

OPERATION EVALUATION
Bangladesh Country Programme 200243 (2012-2016)
evaluation of WFP's operation at mid-term
Management Response

[August, 2015]



World Food Programme

Management response cleared by:

Country Director: *Christa Räder*

Date: *14 July 2015*

Detailed responses to evaluation recommendations

Evaluation Recommendations	Management response Accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and COMMENT on the Recommendation, providing clear reasoning for partially accepted and not accepted	Management - Action to be taken			
		Action	Responsible CO unit	Time frame	Further funding req. (Y or N)
Recommendation 1: Consolidate IMCN activities in the current targeted focus areas (Kurigram, Satkhira, Cox's Bazar and urban slums) and further develop the capacity of government and community clinics to manage the programme in Kurigram and Satkhira. (CO, short-term):	Partially accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an opportunity for greater collaboration with MoHFW and reinforcement of nutrition mainstreaming at the field level in the areas where WFP is currently working in Kurigram and Satkhira 	<p>Partially accepted</p> <p>Targeted supplementary feeding (TSF) will need to be continued in challenged geographical areas (such as those with high numbers of refugees and refuge seekers and those in urban slums) and be phased out in other areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will draw up an action plan to gradually handover IMCN activities in Satkhira and Kurigram to government. CO will phase out TSF with the exception of Cox's Bazar and possibly urban slum areas. 	<p>Nutrition unit</p> <p>Nutrition unit</p>	<p>Dec 2016</p> <p>Dec 2016</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP consolidate IMCN activities in its current targeted focus areas with the aim of further developing the capacity of the government health system at district level (including DNOs) and community clinics to manage the programme, while advocating for support and ownership by government (i.e., IPHN) at central level. 	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Since the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has not made TSF part of the regular activities, CO is exploring other entry points to address and prevent acute malnutrition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will engage with the MoHFW at central level for strengthening and scaling up of nutrition behaviour change communication (BCC) with appropriate tools and methods at community clinic level. CO will prepare and implement action plan with MoHFW for rolling out nutrition BCC at community clinic level. 	<p>Nutrition unit</p>	<p>June 2016</p>	<p>Y</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This response should be clearly articulated and based on evidence (e.g., GAM rates, analysis of underlying factors) 	<p>Accepted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the remaining period of the CP the CO will focus on the MoHFW to 	<p>Nutrition unit</p>	<p>June 2016</p>	<p>Y</p>

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that demonstrates need (in the absence of other relevant nutritional support) and local level government commitment. In addition, WFP should work to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach by effectively using available M&E data for advocacy, or through a research study if necessary.		take over IMCN activities in two areas (Kurigram and Satkhira) and phase out of TSF activities. • CO will continue to implement TSF in collaboration with community clinics (Cox's Bazar) and national NGOs (urban slums) where government presence and interventions are limited.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The remainder of the CP should be spent working to build government capacity to take over activities, to include them in the next health sector programme and NNS Operational Plan, and to demonstrate effectiveness of the approach. This will allow WFP to begin to scale back direct implementation in the next CP and assume a role providing supportive supervision to a government-led programme. 	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consultation workshop will be organized with the MoHFW and Institute of Public Health and Nutrition partners, to present evidence and define WFP's role in the implementation of the NNS 	Nutrition unit	December 2016	Y

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Recommendation 2: Reassess the duration of ER activities and the quality of trainings to enhance sustainability and synergy (CO, medium-term):	Accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP should engage with government to ensure adequate support to and monitoring of ER Plus participants, particularly by diversifying their sources of income, and, per IFPRI's initial findings, by investing in nonfarm self-employment that can help them overcome poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO understands the pathways of diversification and its importance for sustainable income generation and moving out of extreme poverty. Diversification is already incorporated into ER Plus which covers the third programme year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will take action to enhance risk management for the ER Plus investments. CO will establish/formalize collaboration with central and local government departments, such as the Departments of Agricultural Extension, Livestock and Fisheries to ensure their extension services and inputs to ER Plus women. CO will provide technical assistance to government on enhancing their monitoring of ER Plus. 	ER team	July 2016	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As ER Plus is in its early stages, it is important to ensure that a good evidence base is generated on which to assess results and its potential contribution to more effective ways to build resilience among poor households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings of an IFPRI study have proven the added economic value of a third year to ER, i.e. ER Plus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will engage with IFPRI in Dhaka on the finalisation of the ER Plus study report, to ensure it provides clear evidence and is pragmatic and feasible for enhancing resilience action planning CO will present the results of the IFPRI study and recommendations from the resilience conceptualisation report (August 2014) in a consultation workshop to LGED and develop an action plan for the joint approach to resilience. 	ER team	Dec 2105	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the programme has worked in some <i>upazilas</i> for six years or more it should revisit these and facilitate a higher- 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO in consultation with LGED will select from these upazilas those, in 	ER team	July 2016	Y

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<p>quality mapping exercise to include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What ER has accomplished; 2. Similar work completed through other programmes by LGED and/or the Water Development Board; 3. The relative impact of the ER programme; 4. Outstanding work that needs to be done to address the most critical ongoing challenges; and 5. The role of the ER component in these efforts <p>Based on this, the CO can have a discussion with Dhaka and <i>upazila</i> LGED staff to improve the site and activity selection process.</p>		<p>which WFP had provided significant support (selection criteria to be decided at a later point in time) for conducting a gap analysis and determining the need for continued assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CO will present the gap analysis as an input to government and WFP planning. 	ER team	Dec 2016	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training provided to ER beneficiaries should be reviewed with respect to the quality and delivery of the messages. As the ER component has the broadest reach, it could be seen as a primary entry point for other components in rural areas. For example, the nutrition training could discuss screening and treatment for acute malnutrition as well as the causes of malnutrition. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CO will initiate a review of the ER training content and delivery methods in order to enhance its relevance and effectiveness. 	ER team & M&E team	July 2016	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme should facilitate higher-quality training so that communities and their leaders (at ward, union, and upazila level) can do more detailed land and water management analysis and mapping, and engage with other programmes that affect their environments and agricultural productivity. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •CO will review the local level planning process and identify ways to strengthen it. •CO will engage in preparing and rolling out training to local decision makers, stakeholders and community members for better local level planning skills. 	ER team	Dec 2016	Y

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Recommendation 3: Strengthen staff technical expertise, and invest in capacity building for field staff (CO, RB and HQ, medium term): As WFP Bangladesh's role evolves to focus more on technical assistance, capacity building, policy guidance, and testing new approaches to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government safety net programmes, it must ensure its internal capacity and specific technical expertise at the CO level through training and recruitment.	Accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing innovative approaches in nutrition, income generation among the ultra-poor, or the work in urban slums requires specific conceptual and programme design skills, the ability to identify and work with good partners, and drawing on international expertise and experience. Where the CO does not already have these skills, it will need to acquire them. For example, for ER, WFP will need CO, HQ and regional staff with sufficient technical expertise and/or experience to better engage with LGED, FAO, the Department of Agriculture and other larger water and land management programmes. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will conduct a capacity needs analysis once the new Country Strategic plan has been developed. CO will simultaneously identify, which skills are needed, for areas, where government has taken the lead. 	HR team PPIS unit	June 2016 June 2016	Y N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some initial funding from donors or WFP HQ will be needed to provide CO with sufficient capacity to develop new programmes for funding, and to assist government with developing proposals that include financing of WFP technical support. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will establish a Programme Support Unit to spearhead programme design, proposal writing, resource management and reporting. CO will request required expertise from RB and HQ PPI technical service pool and additional external expertise. 	CD/DCD	Dec 2015	Y

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As WFP proceeds to transition from direct implementation to direct assistance, it will need to conduct a thorough risk analysis to identify potential problems linked to technical and staff capacity so that handover strategies include ways to mitigate critical risks to programmes. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will request RB and HQ support to prepare engagement plans at national and district level covering policy development, capacity support and programme enhancement to optimally transition to technical assistance. 	CD/DCD	March 2016	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a complementary activity to strengthening WFP's internal expertise, the SGSN government field staff also needs capacity building and empowerment. There is a need for continuous training and orientation of government staff due to their frequent moves, and for adequate logistical and staff support to enable government staff to monitor their new programme responsibilities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will cover this as part of the above engagement plans. 	CD/DCD	March 2016	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While it is recognised that these require budgetary support, WFP can advocate with government to ensure that adequate staff and resources for ensuring quality control are priorities for sustainability. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will advocate for appropriate government staff structure at national and district level by putting it on the agenda of regular meetings with government. CO will offer technical assistance to government at national and district level to enable them to document their vision and enhance related job descriptions. 	PPIS unit PPIS unit	June 2016 Dec 2016	N Y

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<p>Recommendation 4: Continue technical support and policy guidance to the government to support the institutionalisation of school feeding (CO, short and medium term): WFP's engagement with the CoE in Brazil is a relevant resource and potential model for WFP Bangladesh, as it has made an important contribution to analysing the governance, institutional arrangements and financial arrangements needed to institutionalise school feeding with an eye to greater efficiency.</p>	Accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP will need to advocate for efficient resolutions of problems when internal structures of government as currently constituted pose delays or bureaucratic constraints. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will continue to support the government to define its main business processes, such as for food procurement. 	PPIS unit	Dec 2016	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP is highly experienced in hot school meals and needs to ensure that the evidence on the costs and benefits of the hot meal approach is robust and well-documented so that the government, donors and other stakeholders are able to understand and evaluate school feeding and make an informed decision as to the design of future school feeding programmes. In conjunction with its continuing handover of schools to government, WFP should advocate for increased staff and material support to district education offices to ensure they have the resources to adequately monitor the programme and ensure the ongoing quality of operations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO has started to undertake a basic cost-benefit analysis with Policy, Programme and Innovations Division in HQ. CO will put the issue of increased and enhanced programme implementation capacity at district level on the agenda of regular meetings and work towards reflecting it in the School Feeding 	SF team	Dec 2015	N

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		Strategy (end of 2016).			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finally, since a central purpose of the biscuit is to attract and retain children in school, palatability is important. WFP and government should explore options and costs related to enhancing the texture and varying the taste of the biscuit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biscuit composition is already being discussed with the government to decide on improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO, together with Government, adopt modified biscuit composition. 	SF team in GoB	Dec 2015	N

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Recommendation 5: Take action with government partners to improve community participation and ownership (CO, medium to long term):	Accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP (with PSU) should support the MoWCA/DWA to develop a sustainable system of engaging VGD women in monitoring beneficiary entitlements, delivery of resources, NGO service delivery and beneficiary selection at the ward level under the leadership of the female ward members, and ensure regular reporting to the union VGD committee/UWAO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO already works with MoWCA/DWA on the development of a feedback mechanism for VGD women with the support of local civil society; this will comprise a grievance system and building beneficiary platforms for action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will continue to support MoWCA/DWA to develop beneficiary feedback system. 	VGD team	Dec 2016	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP, in partnership with the DWA, should continue to promote a formal mechanism for regularly reviewing and reporting the performance of the VGD at the DWA and its field offices 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will continue to promote the improvement of the MoWCA/DWA VGD M&E system. 	M&E team	Dec 2016	N

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<p>Recommendation 6: Continue to build evidence for future programming, including revising the M&E system and promoting the learning from research projects (CO, medium-term):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on a review of the 2014 outcome survey and the IFPRI report, <i>“Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters and the Effects of Climate Change Program,”</i> which assessed the impact of ER Plus, there is a need to simplify and improve the M&E system in order to build a strategic evidence base for future programming. WFP needs to focus on how it expects to impact people’s lives, limit data collection and analysis to those variables, and improve its capacity to do robust outcome measurement. WFP also has a role in promoting learning from research projects, such as by working with government partners to adapt the TMRI findings for the design of new and ongoing safety net programmes, and by undertaking pilots and research to further generate evidence for new approaches to support social protection policy. 	<p>Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate guidance on monitoring mandates the inclusion of certain indicators. Corporate guidance on strategic engagement focussed on M&E systems is yet to be developed and the work being undertaken by COs including Bangladesh will contribute practical knowledge to inform HQ in the eventual development of the guidance. CO is supporting and steering a series of research activities related to government safety nets and NGO programmes which aim at evidence creation for scale up, e.g. with IFPRI, IDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will review outcome survey tools to limit them to the corporate requirement, before embarking on a new outcome survey and seek support from RB M&E Advisor. 	<p>Has been passed on to RB</p> <p>M&E team</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p>	<p>y</p>

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	etc. In addition, South-South cooperation facilitated by the Centre of Excellence in Brazil stimulates and enhances the learning from other middle income countries for the formulation of the SF policy and strategy.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CO should select the two or three most appropriate and successful pilots, ensure that strong outcome data are collected to build a good evidence base and focus on scale-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CO has embarked on a number of research activities as evidence creation for scale up. Research has taken or is taking place, e.g. TMRI, Food Security for the Ultra Poor-sustainability, VGD panel survey, ER Plus added value, Targeting the Ultra Poor - Nutrition; school meals; rice fortification and ICVGD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will carefully prioritize the research topics and approaches to ensure that quality research is delivered. 	CD/DCD	Dec 2016	N

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<p>Recommendation 7: Develop clear strategy for supporting nutritional outcomes through a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach (CO, medium- to long-term):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP should develop a clear strategic approach for nutrition as part of its next Country Strategy and in collaboration with key nutrition actors (e.g., UNICEF, REACH, government partners, donors), in line with the Common Narrative. This would clarify WFP's role moving forward, better position WFP vis-a-vis government and donors, and provide an opportunity to incorporate greater programme synergies into the next CP. Partners see a clear role for WFP leadership in BCC and safety nets for mainstreaming the prevention of undernutrition. The CO will require technical and conceptual support to develop this strategic approach, which should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elaboration of WFP's role in nutrition-sensitive approaches; ○ Stronger articulation and advocacy for WFP's support to the broader national and global agenda linking acute malnutrition and stunting (e.g., SUN, Sustainable Development Goals); ○ Evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of IMCN activities and how these fit within the broader agenda; 	<p>Accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of stunting is much higher than wasting in Bangladesh and is therefore a priority. CO first needs research evidence that addressing wasting may serve as an entry point to addressing stunting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Country Strategic Plan, which will be under preparation in 2016, and will outline a clear strategic approach to nutrition. • CO will develop a new nutrition strategy, which will put emphasis on support to the design and implementation of nutrition sensitive social protection programmes. • Based on available effectiveness and coverage data, a summary of current IMCN related evidence will be prepared and presented in a 	<p>Nutrition unit</p> <p>Nutrition unit</p>	<p>June 2016</p> <p>March 2016</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>Y</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing underlying factors through continued integration of nutrition across all activities: in ER (especially considering the opportunity of the ready-made audience for BCC in the six months of FFT), work with MoWCA in social protection with increased focus on appropriate target groups and adding effective BCC or additional relevant support (e.g., exploring the current ideas around maternity allowance); 	<p>Accepted</p> <p>While nutrition awareness is integrated into ER, the ER programme does not select pregnant women or women with children below 6 months, since they must not do hard labour during this period. Even in VGD the proportion of women with small children is low.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation meeting with MoHFW and IPHN CO will continue integrating nutrition awareness into VGD and ER. 	VGD team ER team	July 2016	Y
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will explore what social protection programmes exist or could be initiated, which could target the first 1,000 day window for nutrition. 	VGD team	July 2016	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with development partners and working groups, and strengthening WFP's voice and contribution in innovative joint programming and advocacy, particularly in urban work, cash-based approaches, social protection, and BCC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO has the lead on food security and nutrition under the current UNDAF Pillar 4 and has initiated major joint programming efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will continue to pursue joint programming with other UN agencies under the social protection and resilience agenda. 	CD/DCD	June 2016	Y

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Recommendation 8: Enhance the BCC strategy to address undernutrition of children under two, integrating new approaches and learning from TMRI and pilots (CO, short and medium-term):	Accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for WFP to further develop its BCC model and adapt modules for men and community elites, as well as find innovative ways to deliver BCC, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different venues and timing for men and for urban residents, and Enhanced use of demonstration, theatre, and drama formats that are easily interpreted and understood by village communities. There is a need to work with the whole community: older people are influential mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law, and younger people will become parents and may be able to influence household hygiene and sanitation practices and nutritious diets. The focus should be on addressing the barriers to changes in practice. This will require a dedicated staff member and BCC specialist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO already initiated the preparation of a BCC strategy in 2014/2015 based mainly on the learning from TMRI and the specific needs of various programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will finalise the BCC strategy. CO will prepare an action plan, based on the finalised BCC strategy. 	Nutrition unit	Dec 2015	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The knowledge and experience from TMRI, TUP-N and EFS need to be harnessed in ongoing country programme activities, and opportunities should be examined to understand, in which circumstances BCC can be used in safety net programmes. Stakeholders within Bangladesh see a distinct competitive advantage for WFP here based on the success of the TMRI, and WFP has a clear mandate as the UNDAF lead for BCC within Pillar 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all nutrition sensitive approaches are part of IMCN. The existing IMCN is a collaboration with the MoHFW in which acutely malnourished children are identified and provided with TSF, together with nutrition information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will reflect the findings of its research efforts in future programme design including UNDAF Pillar 4 proposals. 	CD/DCD	June 2016	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP's ongoing pilots of BCC with cash and food should be added to the learning around what works in terms of BCC within IMCN, and BCC with ER, in order to build a body of evidence. BCC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will develop a monitoring toolkit for BCC activities. 	M&E team	Dec 2015	N

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models will need effective monitoring; there is a need to design a robust monitoring system with appropriate process and outcome indicators that can demonstrate success.					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP's BCC strategy should be linked with the MoHFW Nutrition Advocacy and Communication Strategy, supported by REACH (soon to be released), and developed in cooperation with UNICEF to make sure it capitalises on national campaigns and approaches. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will check whether the main elements of the BCC strategy are reflected in the MoHFW's Nutrition Advocacy and Communication Strategy. 	Nutrition unit	Dec 2015	N

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Recommendation 9: Examine effective approaches and options for urban programming and develop a clear urban strategy to address the high rates of undernutrition and school drop-outs amongst the urban poor (CO, medium-term):	Accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further in-depth discussions with urban slum residents, as well as extensive engagement in stakeholder forums, participation in learning groups, and exchanges with other countries, will be necessary to develop partnerships and a clear urban strategy for WFP. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will develop an urban engagement strategy in the context of the preparation of the new Country Strategic Plan. 	CD/DCD	June 2016	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities should be designed in collaboration with the community, community organisations, UNICEF, UNDP and other key actors looking to expand that can offer complementary activities, entry points and access. In addition to the community-based work with BRAC, potential options to explore include workplace-based programming and targeting. There is also potential to further investigate options with non-traditional partners (e.g., workers unions where they exist, or the private sector). It will be essential to consider the childcare environment and potential options in the urban environment (such as crèches, communal childcare). There is a need to pull together and capitalise on the existing strands of WFP's work and consider WFP's comparative advantage to adapt its experience in the urban context in partnership with others. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will continue to explore new engagements in urban areas including with the private sector building on current focus, the new UNDAF and the new Country Strategic Plan. 	CD/DCD	Dec 2016	Y

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<p>Recommendation 10: Review instruments used to fund the CO development portfolio (WFP HQ and RB, medium- to long-term). As WFP Bangladesh transitions from food assistance to technical assistance and capacity building, the adequacy of WFP corporate funding arrangements for COs in a development context needs to be examined.</p>	Accepted				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP headquarters should conduct a corporate review of funding instruments and consider the provision of a funding mechanism that invests in research into new approaches, programme design, and proposal development. 	<p>Since the Executive Board's approval of two modifications to the WFP financial framework end of 2010, WFP HQ is actively engaged in a financial framework review process, the first phase of which was concluded in 2013 with the full integration into corporate tools and systems of the 2010 approval¹. The on-going second phase of the Financial Framework Review was launched in 2014 and seeks to transform the financial architecture in line with WFP's commitment to improve operational effectiveness and ensure that WFP's financial policies and systems reflect evolving operational requirements, the humanitarian landscape and donor priorities.</p>	<p>The third phase will include a review of the funds management structure and further introduce enhancements to improve the predictability and accountability of WFP's resource management framework</p>	<p>Resource management division (RM)</p>	<p>Phase 2 by 2017 Phase 3 by 2020</p>	

¹ These were a) The segregation of food in-kind-based activities from cash activities (cash and voucher transfers and capacity development and augmentation) and to exceptionally allow separate funding streams; b) Funding DSC on a percentage of direct operational costs (DOC) rather than a rate per metric ton.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RB should provide leadership in supporting the CO to better understand the donor landscape, and support CO analysis of donor opportunities and positioning for future funding. Such funding also needs to support dedicated technical staff to develop these new approaches. 	RB deployed a professional proposal writer for DECO/EU funding and general donor approaches at the end of May, and a second mission is scheduled for September.	RB will explore additional support to the CO based on its identified needs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As Bangladesh becomes a MIC and new funding avenues open up for government through the IFIs, there is future scope for WFP to leverage its technical expertise to assist government to prepare funding proposals to the development banks for programmes that include WFP as a partner. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO will explore new funding opportunities with IFIs including IFAD, ADB and World Bank 	CD/DCD	Dec 2016	N