Synthesis of evidence and lessons from WFP’s policy evaluations (2011-2019)

WFP Office of Evaluation
**CONTEXT**

33 policies in force - included in the Compendium updated and presented annually to the EB

**SCOPE**

- School Feeding
- Gender Policy
- Cash and Voucher
- Nutrition Policy
- Capacity Development
- Corporate Partnership Strategy
- Humanitarian Protection
- Humanitarian Principles and Access in Humanitarian Contexts
- Update of WFP’s Safety Nets Policy
FINDINGS: Policy formulation and implementation

UNCLEAR AND INCONSISTENTLY APPLIED RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- Diverse policy initiation triggers
- Diverse designations (terminology)
- No clear policy typology
- Variable use of classifications of documents for EB submission
- Inconsistent policy scrutiny

POLICY COHERENCE

- Largely strong external alignment
- Strong coherence with WFP Strategic Plans
- Gaps in internal policy consistency
- Unclear prioritization
FINDINGS: Policy-making and policy implementation

**Supporting factors**
- Consultation during Policy development
- Investing in **high quality guidance**

**Constraining factors**
- **Design** including:
  - Uneven **quality & use of evidence**
  - Unclear **goals/vision & internal logic**
  - Unclear & inconsistent **terminology**
  - Insufficient attention to **gender**
  - **WFP-centric** focus

- **Implementation**:
  - Limited **dissemination**
  - Inadequate **human & financial resources**
  - Gaps in **corporate leadership and ownership**
  - Weak **accountability mechanisms**
FINDINGS: Evaluation policies and management response

- MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT
- EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS
- INFORMATION VALIDITY CONCERNS
- JUSTIFICATION OF ‘IMPLEMENTED’ STATUS
**FINDINGS: WFP application of learning generated through policy evaluations**

**PROGRESS**
High agreement rate for evaluation recommendations and commitment to follow-up in some areas

*Examples*
- Staff training/capacity strengthening
- Financial resources allocated for specific follow-up actions to recommendations
- Corporate indicators adapted

**PERSISTING CHALLENGES**
Slow progress in areas where evaluations recommend more systemic or longer-term changes

*Examples*
- Comprehensive knowledge management systems
- Sustained availability of staff and predictable financial resources
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities for policy implementation
CONCLUSIONS

1. Nomenclature matters
2. Alignment with absorptive capacity is key
3. Policies need common standards and expectations
4. Effective policy making requires leadership, resourcing, implementation guidance and accountability frameworks

KEY LESSONS

Lack of policy coherence, coordination and prioritization

Persisting constraints in policy implementation

Evaluation recommendations taken seriously and acted upon: not always consistently

Information on implementation lacks reliability
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Update the 2011 Policy Formulation document
- Clarify policy governance and accountability procedures
- Define the policy universe through an updated WFP Policy Framework
- Adopt a policy building approach
- Overhaul the current Policy Compendium
- Review the processes for development of management responses and follow-up