Introduction

Purpose

This Mini Guide is intended to support and enable WFP Decision-Makers to strategically plan and steer decentralized evaluations that are useful, impartial and credible. Typically, those are CDs/DCDs at country level, RDs/DRDs at regional level and Directors of HQ Divisions.

This Mini Guide is in line with: i) WFP Evaluation Policy (2016-2021); ii) Evaluation Charter, issued by the Executive Director as an ED Circular, which establishes the mandate and governance framework for the evaluation function; and iii) WFP’s Corporate Evaluation Strategy 2016-2021.

Content

This Guide focuses on the main role and accountabilities of CDs/DCDs and the key decisions they have to take at each phase of a decentralized evaluation process.

Key phases of a Decentralized Evaluation process

This guide also includes annexes to support understanding and operationalization of the impartiality provisions:

1. Options for appointing the evaluation manager.
2. Outsourced Quality Support Service (QS).

For any query, CDs/DCDs should seek advice from the Regional Evaluation Officer and OEV Help-desk (wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org).

Why is Evaluation important?

→ To make evidence-based strategic, programmatic and operational decisions.
→ To be accountable to beneficiaries and project stakeholders.
→ To develop on evidence-based advocacy for WFP’s programmes with host governments, donors and partners.
Phase 1: Plan

→ Decide strategically on the focus/scope and timing of decentralized evaluations to address CO learning needs and specific donor commitments.

→ Embed the planned decentralized evaluation(s) in the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) at formulation stage. Ensure adequate sequencing with other exercises and refer to the Evaluation Policy’s coverage norms (Annex 4).

→ Budget adequately in the Country Portfolio Budget for the management and conduct of decentralized evaluations. Depending on the scope and complexity of the evaluation, the evaluation management may require up to 50% of a P3/NOC’s time during one year.

→ Ensure the evaluability of WFP’s undertakings – establishing baseline information, performance indicators and targets for expected results.

→ Appoint the evaluation manager (see annex 1).

→ Set up an evaluation committee (see annex 3) and discuss with CO staff the implications of the impartiality and independence principles.

→ Inform key stakeholders of planned evaluations and their expected engagement in the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG); promote joint evaluations whenever feasible and relevant.

Main outputs:

✓ Monitoring, Review and Evaluation plan (MRE) defined including scope, timeline and estimated costs of decentralized evaluation.

✓ Evaluation plan embedded in CSP/ICSP, Country Portfolio Budget and CO work plans.

✓ Evaluation Manager appointed.

✓ Evaluation committee (EC) established and TOR for EC available; and Evaluation Reference Group members identified.
Phase 2: Prepare

→ Undertake the online course EvalPro 2 for decision-makers (series of short videos).
→ Finalize the establishment of the Evaluation Reference Group.
→ Chair the evaluation committee and the Evaluation Reference Group for the entire duration of the evaluation process.
→ Ensure that the impartiality and independence of the evaluation is safeguarded for the entire duration of the process.
→ Provide feedback on ToR paying specific attention to the evaluation questions.
→ Approve the final ToR as the chair of the Evaluation Committee.
→ Approve the evaluation team selection, ensuring the team members are qualified independent evaluators who sign the Code of Conduct for Evaluators in the UN system, as part of their contract with WFP.
→ Approve the budget.
→ Ensure use of competitive and performance-based procedures for recruitment/contracting of the team.
→ Ensure that a comprehensive document library is set up.

Main outputs:

- Draft Terms of Reference (ToR).
- Feedback from outsourced quality support service (DE QS) on the ToR (see annex 2).
- Completed comments matrix.
- Final approved ToR.
- Evaluation team contracted.
- ERG established and TOR for ERG available.
- Communication and Learning Plan defined.
- Document library set up.
Phase 3: Inception

→ Engage adequately in initial briefings with the Evaluation team to set WFP expectations.
→ Provide feedback on draft Inception Report, paying again attention to the evaluation questions and the proposed evaluation methodology.
→ Ensure that key WFP staff and stakeholders engage appropriately; address threats to impartiality and independency as required.
→ Approve the Inception Report.

Main outputs:

✓ Draft Inception Report (IR).
✓ Feedback from outsourced quality support service (DE QS) on the IR.
✓ Matrix of comments completed.
✓ Final approved IR.
Phase 4: Collect Data

→ Participate to entry briefing with the evaluation team and act as key informant.
→ Ensure that CO provides access to additional information requested by the evaluation team.
→ Participate in End of Mission debriefing to discuss the evaluation team’s preliminary findings.
→ Ensure that WFP staff and stakeholders engage appropriately; address threats to impartiality and independency as required.

Main outputs:
✓ PPT Presentation from End of Mission debriefing, which summarizes the evaluation team’s preliminary findings.
Phase 5: Analyse Data and Report

- Provide feedback on draft Evaluation Report; pay close attention to the draft recommendations.
- Facilitate appropriate engagement of ERG members in the report review process, ensuring that reporting is unbiased and transparent.
- Approve the Evaluation Report.

**Main outputs:**
- Feedback from outsourced quality support service (DE QS) on the ER.
- Matrix of comments completed.
- Final approved ER.

Phase 6: Disseminate and Follow-up

- Ensure that the evaluation report is published and disseminated; and that learning products are developed for specific audiences.
- Lead the formulation of the Management Response and clear it.
- Once finally approved by RB Management, ensure that the Management Response is widely disseminated to stakeholders along with final ER. Consider organizing workshop(s).
-Nominate a staff responsible for tracking the implementation of follow-up actions to the evaluation recommendations.
-Use evaluative evidence to inform the design and/or implementation of the Country Strategic Plan and other initiatives.

**Main outputs:**
- Final ER published on WFP websites.
- WFP management response approved and published on WFP websites.
- ER and MR widely disseminated to stakeholders.
- Learning products developed (Brief, video).
Annex 1: Options available for appointing the evaluation manager

Nomination of the evaluation manager is the responsibility of the CO management (CD/DCD). The choice of EM is central to the success of an evaluation and should be done balancing various considerations:

→ EM is able to maintain impartiality and minimise the risk of bias.
→ EM has solid management, communication and conflict-resolution skills.
→ EM has technical evaluation skills.

**Option 1 - CO M&E Officer:** typically, the head of the CO M&E unit would be the best placed to take the role of Evaluation Manager. The advantage is that s/he knows about the activities under evaluation while being involved to a lesser extent in the design and implementation of the intervention than the Head of Programme. This option should be feasible in very large, large and some medium COs which have a M&E Officer with the requisite capacity. In some instances, another staff within the M&E unit may be able to take on this role if sufficiently experienced. Resource permitting, the CD/DCD might decide to hire a new staff to manage the evaluation, who will be placed within the CO M&E unit. Depending on the number and complexity of the evaluation(s), this may be catered through a “when actually employed” contract, with number of days established based on the required level of effort. If a CO intends to commission multiple studies in parallel, then a full-time position would be required.

If option 1 is not feasible because the CO does not have an M&E officer with adequate capacity, or because all M&E staff have been directly involved in the management and implementation of the subject being evaluated, then consider option 2.

**Option 2 - CO VAM Officer or Compliance Officer:** the VAM officer or another CO staff such as the Compliance Officer who has not been directly involved in the management or implementation of the programme/activities to be evaluated may be appointed as Evaluation Manager.

If option 2 is not feasible because the CO does not have a VAM or compliance officer or they have been directly involved in the management of the subject being evaluated, then consider option 3.
Option 3 - Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) or a member of the Regional Evaluation Unit: the CO may request the support from the Regional Evaluation Unit to manage the evaluation. This should be approved by the Deputy Regional Director. This option is to be considered when the DE is covering multiple countries or in the case of single-country DE, for small and very small COs. Otherwise, it would be unsustainable for the Regional Evaluation Unit to manage all decentralized evaluations in the region.

If option 3 is not feasible consider one of the options under option 4.

Option 4: a number of alternative options are presented below:

a) Evaluation Manager from another CO: explore the possibility of having an Evaluation Manager from another CO on TDY. For a staff member to be eligible to manage an evaluation taking place in another CO, s/he must have managed at least one decentralized evaluation and have completed WFP Evaluation Learning Programme. The TDY could be undertaken remotely with travel to the CO at peak times of the evaluation process. An Evaluation Focal Point within the CO team should be appointed to be coached by the Evaluation Manager on TDY and perform the tasks that require in-country presence.

b) CO Programme Officer: a CO Programme Officer can be considered if s/he oversees a different activity than the one being evaluated. The advantage of the Programme Officer is that s/he knows about the activities under evaluation and has strong linkages with the programme team. The selected staff should have the ability to manage the evaluation process effectively and ensure a high degree of impartiality at all stages despite his/her involvement in the activity being evaluated.

c) Outsourced Evaluation Management: the CD/DCD might opt to outsource part of the evaluation management role to an individual or an evaluation firm. However, given that this person will have limited or no presence in the country, s/he will only be able to assume the tasks that can be performed remotely such as drafting the TORs, quality assuring the deliverables produced by the evaluation team. Other responsibilities including consolidating the evaluation document library, preparing the field mission, or engaging with key stakeholders will need to be performed by a CO staff. Hence, the CD/DCD will also need to appoint an "Evaluation Focal Point" within the CO team to perform those tasks. This option should be of last resort when none of the previous options are possible as it does not contribute to enhance WFP evaluation management capacity.
Annex 2: Outsourced Quality Support Service (DE QS)

The outsourced DE QS service is mandatory for all decentralized evaluations. All costs are covered by OEV.

Its primary objective is to support the delivery of useful, credible and impartial evaluations which adhere to UN principles and norms and standards. More specifically, notably by:

→ Improving the quality of decentralized evaluation reports against WFP Evaluation Quality Assurance System; this includes but is not limited to the application of sound approaches and methods.
→ Enhancing the impartiality of the decentralized evaluation (by providing an objective feedback on the quality of the report from an evaluation perspective).
→ Developing evaluation management capacity across WFP.

This service provides timely feedback and recommendations for improvements to Evaluation Managers on the following draft decentralized evaluation deliverables:

- Draft Terms of Reference (ToR): within 5 working days
- Draft Inception Report (IR): within 6 working days
- Draft Evaluation Report (ER): within 6 working days

The Evaluation Manager is responsible for submitting the draft ToR, IR and ER for review to the DE QS Service. S/he will have the opportunity to clarify the feedback and recommendations with the reviewer to guide her/him in the finalization of the TORs.

Feedback received on draft IR and ER will be shared by the Evaluation Manager with the Evaluation Team Leader who is responsible for addressing the recommendations.

The service is available in English, Spanish and French.

For more information, contact your Regional Evaluation Officer and OEV Helpdesk (wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org)
Annex 3: Purpose and role of an Evaluation Reference Group and Evaluation Committee

1. The Evaluation Committee (EC) is a temporary group responsible for overseeing the evaluation process, making key decisions and reviewing evaluation products submitted to the Chair for approval. It helps ensuring due process in evaluation management and maintaining distance from programme implementers (preventing potential risks of undue influence), while also supporting and giving advice to the Evaluation Manager. The establishment of an EC for each decentralized evaluation is part of the impartiality provisions foreseen by WFP Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Charter.

   The CD sets up and chairs the evaluation committee. Key decisions expected to be made by the EC relate to:

   → Nomination of the evaluation manager.
   → Scope, budget and timeline of the evaluation.
   → Selection of the contracting modalities and the evaluation team.
   → Approval of ToR, inception and evaluation report.

   The chair role may be delegated to the DCD, except when the DCD is also the Head of Programme. The number of EC members ranges from 4 to 7 (see TN Evaluation Committee).

2. The overall purpose of the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) is to contribute to the relevance, impartiality and credibility of the evaluation by offering a range of viewpoints and ensuring a transparent process. The participation of primary stakeholders in the ERG can also contribute to enhance collaboration with the Government, other agencies, and donors as well as enhance evaluation culture and capacity among national partners.

   ERG members review and comment on evaluation TOR, inception report and evaluation report and act as advisors during the evaluation process. Responsibility for making key decisions including approval of evaluation products rests with the Country Director/Deputy Country Director as Chair of the Evaluation Committee.

   The ERG always includes both internal and external stakeholders. The EC members are also part of the ERG membership (see TN Evaluation Reference Group). The Chair of the ERG is the Country Director or the Deputy Country Director (by delegation), if the DCD is also the Head of Programme, then the CD should chair the ERG.

   The chair of the ERG can also be delegated to the Evaluation Manager if s/he has strong leadership skills to facilitate adequate engagement from external stakeholders.
Annex 4: Minimum Required Decentralized Evaluation Coverage Norms

The minimum evaluation coverage norms set out in the Evaluation Policy (2016—2021) have been revised and agreed with the Executive Board at the Annual Session in 2018.

Revised coverage norm: at least one decentralized evaluation is planned and conducted within each Country Strategic Plan and Interim Country Strategic Plan's cycle. Should the CSP/ICSP be extended beyond 5 years, the country office should conduct an additional decentralized evaluation.

It is recommended that larger COs commission more than one DE during the lifespan of their CSP given their CSP's increased complexity and scale.

Recommended to evaluate:

→ Before scale-up of pilots, innovations, and prototypes;
→ For high-risk interventions where level of risk is established in line with the WFP enterprise risk management policy;
→ Before the third application of an intervention of similar type and scope.

Resources

WFP Evaluation Policy (2016-2021)
https://newgo.wfp.org/documents/evaluation-policy

Corporate Evaluation Strategy (2016-2021)
https://newgo.wfp.org/documents/corporate-evaluation-strategy

Evaluation Charter (Circular OED2016/007)
https://newgo.wfp.org/documents/evaluation-charter

Decentralized Evaluation Process Guide
https://newgo.wfp.org/documents/process-guide-for-decentralized-evaluations

CD/DCD Functional Summary
https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000111911/download/

EvalPro2 Video series for CDs: peers speaking about steering evaluations
For more information on Decentralized Evaluation visit 
http://newgo.wfp.org/how-do-i/do-an-evaluation

or contact us at: wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org

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