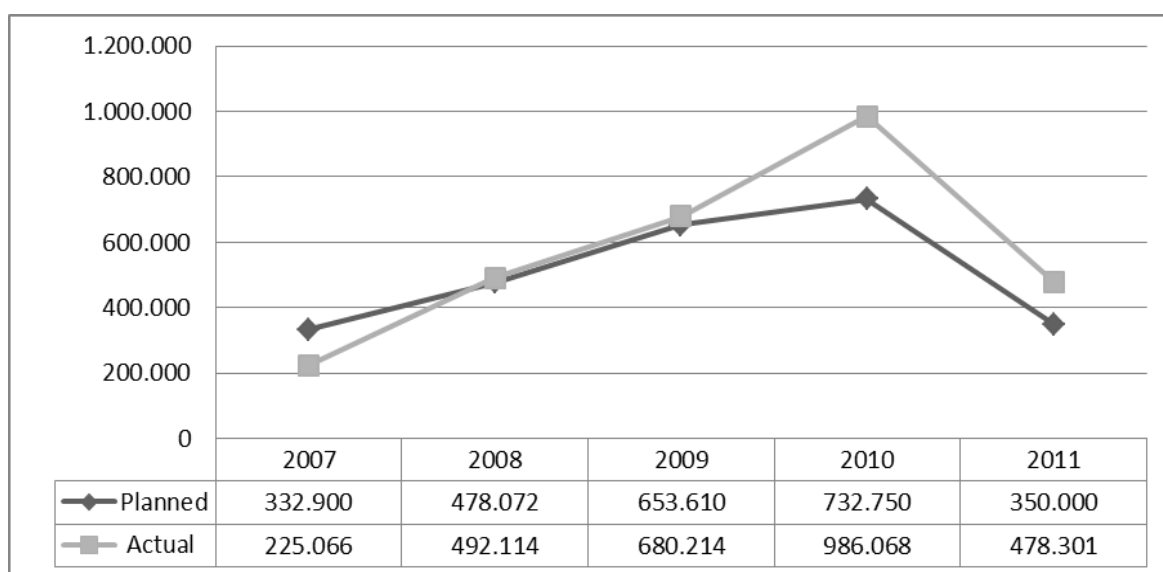
137. WFP is increasingly engaging in strategic discussions with partners around food security and recurrent crises. However, WFP's has not yet defined what its appropriate role should be or clearly communicated that role to stakeholders. At times, WFP has not defined its role according to its comparative advantage or through a collaborative process. WFP has had a tendency to seek resources independently and solicit collaboration from partners with critical capacities during the implementation stage.

2.3. Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability: The extent to which WFP achieved Regional Portfolio objectives, at which cost, and durability of results

2.3.1. Effectiveness in Reaching Beneficiaries and Attaining Objectives

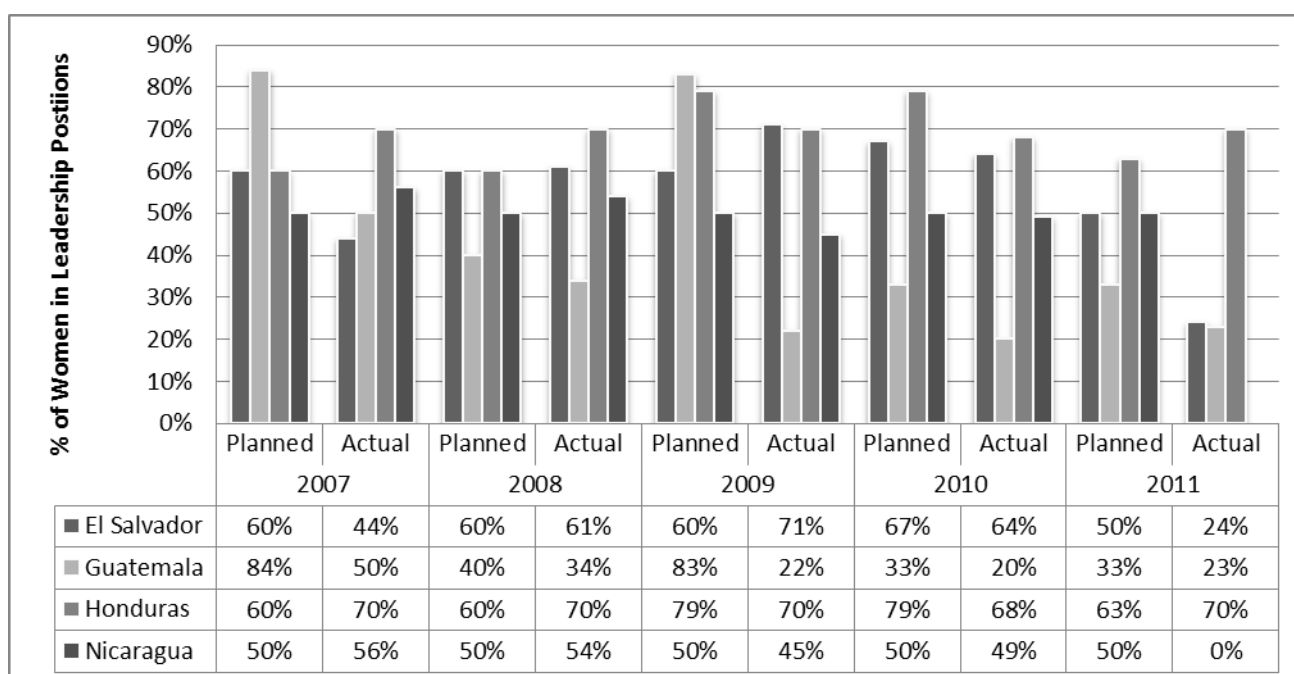
138. WFP COs targeted communities under the regional PRROs through VAM analysis and food security assessments with partners including NGOs, Government, and other UN partners. WFP collaborated with partners with a local field presence to select beneficiaries based on established criteria. PRRO SPRs indicate that funding availability and delays were a challenge. Despite these challenges, as the figure below indicates, WFP exceeded its targets for GFD for both of the PRROs. The total number of beneficiaries includes those receiving both seasonal and emergency food aid. The number of beneficiaries reached exceeds those planned.

Figure 12: Total Beneficiaries for both Regional PRROs



139. Addressing gender in Central America is an ongoing challenge. There were efforts made across the PRROs to engage women as leaders in food management committees, as well as issue rations and vouchers to women and in women's names. However in general, the figures below illustrate gender equity and engagement is an ongoing challenge: across the four countries, WFP did not overall achieve its planned targets for engaging women as leaders in Food Management Committees.

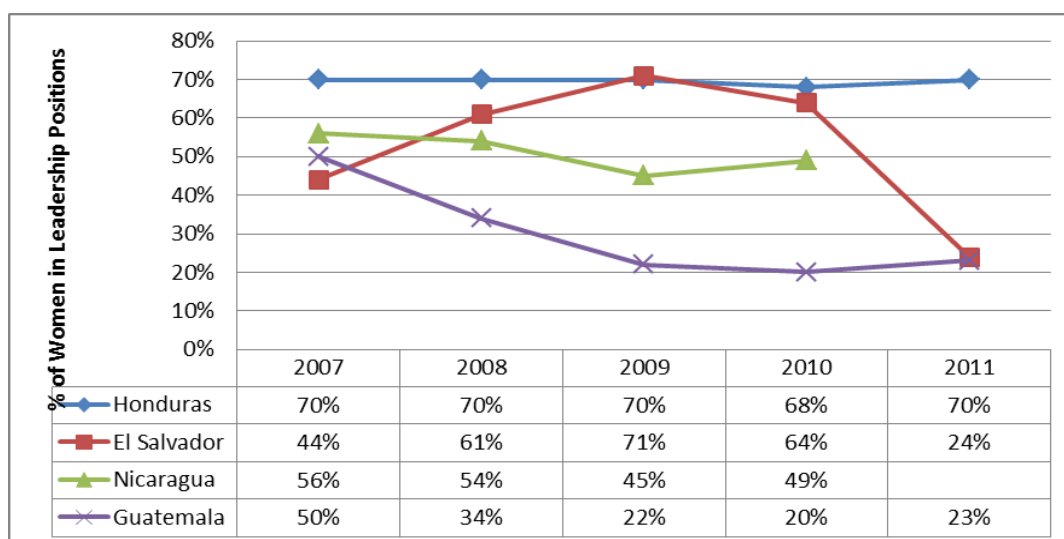
Figure 13: Planned versus Actual Percentage of Women in Leadership Positions in Food Management Committees across both PRROs (2007-2011)



140. When examined as a trend, it appears that women's engagement in leadership positions across the region is declining rather than increasing during the evaluation period, as illustrated by the figure below. The percentage of women participating in

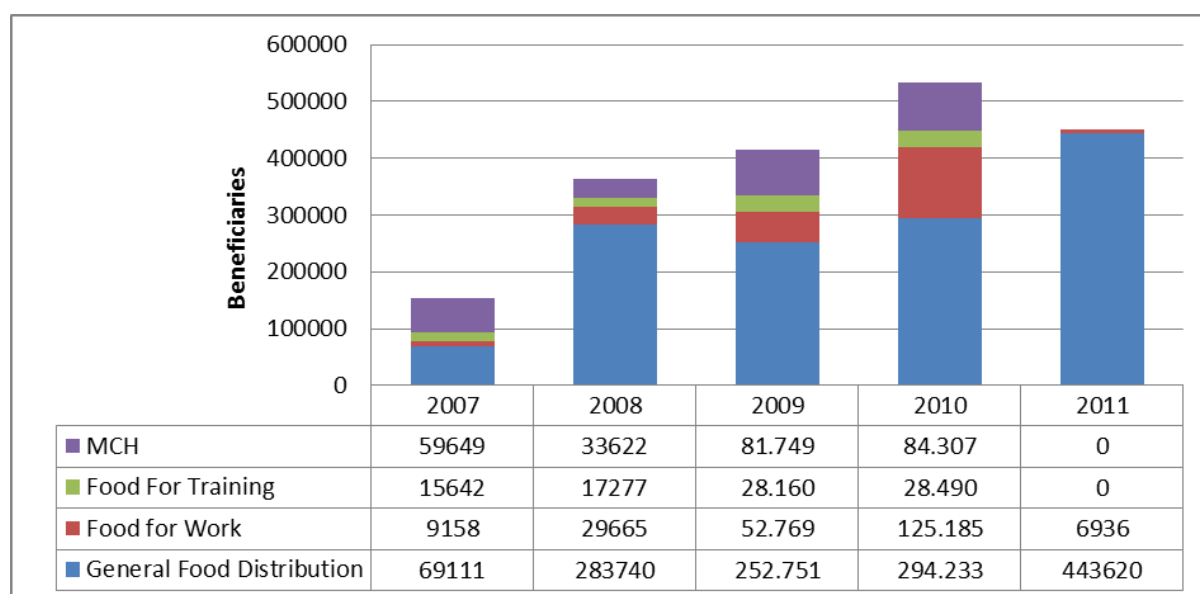
leadership positions in Honduras remained relatively unchanged, but declined in the other countries of the evaluation.

Figure 14: Changes in Women's Leadership in Food Management Committees across both PRROs



141. As illustrated by the figure below, there was an increasing use of FFW and FFT under PRRO 10444 (ended in 2010), which was continued under the current PRRO (200043). However in the first year of the new 20043 PRRO, WFP emphasized GFD.

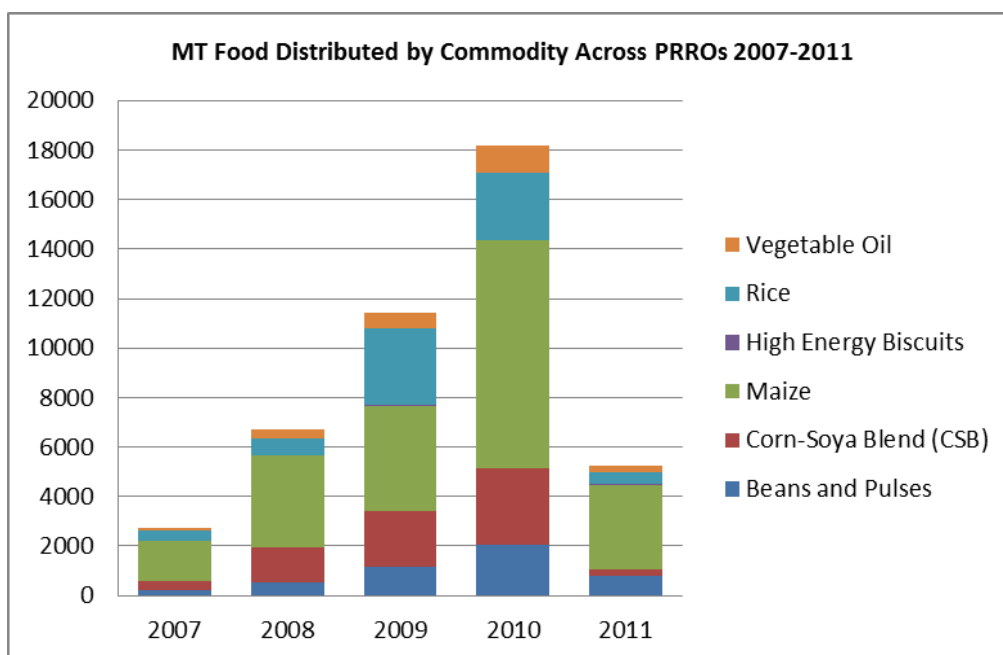
Figure 15: Beneficiaries by Activity Type across PRROs



142. FFW and FFT were key components of the PRROs cited in interviews with WFP staff and Government Officials, as well as in review of SPRs for the period; however it is impossible to aggregate the data at a regional level beyond number of beneficiaries to describe quantitatively results from these efforts. Currently, there is no defined strategy for how to engage with vulnerable groups as a part of FFW efforts (e.g. the aged / disabled) who might not physically be able to participate in FFW programmes. Illustrative examples of work conducted under the FFW programs include: reforestation, watershed management, and road and bridge rehabilitation, among other efforts.

143. Government and civil society interviewees described the food rations distributed as adequate in terms of kilocalorie content and in line with established WFP and Government standards. And in most cases the planned versus actual food ration energy content per person distributed across the region for PRRO 200043 in 2011 match. The one exception was El Salvador, where the actual ration was 86% of planned.³² To the extent possible, WFP reported, and data reflect, that efforts were made to ensure food rations aligned to traditional diets. For example, there was greater use of maize (part of the traditional diet) rather than rice in Guatemala. The figure below illustrates the actual distribution of approved commodities across the region under both Regional PRROs.

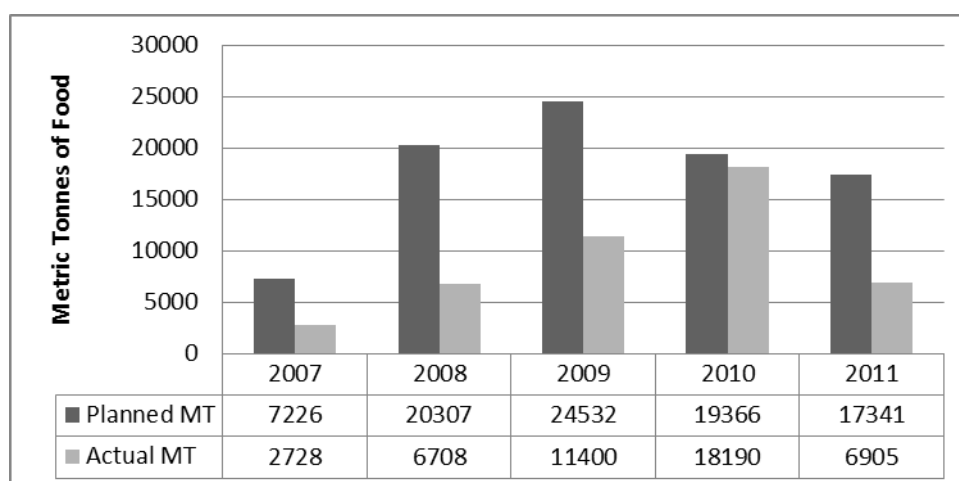
Figure 16: MT of Food Distributed across Regional PRROs 2007-2011



144. With respect to the volume of food distributed, at the start of the new PRRO 20043 in 2011, it appears that the implementation cycle was reset as illustrated by the figures above. The availability of funding at the start of the new PRRO translated to fewer MTs of food distributed in the first year of PRRO 20043's implementation despite an increase in beneficiaries. The WFP RB and COs should consider how to maintain momentum in the close-out and start-up of operations, particularly as they prepare for the new PRRO next year.

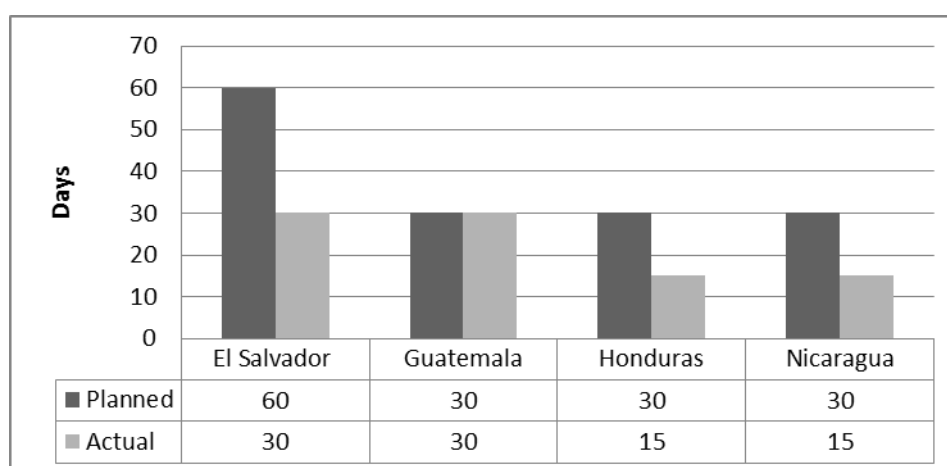
145. There is a noticeable difference between planned MT of food for distribution and actual MT distributed across both PRROs. Given interviews with WFP staff as well as a review of the data this appears to be due to availability of food resources, funding levels, and the duration of food distribution. As a reference, PRRO 10444 received 67.5% of its required contributions and PRRO 200043 received 81.7% during the evaluation period. The figure below illustrates the comparison between anticipated and actual MTs distribution across both PRROs during the evaluation period.

Figure 17: Planned and Actual MT of Food Distributed Across Regional PRROs



146. Interviewees reported that food distribution across the region was timely in immediate response to hazards as a part of GFDs. There were some instances of reported delays during food distribution for FFW / FFT, but this appeared to be linked to the length of time needed to complete the work. In general, the duration of food distribution was less than planned for initially as indicated by the figure below.

Figure 18: Duration of Ration Distribution in 2011 under PRRO 200043



147. The abbreviated duration of food distribution helps explain how WFP was able to exceed its beneficiary targets while not meeting its targets for MTs of distributed food over the period of the evaluation. WFP staff cited in interviews that the common minimum number of planned days of food distributed is 30, but as indicated in the figure above the duration of days when food distribution was needed was less.

148. Calculating the beneficiaries reached under the two DEVs is a difficult challenge as the focus of the work was not on traditional WFP activities of reaching beneficiaries, but increasing capacity, policies, and investment across the region to address hunger and nutrition. Both of the DEV interventions extended beyond the four countries of this evaluation. Within the reports, the data of people trained and organizations partnered with was not always disaggregated by country, and the global WFP SPR reporting template did not easily correlate with the objectives of the two DEV operations. The table below illustrates the numbers of people trained under DEV 10421 by country. In total, 20 countries benefitted from technical assistance

across the region. The figures in the table below illustrate the challenges in reporting and counting – where Guatemala reported over 6,000 participants while other countries reported dramatically less. It was unclear how indicators were defined.

Table 3: Participants in Trainings and Technical meetings

Country	No. of participants with improved capacities
Regional level	180
GUATEMALA	6,670
HONDURAS	950
EL SALVADOR	810
NICARAGUA	660
Other Countries Across the Region	3,707
TOTAL	12,977

149. The DEVs contributed to expand the evidence and knowledge base around nutrition across the region, producing over 40 technical documents (see Annex 7).

150. Logical Frameworks for the two regional PRROs were not aligned with global guidance in terms of performance measurement. Neither PRRO identified impact indicators or targets upon which to gauge progress. Indicators varied across countries, in part, reflecting the variation in livelihood and disaster mitigation activities (e.g., under PRRO 10444, the number of tree nurseries in Guatemala, hectares of home gardens in Honduras and hectares of basic grains planted in Nicaragua are outputs). These country-specific indicators changed from year to year within a given country. In contrast, the same beneficiary output indicators and gender-related indicators were measured across countries and over time. Unfortunately, the SPRs selectively reported on indicators and country-specific activities making it impossible to track performance over time and across the regional portfolio.

151. The table below illustrates the limited availability of data and lack of consistency across indicators from the 2010 SPR for PRRO 10444.

Table 4: Outcome Data for PRRO 10444 (2010)³³

Outcome	Base Value	Previous Follow Up	Latest Follow Up
Guatemala			
SO1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies			
Prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 (weight-for-height as %)	No data	1.4	No data
Percentage of beneficiaries consuming at least 2 meals a day	No data	5	No data
Prevalence of low mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) among children under 5	No data	5	No data
Strategic Objective 2: Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures			
Number of households reporting increased income from assets created	No data	No data	95
Honduras			
SO1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies			
Prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 (weight for height as %)	5.6	3.4	3.2

³³ SPR PRRO 10444 (2010)

Nicaragua			
Strategic Objective 3: Restore and Rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster, or transition situations			
Percentage of beneficiaries consuming at least 3 meals a day	No data	No data	40
Percentage of beneficiaries consuming at least 2 meals a day (<i>n.b. – there appears to be a problem with this indicator as this value should be greater than those consuming at least 3 meals per day</i>).	No data	No data	36
Prevalence of underweight among targeted children under 3 (weight-for-age as %)	4.3	2.9	2.8
FCS: percentage of households with a poor FCS	No data	No data	5
FCS: percentage of households with a borderline FCS	No data	No data	12
FCS: percentage of households with an acceptable FCS	No data	No data	8 3
Proportion of beneficiary household expenditures devoted to food (%)	No data	No data	5 0
El Salvador			
SO1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies			
Prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 (weight-for-height as %)	2.1		1.2

152. The Logical Frameworks of the DEVs were limited to SO5 (Strengthen the Capacities of Countries and Regions to Establish and Manage Food-Assistance and Hunger-Reduction Programmes). As with the PRROs, DEVs frameworks did not list targets or impact indicators. When the DEVs were designed, there were no standard global capacity indicators with which to align. While the global guidance recommended measurement of the change in capacity of institutions and networks, there are no suggested indicators. DEV measurement was limited largely to outputs. SPRs did not consistently report against the performance indicators, sometimes no indicators were included in the report, and when the indicators were presented, they were calculated for the entire region (e.g. number of government officials who attended a Cost of Hunger training for all of Latin America and the Caribbean).

2.3.2 Efficiency of the Regional Portfolio

153. Given the ongoing challenges and limitations of data available, it was impossible to conduct a more thorough quantitative analysis of the efficiency of the regional portfolio. While there is no established measurement or indicator for efficiency for WFP performance, Government counterparts, donors, and civil society referenced WFP as an efficient partner. Interviews with counterparts from Government, donors, and civil society contributed to qualitative evidence of WFP as an efficient partner. Specifically, interviewees with Government counterparts, donors, and civil society described WFP as a trusted partner – accountable with financial management and delivery of results. Qualitative evidence from WFP staff interviews included ongoing efforts to improve efficiency. Given the (albeit limited) evidence, the evaluation team considered there to be reasonable efficiency across the regional portfolio. Efficiency could potentially be improved by strengthening coordination as described in the recommendations, as well as improving WFP monitoring systems. Illustrative evidence of how the portfolio was efficient from interviews and data review included:

- Trustworthy and accountable management of donor and direct Government investment. Donors and Government partners indicated WFP was a trusted partner who transparently managed financial resources well and delivered results.
- Clear processes for assessment. In Honduras, NGOs and local officials (CODEM³⁴ and CODEL³⁵) in Choluteca remarked that the implementation of WFP's assessment methods resulted in a consistent and transparent targeting that instills the confidence of local communities and beneficiaries, local government officials, NGO partners and donors, and resulted in an additional commitment of flood relief resources from the Canadian Government.
- Timely and appropriate responses to natural hazards. The RB and COs have successfully leveraged new WFP initiatives such as the FPF, as well as the new regional warehouse in El Salvador to ensure stocks are available and can quickly be mobilized in the event of a natural hazard.
- Appropriate handling of food and limited losses. During the evaluation period across the PRROs, the RB and COs mobilized WFP procurement and logistics systems to foster efficiency and achieve results. One example of this is the cumulative reported post-delivery losses across the PRROs. There were only 35.8 MT of post-delivery food losses or 0.09% of the over 40,000 MT of food distributed through the PRROs.
- Prioritization of efforts to improve efficiency in food distribution by improving policies for food aid at border crossings as an ongoing effort in the region.

2.3.3 Sustainability of WFP Results

154. The sustainability of WFP's efforts are best evidenced through ongoing engagement with Government and increased capacity of Government and partners to address hunger, nutrition, and food security challenges across the region. Illustrative examples include:

- Through the DEVs, WFP responded to governments' solicitations for assistance in the development nutrition policies, plans and strategies, which included technical input, resources to convene workshops and publication of documents. As governments change every four years, sometimes with significant changes in staff and political platform, the presence of WFP has served as a bridge, maintaining the momentum of the nutrition dialogue and evolution of the policy processes to continue implementation of nutrition and food security programming.
- Increasing Government investment (in trust fund support to WFP, as well as direct-Government implemented programming) in nutrition (school feeding, micronutrients, FFW and local capacity efforts).
- WFP and Government approaches mirroring each other. For example, in Nicaragua, P4P mirrors the Government's approach of building local capacity and sustainability and provides an opportunity to decentralize WFP procurement operations. Similarly, WFP operations fit well and complement the Central American Policy on Comprehensive Risk Management and the Regional Disaster Reduction Plan 2006-15.

³⁴ Comité de Emergencia Municipal

³⁵ Comité de Emergencia Local

155. Some informants indicated that the works resulting from WFP's FFW efforts were not particularly durable, depending on the implementing partner, and WFP capacity to provide oversight and maintain quality. Also challenging the durability is the fact that some areas are constantly facing the same repairs (e.g. road or bridge). This need for repeated repairs could be due to lack of durable quality given the recurrent nature of hazards across the region.

156. While limitations were acknowledged in the durability of some of WFP's FFW programs, the transfer of capacity and ownership to Government and local civil society organizations was highlighted repeatedly as a strength of WFP. However, the sustainability appears to be in Government continued investment and policies rather than sustainability of a WFP effort per se (e.g. Nutrinet no longer exists, but countries reported increasing investment in nutrition and food security efforts).

2.4 Performance and Results of the Regional Portfolio 2007-2011

157. The desired medium and long-term outcomes for the Regional Portfolio are difficult to impossible to measure given that outcome indicators were not defined, measured or tracked consistently across the portfolio. There was a lack of standardization across logical frameworks and reporting within the region, and framework indicators were not necessarily consistent with local VAM indicators and measurement. The team experienced some difficulties accessing the alignment of Regional and Country Office performance frameworks with WFP Rome, because of frequent revisions and inconsistencies across WFP Rome strategy and guidance documents. While the global strategic objectives appeared to be relatively consistent over the RPE timeframe, some of the sub objectives and performance indicators varied across the various strategic documents (e.g., the list of corporate outcome indicators for SO1).³⁶ This, in part, reflected WFP's efforts to better align with Millennium Development Goals. During the RPE period, a number of the global outcome indicators were under revision or discussion (e.g., dietary diversity) or were provisional (e.g., piloted SMART indicators). Output indicators were more consistent, clearly defined and regularly included. Over the RPE period, strategic documents did not identify or recommend impact indicators.

158. Harmonized assessment and performance measurement across the region and within the regional portfolio of key indicators would have facilitated establishing quantitative measures to monitor the effectiveness, efficiency, and overall performance of the Regional Portfolio.

159. There is insufficient quantitative data to quantitatively document the performance of the regional portfolio. Despite the absence of quantitative outcome indicators to measure performance, qualitative evidence from interviewees across the region from Government, donors, civil society, and other UN system partners was that WFP's efforts have contributed to improved hazard management and response, as well as improvements in nutrition across the region. Specifically, Honduras and Guatemala indicated that thanks to WFP support, they were able to reduce the impact of specific storms and increase the quality of support provided by the government to increase the numbers of beneficiaries reached with civil protection

³⁶WFP. (2011) *Strategic Framework 2011 Revised Version*. Rome, WFP;
WFP (Feb 2009) *Strategic Results Framework, Policy Issues*, Agenda Item 5, Rome, WFP
WFP (Feb 2005) *Strategic Plan 2006-2009, Policy Issues*, Agenda Item 5, Rome, WFP
WFP *SO Corporate Outcome and Output Indicators*, Rome, WFP

support, mitigating the potential impact of natural hazards. As trend data indicated in section 1 of this report, there were improvements in the global hunger index, however it is impossible to distinguish what, if any, is WFP's specific contribution to regional improvements.

160. There have been reports of increasing investment in nutrition and food security across the region. Specifically, Guatemala has assumed the costs of ensuring access to micronutrient "Sprinkles" across the country and acknowledged WFP's role in starting the initial distribution of Sprinkles and promoting their continued use and Government investment. In El Salvador, the Government has assumed responsibility for administering the school feeding program. In Honduras, the Government has committed to supporting the allocation of resources to purchase and distribute micronutrient powder and support supplementation. In Nicaragua, the Government is increasing investment for its Action Plan for National Strategy on Sovereignty and National Food Security. As an example of improvements within the region, Guatemala was recently recognized, among SUN framework countries, as the world leader in hunger and nutrition investment based on the recently developed Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index (HANCI). The Institute of Development Studies cites that "while much remains to be done, and substantial social inequities persist between indigenous and other communities, hunger and nutrition outcomes in Guatemala are gradually improving. This is partially thanks to substantial political commitment expressed through a range of efforts by the Government of Guatemala."³⁷

161. Partners from government, civil society, and the private sector acknowledged WFP successfully targets those most affected by natural hazards in providing disaster response.

162. Beneficiary data was disaggregated by gender; however it was unclear how gender was fully integrated into design or implementation efforts to address differences and potential disparities.

163. WFP is widely acknowledged as a critical leader in regional policies for civil protection / disaster response / mitigation. It is also acknowledged by Government, private sector, donors that WFP is a critical actor in the policy agenda around nutrition and food security. Key documents and reports are viewed as high quality, but often seen as tossed out into the public sphere with an initial launch, but not always with following-through.

164. At RB level, during the reporting period, there was not prioritization of an integrated regional framework, strategy and response. There were potential lost opportunities when the RB and COs chose to not work on harmonization of measurement, monitoring and reporting across the region both within WFP and among partners. Subsequent to the period of the evaluation, a Regional Strategic Vision for Latin America and the Caribbean was developed; however this strategic vision does not yet bring together harmonized measurements and monitoring to complement the vision.

³⁷ IDS developed global index supported by DFID and Irish Aid to monitor country investment and commitment to nutrition and hunger. <http://www.hancindex.org/explore-the-data/research-findings/>

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. Overall Assessment

Relevance: Strategic Positioning at the Regional Level

165. Despite the absence of a regional strategy during the evaluation period, or a global MICs strategy, the regional portfolio strategically positioned itself to operate in Central America between 2007-2011. Subsequently, WFP developed a Regional Strategic Vision 2012-2013, which does reflect the operating environment and challenges. WFP leveraged food aid and other resources to deliver programming responding to unique needs, as well as integrating local resources to make investments into key hunger and poverty priorities shared with WFP (e.g. school feeding, disaster mitigation and prevention, resilience, emergency response, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups).

166. The evaluation concluded the relevance of the regional operations as they provided a complement to country programmed activities. However, the limited ability to track Trust Funds within global reporting structures both under-values significant local contributions and related accomplishments.

Coherence/Complementarity: Factors Driving WFP Regional Strategy

167. For the most part, WFP worked in complement and in coordination with Government authorities across the region. As mentioned within the findings, some partners and donors highlighted WFP's ability to identify gaps around nutrition and food security, but there were potentially missed opportunities for better coordination with other UN system partners to improve coordination and effectiveness.

168. There was not a uniform strategy across the region or a clearly articulated document of how regional operations were complementary or improved coherence of WFP country-level efforts. The need for improved vertical communication, for example on the current status of the regional nutrition activity was cited. After the period of the evaluation, the RB developed a regional strategy document that was informed by experience and context to guide future programming³⁸ and continues to coordinate with COs through ongoing meetings and fora. Despite the gaps of defined strategy documents during the period of evaluation, the portfolio did appear to work in complement to Government as well as WFP internal efforts. Specifically, the development of the regional food warehouse in El Salvador for food distribution has helped in country-level emergency responses across the region. WFP provided additional resources and expediency to allow WFP to respond quickly to needs across the region. In addition, country offices interviewed cited that the regional PRROs allowed them to respond to local hazards in complement to other country activities.

Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability

169. The greatest limitation to measuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the regional portfolio was the prioritization of programming and service delivery over investment in monitoring and evaluation. As described previously in this report, there are gaps in monitoring and evaluation across the portfolio. It is important to note there are also gaps in guidance and systems from a WFP corporate level where Standard Project Report (SPR) guidance and indicators

³⁸ Regional Strategic Vision for Latin America and the Caribbean 2012-2013

reflect an emphasis on GFD and do not reflect the monitoring needs of non-GFD related efforts. Despite these concrete gaps in monitoring systems, and as described in Section 2 of this report in greater detail, the PRRO operations exceeded their targets for beneficiaries reached and were cited as providing effective and efficient services to natural hazard response efforts. As described earlier in this report, WFP prioritized distributing available food in times of hazards. This prioritization of expediency potentially contributed to timeliness, but also potential poor choices of food commodities for distribution –e.g. distributing HEB despite local reported dissatisfaction with HEB as a commodity. To date, these efforts have not resulted in sustainable change, as communities are repeatedly affected by similar natural hazards year after year.

170. From the DEV operations, WFP’s advocacy and capacity development efforts contributed to the improved quality of national nutrition programming and there is an ongoing investment in nutrition and micronutrients across the region that appears to be sustainable.

Performance and Results of Regional Portfolio

171. Overall, the WFP Regional Portfolio exceeded many of its numeric targets, but didn’t always reach the most vulnerable. The evaluation team found that WFP was perceived as a positive partner in the region. Particularly in regional policies for civil protection and disaster response, and in the policy agenda around food security and nutrition. However, country offices, donors, and Government cited that coordination and communication could improve. Donors specifically cited coordination within the UN system across other UN agencies. Country Offices cited the need for clarity in expectations and communications with partners, for example there is some confusion at country level both from Government as well as WFP country offices about the status of the recently planned regional nutrition programme to address 1000 days that has not received funding. Government counterparts are anticipating concrete plans to begin for the nutrition activity and did not appear to be aware that there is not available funding. Similarly, WFP country offices were not aware of the current status of the regional nutrition activity. Despite these challenges, Governments, civil society, donors, and the private sector viewed WFP as a key resource to address hunger and poverty (particularly in times of natural hazards) across Central America citing inputs into preparedness (e.g. training, protocols, simulation exercises) and response (mobilization of food aid) as improvements during the evaluation period.

3.2. Key Lessons for the Future

172. Strategy and M&E are critical to both monitor implementation, as well as facilitate evaluation. Without a clearly defined strategy for the portfolio, portfolio evaluations have limited data and reference points to assess performance. Monitoring is as important as strategy, and currently, the WFP global indicators used to monitor performance don’t always correspond to the needs of the region.

173. The COs and RB have been evolving how they work with Governments, moving beyond coordination alongside Governments to closer collaboration with Governments, allowing Governments to be in the lead with WFP in a supporting, rather than driving/directive role. This change appears (based on conversations with WFP staff, donors, and government authorities) to be particularly critical in Central America and with Governments who have the resources to potentially force WFP out

if unsatisfied. This change offers potential lessons to guide WFP forward not only in Central America, but also in other countries, particularly MICs.

174. There is an ongoing gap and a need for a strategy for working in MICs. The recently developed WFP internal concept note for MICs highlights the use of pilots and emphasizes partnership with Governments as well as other partners, but the pilot descriptions don't yet articulate concretely whether Government engagement extends to Government investment similar to the Trust Fund approach in Central America or continues to be reliant on external investment from other actors (e.g. UN agencies, donors, multilateral agencies like the World Bank). The Pilot Concept Note highlights the importance of Government leadership – key in MICs, but doesn't fully appear to integrate the role of the private sector – also key in MICs (highlighted repeatedly in interviews with WFP staff, the private sector, and Government interviewees) as resourced and positioned to address undernutrition across MICs. The Regional Bureau and WFP country offices in interviews highlighted the current need for a strategy that reflects their operating environment and challenges and concern that the pilots would provide promising evidence, but potentially delay addressing the current need for strategy.

175. WFP should continue to strengthen its logistics role within the region. WFP was repeatedly recognized for its logistics strength by governments and UN system partners. WFP should continue to leverage this strength and continue to move beyond “doing” logistics to further developing the logistics capacity of regional and country partners, similar to the work WFP has been doing with CEPREDENAC and in Nicaragua with SINAPRED.

176. The following recommendations include opportunities for improvement and change, as well as opportunities for WFP to continue and prioritize efforts which have been successful or show promise. To achieve this, WFP should ensure that the headquarters functions of the RB are adequately staffed and funded, including in both operational and technical areas.

3.3 Recommendations

3.3.1 Opportunities for improvements and changes

Recommendations

Opportunities for improvements and changes

177. **Recommendation 1: WFP regional and country operations should ensure that operational planning, implementation and monitoring efforts target the most vulnerable.**

- In planning, monitoring, and reporting, WFP should identify how its country offices will address the needs of vulnerable groups – both urban and rural – in regional operations. Specifically, WFP country offices and the regional bureau should identify how DEV efforts that focus on capacity are expected to address the needs of the vulnerable; how PRROs will reach the most vulnerable groups through GFD; and how WFP country offices and the regional bureau will monitor these efforts.
- Opportunities for addressing the needs of the most vulnerable include: i) country offices integrating gender issues into assessment, targeting, programme implementation and monitoring, and analysing and developing protocols that

facilitate implementation and overcome logistical challenges to reach women and children in the 1,000-day window; and ii) country offices identifying specific opportunities for integrating the most vulnerable into FFA activities.

178. Recommendation 2: The Regional Bureau and country offices should define WFP's desired operational role in risk management and the prevention of hazards and their effects.

- Country offices and the regional bureau should use the recently defined Building Resilient Municipalities and Communities (ComRes)³⁹ operation and the global WFP Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management released at the end of 2011 to develop and refine its role in resilience and risk prevention and management across the region.
- The regional bureau and country offices should consider developing knowledge management and advocacy efforts, possibly including a study similar to the Cost of Hunger study to improve understanding and raise awareness and investments.
- Once the regional bureau and country offices have clearly set out WFP's desired role in risk management across the region, WFP Headquarters should provide commensurate corporate backing to networking with key stakeholders from government, donors and the private sector, and to identifying and raising funding to support implementation.

179. Recommendation 3: With significant inputs from country offices and regional bureaux, WFP Headquarters should develop a global MIC strategy that incorporates needs analysis, planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting guidance.

- The MIC strategy should build on WFP's commitments to government ownership and be collaborative rather than directive.
- The regional bureau and WFP Headquarters should improve the documentation of successful South–South collaboration, and use it to exploit South–South collaboration effectively.
- WFP Headquarters and the regional bureau should document current collaboration efforts with the local private sector and draft guidance on facilitating and scaling up private sector collaboration.
- The MIC strategy should address MICs' nutrition challenges, including both over- and undernutrition, and incorporating chronic, and not only acute, undernutrition.

180. Recommendation 4: WFP should clarify roles and communications among and within WFP offices – Headquarters, the regional bureau and country offices – engaged in regional operations.

- The regional bureau should formalize the roles of focal points for regional operations, with clear lines of communication within and among country offices to ensure clarity and continuity. Both the Regional Bureau and country offices should distribute relevant minutes/action items more widely to staff across the region.

³⁹ *Construyendo Comunidades y Municipios Resilientes en Centroamérica* (ComRes) programme document.

- The regional bureau and country offices should develop a common understanding of their respective roles in, and responsibilities for, donor engagement to support regional operations.

181. Recommendation 5: WFP should organize a comprehensive evaluation of trust funds in Central America.

The evaluation would identify the strengths, opportunities, risks and weaknesses of the mechanism, and facilitate a fuller understanding of their current influence and potential role as part of WFP's MIC strategy and programming.

Opportunities for continuing and prioritizing efforts

182. Recommendation 6: WFP should strengthen needs assessments, VAM and M&E so they contribute to regional programme performance and not only to standardized reporting.

- WFP Headquarters should review budget guidance to ensure adequate investment in staffing and resources to support an effective and regionally coherent and consistent approach to VAM and M&E in all countries, making fuller use of the regional bureau to support smaller country offices.
- The regional bureau and country offices should standardize approaches across regional operations. Country offices should use information from assessments and M&E to monitor and encourage performance across regional and country operations.
- WFP Headquarters should review current global indicators, assessments and monitoring systems to ensure there are adequate indicators available for use in Central America.
- As WFP introduces new modalities – Purchase for Progress (P4P), cash for work, community resilience – country offices should consider implementing pilots, with careful monitoring to ensure effectiveness before taking to scale.

183. Recommendation 7: The regional bureau and country offices should continue to build positive collaboration with governments and regional bodies, and South–South linkages.

- Specific technical areas for further collaboration include nutrition, agriculture production, markets, climate change, and risk management.
- WFP should continue to provide collaborative support and create innovative collaborative efforts such as improved stock positioning and logistics, increased government investment in nutrition, successful South–South collaboration, and leadership in the Dry Corridor Initiative.
- WFP should consider designing and submitting joint proposals with other United Nations partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNICEF to improve donor acceptability and the mobilization of expertise across the United Nations system.

184. Recommendation 8: The regional bureau and country offices should continue incorporating public policy into programme design and implementation.

- The regional bureau and country offices should continue to play an important role at the national policy level, promoting the food security and nutrition agenda

and linking WFP interventions effectively to public policies, projects and programmes to ensure continuity and sustainability.

- The regional bureau and country offices should continue to identify ways of providing continuity and leadership in food security and nutrition during government transitions.


185. Recommendation 9: The regional bureau and country offices should continue to work with governments, other regional stakeholders and donors to raise awareness of slow-onset hazards – coffee rust, drought, etc. – across the region and to develop nationally relevant protocols for response.

Country offices should provide assistance to civil protection authorities, clarifying response possibilities, and roles and responsibilities across ministries and departments in declaring and addressing slow hazards as emergencies.

Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Questions Across Evaluation Criteria

The RPE uses four principle questions to address the evaluation criteria as illustrated in the table below:

<p>1. To what extent did WFP position itself strategically at the regional level?</p> <p>Focusing on humanitarian, nutrition and development situation; regional stakeholders and partners; national level policies, institutions and processes; and within WFP globally.</p>	<p>2. What were the factors driving WFP's strategy in the region?</p> <p>Focusing on internal coherence/complementarity (and potential gaps) across WFP's <i>global</i> strategic objectives, the WFP regional portfolio and WFP national operations.</p>	<p>3. To what extent did WFP achieve regional portfolio objectives, at which cost, and are the results expected to be durable?</p> <p>NB: To date, efficiency has been difficult to measure in WFP portfolio evaluations, and the RPE will focus on cost to beneficiary and tonnage ratios (within the PRROs) to guide quantitative measurements of efficiency</p>
 <p>4. What were the performance and results of the Central America Regional Portfolio in 2007 – 2011?</p>		

Annex 2: Fieldwork Schedule

The schedule below is a summary of the Evaluation Team’s travel across the region of Central America.

Dates	Location, Primary Point of Contact	Team Members	Focus
June 2 – 5	Guatemala, Priscila de Molina	Weeks, Egedorf, Blanco	Meetings with WFP CO staff; Meetings with other stakeholders in Guatemala; Fieldwork in Guatemala
June 6-10	Panama, Jayne Adams	Weeks, Egedorf, Blanco, Bonnard	Meetings with WFP RB staff; Meetings with other stakeholders in Panama.
June 11 – 13	Honduras, Blanca Echevarrieta	Weeks, Egedorf, Blanco, Bonnard	Meetings with WFP CO staff; Meetings with other stakeholders in Honduras; Fieldwork in Honduras
June 14-18	Nicaragua, Rosario Sanabria	Blanco, Bonnard	Meetings with WFP with CO staff; Meetings with other stakeholders in Nicaragua; Fieldwork in Nicaragua
	El Salvador, Robert Oliver	Weeks, Egedorf	Meetings with WFP CO staff; Meetings with other stakeholders in El Salvador; Fieldwork in El Salvador
June 19 -22	Panama, Jayne Adams	Weeks, Egedorf, Blanco, Bonnard	Consolidation of findings from all team members Internal exit debrief with the RB June 20; Any follow-up or verification in Panama Initial Analysis for additional inputs to the ER drafting

Annex 3: WFP's Regional Portfolio in Central America

Table 5: Regional Operations During the Evaluation Period

Operation Number Name	Duration	Approved Budget through 2011 USD	Received Contribution through 2011	% of Approved Budget Received 2011	Total Costs through 2011
REG DEV 104110 Capacity Building and Technical Assistance in Support of Food-Based Social Protection Programmes (covers Latin America)	July 2005 – December 2010	10,916,154	8,227,955	75.4%	7,521,070
REG DEV 104210 Capacity Building of Integrated Micronutrient Programmes in the Central American Region	January 2006 – December 2010	8,070,456	4,301,869	53.3%	3,878,501
REG PRRO 104440 Assis. to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation among Marginalized Pop. in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua	August 2007 – October 2011	53,457,768	35,604,689	66.6%	35,371,230
REG PRRO 200043 Assistance to Vulnerable Groups Affected by Natural Disasters and Other Shocks in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua	January 2011 – December 2013	29,042,740	17,169,808	59.1%	8,494,730

Table 6: Proportion of Funding across WFP Operations in the Region during the RPE Period⁴⁰

Operation	Title	Required	Contributed	% Funded
REG DEV 104110	Capacity Building Technical Assistance in Support of Food Based Social Protection Programmes	10,916,154	8,227,955	75.4%
REG DEV 104210	Capacity Building of Integrated Micronutrient Programmes in the Central American Region	8,070,456	4,301,869	53.3%
REG PRRO 10444	Assistance to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation Among Marginalized Populations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua	53,457,768	36,066,678	67.5%
REG PRRO 200043	Assistance to Vulnerable Groups Affected by Natural Disasters and Other Shocks in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua	29,215,274	23,861,921	81.7%
TOTAL REGIONAL OPERATIONS		101,659,652	72,458,423	71.3%
ELS IR- EMOP 200089	Flooding Assistance for Damages Caused by Tropical Storm Ida	459,189	406,287	88.5%
ELS DEV 102260	Country Programme	8,269,568	4,886,100	59.1%
TOTAL EL SALVADOR OPERATIONS		8,728,757	5,292,387	60.6%
GUA DEV 200031	Country Programme	19,576,078	9,659,272	49.3%
GUA EMOP 200111	Emergency Food Assistance to Families Affected by Recurrent Disasters	28,034,086	9,848,253	35.1%
GUA IR- EMOP 200155	Assistance to Victims of Floods and Landslides and Pacaya Volcano Eruption in the Centre, Southern, and Western Highlands	487,990	447,919	91.8%
GUA-IR- EMOP 200072	Food Assistance to Populations Affected by Undernutrition and Critical Food Shortages	479,026	0	0.0%
GUA PRRO 104570	Recovery and Prevention of Malnutrition for Vulnerable Groups	35,362,906	15,828,739	44.8%
GUA DEV 100920	Country Programme	20,839,447	14,594,221	70.0%
TOTAL GUATEMALA OPERATIONS		104,779,533	50,378,404	48.1%
HON DEV 10074.0	Country Programme	24,285,028	19,904,672	82.0%
HON DEV	Country Programme	34,200,250	27,503,171	80.4%

⁴⁰ Data from the Terms of Reference for the RPE. N.b., this does not include trust fund data which were not included in the WINGS database and appears to be proportionally better funded based on interviews with WFP staff.

105380				
HON IR-EMOP 107930	Flood Assistance to Victims of Floods (Tropical Wave 16)	500,000	198,269	39.7%
TOTAL HONDURAS OPERATIONS		58,985,278	47,606,112	80.7%
NIC IR-EMOP 200204	Assistance to populations affected by floods	498,740	429,840	86.2%
DEV 105970	Country Programme	34,683,369	27,196,589	78.4%
EMOP 107000	Emergency Food Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Felix	10,540,198	9,546,379	90.6%
TOTAL NICARAGUA OPERATIONS		45,722,307	37,172,808	81.3%

Annex 4: Evaluation Team Background

The **composition of the Evaluation Team** has been determined in accordance with the Terms of Reference and the key lines of enquiry established for the evaluation. It includes team members with considerable experience of strategic thinking, operations management, capacity development and requisite technical skills for evaluating food and nutrition security outcomes across Central America, a region facing recurrent natural disasters. All team members are fluent in Spanish.

Team Leader, **Kirsten Weeks** has more than 15 years' experience in designing, implementing, and managing projects, focusing on capacity building and performance improvement. Over her career, she has supported a broad spectrum of innovative and evidence-based activities for HIV/AIDS, nutrition, food security and livelihoods. At DAI she has provided senior technical support to foster capacity and create innovative activities to help vulnerable populations (especially AIDS-affected households) move from dependence on external assistance to longer-term sustainable household and community resilience using savings, agriculture, finance and small business strategies. She has also developed behavior change, capacity development and M&E tools to foster effective implementation and impact. She is a certified performance technologist from the International Society for Performance Improvement. She has a MPH from Emory University and is fluent in English and Spanish.

Food Security / Agricultural Specialist, Dr. **Patricia Bonnard** is an agricultural economist with more than 25 years of experience contributing to complex evaluations and assessments of food security, disaster risk reduction, and social protection program strategies, early warning systems, and market system assessments. She offers in-depth experience working across Central and Southern America to analyze and provide recommendations to ongoing programs to improve food security and agricultural development in market-driven systems. In 2010-2011, Dr. Bonnard advised and managed an assessment of WFP, UNICEF, and partner food and nutrition security monitoring systems to determine their efficacy and sustainability. She wrote and guided the development of numerous tools on integrating markets into standard FEWS NET and national early warning activities such as vulnerability, food security, and emergency assessments, monitoring and early warning reporting, and livelihood baselines and profiles. Dr. Bonnard holds a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Michigan State University and speaks English and Spanish fluently.

Senior Evaluator/Technical Specialist in Food Security and Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms. **Maren Egedorf** has 14 years of experience in disaster management and risk assessment in Latin America and the Caribbean. She was instrumental in validating the vulnerability analysis and mapping methodologies in Latin America and the Caribbean, specifically contributing to the design of food security early warning systems (FEWS) in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras. She is an experienced manager, serving as the Project Manager for the European Institute for Risk Management for four years, as a Mission leader for UN special missions in Latin America and Africa, and as the head of the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) unit for the UN World Food Programme in Nicaragua. She is highly skilled in evaluation tools, specializing in poverty and food security monitoring and analysis, vulnerability analysis, emergency food needs assessments, and validating mapping methodologies. She has worked with and alongside the United Nations World Food

Programme for 14 years, and is highly knowledgeable of its structure, systems, and procedures. Ms. Egedorf has a Master’s degree in International Economics and Modern Languages and is fluent in Spanish, English, and Danish.

Food Security / Nutrition Specialist, Ms. **Adriana Moreno Blanco** is a food security and nutrition expert with more than 14 years of experience designing, evaluating, and leading health and nutrition projects in Central America. She offers demonstrated expertise in food and nutritional security and livelihoods analysis, nutrition, early warning systems, cash transfers, food aid operations, M&E, and contingency planning. Ms. Moreno offers extensive experience developing and reviewing food security strategies for the Central America region and individual country contexts. Ms. Moreno has a Master’s degree in rural development from Central America University in Nicaragua and is fluent in Spanish and English.

The table below describes the roles and responsibilities of each team member as part of the RPE. There is good complementarity in skills and responsibilities enabling the team to divide up and cover the entire sub region. All team members will participate in data collection, analysis, and contribute to drafts.

Roles and Responsibilities of Team Members

<i>Ms. Kirsten Weeks, Team Leader</i>	Management of the evaluation activities, evaluation at the strategic level	Ultimately responsible for ensuring all deliverables meet OEV standards for quality, primary contact with the OEV. In addition, she will specifically contribute in the areas of capacity development, strategy, nutrition and HIV. Assessing the strategic alignment of the Regional portfolio vs. National, WFP & partner strategies and priorities.
<i>Dr. Patricia Bonnard, Food Security / Agriculture Specialist</i>	Evaluate food security, agriculture and disaster preparedness/ risk reduction/response	Contribute across the evaluation, specifically assess in the areas of strategy, food security, agriculture, disaster preparedness / risk reduction, as well as WFP and UN Systems.
<i>Ms. Maren Egedorf, Senior Evaluator / Food Security and Disaster Risk Reduction</i>	Evaluate vulnerability assessment and monitoring , food security, disaster preparedness / risk reduction / response	Contribute in the areas of strategy, M&E, food security, disaster preparedness / risk reduction, as well as WFP and UN Systems, providing inputs across all phases of the evaluation.
<i>Adriana Moreno Blanco, Food Security / Nutrition Specialist</i>	Evaluate nutrition and health integration	Contribute in the areas of nutrition and micronutrients, disaster preparedness / risk reduction, as well as WFP and UN Systems, providing inputs across all phases of the evaluation.

In addition, Dr. Chopak, DAI’s Managing Director, supports the team in developing a pertinent methodological approach and when drafting the reports. DAI will assist the team in logistic aspects of the field work preparation.

The members of the evaluation team have been completely independent from the WFP regional portfolio and are able to provide an independent view of the portfolio for the period of 2007-2011, avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

Annex 5: Regional Economic Trend Data and Social Indicators

Figure 19: Trend Analysis: Changes in Gross National Income per Capita in USD Atlas Method⁴¹

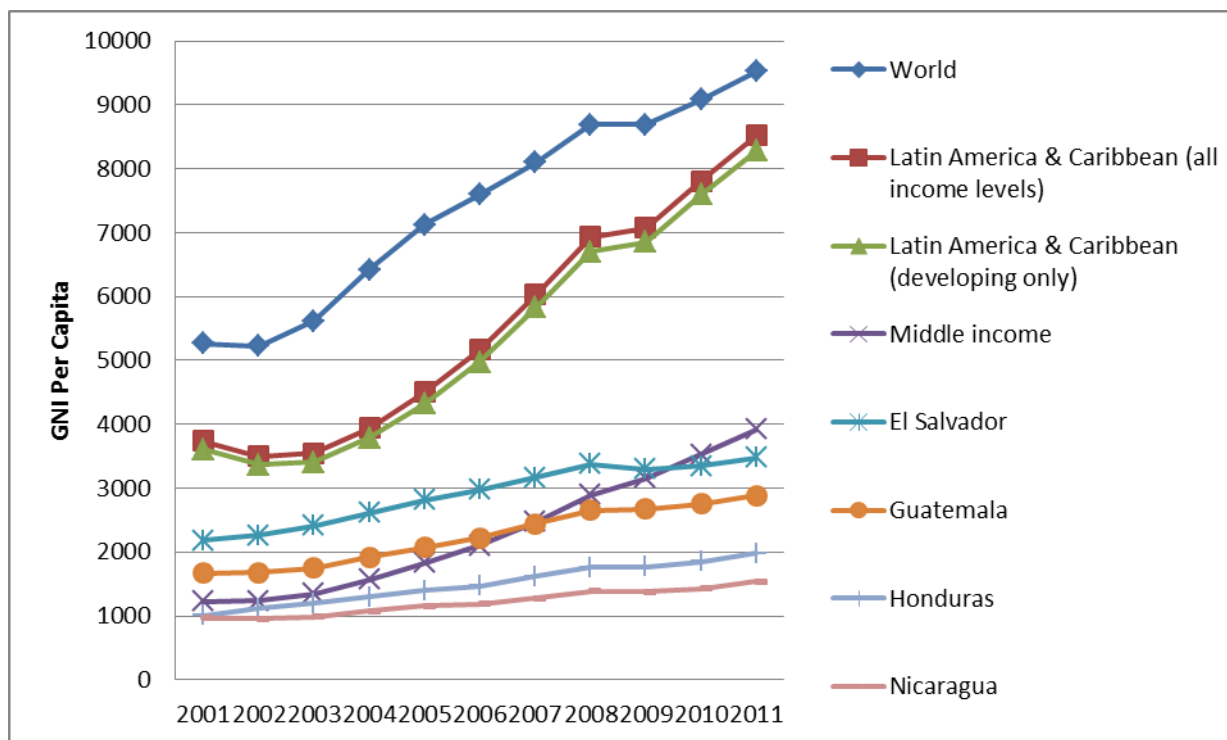
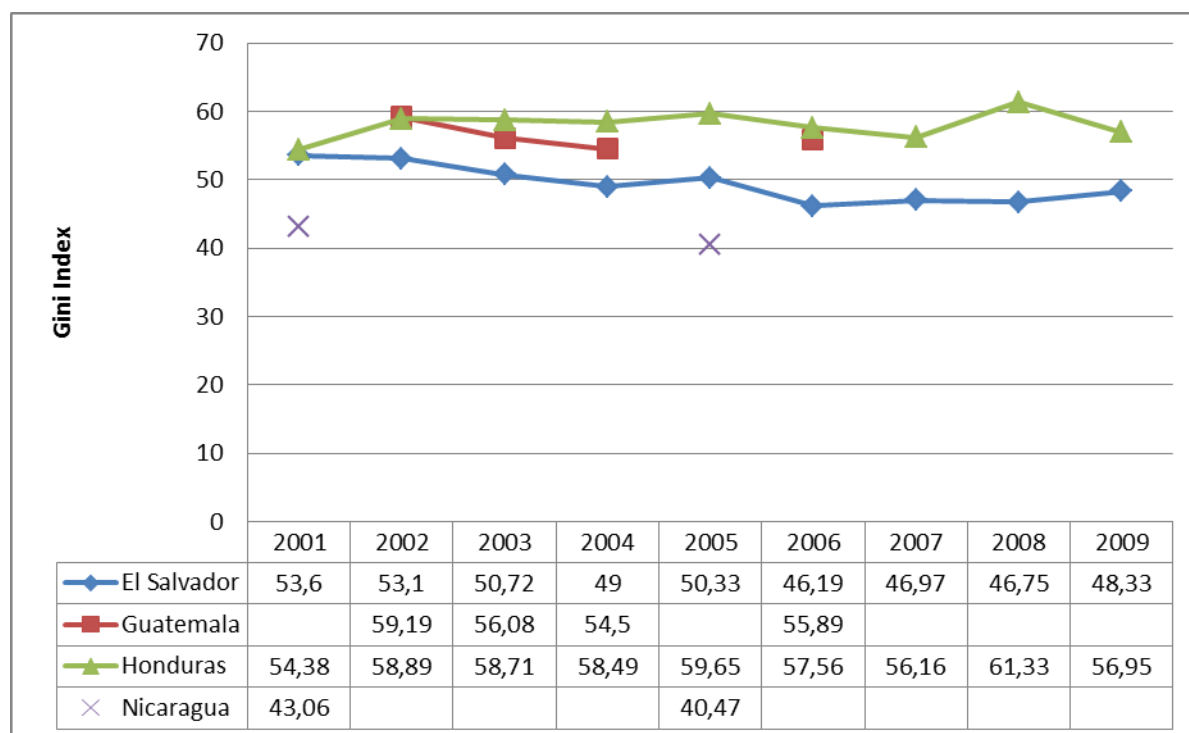


Table 7: Trend Analysis Data of GNI

Country Name	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Increase 2001 and 2011
World	5265	5221	5620	6419	7120	7597	8101	8694	8688	9083	9527	181.0%
Latin America & Caribbean (all income levels)	3740	3501	3552	3940	4500	5165	6033	6929	7070	7811	8516	227.7%
Latin America & Caribbean (developing only)	3604	3366	3412	3785	4326	4978	5831	6705	6854	7597	8275	229.6%
Middle income	1226	1234	1350	1572	1829	2106	2477	2896	3155	3526	3923	320.1%
El Salvador	2180	2260	2410	2610	2810	2980	3170	3380	3300	3350	3480	159.6%
Guatemala	1670	1680	1750	1920	2070	2220	2440	2650	2670	2750	2880	172.5%
Honduras	1010	1120	1200	1300	1400	1470	1620	1760	1770	1850	1980	196.0%
Nicaragua	970	960	990	1080	1160	1190	1280	1390	1380	1430	1540	158.8%

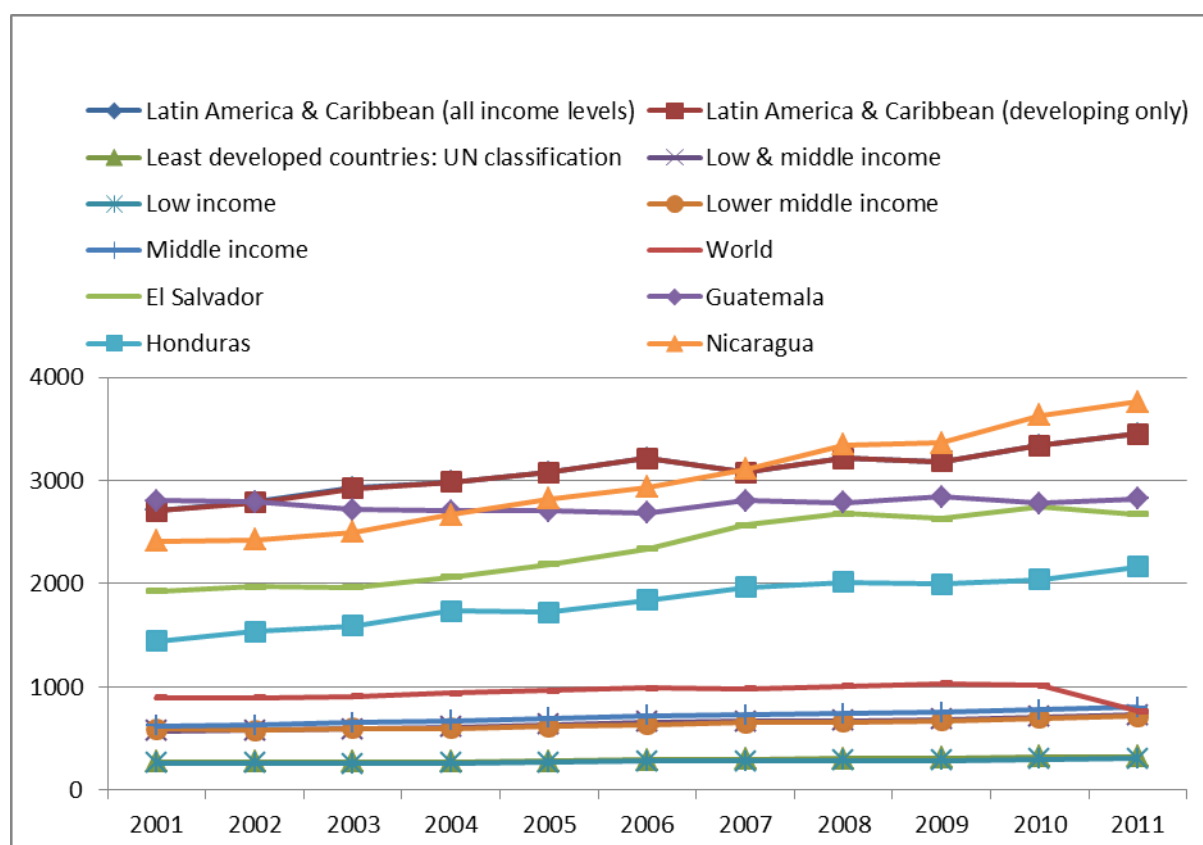
⁴¹ World Bank Data. GNI per capita. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC/countries?display=map>

Figure 20: GINI Coefficient Trend Analysis 2001 – 2009 (Data unavailable 2010-2011)



World Bank Source Note: “Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Lorenz curve plots the cumulative percentages of total income received against the cumulative number of recipients, starting with the poorest individual or household. The Gini index measures the area between the Lorenz curve and a hypothetical line of absolute equality, expressed as a percentage of the maximum area under the line. Thus a Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.”

Figure 21: Trend Analysis: Agriculture value added per worker 2001-2011



Source: World Development Indicators

“Agriculture value added per worker is a measure of agricultural productivity. Value added in agriculture measures the output of the agricultural sector (ISIC divisions 1-5) less the value of intermediate inputs. Agriculture comprises value added from forestry, hunting, and fishing as well as cultivation of crops and livestock production. Data are in constant 2005 U.S. dollars.”

Table 8: Key Health Indicators for RPE Countries⁴²

Country	Under 5 Mortality per 1,000 live birth	Infant Mortality per 1,000 live birth	Maternal Deaths per 100,000 live births
El Salvador	16	14	110
Guatemala	32	25	130
Honduras	30	25	110
Nicaragua	27	--	100

⁴² World Bank. World Development Indicators accessed at data.worldbank.org

Figure 22: Under 5 Mortality Trends in Central America⁴³

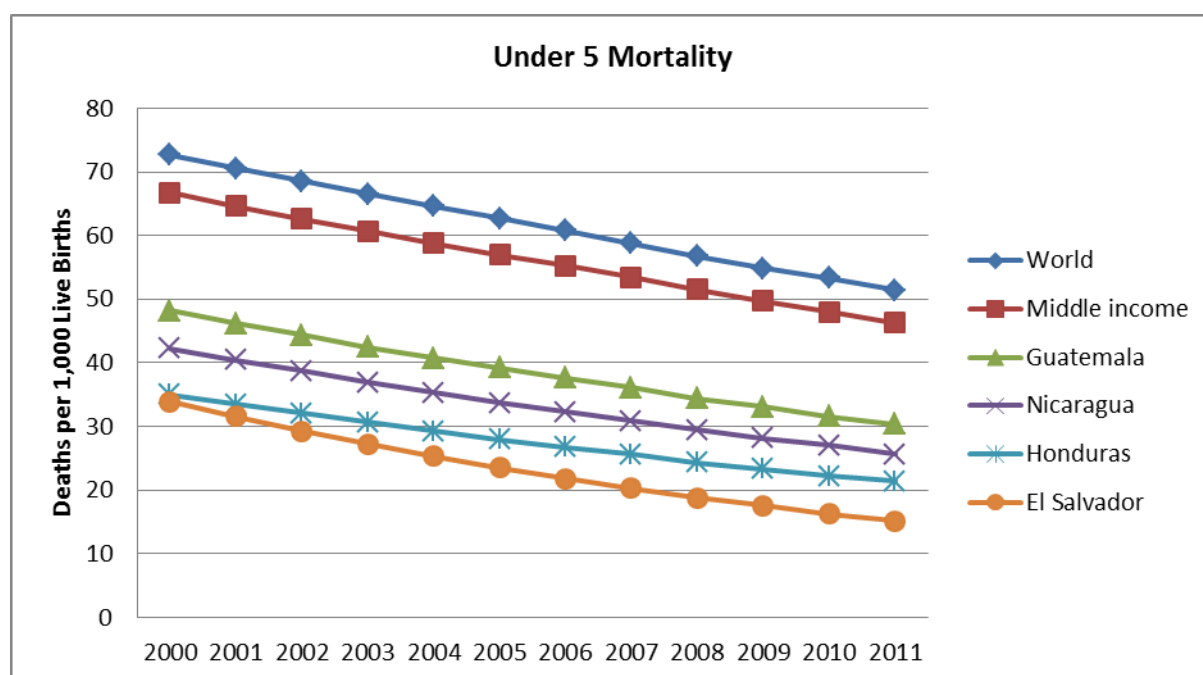


Table 9: Nutrition Transition Countries in Latin America⁴⁴

Stage	Principal Diet	Nutritional Status	Countries
Pre-Transition	Cereals, tubers, fruits, and vegetables	Characterized by micronutrient deficiencies and undernutrition	Bolivia, Haití, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua
Transition	Increased consumption of sugars, fats, and processed foods	Coexistence of micronutrient deficiencies, undernutrition, and obesity	Paraguay, El Salvador, Panama, México, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru
Post-Transition	High sugar and fat consumption, low fiber consumption	Nutrition challenges dominated by obesity and hyperlipidemia	Costa Rica, Chile, Cuba, Uruguay, and Argentina

Table 10: Undernutrition and Progress toward MDGs

Country	% of Stunting Overall	% of Stunting in Rural Areas	Underweight %	Avg Annual Rate of Reduction (Underweight) (AARR)	Progress toward MDG 1
El Salvador	19.2 ⁴⁹	21.9 ⁵⁰	6 (2008)	2.4%	Insufficient Progress
Guatemala	49.8 ⁵¹	58.6 ⁵²	13 (2009)	3.40%	On track
Honduras	30.1 ⁵³	32.0 ⁵⁴	8 (2006)	3.70%	On track
Nicaragua	21.7 ⁵⁵	28.7 ⁵⁶	6 (2007)	5.30%	On track

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Panorama de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional en América Latina y el Caribe, FAO 2010.

⁴⁵ Using WHO growth standards, except Honduras – NCHS growth standard.

⁴⁶ UNICEF Childinfo Data 2013.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Encuesta Nacional de Salud Familiar (FESAL), El Salvador 2008.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Encuesta Nacional de Salud Materno Infantil (ENSMI), Guatemala 2008.

⁵² Ibid.

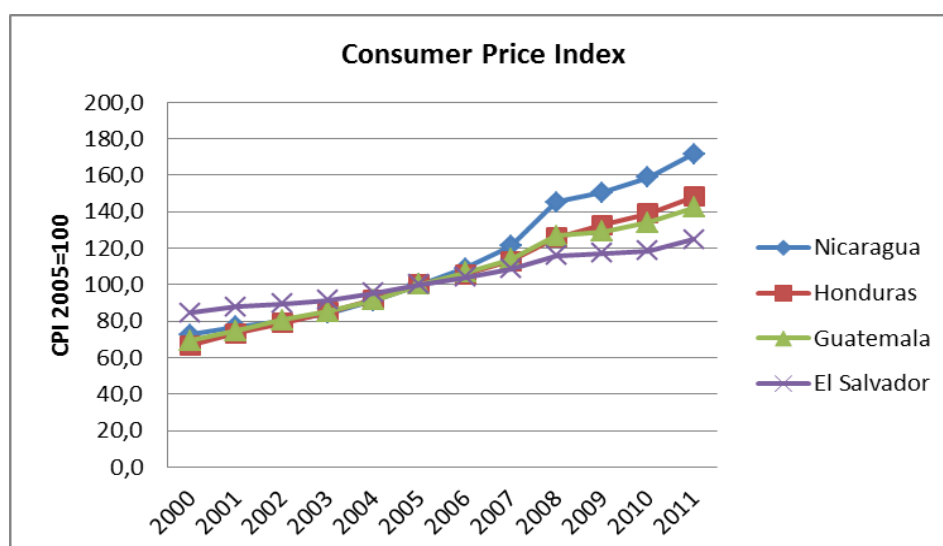
⁵³ Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud (ENDESA), Honduras 2006.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Table 11: Micronutrient Deficiencies

Country	% of Anemia among preschool aged children ⁵⁷	% of preschool aged children with Vitamin A deficiency ⁵⁸
El Salvador	36 FESAL 2002/3	17 FESAL 1998
Guatemala	47.4 ENSMI 2008/9	16 ENSMI 2008/9
Honduras	30 ENMICRON 1996	14 ENMICRON 1996
Nicaragua	45.1 SIVIN 2007	SIVIN 2007

Figure 23: Consumer Price Index Data 2000 - 2011



⁵⁵ Encuesta Nicaragüense de Demografía y Salud (ENDESA), Nicaragua 2007.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ WHO. 2008. Worldwide Prevalence of Anemia 1993–2005: WHO Global Database on Anemia

⁵⁸ WHO. 2009. Global prevalence of vitamin A deficiency in populations at risk 1995–2005. WHO Global Database on Vitamin A Deficiency.

Figure 24: Global Hunger Index Scores among Portfolio Countries 1990 –2012⁵⁹

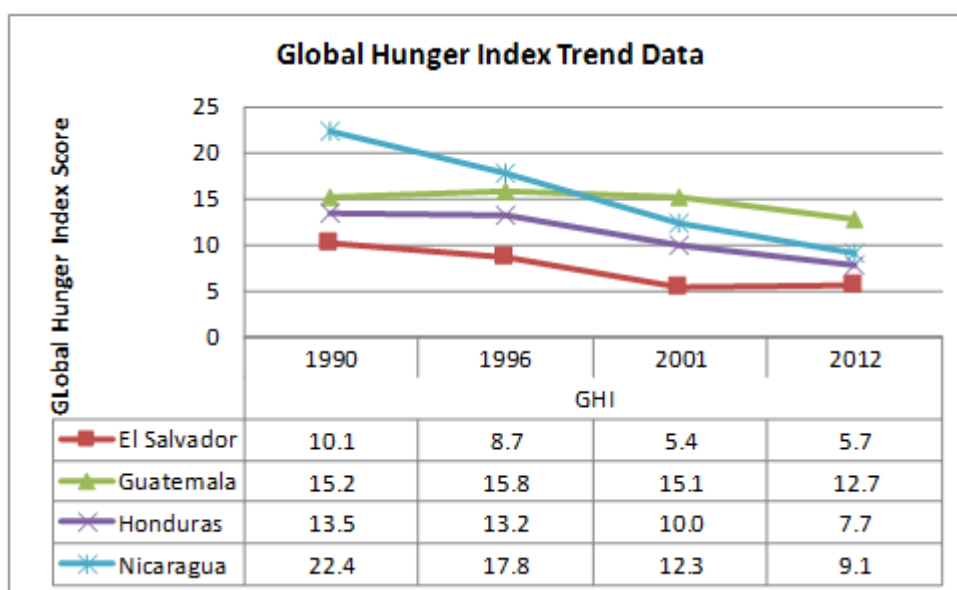
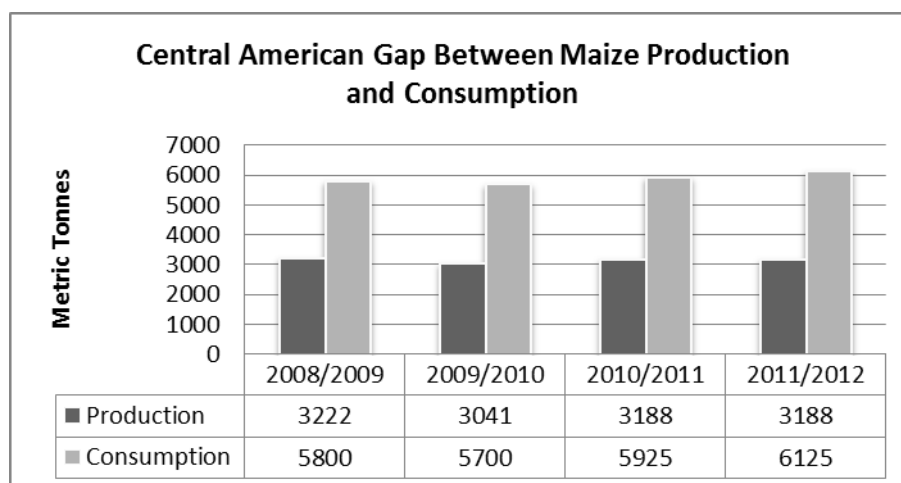


Figure 25: Maize Consumption and Production in Central America⁶⁰



⁵⁹ World Bank Data. www.worldbank.org

⁶⁰ USDA 2011, as cited in “Foro Centroamericano y de Republica Dominicana sobre “Seguridad Hídrica y Alimentaria: el nexa entre el agua y la producción de alimentos.” FAO, 2012.

Figure 26: Seasonality and Food Insecurity across Guatemala⁶¹

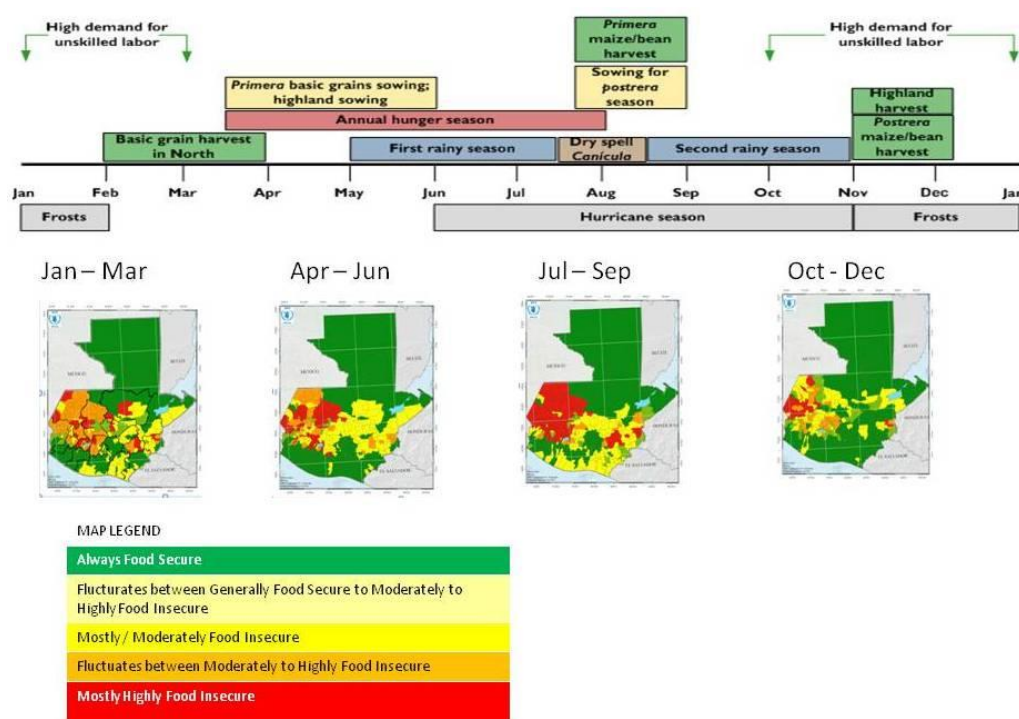


Table 12: Climate Risk Index Data for 1992 - 2011⁶²

Country	GCRI Global Ranking	Average Annual Death Toll	Deaths per 100,000 inhabitants per year	Losses in US\$Million Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)	Losses in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in %
El Salvador	15	33.75	0.61	259.32	0.91
Guatemala	11	82.65	0.72	318.76	0.62
Honduras	1	329.25	4.96	679.92	2.84
Nicaragua	3	160	2.82	223.12	1.89

⁶¹ FEWSNET Data from FEWSNET website and *Análisis de Tendencias de Inseguridad Alimentaria y Desastres (2008-2012): Guatemala*, WFP; 2012.

⁶² Ibid.

Figure 21: Contributions to WFP Regional Operations (REG DEV 104110, REG DEV 104210, REG PRRO 10444, and REG PRRO 200043) by donor 2007-2011⁶³

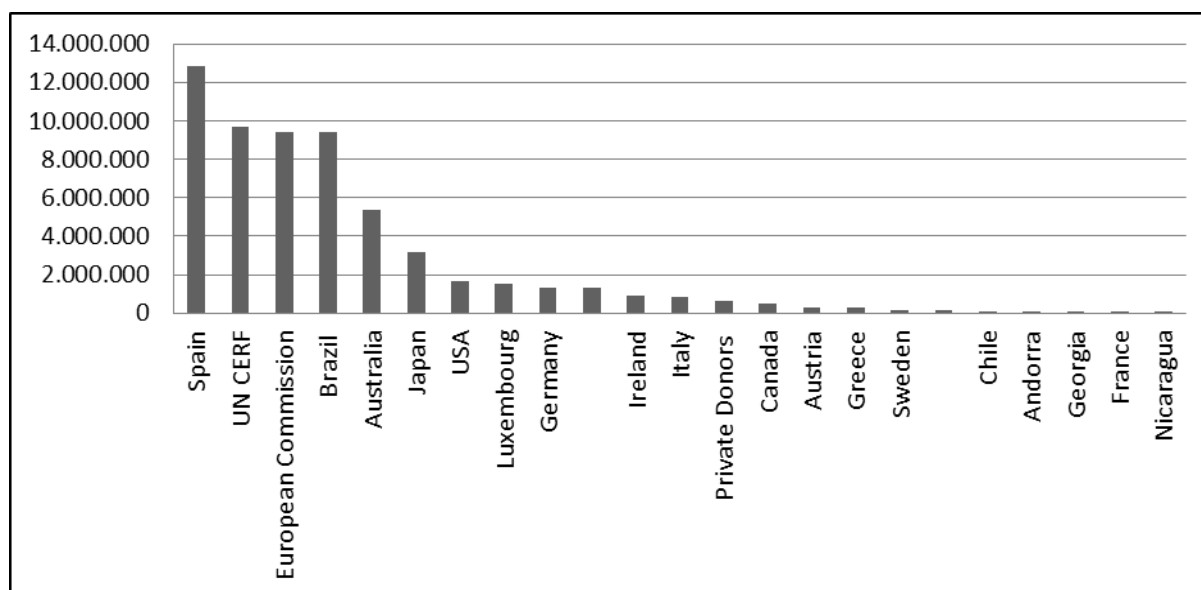


Table 5: Changes in Government Leadership and Key Political Events during the Period of the Evaluation 2007 - 2011

Country	Month/Year	Event
El Salvador	6/2004 – 6/2009	Elected Antonio Saca (Nationalist Republican Party)
	6/2009 – 6/2014	Elected Mauricio Funes (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front)
Guatemala	1/2004 – 1/2008	Elected Óscar Berger (National Solidarity Party/Grand National Alliance)
	2007	Grand National Alliance dismembered and fractured
	1/2008 – 1/2012	Elected Álvaro Colom (National Unity of Hope)
Honduras	1/2002 – 1/2006	Elected Ricardo Rodolfo Maduro Joest (National Party)
	1/2006 – 6/2009	Elected Manuel Zelaya Rosales (Liberal Party)
	6/2009	Military removes president Zelaya
	6/2009 – 1/2010	Appointed acting president Roberto Micheletti (Liberal Party)
	1/2010 – 1/2014	Elected Profirio Lobo Sosa (National Party)
Nicaragua	1/2002 – 1/2007	Elected Enrique Bolaños (Constitutionalist Liberal Party)
	1/2007 – 1/2015	Elected Daniel Ortega (Sandista National Liberation Front)

⁶³ Contributions data provided by WFP-Rome through the Contributions and Forecast Statistics from Donor Relations.

Annex 6: Summary of Contributions to Country Level Operations 2007-2011 (Trust Funds, Single Country Operations, excluding P4P) ⁶⁴

Country Program	102260	648,509	2007
IR-EMOP Flooding Assistance for Damages Caused by Tropical Storm Ida	200089	423,720	2009
WFP Global Contributions GCC	GCC.SV	960,000	2007-2011
<i>Trust Funds and P4P at Country Level⁶⁵</i>			
Nutrinos El Salvador: Supplementary feeding; training and sensitization and capacity development.	20020	1,356,991	2009-2011
Brazilian TF. No further information available on file or wings.	10002667	37,672	2007 - 2012
Enterprise School Meals. School Feeding	10013297	50,000	2010-2011
EPR Capacities. Emergency Preparedness	10004522	55,357	2009 - 2010
FSMS Early Warning System	10012078	41,941.27	2010 - 2011
Government of El Salvador School feeding (purchase of food and non-food items, warehouse, transportation and distribution). Technical assistance and capacity development, nutritional expert assistance, best practices, training and capacity building.	200012 SCHOOL FEEDING 4	39,254,793	2008-2011
Brazilian TF. No further information available on file or wings.	10004063	49,645.15	2008-2009
Protecting Children: towards a coordinated food security and nutritional programme.	10011864	845,993	2010-2013
Purchase for Progress (P4P)		3,731,044	2008- 2014
Support to Children Affected by Hurricane Ida	10011730	52,884	2010
Support to Families Affected by Tropical Depression Agatha	10012964	239,193	2010
DEV: Country Programme	100920	1,429,873	2007-2009
PRRO: Recovery of Malnutrition for Vulnerable Groups	104570	8,547,178	2007-2010
DEV: Country Programme	200031	6,595,011	2009-2011
EMOP: Emergency Assistance to People Vulnerable by Food Insecurity	200111	7,856,472	2010-2011
WFP Global Contributions	GCC.GT	505,048	2007-2011
<i>Trust Funds and P4P at Country Level</i>			
Private Trust Funds	200078	6,768,643	2007-2011

⁶⁴ This data comes from WINGS, the TOR, as well as Trust Fund information available, and was confirmed and updated with countries during the evaluation mission.

⁶⁵ Trust Fund Data for El Salvador Comes from the TOR Table 6, data provided by the Regional Bureau. Additional research and consultations have been made with the WFP offices to adjust table 6 of the TOR to get a complete picture of government trust funds.

⁶⁶ Two operations , specifically IR-EMOP 200155 and IR-EMOP 200111 are included as part of the country operations within the terms of reference, but are not included in the Contributions data provided by WFP-Headquarters- Rome for Guatemala.

DEV: Country Programme	105380	27,107,747	2007-2011
WFP Global Contributions	GCC.HON	5,793	2007
Trust Funds	200137	1,000,000	2008
Government Trust Funds for School Feeding		107,136,370	Ongoing
DEV: Country Programme	100440	8,026,471	2007
PRRO ⁶⁸	102120	991,736	2009
DEV: Country Programme	105970	22,067,181	2007-2011
EMOP: Emergency Food Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Felix	107000	9,130,611	2007
DEV:	200434 ⁶⁹	363,380	2008
WFP Global Contributions	GCC.NI	108,942	2007-2011
Trust Funds	200088	3,181,759	2007-2011

⁶⁷ Similarly, operations that appear in the TOR for Honduras do not appear in the WINGS list.

⁶⁸ Not included as an activity within the original TOR, but listed as a country level PRRO within the WINGS Database.

⁶⁹ Very similar to a regional project number, but a different project category and number.

Annex 7: Supported Studies, Surveys and Baselines from the DEV Operations

REGIONAL LEVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study on the Nutritional Dimension of the Social Safety Nets (or Social Protection Networks) in Central America and the Dominican Republic (Sub-regional full report and abridged version in Spanish and English) • Methodological tool to evaluate the government capacities to meet the nutritional requirements in Latin America and the Caribbean, developed by Universidad H. John Heinz III College, Carnegie Mellon University Systems
BELIZE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Micronutrient Survey on the situation of children under 5 and women in reproductive age
BOLIVIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the National Programme on Zero Undernutrition, with emphasis on micronutrients (four international missions: 2006, 2007, 2008 y 2009) • Study to determine the nutritional status of children before and after exposure to fortified food ready to eat • Study to determine the best formula for the complementary food for children under 2, with a combination of local foods
COLOMBIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Survey on the Nutritional Status of Colombia (ENSIN) designed on technical support on micronutrients • Baseline for the micronutrient powder intervention on anemia prevalence in children
COSTA RICA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Micronutrient Survey including the study of zinc levels en pre-school children • Studies on food and nutritional status of children under 5 in three sentry sites of the National Nutrition Survey • Study of the food and nutritional situation to analyze the determining factors of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in indigenous children under 5 years of age • Study to assess the food and nutritional situation (with emphasis on micronutrients) of children attending community day-care centres • Processing and analysis of the results of Food Consumption module of the National Nutrition Survey 2008-2009
CUBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline for the intervention • Feasibility study for the development and national production of micronutrient powder
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline of the micronutrient powder strategy in the intervention sites of 'Solidaridad' programme • Feasibility study on the micronutrient powder production at country level
ECUADOR	<p>Revision/update of the National Survey on Anaemia (1995 publication)</p> <p>Study on the folic acid levels in women with history of congenital malformation in priority geographical centres</p> <p>Study on the relationship between congenital malformations and stillbirths and maternal deficiency of folic acid</p> <p>Diagnosis of anaemia in vulnerable groups assisted by projects in the Northern border (Ecuador-</p>

	<p>Colombia)</p> <p>Feasibility study for rice fortification with iron and other micronutrients</p> <p>Study on the stability of the sugar fortification with vitamin A</p> <p>Study/diagnosis “Situation of rice production and marketing”</p> <p>Impact study on delayed cord clamping on post-delivery haemorrhage and mother and stillbirth hematologic parameters</p> <p>Study on accelerated acceptability and tests on secretion of sugar with vitamin A</p> <p>Qualitative research on the effects of complementary foods distribution ‘Mi Papilla’ and ‘Mi Bebida’ on the population</p> <p>Evaluation of the fortified complementary food for pregnant women ‘Mi Bebida’</p>
EL SALVADOR	Update study on vitamin A deficiency in children aged 12-59 months and lactating women
GUATEMALA	<p>National Micronutrient Survey-ENMICRON (pending final report)</p> <p>Feasibility study on local production of micronutrient powder and zinc supplements</p> <p>Evaluation of the effectiveness of the pilot programme of preventive supplementation with micronutrient powder and therapeutic supplementation with zinc tablets in case of diarrheal and pneumonia</p>
HONDURAS	<p>National survey on foods of high consumption at household level to assess new foods to include in the fortification programme</p> <p>National Micronutrient Survey (process temporarily interrupted by the government authorities)</p> <p>Feasibility study on micronutrient powder production and consumption</p>
NICARAGUA	<p>Diagnosis on the micronutrient situation in the country</p> <p>Feasibility study for rice fortification with folic acid, iron and vitamins of B group</p>
PANAMA	Preparation of the protocol for the baseline study on micronutrient deficiencies, with emphasis on indicators of the nutritional status regarding iron and zinc
PERU	<p>Baseline for the micronutrient powder intervention</p> <p>Impact evaluation on the use of micronutrient powder in the emergency area and ordinary context</p>

Annex 8: Terms of Reference (without the TOR's annexes)



EVALUATION QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Office Of Evaluation

Measuring Results, Sharing Lessons

TERMS OF REFERENCE

WFP - Regional Portfolio Evaluation Central America Region 2007 – 2011

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- 2.A. Rationale
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- 2.C. Stakeholders at regional level

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- 3.A. WFP portfolio in the region
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- 5.B. Methodology
- 5.C. Quality Assurance

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- 6.B. Evaluation team/expertise required
- 6.C Roles and responsibilities
- 6.D. Communication
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1. Introduction and background

1.A. Introduction

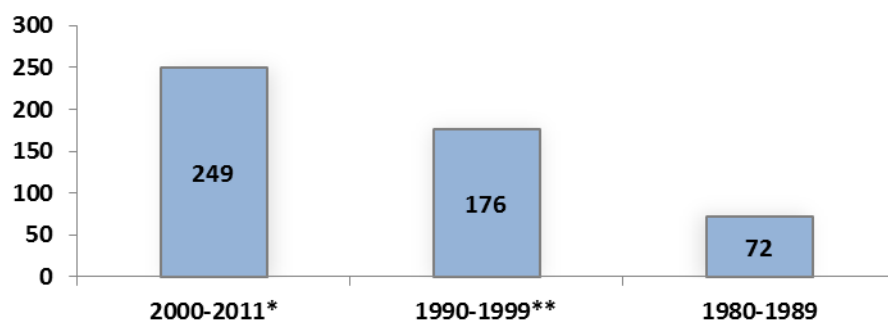
1. Regional Portfolio Evaluation (RPE) is introduced for the first time by the Office of Evaluation (OE) in 2013. It is a variant of the Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) at the regional level. Like a CPE, a RPE encompasses WFP regional activities during a specific period. They evaluate the performance and results of the regional portfolio as a whole and provide evaluative insights to make evidence-based decisions about positioning WFP in the region, and about future strategic choices. This new type of portfolio evaluation is part of the overall evaluation strategy as it will improve the evaluation coverage of small countries, provided regional operations – covering several countries - occurred.
2. The purpose of these terms of reference (TOR) is to provide key information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation. The TOR is structured as follows: Section 1 provides information on the context; Section 2 presents the rationale, objectives, stakeholders and main users of the evaluation; Section 3 presents the WFP regional portfolio and defines the scope of the evaluation; Section 4 identifies the key issues; Section 5 spells out the evaluation approach; and Section 6 indicates how the evaluation will be organized. The annexes provide additional information such as a detailed timeline, the regional portfolio factsheet, etc.
3. The region selected is Central America covering the following four countries; El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

1.B. Regional Context

4. Central America includes seven states, in four of which WFP has a field presence; El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Those four countries are Middle Income Countries. Their geographic location exposes them to hurricanes, floods, droughts and earthquakes.
5. As illustrated in table 1, natural disasters in the Central American region have increased substantially over the past three decades. From 2000 to 2009, drought and storms in the four countries affected over 5 million people⁷⁰. The Americas was the second continent, after Asia, the most often hit by natural disasters in 2011. An increase in frequency and in the severity of extreme weather related events is expected in the future, further threatening food security in the region.

⁷⁰ Source: EM-DAT, the OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database.

Table 1 Central American Region: number of natural disasters over the last 3 decades



Source: Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Emergency Events Database EM-DAT

* Includes the four major hurricanes in 2005: Beta, Gamma, Stan and Wilma.

** Includes hurricane Mitch in 1998, one of the most devastating storms.

6. In 2009, *El Nino* reduced precipitation in Central America. Lower rainfall decreased crop yields for the 2009/2010 agricultural season and reduced domestic food availability. In early 2010, drought affected three of the four countries (except El Salvador). Later in 2010, the region suffered from record-breaking rainfall associated with tropical storms.
7. As we could see from the precedent paragraphs, the four countries, totalling 34 million people, have been exposed to recurrent natural disasters, and the poorest communities were suffering from the repercussions of successive shocks. At the same time, the region was facing high malnutrition rate.
8. The main nutrition problems in the region are chronic undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies (mainly anemia caused by iron deficiency), related to access and consumption rather than food availability. Table 2 below shows that national stunting prevalence ranges from 19.2% in El Salvador to 49.8% in Guatemala. In Guatemala stunting prevalence reaches 70% in some areas, especially where indigenous people are concentrated. The prevalence of chronic undernutrition among children in rural areas is almost double that of children in urban areas.

Table 2: Stunting Prevalence in Central Americaⁱ

Country	National	Urban	Rural	Indigenous areas
<i>Central America</i>				
El Salvador	19.2	11.5	21.9	...
Guatemala	49.8	34.3	58.6	65.9
Honduras	30.1	13.7 ⁱⁱ	32.0 ⁱⁱ	...
Nicaragua	21.7	14.1	28.7	...

Source: Encuesta Nacional de Salud Materno Infantil (ENSMI), Guatemala 2008; Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud (ENDESA), Honduras 2006; Encuesta Nicaragüense de Demografía y Salud (ENDESA), Nicaragua 2007; Encuesta Nacional de Salud Familiar (FESAL), El Salvador 2008;

ⁱBased on the last data available according to the WHO growth standards

ⁱⁱ Using the NCHS growth standard

9. Wasting has also increased as a consequence of the recent crises. The *Transtec International Project Management 2009* study reveals that the situation in Guatemala among children from 6 to 23 months indicates a prevalence of some 16%. In Honduras wasting rates have tripled. Other groups vulnerable to undernutrition include people living with HIV.

10. Malnutrition encompasses the concepts of undernutrition and . While there are a significantly higher percentage⁷¹ of people exposed to under nutrition, obesity is an increasing problem in the region. The tendency is for this double threat of malnutrition to coexist in the same communities.
11. The high food prices in 2007/2008 had serious effects on the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations in the region. For example, the number of poor people increased by 1.5 million in the four countries between 2006 and 2008, with a reduction of between 6 to 26% in their food consumption⁷². The economic crisis has impacted the people, particularly in rural areas, facing undernutrition and chronic food insecurity exacerbated by recurrent natural disasters.
12. Prior the onset of the global crisis in 2008, the region made advances towards meeting the MDGs. But the United Nations⁷³ states that the global crisis has halted progress towards targets and has reversed the positive pre-crisis trend towards reduction of extreme poverty. Table 3 below provides economic indexes related to poverty, inequality and development for the four countries.

Table 3: Regional economic data per country (2005-2010)

Country	Distribution of National Income ⁱ (2005-2010)		GINI coefficient ⁱ (2005-2010)	GDP per capita ⁱⁱ (2010)	GDP per capita growth annual ⁱⁱ (2010)	Population living in poverty ⁱ (2005-2010)			Population living in extreme poverty ⁱ (2005-2010)			Human Development Index ⁱⁱⁱ (2011)
	Poorest	Richest	National	US\$	%	National	Urban	Rural	National	Urban	Rural	Value
<i>Central America</i>												
El Salvador	4.6	50.6	0.45	3,426	0.9	46.6	41.1	55.8	16.7	12.7	23.5	0.7
Guatemala	2.8	62.6	0.59	2,862	0.2	54.8	42	66.5	29.1	14.8	42.2	0.6
Honduras	2.5	60.2	0.57	2,026	0.7	67.4	56.3	76.5	42.8	26	56.8	0.6
Nicaragua	3.5	57.7	0.53	1,132	6.1	61.9	54.4	71.5	31.9	20.8	46.1	0.6

Sources: ⁱStatistical Yearbook, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2011.

ⁱⁱData extracted from the World Bank online database.

ⁱⁱⁱData extracted from the Human Development Report, United Nations Development Programme, 2011.

13. After decades of underinvestment, agriculture is back at the centre of development policies. The governments of the four countries have started to focus development policies and programmes on smallholder production. Since March 2011, the Action Plan for Family Agriculture in Central America recognizes smallholder agriculture and farmer's organizations as important capital for economic, social and environmental development. The Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot project is reinforcing this development approach.
14. Central America has several supranational institutions such as the Central American Bank of Economic Integration and the Central American Common Market (SICA). It exists a global framework on disaster reduction (Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015), as well as several regional perspective related to the prevention of natural disasters in Central America such as the coordination centre CEPREDENAC, or the policy promoting a strategy that addresses food access, availability and utilisation issues ; POLSAN.

⁷¹ Source: FAO Nutrition country profile, Panorama of Food and Nutrition Security in Latin America, 2010

⁷² Price increase, Markets, and Food & Nutritional Insecurity in Central America. WFP, Oct 2008

⁷³ The report "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals with Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean", United Nations under the coordination of ECLAC, 2010.

2. Reasons for the evaluation

2.A. Rationale

15. The four countries of the Central America region share several similarities, such as a common language, and common challenges and interests. WFP shares the same goal in the four countries; to support national governments to improve food and nutrition security, and reduce the impact of natural disasters among vulnerable populations. There is a total of four regional operations, covering the four countries, which took place during the period under review⁷⁴.
16. The Regional Portfolio Evaluation is an opportunity for the Regional Bureau, and for the four Country Offices, to benefit from its findings to feed into the strategic orientation of WFP. A regional strategy has been developed in 2012 and the evaluation findings could validate some directions and/or propose others.
17. Assuming the current regional PRRO 200043 is being extended until December 2013, WFP will also benefit from the preliminary findings regarding the design of the following operation (PRRO).
18. No evaluation on the Central America region's portfolio had been previously undertaken by the Office of Evaluation.
19. Finally this sub region has been identified because it helps addressing an emerging gap in the portfolio evaluation coverage of smaller countries offices. Key lessons can be learnt from a region facing chronic under nutrition and recurrent natural disasters.

2.B. Objectives

20. Evaluations serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning. As such, this evaluation will:

- Assess and report on the performance and results of the regional portfolio in line with the WFP mandate and in response to humanitarian and development challenges in the Central America region (accountability).
- Determine the reasons for observed success / failure and draw lessons from experience to produce evidence-based findings to allow the Regional Bureau to make informed decisions about positioning itself in the region, form strategic partnerships, and improve operations design and implementation whenever possible (learning).

2.C. Stakeholders at Regional level

Table 4 below provides detail on the evaluation stakeholders. A full stakeholder analysis will be done by the evaluation team during the inception phase.

⁷⁴ The current PRRO 200043 was initially planned to end in December 2012. The RB has the intention to extend it to December 2013.

Table 4: Preliminary stakeholders analysis

Internal stakeholders	
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Field Management; the Regional Bureau in Panama, and the four Country Offices; in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

The Regional Bureau (RB) covering Central America is the primary stakeholder of this regional evaluation. More than ever, in light of the RB future stronger strategic and accountability role to the Country Offices (COs) in the sub region, the RB has a direct stake in the evaluation in ensuring that the regional portfolio is relevant, coherent, effective and efficient. The RB also developed strategic priorities to address food and nutrition insecurity in the region. The evaluation findings will inform to what extent it validates the directions indicated in the 2012-2013 regional strategic vision. The COs will also be interested in the findings of this regional evaluation to readjust programming and implementation if necessary and as appropriate. They also have an interest in enhanced accountability towards the governments, partners, donors and beneficiaries.

Headquarters Management

Executive Management will especially be interested in the findings related to the performance of a Regional portfolio covering small country programmes with similar contexts. Other Managers based in Rome will also be interested in the findings of this evaluation. In particular: the Emergency Preparedness & Response branch (ODEP), the Programme division (including the Hand-over&Partnership), the Climate Change&Disaster Risk Reduction unit (current PSC), the Performance and Accountability Management division (RMP), have an interest in ensuring that WFP units are informed by a review of the portfolio and evaluation findings.

**Executive Board (EB)
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As the governing body of the organisation, the EB has a direct interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP operations, their harmonisation with strategic processes of government and partners. The EB will be interested in the findings and recommendations of the first Regional Portfolio Evaluation.

External stakeholders

Beneficiaries

As the ultimate recipients of food assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. As such, perspectives from beneficiaries should be sought.

Institutions at regional level

WFP works with the regional entity CEPREDENAC (and relevant national civil protection and emergency preparedness and relief organizations) to coordinate relief and technical support activities

including contingency planning and EFSAs. WFP assists the Central American Integration System (SICA) in food security and vulnerability analysis and early warning mechanisms

to build the capacity of food and nutrition security and coordination committees. POLSAN⁷⁵ is a policy promoting a strategy that addresses food access, availability and utilisation issues simultaneously. REDLAC is the inter-agency Risk Emergency and Disaster Task Force for the Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim of this task force is to improve information exchange,

reflection, and organization of joint efforts in preventing and mitigating the impact of crises and emergencies. The evaluation will also look at the coherence between national governments main priorities and the supra national institutions.

National Governments

National governments have not only an interest in the effectiveness of WFP programmes impacting their populations, but also as “beneficiaries” of the capacity development component of the regional portfolio.

UN Country Team (UNCT)

As a local strategic and operational partner whose harmonised action should contribute to the realisation of the Government humanitarian and developmental agendas, the UNCT, and notably the WFP partner agencies, have an interest in ensuring that WFP operations are effective and that WFP reviews its portfolio. Within the UN system, disaster preparedness and response activities are coordinated by OCHA. Interagency groups apply joint programming principles for emergency response activities.

Coalitions of international partners (including NGOs partners)

Those WFP’s partners in programme design and/or implementation have a stake in the WFP assessment of its regional portfolio performance as well as an interest in its future strategic orientation. The results of the evaluation might affect the WFP activities and therefore the partnerships. The four countries have established food security and nutrition coalitions as well as early warning mechanisms such as the Early Warning System for Central America (SATCA) and sentinel sites in Honduras. These coalitions - supporting the articulation, coordination and implementation of food security and disaster risk reduction activities at national and local levels - include international food security stakeholders such as FAO, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), WHO, UNICEF and NGOs. The main NGOs are: Accion contra el Hambre (ACH), CARE, CRS, Save the Children, Plan International, Share and World Vision. The priority of those coalition members gives a

⁷⁵ POLSAN (Politica de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional de Centroamerica y Republica Dominicana) is a central document recently signed off.

priority to sudden-onset rather than slow-onset emergencies.

Donors

WFP activities are supported by a group of donors. They all have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP's work contributes to their own strategies and programmes. The top five donors of the regional portfolio are: The European Commission, Brazil, UN CERF, Japan and Australia.

3. Subject of the evaluation

3.A. WFP Portfolio in the region

21. WFP is present in the Central America sub region since 1964, with single country operations occurring in Honduras and Nicaragua. WFP started operating in El Salvador and Guatemala some years later, in 1969. The first regional food assistance operation covering the four countries was the EMOP 5949.0 in December 1997 followed by another EMOP in 1998 in response to hurricane Mitch. In 2005, an independent mid-term evaluation of the 2003-2006 regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO 10212.0) was carried out. The evaluation's findings and recommendations⁷⁶ have been integrated into the strategy for the following PPRO which started in 2007 (10444.0).
22. The two last regional PRROs. In 2007, the Regional **PRRO 10444.0** aimed to address the food needs of the most vulnerable populations who are frequently affected by natural disasters in Central America⁷⁷. In addition it intended to assist national governments to better cope with disasters through capacity building at community level. The PRRO 10444.0 was initially approved to cover a two-year period, from June 2007 through May 2009. It eventually ended in December 2010, after ten budget revisions⁷⁸.
23. This regional PRRO mainly provided assistance to vulnerable population affected by natural disasters and the impact of the global economic crisis through GFD (GFD) as part of the Emergency Response, Food for Work (FFW) as part of the recovery activities, and Supplementary Feeding to Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) and children under five. In addition, Capacity Building activities (for example early warning systems) focused on enhancing Emergency Preparedness and Response capacity of households, communities and the government. Capacity building falls under Strategic Objective 5 of the current WFP's Strategic Plan (see annex 3).
24. In the course of year 2010, a new PRRO was developed to be operational in January 2011. The main objective of the regional **PRRO 200043**, covering another two-year period (from January 2011 through December 2012), is to meet the immediate needs of food-insecure populations in the four countries affected by recurrent shocks in a timely manner, protect their livelihoods, avoid a deterioration of their nutritional status, and speed up recovery before new crises occur.
25. This second regional PRRO comprises distinctly a relief and a recovery component. Firstly, an immediate emergency response through GFD⁷⁹ and blanket supplementary feeding for children under 2 to be used as a preventive measure to stabilize acute malnutrition rates in this particular vulnerable group. Secondly, early recovery activities to increase household income and rehabilitate community infrastructure and agricultural

⁷⁶ See : "Summary report of the evaluation of Central America PRRO 10212.0"

⁷⁷ Although 2006 was a relatively calm hurricane season, the region suffered from four major hurricanes in 2005, and the forecast for 2007 predicted several severe hurricanes.

⁷⁸ An eleventh Budget Revision occurred to extend the Nicaragua component of the Regional PRRO 10444.0 (from January to October 2011) to allow additional time to complete fully funded activities, and to introduce a cash-for-work (CFW) pilot project.

⁷⁹ The planned GFD ration consists of 400g of cereals, 60g of pulses, 25 g of vegetable oil, 60 g of corn-soya blend and 5 g of iodized salt. However the specific needs of beneficiaries and level of ration was planned to be further refined based on the emergency food security assessment (EFSA) results.

capacities through FFW, food-for assets (FFA) and food-for training (FFT) interventions. Based on feasibility and market studies, it was also planned to implement Cash-for-work (CFW) interventions, prioritizing families with PLW. These activities focus notably on saving lives and livelihoods (Strategic Objective 1) and on rebuilding livelihoods in post disaster situations (Strategic Objective 3).

26. The rationale for those regional operations stems from: the similarities of beneficiary profiles and geo-climatic situation across the four countries, the risk of a tropical storm hitting all four countries simultaneously, the ability to accommodate the scale of an appropriate response and to provide a framework for receiving contributions rapidly and finally from the strong political collaboration between regional institutions. The second regional PRRO intended to remove the need for individual emergency operations (EMOP) even if single country EMOPs could be envisaged in the event of a large-scale emergency.
27. Two regional development projects. Two regional development projects, which both ended in December 2010 and did not include food distribution, implemented capacity building activities. The **capacity building project 10411.0** aimed to increase the commitment and capacity of 12 governments in the Latin American region, to reduce hunger and chronic undernutrition through their food-based social protection programmes. The **capacity building project 10421.0** focused more on providing technical support. This project aimed to increase the awareness of Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies by strengthening networks among Central America governments, UN agencies, private sector and other stakeholders.
28. Although single operations will not be evaluated *per se* by this regional portfolio evaluation, it is noted that a total of fourteen individual country operations were implemented in the four countries during the 2007-2011 period. The below table 5 provides an overview of all regional⁸⁰ and country operations during the five year period, regardless whether they are included or not in the scope of this evaluation.
29. While the focus will be on the regional operations, understanding the national operations and countries strategies will be critical to understand the dynamics to inform the complementarity and potential regional synergies. As detailed in annex 8, presenting the country factsheets (national operations only), the prominent activity in the four countries is related to the Education activity sector. Education represents an average of 68.5% in the country operations, while it represents only 2% in the four regional operations.

⁸⁰ Covering the entire Latin America and the Caribbean region, a School Feeding Capacity Development Project started in 2011 (Project 200141, period 2011-2013). This development project on School Feeding capacity is not part of the scope of this evaluation.

Table 5: Regional and individual operations during the portfolio period (2007-2011)

Country/Project Title	Project Number	Planned Start Date	Planned End Date	Total Approved Budget
Regional Operations in Central America - El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua				
REG DEV: Capacity Building and Technical Assistance in Support of Food-Based Social Protection Programmes (covers Latin America)	104110	Jul-05	Dec-10	10,916,154
REG DEV: Capacity Building of Integrated Micronutrient Programmes in the Central American Region	104210	Jan-06	Dec-10	8,070,456
REG PRRO: Assis. to Strengthen Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation among Marginalized Pop. in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua	10444.0	Aug-07	Oct-11	51,628,711
REG PRRO: Assistance to Vulnerable Groups Affected by Natural Disasters and Other Shocks in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua	200043	Jan-11	Dec-12*	29,042,740
REG DEV: Development Operation Latin America and the Caribbean Region - School Feeding Capacity	200141	Jan-11	Dec-13	3,929,650
Single Country Operations				
EL SALVADOR				
IR-EMOP: Flooding Assistance for Damages Caused by Tropical Storm Ida	200089	Nov-09	Feb-13	459,189
DEV: Country Programme	102260	Jan-04	Dec-07	8,269,568
GUATEMALA				
IR-EMOP: Food assistance to population affected by floods, landslides and Pacay volcano eruption in centre, southern coast and western highlands	200155	Jun-10	Sep-10	487,989
DEV: Country Programme Guatemala	200031	Mar-10	Dec-14	19,549,328
IR-EMOP: Food Assistance to Populations Affected by Undernutrition and critical Food Shortage	200072	Oct-09	Jan-10	479,026
EMOP: Emergency Food Assistance to Families Affected by Acute Malnutrition and Food Insecurity	200111	Apr-10	Mar-11	28,034,086
PRRO: Recovery and Prevention of Malnutrition for Vulnerable Groups	104570	Jun-06	Nov-10	35,362,906
DEV: Country Programme	100920	Mar-03	Mar-10	20,839,447
HONDURAS				
IR-EMOP: Food Assistance to Victims of Floods (Tropical Wave 16)	107930	Oct-08	Jan-09	500,000
DEV: Country Programme - Honduras	10538.0	Jan-08	Dec-11	34,200,250
DEV: Country Programme	10074.0	Jna-03	Dec-07	24,285,028
NICARAGUA				
IR-EMOP: Assistance to populations affected by floods	200204.0	Oct-10	Jan-11	498,740
DEV: Country Programme - Nicaragua	10597.0	Feb-08	Dec-12	34,270,882
EMOP: Emergency Food Assistance to Victims of Hurricane Felix	107000	Oct-07	Mar-09	10,540,198

Note: The RB plans to extend the regional PRRO from December 2012 to December 2013.

30. The two regional PRROs show a higher funding situation (67% and 81%), compared to the regional capacity building projects varying from 53 % to 75 %. The timeline and funding level of the regional portfolio to be evaluated is illustrated in annex 7 (regional factsheet).
31. In 2009 and 2010 WFP Guatemala and El Salvador received five grants from Latin America governments amounting to over USD 36 million, as illustrated in table 6 below. It is noted that WFP Honduras also received over USD 61 million in 2012.

Table 6. Trust Funds for Central America during 2007-2011

Year Appr oved	CO	Project No.	Name	Donor	Start Date	Project End	Amount as per MOU (USD)
2009	GT	Grant 10004443	Joint Programme Alliances to improve situation of children, food security and nutrition in Totonicapán province with Spain	Mille Dev. Goal Fund-Corporate	Jan.2010	Dec.2012	2,228,700
2010	SV	200012	Extension - National School Feeding Programme with Ministry of Education of El Salvador (MINED)	Govt	Apr.2010	Jan.2013	30,000,000
2010	SV	200020	Extension - TF for initiative Nutrimos El Salvador with USAID	Govt	Jan.2010	Feb.2013	3,000,000
2010	SV	200168	Brazilian contribution in support of "The affected population of tropical depression Agatha"	Brazil	June 2010	Dec.2010	250,000
2010	SV	200237	BIL TF IPF Trust Fund	Govt		Dec.2020	1,026,585

GT= Guatemala, SV = El Salvador
Source: WFP Regional Bureau in Panama

3.B. Scope of the evaluation

32. In light of the strategic nature of the evaluation, the team will look at the strategic role WFP played in Central America. The portfolio under evaluation comprises the two regional PRROs budgeted at slightly over USD 80 million, and the two regional development projects (DEV), budgeted at USD 19 million. The regional PRROs 10444.0 (2007-2010) and 200043 (2011-2012) cover the following four countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Although the two DEV (10411.0 and 10421.0) cover more countries than the four mentioned above, the evaluation team will consider only those four countries. The focus of this evaluation is on the regional portfolio as a whole; the regional operations will not be evaluated individually.
33. The evaluation will also review the 2012-2013 Regional Strategic vision developed by the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. WFP's overarching goal in the region is to support national governments to improve food and nutrition security and reduce the impact of emerging crises, natural disasters and climate change among vulnerable populations. The evaluation team will look to what extent their findings validate the directions of the strategic vision for the four Central America countries.
34. During the evaluation period, governments provided funding (over USD 36 million) to WFP Guatemala and El Salvador via trust funds to cover the costs of the implementation of WFP activities. Government trust funds are unique to this WFP's Regional Bureau, and the evaluation will explore the notions of sustainability and government ownership - particularly in the case of Middle Income Countries.
35. The fourteen individual operations for each country are not part of the scope of the evaluation. However the evaluation team will look at the internal complementarity between the regional portfolio and those national operations. During the inception

phase the team will develop a logic map behind the existence of both the regional and national programmes⁸¹, which will be presented in the inception report.

36. The geographic scope includes the regional bureau located in Panama and the four countries covered by the regional portfolio. The evaluation team will proceed with a combination of field visits and desk reviews. Besides Panama, fieldwork will occur in the four countries enabling the evaluation team to see the greatest range of circumstances and to sort out what might be anecdotic compared to what is systematic.

4. Key evaluation questions

37. The RPE will address one overarching question divided in three key evaluation questions. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will further elaborate the three below questions in developing an evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix will develop a set of sub questions appropriate to the regional portfolio, under each of the three key questions. Collectively, the questions aim at highlighting the main lessons from the WFP regional presence and performance, which could inform future regional strategic and operational decisions.

What have been the performance and results of the regional portfolio? (Based on the following evaluation criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability). Notably the evaluation will address the performance of WFP's regional portfolio for small country programmes sharing a similar context (countries facing recurrent natural disasters, etc.)

This overarching question is divided into 3 key questions – which will be the basis for the evaluation report structure:

Relevance

Q1. To what extent WFP **positioned itself strategically** at regional level?

For example vis-à-vis concerned regional partners (regional institutions, task forces ...). The team will also look at the strategic positioning with respect to national level policies, institutions and processes.

Coherence/Complementarity

Q2. What were the factors driving WFP's **strategic decision** in the region?

Notably the evaluation will look at the internal coherence/complementarity between the WFP's regional portfolio and the WFP national operations. For example, the extent to which the regional & national portfolios were planned to complement each other? Where are the complementarities and the gaps?

Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability

Q3. To what extent the regional portfolio **objectives were achieved, at which cost**, and are the results expected to be durable?

⁸¹ This logic map will explain how the evaluation team will handle the linkages between the regional and national programmes.

This is a regional portfolio evaluation and therefore national discussions will not dominate the evaluation, however in developing the sub questions the team will look at the linkages/dialogues between the regional and national levels.

5. Evaluation Approach & Methodology

5.A. Evaluability Assessment⁸²

38. The RPE will benefit from the lessons learnt following a review mission of the ongoing PRRO 200043 which took place in June 2012⁸³. The WFP mission included staff from Headquarters and from the Regional Bureau in Panama. The review focused on trends of shocks and specific factors of vulnerability related to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The report concluded that overall there is a robust justification for developing a new regional PRRO covering the same four countries, and presents what needs to be refined.
39. The Regional Strategic Vision developed by WFP's Regional Bureau in 2012 will also bring valuable information to the evaluation team.
40. GFD beneficiaries were identified based on the results of Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA). Rapid assessments⁸⁴ occurred in Nicaragua in 2008 and in 2009, and in Guatemala in July 2009 and in November 2009.
41. OE will share with the evaluation team a bibliography (Annex 6) of relevant documents dealing with key aspects of the government, and WFP strategies, programmes and operations' evaluations.

The main challenges in evaluating the WFP regional portfolio are the following:

42. The portfolio covers two Strategic Plan periods in WFP and the first regional PRRO (2007-2010) was designed before the current 2008-2013 Strategic Plan⁸⁵, and associated Strategic Objectives (SOs). This evaluation will however use the framework of the current five SOs to assess issues of alignment of the portfolio with corporate strategy.
43. Despite the regional design of the PRROs, implementation may be different in the four countries, which would make it difficult to measure achievement towards the regional objectives.

5.B. Methodology⁸⁶

44. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will design the methodology and present it in the inception report. The methodology should:
 - Build on the logic of the regional portfolio and on the common objectives arising across operations;
 - Be geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions presented in section 4A. A model looking at groups of "main activities" across operations should be adopted. The evaluation matrix will be developed in the inception report in order to clearly link the evaluation questions (and subsequent sub-questions) with the methodology

⁸² Evaluability is the extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion, which depends on the clear understanding of the situation before assistance was provided, a clear statement of intended outcomes and impacts, clearly defined appropriate indicators, and target dates by which expected outcomes and impacts should occur.

⁸³ See "Review Mission – Regional PRRO 200043 – draft report, ODXP,ODEP,PSC, 2012"

⁸⁴ A regional EFSA occurred in 2005/06.

⁸⁵ While the formulation of the WFP corporate strategic objectives has varied over the portfolio timeframe, they nonetheless remained similar enough in nature to allow referring only to the 2008 – 2013 strategic plan.

⁸⁶ The methodology requires systematic sex-disaggregation of data.

and associated methods. Gender issues relevant to the evaluation will be identified and addressed in the evaluation questions, matrices, methods, and tools. .

- Take into account the evaluability challenges pointed out in section 5.A, the budget and timing constraints.
- Demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources and by using a mixed of methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, participatory) to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. The selection of the field visit sites and stakeholders to be interviewed should be specified in the inception report. All four team members will travel to Panama for some briefings and meetings, the team will then split into two groups visiting two countries each. Finally the team will reconvene in Panama to consolidate the preliminary findings.

5.C. Quality Assurance

45. WFP's evaluation quality assurance system (EQAS) is based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community. It provides templates for evaluation products and includes quality assurance of evaluation reports (inception, full and summary reports) based on standardized checklists. EQAS will be systematically applied during the course of this evaluation and relevant EQAS documents will be provided to the team at the start of the evaluation. The evaluation manager will conduct the first level quality assurance, while the OE Director will conduct the second level review. This quality assurance process does not interfere with the views and independence of the evaluation team, but ensures the report provides the necessary evidence in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.
46. The evaluation team will be responsible to ensure data quality (validity, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.

6. Organisation of the evaluation

6.A. Phases and deliverables

47. The evaluation is structured in five phases summarized in table 7 below. A more detailed timeline can be found in annex 2. The detailed timeline indicates also the responsibility of the evaluation team and those of the evaluation manager. The detail of each expected deliverable is available in EQAS and will be made accessible to the team during the inception phase.

Table 7: Timeline summary of key evaluation milestones

Main phases	Timeline	Tasks & Deliverables
1. Preparatory	Jan/Feb 2013	Last draft and Final Terms of Reference Evaluation team and/or firm selection & contract. Briefing at HQ
2. Inception	March/May 2013	Inception mission in Panama (RB) and inception reports. Desk Review at RB and COs level
3. Fieldwork	June 2013	Evaluation mission in Panama (RB) and in the 4 COs (June). Internal debriefing with the RB (very preliminary findings)
4. Reporting/Reviews	Aug/Dec 2013	Draft evaluation reports/Matrix of comments/Reviews Final evaluation report
5. Executive Board follow up For EB.A/2014 (June)	Jan/March 2014 <u>Deadline March 2014</u>	Summary Evaluation Report Editing/Evaluation Report Formatting Recommendations for Management Response.

6.B. Evaluation team/Expertise required

48. The evaluation will be conducted by a team of independent consultants with relevant expertise for the WFP Central America Regional Portfolio. The evaluation team (four members) will consist of a mix of international and national evaluators to ensure international best practices with deep understanding of the local context.
49. The team leader is responsible for leading the evaluation team and for quality control of all relevant products timely delivered. He/she should have evaluation experience with a regional profile, a good understanding of food security issues, be familiar with the Central America regional context, as well as have excellent conceptual design and reporting skills in English (analytical skill and capable to synthesize).
50. The key dimensions of the evaluation are: Disaster Risk Reduction, Capacity Building and Food and nutritional security. Therefore the evaluation team should combine between its various members the following competencies and expertise:
- Strong experience in strategic positioning and planning related to food assistance to vulnerable populations affected by recurrent natural disasters, and related to capacity building⁸⁷;
 - Ability to conceptualize complex evaluations and to design ensuing approach and methodology;
 - Knowledge of the Central American regional institutions & stakeholders related to disaster risk reduction & emergency preparedness;
 - Knowledge of the UN and WFP work modalities, WFP types of programmes, and the WFP transition from food aid to food assistance;
 - Technical expertise in Nutrition, in particular on chronic undernutrition & micronutrient deficiencies.
51. All proposed team members should speak Spanish, and have strong analytical and communication skills. They will not have been significantly involved in work for the WFP Regional Bureau in Panama nor have other conflicts of interest.

⁸⁷ Besides their specific area of expertise, all team members should understand the aspects relating to positioning and capacity development.

6.C. Roles and responsibilities

52. The evaluation is managed by WFP's Office of Evaluation. Diane Prioux de Baudimont has been appointed the Evaluation Manager (EM) and is responsible for writing the TOR; selecting and contracting the evaluation team (via contracting a consultant firm); managing the budget; organizing the team briefing in HQ; assisting in the preparation of the field mission in Panama; conducting the first level quality assurance of the evaluation products and consolidating comments from stakeholders on the evaluation report. She will also be the main interlocutor between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader, and WFP regional counterparts to ensure a smooth implementation process.

53. The Regional Bureau will play a key coordination role with the four COs. WFP offices are expected to provide information necessary to the evaluation; be available to the evaluation team to discuss the regional portfolio, its performance and results; facilitate the evaluation team's contacts with stakeholders in the region; set up meetings and field visits, and provide logistic support during the missions, including booking accommodation and arranging for vehicles, as required.

54. Relevant WFP stakeholders at RB, COs and HQ levels are expected to be available for interviews/meetings with the evaluation team and to comment on the various reports throughout the evaluation process.

55. The contracted company will provide quality checks to the evaluation products, especially before the evaluation team sends the reports to OE for comments.

56. To ensure the independence of the evaluation, WFP staff will not be part of the evaluation team or participate in meetings where their presence could bias the responses of the stakeholders.

6.D. Communication

57. In addition to some key WFP stakeholders being kept informed during the evaluation process, an Internal Reference Group (IRG) comprising a cross section of selected WFP stakeholders⁸⁸ has been created to provide feedback throughout the evaluation, especially on two core draft evaluation products i.e. the TOR and the evaluation report. The IRG can also be invited to provide technical information to the evaluation team.

58. Preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation team will be shared with the IRG and other stakeholders during a debriefing session after the field work⁸⁹. This will occur via teleconference with WFP stakeholders at CO, RB and HQ levels. This early feedback, prior to the draft evaluation report, is important to verify the initial findings of the team with stakeholders. It also gives WFP the opportunity to clarify issues and ensures a transparent evaluation process.

59. The summary evaluation report together with the management response to the evaluation will be submitted and discussed at the WFP Executive Board session in June 2014.

60. The evaluation report will be public documents and will notably be posted on the public WFP website. The RB and/or the COs are encouraged to circulate the final (not at a draft stage) evaluation report with external stakeholders in their region or countries.

6.E. Resources and Budget

61. The evaluation will be financed from the Office of Evaluation's budget at a total estimated cost of USD xxx. The total budget covers all expenses related to

⁸⁸ The IRG participants include the Heads of Planning and Programme at regional level (ODP) as well as first line responsible for Capacity Development, and for Emergency Preparedness at Headquarters.

⁸⁹ First, the team will share and discuss internally the very preliminary findings with the RB, while they are still in Panama.

consultant/company rates, international travels, logistics, and OE staff travel. The evaluation team will be hired through an institutional contract with a consultant company.

List of TOR annexes (not incorporated in the Evaluation report)

Annex 1	Map of Central America
Annex 2`	Detailed timeline. Evaluation process steps
Annex 3	WFP strategic objectives 2008 – 2013
Annex 4	WFP regional operations since 1997
Annex 5	Additional core standard indicators
Annex 6	Library list (documents will be available on dropbox)
Annex 7	Regional Portfolio Evaluation Factsheet
Annex 8	Country Factsheets (4 countries)-single country operations

Annex 9: Interviewees

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Annex 10: Methodology (taken directly from Inception Report)

Evaluation Methodology

Methodological Approach

1. The evaluation will employ relevant internationally agreed upon **evaluation criteria**: Relevance, Coherence/ Complementarity, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability to guide the Evaluation Team's approach.
2. The WFP Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) will guide the Evaluation Team's work and structure for reports.
3. The principal points of reference for understanding the **logic of the portfolio** for this evaluation are: (i) the five strategic objectives set out in the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013⁹⁰; (ii) the principal outcomes of the following four regional operations: DEV 104110, DEV 104210, PRRO 104440, and PRRO 200043; and (iii) the key criteria of the evaluation relating to: *strategic positioning; factors driving strategic decisions; cost, sustainability and achievement of objectives; and overall performance and results.*
4. The regional operations were designed at a regional level, but implemented (potentially differently) at the country level, making it difficult to uniformly measure achievement of regional objectives. The Evaluation Team will rely considerably on secondary data and key informant interviews. There is a wealth of data on certain operational indicators, which will contribute to evaluating results, but the consistency and quality of data across operations and countries does not appear to be the same based on initial desk review of information.
5. In the first phase, the Evaluation Team has conducted an in-depth **desk review** of the relevant project documentation (project design, SPRs, budget revisions, data on contributions to WFP, available data on trust funds, country fact sheets, operations reports, assessment reports, evaluation reports, and documents from other regional sources) relating to WFP operations across the region, paying particular attention to the four regional operations that are the focus of this RPE within the regional portfolio. The review has considered existing policy and strategy frameworks, e.g. country operations, the WFP global 2008-2013 strategy and the 2012-2013 Regional Strategic Vision, as well as reports and documents from other stakeholders such as FAO, PAHO, etc.
6. Further, the evaluation team is reviewing and considering key documents from the region including: The Cost of Hunger, Towards the Eradication of Child Undernutrition, From Food Aid to Food Assistance, the Review Mission of the ongoing PRRO 200043, the Regional Strategic Vision, and the Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSA) in Nicaragua (2008,2009) and Guatemala (2009).
7. In the second phase, the Evaluation Team will begin data and information collection through **field work** and **semi-structured interviews** with principal stakeholders detailed in **Annex 8**, including the WFP regional bureau, WFP country offices, national government authorities, UN Agenciespartners, donors, and others

⁹⁰ The evaluation period cuts across two WFP strategic plans, however the team will use the 2008-2013 strategic plan as the guiding strategic plan for this evaluation per the Terms of Reference.

within the region. The bulk of these interviews will take place during the evaluation mission field work; however, some will take place prior to the mission with key stakeholders who are no longer based in the region, or preparing for transition to a new post.

8. The Evaluation Team will ensure its independence and impartiality by relying upon a cross-section of information to triangulate data across sources.

9. While the Regional Bureau has Regional Operations that are implemented by Country Offices engaging with direct beneficiaries, the **primary beneficiaries** of the Regional Portfolio are WFP Country Offices within the region, national governments within the region and other regional stakeholders. As such, the Evaluation Team will focus on this level of beneficiaries in our stakeholder interviews and engagement, but will seek to efficiently use time available to engage with direct beneficiaries at community level as well.

10. The Evaluation Team will work to ensure **gender** is integrated across the evaluation by a careful review of documents and data for gender considerations and incorporating gender within the key themes for the semi-structured interviews for primary data collection. Secondary data analysis for gender considerations will be dependent on the availability of data. A preliminary review of data revealed that the PRRO data are disaggregated by sex, but there are not direct beneficiary data for the CDEV projects, making further beneficiary and gender analysis of the data impossible.

11. The selection of the team and planning of the evaluation schedule are designed to maximize **efficiency** over the course of the evaluation. The team will efficiently leverage time and skills as indicated in the evaluation schedule (**Annex 5**) and the team roles and responsibilities (further described in Section 4, Organization of the Evaluation of this document). Specifically, we will work through complementary skills to pair up for interviews with stakeholders. Recognizing the limited time in each country, we will work with the country offices to schedule focus group as well as individual interview formats to encourage efficiency and engagement across stakeholders. For example, we will seek to interview international NGOs together within each country.

Evaluation Matrix

12. The table below presents a summary evaluation matrix that aligns the four key evaluation questions, the principal modes of analysis and primary sources of information and data. The complete evaluation matrix is included as **Annex 4** to this Inception Report.

Summary Evaluation Matrix

Key Evaluation Issues	Analyses	Principal Sources of Data
1. To what extent did WFP position itself strategically at the regional level?	Primarily qualitative assessments with some quantitative analysis	Various WFP documents including the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013 and Cost of Hunger in relation to other evidence (e.g. FEWS and other data), policy and strategic frameworks for the region, meeting minutes from REDLAC meetings to understand disaster positioning; internal (WFP) and external interviews with stakeholders.

<p>2. What were the factors driving WFP's strategic decision in the region?</p>	<p>Qualitative assessment, incorporating a review of available quantitative data</p>	<p>WFP documents such as the Strategic Plan 2008-13, programme descriptions for operations, reports, assessment reports and other presentations ; VAM and UNICEF assessments; internal (WFP) and external interviews with stakeholders.</p>
<p>3. To what extent did WFP achieve regional portfolio objectives, at which cost, and are the results expected to be durable?</p>	<p>Qualitative and quantitative</p>	<p>Operations reports (SPR), as well as additional reports and documents provided to stakeholders and partners to document progress, costs, and durability of interventions, data from WFP, interviews with stakeholders.</p> <p>Efficiency will be more challenging to measure – particularly for the DEV operations. For the PRROs, the team will incorporate cost analyses such as cost / beneficiary. We will also use key informant interviews to focus the conversation on perceptions of WFP contributions and how critical they were, and whether they provided value for money in relation to other investments at the time.</p>
<p>Overarching question: 4. What were the performance and results of the Central America Regional Portfolio in 2007 – 2011</p>	<p>Analysis of output and outcome indicators, Incorporateion of analyses and results from other questions</p>	<p>WFP documents (SPR, VAM, monitoring reports, reports shared with other stakeholders, key regional documents); internal (WFP) and external interviews with stakeholders.</p> <p>We will use key informant interviews to better understand WFP's impact in contributing to developing capacity to address undernutrition for the DEVs, as well as prepare for, respond to and mitigate disasters for the PRROs.</p>

Data Collection Methods

13. The Evaluation Team will use a purposive sampling strategy to ensure that the most significant partners and stakeholders are interviewed. Based upon consultation with the WFP regional bureau and country offices, as well as an analysis of internal and external stakeholders, the Evaluation Team will prioritise interviews with those that have been the most engaged and familiar with the design and delivery of the WFP regional portfolio as well as critical regional stakeholders.

14. The Evaluation Team will use semi-structured in-depth interviews and interview guides with key informants and stakeholders to gather primary data. The team will use interview guides based on the questions in the evaluation matrix to guide interviews and allow the team to tailor questions contextually to maximize depth of information and stakeholder engagement. In addition, recognizing the limitations of time and that the team may not be able to interview all stakeholders, as well as the fact that some stakeholders may be more revealing if given a completely anonymous format, the team will develop a web-based instrument for data collection to share with stakeholders and solicit input and feedback on WFP performance as well as perceptions of efficiency and effectiveness of the Regional Portfolio. The instrument will be anonymous and optional, and designed to take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

15. The team will complement data from stakeholder interviews with a thorough review of secondary data provided by OEV, from the WFP Regional Bureau, Country Offices, as well as national and regional data available from national governments, regional bodies, and the UN Agencies. The Evaluation Team will share data and

information collaboratively, triangulating data from informants to guide analysis, identification of results, and recommendations.

16. There are already **identified gaps** within the data and reports received (e.g. the Regional Bureau reported in email correspondence with the evaluation team that government-funded trust funds do not report on actual beneficiaries, etc.) We will use the semi-structured interviews as an opportunity to gain more insights to fill in these gaps and identify other potential information sources from WFP Country Offices or stakeholders during field work.

Quality Assurance

17. WFP has developed an Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) based on the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (ALNAP and DAC). It sets out process maps with in-built steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products. It also includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. EQAS will be systematically applied during the course of this evaluation and relevant documents have been provided to the evaluation team.

18. The Evaluation Team will constantly consider the quality of data (validity, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases of the evaluation. This will be critical since regional data can be of variable quality and reliability and a considerable proportion of the evaluation will depend upon secondary data.

19. In order to ensure quality of findings and recommendations, the Evaluation Team will triangulate data and information to the greatest extent possible.

Risks and Assumptions

20. Evaluation is not a static process and there is no practical way to anticipate all of the tasks necessary to produce good results especially across a regional context. Building on the TOR and the inception mission in Panama, the Evaluation Team has designed a process, schedule and series of evaluation questions to ensure the evaluation is responsive to the local context. The following is a summary of risks and assumptions, as well as how the Evaluation Team will mitigate them.

21. The Evaluation Team will continue working closely with the WFP Regional Bureau and Country Offices to ensure that the scheduling of interviews and field work considers the time demands of internal and external stakeholders. Some WFP staff will not be available during the field work and the team will work to identify alternate times for interviews or alternate stakeholders to provide inputs to the evaluation.

22. **Absence of an overall strategy and logframe for the WFP Central America Regional portfolio:** it will be challenging to evaluate a portfolio against strategies and log-frames for individual operations. The evaluation will use the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013 as its principal point of reference to which the portfolio is aligned.

23. **WFP M&E systems are designed to monitor inputs and outputs** as a component of compliance, which is informative in terms of food commodities distributed through different mechanisms and beneficiaries reached, but the system does little to ascertain achievement against outcomes

24. **WFP M&E systems are used at country level rather than regionally**, and are not always consistent in quality or data collected, making it challenging to aggregate and evaluate data to determine regional-level performance and outcomes. The team will work with country offices to gather the maximum amount of data possible to inform the evaluation.

25. Monitoring for the capacity development programs does not neatly fit into the WFP SPR reporting format. Based on the reports, the RPE team has received to date, it appears that the capacity development programs did not disaggregate data (e.g. people trained, organizations supported, capacity developed, etc.) or funds by country, and so it will be difficult to differentiate performance within the four countries of the RPE. Supplementary reports that provide more information than the SPRs are potentially available, and the team will seek to use these data and information to contribute to the RPE, but to date, the evaluation team has not received these reports.

26. **Regional population-based social and demographic data is not consistent or current.** Regional social, economic, and demographic data which could complement WFP program output data are not collected in each country consistently or in a timely manner making it a challenge to assess potential outcome and impact changes over time. For example, much of the nutrition data available is from 2008 or 2009, early within the evaluation time period. Rather than rely only on quantitative data, the team will leverage stakeholder interviews and qualitative data.

27. **Gender disaggregation is inconsistent.** Thus far, in data received and reviewed, not all data is disaggregated by gender. This makes understanding and measuring results, outcomes and performance in relation to gender a challenge. Rather than rely only on quantitative data, the team will leverage stakeholder interviews and qualitative data.

28. **Trust funds data are not completely or consistently captured.** National Government funded trust funds are unique to the Central America portfolio and were not initially included in the WINGS 2 database transition. As such, their financial contribution to WFP-global programming, as well as regional specific contributions are difficult to measure or potentially underestimated. For example, Government Trust Funds in El Salvador in 2010 were over USD\$19 million, but are not included in WFP's *Contributions to WFP: Comparative Figures* tracking donor investments. In addition to the challenge of financially tracking the Government Trust Funds, the challenge of tracking results is further exacerbated by the fact that country offices currently do not record actual beneficiaries for government trust funds⁹¹. Rather than rely only on WINGS and quantitative outputs, the team will leverage stakeholder interviews to gain deeper insights.

29. **Lack of institutional memory within WFP and stakeholders** relating to the evaluation period 2007-2011. Due to WFP rotations, not all of the staff involved in regional programming from the Regional Bureau or Country Offices are still within the region. The team is identifying critical stakeholders for phone or skype interviews prior to field work and will rely on national staff with an institutional memory of the evaluation period. The situation will be the same with most principal stakeholders (including government authorities, donors, other UN organisations and

⁹¹ Email correspondence with El Salvador Country Office. April 18, 2013.

cooperating partners). Where possible, the team will interview key personnel no longer at post.

30. **Potential temporal bias.** The evaluation will identify some key informants from within and outside WFP who can contribute to the findings of the evaluation during the course of the early years, but it is anticipated that there will be potential temporal bias and the Evaluation Team will be sensitive to this during analysis.

31. **Potential risk of unexpected events.** The fieldwork is scheduled for June, which is during the start of the hurricane season (although most severe hurricanes occur later in the year) and in the middle of the annual hunger season. There is a potential risk that other events could become a priority for the WFP regional office and country offices. The Evaluation Team will be sensitive to WFP's broader mandate and responsibilities as a humanitarian organization.

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Acronyms

AARR	Average Annual Rate of Reduction
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CANTERA	Center for Communication and Popular Education
CEPREDENAC	Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central / Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CENTA	National Center for Agro-fish and Forestry
CFW	Cash for Work
CO	Country Office
CODEL	Comité de Emergencia Local
CODEM	Comité de Emergencia Municipal
COEN	National Emergency Committee / Civil Protection – El Salvador
COPECA	Emergency Preparedness and Response Agency (Honduras)
CP	Country Portfolio
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSB	Corn Soy Blend
CSFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DEV	Development Operations
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL)
EFSA	Emergency Food Security Assessments
EMOP	Emergency Operations
ENAs	Emergency Needs Assessments
ENMICRON	Micronutrient Study
ENSMI	Micronutrient Study
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FESAL	Micronutrient Study
FFA	Food for Assets
FFT	Food for Training
FFW	Food For Work
FPF	Forward Purchasing Facility
GCC	Global Contributions
GCRI	Global Climate Risk Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFD	GFD
GHI	Global Hunger Index
GNI	Gross National Income Per Capita
HANCI	Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index
HEBs	High Energy Biscuits

IICA	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture)
INCAP	Institute of Nutrition for Central America and Panama
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LACERN	Latin America and Caribbean Emergency Response Network
MAGA	Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Guatemala)
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFEWS	Mesoamerican Food Security Early Warning System
MICS	Middle Income Countries
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OE	Office of Evaluation
P4P	Purchase For Progress
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PROSAN	National Program for Food Security (Guatemala)
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations
RAAN	North Atlantic Autonomous Region (Nicaragua)
RB	Regional Bureau –p.12
REG DEV	Regional Development Operations
REG PRRO	Regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations
RPE	Regional Portfolio Evaluation
SATCA	Sistema de Alerta Temprana para Centroamérica
SER	Summary Evaluation Report
SESAN	Secretary for Food and Nutrition Security (Guatemala)
SINAPRED	National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation System (Nicaragua)
SIVIN	Micronutrient Study
SO	Strategic Objective
SPR	Standard Project Reports
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TD-12	Tropical Depression Twelve
TL	Team Leader
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS –p.33
UNDAFs	United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks
UNETE	United Nations Emergency Technical Teams
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USD	US Dollars
UTSAN	Technical Food and Nutritional Security Unit
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Office of Evaluation
www.wfp.org/evaluation



World Food Programme