

OPERATION EVALUATION

Armenia – DEV 200128

Development of Sustainable School Feeding

A mid-term evaluation of WFP's Operation (2010-2016)

Evaluation Report

February 2015 – Report OEV/2014/20

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Operational Factsheet

OPERATION		
Type/Number/Title	Development Project – Armenia 200128 – Development of Sustainable School Feeding	
Approval	The operation was approved by the Executive Board in 2010	
Amendments	There have been seven budget revisions to the initial project document. Budget revision 1 (approved November 2012) extended the project by three years until 30 June 2016.	
Duration	<u>Initial:</u> 3 year period (2010 – 2013)	<u>Revised:</u> 2010-2016
Planned beneficiaries	<u>Initial:</u> 50,000	<u>Revised:</u> 67,000 primary school children 1,300 kitchen helpers receiving dry food rations for family of five (introduced in BR 4) Currently around 1,900 helpers; WFP provides family rations for 1,700
Planned food requirements	<u>Initial:</u> In-kind food: 6,840 mt of food commodities Cash and vouchers: N/A	<u>Revised:</u> In-kind food: 10,763 mt of food commodities Cash and vouchers: N/A
US\$ requirements	<u>Initial:</u> US\$ 8,000,000	<u>Revised:</u> US\$ 20,145,633

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (after BR1)*			
	Corporate Strategic Objectives	DEV Project specific objectives	Activities
The project is aligned with UNDAF Outcome 3 and contributes towards the achievement of MDGs 1 and 2	Strategic Objective 4	Specific Objective: Improve children's access to primary education	– School Meals to primary school children
		Increased access to education and human capital development in assisted schools. - Increased regular school attendance, retention and school performance	
		Improved food consumption achieved over the assistance period for primary schoolchildren in targeted schools	
	Strategic Objective 5	Specific Objective: Establish the foundations for a sustainable home-grown national school feeding programme	– Purchase food locally – Capacity and awareness raising activities
		Increased marketing opportunities at the national level with cost-effective local purchases	– Provide support to the government to develop a national school feeding policy/strategy and implementation plan
		Progress made towards nationally owned hunger solutions.	
* The logframe was revised in 2014 to align the project to WFP's new Strategic Results Framework.			

PARTNERS	
Government	Ministry of Education and Science (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture through an inter-ministerial working group)
United Nations	N/A
NGOs	Save the Children, Social and Industrial Food Services Institute (SIFI)
RESOURCES (INPUTS)	
<p>Contributions received as at 28 December 2014: US\$20.83 million</p> <p>91.1% against appeal</p> <p>Top 3 donors: Russian Federation 88.73% Armenia 0.85% Israel 0.73%</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Appeal Status</p> <p>■ Funded ■ Requested</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Donors to date</p> <p>■ Armenia 0.85% ■ Israel 0.73% ■ Private Donors 0.5% ■ Russian Federation 88.73% ■ Miscellaneous 0.07%</p> </div> </div>
PLANNED OUTPUTS (after BR1)	
<p>Planned % of beneficiaries school feeding</p> <p>■ Boys ■ Girls</p>	<p>Planned food commodities: 6,480 mt</p> <p>Outputs for capacity development (SO5):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5.1. Food purchased locally - 5.2. Capacity and awareness developed through WFP-led activities

OUTCOMES ¹			
		Base value 2009	From SPR 2013
SO 4	Reduce chronic hunger and under-nutrition		
	Attendance rate in WFP-assisted schools Target: annual increase in attendance rate of 2% met or exceeded for 80% of assisted schools	n/a	99.1
	Attendance rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools	97.19	n/a
	Attendance rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools	96.28	96.45
	Drop-out rate in WFP-assisted primary schools Target: annual decrease of 2% met or exceeded for 80% of assisted schools	n/a	n/a
	Drop-out rate (boys) in WFP-assisted primary schools	n/a	n/a
	Drop-out rate (girls) in WFP-assisted primary schools	n/a	1.45
	Improved learning performance Target: pass rate of 70% met or exceeded in 80% of assisted schools	n/a	n/a
	Food consumption score Target: maintain at least borderline consumption with daily nutritious meals five days a week during the school year	4.3*	9.7*
SO 5	Strengthen the capacity of the country to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchase		
	Percentage increase in Government's funding for hunger solution tools in national plans of action (based on local currency)	n/a	60
	Food purchased locally as % of food distributed in country	n/a	n/a
	School Feeding National Capacity Index + Baseline for National Capacity Index: 9 (2012) Target for National Capacity Index: 15 (2016)	n/a	9

* As from SPR 2011. This indicator does not appear in SPRs for other years.

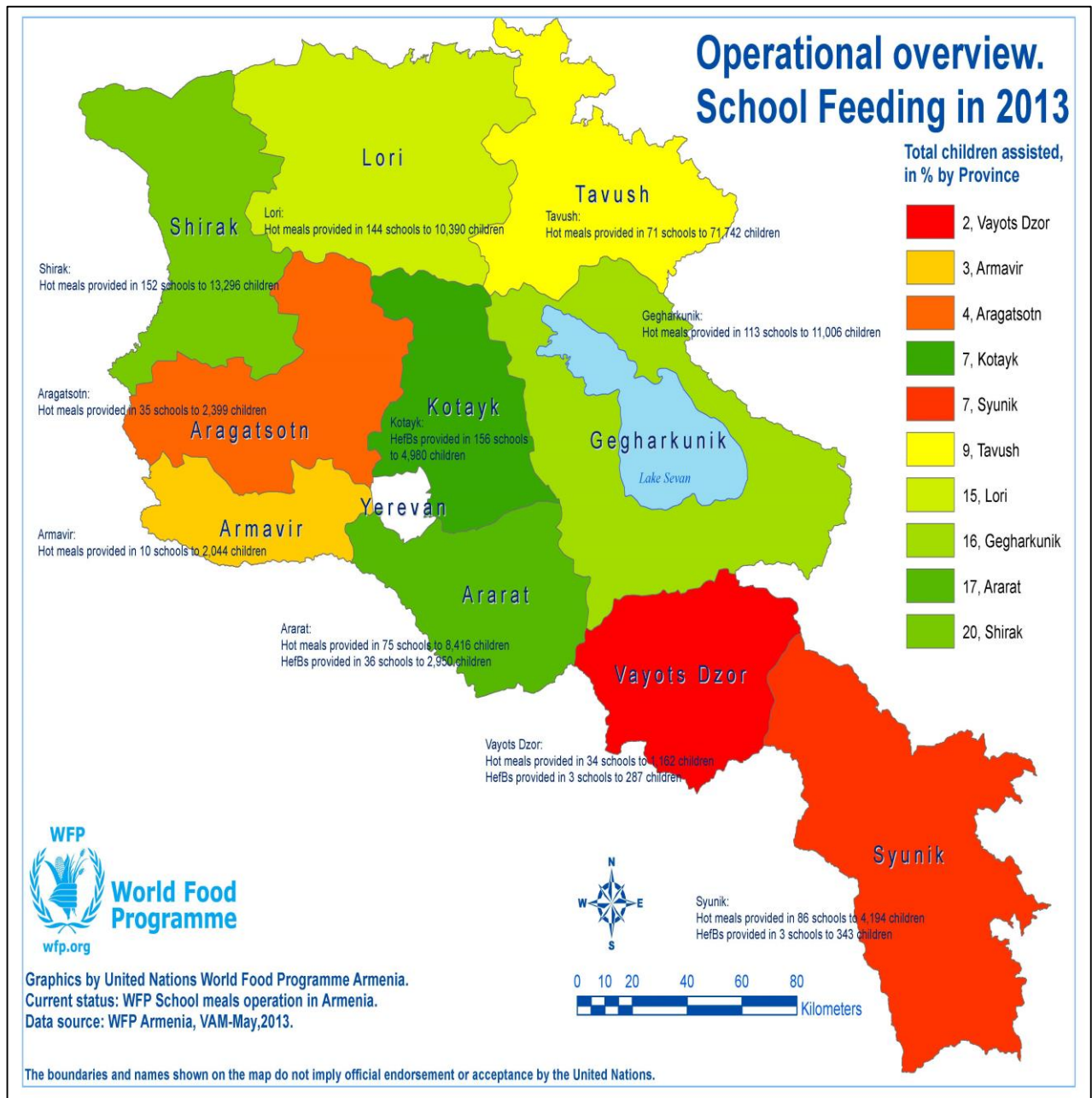
+ Please refer to paragraph 86 of the main report for an explanation of this NCI score.

Key:

	On track for attainment
	Data not available or not systematic

¹ Based on the Project document and 2012 Budget Revision logical frameworks. The revised outcomes from the new SRF are deliberately not included here as they were formally introduced in mid 2014 and there is no SPR or monitoring data available to date to document them.

Operational Map



Executive Summary

1. The World Food Programme (WFP) commissioned this independent, Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Armenia Development Project (DEV) 200128 ‘Development of Sustainable School Feeding’ (2010-2016). It is intended to assess the performance and results of the project (accountability); and to draw lessons to allow the Country Office (CO) to make informed strategic decisions about positioning itself in Armenia, form strategic partnerships, and improve operations design and implementation (learning).

Introduction

2. The DEV 200128 is the successor to previous WFP school feeding activities implemented in Armenia since 2002 under the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 100532. There was no school feeding during the 2008/2009 school year. The DEV 200128 operation was initially approved for a three-year period (2010-2013) but this was later extended until 30 June 2016 and beneficiary numbers increased. The initial goals of the project were to improve children’s access to primary education and establish the foundations for a sustainable home-grown national school feeding programme.

3. Through the project, WFP aimed to transition from implementer to enabler of national ownership and capacity, through providing direct food assistance to schoolchildren on one hand, and augmenting the Government of Armenia’s capacity to set and manage up a sustainable national school feeding programme on the other. The project is part of a wider regional school feeding and regional capacity development initiative, whose purpose is to support governments in bringing national school feeding programmes to higher levels of quality and sustainability through capacity development and budgetary support.

Country Context

4. Armenia is a lower-middle income country that enjoyed high GDP growth rates (averaging 12 percent annually from 2004-2007), but the global economic crisis from 2008 reversed many of the country’s gains. Growth rates dropped to 4.3 percent after the crisis, and was estimated to be just 3.2 percent in 2013. The World Bank estimates that the poverty rate increased from 27.6 percent in 2008 to 35 percent in 2011. The situation has worsened since that time: in November 2013, 41.9 percent of children live below the poverty line against the national average of 35 percent.

Evaluation Features

5. Two independent consultants, including one Armenian national, carried out the evaluation using mixed methodologies, including a document review, an inception exercise and briefings. The Evaluation Team (ET) was tasked to respond to three main questions: 1 - How appropriate is the operation? 2 - What are the results of the operation? 3 - Why and how has the operation produced the observed results? Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from interviews with stakeholders, secondary sources and observations during visits to Yerevan and five provinces across Armenia. In-country data collection took place from 09 to 29 November 2014.

6. Key users of the evaluation include WFP’s country, regional and HQ offices, Government ministries and coordinating bodies, as well as the communities benefiting from WFP assistance. Other stakeholders include United Nations agencies as well as WFP’s operational partners, donors and private sector actors. Lessons gained from this exercise will inform future activities in other countries in this regional programme.

Key Findings

Appropriateness of the Operation

7. Studies carried out in the aftermath of the 2008 global economic crisis² had established that there was a need for support for poor and vulnerable groups, particularly for children whose education and health status was significantly affected. At that time, the resumption of WFP assistance to school feeding in the most food-insecure regions was recommended as an appropriate means to help meet the needs of the food insecure population. With an average 35 percent of the population living below the poverty line in 2012 (against 28.4 percent in 2009), 19.9 percent very poor and 3.7 percent extremely poor, the operation remains relevant.

8. Although the Government has recognized that school feeding programmes are an effective social safety net, the coherence of the project with national policies is questionable and there is no mention of school feeding in the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, nor in long-term perspective documents like the Education section of the Armenia Development Strategy for 2014-2025.

9. The project is coherent with the approach and objectives presented in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2010-2015. Similarly, the project contributes towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1 and 2 to which the Armenian Government has subscribed. Nevertheless, WFP has not established technical partnerships with other United Nations agencies, and enhancing such partnerships to leverage their broader based assistance could create much greater synergy at community level.

10. The Armenia DEV 200128 was formulated under the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013 that marked a historical shift from WFP as a food aid agency to WFP as a food assistance agency. The project was then in line with the Strategic Objectives (SOs) 4 and 5. In 2014, the project logframe was revised in accordance with the new global SOs and related performance indicators introduced with the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) adopted by WFP for the period 2014-2017.

11. The benefits expected from the project were coherent with WFP's 2009 School Feeding Policy. The emphasis on the handover of activities to the Government, and the related technical assistance provided to build national capacity, are aligned with the 2013 Revised School Feeding Policy goals. In 2014, in accordance with the WFP Gender Policy, the revised logframe includes some performance indicators related to gender equality and empowerment as a cross-cutting result of the project, but no further action to implement them has been taken.

Results of the Operation

12. School feeding activities: Since the beginning of the project, beneficiaries and geographic targets were progressively increased from 12,000 to 67,000 primary schoolchildren, with equal participation of boys and girls; from two districts to all provinces except the capital Yerevan. The funding secured had reached 91.1 percent of requirements (US\$20.83 million) for the project by late December 2014.

13. The school feeding activities reached around 900 primary schools in 10 provinces, almost 62 percent of primary schools nationwide. In WFP assisted schools, children are provided with food five days a week, 180 days per year, according to one of two modalities: hot meals and fresh bread in two-thirds of the schools, and distribution of fruit bars in the remaining one-third. Funding shortfalls and delays in procurement of

² These included a Rapid Assessment of the Impact of the Global Financial Crisis, a WFP/United Nations Survey on the Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis and a Follow-up Rapid Assessment of the Impact of the Global Financial Crisis in Armenia

food commodities in 2012 meant there were fewer feeding days and less food being distributed than planned; in 2013, pipeline breaks for internationally purchased commodities also led to lower distributions than planned.

14. School attendance of both boys and girls in WFP-assisted primary schools has been very high during project implementation. Nevertheless, it is not possible to attribute this outcome to the school feeding activity only. Collection of data about drop-out and promotion rates has not been systematic enough over the period to enable any reliable assessment of outcomes regarding retention and performance of students in WFP-assisted schools.

15. The project design anticipated benefits related to improved schoolchildren's health and nutrition status, but there were no corresponding indicators in the initial logframe. No gender analysis was conducted either, and subsequently no relevant objectives have been incorporated into the project document. Consequently, these possible outcomes have not been monitored. Likewise, the CO did not carry out any comprehensive food security and vulnerability surveys to assess the impact of the project as a social safety net. The absence of follow-up does not allow any analysis related to this indicator.

16. Institutional and capacity development: WFP and its cooperating partner, Social and Industrial Food Services (SIFI), provided technical assistance to the Government to establish the foundations for a sustainable home-grown national school feeding programme. As a result the 'Sustainable School Feeding' Strategy, the Plan of Activities and a Pilot Project were approved by the Government in August 2013. As part of the plan for the progressive implementation of this strategy, two provinces have been taken over by the Government in September 2014, with a third to follow in January 2015.

17. The traditional roles of women and men in Armenian households put all child-rearing tasks in the domain of mothers' responsibilities. Hence, the school feeding committees in all WFP-assisted schools are totally feminized and no men/fathers are engaged in school feeding related activities on a daily basis.

18. In order to implement the pilot project in the handover provinces, a budget line was created within the MoES budget to ensure base funding for school feeding in the targeted schools up to the end of 2016. The pilot project launch nevertheless had to be delayed until the completion of basic repairs and equipment for kitchens and cafeterias, undertaken through additional funds provided by WFP.

Factors Affecting the Results

Internal factors (within WFP's control)

19. The Armenia DEV 200128 project document does not recommend, or even make reference to, any possible partnership with United Nations agencies present in the country. Collaboration with sister agencies has been non-existent and as a consequence, WFP CO has implemented its school feeding project in quasi-isolation.

20. The only domain within the project related to gender equality is covered through the indicator on boys' and girls' participation that was successfully achieved. The project document does not incorporate specific objectives and goals to promote women's empowerment, and the CO staff lacks capacity in gender-sensitive programming. The gender related aspects of the project as envisaged by the WFP Gender policy still require elaboration of a strategy to address these issues.

21. All activities carried out by SIFI since the beginning of its cooperation with WFP have been completed on time and reported in regular comprehensive narrative reports,

as well as in an impressive number of detailed specific annexes. It appears that one major component of the Armenia DEV 200128 project (capacity development and preparation of handover to Government) has been almost entirely outsourced to an external cooperating partner.

External factors (outside WFP's control)

22. The project leadership by the Armenian Government appears to have been limited. Although the School Feeding Inter-Ministerial Committee has contributed to the design and finalization of a National School Feeding Strategy, this body has never been involved in hands-on school feeding activities and therefore has not yet acquired the capacity to independently implement and monitor a national school feeding programme, which has still to be formulated. At provincial level, local authorities have not been directly involved in the day-to-day operationalizing of school feeding activities. At school level, head teachers play a major role in the implementation of school feeding activities, in close cooperation with parents' committees. Although highly dedicated to feeding school children, some school directors expressed their concerns regarding their new responsibilities, particularly those related to the purchase of food on the local market for which they thought they had no competency.

23. According to the Armenian National Statistical Service, in 2011 some 4.7 percent of children under 18 lived below the extreme poverty line and 41.9 percent below the poverty line, while extreme poverty and poverty rates in Armenia were 3.7 percent and 35.0 percent respectively. These figures are an obvious explanation of the limited financial participation in school feeding activities that can be expected from vulnerable households.

24. The achievement of gender equality in the project did not produce tangible effects in provision of better economic and social opportunities for women at household and community levels given the increased poverty rates, limitations of the labour market and little demonstration of the State's will to support women's empowerment programmes.

Overall Assessment and Conclusions

25. The current M&E system does not allow for a robust evaluation of the results of the direct feeding aspects of the operation: regarding education, it is not possible to attribute some objectively verified positive findings to school feeding only, while other expected outcomes related to drop-out and promotion rates have not been sufficiently documented. Likewise, there is a lack of sound information regarding the effective health and nutrition benefits for schoolchildren and socio-economic improvements for their families generated by the project that could support recommendations for its handover.

26. The 'Sustainable School Feeding Strategy' that has been approved by the Government is not a school feeding policy. It has been designed as a food service: provision of food to schoolchildren is its core element while alternative approaches could have been explored, such as conditional transfers (in the form of cash and/or vouchers) as part of social benefit plans for the most vulnerable households. This would have been in line with WFP's corporate school feeding policy that puts a great emphasis on school feeding as a social safety net.

27. The handover process recently launched in three provinces has resulted in two parallel systems: instead of a complementary decrease in WFP beneficiaries as the Government's programme grows, the CO plans to expand its operation to new schools or to additional classes in already-assisted schools and maintaining the existing 67,000 beneficiary caseload. This is in contradiction with both the transition to a nationally-owned school feeding programme and a possible exit strategy for WFP.

28. The examination of the information collected for this MTE in the light of the performance drivers commonly used to benchmark school feeding systems, in compliance with the five Policy goals of the 2013 WFP School Feeding Policy, shows that after four years of implementation the transition to a sustainable national home-grown school feeding programme is still at the very early stage.

Recommendations

29. The following prioritized recommendations present strategic, actionable and plausible options for improvement by the CO, in cooperation with its partners, for immediate implementation as well as looking ahead to the hand-over of activities to the Government scheduled in 2016.

Strategic

R1. Design and create a handover plan in conjunction with the Government as a roadmap to move towards a nationally owned programme in line with WFP's Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

R2. Actively assist with the development of a national school feeding programme based on clearly established national priorities and targeted at revised objectives.

R3. Promote gender balance in parents' committees and advocate for an increased men's presence on school feeding parents' committees.

Operational

R4. Encourage and facilitate an effective hands-on capacity development by duly assigned full-time Government school feeding staff, enabling joint implementation with relevant ministries and the progressive takeover of school feeding activities.

R5. Improve the M&E system through integrating school feeding indicators and data, particularly those related to students' attendance, retention and performance, within the broader regular framework of the Education Monitoring and Information System (EMIS) of the MoES.

R6. Generate replicable school feeding models that incorporate partnership among agencies and other actors, including the private sector, for further scale up in support of national priorities. In this perspective, reinforce cooperation with sister United Nations agencies.

Studies and Research

R7. Continue to invest in studies and research to underpin programme design (such as on the effectiveness of cash-based transfers as opposed to in-kind food; on worm infestation and deworming needs and practices; and on the increased use of locally processed and purchased food commodities).

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation Features

1. This Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Armenia Development Project 200128 ‘Development of Sustainable School Feeding’ (2010-2016) covers the period from 2010 to mid-November 2014. The project corresponds with the 2010–2015 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the major point of reference for strategic planning and alignment with partners. The project is based upon mutual agreement and cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Armenia (the Government) and WFP for the fulfilment of the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the World Food Summit, as furthered in a June 2011 Development Project Action Plan (DPAP) for School Feeding.

2. The MTE serves the dual objectives of accountability and learning to assess the performance and results of the project in line with WFP’s mandate (accountability); and to determine the reasons for observed success/failure, and draw lessons from experience to allow the country office to make informed strategic decisions about positioning itself in Armenia, form strategic partnerships, and improve operations design and implementation whenever possible (learning).

3. Lessons and good practices can be applied nationally, regionally and globally. As such, WFP’s Armenia Country Office (CO) will be the primary user of the evaluation report. Other key users will be WFP’s regional and headquarters offices, Government ministries and coordinating bodies, as well as regional (‘marzes’) offices and the communities benefiting from WFP assistance. Other stakeholders include United Nations agencies as well as WFP’s operational partners, donors and private sector actors. The results of the evaluation will contribute to help the phasing out process and handover of WFP’s School Feeding activities to the Government, which is expected to be completed in late 2016. The project is funded by the Russian Federation and is part of a regional initiative³ overseen by the WFP Regional Bureau (RB), with the lessons learned from Armenia expected to feed into future implementation in the other countries.

4. The Armenia MTE has been guided by the Terms of Reference (ToR) developed by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) in Rome (Annex 2). An Inception Package was developed to guide the process of the evaluation, to which the CO and RB provided extensive input. This document defined the scope and approach and represented the understanding between the OEV and the evaluation team of how the exercise would be conducted. An evaluation matrix (included as Annex 3) was developed to guide the process. The evaluation looked in depth at the three key questions of the evaluation which were as follows: Q1 - How appropriate is the operation? Q2 - What are the results of the operation? Q3 - Why and how has the operation produced the observed results?, as well as cross cutting issues as set out in the ToR. The purpose of this MTE was not to develop a SABER⁴ exercise, but the evaluation was to be built on the SABER framework as SABER will be rolled out in Armenia in 2015.

5. Quality assurance was assured through the use of the WFP Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) Checklist and the United Nations Evaluation Group guidance, as well as quality oversight by the KonTerra Group’s evaluation manager. The OECD/DAC recommended criteria were used to assess accountability and performance (relevance and

³ Other countries are the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

⁴ System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results.

appropriateness, connectedness, coherence, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness and impact), and the format and contents comply with the ALNAP proforma.

Methodology and Limitations

6. The evaluation team was composed of two independent consultants (including one Armenian national) with expertise in school feeding, capacity development and gender issues, and evaluation methodology. The country visit was conducted from 09 to 29 November 2014 and included data collection in the capital Yerevan and five regions (Ararat, Gegharkunik, Kotayk, Lori, Vayots Dzor).

7. The evaluation was facilitated by the efficient provision of secondary data by the CO and in-depth briefings by the CO and RB staff.

8. In order to analyze the data and to form conclusions and recommendations, the team collected information from a selection of stakeholders and triangulated different perspectives on key points of the analysis. Secondary data to help address key evaluation questions were gathered from the Armenia CO, WFP corporate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, and external United Nations, Government and NGO agencies. Nevertheless, the lack of systematic monitoring and absence of regular follow-up regarding some indicators (particularly related to schoolchildren's drop-out and promotion rates, household food consumption scores) prohibited an analysis of some expected outcomes.

9. Access to the totality of the documentation was limited by the language barrier for the non-Armenian member of the evaluation team, as some documents have not been provided in English, particularly from the main cooperating partner, the Russian NGO Social and Industrial Food Services (SIFI). Some essential documents were identified and fully translated from Armenian or Russian to English by professional translators hired by the Konterra Group, while some others were only summarized.

10. Structured interviews were held with staff from WFP, sister United Nations agencies, operating partners and other NGOs and donors. Focus group discussions were conducted with beneficiaries at school level. Although the evaluation team intended to use a gender aware approach, discussion groups were totally feminized reflecting traditional Armenian socio-cultural patterns regarding issues related to child feeding and education.

11. Debriefings of the initial findings were conducted in Yerevan on 27th November 2014 (internal to WFP) and 28th November 2014 (for external stakeholders), which contributed to fine-tuning the analysis.

1.2. Armenia Country Context

12. The Republic of Armenia is a small, landlocked country in the Caucasus region with a population of 2.97 million people. More than half the population is urban and one third lives in the capital, Yerevan. Armenia is a lower-middle income country.⁵ Between 2004 and 2008 GDP growth averaged 12 percent annually, led by the construction and services sectors, and made possible by high remittances and capital inflows.

13. The global economic crisis from 2008 reversed many of the country's gains. As a country whose economy relies on imports of food and fuel, Armenia faced a marked slowdown in growth and deteriorating living standards following a sharp drop in remittances in 2008 and the economic recession of 2009. Double-digit growth rates of the pre-crisis period were replaced by a 4.3 percent rate after the crisis, and this was expected

⁵ Per-capita GDP of US\$3,870 (GNI, 2013).

to reduce to just 3.2 percent in 2013. Reduction in private consumption and public investments underpinned the decline.⁶

14. The effect of the financial crisis on rural and urban poverty has been dramatic. The proportion of Armenians living below the poverty line was estimated to have reached 28.4 per cent in the second quarter of 2009, up from 25.6 percent in the same period one year earlier. The World Bank estimates that the poverty rate increased from 27.6 percent in 2008 to 35 percent in 2011.⁷

15. The situation affects women and men differently as the economic hardship and absence of workplaces aggravate the trends of labour migration among men, whereas women become more susceptible in communities as they come to be primary caregivers to their children and assume overall responsibility for maintaining their households. In the midst of these changes the negative impact on the health and education of children in low-income families can be dramatic. According to the 2010 Armenia Demographic and Health Survey⁸, stunting among children under five increased from 17 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2010. In seven out of 11 regions in Armenia, stunting is above 20 percent while in some regions the prevalence is even higher (23.3 percent in Gegharkunik, 32.3 percent in Aragatston, 36.5 percent in Syunik).

16. Although government spending on education increased from 1.2 percent of GDP in 2002 to 3.28 percent of GDP in 2012,⁹ most of the funds were allocated to teachers' salaries. The target agreed by the Government in the current UNDAF is four percent of GDP by 2015. However, budgetary restrictions made necessary by the financial crisis have had a negative impact on Government spending on the social sector, and have especially limited planned improvements in education. Expenditure on education as a percentage of total Government expenditure (all sectors) was almost the same in 2012 (13.7) as it was six years before (13.58 in 2006).

17. School enrolment is compulsory in Armenia until the ninth grade, but there was a worrying increase in the number of children dropping out of school at the time of the design of this project (from 1,417 in 2003 to 7,534 in 2007). Inequalities in access to education were a major concern: drop-out rates were higher in rural areas and among minority groups; enrolment rates were lower in rural areas; and rural residents were 1.8 times less likely to attend tertiary education than residents of urban areas. There were significantly lower enrolment rates for the poor population in high/upper secondary school and in preschools.

18. A UNICEF case study conducted before the 2008 crisis found that student absenteeism reached 10 percent, and was attributable to poverty, frequent sickness and the need to look after livestock or undertake other household chores. The crisis has made it even more difficult for children of poor parents to attend school regularly. The situation has worsened since that time: according to data issued by the National Service of Statistics in Armenia in November 2013, 41.9 percent of children live below the poverty line against the national average of 35 percent.

19. In 2009-2010 a series of studies showed that food insecurity in Armenia had increased. These included a Rapid Assessment of the Impact of the Global Financial Crisis, a WFP/United Nations Survey on the Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis and a Follow-up Rapid Assessment of the Impact of the Global Financial Crisis in Armenia. The latter,

⁶ Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2012, National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia.

⁷ <http://data.worldbank.org/country/armenia>

⁸ 2010 Armenia Demographic and Health Survey (2010 ADHS), National Statistical Service and Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, 2010.

⁹ Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

carried out in February 2010, recommended, among other things, the resumption of WFP assistance to school feeding in the most food-insecure provinces.

1.3. Operation Overview

20. The Armenia Development Project (DEV) 200128 ‘Development of Sustainable School Feeding’ was approved in May 2010 by the WFP Executive Board.¹⁰ The project is the successor of previous WFP school feeding activities in Armenia implemented since 2002 under the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO 100532) ‘Transitional Relief and Recovery Assistance to Vulnerable Groups’. Due to the planned phase-out of this latter operation, there was no school feeding activity during the 2008/2009 school year.

21. The operation was initially approved for a three year period (2010-2013) but was expanded and extended by three more years until 30 June 2016 through a budget revision.¹¹ The project supports inclusive education policies to ensure that vulnerable children have access to quality schooling, and to foster attendance, retention and learning. It aims to reduce hunger and to achieve universal primary education in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1 and 2 by enabling children from poor rural areas to benefit fully from primary education.

22. The initial goals of the project were to improve children’s access to primary education and establish the foundations for a sustainable home-grown national school feeding programme. Expected outcomes included: i) increased regular school attendance, retention and school performance; and ii) a national school feeding strategy and implementation plan. A new budget revision approved in April 2013 maintained the overall goal of the operation, which is to develop a sustainable project that can be taken over and expanded by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to include all primary school children. The project aims to ensure that: i) a comprehensive hand-over of WFP school feeding activities is in place and implemented and ii) there is continued regular school attendance, retention and school performance.

23. Although the promotion of women’s participation and gender equality is clearly outlined in the WFP gender policy, no relevant goals and objectives were set in the initial project design documents, thus leaving no room for reflection thereof in the programme’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. Meanwhile, the need for such a gender-sensitive approach is articulated as the data gathered from various sources testifies to the growing economic vulnerability of women, leading to their overall increased exposure to various forms of discrimination including in the labour market, their participation in social life, and their susceptibility to violence.

24. To achieve these outcomes WFP implements two kinds of activities: on one hand WFP provides direct food assistance to schoolchildren benefitting from the operation. School meals are provided five days a week and 180 days a year in primary schools, in the form of hot soup and fortified bread in two-thirds of the schools, and fortified fruit bars in schools where meals cannot be prepared. WFP food is supplemented with fruit and vegetables purchased by parent–teacher committees from local smallholder farmers to enhance nutritional value of the meals. The project was previously complemented by Government work (food for assets) to upgrade schools that had no kitchens or cafeterias under the PRRO 100532, which ended in June 2012.

25. On the other hand, WFP aims to augment the capacity of the Government of Armenia to set up a sustainable national school feeding programme and ensure the

¹⁰ WFP/EB.A/2010/9-A/3, 24 May 2010.

¹¹ WFP/EB.2/2012/9-B/2, 3 October 2012.

transition of the programme to national ownership through providing technical assistance to the Government, in cooperation with the Russian NGO SIFI. This latter cooperation is part of a broader agreement between WFP and the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation. The Armenia DEV 200128 is funded by the Russian Federation and is a part of a regional initiative whose main objective is to support governments' national school feeding programmes. The other countries in the regional intervention are the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1. Appropriateness of the Operation

26. Diverse studies (see § 19 above) carried out in the aftermath of the 2008 global economic crisis established that there was a need for support for poor and vulnerable groups, particularly for children whose education and health status was significantly affected. At that time, the resumption of WFP assistance to school feeding in the most food-insecure regions was recommended as an appropriate means to help meet the needs of the food insecure population. In comparison with 2008, the extreme poverty rate in 2012 increased by 1.8 times (or by 1.2 percentage points); the share of the very poor increased by 7.1 percent (or by 0.9 percentage points), and total poverty increased by 17.4 percent (or by 4.8 percentage points).¹² With an average 35 percent of the population living under the poverty line in 2012 (against 28.4 percent in 2009), 19.9 percent very poor and 3.7 percent extremely poor, the operation remains relevant.

27. The WFP Executive Board approved the Armenia DEV 200128 in May 2010. In June 2011 a Development Project Action Plan (DPAP) was signed between the Armenian Government and WFP establishing the mutual responsibilities of the two bodies with regard to the implementation of the project. Through this DPAP, the Government recognized that 'school feeding programmes are an effective social safety net that also promote long term investment in human capital by achieving improvements in nutrition, education, value transfer, gender equality and wider socio-economic benefits'. The interest shown by the Government appears to have been to a certain extent circumstantial as, at that time, school feeding was not among the stated national development priorities of the country. For example, there was no mention of school feeding in the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.¹³

28. Alignment of the project with national policies remains questionable as school feeding does not appear in more recent reference documents like the 'Program for the Government of the Republic of Armenia' adopted in May 2014, as well as in long-term perspective documents like the Education section of the Armenia Development Strategy for 2014-2025.

29. The project is coherent with the approach and objectives presented in the UNDAF for 2010-2015, particularly with the Outcome 3 that aims at improving access and quality of social services especially for vulnerable groups, and the Agency Output 2.1.3. which contributes to increased national and local capacities to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women. Similarly, the project contributes towards the achievement of

¹² National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. *Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia*. Key findings of the 2012 Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ICLS). <http://armstat.am/en/?nid=81&jid=1503>

¹³ Republic of Armenia. Sustainable Development Program (SDP), Yerevan, October 2008.

MDGs 1 (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and 2 (Achieve universal primary education) to which the Armenian Government has subscribed.

30. The Armenia DEV 200128 has been formulated under the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013¹⁴ that marked a historical shift from WFP as a food aid agency to WFP as a food assistance agency. The project was then in line with the Strategic Objectives 4 (Reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition) and 5 (Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger, including through hand-over strategies and local purchases). In 2014, the CO revised the project's logical framework to be in accordance with the new global Strategic Objectives and related performance indicators introduced with the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) adopted by WFP for the period 2014-2017.¹⁵

31. The immediate and long-term benefits expected from the project (enhanced access to education, improved health and nutrition of school-age children, and contributions to the social and economic development of the country) were coherent with the WFP School Feeding Policy adopted in 2009,¹⁶ which highlighted the benefits of school feeding as a hunger solution and safety net. The emphasis put in the project on the handover of activities to the Government, and the related technical assistance provided in cooperation with SIFI, to build national capacity, are in line with the goals indicated by the 2013 Revised School Feeding Policy.¹⁷

32. The project started as a pilot with a limited geographical coverage and was progressively expanded to cover all provinces, apart from the capital Yerevan. Considering, on one side, that the perspective for WFP is to hand over the project to the Government and that, on the other side, the national project intends to cover all primary grade students in the country, the expanded coverage approach adopted until now by the CO seems fully justified, subject to the implementation of an inversely proportional decrease from WFP's side as the Government programme develops.

33. The school feeding activity under the earlier PRRO 100532 involved the participation of women kitchen helpers who received a family food ration (estimated for five members per family) as compensation for their work preparing the meals. The DEV 200128 benefitted from this practice until the end of the PRRO in December 2012. The budget revision approved by the RB in April 2013 included a food-for-work (FFW) component for 1,300 school kitchen helpers as an integral part of the school feeding project. This measure was limited to 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 school years given that the responsibility of paying the kitchen helpers would be fully taken over by the Ministry of Education at the beginning of the 2014/2015 school year.

34. A budget revision adopted in April 2013 points out that “once the project is handed over to the Government, the use of cash or vouchers can be envisaged under the government-run national school feeding programme to pay for the kitchen helpers”. This kind of transfer modality (that is: cash/voucher conditional transfers instead of in-kind food deliveries) has never been envisaged regarding the school feeding itself, although the initial Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IWG) established under the first DPAP was supposed to “implement technical and legal measures necessary to integrate a school meals project into national safety net systems”. The participation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (MLSI) in this coordination body would have helped, considering the school feeding project under a social protection perspective.

¹⁴ WFP/EB.A/2008/5-A/1/Rev.1, 19 May 2008.

¹⁵ WFP/EB.A/2013/5-A/1, 8 May 2013.

¹⁶ WFP/EB.2/2009/4-A, 8 October 2009.

¹⁷ WFP/EB.2/2013/4-C, 25 October 2013.

35. While the Armenia DEV 200128 is in line with the 2011-2015 Gender Policy Strategic Program of the Armenian Government as it relates to the promotion of gender equality and socio-economic rights of women, no gender analysis was conducted at the project design stage and subsequently no relevant objectives have been incorporated into the project document and the initial logical framework, as should have been done according to the WFP Gender Policy.¹⁸ In 2014, in accordance with the new Strategic Results Framework, the CO has formally introduced into the project's logical framework some performance indicators related to gender equality and empowerment as a cross-cutting result of the project.

36. Through its two main components (direct food assistance to school children on the one side, and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of Government on the other) the Armenia DEV 200128 is in harmony with the school feeding and regional capacity development initiative, whose purpose is to support governments in bringing national school feeding programmes to higher levels of quality and sustainability through capacity development and budgetary support.

Summary of Key Findings: Appropriateness of the Operation

- With an average 35 percent of the population living below the poverty line in 2012 (against 28.4 percent in 2009), 19.9 percent very poor and 3.7 percent extremely poor, the operation remains relevant.
- The coherence of the project with national policies is questionable.
- The project is coherent with the approach and objectives presented in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2010-2015 . Nevertheless, WFP has not established technical partnerships with other United Nations agencies.
- The project was in line with the Strategic Objectives (SOs) 4 and 5 prevailing at the time of its design, and has been revised in accordance with the new global SOs and related performance indicators introduced with the Strategic Plan and the Strategic Results Framework (SRF).
- The project objectives were coherent with WFP's 2009 School Feeding Policy and aligned with the 2013 Revised School Feeding Policy goals.
- The progressive expansion of the geographical coverage is coherent with the Government's national perspective.
- There has been a lack of investigation regarding the most appropriate transfer modality adopted by the project.

2.2. Results of the Operation

Efficiency

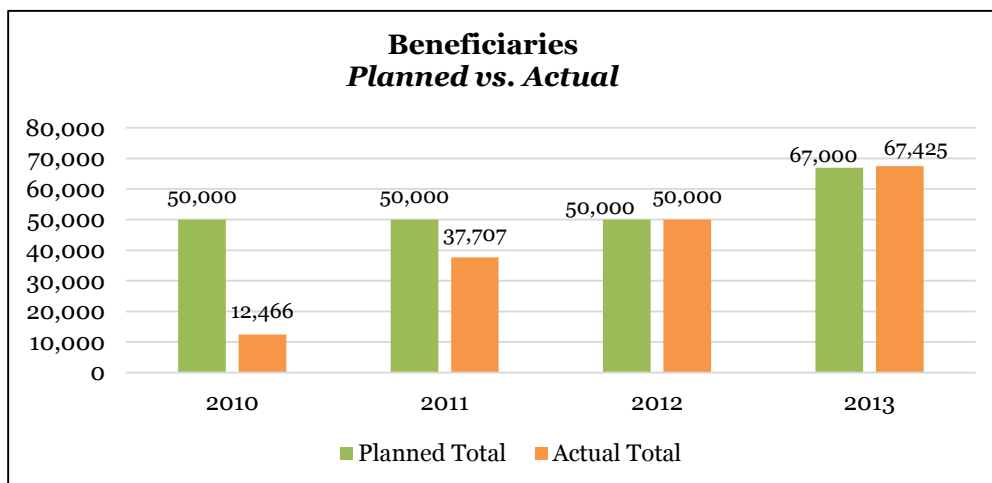
37. The Armenia DEV 200128 began in 2010 as a pilot activity targeting 12,000 primary school children in two administrative districts. The number of beneficiaries was progressively increased to reach the initially planned number of 50,000 in 2012. In accordance with the DPAP signed between the Government and WFP in June 2011, the project should have ended in June 2013. It was nevertheless extended in time until 30 June 2016 through a budget revision approved by the Executive Board in November 2012. It was then decided to target 10,000 additional students in three districts (Ararats, Vayots Dzor

¹⁸ WFP/EB.1/2009/5-A/Rev.1, 10 February 2009.

and Syunik) thus bringing the total to 60,000 schoolchildren in 800 schools in the most food-insecure areas.

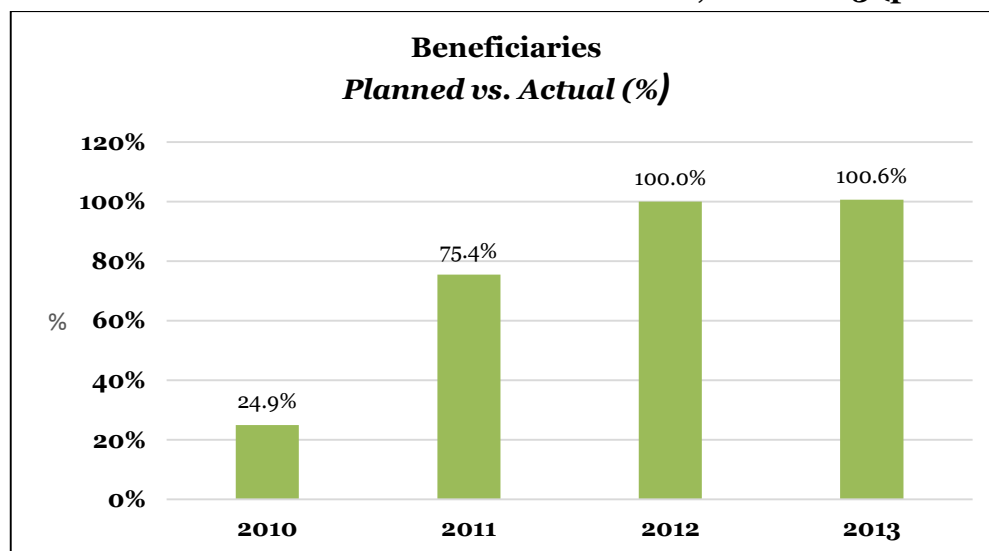
38. In April 2013, another budget revision approved by the RB allowed a further increase of 7,000 children. The increase of the number of beneficiaries (total of 67,000 schoolchildren in some 900 schools at the beginning of the 2013/2014 school year), the three-year extension and the territorial expansion (all provinces covered except the capital Yerevan) were formalized through an amendment to the initial DPAP. The progressively improving level of realization of the planned number of beneficiaries is reflected in Figures 1 and 2 below:

Figure 1: Planned vs. Actual Numbers of Beneficiaries, 2010-2013



Source: WFP Standard Project Reports

Figure 2: Planned vs. Actual Numbers of Beneficiaries, 2010-2013 (percentages)



Source: WFP Standard Project Reports

39. An equal participation of boys and girls was also ensured by the project resulting in meeting project targets, as 33,729 girls and 33,696 boys (total: 67,425) were covered by the school feeding activities in 2013.

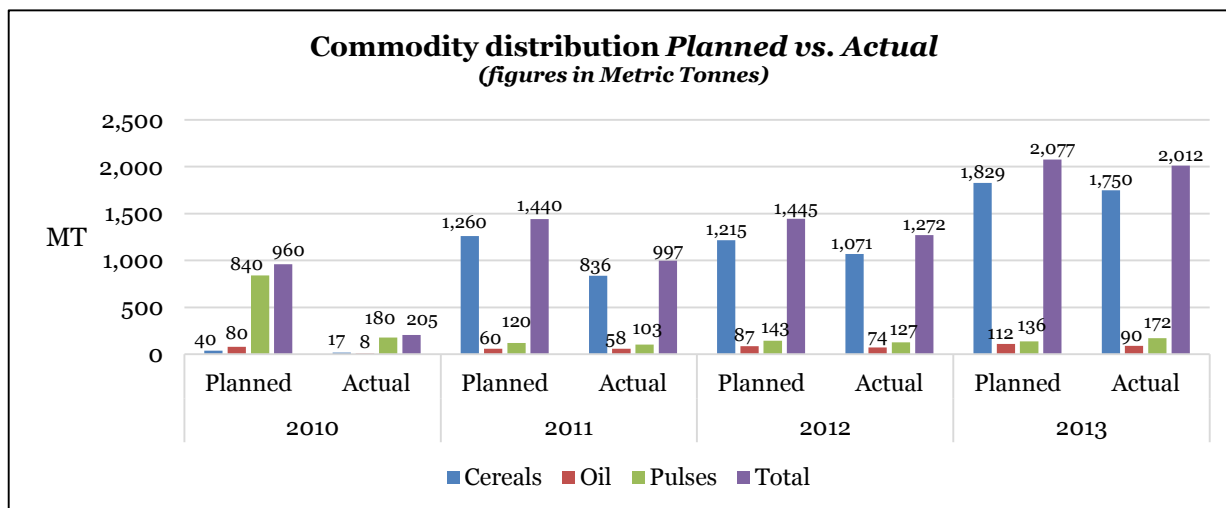
40. In WFP assisted schools, children are provided with food five days a week, 180 days per year, according to one of two modalities: hot meals and fresh bread in two-thirds of the

schools, and distribution of fruit bars in the remaining one-third. The allocation of feeding modalities among assisted schools was dependent upon the availability of appropriate kitchen/cafeteria facilities at the schools, with this information being determined on the basis of questionnaires completed by all headmasters.

41. Considering that a number of schools were unable to implement wet feeding due to not having appropriate kitchen/cafeteria facilities, in the second semester of the 2011/2012 school year, with the financial support of the Open Society Foundation, WFP introduced the dry feeding modality consisting of fruit bars: a local biscuit production company uses WFP-provided micronutrient-fortified wheat flour, together with locally produced dry fruit, to produce the fruit bars and delivers them to the concerned schools.

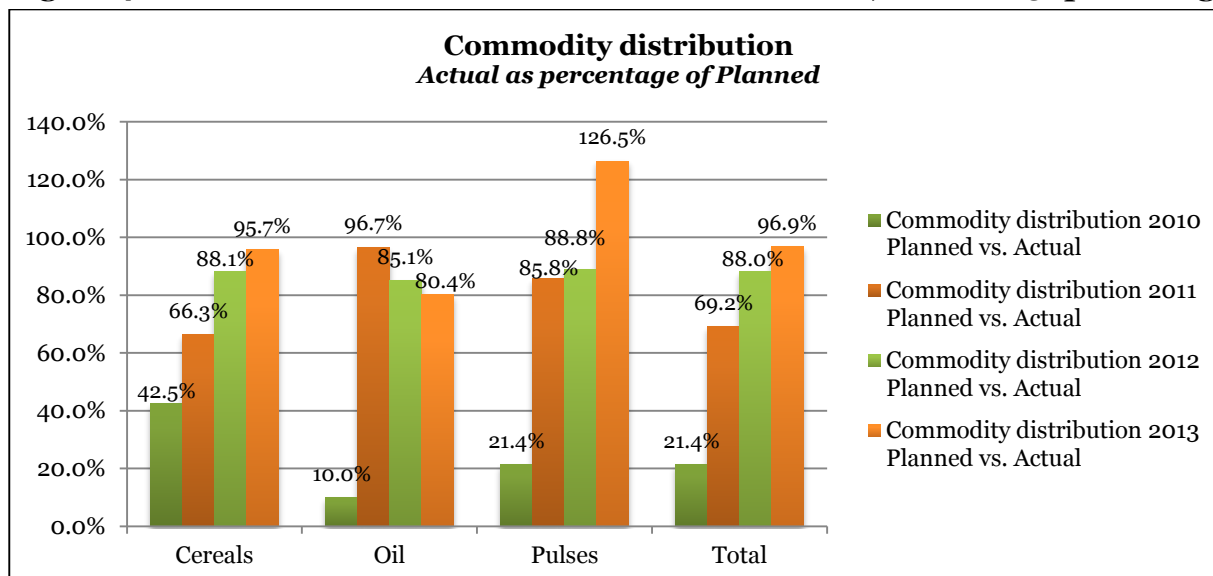
42. At the beginning of the project, the daily ration for the wet meals consisted of 210g of wheat flour, 10g of vegetable oil and 20g of pulses. This ration was later changed to 180g, 15g and 30g respectively, in line with the recommended caloric value for children attending half-day schools. Parents contributed with fresh vegetables, fruit, salt and fuel. Due to changes in the wet ration size and the reduced number of schools assisted through this modality, the amount of food actually delivered in 2011/2012 was lower than planned. At the beginning of the 2012/2013 school year, in order to ensure nutritional diversification, buckwheat, rice and pasta were added to the food basket through a budget revision (BR No 3). In 2012, due to funding shortfalls and delays in procurement of food commodities, there were fewer feeding days resulting in less food distributed than planned. In 2013, delays in the arrival of internationally purchased commodities resulted in pipeline breaks, which in turn led to a lower distribution than planned. The evolution of the distribution of food over the period is shown in Figure 3 below, with the percentages of actual versus planned amounts shown in Figure 4:

Figure 3: Planned vs Actual Distribution of Commodities, 2010-2013



Source: WFP Standard Project Reports

Figure 4: Planned vs Actual Distribution of Commodities, 2010-2013 (percentages)



Source: WFP Standard Project Reports

Effectiveness

43. WFP CO has set up a comprehensive system to collect data at school level on both food distribution and use, and schoolchildren’s educational performance. Forms prepared by WFP are completed on a monthly basis by school headmasters and sent to a school feeding focal point staff member within the education department of the district administration. Once collected, the focal point forwards the forms to WFP to populate the M&E project database. No copy of these forms is sent to the MoES, which is not involved at central level in the data collection process. The information about the project implementation is complemented and verified by regular school visits carried out by three WFP Food Aid Monitors.

44. According to data collected through the M&E system, school attendance of boys and girls in WFP-assisted primary schools has been very high during project implementation. The last updated data (for 2013) show that 99.1 percent of schoolchildren attended school regularly (96.45 percent among girls). Nevertheless, in the absence of any additional information, it is not possible to attribute this outcome to the school feeding activity only.

45. During the internal debriefing session the evaluation team underlined the lack of impact studies comparing WFP-assisted and non-assisted schools. The RB reminded the team that there is currently no corporate requirement for COs to conduct impact studies using control groups or comparing trends at national or regional levels. In addition, the RB stressed that it cannot be expected for a small CO to engage in these rather complex processes. Supporting impact studies would require additional staffing. However, the RB recognizes that it should be possible to compare assisted schools at national and possibly regional levels.

46. According to the logical framework attached to the initial project document and revised on the occasion of budget revisions, other education indicators related to the project's objectives have been collected by the CO and reported in the annual Standard Project Reports (SPRs). Nevertheless collection of data about drop-out and promotion rates has not been systematic enough over the period to enable any reliable assessment of outcomes regarding retention and performance of students in WFP-assisted schools.

47. In addition to education outcomes, the project anticipates benefits related to schoolchildren's health and nutrition status. This was not reflected in the initial logical framework which, in accordance with the Strategic Results Framework prevailing at the time of the project's design, did not include indicators in this area. Consequently, these possible outcomes have not been monitored.

48. Likewise, for staffing reasons mentioned above, the CO did not carry out comprehensive food security and vulnerability surveys to assess the impact of the project as a social safety net that was expected to improve food security among poor households. SPR 2011 included data on the percentage of households with borderline Food Consumption Scores, but there was no indication about the way data were collected and the calculation procedure. In addition, the absence of follow-up does not allow any analysis related to this indicator.

49. Some results are more qualitative and cannot necessarily be measured in quantitative terms. Anecdotal information from teachers suggests that alleviation of short-term hunger enables an improved concentration by children while in the classroom. Focus group discussions with parents and teachers have highlighted that children developed self-discipline, better nutritional behaviour and socialization skills: eating together helps develop a good fellowship; and school feeding has inculcated the habit of eating breakfast.¹⁹ The project has had a positive impact on boys' and girls' overall social skills development in terms of building their social interaction competencies and life skills, through creating a welcoming environment for social inclusion and equitable relations for all, including boys, girls, and the poor and disabled.

50. In terms of unexpected outcomes, a common effect of school feeding programmes is children shifting from a non-assisted school to another assisted school. During field visits the ET was informed that this effect has been insignificant in Armenia.

Sustainability

Policy Frameworks

51. As indicated in the initial project document, one of the main objectives of the project is to establish the foundations for a sustainable homegrown national school feeding programme.

52. The concluded agreement between WFP and SIFI envisioned carrying out a number of research and development activities according to a very detailed work plan covering diverse areas, such as the analysis of local food markets and development of recommendations for locally produced food products; the establishment of a database on the existing legislation in Armenia regarding all supplies provided to schools, food safety and agricultural production, with proposals for improving the legislation provided; and development of a website²⁰ (in Armenian, Russian and English languages) aimed at increasing awareness on the school feeding programme in Armenia as well as attracting funds for the programme. Additionally, a group of officials from MoES went on a school feeding study tour to the Republic of Mordovia (Mordvinia), one among the 44 federal subjects²¹ (out of 85) of the Russian Federation where SIFI had helped the modernization of food services.

¹⁹ A study (*Health behaviors of Armenian schoolchildren as a risk factor for developing NCDs*) [non-communicable diseases] published in May 2014 by The American University of Armenia, reveals that only 57% of 15-year old boys and 46% of girls have breakfast every day on weekdays; with age the prevalence of having breakfast decreases; adolescents from villages have breakfast less often; 19% of boys and 30% of girls never have breakfast during weekdays.

²⁰ www.schoolfeeding.am

²¹ The constituent entities of Russia, its top-level political divisions according to the Constitution of Russia

53. Prior to the agreement with SIFI regarding technical assistance, in December 2010 WFP had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV). The MASHAV contribution enabled the organization of a capacity building stakeholder workshop held in Yerevan in 2011 to help the MoES to secure commitment through an agreed road map for the handover of WFP's DEV 200128 by 2013, and the formulation of a national school feeding policy as well as relevant follow up activities to the workshop.²²

54. As a result of joint effort by members of the inter-ministerial group (see § 60 below), WFP CO staff and experts from SIFI, the Armenian Government adopted two principal documents in the school feeding area:

- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 52 dated 27 December 2012: “On Approval of the Concept of the ‘Sustainable School Feeding’ Project”;
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Armenia No. 33 dated 22 August 2013: “On Approval of the ‘Sustainable School Feeding’ Strategy, Plan of Activities and Pilot Project”.

Financial capacity

55. As Armenia is not classified as a Least Developed Country (LDC), the Government is responsible for covering internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) costs for WFP non-relief activities. As set out in the initial project document and confirmed in the 2011 DPAP, for the first year of the project (school year 2010/2011) WFP exceptionally covered 100 percent of ITSH expenses. It was agreed that the Government would cover 50 percent of ITSH costs in the second year and 100 percent in the third year. This agreement was effectively achieved.

56. The budget revision No 3 (October 2012) increased the number of beneficiaries (from 50,000 to 60,000), which in turn resulted in an increased commodity requirement of 5,508 mt and subsequent increased associated ITSH costs. This was replicated under the BR No 4 (April 2013) which raised the number of beneficiaries to 67,000 with an additional food requirement of 1,488 mt. On the occasion of this latter BR, it was indicated that funds disbursed by the Government to cover ITSH should not be considered as a contribution to the project but should be confirmed as financial support directed to a Trust Fund of Service Agreement.

57. The lack of basic facilities enabling hot feeding in schools is commonly considered as an impediment for project handover and sustainability. A needs assessment, carried out by SIFI in cooperation with the authorities of the two administrative areas (Vayots Dzor and Syunik) that were handed over to the Government in September 2014, has identified the quantity of required kitchen and cafeteria basic repairs, installation of drinking water as well as the provision of basic equipment, that is required to allow the preparation of hot meals. To facilitate a successful handover and ensure sustainability of the national project, a budget increase allowing infrastructural development in the two districts was approved by WFP RB (BR No 6, April 2014).

58. As already mentioned (see § 33 above), school meals are prepared and served by women kitchen helpers. During the 2013-2014 school year there were 1,900 kitchen helpers working in 800 WFP-assisted schools. Through the BR No 4 (April 2013) this

²² Following the 2011 workshop, diverse activities have been carried out with the financial support of the MASHAV contribution, notably: implementation in 2012 of a Healthy Eating Habits Project, in cooperation with the NGO Save the Children, consisting of the development, printing and distribution of teacher's and student's educational materials on healthy nutrition; feasibility study and piloting a school feeding modality with local-produced nutritious fruit bars; series of training at central, administrative district and field level.

complementary food-for-work (FFW) activity was included as an integral part of the Armenia DEV 200128, being understood that this would be a temporary measure as the Government would take it over at the beginning of the 2014/2015 school year.

59. In March 2014, the MoES indicated a difficulty in being able to finance their responsibility in relation to the value of food to be provided. Considering that the role of kitchen helpers is indispensable for implementation, in order to avoid a risk of project failure for the upcoming 2014/2015 school year a new budget revision (BR No 7, July 2014) was approved by WFP's RB to allow reimbursement of the school feeding kitchen helpers' labour from 01 September 2014 until 30 June 2016. However, in the two pilot administrative areas of the project being taken over by the Ministry in the 2014/2015 school year (covering 200 kitchen helpers) the Government agreed that the helpers will each receive AMD 10 per day from the cash contributions paid to each school (see § 79 below). Thus, for the current number of 1,900 kitchen helpers, those receiving FFW has reduced to 1,700, with the remaining 200 being paid in cash.

Institutional capacity and coordination

60. At the beginning of the project a national inter-ministerial coordination body, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education, was set up with the participation of designated senior officials and technical staff from the Ministries of Education and Science, Labour and Social Affairs, and Agriculture. This coordination mechanism was established to supervise the implementation of the direct food assistance component of the DEV 200128 starting in September 2010 on one hand, and to steer the development of a national school feeding policy and implement the necessary technical and legal measures to integrate a school feeding programme into national safety net systems on the other hand.

61. In December 2013, following a decision from the Minister of Education,²³ the initial coordination body was replaced by a School Feeding Inter-Ministerial Committee (SFIMC) including the representatives of the Ministries of Education and Science, Territorial Management, Healthcare, and Agriculture, along with WFP and SIFI. The Head of the Department for Development Programs and Monitoring within MoES has been appointed as the Head of SFIMC, amongst his other duties. The 'Sustainable School Feeding Strategy' document itself points out that 'the involvement of the ministries in the Project is very limited'.

62. The school feeding strategy approved in August 2013 provides clear indications about the institutional framework that should have been established to coordinate school feeding activities in Armenia:

- Project implementation will be done by the MoES' Centre of Educational Projects Project Implementation Unit (CEP PIU), which will be equipped with relevant specialists. The capacity of the CEP PIU will be developed in parallel with the expansion of the project, which will be accomplished with a view to enabling it to act independently as a pivotal entity of the system of school feeding by the end of the project.
- During the first year the CEP PIU was to have participated in the WFP-implemented project and acquire experience in the related functions. During the second year the CEP PIU will assume project implementation under the pilot project in one of the provinces where WFP currently does not implement school feeding.

²³ Order No. 1415-A/K dated 23 December 2013 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia.

- In subsequent years the responsibility of project implementation will gradually be transferred to the CEP PIU in all the provinces, with increased project funding from the Government budget. The responsibility of the CEP PIU will include its participation in the implementation of pilot micro-projects.

63. With the support from the World Bank, the CEP PIU is involved in education reform. WFP CO staff, SIFI experts and the Head of the School Feeding Steering Committee within MoES had several meetings with the CEP PIU, and invited them to a number of seminars in the provinces. The CEP PIU has nevertheless never been directly involved in school feeding responsibilities/activities. Other stakeholders suggested that the absence of a school feeding unit or some other structure acting as such within MoES is due to the shortage of funds.

Design and implementation

64. As a corollary to the absence of a national school feeding management unit within MoES, no M&E system has yet been put in place within the lead institution. Until now, activities implemented in the wake of the approval of the National School Feeding Strategy, notably the preparation of pilot projects in Vayots Dzor and Syunik, have been carried out by SIFI in cooperation with district authorities ('marzpetaran') and facilitated by WFP. As one example: on the occasion of a meeting held in April 2014 in the Governor's office of Vayots Dzor, in preparation of the taking over of school feeding activities by the Government, SFIMC requested the Deputy Director of SIFI to draft a methodological manual on organizing school feeding in Vayots Dzor.

65. WFP puts a great emphasis on the use of locally produced food: "To develop links between school feeding and local agricultural production where possible and feasible" is one of the five objectives of the 2013 revised School Feeding Policy, which points out that "WFP will focus increasingly on helping countries to establish and maintain nationally owned programmes linked to local agricultural production". The concept note elaborated by the RB on the school feeding and regional capacity development programme was also very clear when specifying that: "to the maximum extent possible and to ensure sustainability, preference will be given to the use of locally produced food, including fortified processed food". In Armenia, the MoU between the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation and WFP stipulates that "WFP shall use 75 percent of the contribution to purchase commodities of Russian origin and the remaining 25 percent shall be used to purchase commodities on the local market. WFP shall decide the times when local purchases shall be made, in accordance with WFP's Regulations and Rules".

66. SIFI carried out a feasibility study²⁴ on the efficiency of the use of locally produced and processed products. Research on the development of agricultural branches, food and processing industries, food markets with consideration of the foreign trade of food products and agricultural raw products was specially emphasized. This in-depth documented survey listed a large number of food items to assess their availability on the Armenian local market and possible use in school feeding menus. One of the conclusions of the study was: "Of the 32 names of products for school meals 22 (70 percent) can be provided by local production, with the exception of wheat, rice, buckwheat, peas, lentils, sugar, frozen fish, vegetable oil, tea, and baker's yeast which have to be provided at the expense of imports."

67. Considering that the potential market for school and pre-school feeding was 430,900 beneficiaries against 67,000 schoolchildren presently covered through DEV

²⁴ 'Technical and economic evaluation of the effectiveness of using local Armenian products instead of imported processed products', [in Russian], SIFI (undated)

200128, the study concluded that this market has significant potential for further development. In addition, one key finding of the study underlined that: "Calculations show that the purchase of local products is more profitable for the State budget, even if the price of local products is up to 20 percent higher than imports. This is due to the fact that local production is a source of tax revenue (VAT, pension fund contributions, etc.), as well as ensur[ing] the creation of jobs in the agricultural sector of the country."

68. Data provided by WFP through the SPRs show that since the beginning of the project, except for locally-produced dried fruit used for the production of fruit bars, all commodities were purchased from Russia. In an internal interim evaluation²⁵ of DEV 200128, the CO noted: "WFP Armenia needs assistance in knowledge and technology transfer to develop home-grown school feeding (HGSF)."

69. The evaluation team does not intend to make a recommendation about a percentage of local/international purchase that has been decided through a mutually agreed MoU between WFP HQs and the Russian Ministry of Finance, but to underline the discrepancy between widespread corporate guidelines about local purchases, from RB as well as from the SF policy or from the last Strategic Plan, and this specific agreement. Although a study has been conducted within the framework of the project that could help in developing local purchase and agricultural supply chains solutions, the CO has not benefited from some support to acquire the capacity of taking advantage of its findings.

Community roles

70. Parents and communities participate in schools by contributing food and other items, in-kind or in cash, and playing a role in implementing school feeding. The above-mentioned internal evaluation noted increased parents' trust towards the project resulting in improved contributions from the community and parents. Among the schools visited by the evaluation team, the amount of voluntary cash contributions varied from AMD200 (US\$0.45) to AMD1,000 (US\$2.31) per child per month with an average of AMD500 (US\$1.16)²⁶. Not all parents can afford this amount. In one school, around one third of parents did not have the capacity to contribute in cash despite all children benefiting from the hot meals. Parents' cash contributions allow the purchase of additional food items, such as meat, once or twice a month (many children come from poor families where meat is seldom consumed) as well as non-food items, in some cases fuel, required for implementation.

71. There was an important and active participation of representatives of parents' councils during focus group meetings with the evaluation team, consistent with their increased involvement in the project. Anecdotal information from schoolteachers indicated that, due to the project, parents' visits to the schools had become more frequent, keeping children's needs in focus and strengthening parent-school relations.

72. The traditional roles played by women and men have not changed considerably as a result of the project, as traditionally in Armenian households all child rearing tasks, including those related to feeding and education, lay in the domain of mothers' responsibilities. Hence, the school feeding committees in all WFP-assisted schools are totally feminized and no men/fathers are engaged in school feeding related activities on a daily basis.

73. This phenomenon can be explained as another cultural standard or a stereotype that prescribes women to bear the primary (and often the sole) responsibility for child rearing

²⁵ 'Mid-term Evaluation of WFP's 'Development of Sustainable School Feeding in Armenia' Project – 200128', WFP Armenia Country Office (undated).

²⁶ US\$1.00 = AMD433.20 (UN Operational Rate of Exchange, 01 December 2014).

related issues both at home and at school. Women who are engaged in these committees explain the absence of men in the activities by the lack of interest towards school-life, as well as by low employment rates amongst women thus allowing them to dedicate more time to children and school feeding related tasks.

74. Nevertheless, as mentioned during discussions with parents (mothers) representing the school feeding committees, men can be involved occasionally and only in cases when physical help is needed, such as to unload the food packs or to fix some utilities/kitchen appliances. Moreover, women themselves do not see any other prospect for fathers' engagement in the project, as it would not be perceived as gender-appropriate behaviour in the first place. At the same time, the phenomenon of little involvement of men in overall child-care related tasks is greatly conditioned by the high-level of labour migration in rural areas of Armenia leaving on average about 30 percent of households without men (of whom 76 percent are married).²⁷

75. Despite this, teachers mentioned that the occasional participation of men in school feeding related events is very beneficial and desirable. They show greater interest towards their own children's school-life and readiness to care and support towards other children who are in need of financial support.

76. The project resulted in increased employment amongst women, as demonstrated by the fact that almost 99 percent of 1,900 cooks/kitchen helpers are women of different ages. Although driven by the local cultural norms mentioned, this can nevertheless be considered as a valuable support to household incomes by alleviating the economic burden on women, especially in the context of increasing poverty and unemployment in rural regions. On average, women earn 36 percent less than men in Armenia and only 56 percent of women aged 15-64 participate in the labour market vs. 78 percent for men. This can be attributed to several reasons: firstly, self-selection among women into shorter hours and lower-paying jobs (like teaching, nursing, etc.), reflected in the occupational segregation patterns observed, might explain much of the gender wage gap; secondly, discrimination by employers might further contribute to explaining the inequality in average wages. Lastly, the functional roles of men and women within each economic activity are likely to be at the root of the wage gap.²⁸

77. It also indicates the very low level of interest that men have towards these jobs, because of the lower financial value of this work: the FFW rations provided to the cooks and/or helpers equal about AMD15,000 (c. US\$33.94) per month, or one third of the state approved minimum salary rate. Thus, as confirmed through numerous interviews in schools, the compensation provided for the work is only a minor incentive and complementary to the existing sense of parents' ownership and enthusiasm of the activities at community level. At the same time, it is not obvious if some parents fulfilling these roles will stay committed to the programme upon the handover from WFP to the Government, as many schools (especially the smaller ones) may simply not be able to afford to hire cooks and kitchen helpers within the state allocated budget.

Handover to Government

78. The National School Feeding Strategy document, approved in August 2013, includes a plan for the progressive implementation of the 'Sustainable School Feeding Project' by the Government, with a comprehensive takeover of WFP-administered school feeding activities by Government scheduled by the end of 2016. At the time of this MTE, two provinces (Vayots Dzor and Syunik) had already been handed over (in September 2014),

²⁷ Labour migration in Armenian communities, EFP, CRRRCR, 2008

²⁸ Armenia country Gender Assessment. World Bank, Report No 88358-AM

with a third (Ararat) to follow in January 2015. The plan is summarized in Table 1 below, as it is presented in the National School Feeding Strategy document:

Table 1: Plan for Incremental Implementation of Government Takeover

2013	2014-2016	2016-2021	Long-term perspective
Preparatory period (when the Project is implemented by WFP)	Implementation of a pilot in Vayots Dzor Province, while in 2015-2016 implementation also in Syunik and Ararat provinces (by the Government, with limited support from external donors)	Implementation of the 'Sustainable School Feeding Project' by the Government, with limited support from external donors	Independent implementation of the 'Sustainable School Feeding Project' by the Government, (using the internal resources of the Government budget and the resources of internal donors)

Source: National School Feeding Strategy, Government of the Republic of Armenia

79. Starting from September 2014, the Armenian Government has gradually taken responsibility to ensure the base funding of school feeding, which has been established by SIFI at AMD140²⁹ per student per day, to provide 280 Kcal/day. The base daily diet includes 160ml of hot milk and 60g of biscuits or buns. To ensure diversity of the diet, children will be provided with alternative food items including milk with cocoa, kefir, yogurt, juice, etc. Out of the AMD140, AMD120 will be used for food purchase, AMD10 to pay kitchen helpers' salaries, and AMD10 for other costs including implementation of sanitary norms, utility expenses and transportation. According to SIFI's calculations, an additional AMD40 to 50 provided by parents and the community would be necessary to provide a more balanced meal.

80. Details regarding the pilot project launched in Vayots Dzor province are presented in an annex to the National School Feeding Strategy document. The approach consists of replicating a previous limited school milk pilot project that had been successfully tested in 2012 under the supervision of SIFI in two villages of Aragatsotn province, and to progressively shift to the implementation of more nutritional hot meals. In Vayots Dzor province, the pilot covers some 2,200 primary school students as well as 182 students in preparatory grades in 45 general education schools in 42 communities (totalling 2,382 students). In Syunik province food will be provided to a total of some 6,000 students in 633 primary grades of 115 general education schools while in Ararat province it will be provided to some 12,000 students in 810 primary grades of 108 general education schools. Thus, it is envisaged that in 2016 the School Feeding Project will cover a total of 20,200 primary school students in these three provinces of the country.

81. It is noteworthy that the National School Feeding Strategy establishes a clear delineation between WFP's operation and the Government's school feeding activities, as the document points out: "In parallel with the pilot, WFP's project will continue for around 67,000 primary school students a year."

82. At the time of the present MTE, considering that not all schools in the pilot targeted areas are equipped with the appropriate facilities and equipment to allow the launching of the school milk pilot (it is necessary to warm the milk), SFIMC and SIFI decided to organize the distribution of juice and pastries in all targeted schools as a temporary alternative solution, waiting for the completion of basic repairs and equipment for kitchens and cafeterias to be realized through the funds provided by the DEV 200128 budget revision (see § 57 above).

²⁹ US\$1.00 = AMD433.2 (UN Operational Rates of Exchange, 01 December 2014).

Summary of Key Findings: Results of the Operation

- Since the beginning of the project, beneficiaries and geographic targets were progressively increased from 12,000 to 67,000 primary schoolchildren, with equal participation of boys and girls; from two districts to all provinces except the capital Yerevan. The funding secured had reached 91.1 percent of requirements (US\$20.83 million) for the project by late December 2014.
- School attendance of both boys and girls in WFP-assisted primary schools has been very high during project implementation. Nevertheless, it is not possible to attribute this outcome to the school feeding activity only. Collection of data about drop-out and promotion rates has not been systematic enough over the period to enable any reliable assessment of outcomes regarding retention and performance of students in WFP-assisted schools.
- Outcomes related to improved schoolchildren's health and nutrition status have not been monitored. No gender analysis was conducted either, and subsequently no relevant objectives have been incorporated into the project document. No comprehensive food security and vulnerability surveys have been conducted to assess the impact of the project as a social safety net.
- A 'Sustainable School Feeding' Strategy, Plan of Activities and Pilot Project were approved by the Government in August 2013. Subsequently, school feeding activities in two provinces were taken over by the Government in September 2014, with a third to follow in January 2015.
- A national Inter-Ministerial Committee has been established to coordinate school feeding but the effective involvement of the ministries in the project is very limited.
- School feeding committees in all WFP-assisted schools are totally feminized and no men/fathers are engaged in school feeding related activities on a daily basis.
- A budget line has been created within the MoES budget to ensure base funding for school feeding in the targeted schools up to the end of 2016. The pilot project launch nevertheless had to be delayed until the completion of basic repairs and equipment for kitchens and cafeterias, undertaken through additional funds provided by WFP.

2.3. Factors Affecting the Results

Internal factors (within WFP's control)

83. Since the FRESH (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) initiative adopted by WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank in 2000, and even before, it has been commonly acknowledged that interventions from diverse United Nations agencies should mutually reinforce each other through enhanced partnership. This is notably the case regarding school feeding, whose efficiency can be strengthened by complementary interventions from sister agencies. Thus, in 2002 WFP and UNICEF signed a global MoU and entered into partnership to collaborate through an integrated package of cost-effective interventions (the 'Essential Package') to improve the nutritional and health status of schoolchildren.³⁰

84. The Armenia DEV 200128 project document does not recommend, or even make reference to, any possible partnership with United Nations agencies present in the country.

³⁰ The 'Essential Package' covers 12 main areas: Basic education; Food for education; Promotion of girls' education; Potable water and sanitary latrines; Health, nutrition and hygiene education; Systematic deworming; Micronutrient supplementation; HIV and AIDS education; Psychosocial support; Malaria prevention; School gardens; Improved stoves.

The WFP CO has no direct cooperation with UNICEF (for example, about nutrition, hygiene, water and sanitation, etc.), WHO (about students' health, deworming, etc.) nor FAO (about school gardens, home-grown school feeding). Collaboration with sister agencies has been non-existent and as a consequence, WFP CO has implemented its school feeding project in quasi-isolation.

85. The only domain within the project related to gender equality is covered through the indicator on boys' and girls' participation that was successfully achieved. The project document does not incorporate specific objectives and goals to promote women's empowerment through its activities, thus making it impossible to reflect in the M&E framework. Moreover, the absence of additional efforts to cover the gap was also influenced by lack of CO staff capacity in gender-sensitive programming complemented with the absence of any pre-project gender analysis. Together, these factors left little space for the project staff to consider and adequately address the gender related aspects of the project as envisaged by the WFP Gender Policy, and the project still requires the elaboration of a strategy to address these.

86. While discussing the weaknesses of data collection regarding some expected educational outcomes of the project, the RB underlined the limited capacity of small WFP country offices and indicated that impact studies, for example, would require additional staffing. In 2014 there were some 900 WFP assisted schools across Armenia. Three Food Aid Monitors monitored them, requiring each to visit an average of 300 schools per year across nine provinces. As part of the SPR, the CO has to report on indicators related to the capacity development activities of the project including calculating the National Capacity Index (NCI). It appears that the NCI figures provided in the SPRs (the number '9' appears in both the 2012 and 2013 SPRs) are not evidence-based and when asked how this figure was calculated, it was evident that the CO staff did not know how to determine the rating and thus the figure given was not based on hard data. They had not received either training or support to calculate this indicator, which is determined through a rather complex process³¹.

87. During discussions held between the WFP RB and SIFI in October 2013 in Cairo, it was confirmed that the Russian NGO would continue to provide technical assistance in countries where the school feeding and regional capacity development intervention is implemented with the Russian contribution. Regarding Armenia, the Field Level Agreement (FLA) between WFP and SIFI was renewed for a three year period focusing on capacity development activities aiming at assisting the Armenian Government in operationalizing its school feeding strategy, with a view to taking over the WFP-supported project by 2016. All activities to be carried out were set out in a specific Project Document with related outcomes, outputs and timeframes described in a Work Performance Plan and Reporting annex.

88. All activities carried out by SIFI since the beginning of its cooperation with WFP have been completed on time and reported in regular comprehensive narrative reports, as

³¹ The National Capacity Index (NCI) is not intended to be a scientific measure, but a flexible tool to help COs determine the progress of a country in the transition and/or national capacity development process. An initial capacity development assessment should be conducted and serve as a baseline. Progress should be measured annually or in accordance with the country office strategy and the milestones identified. Milestones should be jointly agreed beforehand between the Government and WFP in accordance with the national plans of action. A NCI score should be calculated for all the hunger solutions that WFP is involved with in a given country. For instance, a CO should calculate the NCI for each WFP supported programme e.g. Nutrition NCI, school feeding NCI and food for assets NCI. Each of the five Quality Standards (QS) will have a score ranging from 1-4, which reflect the capacity of the country. Weak or absent capacity scores one point, limited capacity scores two points, moderate capacity scores three points, and strong capacity scores four points. The total result will be obtained by adding the scores for each of the five QSs. The NCI score will range from five to 20. The corporate target for WFP is an NCI score above 15 in 50% of WFP supported countries.

well as in an impressive number of detailed specific annexes³²: the first implementation report submitted at the end of 2011 was a 200 page document complemented with 19 annexes. Nineteen Russian experts and scientific consultants had contributed to this report as implementers. The partnership with SIFI therefore looks like a specific project within the broader DEV 200128, whose main focus up to early 2014 had been on research, including theoretical studies conducted from abroad. During the second quarter of 2014, SIFI organized one workshop for national and local staff responsible for school feeding and two training sessions for school directors in preparation for the launch of the pilot project in Vayots Dzor and Syunik provinces. Thus it appears that one major component of the Armenia DEV 200128 project (capacity development and preparation of handover to Government) has been almost entirely outsourced to an external cooperating partner.

External factors (outside WFP's control)

89. The Armenia DEV 200128 Project started its operations in 2010. During the four years since then the project leadership by the Armenian Government appears to have been limited:

- At central level, an inter-ministerial committee has contributed to the design and finalization of a National School Feeding Strategy. The SFIMC has nevertheless never been involved in hands-on school feeding activities and therefore has not yet acquired the capacity to independently implement and monitor a national school feeding programme, which has still to be formulated;
- At provincial level, until now local authorities have not been directly involved in the day-to-day operationalizing of school feeding activities;
- Head teachers play a major role in the implementation of school feeding activities at school level, in close cooperation with parents' committees. All head teachers met by the evaluation team showed a high level of dedication to feeding schoolchildren but some of them pointed out that it was an additional burden to their regular duties. In Vayots Dzor and Ararat provinces, where the pilot project is being implemented, some school directors expressed their concerns regarding their new responsibilities, particularly those related to the purchase of food on the local market for which they thought they had no competency.

90. A proposal for the structure and adequate staff numbers required to manage school feeding in the future was included in the last narrative report from SIFI (30 June 2014). The complete definitions of staff responsibilities, distribution of functions, detailed management methodology and job descriptions have been put in an annex.

91. School feeding activities under DEV 200128 are implemented in 900 selected schools across the country, except in the capital Yerevan. Until now, the project has been implemented through the support of external donors' contributions, mainly the Russian Federation. Since 2012, the financial contribution of the Armenian Government to the project has been limited to supporting ITSH costs. Following the takeover of two provinces in January 2014 and one province in 2015, a line has been created within the MoES budget (on the basis of AMD140 (c. US\$0.32) per capita per day) in order to secure the funds necessary to implement the pilot project in these three provinces until June 2016. Apart from ITSH, all other costs in the seven other provinces will continue to be supported by WFP.

³² Contrary to what had been mutually agreed during the Cairo meeting, not all key documents have been translated to high-quality English documents using consistent terminology. This is notably the case for School Feeding Guidelines developed by SIFI which are not accessible in English and whose translation from Russian to Armenian has not yet been finalized and therefore not circulated.

92. According to the Armenian National Statistical Service, in 2011 some 4.7 percent of children under 18 lived below the extreme poverty line and 41.9 percent below the poverty line, while extreme poverty and poverty rates in Armenia were 3.7 percent and 35.0 percent respectively. These figures reflect the harsh circumstances under which many Armenian children and their families live. It is also an obvious explanation of the limited financial participation in school feeding activities that can be expected from vulnerable households.

93. The infrastructure at many schools needs repair. With temperatures generally ranging between -10°C and -5°C during the winter months, heating represents a basic necessity, notably for children seated in classrooms. This is especially true in mountainous areas, which constitute about three-quarters of the country's territory. During school visits the evaluation team noted that the central heating systems were not functioning. Surveys carried out by WFP, SIFI and relevant local authorities have shown that basic repairs to kitchens and cafeterias are also needed in many targeted schools prior to the preparation and distribution of hot meals. This involved the mobilization of additional funds (BR No. 6) to undertake the critically required repair works in some 30 to 50 schools.

94. According to the plan from the National School Feeding Strategy, starting in 2016 the 'Sustainable School Feeding Project' will be scaled up and implemented by the Government with limited support from external donors. Considering the country's recent economic situation and trends, and the demonstrated limited financial capacity of the Government regarding school feeding activities, there is a high uncertainty regarding the feasibility and sustainability of this plan up to 2021.

95. The achievement of gender equality in the project was mostly demonstrated by the equal coverage of boys and girls in SF activities. This, however, did not produce a tangible effect of better economic or social opportunities for women at household and community levels given the increased poverty rates, limitations of the labour market and little demonstration of the State's will to support women's empowerment programmes, despite there being strategic documents adopted to encourage this.

Summary of Key Findings: Factors Affecting the Results

Internal factors (within WFP's control)

- Collaboration with United Nations sister agencies has been non-existent and as a consequence, WFP CO has implemented its school feeding project in quasi-isolation.
- The project staff did not consider and adequately address the gender related aspects of the project as envisaged by the WFP Gender policy.
- The limited staffing of the CO has challenged its capacity to carry out possible additional tasks (for example, impact studies). The CO staff did not benefit from training and support to document and calculate some indicators related to capacity development activities, notably the National Capacity Index (NCI).
- One major component of the project (capacity development and preparation of handover to Government) has been almost entirely outsourced to an external cooperating partner.

External factors (outside WFP's control)

- The project leadership by the Armenian Government appears to have been limited. The Government staff at central and regional levels have not yet acquired the capacity to independently implement and monitor a national school feeding programme.

- Since 2012, the financial contribution of the Armenian Government to the project has been limited to supporting ITSH costs. Apart from the three provinces that have been taken over by the Government (two in September 2014 and a third in January 2015), all other costs will continue to be supported by WFP in the seven remaining provinces.
- The financial participation of vulnerable households to school feeding activities is limited by the very difficult socio-economic circumstances under which many Armenian children and their families live.
- The need for infrastructure repairs prior to the preparation and distribution of hot meals in some 30 to 50 schools taken over by the Government involved the mobilization of additional funds.
- The project did not produce tangible effects in terms of better economic and social opportunities for women at household and community level.
- The country's recent economic situation and trends, and the demonstrated limited financial capacity of the Government regarding school feeding activities, result in a high uncertainty regarding the feasibility and sustainability of the National School Feeding Strategy up to 2021.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. Overall Assessment

Appropriateness

96. In accordance with the major change introduced by the WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013 under which it was formulated, the Armenia DEV 200128 project includes two major components that have to be carried out simultaneously: direct implementation of what can be considered as a traditional school feeding programme, where WFP acts as a food aid agency, on the one hand; and support to capacity development to support a progressive handover of school feeding activities to the Government, where WFP acts as a food assistance agency, on the other hand. The main challenge for WFP is to complete a smooth transition from one status to the other, from 'implementer' to 'enabler'.

Effectiveness

97. The M&E system that has been put in place does not allow a robust evaluation of the results of the operation: as far as education is concerned, it is not possible to attribute some objectively verified positive findings (for example, a high percentage of school attendance in WFP-assisted schools) to school feeding only, while some other expected outcomes (related to retention and performance) have not been sufficiently documented. In the absence of such well-established evidence, it is not possible to determine to what extent it is recommendable to hand over this project. Likewise, there is a lack of sound information regarding the effective health and nutrition benefits for schoolchildren, and socio-economic improvements for their families, generated by the project, that could support recommendations for its handover.

Relevance

98. In order to carry out the capacity development component of the project, WFP entered into an agreement with the Social and Industrial Food Service Institute (SIFI)³³. In compliance with its name, the core activity and competency of this Russian NGO is centred upon providing technical assistance to organize and manage food services in a variety of contexts: educational institutions, industry, the recreation industry, hospitals, the military, transport, prisons and mass events.³⁴ Before its intervention in Armenia, SIFI had exercised its competencies within the limits of the Russian Federation. For this institution, the agreement with WFP in Armenia is the first of this kind out of this context and the first of a series within the broader framework of a WFP regional initiative. In Armenia, the first main task for SIFI has been to carry out research to lay the basis for a national school feeding programme. Resulting from this preliminary work, a ‘Sustainable School Feeding Strategy’ was elaborated and submitted for the approval of the Armenian Government in August 2013.

Coherence

99. SIFI has acquired significant expertise in strategic planning in the Russian Federation context but they appear less committed to the policy requirement of Armenia. As its title indicates, the ‘Sustainable School Feeding Strategy’ is a strategy and not a school feeding policy. A policy is an idea, a concept; a strategy is a set of ways and means that will be used to achieve the ends identified by the concept. In the case of the Armenian School Feeding Strategy, the policy is lacking (there are minor differences between the so-called concept document approved in December 2012 and the final Strategy document approved in August 2013) but the ends have been identified and formulated as follows: "The main goal of the Strategy is to create a sustainable school feeding system which will allow providing healthy food to the students of primary grades classes of general education schools in all the provinces of the Republic of Armenia, improve their health and overcome poverty fostering the students’ attendance and acquiring universal primary education."

Efficiency and Impact

100. More precisely "the strategic aim of the project is to provide balanced, safe and quality food to all students in primary grades in all the schools across the country by gradually expanding the scope of school feeding organized in general education schools." It so appears that the vision underlying the approved ‘Sustainable School Feeding Strategy’ is rather limited: it has been designed as a food service: provision of food to schoolchildren is its core element while alternative approaches could have been explored, such as conditional transfers (in the form of cash and/or vouchers) as part of social benefit plans for the most vulnerable households. This would have been in line with WFP's corporate school feeding policy that puts a great emphasis on school feeding as a social safety net.

Gender Considerations

101. Within the context of the overall social economic crisis, increasing poverty rates and labour migration trends, which leave a serious economic burden upon women’s shoulders, the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship was identified as a crucial component within the home-grown component of the ‘Sustainable School Feeding Strategy’. Engaging women-led households into local food value chains within school feeding activities may become an important step toward promoting gender equality. This approach may become an important source of sustainability of the programme, through an increased capacity of

³³ It should be noted here that the former regional director of WFP, who signed the first agreement with SIFI in May 2011, subsequently retired from WFP but then participated in a WFP-SIFI meeting in Cairo on 02-03 October 2013 as SIFI's Regional Coordinator and representative of SIFI international in the region (though he has subsequently died).

³⁴ <http://www.orgpit.ru/eng/>

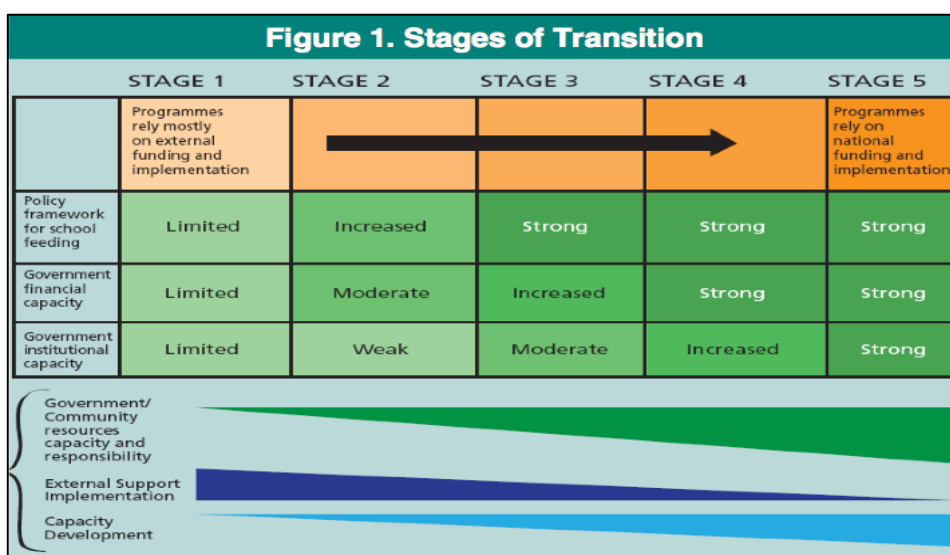
the communities and families to support the programme. This gender sensitive approach anchored on the strengthening the home-grown food production within the Strategy will not only support the existing state gender policy, aimed at promotion of equal right and opportunities for women, but will be in line with the Armenia Development Strategy that sets women’s entrepreneurship as a priority for developing the country’s economy.

Sustainability

102. The transition from a WFP-administered programme to a nationally owned programme should be the result of a progressive and smooth handover from WFP to the Government, as indicated in a RB concept note: "the WFP caseload should decrease as the Government increases its interventions". Instead of shifting progressively from one system to the other, the handover process recently launched in three provinces results in the development of two coexisting systems as, in parallel with the pilot implemented in the framework of the national Strategy, WFP’s project will continue for around 67,000 primary school students a year. Instead of decreasing the number of its beneficiaries as the number of beneficiaries supported by the Government increases, WFP CO plans to expand its operation to new schools or to additional classes in already assisted schools through maintaining the existing 67,000 beneficiary caseload (see § 81 above). This is in contradiction with both the transition to a nationally-owned school feeding programme and a possible exit strategy for WFP.

103. The purpose of this MTE was not to develop a SABER exercise, but the evaluation was to be built on the SABER framework as SABER will be rolled out in Armenia in 2015. The examination of the information collected in the light of the performance drivers commonly used to benchmark school feeding systems, in compliance with the five Policy goals of the 2013 WFP School Feeding Policy, shows that after four years of implementation the transition to a sustainable national home-grown school feeding programme is still at the very early stage, as shown in Figure 3 below:

Figure 5: Stages of Transition from WFP-led to Government-led School Feeding Programmes



Source: WFP School Feeding Policy, p. 17

3.2. Recommendations

104. The current dependency on WFP’s assistance should normally be reduced as national capacity and resources develop. Given this perspective, a strategy is needed to best

use the available human and material resources as well as clearly illustrating WFP's ability to work with the Government to support its takeover of school feeding activities in 2016.

105. The following recommendations present plausible options for improvement by the Country Office for immediate implementation, as well as looking ahead to 2016 to ensure a successful handover:

Strategic Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Create a handover plan

1. Documenting achievements against a set of predetermined milestones will help determine how and when WFP should phase-out. With Government partners, the CO should create a well thought out handover plan to move forward towards a nationally owned programme in order to facilitate the CO's transition from implementer to enabler of national ownership and capacity, as per the objectives of the DPAP and in line with WFP's Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Starting from now, this initiative conducted by the CO will clarify WFP's evolving role and provide information to assist in the Government's strategic planning.

Within this initiative the CO should notably (i) develop a detailed framework of capacity development needs where WFP, in cooperation with SIFI, can make a difference, with benchmarks and indicators of success, with a view to confirming milestones for programme handover; (ii) Demand results from capacity development efforts from external consultants, to ensure confirmation of transfer of capacity and skills.

The current project ends in June 2016. Given the necessity to re-discuss policy and strategy with the Government and engage partnerships with a broad range of actors, a one-year extension in this period should allow sufficient time to rethink and redesign a new project clearly articulated with the Government priorities, with SF imbedded as a social safety net.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the School Feeding Strategy

2. Joint efforts by the MoES, WFP and SIFI have contributed to develop a 'Sustainable School Feeding Strategy'. Nevertheless, national ownership of the strategy still has to be improved. WFP should assist with the development of a national school feeding programme based on clearly established national priorities and targeted at revised objectives.

With reference to the findings, conclusions and recommendations from this present MTE, WFP jointly with relevant Government bodies should organize a workshop whose main objectives will be to help prioritize national school feeding long-term objectives (education / health and nutrition / social protection), and revise strategic aims and implementing modalities accordingly. This recommendation should include the Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture and Social Affairs, and related departments at provincial level. The development of a national school feeding programme could also benefit from counselling from other external parties, such as the Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil.

Recommendation 3: Improve/enhance gender equality impact

3. A strategy of men's engagement in school feeding related activities should be designed with consideration of the general trends related to gender involvement in education. Considering that 90 percent of all schoolteachers are female and that men occupy mostly the high administrative positions (repeating the general patterns of gender disparity in women's employment and earnings across all employment sectors, both private and public), WFP, working with MoES and cooperating partners, should promote gender balance in parents' committees and advocate for an increased men's presence on school feeding parents' committees. This will help to pursue two objectives: (i) to increase fathers' engagement in child-care related tasks and tackle existing negative practices limiting their effective participation in education; (ii) to enhance the sense and practice of social responsibility for the vulnerable, and promote improved care practices in general within communities.

In the context of the support to overall social economic growth of the country, increased household economic resilience and mitigation of negative effects of labour migration, which increase women's economic vulnerability, the project would benefit from elaboration of a structured approach of working with partners to advance the gender aspect of the home-grown component of the 'Sustainable School Feeding Strategy' (reflected in the M&E framework). This can be achieved through capacity building and engaging women-led households into local food value chains within school feeding activities and may become an important step toward promoting gender equality and participation. Hiring a dedicated gender consultant will help alleviate the lack of CO staff capacity in gender-sensitive programming.

Operational Recommendations

Recommendation 4: Enhance the transfer of knowledge and good practice to the Government

4. From an operational point of view, improving national ownership of the School Feeding Strategy, as recommended through the Strategic Recommendation 2 above, should be based on a sound knowledge and practice of all school feeding procedures from planning to M&E. WFP should encourage and facilitate an effective hands-on capacity development by duly assigned full-time Government school feeding staff, enabling joint implementation with relevant ministries and the progressive takeover of school feeding activities.

Recommendation 5: Improve the M&E system

5. In order to avoid a double system of data collection and to facilitate the comparison between assisted and non-assisted schools, WFP M&E school feeding indicators and data, particularly those related to students' attendance, retention and performance, should be integrated within the broader regular framework of the Education Monitoring and Information System (EMIS) of the MoES operated by the National Centre of Education Technology (KATAK).

Recommendation 6: Improve partnerships, particularly with United Nations sister agencies

6. Building on the widely established fact that food aid interventions, including school feeding, often have a greater developmental impact when and where they are linked to other development assistance, WFP should help generate replicable school feeding models

that incorporate partnership among agencies and other actors, including the private sector, for further scale up in support of national priorities.

WFP should seek to reinforce its cooperation with sister United Nations agencies (particularly with UNICEF in the areas of nutrition, hygiene, water and sanitation, etc.; with WHO regarding students' health, deworming, etc.; and with FAO about school gardens, HGSF).

Studies and Research

Recommendation 7: Continue to invest in studies and research as evidence for programme design

7. According to WFP's School Feeding Policy, school feeding benefits fall into four main categories: safety nets, education, nutrition and local economies. Surveys and research conducted by SIFI have contributed to knowledge required to effectively plan programmes. This evaluation has identified areas where further research is needed to base effective programme planning targeted at possible revised objectives:

- A study on the effectiveness and efficiency of cash-based transfers as opposed to in-kind food will help provide support to the most vulnerable children in the form of conditional transfers within the broader framework of national social protection measures and the provision of social benefits. The study should set out to determine the best means of asset transfer (food, cash, or vouchers). This study should be jointly undertaken by WFP, the Ministries of Education, Social Affairs, and SIFI in view of the objectives in the 'Sustainable School Feeding Strategy' and the handover of school feeding activities to the Government in 2016.
 - Similarly, in cooperation with the Ministries of Education, Health, and WHO, WFP should support a survey to ensure and determine the best ways to monitor and evaluate nutritional benefits of school feeding activities in Armenia related to: a child's health improvement and related impact on school performance and educational attainment, increase in energy and kilocalories through enhanced child's diet, improved cognition and learning capacity through preventing key micro-nutrient deficiencies, possible prevalence and intensity of worm infestations amongst schoolchildren and appropriate deworming measures if deemed necessary. This survey should also consider that school feeding, when targeted at pre-school aged children, may play a role in preventing the damage to cognitive development that poor nutrition can contribute to.
 - Based on the findings of the feasibility study on the efficiency of the use of locally produced and processed products conducted by SIFI, in cooperation with the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, and FAO, WFP should facilitate some follow-up research to establish the basis for a national homegrown school feeding programme where procurement schemes will focus to the largest extent possible on food produced, processed and purchased locally, instead of internationally.
-

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AMD	Armenian Dram
BR	Budget Revision
CEP PIU	Centre of Educational Projects Project Implementation Unit
CO	Country Office
DPAP	Development Project Action Plan
EMIS	Education Monitoring and Information System
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFW	Food for Work
FLA	Field Level Agreement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HGSF	Home-Grown School Feeding
ITSH	Internal Transport, Storage and Handling
IWG	Inter-Ministerial Working Group
KATAK	National Centre of Education Technology
LDC	Least Developed Country
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MASHAV	Israeli Agency for International Development Cooperation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLSI	Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OEV	Office of Evaluation
OMC	Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia & Eastern Europe
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RA	Republic of Armenia
RB	Regional Bureau
SABER	System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results
SFIMC	School Feeding Inter-Ministerial Committee
SIFI	Social and Industrial Food Services
SO	Strategic Objective
SPR	Standard Project Report
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US\$	United States Dollar
VAT	Value-added Tax
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex 2: Terms of Reference



EVALUATION QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Office Of Evaluation

Measuring Results, Sharing Lessons

[FINAL, AUGUST 14TH 2014]

TERMS OF REFERENCE

MID TERM OPERATION EVALUATION

ARMENIA – DEVELOPMENT PROJECT – 200128

DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL FEEDING

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1. Introduction

1. These Terms of Reference (TOR) are for the evaluation of Development Project (DEV) 200128 “Development of Sustainable School Feeding” in Armenia. This evaluation is commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) and will take place from September 2014 to January 2015. In line with WFP’s outsourced approach for operations evaluations (OpEvs), the evaluation will be managed and conducted by an external evaluation company amongst those having a long-term agreement with WFP for operations evaluations.
2. These TOR were prepared by the OEV focal point based on an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders and following a standard template. The purpose of the TOR is twofold: 1) to provide key information to the company selected for the evaluation and to guide the company’s evaluation manager and team throughout the evaluation process; and 2) to provide key information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation.
3. The TOR will be finalised based on comments received on the draft version and on the agreement reached with the selected company. The evaluation shall be conducted in conformity with the TOR.

2. Reasons for the Evaluation

2.1. Rationale

4. In the context of renewed corporate emphasis on providing evidence and accountability for results, WFP has committed to increase evaluation coverage of operations and mandated OEV to commission a series of Operations Evaluations (OpEvs) in 2013 -2015.
5. Operations to be evaluated are selected based on utility and risk criteria.³⁵ From a shortlist of operations meeting these criteria prepared by OEV, the Regional Bureau (RB) has selected, in consultation with the Armenia Country Office (CO), DEV 200128 for an independent evaluation. In particular, the evaluation has been timed to ensure that findings can feed into future decisions on programme implementation.

2.2. Objectives

6. This evaluation serves the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning:

- **Accountability** – The evaluation will assess and report on the performance and results of the operation. A management response to the evaluation recommendations will be prepared.
- **Learning** – The evaluation will determine the reasons why certain results occurred or not to draw lessons, derive good practices and pointers for learning. It will provide evidence-based findings to inform operational and strategic decision-making. Findings will be actively disseminated and lessons will be incorporated into relevant lesson sharing systems.

2.3. Stakeholders and Users

7. **Stakeholders.** A number of stakeholders both inside and outside of WFP have interests in the results of the evaluation and many of these will be asked to play a role in the evaluation process.

Table one below provides a preliminary stakeholders’ analysis, which will be deepened by the evaluation team in the inception package.

³⁵ The utility criteria looked both at the timeliness of the evaluation given the operation’s cycle and the coverage of recent/planned evaluations. The risk criteria was based on a classification and risk ranking of WFP COs taking into consideration a wide range of risk factors, including operational and external factors as well as COs’ internal control self-assessments.

Table 1: Preliminary stakeholders' analysis

Stakeholders	Interest in the evaluation
INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS	
Country Office (CO)	Responsible for the country level planning and operations implementation, the CO is the primary stakeholder of this evaluation. It has a direct stake in the evaluation and an interest in learning from experience to inform decision-making. It is also called upon to account internally as well as to its beneficiaries, partners for the performance and results of its operation.
Regional Bureau (RB) Cairo	Responsible for both oversight of COs and technical guidance and support, the RB management has an interest in an independent account of the operational performance as well as in learning from the evaluation findings to apply this learning to other country offices.
Office of Evaluation (OEV)	OEV is responsible for commissioning OpEvs over 2013-2015. As these evaluations follow a new outsourced approach, OEV has a stake in ensuring that this approach is effective in delivering quality, useful and credible evaluations.
WFP Executive Board (EB)	The WFP governing body has an interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP operations. This evaluation will not be presented to the EB but its findings will feed into an annual synthesis of all OpEvs, which will be presented to the EB at its November session.
EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS (See Table 2 for list of 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, the level of participation in the evaluation of women, men, boys and girls from different groups will be determined and their respective perspectives will be sought.
Government	The Government, and in particular the Ministry of Education and Science, has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities in the country are aligned with its priorities, harmonised with the action of other partners and meet the expected results. Issues related to capacity development, handover and sustainability will be of particular interest. The Government also contributes financially to this operation.
UN Country team	The UNCT's harmonized action should contribute to the realisation of the government developmental objectives. It has therefore an interest in ensuring that the WFP operation is effective in contributing to the UN concerted efforts. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level.
NGOs	NGOs are WFP's partners for the implementation of some activities while at the same time having their own interventions. The results of the evaluation might affect future implementation modalities, strategic orientations and partnerships. The Russian NGO, the Social and Industrial Food Services Institute (SIFI) is WFP's main partner in this project.
Donors	WFP operations are voluntarily funded by a number of donors. They have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and if WFP's work has been effective and contributed to their own strategies and programmes. The project is a part of a regional programme and is funded by the Russian Federation.

8. **Users.** The primary users of this evaluation will be:
- The CO and its partners in decision-making related notably to programme implementation and/or design, country strategy and partnerships. The CO will use the lessons and recommendations when designing the next programming cycle in 2016.
 - Given RB's core functions the RB is expected to use the evaluation findings to provide strategic guidance, programme support and oversight. The recommendations are also expected to be useful for the five other countries that are part of the WFP/Russian Federation partnership. The evaluation provides an important opportunity to look at the project in a broader context to contribute to lessons learned on the regional school feeding programme.
 - OEV will use the evaluation findings to feed into an annual synthesis of all OpEvs and will reflect upon the evaluation process to refine its OpEv approach, as required.

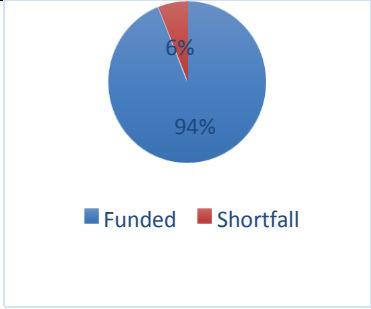
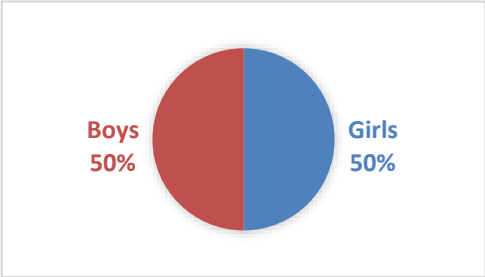
3. Subject of the Evaluation

9. Development Project 200128 "Development of Sustainable School Feeding" supports inclusive education policies to ensure that vulnerable children have access to quality schooling, and to foster attendance, retention and learning. It aims to reduce hunger and to achieve universal primary education in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1 and 2 by enabling children from poor rural areas to benefit fully from primary education. The goals of the project are to: i) improve children's access to primary education; ii) maintain high levels of school attendance; and iii) support the establishment of a sustainable Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. Expected outcomes include: i) increased access to education in assisted schools; ii) improved food consumption during DEV 200128 for primary schoolchildren; and iii) progress towards nationally owned hunger solutions.
10. To achieve outcomes 1 and 2, school meals are provided five days a week 180 days a year in primary schools in the form of hot soup and fortified bread in two-thirds of the schools, and fortified fruit bars in schools where meals cannot be prepared. WFP food is supplemented with fruit and vegetables purchased by parent-teacher committees from local smallholder farmers to enhance nutritional value of the meals. To achieve the third outcome, WFP is providing technical assistance to the government through the Russian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), the Social and Industrial Food Services Institute (SIFI). The project was previously complemented by government work (food for assets) to upgrade schools that had no kitchens or cafeterias under the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 100532 which ended in June 2012.
11. WFP and SIFI formed a partnership in the area of school feeding in 2010. Armenia is the first country where the partnership was put in action with the development of a national school feeding strategy and programme, the first time in the country's twenty years of independence. The project is funded by the Russian Federation and is a part of a regional programme. The main objective is to support governments' national school feeding programmes. The other countries in the regional programme are the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, all funded by the Russian Federation.
12. The project document including the project logframe, related amendments (Budget revisions) and the latest resource situation are available by clicking [here](#).³⁶ The key characteristics of the operation are outlined in table two below:

³⁶ From WFP.org – Countries – Armenia – Operations.

Table 2: Key characteristics of the operation

OPERATION			
Approval	The operation was approved by the Executive Board in 2010		
Amendments	There have been seven budget revisions to the initial project document. Budget revision 1 (approved November 2012) extended the project by three years until June 30 th 2016.		
Duration	Initial: 3 year period (2010 – 2013)	Revised: 2010-2016	
Planned beneficiaries	<u>Initial:</u> 50,000	<u>Revised:</u> 67,000 primary school children 6,500 kitchen helpers receiving dry food rations (introduced in BR 4)	
Planned food requirements	<u>Initial:</u> In-kind food: 6840mt of food commodities Cash and vouchers: N/A	<u>Revised:</u> In-kind food: 10763mt of food commodities Cash and vouchers: N/A	
US\$ requirements	<u>Initial:</u> US\$ 8,000,000	<u>Revised:</u> US\$ 20,145,633	
OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (after BR1)*			
	SO	DEV specific objectives and outcomes	Activities
The project is aligned with UNDAF outcome 3 and contribute to achievement of MDG 1 and 2	Strategic Objective 4	Specific Objective: Improve children’s access to primary education	☐ School Meals to primary school children
		Increased access to education and human capital development in assisted schools. - Increased regular school attendance, retention and school performance	
		Improved food consumption achieved over the assistance period for primary schoolchildren in targeted schools	
	Strategic Objective 5	Specific Objective: Establish the foundations for a sustainable home-grown national school feeding programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase food locally • Capacity and awareness raising activities • Provide support to the government to develop a national school feeding policy/strategy and implementation plan
		Increased marketing opportunities at the national level with cost-effective local purchases	
		Progress made towards nationally owned hunger solutions.	
*The logframe was revised in 2014 to align the project to WFP’s new Strategic Results Framework. This will be provided to the Evaluation Team together with other project documents.			
PARTNERS			
Government	Ministry of Education and Science		
United Nations	N/A		
NGOs	Social and Industrial Food Services Institute (SIFI)		

RESOURCES (INPUTS)																			
Contribution received July 16th 2014: US\$ 18.9 million, 94% against appeal Top 3 donors: Russian Federation, Armenia, Israel	 <p>% funded of total requirements</p>	Top five donors																	
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Donor</th> <th>Contribution</th> <th>% of needs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Russian Federation</td> <td>18,478,600</td> <td>91.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Armenia</td> <td>177,699</td> <td>0.88%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Israel</td> <td>151,074</td> <td>0.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Private donors</td> <td>105,155</td> <td>0.52%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Misc. income</td> <td>14,896</td> <td>0,07%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Donor	Contribution	% of needs	Russian Federation	18,478,600	91.7%	Armenia	177,699	0.88%	Israel	151,074	0.75%	Private donors	105,155	0.52%	Misc. income	14,896
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Private donors	105,155	0.52%																	
Misc. income	14,896	0,07%																	
PLANNED OUTPUTS (after BR1)																			
Planned % of beneficiaries school feeding 		Planned food commodities: 6480mt Outputs capacity development (SO5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5.1. Food purchased locally - 5.2. Capacity and awareness developed through WFP-led activities 																	

4. Evaluation Approach

4.1. Scope

13. **Scope.** The evaluation will cover DEV 200128 including all activities and processes related to its formulation, implementation, resourcing, monitoring, evaluation and reporting relevant to answer the evaluation questions. The period covered by this evaluation is 2010 – mid-November 2014, which captures the time from the development of the operation until the start of the evaluation mission.

14. The evaluation should take the local context of Armenia into account, especially considering SIFI's technical assistance to support the government in establishing and improving the national school feeding programme and how relevant the project is in the local context. Strategic recommendations on how to move ahead will be especially useful for the CO.

15. The evaluation should look at the project in a broader context to contribute to lessons learned for the regional School Feeding programme. The evaluation should build on the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) assessment framework with the following five policy goals: (i) policy frameworks; (ii) financial capacity; (iii) institutional capacity and coordination; (iv) design and implementation; and (v) Community roles – reaching beyond schools.³⁷ The SABER is likely to be rolled out in Armenia in early 2015.³⁸ The results from the SABER exercise will not be available during the period of the evaluation, but it is important that the evaluation is built on the SABER assessment framework.

³⁷ The WFP revised School Feeding Policy was approved by the Executive Board in November 2013. The policy recommends that WFP supports countries to establish and maintain nationally owned programmes linked to local agricultural production. In countries still requiring WFP's operational support, WFP is to implement school feeding programmes with clear handover strategies. Building on the SABER assessment framework which was led by the World Bank in collaboration with WFP and other partners, the policy shifted from quality standards for school feeding to the five policy goals.

³⁸ The SABER framework has already been piloted in Tunisia.

4.2. Evaluation Questions

16. The evaluation will address the following three questions:

Question 1: How appropriate is the operation? Areas for analysis will include the extent to which the objectives, targeting, choice of activities and of transfer modalities:

- Were appropriate at project design stage to the needs of the food insecure population including the distinct needs of women, men, boys and girls from different groups, as applicable, and remained so over time.
- Are coherent with relevant stated national policies, including sector policies and strategies, seek complementarity with the interventions of relevant humanitarian and development partners.
- Were coherent at project design stage with WFP strategies, policies and normative guidance and remained so over time.
- Were coherent with WFP's regional school feeding programme.
- Were risks and assumptions addressed in the design of the project.

Question 2: What are the results of the operation? While ensuring that differences in benefits between women, men, boys and girls from different groups are considered, the evaluation will analyse:

- The level of attainment of the planned outputs (including the number of beneficiaries served disaggregated by girls and boys);
- The extent to which the outputs led to the realisation of the operation objectives as well as to unintended effects, in particular whether progress have been made to complete the milestones already moving towards establishing a sustainable national school feeding programme in Armenia, highlighting, as applicable, differences for different groups, including girls and boys;
- The extent to which the current WFP school feeding project is facilitating the introduction and implementation of the national school feeding strategy;
- How different activities of the operation dovetail and are synergetic with what other actors are doing to contribute to the overriding WFP objective in the country; and
- The efficiency of the operation and the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the end of the operation.

Question 3: Why and how has the operation produced the observed results? The evaluation should generate insights into the main internal and external factors that caused the observed changes and affected how results were achieved. The inquiry is likely to focus, amongst others, on:

- Internally (factors within WFP's control): the processes, systems and tools in place to support the operation design, implementation, the technical assistance, monitoring/evaluation and reporting; the governance structure and institutional arrangements (including issues related to staffing, capacity and technical backstopping from RB/HQ); the partnership and coordination arrangements; etc. In particular o to what extent the partnership with SIFI contributing to building a sustainable, cost efficient national School Feeding programme
- to what extent have private sector partnerships been explored considering realistic funding prospects for a national School Feeding programme.
- Externally (factors outside WFP's control): the external operating environment; the funding climate; external incentives and pressures; etc.

4.3. Evaluability Assessment

17. Evaluability is the extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. The below provides a preliminary evaluability assessment, which will be deepened by the evaluation team in the inception package. The team will notably critically assess data availability and take evaluability limitations into consideration in its choice of evaluation methods. In doing so, the team will also critically review the evaluability of the gender aspects of the operation, identify related challenges and mitigation measures.
18. In answering question one, the team will be able to rely on assessment reports, minutes from the project review committee, the project document and logframe, as well as documents related to government and interventions from other actors. In addition, the team will review relevant WFP strategies, policies and normative guidance.
19. For question two the operation has been designed in line with the corporate strategic results framework (SRF) and selected outputs, outcomes and targets are recorded in the logframe. Monitoring reports as well as annual standard project reports (SPRs) detail achievement of outputs and outcomes thus making them evaluable against the stated objectives.
20. However, answering question two is likely to pose some challenges owing in part to: i) the absence of baseline data for the activities, which will need to be reconstructed using findings from various assessment reports and ii) data gaps in relation to efficiency. However, for the educational indicators, secondary data can be utilized to establish a baseline. It should be noted that the main objective is capacity development for establishing a sustainable school feeding programme.
21. For question three, the team members will have access to some institutional planning documents and is likely to elicit further information from key informant interviews.
22. Another evaluability challenge is linked to changes in some of the outcome indicators during the course of the implementation of the DEV as the operation's logframe was realigned to the new SRF (2014-2017) in April 2013.

4.4. Methodology

23. The methodology will be designed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. It should:
 - Employ relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria including those of relevance, coherence (internal and external), coverage, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability (or connectedness for emergency operations);
 - Use applicable standards (e.g. SPHERE standards);
 - Demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources (e.g. stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.) and using mixed methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, participatory) to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. Participatory methods will be emphasised with the main stakeholders, including the CO. The selection of field visit sites will also need to demonstrate impartiality.
 - Be geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions taking into account the evaluability challenges, the budget and timing constraints;
 - Be based on an analysis of the logic model of the operation and on a thorough stakeholders analysis;
 - Ensure through the use of mixed methods that women, girls, men and boys from different stakeholder groups participate and that their different voices are heard and used;
 - Be synthesised in an evaluation matrix, which should be used as the key organizing tool for the evaluation.

4.5. Quality Assurance

24. OEV's Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) defines the quality standards expected from this evaluation and sets out processes with in-built steps for quality assurance, templates for evaluation products and checklists for the review thereof. It is based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (DAC and ALNAP) and aims to ensure that the evaluation process and products conform to best practice and meet OEV's quality standards. EQAS does not interfere with the views and independence of the evaluation team.
25. At the start of the evaluation, OEV will orient the evaluation manager on EQAS and share related documents. EQAS should be systematically applied to this evaluation and the evaluation manager will be responsible to ensure that the evaluation progresses in line with its process steps and to conduct a rigorous quality control of the evaluation products ahead of their submission to WFP. OEV will also share an Orientation Guide on WFP and its operations, which provides an overview of the organization.

5. Phases and deliverables

26. The evaluation will proceed through five phases. Annex two provides details of the activities and the related timeline of activities and deliverables.
27. **Preparation phase** (mid-July – mid-September): The OEV focal point will conduct background research and consultation to frame the evaluation; prepare the TOR; select the evaluation team and contract the company for the management and conduct of the evaluation.
28. **Inception phase** (mid-September – mid-October): This phase aims to prepare the evaluation team for the evaluation phase by ensuring that it has a good grasp of the expectations for the evaluation and a clear plan for conducting it. The inception phase will include a desk review of secondary data and initial interaction with the main stakeholders. To gain an in-depth understanding on the special partnership with SIFI as well as the regional context, an initial briefing should be conducted with the regional team at an early stage of the exercise. The main resource persons are: Pascale Micheau, Senior Regional Programme Advisor, Cairo; Ellen Kramer: Regional Programme Advisor, Cairo; Maria Lukyanova: Head of Tunisia Office and coordinating the School Feeding capacity development project, Tunis; Tarneem Fahmi: Regional Programme Officer (Partnerships), Cairo.

☐ **Deliverable: Inception Package.** The Inception Package details how the team intends to conduct the evaluation with an emphasis on methodological and planning aspects. The package will be approved by OEV and shared with the CO/RB for information. It will present an analysis of the context and of the operation, the evaluation methodology articulated around a deepened evaluability and stakeholders' analysis; an evaluation matrix; and the sampling technique and data collection tools. It will also present the division of tasks amongst team members as well as a detailed schedule for stakeholders' consultation. For more details, refer to the [content guide for the inception package](#).

29. **Evaluation phase** (November): The fieldwork will span over three weeks and will include visits to project sites and primary and secondary data collection from local stakeholders. Two debriefing sessions will be held upon completion of the field work. The first one will involve the country office (relevant RB and HQ colleagues will be invited to participate through a teleconference) and the second one will be held with external stakeholders.

☐ **Deliverable: Aide memoire.** An aide memoire of preliminary findings and conclusions (powerpoint presentation) will be prepared to support the de-briefings.

30. **Reporting phase** (December-January): The evaluation team will analyse the data collected during the desk review and the field work, conduct additional consultations with stakeholders, as required, and draft the evaluation report. It will be submitted to the evaluation manager for quality assurance. Stakeholders will be invited to provide comments, which will be recorded in a

matrix by the evaluation manager and provided to the evaluation team for their consideration before report finalisation.

2 **Deliverable: Evaluation report.** The evaluation report will present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation in a concise report of 40 pages maximum. Findings should be evidence-based and relevant to the evaluation questions. Data will be disaggregated by sex and the evaluation findings and conclusions will highlight differences in performance and results of the operation for different beneficiary groups as appropriate. There should be a logical flow from findings to conclusions and from conclusions to recommendations. Recommendations will be limited in number, actionable and targeted to the relevant users. These will form the basis of the WFP management response to the evaluation. For more details, refer to the [content guide for the evaluation report](#).

31. **Follow-up and dissemination phase:** OEV will also subject the evaluation report to an external post-hoc quality review to report independently on the quality, credibility and utility of the evaluation in line with evaluation norms and standards. A feedback online survey on the evaluation will also be completed by all stakeholders. The RB will coordinate WFP’s management response to the evaluation.

Notes on the deliverables:

The inception package and evaluation reports shall be written in English and follow the EQAS templates.

The evaluation team is expected to produce written work that is of very high standard, evidence-based, and free of errors. The evaluation company is ultimately responsible for the timeliness and quality of the evaluation products. If the expected standards are not met, the evaluation company will, at its own expense, make the necessary amendments to bring the evaluation products to the required quality level.

The evaluation TOR, report and management response will be public and posted on the WFP External Website (wfp.org/evaluation). The other evaluation products will be kept internal.

Table 3: Key dates for field mission and deliverables

Entity responsible	Phase	Activities	Key dates
EM	Inception	Final Inception Package	20 th October
CO/ET	Evaluation	Evaluation field mission	November 10 th to December 1 st
ET	Evaluation	Aide memoire	November 28 th
EM	Reporting	Draft Evaluation Report	January 9 th
EM	Reporting	Final Evaluation Report	February 6 th
CO/RB	Follow-up	Management Response	February 27 th

6. Organization of the Evaluation

6.1. Outsourced approach

32. Under the outsourced approach to OpEvs, the evaluation is commissioned by OEV but will be managed and conducted by an external evaluation company having a long-term agreement (LTA) with WFP for operations evaluation services.

33. The company will provide an evaluation manager (EM) and an independent evaluation team (ET) in line with the LTA. To ensure a rigorous review of evaluation deliverables, the evaluation manager should in no circumstances be part of the evaluation team.

34. The company, the EM and the ET members will not have been involved in the design, implementation or M&E of the operation nor have other conflicts of interest or bias on the subject. They will act impartially and respect the [code of conduct of the profession](#).

35. Given the evaluation learning objective, the evaluation manager and team will promote stakeholders' participation throughout the evaluation process. Yet, to safeguard the independence of the evaluation, WFP staff will not be part of the evaluation team or participate in meetings with external stakeholders if the evaluation team deems that their presence could bias the responses.

6.2. Evaluation Management

36. The evaluation will be managed by the company's EM for OpEvs (as per LTA). The EM will be responsible to manage within the given budget the evaluation process in line with EQAS and the expectations spelt out in these TOR and to deliver timely evaluation products meeting the OEV standards. In particular, the EM will:

- Mobilise and hire the evaluation team and provide administrative backstopping (contracts, visas, travel arrangements, consultants' payments, invoices to WFP, etc).
- Act as the main interlocutor between WFP stakeholders and the ET throughout the evaluation and generally facilitate communication and promote stakeholders' participation throughout the evaluation process.
- Support the evaluation team by orienting members on WFP, EQAS and the evaluation requirements; providing them with relevant documentation and generally advising on all aspects of the evaluation to ensure that the evaluation team is able to conduct its work.
- Ensure that the evaluation proceeds in line with EQAS, the norms and standards and code of conduct of the profession and that quality standards and deadlines are met.
- Ensure that a rigorous and objective quality check of all evaluation products is conducted ahead of submission to WFP. This quality check will be documented and an assessment of the extent to which quality standards are met will be provided to WFP.
- Provide feedback on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.

6.3. Evaluation Conduct

37. The ET will conduct the evaluation under the direction of the EM. The team will be hired by the company following agreement with OEV on its composition.

38. **Team composition.** The evaluation team is expected to include 2-3 members, including the team leader and evaluator(s). It should include women and men of mixed cultural backgrounds and a national of Armenia if possible. Past WFP experience is a requirement.

39. The estimated number of days is expected to be in the range of 40-50 for the team leader; and 25-35 for the evaluator(s).

40. **Team competencies.** The team will be multi-disciplinary and include members who together include an appropriate balance of expertise and practical knowledge. The following competencies will be important:

- Implementation of school feeding programmes, including home grown school feeding
- Institutional capacity development, safety nets and policy dialogue (preferably in the educational sector)

- Gender expertise / good knowledge of gender issues
41. All team members should have strong analytical and communication skills; evaluation experience and familiarity with the country or region.
 42. The team members need to be fluent in English, both orally and in writing. At least one member in the team should be fluent in Russian. The national team member should speak Russian.
 43. **The Team leader** will have technical expertise in one of the technical areas listed above as well as expertise in designing methodology and data collection tools and demonstrated experience in leading similar evaluations. She/he will also have leadership and communication skills, including a track record of excellent English writing and presentation skills.
 44. Her/his primary responsibilities will be: i) defining the evaluation approach and methodology; ii) guiding and managing the team; iii) leading the evaluation mission and representing the evaluation team; iv) drafting and revising, as required, the inception package, aide memoire and evaluation report in line with EQAS; and v) provide feedback to OEV on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.
 45. **The team member(s)** will bring a complementary combination of the technical expertise required and have a track record of written work on similar assignments.
 46. Team member(s) will: i) contribute to the methodology in his/her area of expertise based on a document review; ii) conduct field work; iii) participate in team meetings and meetings with stakeholders; iv) contribute to the drafting and revision of the evaluation products in his/her technical area(s); and v) provide feedback on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.

7. Roles and Responsibilities of WFP Stakeholders

47. **The Country Office.** The CO management will be responsible to:
 - Assign a focal point for the evaluation. Liana Kharatian, Programme Officer will be the CO focal point for this evaluation.
 - Provide the evaluation manager and team with documentation and information necessary to the evaluation; facilitate the team's contacts with local stakeholders; set up meetings, field visits; provide logistic support during the fieldwork; and arrange for interpretation, if required.
 - Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the operation, its performance and results and in various teleconferences with the evaluation manager and team on the evaluation products.
 - Organise and participate in two separate debriefings, one internal and one with external stakeholders.
 - Comment on the TORs and the evaluation report and prepare a management response to the evaluation.
 - Provide feedback to OEV on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.
48. **The Regional Bureau.** The RB management will be responsible to:
 - Assign a focal point for the evaluation. Claudia Ah Poe, Regional M&E Advisor will be the RB focal point for this evaluation.
 - Participate in discussions with the evaluation team on the evaluation design and on the operation, its performance and results. In particular, the RB should participate in the evaluation debriefing and in various teleconferences with the evaluation manager and team, as required.
 - Provide comments on the TORs and the evaluation report.
 - Coordinate the management response to the evaluation and track the implementation of the recommendations.

- Provide feedback to OEV on the evaluation process as part of an evaluation feedback e-survey.

49. **Headquarters.** Some HQ divisions might, as relevant, be asked to discuss WFP strategies, policies or systems in their area of responsibility and to comment on the evaluation TOR and report.

50. **The Office of Evaluation.** OEV is responsible for commissioning the evaluation and Anette Wilhelmsen, Evaluation Officer is the OEV focal point. OEV's responsibilities include to:

- Set up the evaluation including drafting the TOR in consultation with concerned stakeholders; select and contract the external evaluation company; and facilitate the initial communications between the WFP stakeholders and the external evaluation company.
- Enable the company to deliver a quality process and report by providing them with the EQAS documents including process guidance, content guides and templates as well as orient the evaluation manager on WFP policies, strategies, processes and systems as required.
- Comment on the evaluation report and submit the final evaluation report to an external posthoc quality review process to independently report on the quality, credibility and utility of the evaluation and provide feedback to the evaluation company accordingly.
- Publish the final evaluation report on the WFP public website and incorporate findings into an annual synthesis report, which will be presented to WFP's Executive Board for consideration.
- Conduct an evaluation feedback e-survey to gather perceptions about the evaluation process and the quality of the report to be used to revise the approach, as required.

8. Communication and budget

8.1. Communication

51. Issues related to language of the evaluation are noted in sections 6.3 and 5, which also specifies which evaluation products will be made public and how and provides the schedule of debriefing with key stakeholders. Section 7 paragraph 50 describes how findings will be disseminated.

52. To enhance the learning from this evaluation, the evaluation manager and team will also emphasize transparent and open communication with WFP stakeholders. Regular teleconferences and one-on-one telephone conversations between the evaluation manager, team and country office focal point will assist in discussing any arising issues and ensuring a participatory process.

8.2. Budget

53. **Funding source:** The evaluation will be funded in line with the WFP special funding mechanism for Operations Evaluations (Executive Director memo dated October 2012). The cost to be borne by the CO will be established by the WFP Budget & Programming Division (RMB).

54. **Budget:** The budget will be prepared by the company (using the rates established in the LTA and the corresponding template) and approved by OEV. For the purpose of this evaluation the company will:

- Use the management fee corresponding to a small operation.
- Take into account the planned number of days per function noted in section 6.3.

Please send queries to Anette Wilhelmsen, Evaluation Officer, at anette.wilhelmsen@wfp.org, +390665133008.

Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix

Key Question 1: How appropriate is the operation?						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
	Relevance					
1.1	Was WFP assistance appropriate to the needs of the food insecure population at project design stage and remained so over time?	Descriptive material of assessed and perceived needs ex-post facto	VAM assessment reports and similar surveys from other sources (e.g. UNICEF)	Desk review, key informant interviews	Comparison of interviews with documented information	Some documents suitable, other data collected via interviews
	Coherence					
1.2	Is WFP assistance coherent with relevant stated national policies?	Mention/integration of SF in national development strategy documents Level of compliance with Armenia endorsed MDGs (2, 3)	PRSP Armenia Development Strategy for 2014-2025 Program for the Government of the Republic of Armenia (2014)	Desk review	Qualitative assessment	Some documents suitable
1.3	Is WFP assistance coherent with the interventions of relevant humanitarian and development partners?	Level of compliance with UNDAF objectives	UNDAF for Armenia 2010-2015	Desk review, key informant interviews	Qualitative assessment	Documentation is clear and complemented by interviews in-country
1.4	Is WFP assistance coherent with WFP strategies, policies and normative guidance?	Level of compliance with WFP Strategic Plan, School Feeding policy, Gender policy	WFP corporate policies and guidance, particularly WFP Strategic Plans 2008-2011 and 2014-2017 (SO 4,5) WFP revised School Feeding Policy 2013	Desk review	Qualitative assessment	Documentation is clear

Key Question 1: How appropriate is the operation? (cont'd)						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
1.5	Is WFP assistance coherent with WFP's regional school feeding programme?	Level of alignment of Armenia DEV Project with Regional SF programme	WFP CO and Regional Bureau (Cairo)	Desk review, key informant interviews (eventually through telephone call)	Qualitative assessment	Limited documents independently collected by the ET.
1.6	Where risks and assumptions addressed in the design of the project?	Relevant indicators in the project's logframe	WFP CO	Desk review	Qualitative assessment	Documentation is clear
Key Question 2: What are the results of the operation?						
	Efficiency					
2.1	What is the level of attainment of the planned outputs?	Number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender) planned vs. act. Tonnage of food distributed vs. planned Number of schools assisted vs. planned National Capacity Index (NCI)	WFP CO M&E data and reports, SPRs, Budget Revision documents	Desk review	Quantitative assessment	The ET assessed the M&E system of WFP and their implementing partner in order to determine the quality and appropriateness of the available data
	Effectiveness					
2.2	To what extent have the outputs led to the realization of the operation's objectives?	Attendance rate Drop-out rate Promotion rate (all disaggregated by gender) Endorsement of a National SF strategy and implementation plan	WFP CO M&E data and reports, SPRs, Budget Revision documents MoES reports SIFI reports	Desk review, key informant interviews, focus group meetings	Qualitative and quantitative assessment	Documentation clear and complemented by interviews in-country

Key Question 2: What are the results of the operation?						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
	Sustainability					
2.3	To what extent is the current SF project facilitating the introduction and implementation of the national school feeding strategy?	WFP revised SF Policy 2013 SABER policy goals	WFP CO M&E data and reports, SPRs, Budget Revision documents National SF strategy and plan of implementation documents SIFI reports	Desk review, key informant interviews, focus group meetings during field visits	Qualitative assessment	Documentation clear and complemented by interviews in-country
Key Question 3: Why and how has the operation produced the observed results?						
Internally (factors within WFP's control)						
	Connectedness					
3.1	To what extent has there been effective cooperation and coordination in the design and implementation of the SF activities between WFP, government, cooperating partners and beneficiary communities?	Perception of management strengths/difficulties by WFP staff, government staff, cooperating partner, and project participants MoU, FLA, etc. Reports from a project coordination committee (inter-ministerial working group)	WFP staff, government staff, cooperating partners, project participants	Key informant interviews, focus group meetings with project participants	Qualitative assessment	Evidence gathered during field visits and discussions with implementing staff and project participants
3.2	To what extent have private sector partnerships been explored?	Existence of feasibility survey and /or subsequent FLA	WFP CO, MoES, SIFI staff	Key informant interviews	Qualitative assessment	No documentary evidence available. Other evidence from discussions with implementing staff and project participants

Key Question 3: Why and how has the operation produced the observed results?						
No.	Sub-questions	Measure/Indicator	Main Sources of Information	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods	Evidence quality
Externally (factors outside WFP's control)						
	Relevance					
3.3	To what extent does the environment of targeted schools influence results?	Food insecurity, poverty, low educational, nutrition and gender indicators School infrastructure and equipment	EMIS data, CFSVA or similar VAM surveys, SIFI feasibility survey	Desk review, key informant interviews Focus group meetings with project participants	Qualitative assessment	Documentation is clear and complemented by interviews in-country
	Sustainability					
3.4	To what extent are the activities designed and the structures established through the project likely to be sustained after the completion of donor funding?	Donor commitment vs. actual community contribution	National SF strategy and plan of implementation documents	Desk review, key informant interviews (including donors) Focus group meetings with project participants	Qualitative assessment	Some documentary evidence available for planning sustainability but most evidence gathered via interviews in-country

Annex 4: Evaluation Work Plan and People Met

Day	Date	Time	Organization	Activity	Person	Position
In Yerevan						
Saturday	08-Nov-14			International consultant arrival		
Sunday	09-Nov	14:00		Team meeting	JPV	ET Team leader
					Inga Harutyunyan	ET member
					Anna Harutyunyan	Translator
					Lucy Geghamyan	Translator
Monday	10-Nov	09:00	WFP	CO meeting	Liana Kharatyan	OIC, Programme Officer
					Eduard Shirinyan	Programme Officer
Tuesday	11-Nov	09:00	WFP	CO meeting	Liana Kharatyan	OIC, Programme Officer
					Eduard Shirinyan	Programme Officer
		10:00	WFP	Field Monitor Assistants meeting	Vahan Arakelyan	Field Monitor Assistant
					Karen Kakobyan	Field Monitor Assistant
					Vladimir Malkhasyan	Field Monitor Assistant
		15:00	WFP Regional Bureau	RB teleconference	Carlo Scaramella	Deputy Regional Director
					Pascale Micheau	Senior Regional Programme Advisor
					Claudia Ah Poe	Regional M&E Advisor
					Ellen Kramer	Regional Programme Advisor (Project Cycle)
					Dipayan Bhattacharyya	Regional Programme Advisor (Social Protection & Safety Nets)
Emma Conlan	Regional Programme Advisor (Livelihoods and Resilience)					
Karl Svensson	Regional M&E Officer					
Maria Lukyanova	Head of Tunisia and Morocco Office/coordinator of the SIFI partnership					

Day	Date	Time	Organization	Activity	Person	Position
Wednesday	12-Nov	10:00	SIFI	Meeting	Melkon Gasparyan	Head of office
		12:00	Ministry of Education and Science	Meeting	Gevorg Yeghinyan	Head of Finance Department
		15:00	UN Resident Coordinator Office	Meeting	Anoush Avanesyan	UN Coordination Associate
					Tatevk Movsisyan	Senior Adviser to the UN Resident Coordinator
		16:00	UNICEF	Meeting	Henriette Ahrens	Representative
Thursday	13-Nov	09:00	UNDSS	Security briefing	Aram Gevorgyan	Local Security Assistant
		10:00	WHO	Meeting	Tatul Hakobyan	Head of Country Office
		11:30	Save the Children	Meeting	Iren Sargsyan	Senior Manager, Program Implementation
		14:00	OSF-Armenia	Meeting	David Amiryan	Deputy Director for Programs
					Ashot Grigoryan	Civil Society Program Coordinator
15:00	FAO	Meeting	Vahan Amirkhanyan	National Project Coordinator		
Friday	14-Nov	10:00	Ministry of Agriculture	Meeting	Grisha Baghiyan	First Deputy Minister
					Petrosyan	Head of International Affairs Department
		11:00	WFP	Preparation of field visits		
Saturday	15-Nov			Desk review		
Sunday	16-Nov			Desk review		
Field visits						
Monday	17-Nov	<i>Gegharkunik Marz</i>				
		10:30	Governorate	Meeting		
		12:00	Gavar school #3	School visit*		
		14:30	Noratus school #3	School visit		
Tuesday	18-Nov	<i>Ararat Marz</i>				
		10:00	Governorate	Meeting		
		12:00	Artashat school	School visit		
		14:30	Lusarat school	School visit		

Day	Date	Time	Organization	Activity	Person	Position
Wednesday	19-Nov	<i>Lori Marz</i>				
		11:00	Governorate	Meeting		
		13:30	Vanadzor school #25	School visit		
		15:00	Aznvadzor school	School visit		
Thursday	20-Nov	<i>Kotayk Marz</i>				
		10:30	Governorate	Meeting		
		11:45	Lernanist village school	School visit		
In Yerevan						
Thursday	20-Nov	14:00	SIFI	Meeting	Maslov Sergey	Vice-President
					Arthur Varzapetyan	Programme Coordinator
					Melkon Gasparyan	Head of Office in Armenia
Field visits						
Friday	21-Nov	<i>Vayots Dzor Marz</i>				
		11:15	Governorate	Meeting		
		13:30	Yeghegnadzor school #1	School visit		
		15:30	Areni village school	School visit		
In Yerevan						
Saturday	22-Nov			Analysis of field data and preparation of Aide Memoire		
Sunday	23-Nov					
Monday	24-Nov					
Tuesday	25-Nov	10:00	Ministry of Education and Science	Meeting	Robert Stepanyan	Head of Department for Development Programs and Monitoring
Wednesday	26-Nov	10:00	Ministry of Health	Meeting	Nune Pashayan	Head of Child Health Protection Department
					Margareta Babayan	Head of Hygiene Unit for Nutrition
Thursday	27-Nov	14:00		Internal debriefing (teleconference)	WFP staff + RB, OEV, EM	
Friday	28-Nov			Debriefing session	External Stakeholders	
Saturday	29-Nov			Team meeting		
Sunday	30-Nov			International consultant departure		

Annex 5: List of documents consulted

Government

National

- Impact of the Global Financial Crisis on Households, National Institute of Labour and Social Research, 2010
- Program for the Government of the Republic of Armenia, May 2014
- Armenia Development Strategy for 2014-2025, Revised Final Draft, 20 March 2014
- Law of the Republic of Armenia on Education, 14 April 1999
- Law of the Republic of Armenia on Food Safety, November 2006
- Law of the Republic of Armenia on Local Self-Government, 07 May 2002
- Republic of Armenia Sustainable Development Program, October 2008 (Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper)
- Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

School Feeding

- « Sustainable School Feeding » Strategy, Draft, 2013
- « Sustainable School Feeding » Strategy, approved 22 August 2013
- Development Project Action Plan for School Feeding between the Government of the RA – MoES and the UN WFP, 08 June 2011
- Amendment to the DPAP between WFP and the Government of the RA through its MoES concerning school feeding in Armenia, 2013
- Agreement on Support by the Government N-9/6-1.40, 06 August 2012
- Agreement on Support by the Government N-9/6-1.38, 18 April 2014

Health

- Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2005, National Statistical Service/Ministry of Health, ORC Macro, December 2006
- Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2010, Preliminary Report, National Statistical Service/Ministry of Health/ORC Macro, June 2011

WFP

- Logistics Capacity Assessment Armenia, October 2009
- Effects of the Financial Crisis on Vulnerable Households : Follow-up Study, Armenia, March 2010
- Development Project Armenia 200128 « Development of Sustainable School Feeding », WFP/EB.A/2010/9-A/3, 24 May 2010
- Mid-term Evaluation of WFP's « Development of Sustainable School Feeding in Armenia » Project 200128, no date
- Summary of the meeting of the School Feeding Inter-Ministerial Committee (SFIMC) on measures in preparation to take over implementation of school feeding in Vayots Dzor province, Venue: Yeghegnadzor Town, at the Governor's Office of Vayots Dzor, 15-16 April 2014
- Project Management Overview
- Project Beneficiaries & Outputs (Excel sheet)
- Armenia Country Office Organigramme DEV 200128
- Executive Brief Armenia (February to August 2014)
- Standard Project Report 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013
- Monitoring Plan Matrix

- Monitoring reports + Monitoring forms
- Resource situation 01 September 2014
- Budget Revisions
 - N°03, 3 October 2012 (WFP/EB.2/2012/9-B/2)
 - N°04, 4 April 2013
 - N°06, 15 April 2014
 - N°07, 24 July 2014

WFP Regional Bureau

- Deauville G8 Summit, no date
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation and the World Food Programme for 2013-2015
- School Feeding and Regional Capacity Development Programme, Concept Note
- Russian Contributions for School Feeding Activities (2012-2015), Excel sheet
- Agreement between WFP and SIFI regarding the implementation of a WFP assistance programme in the Republic of Armenia, 25 May 2011
- Agreement between WFP and SIFI regarding the implementation of a WFP assistance programme in the Republic of Armenia, 3 October 2013
- WFP – SIFI School Feeding Partnership – Meeting in OMC Regional Bureau Cairo, 2-3 October 2013, Powerpoint presentation
- WFP School Feeding – Policy, standards and good practices, Meeting in OMC Regional Bureau Cairo, 2-3 October 2013, Powerpoint presentation
- WFP – SIFI School Feeding Partnership – Meeting in OMC Regional Bureau Cairo, 2-3 October 2013, Main Agreements and Follow-Up Actions

Partnership

- Agreement between WFP and Save The Children, 29 November 2011
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between WFP and MASHAV – Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, 1st December 2010
- Update on the use of the MARSHAV donation of US\$150,000 by WFP Armenia

SIFI

- Activities for technical support for SF program in ARMENIA developed and carried out during 2011-2014 by SIFI, no date
- Feasibility study on the effectiveness of the use of locally produced and processed products instead of imported and processed ones in Armenia, no date
- Report on implementation of agreement between WFP and SIFI on implementation of a WFP assistance program in the Republic of Armenia, + 17 annexes, Moscow, 2011
- School Feeding Bulletin, 1, 2013, in Russian
- School Feeding Bulletin, 2, 2014, in Russian
- Second Quarter report on implementation of agreement between WFP and SIFI on implementation of a WFP assistance program in the Republic of Armenia, 30 June 2014
- Suggestions for justification for continued cooperation of WFP with the Russian Institute of food industry for the "Development of sustainable school feeding in Armenia" project (since 2016), no date

Cluster and Inter-agency Coordination

- United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2010 – 2015 Armenia
- UNDAF 2010 – 2015 Annexes
- UNDAF 2010 – 2015 draft Roadmap, 8 April 2014
- Political and Socio-economic Highlights (UNCT Briefing May-June, June-July, August 2014)
- UNICEF Statistics basic indicators, 18 December 2013
- Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2013 – 2017, USAID Armenia, March 2013

Miscellaneous

- Child Poverty in Armenia: Analysis of the 2008 Integrated Living Conditions Survey, UNICEF, October 2009
- Health behaviors of Armenian schoolchildren as a risk factor for developing NCDs, American University of Armenia, 26 May 2014
- Armenia, Asian Development Outlook 2014, Asian Development Bank
- Armenia'Child Nutrition Challenge, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 30 July 2014
- Macroeconomics 2014: Armenian government lowers annual growth forecast, by Sara Khosoyan, ArmeniaNow, 9 July 2014
- Partners join to improve children's health and nutrition in Armenia, USAID/Armenia, 12 February 2014

Rome, February 2015, report
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