

OPERATION EVALUATION

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 200310 (2013-2015)
Food assistance and education incentive for Afghan and Iraqi
refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Management Response

[March, 2015]



World Food Programme

Management response cleared by:

Country Director: Negar Gerami/ 26/02/2015

Detailed responses to evaluation recommendations

Evaluation Recommendations	Management	Management - Action to be taken			
	Accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and COMMENT on the Recommendation, providing clear reasoning for partially accepted and not accepted	Action	Responsible CO unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>Recommendation 1: Improve the food deliveries of the operation (First level of priority, WFP CO and HQ, UNHCR). WFP must improve outputs, in particular the delivery of planned food, in order to support more significantly refugee access to food, and the operation's outcomes. WFP should modify the combination of modalities (food imports, local purchases, C&V) in order to find a better balance between cost-efficiency and effectiveness. Food imports and distributions are the main modalities of the operation, as they are considered the most cost-efficient. However, the cost-efficiency analysis is not comprehensive, as it does not take into account the recurrent costs of customs clearance delays, and the warehousing and distribution costs assumed by BAFIA. Food imports face recurrent constraints that reduce their effectiveness. WFP CO and UNHCR should assess in the next JAM the relevance and feasibility of the implementation of a more balanced combination of modalities, which could include a higher level of local purchases and/or the introduction of C&V transfers for commodities and activities where the alpha value is close to 1</p>	Accepted	Logistics/ Procurement has prepared a procurement plan for 2015 increasing local purchase which will reduce lead times and circumvent the lengthy custom clearance process. CO will also explore the possibility of utilizing C&V transfers, and will liaise with the RB on suitable timing of a C&V feasibility assessment.	RB, CO Management Logistics and Programme Unit	Procurement Plan submitted 1 st quarter 2015 RB C&V Mission (by 4 th quarter) JAM mission (by 4 th quarter 2015)	Y

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(oil, lentils, THR, partial rations) and other factors are favourable (e.g. market access, etc).					
<p>Recommendation 2: Improve the monitoring system of the operation (First level of priority, WFP CO). WFP must improve the measurement and analysis of the outcomes of the intervention in order to allow better-informed decisions. For this purpose, WFP CO should improve the monitoring procedures in order to obtain reliable information on outcomes, and adapt the monitoring system to the limited capacities of the CO. The following proposed measures should be implemented with the objective of conducting a proper post-distribution monitoring exercise before the next JAM, so that findings can feed the JAM.</p> <p>2.1 Carry out one or two proper post-distribution monitoring per year: Considering the stable context on Iran, there is no need to carry out 4 PDM per year as proposed in the PRRO 200310. In addition, the CO has shown that it does not have the necessary capacity to carry out 4 PDM properly. Depending on the findings of the proposed food security assessment (recommendation) and the seasonal variability of food access (influence of access to work in agriculture and food price variability), one or two monitoring exercises should be carried</p>	Accepted	2.1 CO will carry out one comprehensive PDM with improved methodology prior to the 2015 JAM. In addition, a strategy will be set-up in consultation with the RB to inform appropriate	RB, CO Management and Programme Unit	By 3 rd quarter 2015	N

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<p>out.</p> <p><u>2.2. Implement a methodology</u> based on a combination of significant quantitative information (based on a representative sample) and qualitative information that will allow for a high level of reliability, triangulation and depth of analysis. The CO could liaise with the RB in order to determine a sampling strategy. . A strategic review of the monitoring and evaluation system of the operation by the RB has been planned for 2015. It should be carried out in order to adjust the monitoring system to the WFP minimum monitoring requirements.</p> <p><u>2.3 Increase the human resources capacity for monitoring:</u> proper PDM in such a vast territory can hardly be carried out by only two people from the programme team based in Teheran, who have other important responsibilities in the programme. The WFP CO should consider working with a partner, e.g. a university, to carry out the field collection of data. An alternative could be to train refugees in settlements, and to compensate them with food or cash transfers, which would contribute to the outcomes of the operation.</p>		<p>frequency and timing of PDM for 2016 onwards.</p> <p>2.2 RB will conduct a strategic review of the M&E system and methodology. A mission is planned in the second quarter.</p> <p>2.3 The above mentioned mission will review staffing needs to provide recommendations on an appropriate setup to improve monitoring.</p>			<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Improve the targeting and accountability approach for the GFD (Second level of priority, WFP CO and BAFIA). The initial household selection for full rations lacked accuracy, and the process of updating the</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p> <p>During recent mission of the Regional VAM advisor to Iran a review of available data and</p>		<p>RB, CO Management and Programme</p>		

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<p>beneficiary lists lacks effectiveness in some settlements, and could become a burden that is difficult to manage for WFP CO. In addition, a better targeting approach together with better communication could improve the level of satisfaction of beneficiaries. The targeting and accountability approach could be improved through the following measures.</p> <p>3.1 Carry out a food security and livelihoods assessment, as recommended by the JAM 2012. Such an assessment would allow for a better analysis and knowledge of the differential food security situation among regions and settlements and among households. This assessment could be carried out together with the proper post-distribution monitoring proposed prior to the next JAM.</p> <p>3.2 On the base of the assessment findings, <u>take into account the variation in terms of proportion of vulnerable population between settlements</u>, define a specific size for the assistance in each settlement (% of households beneficiaries of each ration), and <u>review the selection criteria</u>, in order to allow a more accurate household targeting.</p> <p>3.3 Implement a <u>participatory approach</u> involving refugee councils and/or women committees for the selection of households for both rations. Refugee committees should be given a decision-making role in the selection, WFP and/or BAFIA</p>	<p>beneficiary lists were conducted and determined that considerable amount of information/data has been collected by the CO and the amount of efforts that have been put into operationalizing the current targeting approach merits a validation instead of a full-fledged assessment as recommended by the evaluation mission. During the process, the targeting approach, selection process, and its rationale are to be documented. Also, the accuracy of the current targeting approach will be looked at using the PDM data to be collected during the 3rd quarter in 2015.</p> <p>3.3 CO does not fully agree with the statement that refugee councils were not consulted. Although during the evaluation mission, members of refugee</p>	<p>3.1 and 3.2 The validation exercise will be completed prior to the upcoming JAM that is planned during the 4th quarter 2015.</p> <p>Additional questions related to livelihoods will be developed with RB VAM/M&E units and complementing information will be collected during</p>	<p>Unit</p> <p>Programme and Procurement Units with RB support</p>	<p>Validation exercise by 2nd quarter of 2015</p> <p>By 3rd quarter 2015</p>	<p>N</p> <p>Y</p>

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<p>being in charge of implementing verification.</p> <p><u>3.4 Establish a proper verification and complaint mechanism.</u> On the one hand BAFIA or WFP could carry out a verification on a sample of households proposed by refugee councils for full rations, and above a certain rate of errors of selection in the sample (e.g. 15%), reject the proposed list. On the other hand, WFP should establish a proper complaint mechanism that is independent from bodies involved in the selection process (BAFIA, refugee councils). This could be done using the UNHCR outreach mechanism, for instance telephone hotlines or access to provincial UNHCR offices.</p> <p><u>3.5 Improve the communication with refugees</u> developing systematic communication channels, for example through BAFIA or the refugee councils, in order to inform refugees regularly on the status of food assistance, selection criteria, rations to be distributed or pipeline breaks.</p>	<p>councils issued complaints about the vulnerability criteria and insufficient consultation, both UNHCR and BAFIA can confirm that focus group discussions and key informant interviews with refugee representatives were conducted during the JAM in 2012.</p>	<p>the next PDM₂</p> <p>3.3- 3.5 The CO will explore options to establish systems to enhance accountability towards beneficiaries. This includes a stronger involvement of refugee councils in decision-making processes. The issue will also be covered during the planned M&E review mission and JAM. As an immediate step, the CO will install complaint boxes in each settlement close to distribution centers and explore the option to establish</p>		<p>By 3rd quarter 2015</p>	

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		a hotline			
<p>Recommendation 4: Improve the gender approach of the operation (second level of priority, WFP and UNHCR). The gender approach of the PRRO 200310 has two levels of programming: SF for girls, which has a formal plan and budgeting, and all the other expected outcomes, which do not have clear activities and resources. WFP should improve this second part, through a combination of actions to be put in place by WFP and UNHCR offices. Some of these actions would require minimum resources in the short term, whereas others would require more time/energy as well as support from senior level positions within related units of WFP and UNHCR. Some could be implemented internally, while others would require taking joint actions.</p> <p>4.1 <u>Build internal capacities for gender programming:</u> -Increase and/or refresh gender knowledge of program staff regarding gender; -Hire a gender consultant and/or get support from Regional and Headquarter WFP Offices to support gender programming from a technical perspective, starting with a gender assessment to identify what best approaches are relevant;</p> <p>4.2 Develop joint action plans with UNHCR to enhance the impacts of current gender-related objectives: -Organize regular joint meetings to share and discuss common concerns and assess the possibility of developing more gender</p>	Accepted	4.1 CO will seek the assistance of the Regional Gender focal point to review the project document from a gender perspective and explore the option to conduct a gender assessment in close consultation with	RB, CO Management and Programmme Unit	By 4 th quarter 2015	Y

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<p>sensitive monitoring indicators and methodologies;</p> <p>-Exchange any internal gender related documents that have been drafted and/or used in recent years (including UNHCR reports on Accountability Framework for AGDM) prior to the above-mentioned meetings and give feedback on them;</p> <p>-Plan for regular reflection meetings after each joint mission on gender-related concerns and agree on taking certain actions to deal with problems;</p> <p>-Allocate joint funds and/or plan for special fundraising to support and monitor women's involvement in women's groups in settlements;</p> <p><u>4.3 Link current activities for women's empowerment to increase their impact:</u></p> <p>-Utilize the potential pool of Health Posts resources more effectively and maintain systematic cooperation with them to increase capacities for refugee women, especially in the area of nutrition and SGBV.</p> <p>-Develop a networking strategy to link together socially active refugee women in each settlement and also link them to Iranian women employees in schools and Health Posts, either on occasions or permanently;</p> <p><u>4.4 Try to generate alternative courses of action and/or use alternative policies to promote women's empowerment:</u></p> <p>-Adjust the concept of 'Food for Social Development' to the current situation and advocate for it to increase women's involvement in community participation, such as their</p>		<p>UNHCR.</p> <p>4.2, 4.3: CO will engage with UNHCR and organize a brainstorming session; facilitate exchange of relevant documents and information and explore funding opportunities. Opportunities for a developing a networking strategy and working with Health Posts will be explored if funding permits.</p> <p>4.4, 4.5: WFP will endeavor to the extent possible to promote involvement of</p>		<p>By 4th quarter 2015</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>N</p>

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<p>membership in PTAs and enhancement of social networks; -Advocate for WFP Food for Assets (FFA) for current WCs and WHVs, the newly established Self Help Group in Saveh Settlement, and women in literacy courses;</p> <p><u>4.5 Expand external relations to ensure coherence with national policies on FHHs:</u> -Focus on developing projects that are more closely in line with articles 39 and 23 of the Fifth National Development Plan (NDP), as these articles emphasize developing programs that prevent social harm to vulnerable women and enhance their economic status. -Attempt to start a working relationship with the VPWFA directly or via the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), who has recently signed a Letter of Understanding and a joint Annual Work Plan.¹</p>		women in community projects while respecting cultural sensitivities and taking into account the policy context.			
<p>Recommendation 5. Support more actively livelihoods and self-reliance (second level of priority, WFP CO, BAFIA). Perspectives on refugee repatriation in the short term are uncertain and the government of Iran is more open to allowing a higher level of self-reliance for refugees. WFP, together with BAFIA, should join the process being undertaken by UNHCR aimed at expanding its activities in support of refugee livelihoods, for both the purpose of preparing refugees for repatriation and allowing a higher level of self-reliance. Food</p>	5.1 –Partially accepted – with a commitment to engaging in the HCR livelihoods strategy process for camp settings and consider the feasibility of including food assistance in the strategy as and when appropriate (considering other factors such as funding and a supportive government policy).				N

¹http://www.irna.ir/en/News/2717837/Social/UNFPA,_Iran%E2%80%99s_dept_for_women,_family_affairs_sign_agreement

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<p>assistance for supporting self-reliance could partially and progressively replace the GFD.</p> <p>5.1. <u>WFP should participate in the process of designing the new livelihood strategy of UNHCR.</u> UNHCR is currently carrying out a livelihoods assessment and will organize a validation and consultation workshop in February 2015. WFP should propose to UNHCR that it supports the organization of this process, and that food assistance be included as a possible modality for supporting more actively livelihoods and self-reliance. The next JAM should validate the propositions formulated in this process.</p> <p>5.2. <u>Several opportunities have been identified</u> during the evaluation mission, such as working with refugee councils for settlement management. Refugee councils are responsible for the management of some services and community assets, on a household's contributory basis. WFP could assess the feasibility of supporting these activities, or the creation of new community assets, with food or C&V transfers. This could lessen the contribution households would have to make, and contribute to the food security outcomes of the operation. Another opportunity could be supporting self-employment activities inside settlements, in particular for women.</p>	<p>For the time being livelihood options will be considered only within a camp setting framework unless WFP internal policies vis a vis its intervention in urban settings change.</p> <p>5.2 – Accepted</p>	<p>CO and RB will look at feasibility through an RB mission to discuss with authorities and identify opportunities in the area.</p>		<p>RB resilience mission (3/4 quarter 2015)</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Recommendation 6. Consider expanding the coverage of the operation to areas outside of settlements (second level of priorities, WFP CO, UNHCR and BAFIA). The current operation, and the focus on settlements, limits the coverage of refugee</p>	<p>Partially accepted- Proper and comprehensive Food Security assessments were conducted twice in Iran in 2003 and 2008. Both indicated the need to assist non-</p>	<p>CO management will discuss this issue with RB management and it will be further</p>	<p>RB and CO management</p>	<p>By 4rd quarter 2015</p>	<p>N</p>

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<p>food security needs. BAFIA has repeatedly expressed its expectation for WFP to expand its intervention outside settlements, and UNHCR has also shown its interest and considers such an expansion very relevant. Entering into an urban context with such a high number of urban refugees (over 800,000) represents a challenge. However, there are already known sub-urban areas with high concentrations of refugees and vulnerability. If WFP carries out a proper food security and livelihoods assessment as proposed in recommendation 3.1, it could include, in addition to settlements, some of these already known areas, and WFP could consider designing a simple assistance plan in the first phase of intervention (e.g. THR in schools in Kerman where enrolment rate is very low for refugees in the province).</p>	<p>camp refugees. However, due to funding constraints it was decided not to expand the operation beyond its current mandate of assisting camp based refugees.</p>	<p>explored during the upcoming JAM.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 7: Better adapt the SF and FFT activities to needs (second level of priority, WFP CO).</p> <p>7.1 THR does not seem to be a crucial factor in the promotion of access to primary schools inside settlements while it still represents a valuable incentive for access to girls at secondary schools. It is recommended to consider the suspension of THR distributions in primary school and to maintain them in secondary school.</p> <p>7.2 WFP and UNHCR should consider a more effective incentive for female teachers than THR, such as systematic transport facilities or support.</p>	<p>Partially accepted- CO does not agree with the statement in 7.1 on non-importance of THR at primary level. School feeding THR in primary school has been a pillar of recovery activities and has served as the main gender component of the project for many years. The expansion of THR to secondary level is by and large attributable to the success of this component at primary level. CO fears that if the assistance is</p>	<p>7.2 CO will discuss with UNHCR possibility of provision of</p>	<p>CO management</p>	<p>2nd quarter 2015</p>	<p>N</p>

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7.3 For FFT activities, WFP should provide a higher transfer to beneficiaries, more closely aligned with the potential loss of income for participants.	withdrawn at primary level families may go back to the previous practice of not sending their girls to school	transportation for the teachers 7.3 CO will incorporate this issue into the TORs of the JAM to inform the appropriate transfer value.	Programme Unit	2 nd quarter 2015	N
Recommendation 8: Strengthen WFP country office capacity and field presence, and consider expand partnerships. Most of the recommendations presented above need dedicated time and resources in order to design, plan, implement and monitor innovations. Currently, the capacities of the CO are limited and staff workload is already high and does not allow a high flexibility for new activities. Some propositions on ways to strengthen the capacity of the CO are already included in the recommendations. In addition to these, WFP RB should provide all the necessary support for the implementation of the recommendations that are accepted, in the form of technical expertise and support missions. Also, WFP should increase its presence at field level, which would support all activities. In order to limit the extra resources needed, WFP could propose	Accepted	While the RB will provide technical advice and conduct support missions on a priority basis, the CO will be responsible for the implementation. To make maximum use of its staff and explore options to enhance staff capacity, the CO plans to conduct a staffing review. The	RB, CO management and programme Unit	Staffing review (timing tbc) RB M&E mission by 3 rd quarter of 2015 RB resilience team mission (tbc) JAM by 4 th	Y

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that UNHCR use its field infrastructure (sub-offices) and share some staff and costs. Currently WFP does not have any partnership with NGOs since they have limited access to camps and food distribution is done by BAFIA who is overall responsible for the camps in Iran. If WFP chooses to work in urban areas and adopt an approach of support to self-reliance, WFP should engage more actively with partners other than BAFIA that already have experience in supporting livelihoods. This would include UNHCR and could partly build on its outreach strategy, and NGOs who are already working on a limited number of livelihood activities with UNHCR		CO management will discuss possibility of using the four UNHCR sub offices and possibly cost share one staff member in each sub-office who would serve as the outreach arm of WFP in the field. Should the decision for expansion of assistance to urban areas be reached WFP will certainly identify NGOs with suitable profile and expertise to implement WFP assistance in the urban setting		quarter 2015 C/V mission by 4 th quarter 2015 Engage in dialogue with UNHCR on sharing office space and staff: 2nd quarter	