MOPAN
2017-18 ASSESSMENTS

Organisational Performance Brief

World Food Programme (WFP)

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Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network

WFP's performance at a glance

Overall, the assessment finds that WFP has made significant progress in several areas since the last MOPAN assessment in 2013, but also finds areas for improvement.

WFP has a clear and cohesive long-term vision. This vision, expressed in the current strategic plan (2017-21), is well known and broadly supported across the organisation. It is strengthened by its unequivocal links to SDG 2 and SDG 17 which focus on ending hunger and revitalising partnerships for delivery of the SDGs. The present plan builds on the work started and the direction taken in the previous strategic plan (2014-17). Together, they provide a clear direction for the work of WFP, encompassing both humanitarian and development efforts. The organisation's five strategic objectives (especially Objectives 1-3 linked to SDG 2) guide its activities and are being used to prioritise and support coherence at the country level. The major successive reforms WFP has undertaken and continues to undertake (the Fit for Purpose reform and the Integrated Road Map) have progressively strengthened the manner in which WFP's planning, budgeting and management systems deliver the intended results and are geared towards the long-term vision.

WFP KEY FACTS

MISSION: WFP is the food arm of the UN system charged with providing and co-ordinating food assistance. Its dual humanitarian and development mandate, dates back to its origins in 1962.

GOVERNANCE: WFP is governed by an Executive Board consisting of 36 member states. The Board provides intergovernmental support, direction and supervision for all initiatives. 18 members are elected by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and 18 by the Council of FAO.

STRUCTURE: Headquartered in Rome, WFP currently employs approximately 17 000 people, 88% of whom are deployed in the field. It has six regional bureaux and operates in more than 80 countries. The organisation is headed by an Executive Director who is appointed by the UN Secretary-General and the Director-General of the FAO.

FINANCE: In 2018, WFP received record contributions of USD 7.5 billion, up from USD 6 billion in 2017. WFP's needs-based budget is fully voluntarily funded. The organisation's top ten donors accounted for 85% of its 2018 income. Most contributions are single-year, and 95% of them are earmarked.

WFP is also a highly relevant and responsive organisation. It has coped with increasing numbers of severe and protracted humanitarian emergencies. Its substantial body of independent evidence, which allows assessing its performance results, shows a positive track record on delivering, including under difficult circumstances. WFP is highly regarded by partners for its flexibility and agility in rapidly responding to crises and for the support it provides to others involved in the wider humanitarian response, based on its logistics and telecommunications strengths and its extensive field presence. The organisation is committed to maintain and strengthen this humanitarian response capacity, which is essential to meeting current and growing needs and the demands of protracted crises. WFP's strategic direction and reforms are helping to further clarify WFP's comparative advantage within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. WFP's alignment with SDGs 2 and 17 have supported this and enabled WFP to further clarify its comparative advantage in the areas of hunger and nutrition.

WFP has delivered well on its strategic objectives. The assessment – which reflects corporate reporting on results for both humanitarian and development work – finds that WFP has consistently achieved intended results in its work to address hunger and improve nutrition. Large-scale, life-saving interventions are a particular area of strength and include food assistance in humanitarian situations and action to improve nutrition. The organisation has been able to scale up interventions quickly to meet rising demands. Effective co-ordination mechanisms, partnerships and improved nutrition programming have supported

the achievement of results, especially at country level. Where WFP still faces challenges in delivering results, these challenges stem mostly from insufficient policy integration across the organisation and from limited funding and resources, including human resources.

WFP is increasingly oriented to deliver results at the country level. Reforms have helped position WFP nationally to plan holistically, and with partners, and to report transparently on its use of resources to deliver results. Reforms are ongoing, and many expected gains have yet to materialise, but evidence from internal audits and performance reports on pilots is already positive. While not yet fully operationalised in all contexts, its country strategic plans provide a more country-prioritised and less project-based approach and have shown that WFP is capable of responding flexibly to national and regional emergency context changes and needs.

However, WFP's new approach to partnerships at the country level has not yet been fully realised. Partnerships to deliver the SDGs (SDG 17) are one of its two overarching goals. WFP's reforms are expected to strengthen partnership approaches. The country strategic planning approach is providing opportunities for building collaborative partnerships. Country-based partnerships, promoted by the country-owned zero hunger strategic reviews as part of country strategic planning, represent an important ingredient for the sustainability of WFP's work. Yet they require staff to be equipped with new and improved competencies, guidance and support to successfully identify and nurture these diverse partnerships; but this is not consistently the case. Other forms of partnership, such as those with the private sector, lack a coherent approach and strategy.

More generally, structured workforce planning has not kept pace with other aspects of reforms. WFP does not yet have a robust human resources plan to guide organisational growth to keep pace with a growing budget. Delivering on the dual mandates requires mobilising enough of the right people and appropriate skillsets. The ability to systematically assess workforce composition at the country level, and provide the necessary guidance on this and related human resources, is essential to WFP's transition to become more of an enabler and work even more collaboratively with others to tackle hunger and malnutrition.

Short-term, highly earmarked funding creates constraints to fully implementing the new operational model. Single-year contributions still constituted 86% of WFP's overall funding in 2018.[1] Additionally, the share of unearmarked or softly earmarked funds has declined significantly in recent years; it stood at 6% in 2018.[2] The short-term, earmarked nature of funding impairs WFP's ability to implement its new, needs-based operational model. In that model, needs are derived from regional and country aggregated plans, which are based on national and WFP-conducted hunger, food security and malnutrition assessments. WFP's new budget planning approaches and tools such as the Country Portfolio Budget, which is elaborated on the basis of WFP Strategic Results and Outcomes, were introduced to support this needs-based model. The short-term, earmarked funding creates immense challenges for planning, pursuing partnerships, and meeting needs, although WFP is using measures to minimise the impact of funding shortfalls. This challenge is now receiving more attention, but these efforts have not yet shown a significant return. Diversifying its funding base – so as to become less vulnerable to external policy shifts and pressures – has therefore become increasingly important for WFP. However, despite efforts in this direction, it still depends on its top ten donors who contributed 85% of 2018 financing.[3] There is an expectation that increased transparency and reporting on results-based budgeting, which WFP can now offer, will influence donors towards more flexible and multi-year funding. However, this is likely to require consistent messaging from WFP on the benefits of such funding and the negative impacts of conditionality, as well as building confidence in WFP results reporting. Ultimately, the efforts of all WFP stakeholders are needed to tackle the challenges of the funding model.

The operational priorities of WFP's mission statement (1994) are:

- to use food assistance to support economic and social development
- to meet refugee and other emergency and protracted relief food needs
- to promote world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

1: 84% in 2017; 2: 5% in 2017; 3: 88% in 2017.

WFP's single framework for strategic and management results is a strength. Nonetheless, WFP still has a few gaps to fill in its Corporate Results Framework (CRF). The organisation is still grappling with issues such as linking humanitarian efforts to higher-level outcomes and specifying indicators for capacity strengthening, in its efforts to strengthen and update the CRF. While thinking is clearly happening, the assessment was unable to identify a sufficiently coherent and vigorous response to clarifying these gaps in the CRF – a process essential to give guidance to staff and put in place the mechanisms and resources to report fully on all key result areas.

WFP can still count on robust oversight and evaluation structures and functions. One of WFP's strengths is its ability to rely on a strong evaluation system; and while there are still some gaps in the system, a culture of using evaluation evidence in planning and programming is emerging. WFP's strategic independent corporate evaluation function oversees the production of high-quality centralised and decentralised evaluations and syntheses of findings that feed into planning processes. Its evaluations are of a high standard and have broad coverage of the activities. Independent assessments, for example one by the Joint Inspection Unit, have rated the organisation highly on its evaluation function. While evaluations have been a long-standing strength of WFP, the organisation has invested in improving them further over the years. It has developed a system to ensure that management responses to all evaluations are recorded and their implementation publicly tracked; this system is being rolled out in 2019. WFP also reports annually to the Executive Board on the implementation of recommendations. It has undertaken considerable effort to ensure that the evidence base is used.

But learning and improvement are limited by WFP's knowledge management system not yet being sufficiently integrated. Despite pockets of valuable in-depth knowledge generation and use, such as in nutrition, WFP has not yet developed an effective, integrated organisation-wide system for making this available internally and externally. Technical staff report that they rely significantly on informal networks and on trawling for information and knowledge sharing. There is also scope to better identify and respond to poorly performing interventions, which a more comprehensive organisational knowledge management system would support. This would also help illustrate and capitalise on WFP's growing reputation as a generator of solutions to humanitarian and development challenges.

WFP has not yet systematically implemented all of its cross-cutting priorities. It has made progress in putting policies and instruments in place to support their integration into operations. However, the inclusion of WFP's gender equality focus in its operations remains incomplete because of gaps in human and financial resources and of limited capacity of staff to understand and meet organisational commitments, including transformative change in gender equality. The lack of dedicated resources also has hampered the implementation of protection-related issues. On climate change and environmental sustainability, WFP has limited achievements to demonstrate so far, given the relative nascence of its efforts in this area.

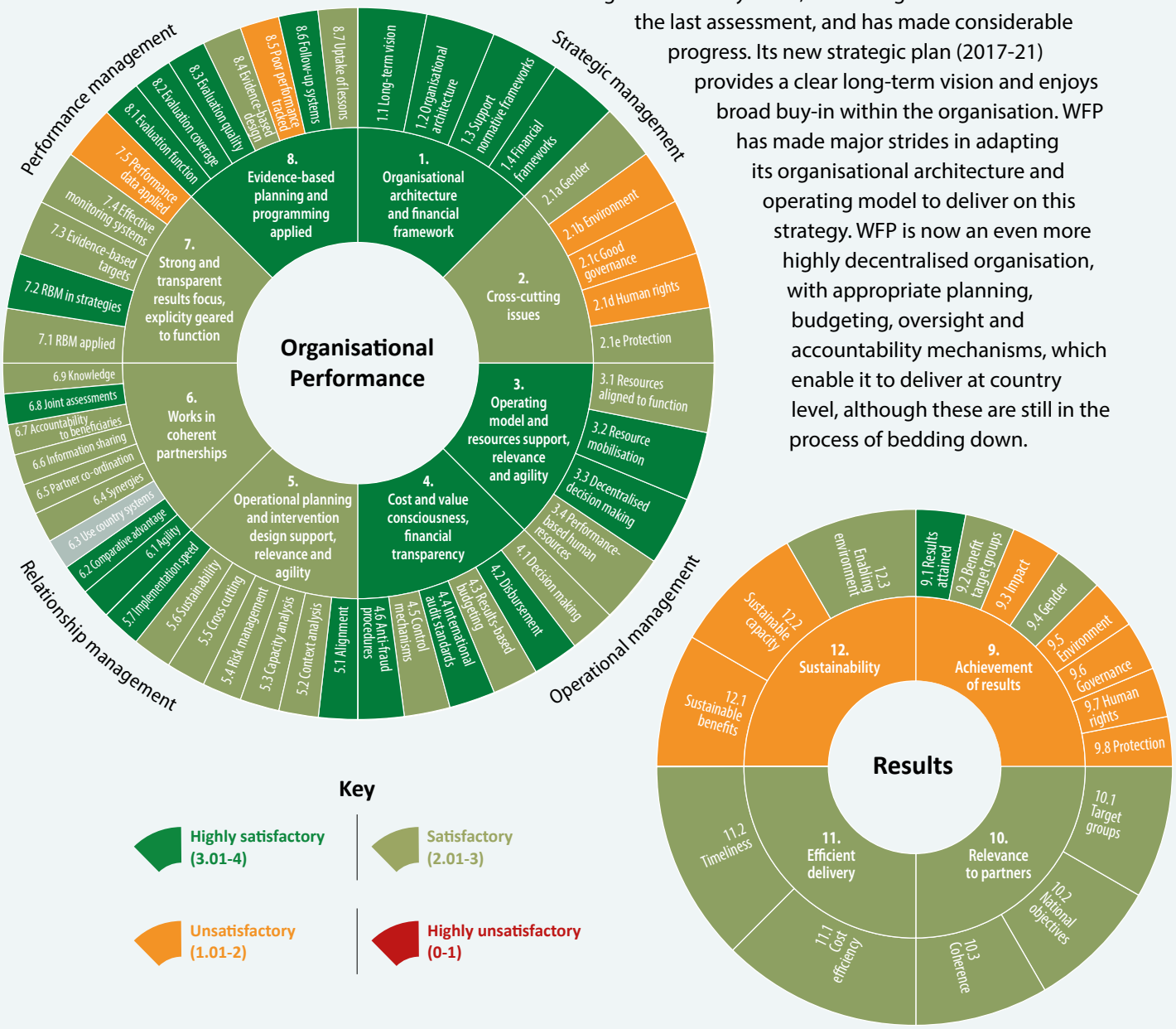
Finally, there remains scope for WFP to better build sustainability into its interventions. The assessment finds examples which are likely to have led to long-term benefits in partner countries. For example, structural and institutional arrangements supported by WFP – such as co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms – have the potential for ongoing benefits for preparedness and could serve again in future emergencies. Overall, however, evaluations note that WFP has not yet achieved sustainability in its interventions and has not sufficiently linked them to longer-term development results. This is partially because of the emergency character of much of WFP's work, but there are also internal impediments. Firstly, WFP, in designing its interventions, pays limited attention to strategies for handover to national governments and to links with recovery and longer-term development results. Secondly, this assessment finds that WFP has not yet contributed sufficiently to national policy development and system reforms. Finally, WFP is not yet seizing opportunities often enough to strengthen the capacity of national actors across its interventions.

Key findings

The assessment finds that the World Food Programme (WFP) is making steady progress in fully exploiting its strengths and capacities to respond to humanitarian needs in food and nutrition, while strengthening links with long-term development. It is coping with an increasing number of severe and protracted humanitarian emergencies, which place significant demands on the organisation. Acknowledging the increasingly complex environment, WFP recognises that it can no longer "go it alone" to end hunger.

It has successfully aligned its long-term vision for tackling hunger and malnutrition to two Sustainable Development Goals – SDG 2 on zero hunger, and SDG 17 on establishing and strengthening partnerships. This double alignment is commensurate with WFP's comparative advantage and dual humanitarian and development mandate. Ongoing reforms are equipping WFP to better deliver on these objectives, with a greater focus at the country level and gearing of the organisation from implementer to enabler.

PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY



When WFP has continued the trajectory of change towards greater country focus, which began at the time of the last assessment, and has made considerable progress. Its new strategic plan (2017-21) provides a clear long-term vision and enjoys broad buy-in within the organisation. WFP has made major strides in adapting its organisational architecture and operating model to deliver on this strategy. WFP is now an even more highly decentralised organisation, with appropriate planning, budgeting, oversight and accountability mechanisms, which enable it to deliver at country level, although these are still in the process of bedding down.

Two institutional reform initiatives launched in 2012 (Fit for Purpose) and 2016 (Integrated Road Map) are designed to improve the effectiveness of WFP. These reform initiatives have been effective in delivering a changed business model geared to meeting the requirements of its successive strategic plans. While they are far reaching, their implementation is still underway. The scope of change demands sustained attention to managing change in skillsets, behaviour and culture, as well as system change within WFP. It also requires ongoing dialogue and engagement with partners to mitigate perceptions of mandate creep. The assumption that donor behaviour towards more flexible funding will follow from the increased transparency now emerging on the link between budgets and results has yet to be fully tested and is not within WFP's direct remit. Achieving this will require even more robust reporting and further dialogue with donors on the advantages of greater flexibility in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. It will also require WFP to better communicate the costs of earmarked funding.

About this assessment

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is a network of 18 countries[4] who share a common interest in assessing the effectiveness of the major multilateral organisations they fund, including UN agencies, international financial institutions and global funds. The Network generates, collects, analyses and presents relevant and credible information on the organisational and development effectiveness of the organisations it assesses. This knowledge base is intended to contribute to organisational learning within and among the organisations, their direct clients and partners, and other stakeholders. Network members use the reports for their own accountability needs and as a source of input for strategic decision-making.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is one of the 14 organisations assessed by MOPAN in 2017-18. This was the second MOPAN assessment of WFP; the first assessment was conducted in 2013. Denmark and the United States championed the assessment of WFP on behalf of the Network.

MOPAN's evidence lines for WFP

- Review of 195 documents
- 70+ staff interviews / focus groups
- 84 partners surveyed in 11 countries

This brief accompanies the full assessment published in early 2019, which can be found on MOPAN's website at **www.mopanonline.org**. WFP's management response will be made available on that website as well.

The assessment of performance covers WFP's headquarters and regional and country field presence. It addresses organisational systems, practices and behaviours, as well as results achieved during the period 2016 to mid-2018. It relies on three lines of evidence: a document review, interviews with staff and small groups, and an online partner survey.[5]

The MOPAN 3.0 methodology entails a framework of 12 key performance indicators and associated micro-indicators. It comprises standards that characterise an effective multilateral organisation. More detail is provided in MOPAN's methodology manual.[6]

Organisations assessed by MOPAN in 2017-18:

- ADB
- FAO
- GEF
- GPE
- IFAD
- IOM
- OHCHR
- UN Women
- UNESCO
- UNFPA
- UNHCR
- UNRWA
- WFP
- WHO

4: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States – and two observers, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates.

5: The online survey was conducted among partners of WFP in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Turkey.

6: Available at www.mopanonline.org