

Evaluation Terms of Reference



SUMMARY TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of WFP's Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis

Civil unrest in Syria began in March 2011 and marked the advent of a refugee crisis which continues to gain momentum. By mid-May 2014, UNHCR identified 2,81 million 'Persons of Concern', including 2.73 million Syrian refugees registered in neighbouring countries. The main receiving countries are Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and to a lesser extent, Egypt and Iraq. The operational environment is challenging and fast-changing. This is a complex regional crisis that combines massive refugee and internal displacements, complicated by competing and divided international, regional and national interests, and faced with challenges of dual mandates for coordination between UN agencies.

Subject and Focus of the Evaluation

The geographical area under review is wider than a single-country entity, as the organisational structure of the WFP response to the Syria Crisis, termed the Regional Emergency Coordination (REC), operates out of Amman (Jordan), encompassing emergency operations targeting populations affected by the conflict in Syria and in the neighbouring countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey).

The Level-3 activations¹ and implementation of WFP's Emergency Response Activation Protocol and related new corporate mechanisms and tools - such as: (a) the Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme; (b) the Emergency Preparedness Response Package, and; (c) WFP's first corporate set-up of a parallel management structure to support the emergency coordination efforts (the REC), separate and independent of the Cairo Regional Bureau (OMC), provide an opportunity for organisational learning.

The scale of humanitarian needs also makes the WFP emergency response an opportunity for large-scale implementation of WFP innovative programming approaches, in terms of: (a) Context: urban, middle-income countries, camp and non-camp refugee populations; (b) Modalities: cash & voucher, use of technologies such as bio-metrics, electronic vouchers and one-card systems, and of; (c) Organisational learning opportunity given the shift of organisational architecture, risk-management by WFP, and testing of guidelines and systems in place.

The focus of this evaluation will be the WFP regional response to the Syrian crisis as embodied by its two

emergency operations (the Syria specific EMOP 200339 and the regional EMOP 200433).

Objectives and Users of the Evaluation

Geared towards constructive learning and accountability, the evaluation will seek to: (a) provide a snapshot of results; (b) identify strengths & areas of weaknesses; (c) feed into the 2015 REC programming process, and; (d) recommend areas of focus for further evaluative work both by the REC management and organization.

Primary users of the evaluation will include the REC organisational structure in Amman, WFP Operations Management Department and HQ Senior Management, the country-based emergency response teams, and the OMC Regional Bureau. Other stakeholders with a possible interest in the evaluation's findings include the affected populations, national governments and humanitarian actors engaged in the response, the Executive Board, as well as Inter-Agency Principals and Directors.

Key Evaluation Questions

A scoping mission undertaken to assess challenges established four Areas of Focus (AoF) and eleven key questions in coordination with the REC management (to be further refined at inception, as necessary, given the fluid context):

AoF 1: Strategic Direction & Positioning

- the extent to which:

- i) WFP response's objectives and activities have been in line with: identified humanitarian needs, priorities and capacities; and programme design based on good quality contextual analysis;

¹ The WFP activation of L3 is dated 14 Dec 2012, and the inter-agency L3 declaration 15 January 2013

- ii) food assistance has been coordinated (including humanitarian access) with relevant partners, enabling complementarity of interventions at policy and operations levels;
- iii) there have been trade-offs between aligning with wider-system and/or national priorities on the one hand, with WFP's mandate, policies and Humanitarian Principles, on the other.

AoF 2: WFP Organisational Effectiveness

- *the extent to which the REC architecture and institutional arrangements of the WFP L3 response have contributed to:*

- i) corporate guidance being effectively applied in the emergency responses (within WFP and in coordination with the wider humanitarian system);
- ii) innovation, adaptation and learning for WFP [and beyond] to improve guidelines and/or systems, and; innovative programme implementation at scale;
- iii) potential for sustainability and replication.

AoF 3: Programme Strategy Issues

- *the extent to which:*

- i) trade-offs of programmatic choices have been analysed, monitored and assessed;
- ii) a transition strategy has been developed and integrated in implementation.

AoF 4: Operational Performance & Results

- *an assessment of:*

- i) WFP's interventions' main results achieved for people affected by the conflict, by sub-group;
- ii) WFP assistance has been delivered in a timely, efficient manner successfully avoiding duplication and filling gaps;
- iii) Contextual factors that help explain results.

Methodology

To mitigate limitations, flexibility is weaved into the evaluation process: (a) maximising use of available evidence as it becomes available (two-step desk review); (b) sustained coordination and information sharing to lighten the evaluation's footprint (e.g.: joining the OME Lessons Learned Exercise); (d) consider use of a remote approach (brief on-line questionnaire to WFP staff and/or external stakeholders); (e) tailor-made products (more concise reports; formative workshop to inform the REC's 2015 budget revisions and provide pointers for the longer-term REC strategic planning process); (f) lighter impact assessment given operations are on-going.

The evaluation will use international criteria for assessing humanitarian action, and give attention to gender, protection and accountability to affected populations. Using secondary qualitative and

quantitative data complemented with primary data as feasible, a remote approach in some countries, such as Syria, will be considered. The methodology will demonstrate impartiality by relying on a cross-section of information sources and using a mixed methodological approach to ensure triangulation of information.

Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluation Team: an independent team from ODI has been contracted to conduct the evaluation in partnership with the Amman-based *The Excel Consulting Associates*, under the leadership of Jim Drummond (team leader).

OEV Evaluation Manager: Elise Benoit is responsible for the design, follow-up and quality assurance following WFP OEV's evaluation quality assurance system.

Stakeholders: WFP stakeholders at CO, REC, RB and HQ levels are expected to provide information necessary to the evaluation. WFP REC & CO stakeholders will facilitate the evaluation team's contacts and field-trips.

Communications

Two advisory panels will be established for the evaluation in order to ensure appropriate technical and strategic input, review and follow-up: (a) an *internal reference group* with key representatives from relevant technical units of WFP HQ and REC team; (b) an *internal advisory group* with executive managers of relevant divisions and offices of L3 response.

Interactive briefs will be organised throughout the evaluation process:

- *exit brief at the end of the inception mission* with the key stakeholders in Amman [August]
- *exit briefs at the end of the field evaluation mission* in the countries visited and in Amman [September]
- *formative workshop* on preliminary conclusions and potential areas of recommendations [October]

Timing and Key Milestones

Inception: August 2014

Fieldwork: September 2014

Report:

- Draft – January 2015
- Final – March 2015
- Summary evaluation report to be presented to the Executive Board of June 2015 (EB.A/2015).

Full Terms of Reference are available at



<http://www.wfp.org/evaluation> as are all Evaluation Reports and Management Responses.

For more information please contact
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