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sharing lessons

2014

Annual Evaluation Report

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World Food Programme

Contents

Foreword	1
Executive Summary	2
Key Messages	2
Overall Recommendations	3
Part 1. Evaluation Findings	5
Introduction	5
Country Portfolio and Operation Evaluations	7
WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response: Findings from Evaluations of the Global Food Security Cluster and WFP's Use of Pooled Funds	12
Innovations in Food Assistance: Findings from Evaluations of WFP's Cash and Voucher Policy and the Purchase for Progress Pilot Initiative	15
Part 2. WFP's Evaluation Function	19
The 2014 Peer Review of WFP's Evaluation Function	19
The Office of Evaluation's Performance Against its 2014 Plan	20
Evaluation Outlook	25
Acronyms	26

Foreword

This Annual Evaluation Report presents key messages, recommendations and synthesized findings from evaluations completed by the Office of Evaluation (OEV) during 2014 (Part 1). The evaluations covered a wide range of WFP's work at the country portfolio and operational level, and included the first batch of single operation evaluations under the new series.

Managing innovation as a major feature of WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance was considered in two of the complex evaluations. Appropriately, in view of the external context for WFP's work in 2014, two strategic evaluations examining WFP's role in and contribution to the international humanitarian system are presented as part of OEV's ongoing series of evaluations on WFP's emergency preparedness and response.

Part 2 reports on OEV's performance against plan, and progress made since the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Development Assistance Committee completed their peer review of WFP's evaluation function in mid-2014. The report concludes with the main areas of development for coming years agreed in the management response to the peer review, the implications for OEV's remit, and priorities for the evaluation function as a whole.

Helen Wedgwood
Director, Office of Evaluation
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Executive Summary

2014

The evaluations synthesized in this year's Annual Evaluation Report raise several strategic issues relevant to WFP's ongoing organizational strengthening process to support the shift from food aid to food assistance, and the early stages of implementing the 2014–2017 Strategic Plan. These issues are reflected in the following key messages and recommendations, and elaborated in the findings section in Part 1 of this report. Part 2 reports on the Office of Evaluation's performance in 2014.

Key Messages

There is growing awareness of and work towards the shift “from implementer to enabler” indicated in WFP's Strategic Plan. While the evaluations confirm this shift as relevant and appropriate to long-term trends in the external context for WFP's work, the principal lesson from the 2014 evaluations is that the shift from food aid to food assistance is still “work in progress” on the ground.

Change of the magnitude and depth envisioned is difficult, takes longer than anticipated, and requires enhanced supporting functions across WFP. WFP needs to continue adjusting its tools and services, funding and staffing strategies, and measuring and reporting practices. Even where these adjustments have been prioritized for several years – including under major initiatives such as Purchase for Progress and mainstreaming of cash and voucher use – evaluations have confirmed that challenges and gaps remain. To enable country offices to deliver and sustain the shift requires commitment, central guidance and cross-functional leadership, with systematic dissemination and learning support.

Evaluations in middle-income countries in 2014 reinforced the lessons reported in the 2013 Annual Evaluation Report by finding that WFP can make

relevant contributions in these dynamic contexts, where inequity of opportunity often results in vulnerability. To do this, however, WFP needs to enhance its focus on strengthening national policy and systems, developing capacity and working in partnership. The need for greater clarity and guidance on capacity development strategy and measurement of the results of capacity development activities was echoed in several other evaluations.

Evidence requirements for identifying food assistance results are challenging for WFP's current monitoring systems and capacity. While data on outputs have improved, measurement and analysis at the outcome level are still inadequate. Challenges in determining WFP's efficiency, effectiveness and comparative advantage are particularly acute in the relatively new areas of its strategic and operational plans, such as in establishing sustainable links between smallholder farmers and markets, and in resilience, nutrition and capacity development work. These challenges, coupled with unclear result chains in project designs, limit WFP's ability to manage for results based on analysis of what works and what does not. This limitation undermines efforts to ensure that the people WFP serves in the future obtain the maximum benefits from learning derived from today's innovations. The evaluations also found some evidence of underreporting, with outcomes being achieved but not adequately recorded.

Despite use of the gender marker system, and echoing findings reported in last year's Annual Evaluation Report, 2014 evaluations found that gender is not yet fully integrated into the design of WFP operations or outcome monitoring. Many of the 2014 evaluations confirmed that there is scope for improving the capture of positive results in several outcome areas, including gender; however, further development of gender monitoring systems, capacity and culture is needed.

The 2014 evaluations completed under the ongoing series on WFP's core business of emergency preparedness and response confirm WFP's role as an important contributor to the international humanitarian system. In addition to adding value to its own response through the use of pooled funds, WFP has also delivered clear benefits to partners through its leadership and co-leadership of clusters. However, while the evaluations confirmed that investment in coordination brings benefits for the overall humanitarian response, WFP's commitment to and resourcing of its leadership role in coordination was found to be variable; and although WFP engaged in coordinated planning and appeals, this has not led to the coordinated programming envisaged by the humanitarian reform process.

Overall Recommendations

Based on findings, recommendations and common themes from the evaluations completed by the Office of Evaluation in 2014, four overarching recommendations are directed to senior management for addressing systemic issues that were manifested in several ways across WFP's functions during the periods covered by the evaluations. The recommendations are intended to support WFP as it works towards continuous improvement, enhanced impacts for the people it serves, and accountability for results.

- 1) Reconfirm WFP's commitment to its *leadership role in inter-agency coordination* of humanitarian response, and ensure consistent support for coordination at the country level, by clarifying to staff the expected balance between WFP's delivery of its operations and its inter-agency engagement; providing adequate resources for WFP's leadership role in coordination; and providing appropriate guidance, support and orientation for those deployed in coordination roles.
- 2) Increase *support to country offices' adoption of food assistance approaches and modalities* by: i) strengthening management and coordination across functional units, enhancing integrated systems and processes for addressing challenges and bottlenecks arising from increased demand for and complexity of services; ii) ensuring timely and systematic update and dissemination of the required programme guidance; and iii) following through on financial and human resource strategies to deliver the wider range of capacities and skills needed.
- 3) Enhance WFP's accountability and strengthen country offices' ability to *manage for results* by identifying and addressing barriers to systematic measurement of the outcomes of WFP's food assistance, and its contribution to improving the lives of the women and men, girls and boys it reaches. Evidence provided by the evaluations suggests that this will require: i) providing better guidance on targeting strategies and prioritization in operational planning; ii) following through on commitments to provide comprehensive guidance on beneficiary counting, and on monitoring, review and decentralized evaluation; iii) communicating evidence requirements and expectations at the project design stage, including the specific needs of pilots; and iv) ensuring adequate resourcing and technical capacity for monitoring and evaluation.
- 4) While keeping the needs of the most vulnerable in sight, increase the focus of WFP's country strategy and programme design on alignment with *national/local systems and strategies for capacity development* and on policy advice, including by identifying adequate human and financial resources for the longer-term and predictable engagement this requires. This work should be supported by clearer communication of WFP's strategic approach, particularly in middle-income countries, and associated guidance and measurement systems drawing on experience, evaluations and lessons from recent years.

Part 1. Evaluation Findings

Introduction

Independent evaluations form part of WFP's accountability framework and contribute to organizational learning and strengthening. The Executive Summary of this Annual Evaluation Report (AER) sets out the key overarching messages and recommendations drawn from the evaluation summaries and syntheses presented in the following sections.

WFP conducts different types of evaluation to ensure appropriate coverage of its policies, strategies and operations. In 2014, the Office of Evaluation (OEV) completed 27 evaluations comprising policy, strategic, country portfolio and single operation evaluations, as shown in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1. Coverage is considered further in Part 2 of this report.

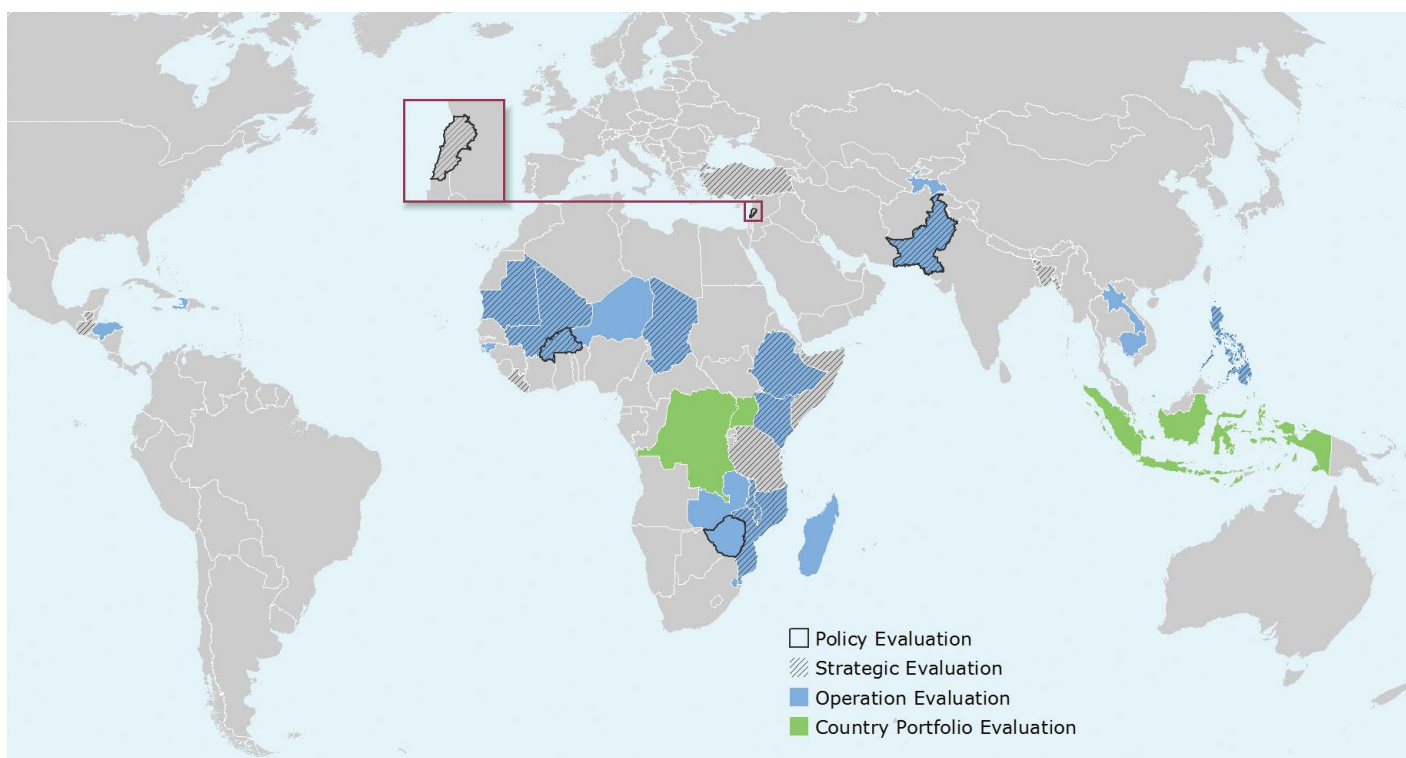
Table 1. Evaluations completed in 2014*

Type	Subject	Reference period
Strategic	Joint WFP/FAO Global Food Security Cluster	2009–2014
	WFP's Use of Pooled Funds for Humanitarian Preparedness and Response	2009–2013
	WFP's Pilot Purchase for Progress Initiative	2008–2013
Policy	Cash and Voucher Policy	2008–2014
Country portfolio	Democratic Republic of the Congo	2009–2013
	Uganda	2009–2013
	Indonesia	2009–2013
Operation	Burkina Faso CP 200163 (2011–2015) – mid-term evaluation	
	Cambodia CP 200202 (2011–2016) – mid-term evaluation	
	Chad PRRO 200289 (2012–2014)	
	Ethiopia PRRO 200290 (2012–2015)	
	Guinea-Bissau PRRO 200526 (2013–2015)	
	Haiti DEV 200150 (2012–2014)	
	Honduras CP 200240 (2012–2016) mid-term evaluation	
	Kenya PRRO 200174 (2011–2014)	
	Lao People's Democratic Republic CP 200242 (2012–2015) mid-term evaluation	
	Madagascar PRRO 200065 (2010–2014)	
	Malawi CP 200287 (2012–2016) mid-term evaluation	
	Mali EMOP 200525 (2013–2014)	
	Mozambique PRRO 200355 (2012–2014)	
	Pakistan PRRO 200250 (2013–2015)	
	Philippines PRRO 200296 (2012–2014)	
	Swaziland DEV 200422 and 200508 (2013–2014)	
	Tajikistan PRRO 200122 (2010–2014)	
	West Africa (Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, the Niger) EMOP 200438 (2012–2014)	
	Zambia CP 200157 (2011–2015) mid-term evaluation	
	Zimbabwe PRRO 200453 (2013–2015)	

* CP = country programme; DEV = development project; EMOP = emergency operation; PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation. Shaded operation evaluations are included in "Synthesis Report of Operation Evaluations (July 2013–July 2014)" presented to the Board in November 2014¹. Source: OEV database.

¹ WFP/EB.2/2014/6-E.

Figure 1. Evaluations by type, 2014



Data include all countries visited in the course of evaluations.

Source: OEV database.

Policy evaluations are a central element of WFP’s policy framework in which policies are evaluated between four and six years after approval, to assess their quality, implementation and results. In 2014, the evaluation of WFP’s 2009 cash and voucher policy was completed, providing evidence and recommendations on one of the main innovations in WFP’s shift from food aid to food assistance through an increased range of transfer modalities.

Strategic evaluations assess global or corporate themes, programmes, plans and initiatives selected for their relevance to WFP’s strategic direction and management. In 2014, the series of strategic evaluations on WFP’s emergency preparedness and response continued with completion of evaluations of the food security cluster, conducted jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and of WFP’s use of pooled funds. Also in 2014, the final evaluation of Purchase for Progress – WFP’s largest ever pilot initiative initiated under the previous Strategic Plan to help link smallholder

farmers to agricultural markets – was completed.

Country portfolio evaluations (CPEs) were conducted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Indonesia and Uganda in 2014. Since their start in 2009, 20 CPEs have been completed plus one regional portfolio evaluation in Central America. CPEs assess the strategic positioning, performance and results of the entirety of a country office’s work over four to six years – the “portfolio”. Uganda was the first WFP country office to develop a formal strategy for implementing the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan’s shift from food aid to food assistance; Indonesia’s strategy covers 2011–2015 and DRC’s 2013–2017.

This is the first AER to include a synthesis of findings from the first year of implementation of the new series of single operation evaluations, launched in mid-2013.² These evaluations are considered together with the CPEs, and provide further insight into the appropriateness, performance and results of individual operations.

² For technical reasons, only the 12 operation evaluations completed by July 2014 are included in this AER. The 2015 AER will include a synthesis of findings from the eight operation evaluations completed later in 2014 (see Table 1).

Country Portfolio and Operation Evaluations

Content and Context

The three CPEs and twelve operation evaluations synthesized in this section spanned virtually all the types of activity in which WFP engages in a range of environmental, political and economic contexts.

Alignment and Strategic Positioning

The work evaluated was generally well aligned with humanitarian and food-security needs and with host governments' policy frameworks and objectives. The CPEs found that alignment with WFP's own Strategic Plan was good; operation evaluations noted that outcome-level indicators in individual operations did not always accurately reflect WFP's 2012 Strategic Results Framework.³ In several countries, alignment with international principles and practice on humanitarian response, and support to people

affected by conflict in fragile states were found to be good. However, principles were also found to be compromised in a few instances.

Although CPEs found strategic coordination and partnership with other agencies, including the Rome-based agencies (RBAs), to be weak and lacking in synergy, operational partnerships were generally strong. Promising private-sector partnerships were identified in the Indonesia and Uganda portfolios and some of the operations evaluated⁴ – but there were many obstacles and delays in this emerging area for WFP.⁵

Overall, while more strategic aspects of WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance were developing satisfactorily, individual operations did not always reflect the transition so well. As the Uganda CPE put it, "implementation was not always as coherent as the strategy". Conversely, while WFP had effective operational partnerships, the most challenging element of the strategic shift – working in synergy with other agencies at the country level – had yet to be achieved.

Figure 2. Contextual characteristics

	CPEs			Operation Evaluations											
	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Indonesia	Uganda	Burkina Faso	Cambodia	Chad	Ethiopia	Kenya	Laos PDR	Madagascar	Mozambique	Philippines	Regional EMOP (Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger)	Swaziland	Tajikistan
Affected by recurrent natural disaster	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Fragile state	■		■			■	■	■		■			■		
Small country office									■					■	■
Middle-income country												■			

Country office sizes are categorized by WFP management.

■ partial

Sources: CPE and operation evaluation reports; WFP's Operations Management Department; World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) 2014 data on fragile states.

³ The 2012 Strategic Results Framework was amended during its implementation period.

⁴ Cambodia, Madagascar and the Philippines.

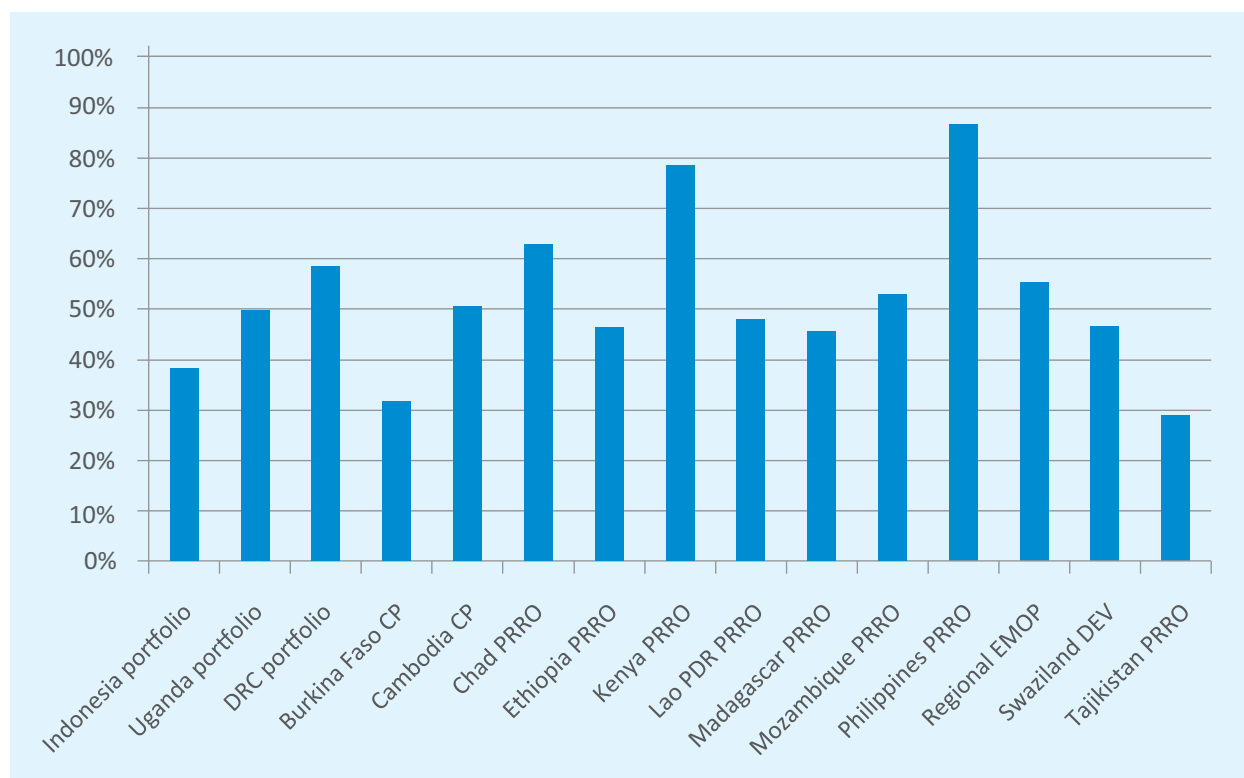
⁵ For example, in Burkina Faso, Chad and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Strategic Choices and Design

In most cases, portfolio and operation design was supported by thorough analytical work. In particular, Indonesia and Uganda benefited from intensive, innovative thinking while their country strategies were developed. However, in many countries, planning did not anticipate and adjust to changing funding

climates for WFP’s evolving programmes. The recent development of a country strategy in DRC was widely welcomed, although WFP’s strategic position had suffered from its earlier absence. Major funding shortfalls often necessitated unsatisfactory, ad hoc adjustments and cuts. The Indonesia CPE found that the country office had to operate in “sub-survival mode” for much of the review period.

Figure 3. Percentages of total budgets funded⁶



Sources: CPE and operation evaluation reports.

WFP made good strategic choices as it expanded its response options and transfer modalities. However, 9 of the 12 operation evaluations and the CPE of DRC raised targeting issues, including in balancing the depth and breadth of coverage. The approach to gender in the design and implementation of operations remained generally inadequate. Even on paper, alignment with WFP’s gender policy was unsatisfactory, although good progress was made in individual operations in Cambodia, Kenya, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Swaziland.

Progress with improving monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reflected the incomplete strategic transition from food aid to food assistance. Data measurement and reporting remained stronger at the output than the outcome level, often because of weaknesses in field monitoring systems, inadequately supported by corporate guidance. This resulted in inadequate measurement of and reporting on overall effectiveness in the strategic context and core issues such as gender. In other words, WFP found it easier to track what it was doing than what it was achieving.

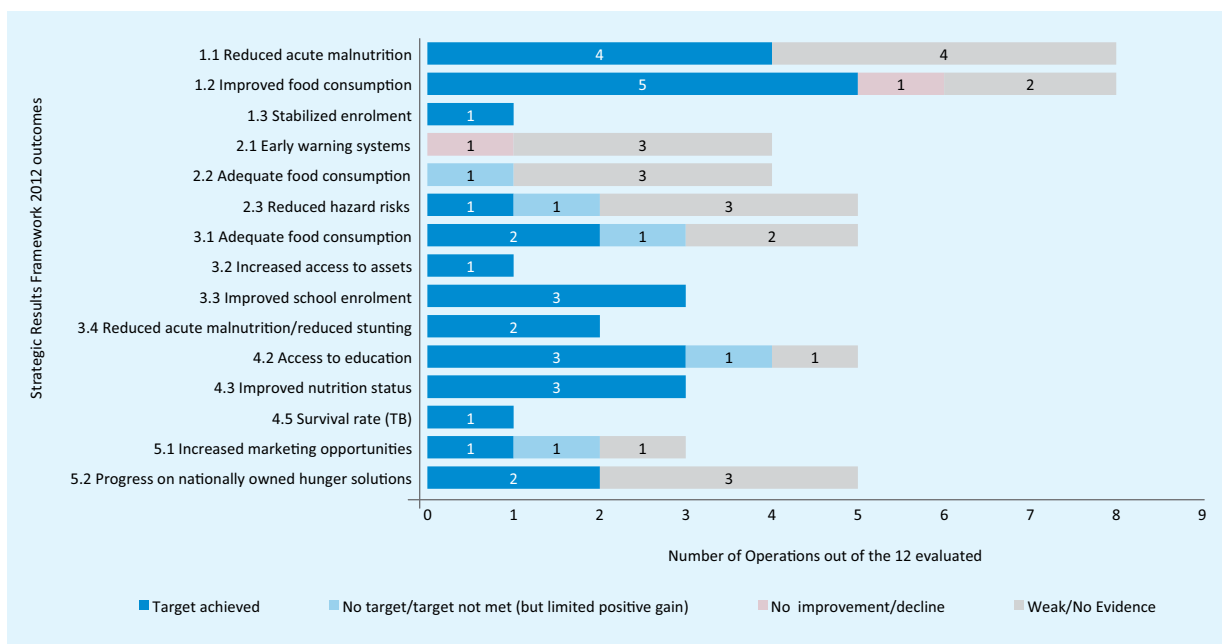
⁶ Aggregate funding received, as a percentage of total budget. All the single operations evaluated were due for completion in 2014, except for Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2015) and Cambodia (2016), for which additional funding might be received.

Performance and Results

Figure 4 indicates the contributions made at the operational level by the 12 operations evaluated in 2014 towards WFP’s Strategic Objectives, based on the 2012 Strategic Results Framework.⁷ Unsurprisingly, the

greatest evidence of positive results was under Strategic Objective 1; evidence under Strategic Objective 2 was particularly scant; and there was limited evidence under Strategic Objective 5. Under-reporting and under-representation were major issues.⁸

Figure 4. Outcome performance of operations to the 2012 Strategic Results Framework



Source: “Synthesis Report of Operation Evaluations (July 2013–July 2014)”.

Across the country portfolios and single operations evaluated in 2014, implementation remained generally, but not universally, satisfactory in WFP’s established activities: general food distribution (GFD), school feeding and food for assets (FFA). During the period covered, WFP reached large numbers of beneficiaries, as measured in corporate monitoring systems.⁹ However, although beneficiary numbers typically

remained high or even exceeded targets (Figures 5 and 6), transfers to beneficiaries were often reduced – in frequency, entitlement or both – because of pipeline breaks, operational constraints and/or funding shortfalls. The efficiency and effectiveness of GFD were thus often impaired. Failings identified in FFA included short-term approaches, weak technical design, poor construction and inadequate follow-up.¹⁰

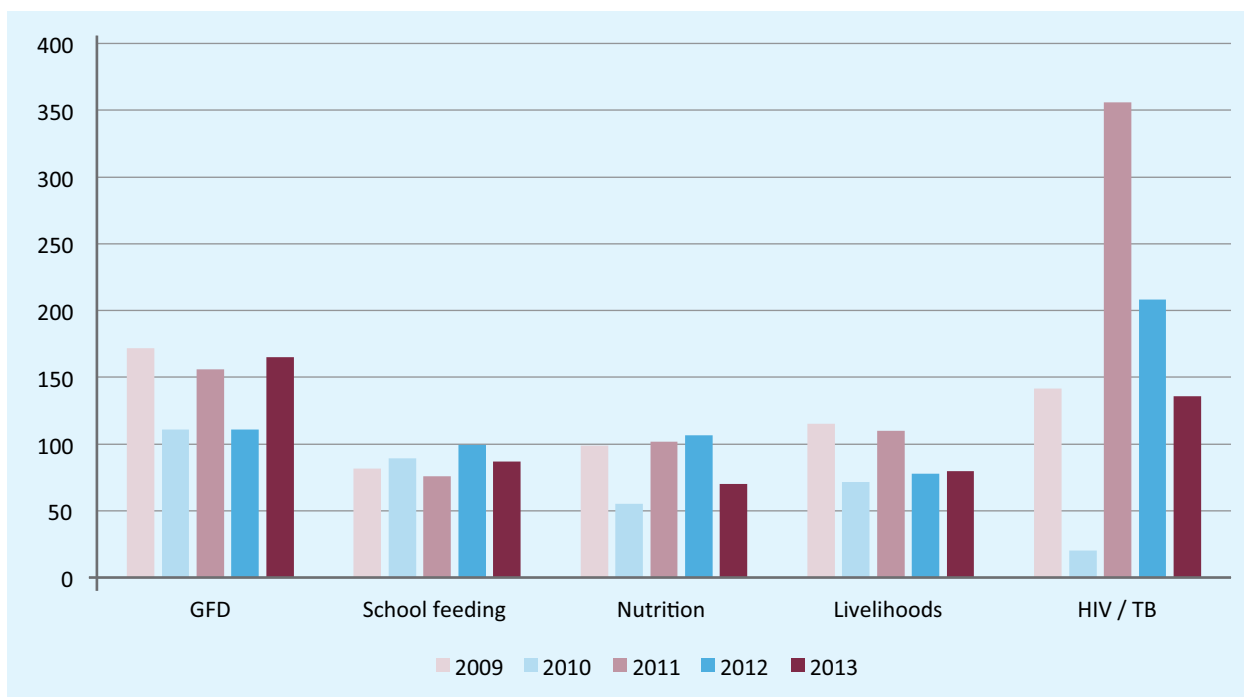
⁷ WFP Strategic Plan 2008–2013 and Strategic Results Framework 2012.

⁸ Under-reporting refers to results included in WFP’s corporate reporting system for which evaluations found limited evidence. Under-representation refers to results that are not included in WFP’s corporate reporting system, but for which evaluations found evidence.

⁹ During the significant time-lag between evaluation fieldwork and the AER, new guidance was disseminated in 2014, along with training and context analysis in 12 countries.

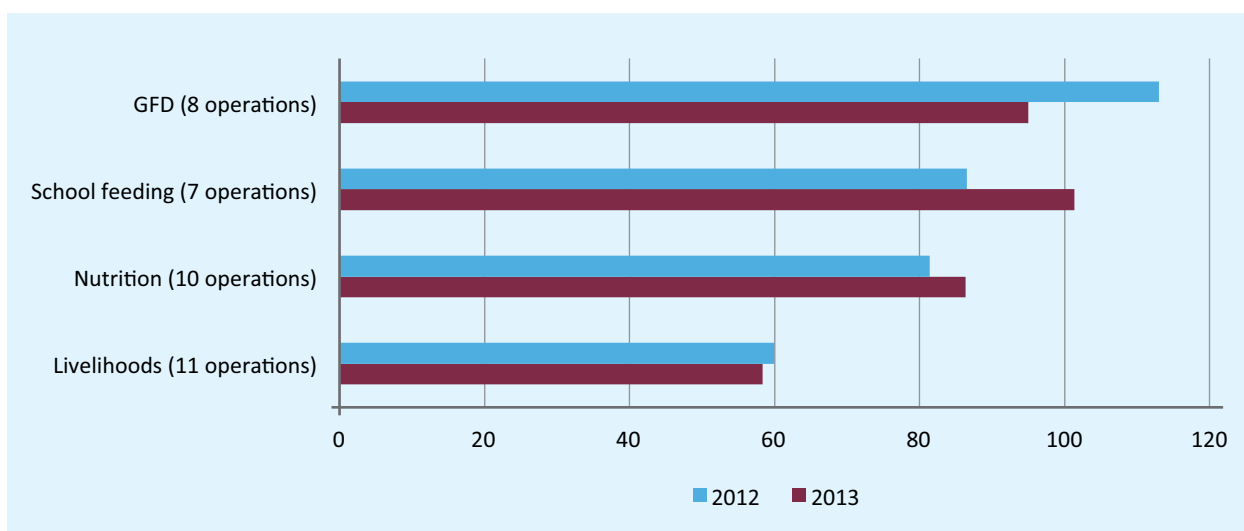
¹⁰ Under-reporting refers to results included in WFP’s corporate reporting system for which evaluations found limited evidence. Under-representation refers to results that are not included in WFP’s corporate reporting system, but for which evaluations found evidence.

Figure 5. Beneficiaries reached as percentages of targets (2014 CPEs)



Sources: CPE reports and Dacota.¹¹

Figure 6. Beneficiaries reached as percentages of targets 2012 and 2013 (2014 operation evaluations)



Source: Synthesis Report of Operation Evaluations (July 2013–July 2014)¹¹.

¹¹ In 2010–2013, HIV/TB activities took place only in DRC. The 2011 peak occurred with the change in WFP’s partner organization.

Among newer approaches, evaluation findings confirmed the relevance and appropriateness of cash and vouchers (C&V), which operation evaluations found to be popular with beneficiaries. All CPEs and five operation evaluations assessed the use of WFP's purchasing power to connect smallholder farmers to markets as having a largely positive impact in terms of increasing sales from farmers' organizations (FOs). Agriculture and market support was a major part of the Uganda portfolio and was instrumental in establishing market standards. However, both the Uganda CPE and the final evaluation of the Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot initiative noted the need for more attention to differentiation within beneficiary groups if smallholder farmers are to benefit. P4P was the only development project in the DRC portfolio and showed early potential. The use of local foods in school meals – although not a P4P project – was enthusiastically received in Indonesia.

Nutrition activities were an increasingly important part of WFP's work,¹² but achieved mixed results, impeded by operational difficulties and inadequate outcome monitoring. Notable achievements in individual operations included reduced anaemia prevalence, good recovery rates for treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, higher survival rates for people on anti-retroviral therapy, and enhanced nutrition awareness and health-seeking behaviour. There was good progress in developing policies in Indonesia and the Philippines, but mother-and-child health and nutrition activities in Uganda were assessed as “not timely, not predictable and not sustainable”. In other cases, absence of complementary activities limited the achievement of results.

Several evaluations commended logistics performance and recognized the contextual and operational challenges to efficiency under WFP's mandate. However, all the CPEs and most operation evaluations nevertheless criticized WFP's insufficient attention to efficiency and/or monitoring.

About half of the evaluations found evidence of influence on national policy, but WFP continued to face challenges in these upstream areas. Performance in national capacity development reflected WFP's evolving operational experience and capacity in this area. While

national capacity development was a central theme in the Indonesia portfolio, the aim in Uganda was mainly to build capacity for implementing WFP activities. National capacity development was included in the design of several operations, but strategies were not always fully thought through. Although national capacity development was covered by nine operation evaluations, WFP corporate monitoring systems do not facilitate its assessment at the outcome level and evidence of results was limited.¹³ All CPEs and 11 operation evaluations assessed training, which was of uneven quality and was sometimes incorrectly equated with capacity development.

Advocacy for enhanced food assistance policy at the national level and for host governments' adoption of effective approaches and modalities is a core strategy as WFP seeks to strengthen countries' capacity to end hunger. While advocacy was integrated into the design of some country strategies and programmes, it was lacking in many of the operations evaluated. However, the operation evaluations in Cambodia, Chad, the Philippines, Swaziland and Tajikistan commended advocacy efforts.

In Indonesia and Cambodia, institutional development was explicitly linked to strategies for hand-over and exit, but consideration of such strategies was in its early stages or completely lacking in most cases, and was often constrained by lack of readiness in government or other partners.¹⁴ The Indonesia CPE criticized the way in which the “prototyping” approach for gradual government adoption and scaling up was executed; evaluations elsewhere found weak foundations for hand-over to government.

While the effectiveness of some activities was affirmed,¹⁵ the density of evidence of effectiveness overall was compromised by inadequate outcome-level measurement and analysis. Short-term impact on malnutrition and in some policy and institutional areas was certainly achieved in some cases. WFP had strengthened its approach to preparedness, resilience and sustainability in many countries; however, longer-term impact was difficult to discern from available evidence, although it was identified in some activities.¹⁶

¹² In the 12 operation evaluations, nutrition activities reached the most beneficiaries after GFD.

¹³ This may improve following roll-out of the country office M&E tool (COMET).

¹⁴ Cambodia, Madagascar and Mozambique.

¹⁵ Including nutrition and school feeding in DRC and school feeding in Uganda.

¹⁶ School feeding in Cambodia and Swaziland; FFA in DRC and Tajikistan.

Lessons from CPEs and Operation Evaluations

The principal lesson from the 2014 CPEs and operation evaluations was that WFP's strategic shift from food aid to food assistance is still a work in progress. It requires ongoing commitment at all levels of WFP to avoid simply rebranding food aid as food assistance, without appropriately transforming the character of operations. It is understandably easier to write new strategy than to implement it through operational change, and there is growing awareness in WFP of the intended increasing shift "from implementer to enabler" in appropriate contexts. Nevertheless, WFP is not yet ahead of the curve with regard to the necessary adjustments in funding and reporting, and is often caught short by budget shortfalls that necessitate operational compromises and reduce effectiveness.

Gender considerations are not yet fully integrated into WFP operations. Gender lessons include the need to design gender-sensitive programmes based on disaggregated data and analysis, including of different socio-economic groups. Evaluations can make major contributions to enhancing WFP's accountability on gender, but require clear parameters for and expectations of gender analysis and reporting.

WFP has not yet responded adequately to the calls in many evaluations for more thorough and meaningful monitoring and reporting, particularly at the outcome level. While the format for Standard Project Reports has been changed incrementally each year over recent years, it does not yet enable reporting on the full range of tools and services used to deliver food assistance, especially capacity development and policy advocacy. There is also scope for WFP to report more on the positive outcomes that it is achieving and can already identify. The synthesis of operation evaluations concluded that: "WFP's outcome-level results appear to be under-reported... almost all the [operation evaluations] found valuable results that were not captured in current systems". Examples included increased dietary diversity in Tajikistan, improved economic status for women in Cambodia and more early warning systems in the Philippines.

Evaluations in middle-income countries (MICs) in 2014 reinforced the lessons reported in the 2013 AER.

Hunger, malnutrition – including overnutrition – and vulnerability to natural disasters persist in many MICs, where mean national income data may mask significant inequality and poverty levels. WFP therefore has relevant roles in these countries, but must adjust its intervention, funding and staffing strategies and increase its focus on policy, capacity development and partnerships – not only with host governments and other United Nations agencies but also with civil society and the private sector.

WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response: Findings from Evaluations of the Global Food Security Cluster and WFP's Use of Pooled Funds

Emergency preparedness and response is WFP's core business. Responses to emergencies and protracted crises accounted for at least 78 percent of WFP's direct expenditure over the last four years.¹⁷ WFP is also an important pillar of the international humanitarian system, implementing the 2005 Humanitarian Reforms and the 2011 Transformative Agenda, leading the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters, and co-leading the global food security cluster with FAO. WFP is the single largest recipient both of reported total humanitarian funding and of pooled funds.

In 2014, two of the evaluations under OEV's series on emergency preparedness and response were completed: one on the global food security cluster (2009–2014), conducted jointly with FAO; and another on WFP's use of pooled funds (2009–2013). Short summaries of the evaluation findings¹⁸ and common themes are presented in this section, pending a synthesis report on the whole series in 2015.

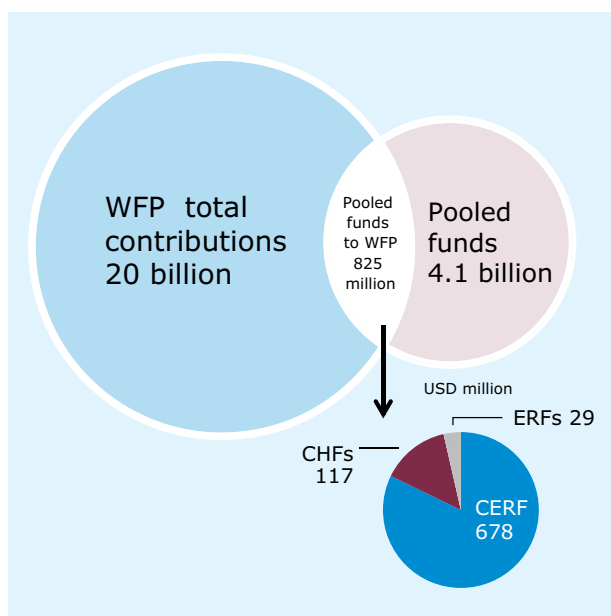
WFP's Use of Pooled Funds

This evaluation considered use of the global-level Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the country-based common humanitarian and emergency response funds. WFP received USD 825 million from pooled funds between 2009 and 2013 – approximately 4 percent of its total donor contributions.

¹⁷ "WFP Annual Performance Report for 2013" (WFP/EB.A/2014/4*).

¹⁸ Between 22 and 31.9 percent of total humanitarian funding in 2011–2014, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service.

Figure 7. Pooled funds in proportion to WFP's total contributions, 2009–2013 (USD)



CHF = common humanitarian fund; ERF = emergency response fund. Totals may not sum because of rounding.

Sources: Total pooled funds from OCHA Financial Tracking Service; WFP total contributions from WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS) and weekly contribution statistics.

Overall, the evaluation found that pooled funds made a positive contribution to WFP operations. Their main added value came from their relative timeliness, predictability and additionality with respect to other funding sources. The modalities of pooled funds were found to be well aligned with supporting life-saving responses but had limited relevance in financing preparedness, resilience- building or social assistance interventions.

The CERF rapid response window was found effective in facilitating rapid response to sudden-onset emergencies. It helped get WFP operations under way quickly and catalysed directed multilateral contributions. Although timeliness was highly variable among the 62 country offices receiving them, pooled funds were on average, one of the first donor funds available to WFP.

However, access to the CERF underfunded window was unpredictable and inadequate to the scale of WFP's needs. Understanding of what constitutes an underfunded crisis were inconsistent across WFP, ranging from situations where funding was simply uneven and slow, to crises attracting limited donor support.

Pooled funds complement internal advance financing, which is critical to WFP's capacity to respond rapidly. Pooled funds reinforce internal advances by revolving the Immediate Response Account and providing collateral for release of working capital financing. An important feature of pooled funds is that they are more flexible than many other funding sources in allowing repayment of internal loans.

Country-based pooled funds provided smaller-scale contributions but were strategically important in funding a range of WFP-operated common services, including the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service, common logistics services and pipelines, and shared operational hubs. Pooled funds contributed an average of 16 percent of funding to special operations.

Pooled funds appear to have resulted in additional resources for WFP, as other channels of multilateral donations have increased alongside their introduction.

Pooled fund processes encouraged WFP to engage with coordinated strategy development and project appraisal mechanisms. However, this did not lead to innovative, integrated programmes or greater cross-sectoral collaboration. Pooled funds had limited comparative advantage in financing cluster coordination costs, where they played a supplementary role at best. Pooled funds have had little observable impact on WFP's relationships with cooperating partners. Overall, pooled funds worked best in reinforcing effective coordination structures, rather than solving the challenges of weak or absent systems.

Reconciling WFP's large-scale operations to the project-funding model of pooled funds remains challenging. The earmarking of pooled funds for specific activities within WFP operations added transaction costs, constrained flexibility and did little to improve the quality of response. The demands for disaggregated reports on the use of pooled funds were difficult to reconcile with WFP's reporting systems for operations, and added little value. The evaluation also noted insufficient attention to monitoring the contribution of pooled funds to the broader goals of improved timeliness of response and the institutionalization of the humanitarian reforms.

The evaluation recommended maintaining and strengthening the life-saving focus of pooled funds; reducing the earmarking of pooled fund grants; improving the targeting of CERF grants from the underfunded emergency window; increasing capacity to utilize pooled funds as collateral for release of

internal advances; clarifying the contribution of pooled funds to supporting common services in emergencies; consolidating commitment to and fulfilment of WFP’s coordination responsibilities; and clarifying responsibilities for acquiring, monitoring and reporting on pooled funds.

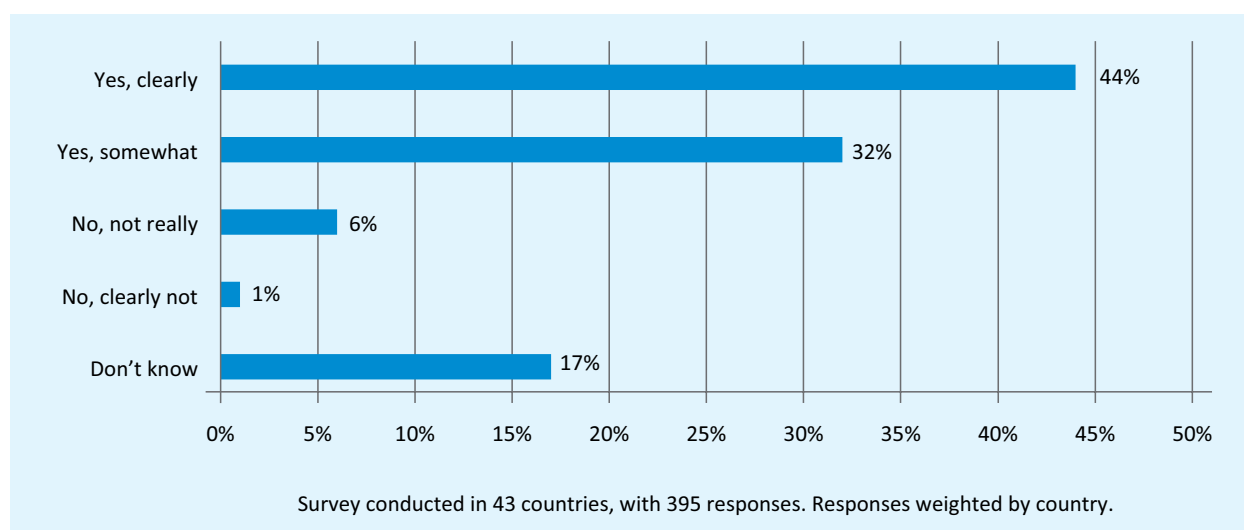
The Global Food Security Cluster

The evaluation found that overall, food security coordination had a positive effect on participating organizations. While performance varied among countries, the coordination mechanisms assessed made consistent, positive contributions by facilitating networking and helping to build trust; reducing

duplications in coverage; strengthening reporting; and, in some cases, setting and disseminating standards. By helping to avoid duplications and enabling humanitarian organizations to redirect resources, food security coordination had a positive effect on the coverage of services provided.

General endorsement of the global food security cluster was also reflected in the fact that in cases where alternative internationally led coordination processes were initially used, humanitarian organizations quickly called for or introduced clusters or cluster-like systems. As illustrated in Figure 8, a survey among cluster members found that investments in food security coordination were generally seen as worthwhile.

Figure 8. Perceptions of investment in food security coordination



Source: Report of the joint evaluation of food security cluster coordination.¹⁹

However, food security coordination fell short of its full potential in supporting operations. Most country-level mechanisms did not sufficiently address the operational needs of their members, especially in coordinating needs assessments, identifying and filling gaps in responses, using information to inform operations and learn from best practices, and enhancing contingency planning and preparedness. The evaluation found that these weaknesses were related to the demands of system-wide processes taking priority over operational demands. For example, the drafting of consolidated

appeals or strategic response plans fostered inclusion, but interviewees questioned whether the time spent was worthwhile, as the documents had little influence on their own operational decisions.

The benefits of food security coordination were also limited by the lack of participation in clusters of local and non-traditional actors. For example, where non-traditional donors made large investments, and local organizations played central roles, clusters were unable to eliminate duplications. In addition, lead agencies had inconsistent

¹⁹ “Summary Report of the FAO/WFP Joint Evaluation of Food Security Cluster Coordination in Humanitarian Action (2009–2014)” (WFP/EB.2/2014/6-A).

commitment to and capacities for supporting food security coordination in different host countries. Where they lacked dedicated funding, clusters often struggled to fulfil even basic functions. Most of the food security coordination mechanisms assessed paid little attention to preparedness and lacked exit and transition strategies. They therefore contributed little to building national capacities and creating links with development actors.

The evaluation recommended advocacy with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to reduce system-wide process demands; further clarification of roles and responsibilities in the coordination architecture; and enhanced donor commitment to food security coordination. Further recommendations were relevant to WFP's role and responsibilities as cluster lead, including strengthening the commitment to and ensuring sufficient capacity for supporting food security coordination; ensuring deployment of experienced coordination staff; focusing cluster activities on operationally relevant services; and enhancing engagement in preparedness, transition and exit management, including through greater involvement of national, local and non-traditional humanitarian actors.

Emerging Lessons on WFP's Emergency Preparedness and Response

Common themes identified from the two evaluations indicated the following broader, systemic strengths and challenges. The synthesis of the full evaluation series on emergency preparedness and response will review these in the light of findings from the evaluations yet to be completed:

- i) Significant innovations introduced through the humanitarian reform process have helped improve coordination, benefiting the overall response. WFP has used pooled funds effectively to address specific funding requirements, and has delivered clear benefits to partners through its cluster lead and co-lead roles.
- ii) System-wide processes and donor-driven reporting demands risk crowding out other more operationally relevant activities, such as coordinated needs assessments, gap identification, monitoring and learning.
- iii) The availability of sufficient resources for cluster coordination remains a challenge. Currently, neither the commitment of lead agencies nor financial support from pooled funds is consistent.
- iv) Both systems analysed in the evaluations indicate insufficient focus on preparedness, resilience and

transition beyond emergency response, for which engagement by national institutions is essential. While pooled funds are not seen as having comparative advantage in these areas, clusters and/or their lead agencies should play larger roles.

- v) Formal integration of gender considerations has increased through enhanced compliance with the IASC's gender marker and the appointment of more gender focal points in clusters. However, little influence on operations has been reported.

Innovations in Food Assistance: Findings from Evaluations of WFP's Cash and Voucher Policy and the Purchase For Progress Pilot Initiative

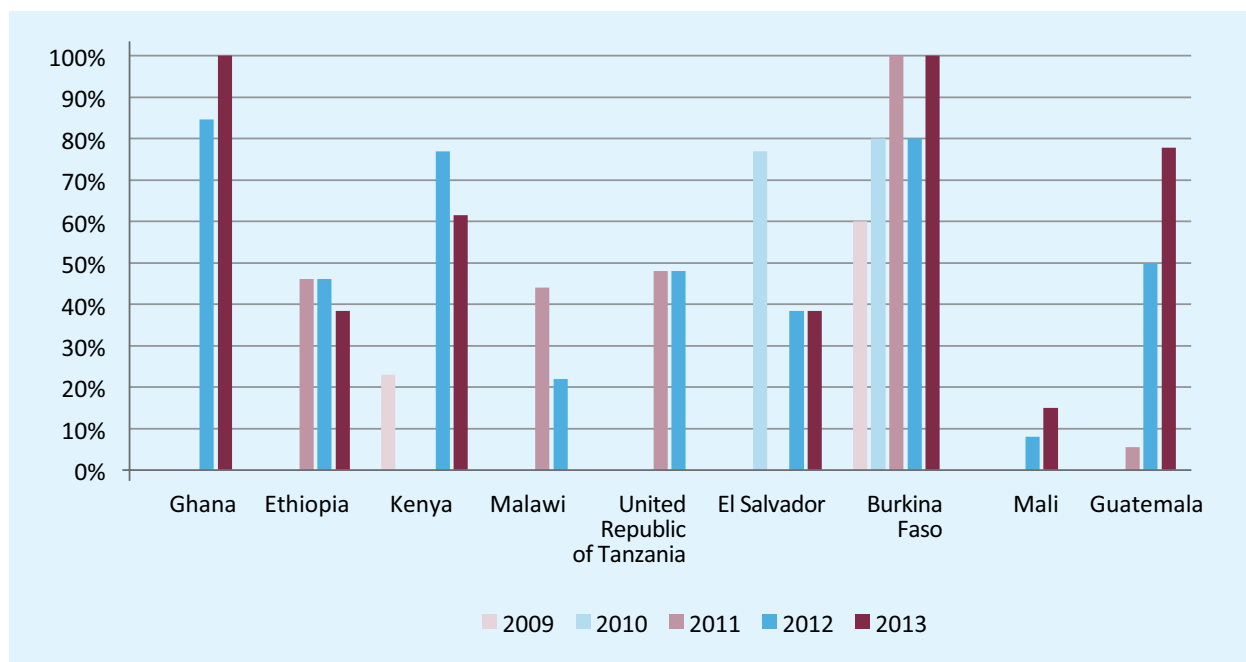
Two of the global evaluations completed in 2014 assessed major innovations in WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance.

Final Evaluation of the P4P Pilot Initiative

The P4P initiative was conceived as a five-year pilot covering ten countries with common objectives, but rapidly expanded to include an additional ten countries, making it WFP's largest trust fund and formal pilot initiative to date. The pilot aimed to develop and test ways of leveraging WFP's purchasing power to promote increased small-scale production and facilitate smallholders' engagement with markets, thereby increasing incomes and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, many of whom are women.

The evaluation found that P4P was highly relevant to WFP, the international agenda on agriculture-led food security and poverty reduction, and partner countries' national policy objectives. P4P provided some measurable improvements in the capacity of farmers' organizations (FOs) and had important benefits in enhancing host governments' view of WFP as a development partner. It helped to increase WFP's commitment to supporting FOs and small-scale production, and has led to significant levels of procurement from FOs being made through P4P approaches. Increased sales by FOs were observed in almost all countries where data were available (Figure 9). P4P benefited from strong WFP support at the highest level, and from the establishment of temporary systems and processes to facilitate implementation. However, the evaluation found insufficient attention

Figure 9. Sales to WFP (% of FOs surveyed at baseline)



Source: P4P final evaluation report compilation from available P4P follow-up reports.

at the design phase to the differentiation in smallholder farmer beneficiary groups, or to articulating the theory of change and underlying assumptions. At the smallholder farmer level, in the three countries where an impact assessment was conducted, there is evidence of production increase attributable to P4P in El Salvador, but not in Ethiopia or the United Republic of Tanzania. Capacity improvement was less and took longer to achieve than envisaged, partly because the initial capacities of FOs were lower than anticipated. Tension between the P4P initiative’s roles as a pilot for learning and a tool for achieving development results could have been reduced by greater consideration of the evidence requirements for learning at the programme design stage.

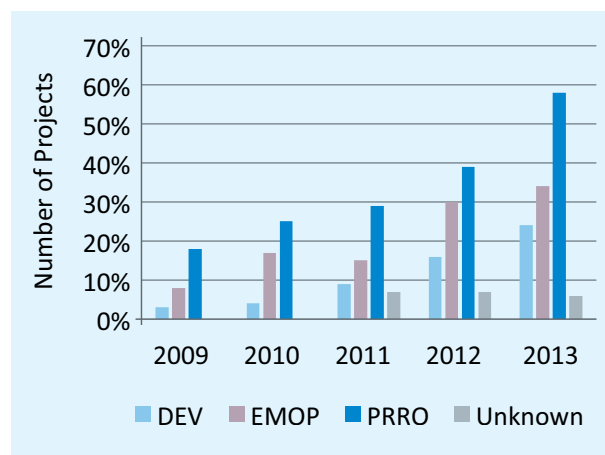
Evaluation of WFP’s 2008 Cash and Voucher Policy

Innovation in WFP’s transfer modalities was initiated by a 2007 directive authorizing limited C&V projects up to USD 3 million and setting basic M&E requirements. The subsequent 2008 C&V policy lacked a clear implementation plan or theory of change, leaving country offices to innovate and learn within broad parameters. Piloting requirements were removed in 2011, and C&V project requirements were

mainstreamed, prior to establishment of systems, capacities and tools for supporting their use.

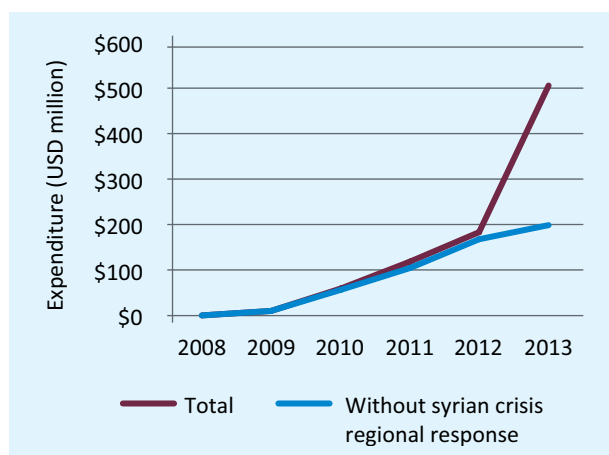
The policy was found to be highly relevant, as reflected in the rapid increase in WFP projects using C&V transfers, which increased from effectively zero in 2008 to a total actual expenditure of approximately USD 507 million in 52 countries in 2013 (Figures 10 and 11). Figure 10 shows that C&V were used in all programme categories, but mostly PRROs and EMOPs.

Figure 10. C&V projects by programme type



Source: WINGS.

Figure 11. Growth in C&V projects, by actual expenditure



Source: WINGS.

The evaluation found that although the C&V policy does not represent WFP’s current best practice for policies, it served its purpose in establishing the basis for authorizing C&V within WFP. Subsequent directives, guidance and tools have supported C&V implementation, but need continuous updating and more effective dissemination.

The policy’s intended outcomes – empowerment of beneficiaries, improved livelihoods and better coping strategies – were not systematically measured, and the lack of disaggregation by transfer modality in the corporate monitoring system makes it impossible to attribute the outputs and outcomes achieved to C&V.

Efficiency gains from C&V were lower than expected because of significant implementation delays and less than envisaged flexibility to switch modality within projects; there was also anecdotal evidence that transaction costs for beneficiaries were not reduced. While WFP’s capacity for implementing C&V has grown, and informal targets for increasing the use of C&V have motivated changes in business process support at Headquarters, some challenges and bottle-necks remain, including satisfying the increased demand for support, and guidance on retailer and financial-sector partner assessment and selection, and adapting approval processes for service-provider and procurement contracts. The limited authority of the lead Headquarters unit hampered cross-functional improvement and resolution of such bottle-necks.

Lessons on Innovation Management

Several common lessons emerged from the evaluations of these two important innovations, particularly concerning management of change, which resonated with findings of previous AERs:

- i) In the current global contexts, both C&V and P4P are highly relevant to WFP’s shift from food aid to food assistance:
 - P4P was and remains well aligned with the objectives of national governments and partners and with WFP’s mandate, strategic plans and policies. Likewise, C&V were found to be increasingly relevant to external trends and the range of WFP project types.
 - However, while both evaluations noted clear progress, they also found that change of the magnitude and depth envisioned is difficult, takes longer than anticipated, and requires complex changes in all supporting functions throughout WFP.
- ii) Decentralized innovation can be effective but requires central guidance, support and leadership:
 - A few country offices implemented C&V pilots prior to 2008, but the legitimacy and guidance provided by the policy, directives and tools fueled an exponential increase in C&V use. In the P4P pilot, although each country office designed its own implementation plan, dedicated funding and central guidance and support were crucial.
 - The P4P evaluation highlighted the importance for pilot initiatives of having central design and clear assumptions –that support rigorous testing of what works, to inform mainstreaming, while taking into account the diversity among countries. The C&V evaluation stressed the importance of developing better performance and efficiency measures and building capacity in country offices, and the need for strong leadership of change processes and matrix management structures at Headquarters.
 - These findings echo the 2012 synthesis of strategic evaluations on the shift from food aid to food assistance, which noted the need for “leadership and management of the initiative, clarity of goals, development and/or adaptation of the necessary supporting systems and staff capacity”.

- iii) WFP's current M&E systems and capacity are challenged by evidence requirements for identifying successful innovations. However, to ensure appropriate mainstreaming decisions, manage risk and safeguard future effectiveness, pilot approaches and assumptions need to be tested through the generation of robust evidence:
- The lack of a clear theory of change, common indicators and evaluation requirements for C&V pilots limited the ability to prove or disprove assumptions, compare results and analyse what worked, particularly among different transfer modalities. In 2014, approaches to sharing lessons on and good practice for C&V use among countries remained deficient.
 - The P4P evaluation found limitations in the evidence available for testing pilot approaches and assumptions. These limitations stemmed from incomplete articulation of the theory of change and unclear identification of the evidence needed for robust testing and comparison of major elements and impacts of the pilot. Rapid expansion of the pilot with variable designs and implementation arrangements and support from different donors limited comparability further. The evaluation recommended developing guidance for the design of future pilots to enhance learning and determine the potential, conditions and requirements for mainstreaming.
- iv) Limitations in M&E and financing reporting systems are barriers to measuring efficiency, costs, effectiveness and long-term outcomes, including gender implications:
- Assessment of efficiency, effectiveness and impacts formed important elements of the evaluations, but findings were limited by data and system deficiencies.
 - The C&V evaluation observed that support for WFP's continued effectiveness and competitiveness will require stronger evidence of cost-efficiency and cost effectiveness broken down by transfer modality; this would help inform modality selection and the appropriate degree and forms of conditionality in relation to WFP's mandate. Moreover, the C&V effects on livelihoods, choices and empowerment were not monitored.
- Laudable efforts were made to generate robust evidence of the impact of P4P on sustainable increases in smallholder farmers' incomes. However it was not possible to apply this M&E approach consistently across the 20 pilot countries given the low level of M&E capacity and the very different contexts and ways in which P4P was implemented in each country.
 - Gender targets and implications were initially not well integrated into P4P design, or measured consistently in C&V projects; results cannot be proved using current measuring systems. However, P4P's monitoring of numbers of women members and leaders in FOs improved during implementation; draft C&V guidance seeks to improve gender considerations.
- v) High-quality systems for disseminating guidance and learning are essential for mainstreaming innovations and maintaining consistent quality:
- WFP systems for disseminating and communicating policy and guidance on C&V were found to be fragmented, inconsistent and sub-optimal, with country offices reporting widely varying levels of awareness of critical policy guidance and tools.
 - Clear models and guidance on best practices in different contexts – considered an essential first step in mainstreaming P4P – have yet to be identified and promulgated, although work is currently ongoing in this regard.
- vi) Strong management of the changes needed to support systems is essential for effective mainstreaming of new approaches to food assistance:
- Both evaluations confirmed that P4P and C&V contributed to WFP's overall progress in the shift to food assistance, with support and commitment from WFP's management reflected in strategic plans and the development of institutional processes.
 - However, both evaluations found that the shift creates significant new demands in corporate functions including programme advice, procurement, logistics, legal, finance and human resources. The evaluations also found gaps in cross-functional management for the necessary transformation of functions and systems, and lack of adequate and appropriate staff and capacity for mainstreaming.

Part 2. WFP's Evaluation Function

The 2014 Peer Review of WFP's Evaluation Function

The Peer Review of WFP's Evaluation Function by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) was presented to WFP's Executive Board in mid-2014 and provided an external assessment of WFP's overall evaluation function, policy and products. Based on international norms and standards for the independence, credibility and use of evaluation, the review was well timed to contribute to WFP's ongoing organizational strengthening process; the management response set out the agreed strategic direction and priorities for its future development.

The peer review confirmed that significant progress had been made since the 2007 review that led to WFP's current evaluation policy. It rated the central evaluation function highly, supported by an assessment by the Joint Inspection Unit, which placed it high in the league of United Nations evaluation functions. Although not wholly independent in WFP's organizational structure, there are strong and effective provisions for safeguarding evaluation independence; there is good intentionality²⁰ in the system for selecting topics for evaluation and evaluations were found to be highly credible, with WFP respecting and responding to them.

However, OEV was found to have insufficient capacity to carry out all the functions it is expected to perform for accountability and learning purposes. While OEV's shift over recent years to evaluation of WFP's policies, strategies, country portfolios and impacts was found appropriate, evaluation coverage at the operational level had declined to poor. The peer review found inadequate resources, guidance and support for decentralized evaluation.

Evaluation coverage has been improved by a recent allocation of resources to a series of operation evaluations, temporarily managed by OEV, and the introduction of evaluations of Level 3 emergencies,

by WFP and covering WFP's work alone, or through inter-agency humanitarian evaluations covering the collective response. However, further work is needed to strengthen WFP's evidence and evaluation culture, improve use of evaluations in programme and strategy, and enable the decentralized evaluation function to flourish. These areas are relevant to WFP's decentralized management model, with accountability for results being an important part of the organizational strengthening process, and increasing recognition of the need for evidence to ensure continued effectiveness and competitiveness in a crowded funding arena.

The management response commits WFP to significant development of its evaluation function, including revision and updating of the 2008 evaluation policy; development of a charter enshrining the mandate and augmented role and responsibilities of OEV, including for reporting on and oversight of the decentralized evaluation function; an evaluation strategy for implementing the policy across WFP; and development of a framework for demand-led decentralized evaluations, including norms, standards, guidance and technical advice, quality assessment, key performance indicators and management information systems, and resolving resourcing barriers to adequate evaluation at the operational level.

Implementation of these commitments is under way: a revised policy is being prepared, and OEV reorganized its work plan and internal management in late 2014 to support delivery of its extended mandate, including its oversight and enabling role in decentralized evaluation, and its support to learning from and use of evaluations. Development of the enabling framework for demand-led decentralized evaluation started with a carefully phased approach that recognizes resource constraints and the need to complement WFP's revised monitoring strategy and guidance on reviews, as distinct from evaluations. OEV also worked with the Performance Management and Monitoring Division to identify the competencies needed and develop job profiles for monitoring and evaluation as mission-critical functions in WFP's 2014 People Strategy.

²⁰ "Intentionality" refers to a clear organizational intention to plan and use evaluation to inform decision-making and improve performance.

The Office of Evaluation's Performance against its 2014 Plan

This section reports on OEV's performance against WFP's Management Plan 2014–2016. It outlines performance in: i) implementation and coverage of the planned programme of complex evaluations and the new series of operation evaluations; ii) engagement with the international evaluation system; and iii) evaluation dissemination and use. A report on the use of human and financial resources for the year concludes reporting on OEV's management results.

Evaluation Implementation and Coverage

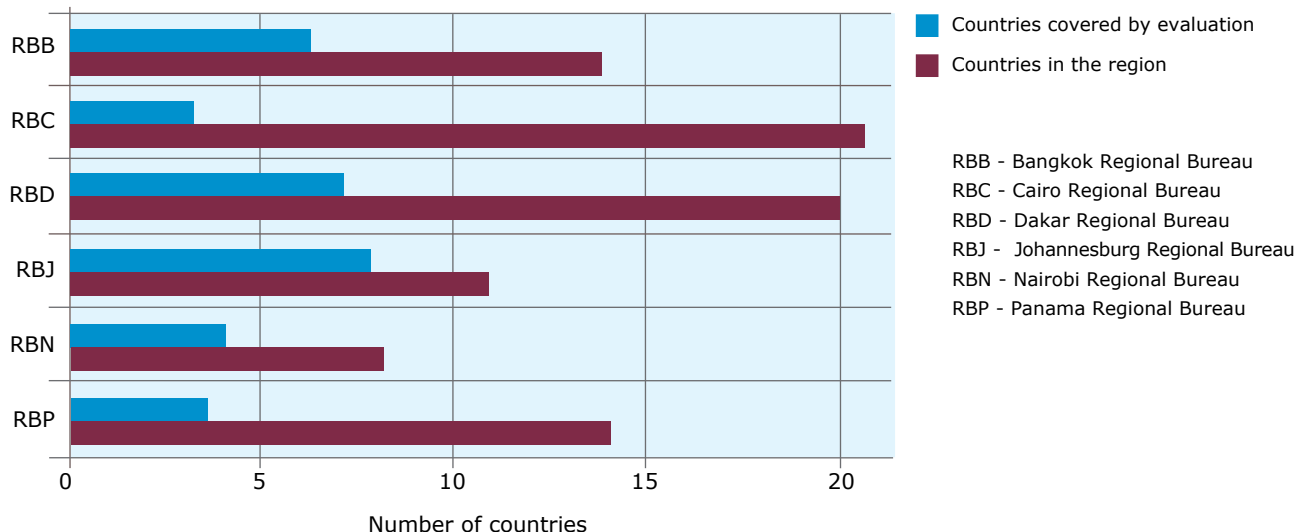
The 2014 programme of evaluations completed by OEV consolidated the significant advances in evaluation coverage begun in 2013. Non-staff Programme Support and Administrative (PSA) funding of USD 3 million – the same as in 2013 – underpinned continued

delivery of the well-established complex evaluations of multiple operations, policies and strategies. The series of operation evaluations launched in 2013, expanded, temporarily managed by OEV and funded largely by individual project sources. Table 2 shows implementation rates against plan.

OEV evaluations completed in 2014 covered 33 countries, representing a sharp increase over the previous two years – 20 countries in 2013, and 21 in 2012 – entirely because of the increase in operation evaluations, which thus achieved one of their objectives. Figure 12 shows the actual geographic coverage in 2014. Coverage is not intended to be evenly distributed across all regions in any single year, as selection criteria for the different types of evaluation are complex.

Many evaluations start in one year and are completed in the next; therefore Table 2 (on the following page) which shows performance against plan, groups evaluation “starts”²¹ and “completions”²² separately.

Figure 12. Coverage of completed OEV evaluations by WFP region, 2014



“Number of countries covered by evaluation” includes countries for which desk studies and country visits were conducted. “Number of countries in the region” includes those with at least one WFP operation.

Sources: OEV database and 2014 programme of work.

²¹ When budget expenditure commences.

²² When the final evaluation report is approved by the Director of OEV. Reports approved at the end of a calendar year are usually presented to the first Board session in the following year.

Table 2. Implementation of Evaluation Work Plan 2014²³

		Country portfolio evaluations	Impact evaluations	Global evaluations (policy and strategic)	Humanitarian Level 3 emergency WFP response	Subtotal evaluations (core programme)	Single operation evaluations (temporary)	Total evaluations
Completions	Planned completions 2014	4	0	5	0	9	11	20
	Actual completions 2014	3	0	4	0	7	20	27
	Completion rate	75%	-	80%	-	78%	182%	135%
Starts	Planned starts 2014	4	0	4	0	8	24	32
	Unplanned new actual starts	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
	Total actual starts 2014	4	0	4	1	9	15	24
	Start rate	100%	-	100%	100%	113%	63%	75%

In 2014, the overall completion rate of individual evaluations in WFP's evaluation work plan was 135 percent,²⁴ with 27 actually completed against 20 planned. Table 1 in Part 1 of this report lists the evaluations completed, including one joint evaluation with FAO. In addition, three synthesis reports were completed, as planned. This overachievement compared to plan was due to more operation evaluations being completed in 2014 than planned. The 11 started in late 2013 were completed as planned in 2014; with 9 of the 15 started in 2014 completed by the end of the year, demonstrating the desired short process for operation evaluations. The completion rate for complex evaluations – of policy, strategy or a portfolio of multiple operations – was 78 percent: of the 9 planned, 7 were completed. Completion of 2 evaluations was rescheduled for 2015 following postponement of the evaluation of WFP's Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme, to align it with decision-making for an extension of the programme; and of the CPE of the United Republic of Tanzania, to accommodate new time-sensitive initiatives in OEV's work plan for 2014 without damaging timeliness for decision-making by the country office.

In 2014, the overall start rate was 75 percent.²⁵ Again, the deviation from plan was caused by the series of

operation evaluations, temporarily managed by OEV; findings from the United Nations Evaluation Group/ Development Assistance Committee (UNEG-DAC) peer review on the approach to decentralized evaluation and a review of the adequacy of coverage led to a reduction in the number of operation evaluations planned for start in 2014, from 24 to 16. This decision was confirmed by the Board at an informal consultation in September 2014; by the end of 2014, 15 operation evaluations were started.

The start rate for complex evaluations was 113 percent.²⁶ This overachievement was due to the start of an unplanned evaluation of WFP's regional response to the Level 3 emergency caused by the Syrian crisis; OEV will complete this evaluation in 2015.

As indicated in Figure 13, operation evaluations completed in 2014 broadly reflected the geographic distribution of WFP operations and the proportions of different programme categories: special operations were excluded because of their recent coverage in the joint evaluations of the global logistics and food security clusters and/or other accountability mechanisms; and EMOPs were under-represented because of their short duration and the new arrangements for Level 3 EMOPs (described in the next section).

²³ As per WFP Management Plan (2014–2016), Annex VII. WFP/EB.2/2013/5-A/1.

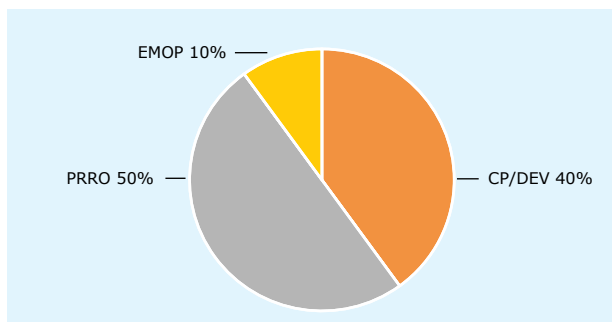
²⁴ Compared with 100 percent in 2013.

²⁵ Compared with 100 percent in 2013.

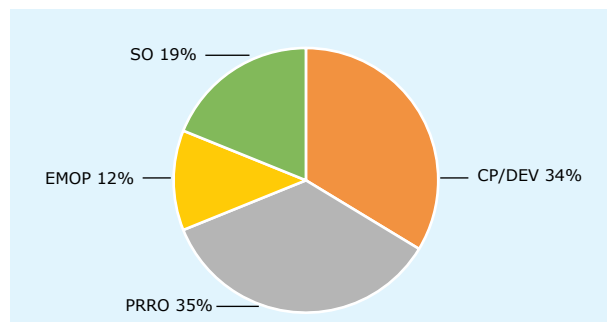
²⁶ Compared with 100 percent in 2013.

Figure 13. Completed operation evaluations and WFP operations by programme category and region, 2014

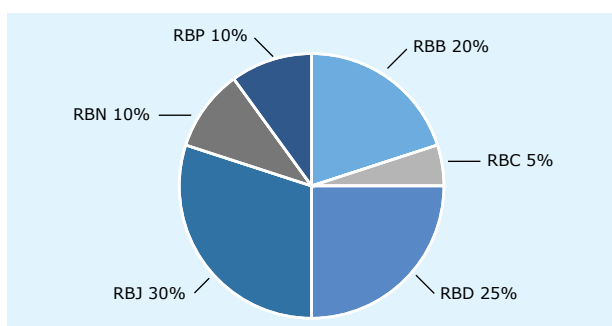
a. Operation evaluations by programme category



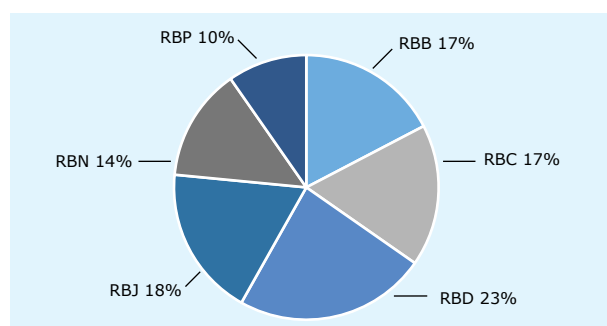
b. WFP operations by programme category



c. Operation evaluations by regional bureau



d. WFP operations by regional bureau



Coverage calculated in terms of number of operations. Data cover only the 20 operation evaluations completed in 2014 presented in Table 1, and exclude Level 3 emergencies.

Sources: OEV internal database and WFP Programme of Work as of February 2015.

RBB–Bangkok Regional Bureau; RBC–Cairo Regional Bureau; RBD–Dakar Regional Bureau; RBJ–Johannesburg Regional Bureau; RBN–Nairobi Regional Bureau; RBP–Panama Regional Bureau

Engagement with the International Evaluation System

The planned evaluability assessment of WFP’s Strategic Plan was postponed to 2015 to take account of potential adjustments to be made to the Strategic Plan in light of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Zero Hunger Challenge. A review of WFP’s decentralized evaluation function, which was added under the business process review and funded by special funds, fed into the UNEG/DAC peer review. Together with an internal “proof of concept” review of the first year of the outsourced management model for operation evaluations, this review provided a firm foundation for starting – in the last months of 2014 – to formulate standards, guidance and capacity development for a demand-led decentralized evaluation function in WFP, in line with the management response to

the peer review. Interdivisional work will ensure that the decentralized evaluation function dovetails with enhancements of WFP’s wider performance management framework and investments in monitoring systems and capacity.

By reducing the planned number of complex evaluations of WFP’s work alone (described in paragraph 59), OEV liberated resources for participating in three joint inter-agency humanitarian evaluations (IAHEs) of Level 3 emergency responses in the Philippines, South Sudan and the Central African Republic.²⁷ This new type of evaluation, signalled in the OEV work plan, is part of the IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle in the Transformative Agenda. With the OEV-managed evaluation of WFP’s Syrian response, four of the five ongoing Level 3 emergencies were under evaluation in 2014, constituting a major advance in focusing

²⁷ IAHEs are managed by OCHA and are not included in Table 2. The Philippines’ IAHE is completed, South Sudan’s is ongoing and the Central African Republic’s is in the preparatory phase.

WFP's evaluation function on the bulk of its operating context and programme of work – to be fit for purpose. Including the joint FAO–WFP evaluation of the global food security cluster, OEV was engaged in four joint evaluations in 2014.

IAHEs aim to build evaluation partnerships and shared analysis of coordinated humanitarian responses as part of the Transformative Agenda. At the same time, evaluation costs and the burden on programme implementers are lower than when each agency evaluates its own response individually. Careful consideration is given to the trade off between focusing on the coordinated response with an IAHE and providing in depth evaluation of WFP's individual response, such as the Syrian response.

In the same spirit of quality-enhancing partnerships and cost-sharing, a new collaborative relationship with the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation was negotiated for undertaking a series of four impact evaluations on moderate acute malnutrition in humanitarian contexts, for completion in 2017.

The credibility of WFP's evaluation function is supported by engagement with international networks. In 2014, this engagement included leading roles in and contributions to UNEG, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP), the IASC Humanitarian Evaluation Group, the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender in Evaluation (UN SWAP), and broader academic and professional associations and conferences. WFP's reputation in evaluation was recognized through invitations to convene sessions on humanitarian evaluation at ALNAP's annual meeting and the biennial conference of the European Evaluation Society.

Learning From and Use of Evaluation

The peer review observed that while OEV's evaluations are highly independent and credible, improvements could be made in increasing their utility and impact on WFP's performance.

Accordingly, in 2014, OEV strengthened its inputs to WFP's project and policy planning. Summaries of evidence and recommendations from relevant evaluations were provided for 89 percent of the project documents and country strategies reviewed under WFP's new strategic programme review process (SPRP). OEV participated

in management task forces related to performance management, was an observer in WFP's Policy and Programme Advisory Group, and was active in WFP's various knowledge management efforts in 2014.

Wherever possible, OEV builds stakeholder engagement and learning opportunities into the evaluation process. For the 2014–2015 strategic evaluation series, stakeholders were engaged systematically through workshops or seminars during evaluations of the global food security cluster and pooled funds, and in the ongoing evaluations of the Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme and WFP's response to the Syrian crisis.

To facilitate learning from innovations, a major workshop on the final evaluation of the P4P pilot initiative brought together the RBAs, WFP colleagues and members of the pilot's external technical advisory panel; two seminars were also held on the C&V policy evaluation.

Through its participation in the IAHE Steering Committee, OEV supports a multi-agency coordinated accountability and lesson learning initiative on the response to the Syrian crisis.²⁸ The initiative includes three main products: an evaluation and learning portal and repository, maintained by the ALNAP Secretariat; common context analysis; and a common evaluation framework, which is being used to map evaluation work on the Syrian crisis response as the basis for an inter-agency synthesis report in late 2015.

Evaluation syntheses offer important opportunities for learning and use. In 2014, the first annual synthesis of the operation evaluation series reported on the results of 12 operation evaluations. OEV also conducted a workshop to discuss findings and conclusions from the synthesis of the FFA impact evaluation series, using a virtual format that enabled wide participation from countries, regional bureaux and Headquarters.

Executive management dialogue is an important factor in enhancing use of evaluations, and OEV made significant efforts in this area in 2014. Regional fact sheets were introduced to inform Regional Directors of ongoing and planned evaluations in their regions. Executive managers were regularly briefed on strategic evaluations. OEV also provided inputs from recent partnership-related evaluations to inform development of WFP's partnership strategy.

Evaluation briefs were prepared for all 2014 evaluation reports. A special brief was prepared on OEV's emergency preparedness and response evaluations, and

²⁸ <http://www.syrialearning.org>

OEV helped OCHA develop a brief on IAHEs. Three short case studies were prepared for a United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (UNEG) publication on evaluation use in the United Nations system as part of the 2015 International Year of Evaluation.

All of OEV's evaluations and associated products are accessible in the evaluation library on WFP's website and on the intranet. In 2014, page views of the OEV intranet site increased by 65 percent over 2013, but still constituted only a very small proportion of overall use of WFP's intranet. Page views of the external website dropped by 40 percent. Some planned advances in website accessibility and knowledge management were delayed by unusually slow processes for filling vacant positions, which were beyond OEV's control.

Enhancing the Evaluation Quality Assurance System

Actions taken in 2014 to improve gender analysis in evaluations resulted in a higher rating from the independent assessment of evaluations; with updated quality assurance and professional development measures in place, the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (UN SWAP) target was met. In OEV's evaluation quality assurance system, technical guidance on analysing efficiency in evaluations and guidance on planning communication of evaluation were updated.

Resources for Evaluation

• Financial resources

This section reports only on resources available to OEV. As recommended by the UNEG DAC peer review, WFP's management information system will be expanded over the coming years to enable an aggregated report on resources dedicated to the evaluation function in WFP as a whole.

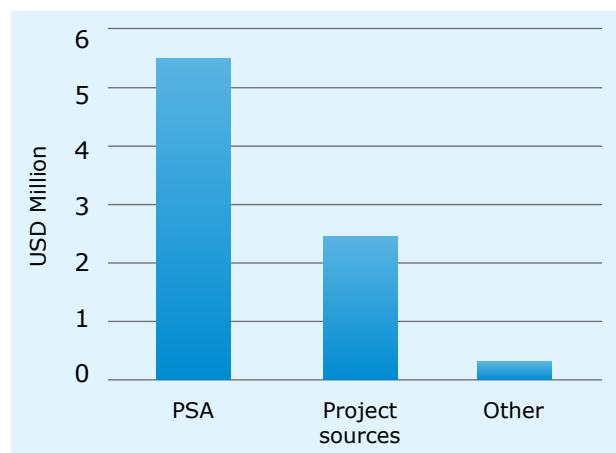
The overall total budget for evaluation was USD 8.39 million – 10 percent more than in 2013, largely because of the increase in operation evaluations. This total represents 0.19 percent of WFP's estimated total contribution income. OEV's expenditure rate was 98 percent of all funds with required spending within the year.

As shown in Figure 14, WFP's 2014 Management Plan allotted USD 5.39 million from the PSA budget to the core evaluation work programme: USD 2.39 million for staff and USD 3 million for non-staff expenditures. This represented a 2 percent increase

over 2013, attributed solely to an increase in fixed staff costs, and was 0.12 percent of WFP's projected total contribution income for 2014. Additional funds totalling USD 345,500 were allocated to OEV for assessing evaluations against UN SWAP standards and initiating development of standards and guidance for WFP's decentralized evaluations and reviews under the business process review ongoing in 2015.

The special account from which operation evaluations are funded – largely from project sources – grew to USD 2.65 million from USD 2 million in 2013.

Figure 14. OEV budget sources, 2014



• Human resources

OEV's staff complement remained stable at one director, nine professional officers and three general service staff. Further improvements were made in geographic and gender diversity, although there is still a gender imbalance in favour of women. The 50:50 balance between WFP staff on rotation and externally recruited experts, foreseen in the WFP evaluation policy, was maintained.

Over the year, the position occupancy rate was 81 percent because of slow processes for filling vacant general service positions and one professional position. Professional staff turnover for the year was 33 percent.

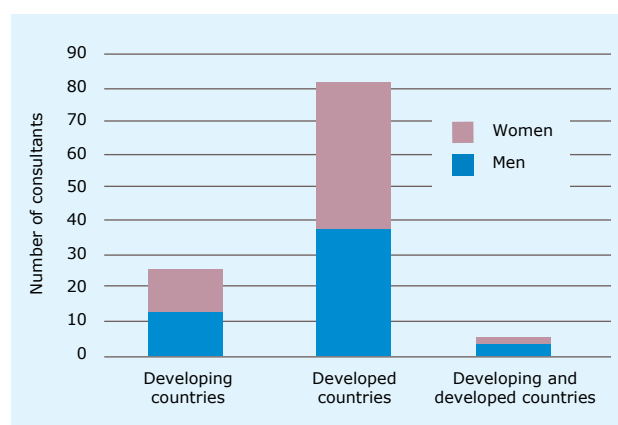
A total of 65 professional staff person-days were spent in professional development in 2014 – just over the target of 3 percent of working time. In addition, short-term personnel and a junior professional officer attended the European Programme for Development Evaluation Training, and all staff participated in RBA joint training on evaluation of gender and of humanitarian action. Staff communities of practice were maintained for further learning with peers.

OEV maintained 12 long-term agreements (LTAs) with consultancy firms and research institutions providing high-quality evaluation services in the technical and geographical areas required for the programme of complex evaluations, and seven LTAs providing services for the operation evaluations. In 2014, 100 percent of the evaluation teams for complex and operation evaluations were hired through LTAs.

For all evaluations managed by OEV, a total of 106 consultants were hired. For complex evaluations, 41 percent of consultants were hired for the first time, bringing fresh expertise to complement that of consultants with WFP experience. The average evaluation team was larger for complex than for operation evaluations, at 4.8 consultants – up from 4.1 in 2013 – and 3.8 respectively.

As shown in Figure 15, 46 percent of consultants hired were men and 54 percent women, but the proportion of professionals from developing countries dropped to 25 percent. This figure does not include local research team members who are subcontracted in country by the main WFP contractor. The decrease is also partially explained by the higher proportion of global rather than country-specific evaluations conducted in 2014 compared with 2013. Nevertheless, this indicator will receive the attention of OEV management in 2015.

Figure 15. Composition of evaluation teams for complex and operation evaluations



Evaluation Outlook

Follow up on the peer review forms the main outlook for evaluation work in 2015. This involves considerable work to develop WFP’s evaluation function beyond OEV, while maintaining the high quality of central evaluations led by OEV. The work plan agreed for 2015 reflects these dual priorities. However, the PSA investment funds received are not sufficient for employing the staff in OEV or regional bureaux envisaged in the peer review’s “model 2” for a combined central and decentralized evaluation function.

The number of central evaluations planned for completion will be somewhat reduced to allow time to: i) develop the revised policy, the new evaluation charter and the evaluation strategy; ii) begin developing OEV’s wider reporting function; and iii) design the enabling environment for decentralized evaluation. A management information and reporting system will be established, covering all WFP evaluations, including those managed outside OEV. In addition, modest enhancements will be made in OEV’s support to learning from and use of evaluations, including through continued participation in WFP’s strategic programme review process; improvements in information systems for communication and dialogue on evaluation; and contributions to WFP management task forces and networks on issues where evaluation is relevant.

In preparation for the World Humanitarian Summit, OEV will share lessons in and experience of collaboration with its inter-agency and other humanitarian evaluation partners, and will help increase awareness of and competencies in evaluation in humanitarian contexts. Systematic engagement by OEV staff in the work of UNEG will continue, with the Director of OEV again serving as one of four vice-chairs. OEV will also continue to promote RBA collaboration on evaluation, particularly considering the International Year of Evaluation in 2015 and the evaluation implications of the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals related to food and nutrition security.

Acronyms

AER	Annual Evaluation Report
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
C&V	cash and vouchers
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CP	country programme
CPE	country portfolio evaluation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEV	development project
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EMOP	emergency operation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	food for assets
GFD	general food distribution
IAHE	inter-agency humanitarian evaluation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
LTA	long-term agreement
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MIC	middle-income country
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OEV	Office of Evaluation
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
PSA	Programme Support and Administrative (budget)
RBA	Rome-based agency
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UN SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global System



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