

OPERATION EVALUATION

Afghanistan, PRRO 200447, Assistance to Address Food Insecurity and Undernutrition: An evaluation of WFP's Operation (2014 - 2016)

Management Response

April, 2016

Management response cleared by:

Country Director: Claude Jibidar, 17 April 2016



World Food Programme

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Section 2: Detailed responses to evaluation recommendations

Evaluation Recommendations	Management	Management - Action to be taken			
	Accepted, partially accepted or not accepted and COMMENT on the Recommendation, providing clear reasoning for partially accepted and not accepted	Action	Responsible CO unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
<p>Recommendation 1: Future Programming: For the next PRRO, envisaged in January 2017, activities should be carefully prioritised and strictly targeted given funding constraints and vulnerabilities:</p> <p>a. The core activities of the current PRRO, including P4P and the support to the SGR should be maintained with some changes, keeping CO operating principles of ‘depth over breadth’ in mind. GFD and TSFP meet the most acute needs and should be given the highest priority. ScF, AC and VT all address important needs and should further target women and girls. P4P and the support to the SGR are closely linked to government policy and a WFP exit strategy. Funds should be prioritized for these important development initiatives.</p> <p>b. In line with The Government of Afghanistan policy, local procurement of nutritious food and increased use of C&V modality should be maximised and commodity food imports reduced where possible. Given the limited funds available,</p>	<p>Accepted.</p>	<p>Under the BR5, which will extend the current PRRO until June 2018, WFP Afghanistan will maintain the core activities, with the following observations:</p> <p>(a) The programme will be aligned with the expected resources through the application of more stringent geographical, seasonal and household targeting based on the results of the Seasonal Food Security Assessment 2016, Integrated Context Analysis 2016, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and the Afghanistan Living Condition Survey 2014;</p> <p>(b) Resources will be prioritized for projects designed to target women and girls that match specified criteria;</p> <p>(c) Explore scope to include nutrition prevention activities in partnership with MoPH and Unicef;</p> <p>(d) To reflect donor interest and the context of Afghanistan, DRR will be used as a means to align AC, VT and ESP projects to maximize impact;</p>	<p>Programme Unit</p>	<p>January 2017</p>	<p>No</p>

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stricter targeting of all activities is particularly important; the VAM unit needs to continue to ensure that WFP concentrates its efforts on the most vulnerable provinces and districts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (e) Joint programming will be expanded with UNEP, UNWomen, Unicef and FAO, particularly in DRR activities; (f) Capacity to implement CBT, particularly for emergency response, will be expanded and enhanced by implementing SCOPE, and establishing a local solution to CBT for emergency response; (g) As resources allow, the use of CBT as the transfer modality will be maximized; and (h) P4P activities will be fully integrated into the PRRO. 			
<p>Recommendation 2: Exit Strategy</p> <p>a. As soon as possible, CO leadership should develop an exit strategy, complete with timeline, a capacity enhancement strategy and indicators in order to note progress towards exit. This would better enable WFP Afghanistan to facilitate a gradual hand-over of its activities to government agencies consistent with government priorities. Despite the overarching ambition of the Government of Afghanistan to take ownership of the humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan, the evaluation team</p>	Accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The exit strategy will be clearly defined in the next PRRO; and (b) In the interim, WFP Afghanistan will engage key ministries (MoE, MoPH, MAIL, MRRD, MoRR and MoLSAMD) to identify capacity gaps and engage in appropriate capacity building activities, and agree on a strategy to address them. 	Programme Unit	July 2018 July 2017	No

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<p>recognises that given the challenging environment, a full transition to the Government of Afghanistan may take several years.</p> <p>b. In order to achieve this gradual hand-over the CO senior management need to remain fully engaged with the key ministries through regular contact, particularly MoE, MoPH and MAIL, and make progress where and when possible. Formal and informal training programmes, awareness visits overseas, and mentoring of key government staff may all be appropriate means of making progress. Collaboration is already producing strong results in the school feeding programme and through the Nutrition Database cluster initiative.</p>					
<p>Recommendation 3: Gender</p> <p>a) CO should build on the recent development of its new gender working group to improve its own practices and to set an example for partners, government and beneficiaries. The ET recommends some further steps:</p> <p>b) Prior to the next PRRO, the CO program team must find innovative ways to ensure that women are included as participants in future asset creation</p>	Accepted.	<p>WFP Afghanistan Gender Strategy and framework has been developed reflecting many of the OpEV recommendations. The implementation of the strategy/framework is an ongoing work in progress. With regards to sub-recommendations:</p> <p>(a) WFP Programme has already identified opportunities for increased female engagement in Asset Creation activities for 2016. WFP is working with targeted communities to design projects that explicitly target women, or are multifaceted enough to allow sufficient space for female</p>	Programme Unit	Implemented	No

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<p>programmes despite the cultural restrictions on women’s involvement in physical work outside the home. This may include bee-keeping, home-gardening and chicken-keeping. Gender equality efforts should go beyond ensuring equal numbers of male and female beneficiaries. It should help address the practical needs of women and contribute to the empowerment of women to obtain equal representation.</p> <p>c) During 2016, CO with the support of the CO Gender Advisor should complete the contextualization of the WFP Pakistan safe distribution model which incorporates the construction of women-friendly corridors. This should be rolled out before the end of the current PRRO so that the next PRRO can benefit from the learning.</p> <p>d) Before January 2017, CO M&E unit should work with RB to develop qualitative and practical gender indicators to enable WFP Afghanistan to better capture the progress on gender issues. This should build on work and lessons learned already captured in the region and should include training in their use.</p> <p>e) In the next three months, the WFP Gender Working Group with WFP Afghanistan management should determine whether translation of the gender mainstreaming guidelines and other</p>		<p>engagement. The Gender Strategy explicitly states that AC projects with no female beneficiaries will not be considered – although WFP recognizes that equal participation does not necessarily equal further empowerment and is working to advance female representation in AC design/development phase;</p>	Programme Unit	June 2016	No
		(b) and (f), WFP Afghanistan is developing a comprehensive protection strategy that encompasses the principles of the Safe Distribution model. Female-friendly distribution sites appropriate to the Afghanistan context will be designed and piloted during 2016, to inform the new PRRO;	Programme Unit	June 2016	No
		(c) The development of qualitative and practical gender indicators commenced with the preparation of the 2016 APP. WFP AFG will work with RBB to further advance these indicators;	Programme Unit	May 2016	No
		(d) The AFG Gender Working Group will translate gender mainstreaming guidelines into local languages; and	Programme Unit	Aug/Sept 2016	Yes: for (e) additional funding required for labour market assessment
		(e) WFP AFG will allocate funding in BR5 – currently under preparation – for national labour market assessments/skills gap analysis. This will enable WFP to identify professional demands and opportunities for sustainable employment/income generation post-training. It will also ensure that			

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<p>documents and training materials into local languages would be worthwhile.</p> <p>f) By the next PRRO, VT should incorporate activities that lead to clear income generating opportunities and other important social benefits for the participants commensurate with the level of training provided. If the aim of a programme is to create marketable products and services, then WFP needs to assess the market options before launching the programme. Outcome monitoring would be ideal to ensure the value of the VT but if this is difficult to achieve, then at least some ex-post studies should be conducted to better determine longer-term results. However, in light of resource constraints and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of VT, the CO should target effective VT programmes of other service providers rather than WFP running their own VT programmes. In this model, WFP would provide food and CBT.</p> <p>g) The CO should immediately speed up the process of designing and building women-friendly distribution sites. When safe and sex-segregated spaces for distribution are constructed, women will be more eager to engage in the management of such sites. This will further empower women at local level including within community leadership structures.</p>		<p>VT activities are equitably targeted at both men and women. In the interim, WFP is linking with partners (such as PIN) that have conducted comprehensive labour market assessments and developed their own VT curricula.</p> <p>For both (a) and (e), CO is investigating opportunities such as micro-finance support or developing strategic partnerships with UNWomen, FAO and I/NGOs to extend support past skills training/asset created.</p>			

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<p>Recommendation 4: The future of Purchase for Progress: Over the course of 2016, WFP needs to identify the key elements of the P4P programme that can be integrated into the mainstream programmes. At the same time the principle of simplicity should be applied to examine the range of activities.</p> <p>a) The existing specialist skills related to fortification and production within the P4P unit should not be lost at the end of the PRRO as they will be needed to further develop the activities. It is proposed that a technical service unit should be set up within WFP Afghanistan for this purpose while programme management, procurement and logistics should be handled by the relevant units within WFP Afghanistan by January 2017.</p> <p>b) The RB and WFP globally should recognise the leading role that WFP Afghanistan is playing in developing local production methods and continue to support it. This could be done in part by ensuring lessons learned are fully shared over the next six months at RB and HQ level to maximise the value of the pilot programme globally.</p> <p>c) Food fortification, including quality and safety control, along with the containerised production unit are the most</p>	Partially accepted.	<p>a) Agree. Strategy for mainstreaming of P4P has been developed.</p> <p>During 2016, key elements of P4P activities that can be integrated to mainstream programme will be identified and consulted with CO units, under the direction of management. The integration will start in the second quarter of 2016. The specialist skills within production and fortification will be retained to provide comprehensive technical support to the newly integrated activities by establishing a technical services unit;</p> <p>b) Agree. The containerized production units (CFPU) are currently being reviewed by the CO management, in consultation with RBB, to determine whether it can be sustained long-term or if an exit strategy should be prepared for a short-term phase-out. A detailed lessons learned document entailing the complete history, process, challenges and recommendations for use in future plans for similar interventions will be prepared and shared with WFP globally;</p> <p>c) Disagree. WFP remains in the stage of scaling up the fortification programme. This includes a direct collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), for an expansion of the programme to intervene in areas of standard development, communication, marketing and consumer demand, legislation and food safety and quality;</p>	DCD Operations	May 2017	No
			DCD Operations	August 2016	No
			DCD Operations	Ongoing	No

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<p>important elements of the programme for WFP and should be retained. By 2017, activities designed to increase wheat production and marketing linkages should be taken over by other agencies more involved in these areas such as FAO, MAIL, other development stakeholders and NGOs.</p> <p>d) The Republic of Korea uses WFP to manage their funding of the Nutrition and Education International (NEI) soy bean development programme, however the added value of WFP's involvement is not clear. WFP Afghanistan should immediately and critically review whether it is the best use of their staff resources to continue to manage this activity.</p> <p>e) It is recommended that the involvement with the SGR continue. WFP should more formally support the capacity enhancement of MAIL including policy development and the creation of relevant procedures for grain procurement and distribution. These should begin in earnest in 2016 and be included in the overall capacity building plan as part of the exit strategy.</p>		<p>WFP Afghanistan mills and fortifies all the wheat grain for distribution through its PRRO food assistance programme, including the P4P component. WFP cannot depend on another agency's logistics and procurement support for supply of the required fortification premix. Furthermore, through many consultations have been held, FAO has demonstrated no interest to take over part or all of the fortification activities. However, WFP will continue to assess capacity, interest and relevance of other agencies in a future handover;</p>	DCD Operations	Implemented	Yes. Funding for US\$3.365.55 ¹ has been proposed to RoK
		<p>d) Agree. WFP will define a more critical involvement in its partnership with NEI, both with regards to channelling the funds received from RoK to NEI, and allocating a proportion of the funding to play an active role in the oversight of the activities implemented by NEI. This will include: a review of all procurement processes, involvement in implementation of distribution activities and selection of local partners for business partnerships. All these activities have been incorporated in the next round of proposals to RoK starting from Dec 2017; and</p> <p>e) Agree. WFP took part in the review of the National Wheat Grain Policy and National purchasing policy documents developed by MAIL, relevant to the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR), and has provided</p>			P4P Unit

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		inputs, emphasizing the importance of the government mechanisms that support the milling sector (wheat flour production) and procurement of part of the SGR requirements from small-scale farmers. WFP will continue its support to the government in the SGR policy development and implementation.			
<p>Recommendation 5: Working as One As part of the “Working as One” initiative, over the course of 2016, WFP Afghanistan needs to further integrate its activities with other UN agencies as follows:</p> <p>a. With FAO in relation to the SGR and grain production and marketing: with UNICEF and other agencies in relation to education material on health and nutritional matters, and with UNDP and other agencies and development partners in relation to asset creation and DRR.</p> <p>b. The core strengths of WFP are recognised to be its national coverage, logistics and nutrition expertise. WFP should make these strengths available to all humanitarian actors while making</p>	Partially accepted.	<p>a) The WFP Afghanistan strategy is to assume leadership roles in key interagency coordination fora, including Programme Management Team, and the UN Afghanistan DRR Working Group. WFP Afghanistan will also expand its joint programming activities with UN-agencies, especially FAO, UNEP, UNHCR, Unicef and UNWomen.</p> <p>b) Disagree. Nutrition expertise is appropriately made available through the cluster system. There is no need for a Logistics Cluster, given ample transport and infrastructure is available within Afghanistan.</p>	DCD Operations	Implemented	No

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better use of the strengths of other agencies.					
<p>Recommendation 6: Funding</p> <p>WFP needs to seek new funding opportunities and at the same time carefully manage the effects that shortfalls have on the ongoing operations:</p> <p>a. Within 2016, WFP, at CO, RB and HQ levels should ensure that they take advantage of all possible sources of income. This should include competitive funding, such as those available from USAID that could be applied for either alone or in partnership with other organisations. The process of applying for this stream of funding will require specific skills such as bid preparation that could be concentrated at RB or HQ. USAID funding for areas of potential interest of WFP include humanitarian assistance, health,</p>	Accepted.	<p>a) The Country Office will engage and seek support from HQ and Regional Bureau to pursue all relevant funding opportunities to WFP Afghanistan.</p> <p>b) The impending BR5 will align the programme along with operational and direct support costs, to the expected resource forecast.</p>	<p>CD</p> <p>CD</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2016</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p>

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<p>food security, education, disaster risk reduction and even infrastructure. Resources are awarded via competitive processes and generally involve proposal writing and results-based budgeting. The USAID mission in Kabul strongly recommended that WFP CO discuss with them areas of mutual interest to be availed through these more competitive processes.</p> <p>b. Funding shortages have led to inevitable cutbacks of programmes. The CO needs to consider more carefully the impact that cutbacks in programmes such as VT or AC have on beneficiaries, CPs and WFP's own reputation when they are applied at short notice, after an intervention has been started or promised. Starting in 2016, CO management should plan changes carefully and ensure that there is full transparency with staff and partners about the process.</p>					

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<p>Recommendation 7:</p> <p>The Use of Programme Assistance Teams: The use of PATs should be closely monitored by CO and should be guided by a clear policy on the circumstances under which they can be used. This should be developed in the next few months. PATs were introduced in order to be able to continue operations in areas where WFP staff did not have access however their use has become routine in more secure regions. Cost advantages should be carefully balanced against the disadvantages of decreased direct involvement of WFP staff in interventions and weaker connections to beneficiaries.</p>	Accepted.	A policy for use of PAT will be developed, taking into consideration the operational accessibility as outlined in the access strategy and a cost benefit analysis.	Programme Unit	June 2016	No
<p>Recommendation 8: Maximizing sustainable impact at the local level: WFP should improve the sustainable impact of its operations by improving communication with beneficiaries, partners and its own staff:</p>	Accepted.	a) and b) The scope for nutrition prevention will be explored during the BR5 preparation. This will include opportunities for integration of nutrition messages in other programme activities and community outreach, as appropriate.	DCD Operations	July 2016 Implemented	No No No

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<p>a. Greater impact can be achieved for all the programmes if food distributions are combined with training and education of staff and general messages to beneficiaries regarding nutrition and health. By the next PRRO, the CO needs to use its added value of coverage to provide appropriate messages, particularly on the prevention of malnutrition. Such messages could also be included in literacy training packages.</p> <p>b. WFP Afghanistan should work with partners including the government to find innovative ways to improve outreach for the nutrition interventions by the start of the next PRRO. Although access is a major problem, particularly in remote areas, there may be options to build on the mobile services of other stakeholders and more opportunities for promotional work at village level.</p> <p>c. The link between CO and Area and Sub-offices needs to be strengthened. To achieve this CO-based staff, especially management,</p>		<p>c) During 2016, staff based at the country office spent increasingly spent more time in the field.</p> <p>d) As part of the project life cycle, the project is always formally handed over to the local community and administration. Monitoring is subsequently conducted to ensure the required maintenance is routinely undertaken by the local community.</p>		Implemented	

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health and M&E should spend more time in the field beginning in 2016. d. In 2016, the CO needs to closely monitor AC results from 2015 to ensure the planned handover to government and subsequent operations and maintenance activities occur					
Recommendation 9: Data Management Data management and reporting should be improved to enhance programme management and transparency in line with the PRRO guiding principle of accountability. a. To increase the evaluability of programmes and better communicate results, CO, RB and OEV supported by staff rolling out COMET, should harmonize the required data as soon as possible. Data required for evaluation factsheets do not correspond well with the data provided in the SPR leading to potential under-reporting of important results. At the same time the SPR does not provide a sufficiently clear picture of the activities, results and progress of the programme and needs reform at a	Accepted.	<p>a) The implementation module of COMET was launched in Afghanistan January 2016 and was an important step towards aligning Data management in Afghanistan with corporate M&E tools.</p> <p>b) The launch of the COMET Monitoring module and roll-out of the corporate MDCA database, which will facilitate real-time monitoring and mobile monitoring, will further harmonise the capture of corporate level indicators; and</p> <p>The launch of both COMET Monitoring module and MDCA are expected in 2016, subject to HQ timing. Once launched, it is anticipated that it will facilitate the phase out of the current country office M&E databases: APPMR and WOW.</p>	<p>Programme Unit</p> <p>Programme Unit</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>4th Q. 2016 subject to HQ confirmation</p>	<p>No</p> <p>No</p>

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<p>global level. These efforts should begin immediately.</p> <p>b. Harmonization is also required across the CO's many databases and this could be a natural outcome of improved alignment between programme management information requirements with M&E data requirements. The development of a corporate M&E system would be a useful step and could include the use of open source kits (OSK) to increase the ease of updating and maintaining the system, as well as other tools such as mobile monitoring.</p>					