[Evaluation Title] [Period covered]

Decentralized evaluation

*Fighting Hunger Worldwide*

Inception report

WFP [Commissioning team/office]

Report number

Month Year

Maintaining stable formatting in Microsoft Word can be challenging, especially in long or complex documents. However, here are some best practices to help ensure formatting stability:

**Use MS Word Styles function**: Styles are a collection of formatting settings that can be applied to text or paragraphs. They help maintain consistency and efficiency in formatting documents by allowing you to apply predefined sets of formatting attributes quickly and easily. Utilize Word's built-in styles for consistent formatting throughout the document. Apply styles such as Numbered Paragaph, Heading 1, Heading 2, Normal, etc., instead of manually formatting text. This helps maintain consistency and makes it easier to update formatting globally if needed. Switch back to Normal or to Bullet list style, if you want to insert paragraphs that are not numbered or bullet lists. Remember you can also create new styles as needed.

**Avoid direct formatting**: Minimize the use of direct formatting for individual instances (e.g., bolding, italicizing, changing font size manually from the ‘Paragraph’ options) as much as possible. Instead, rely on styles to apply formatting consistently. When users apply formatting changes directly to text instead of using styles, it can lead to inconsistency and instability. Direct formatting overrides the underlying style settings and can cause unexpected changes or conflicts when editing the document. Remember that WFP style guide recommends ‘not using italic or bold fonts in text to denote emphasis, which should be reflected in the phrasing.’

**Update styles**: If you need to modify the formatting of a particular style, update the style definition rather than manually changing individual instances. This ensures that all text formatted with that style is updated automatically.

**Clean formatting before pasting from external sources**: When copying text from external sources (e.g., websites, PDFs), paste it into Notepad or another plain text editor first to remove any hidden formatting. Then, paste it into Word and apply the appropriate styles. If you paste directly into Word, instead of using the standard paste (CTRL+V), use the ‘Paste special’ option. Right-click and select the Paste option: ‘Keep text only’ and re-apply the style as needed.

**Avoid floating boxes:** Minimize the use of boxes. Instead of creating small floating boxes for sidebars or side content, opt for full-page sized boxes. Select the following option for the layout: ‘In line with text’. This layout ensures that the box remains integrated with the flow of the document. Instead of relying on text boxes, you can also use one-column tables to achieve a similar effect. One-column tables can serve as containers while maintaining a stable position.

**Use ‘Insert captions’ to number figures, tables and boxes**. The "Insert Captions" function in MS Word allows you to easily add captions to figures, tables, equations, and other objects within your document while ensuring their numbering stays updated.

**Check compatibility**: Be mindful of compatibility issues when sharing documents with others who may be using different versions of Word or other word processing software. Save the document in a compatible format (e.g., .docx) and consider using the "Compatibility Mode" if necessary.

***This template applies to all types of decentralized evaluations.***

**Who is this template for?** This template should be used by evaluation teams contracted to conduct a decentralized evaluation. It is also a useful reference for WFP evaluation managers responsible for assessing the quality of the draft inception report.

**What is the purpose of this template?** This template provides a suggested structure and guidance on content for the inception report. In doing so it sets out WFP expectations for the inception report.

**How should this template be used?** This template is used alongside the [Quality Checklist for Inception Reports](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000003169/download/)to help ensure that all quality standards are adequately met.

**How is this template structured?** Within this template:

* Text presented in **bold** provides guidance for the template user
* Text in standard format is suggested content for the inception report
* Text in [highlighted square brackets] indicates that this part should be completed by the user
* Reference to various elements of the guidance is underlined

**Other key materials?** Additional relevant guidance can be found in:

* The [Process Guide for Decentralized Evaluations](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000002653/download/), which sets out the phases of a decentralized evaluation and how to implement each one
* Relevant technical notes, notably:
* [TN on evaluation principles, norms and standards](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000003179/download/)
* [TN on evaluation approaches, methods and tools](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000123978/download/)
* [TN on stakeholder analysis](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000002694/download/)
* [TN on evaluation criteria and questions](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000002694/download/)
* [TN on gender](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000002691/download/); [gender quality checklist](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000023366/download/) and [quick guide](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000023365/download/)
* [TN on logical frameworks and logic models](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000002683/download/)
* [TN on planning and conducting evaluations during COVID-19](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000115094/download/)
* [TN on joint evaluations](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000002695/download/)

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# Introduction

**[The inception report ensures that the evaluation team (leader and members) has an in-depth understanding of the ToR of the evaluation. It translates the ToR into an operational plan according to which the evaluation will be carried out. The inception report is a working document that forms the agreement between the evaluation manager and the evaluation team on the operational plan for the evaluation.]**

The maximum length for an inception report (excluding Annexes) is 15,000 words.

**[Describe the purpose of the IR, its place within the evaluation process and the activities carried out in preparation of the IR (including persons met and documents reviewed)]**

1. Use the ‘Numbered Paragraph’ style from the MS Word Styles if you want to keep the paragraphs numbered throughout.
2. If you want to insert bullet lists, consider using the MS Word Style ‘Bullet level 1’ or going back to the ‘Normal’ style. Do not create bullet lists or a new numbered list when you are typing with the ‘Numbered paragraph’ style.
* Bullet list
* Bullet list
* Bullet list
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Table 1: Table title

| **Table header** | **Table header** |
| --- | --- |
| Text text text text | Text text text text |
| Text text text text | Text text text text |

## Evaluation features

**[Provide a brief introduction including key characteristics of the decentralized evaluation (title, type, timing, subject, geographic area, commissioner) and evaluation subject (i.e. what is being evaluated in terms of the intervention and what is provided to whom, why and how). Present rationale, objectives, and expected users If any of these elements are not clear from the ToR ask the stakeholders during the inception meetings or through written communication.]**

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## Context

**[Building on section 1.2 of the ToR, provide sufficient information to understand the implications of the context for the subject being evaluated. Ensure information is focused concise and contains relevant information, indicators/trend data for sectors that are relevant to the subject of evaluation (e.g., education/school health for school feeding, agriculture for smallholder farmers etc). Regardless of sector and subject, gender landscape should be briefly described within context.]**

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# Subject of the evaluation

## [Subject evaluated]

**[Building on the ToR, provide additional information and analyses of the key features of the evaluation subject, which should include strategic objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities, budget, modalities of intervention/assistance/engagement, etc. Undertake a comparative analysis of planned versus actual numbers with data disaggregated by year (in case of multi-year programmes with resource transfer) and by activity (if multiple activities). Include a short analysis of what is provided to whom and why. Identify if the subject has a results framework/logic model/theory of change. If none exists, reconstruct based on the information available and identify gaps that will be filled during stakeholder engagement. Any reconstructed framework should be noted as a preliminary draft pending stakeholder discussions and validation. Explain the gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions relevant to the subject evaluated.]**

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## Scope of the evaluation

**[Building on relevant information in the ToR, provide a summary information and analysis of ET’s understanding of the scope/parameters of the evaluation, highlighting any changes or refinements the ET proposes as compared to the scope stated in the ToR. Any proposed changes in scope should be transparently explained and implications spelt out for discussion. Present the key issues to focus on as identified in the inception phase, which should be clearly reflected in the evaluation matrix as operational components or lines of inquiry under the relevant evaluation subquestions. As relevant, explain how any evaluability challenge will affect the scope of the evaluation in relation to specific evaluation criteria, questions or subquestions. Note any past relevant evaluations or not if there are no such evaluations].**

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## Stakeholders analysis

**[Building on the information from the ToR, add depth by providing necessary and relevant information to establish an overview of the key stakeholders and their interest and stake in the evaluation and the actual role they will play in the evaluation. Avoid generalized presentation of stakeholder categories (e.g. NGOs, Government, Donors) instead state the actual stakeholders such as the names of NGOs, Donors and Ministries involved in and relevant to the subject of evaluation. If names of stakeholders in certain categories are not clear, indicate this as a gap to be filled by stakeholders during inception meetings and/or when commenting on draft inception report. Use appropriate analytical tools for this purpose. The details should be provided in annex.]**

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# Evaluation approach, methodology and ethical considerations

## Evaluability assessment

**[Provide an overview of the evaluability assessment, highlighting challenges and opportunities and describing how the assessment has informed the delimitation of the evaluation scope, the evaluation questions, and the choice of methods for data collection and analysis.]**

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## Methodological approach

**[Describe the overall methodological approach, data collection methods, data analysis and present methods[[1]](#footnote-1). Describe how the approach will include the perspective of key stakeholders and minimize threats to validity and ensure reliability and credibility of the evaluation. Describe the evaluation criteria and questions and provide the details in the evaluation matrix in Annex 4. Describe any major limitations deriving from the evaluability assessment, in relation to specific criteria and questions, and solutions to minimize them. Specify the use of a mixed methods approach and the specific tools that will be applied. Specify how independence and impartiality will be safeguarded in the evaluation’s design.]**

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## Data collection methods

**[In keeping with the approach described above, elaborate in detail on qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and tools for primary and secondary sources. Describe comprehensively the sampling strategy and selection, and related limitations/risks. Explain their specific application within the evaluation matrix, particularly in relation to the data sources available. Provide a full explanation of why the methods have been selected and any changes required in light of the evaluability assessment.]**

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## Data analysis

**Describe the methods that will be used to process, clean and analyse quantitative and qualitative data and triangulation to ensure validity and reliability. Include an analytical framework for data analysis and describe the analytical processes both for quantitative and qualitative data in line with the methods described in section 3.3. Define how findings will be derived from the data to answer evaluation questions. Clarify how the team will attend to data validity and reliability issues, and related limitations.]**

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## Ethical considerations

**[Describe mechanisms to ensure confidentiality, data protection, and management of ethical issues that may arise during the evaluation. These issues will be monitored and managed during the implementation of the evaluation. If any additional ethical issues arise during the implementation of the evaluation, they will be recorded and managed in consultation with the evaluation manager and overall steer of the evaluation committee.]**

**Use this wording in the IR:**

1. Evaluations must conform to the [2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866). Accordingly [insert firm name or team leader name if hired individuals] is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities. During the inception phase the following ethical issues, related risks, safeguards and measures have been considered:

Table 2: Ethical considerations, risks and safeguards

Fill/adjust the table as needed

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Phases** | **Ethical issues** | **Risks** | **Safeguards** |
| Inception |  |  |  |
| Data collection |  |  |  |
| Data analysis |  |  |  |
| Reporting |  |  |  |

## Risk and assumptions

**[Identify the risks that are likely to affect implementation of the evaluation methodology as designed in previous sections and how the team will manage and mitigate them. For each risk identified, describe the potential impact/implications for the evaluation process and reporting/product. Summarise the risks in a table with mitigation strategies.]**

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## Quality assurance

**[Describe the quality assurance mechanisms that will be applied during the evaluation process and product to ensure the credibility, independence and utility of the evaluation. Clearly state what internal mechnisms in the firm (or the team if individuals are hired) to assure quality of the process and product and who within the firm will conduct the quality control of draft products before they are submitted to WFP. What will the evaluation team do to assure quality of the process throughout?]**

**Use this wording in the IR:**

1. WFP has developed a Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) and the Development Assistance Commission (DAC)). It includes process a process and contents guide that maps the steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products. It also includes quality control checklists and DE support service (DEQS) that provides feedback on quality for each of the draft evaluation products. This draft IR will be reviewed by this service and feedback and recommendations used to finalise. The evaluation report will follow the same process. DEQAS will be systematically applied by all stakeholders involved with this evaluation. All relevant documents have been provided to the evaluation team.

# Organization of the evaluation

## Roles and responsibilities

**[Briefly describe the expertise of each team member in line with ToR requirements, and how their skills are complementary. Specify respective roles and responsibilities for each team member. Describe coordination mechnisms within the team, within the firm (if contracted through a firm) and with WFP stakeholders through the EM and EC. Describe how (and by whom) the inputs of each team member will be incorporated into draft products. Finally, state what the team will use as escalation process if/when there are concerns that may affect the implementation of the plan.]**

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Table 3: Team composition and workplan

Fill/adjust the table as needed

| **Team members** | **Primary role** | **Specific tasks within the evaluation** | **Deliverables** | **Dates** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## Timeline

**[Present the specific timeline, revised if appropriate from the ToR based on discussions and agreements, and the associated deliverables linked to it. The timeline should be realistic given the scope and methodology (see** [**Evaluation Timeline Template**](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000003160/download/)**). Include in annex a detailed schedule, including activities to be covered by each team member.**

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Table 4: Team composition and workplan

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Steps** | **By whom** | **Key dates** |
| **Inception**  |
| Briefing |  |  |
| Draft inception report |  |  |
| …. |  |  |
| **Data collection**  |
| Fieldwork |  |  |
| Fieldwork debrief |  |  |
| **Reporting** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Dissemination and follow up** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

# Issues to be agreed and information required

**[To be included only if there are pending outstanding issues, indicating for example what support (logistical/operational) and information will still be required from WFP staff and other stakeholders, based on what is available at the time of preparing the IR.]**

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# Annex 1. Summary terms of reference

# Annex 2. Detailed timeline

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# Annex 3. Methodology guidance

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# Annex 4. Evaluation matrix

|  |
| --- |
| **Evaluation Question**  |
| 1.1  |  |  |
| **Subquestions** | **Indicators/measures** | **Data collection methods** | **Sources of data/information (primary or secondary)** | **Data analysis methods/ triangulation** | **Availability/validity** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Annex 5. Data collection tools

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# Annex 6. Evaluation field mission schedule

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# Annex VII. Reconstructed Theory of Change

**[Explain the rationale and steps for using the ToC.]**

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# Annex VIII. Results framework/Line of sight

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# Annex IX: Detailed stakeholder analysis

Refer to [Technical Note on Stakeholder analysis](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000002694/download/)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **What is their role in the intervention?** | **What is their interest in the evaluation?** | **How will they be involved in the evaluation?** | **At which stage will they be involved?** | **How important is to involve them in the evaluation? (High, medium, low)** |
| **WFP internal stakeholders** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **External stakeholders** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Annex X. Updated Internal Reference Group membership

# Annex XI. Communication and knowledge management plan

# Annex XII. List of people interviewed

# Annex XIII. Bibliography

**[Amend as appropriate, deleting documents that are not relevant for the subject of evaluation]**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document type** | **Comment/titles & dates of documents received** | **Received - Y/N (N/A)** | **Link to evaluation matrix** |
| **Project-related documents [if applicable]** |  |  |  |
| Appraisal mission report |  |  |  |
| Country strategic plan document (including line of sight) |  |  |  |
| Annual country reports |  |  |  |
| CSP budget revisions |  |  |  |
| Note for the record (NFR) from programme review committee meeting (for CSP and budget revisions if any) |  |  |  |
| Approved country portfolio budget and budget revisions, if any |  |  |  |
| COMPs |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |
| **Country office strategic documents (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Sectoral country strategies (if any) |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |
| **Assessment reports [if applicable]** |  |  |  |
| Comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment report(s) |  |  |  |
| Crop and food security assessments (FAO/WFP) |  |  |  |
| Emergency food security assessments |  |  |  |
| Food security monitoring system bulletins |  |  |  |
| Market assessments and bulletins |  |  |  |
| Joint assessment missions (UNHCR/WFP) |  |  |  |
| Inter-agency assessments |  |  |  |
| Rapid- needs assessments |  |  |  |
| Cash and voucher feasibility studies |  |  |  |
| Logistics capacity assessment |  |  |  |
| Integrated phase classification (IPC) reports |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |
| **Monitoring & reporting (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Country office M&E plan |  |  |  |
| Country/internal situation report (all if monthly, samples if weekly) |  |  |  |
| Field visits, oversight mission reports by RB and other units |  |  |  |
| Country briefs |  |  |  |
| Food distribution and post-distribution monitoring reports |  |  |  |
| Monthly monitoring reports |  |  |  |
| Beneficiary verification reports |  |  |  |
| Donor-specific reports |  |  |  |
| Dashboards |  |  |  |
| Asset monitoring from space - AIMS report |  |  |  |
| Any other monitoring reports |  |  |  |
| **Output and outcome monitoring reports/data** **(if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Actual and planned beneficiaries by sex, activity, district/ location and by year |  |  |  |
| Actual and planned beneficiaries by age group |  |  |  |
| Actual and planned tonnage distributed by activity by year |  |  |  |
| Commodity type by activity |  |  |  |
| Actual and planned cash/voucher requirements (USD) by activity by year |  |  |  |
| Outcome monitoring reports/data |  |  |  |
| Other output monitoring related documents/data |  |  |  |
| **Country office human resources** |  |  |  |
| Workforce planning exercise (if applicable) |  |  |  |
| Organizational realignment documents (if applicable) |  |  |  |
| CO staffing (list of employees by contract type working in CO during the evaluation scope) |  |  |  |
| Organigram for main office and sub-offices |  |  |  |
| **Operational documents (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Activity guidelines |  |  |  |
| Pipeline overview for the period covered by the evaluation |  |  |  |
| **Partners (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Annual reports from cooperating partners |  |  |  |
| List of partners (government, NGOs, UN agencies) by location/ activity/ role/ tonnage handled |  |  |  |
| Field-level agreements (FLAs), memoranda of understanding (MoUs) |  |  |  |
| Partnership assessment/evaluation/review reports (if applicable) |  |  |  |
| Other partnership-related documents (if any) |  |  |  |
| **Cluster/coordination meetings (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Logistics/food security/nutrition cluster documents  |  |  |  |
| NFRs of coordination meetings |  |  |  |
| Other |  |  |  |
| **Evaluations/reviews/audits /operational research** |  |  |  |
| Evaluations/ reviews of past or on-going activities/interventions |  |  |  |
| Audit reports of past or on-going activities/interventions |  |  |  |
| Other performance assessment/review-related documents |  |  |  |
| **Resource mobilization (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Resource situation |  |  |  |
| Contribution statistics by month |  |  |  |
| Resource mobilization strategy |  |  |  |
| NFRs donor meetings |  |  |  |
| Donor proposals (if applicable) |  |  |  |
| **Maps (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Updated operational map |  |  |  |
| [HungerMapLIVE](https://mobile.wfp.org/%2BCSCO%2B1h75676763663A2F2F61726A74622E6A73632E626574%2B%2B/services/hungermaplive) |  |  |  |
| Food/cash/voucher distribution location map |  |  |  |
| Food security map |  |  |  |
| CO presence maps |  |  |  |
| Resourcing and donor relations |  |  |  |
| Resource situations by donors |  |  |  |
| CPB plan vs actuals report |  |  |  |
| Earmarking funding overview |  |  |  |
| Funding overview  |  |  |  |
| Implementation budget plan  |  |  |  |
| Contribution statistics by month and year |  |  |  |
| **Other documents collected by the team (including external ones) (if applicable)** |  |  |  |
| Specify |  |  |  |
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# Annex XIII. Acronyms and abbreviations and abbreviations

| **Abbreviation** | Definition  |
| --- | --- |
| **AAA** | Acronyms Acronyms Acronyms  |
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1. We have seen cases of IRs mixing the methods for collecting data with those for analysing the data (or the latter not mentioned at all). Distinction is to be made in order to understand the design of the evaluation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)