



World Food Programme

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WFP EVALUATION

Technical Note

Engagement in Joint, Country-Led and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Evaluations

1. Introduction

1. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, Joint Evaluations (JEs), particularly at decentralized level, are increasingly relevant for collective accountability and learning, and for strengthening partnership for results and national leadership/ownership. WFP engagement with JEs has been expanding since 2016. When commissioned and co-managed with national institutions, JEs are a key instrument for National Evaluation Capacities Development (NECD).¹ This Technical Note (TN) was developed in 2018 and revised in 2020 and 2024 to guide WFP engagement with JEs.
2. The revision and expansion of the note have been prompted by the need to integrate lessons and good practices from WFP and its partners, as well as by two UN system-wide developments since 2020. First, while countries have been commissioning Country-Led Evaluations (CLEs) with support from WFP and other partners where appropriate ([see this 2022 brief](#)), the 2023 [UN resolution on Country-Led Evaluations](#) has created further momentum. WFP and its partners are engaged in discussions on how best to support implementation of the resolution. Secondly, with the introduction of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, here after referred to as CF), every UNSDCF must be evaluated. To this end, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) developed [UNSDCF evaluation guidance](#).² CLEs and UNSDCF evaluations share similarities with JEs as they involve collaboration among partners to generate evidence. Therefore, this revised note outlines key principles for WFP's involvement in these evaluations and highlights the differences with JEs.
3. The purpose of this TN is twofold: first, to differentiate between JEs, CLEs and UNSDCF evaluations across several key elements and outline the principles of WFP's engagement; second, to clarify the specific considerations when planning, commissioning, and managing a JE in collaboration with partners. The Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) Process Guide remains the main reference for guidance on the overall process of planning, commissioning, and managing Decentralized Evaluations (DEs).
4. The UNEG's Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations remains a useful tool for planning, preparing for, and managing a Joint Evaluation in the UN system.³
5. To promote continuous learning and improvement in commissioning and managing JEs, WFP Evaluation Managers (EMs), Regional Evaluation Units (REUs) and OEV are encouraged to regularly document and share good practices through webinars, newsletters, and other appropriate forums. Figure 1 below shows an overview of lessons from joint evaluations between 2018 and 2023, disseminated in a lesson learning webinar led by REUs in September 2024.

¹ [WFP NECD Action Plan 2022-2026_Final June 2023](#)

² All information on UNSDCF status by country including evaluations can be found here <https://uninfo.org/>

³ UNEG's Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations, 2013, <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2111>

Figure 1. Overview of lessons from WFP joint evaluations (2018-2024).



6. WFP has produced short videos that illustrate the added value of JEs and experiences in commissioning and managing them in [Lesotho](#), [Tunisia and Namibia](#), [Dominican Republic](#) and [Benin](#). Joint evaluations can be undertaken with different types of partners (UN, NGO, government, donor, think tank, etc.). Table 1 shows some examples of JEs with different partners as well as some examples of country-led and donor-led evaluations.

Table 1: Examples of JEs, CLEs and UNDSFC evaluations

Type of Evaluation	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint evaluation with Government Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Évaluation décentralisée conjointe finale du Programme National d’Alimentation Scolaire Intégré (PNASI) au Bénin, 2017-2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint evaluation with UN agencies (CO level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the Breaking Barriers for Girls’ Education Programme in Niger 2019–2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint evaluation with UN agencies and Government (global) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Rural Women Economic Empowerment Programme: Joint Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint evaluation with inter-governmental and donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Evaluation of the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) programme, 2017- 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donor-led joint evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of the Belgian Fund for food security, the integration for food security and the multi-actor approach within the Belgian cooperation. Mozambique Country Report, 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country-led evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya’s Inua Jamii 70 years and above cash transfer programme, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDSFC evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sri Lanka UNDSFC (2018-2022) Evaluation

2. Differences between Joint Evaluations, Country-Led Evaluations and UNSDCF Evaluations

7. The principles that guide WFP engagement in JEs, CLEs and UNSDCF evaluations and the key elements that distinguish these evaluations are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Principles of engagement in JEs, CLEs, and UNSDCF evaluations

Element	Joint Evaluation (JE)	Country-Led Evaluation (CLE)	UNSDCF Evaluation
Principles of WFP engagement at different organisational levels (CO, RB, HQ) and from programme and evaluation perspectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WFP is involved in direct decision making on all aspects of the evaluation including approval of final evaluation products. 2. WFP has visibility on the quality assurance processes and considers them credible (even if they differ from WFP processes on some aspects) 3. Except for donor demanded JEs, advantages of a JE outweigh the disadvantages in the specific context. 4. If WFP systems are to be used, any elements that are to be adjusted/ contextualised to accommodate any unique aspects and their implications are discussed beforehand. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a request from a national institution either to WFP directly or to the UNCT or another agency. 2. There is a mechanism for governing the evaluation (steering committee, advisory group, etc.) through which WFP can engage. 3. WFP is not held accountable for the quality of the processes and products neither will it be approving the products as an agency. This is the case even if WFP shares DEQAS tools and guidance and the national entities decide to adapt and use them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WFP is actively engaged with the implementation of UNSDCF from programme perspective as member of UNCT, programme/ M&E Working groups, etc. 2. There is a commitment from UNCT to commission a credible evaluation as per UNSDCF evaluation guidelines.⁴ 3. The process by which WFP and other stakeholders' inputs will be taken, addressed and feedback provided is clear and transparent (as per UNEG norms and standards and common evaluation practice)
1-Definition	A joint evaluative effort by more than one entity. It evaluates a topic of mutual interest or a programme or set of activities which are co-financed and/or jointly implemented. The degree of 'jointness' varies from cooperation in the evaluation process, pooling of resources, to combined reporting and follow up.	A CLE is an <i>evaluation that has country leadership in commissioning, managing and use, is country-owned, inclusive and respond to the development needs and priorities of the countries.</i> It may be cover. CLEs are defined by six principles: Country leadership, Country ownership, Inclusivity, Cost Sharing; Alignment with national priorities and planning process; and Contribution to strengthening national evaluation capacities. ⁵	A mandatory independent system-wide country level evaluation which systematically assesses the contributions of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF). It focuses on achieved development results, as well as gaps and overlaps in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2-Who commissions	All or some of the agencies with an interest in the subject of evaluation. It may agencies implementing a joint programme	National (government) entity such as Ministry, department, commission, etc.	Resident coordinator (RC) and UN country teams (UNCTs) hold overall responsibility with oversight by the UN Development Coordination Office
3-Who meets the costs of the evaluation	Costs are shared between agencies or from a common fund in case of joint programme funding. (For example, social protection for sustainable development-SP4SDG funded projects). The budget is held by the programme administration lead agency	Funded through national budget or co-funded by development partners. The principle of Cost sharing means that contributing financially or in-kind by the government gives it power to lead and increases decision-making confidence.	DCO currently provides core funds for CF evaluations (about USD 50,000 per country). RC should advocate and mobilize additional contributions from UNCT members who may include support to CFEs in their budgets.

⁴ <https://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2972>

⁵ These were developed by the UNEG NECD working group in 2024. The Link will be provided when the paper is published

Element	Joint Evaluation (JE)	Country-Led Evaluation (CLE)	UNSDCF Evaluation
4-What is evaluated	Joint interventions involving multiple partners; or interventions that are not (wholly) joint but have a strong convergence in terms of objectives, sector, themes, target populations, or implementation modalities.	National policies, strategies, programmes and projects, or sustainable development goals or national development plans or other frameworks within a country. UN and partners play a supporting and/or advisory role which differ depending on national capacities and systems.	All UN development system programmes implemented in the country as per the CF document, synthesizing and building on the programme and project evaluations conducted by agencies as/where appropriate.
5-Who manages	Either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single evaluation manager from one of the commissioning partners • A management group with partial representation of the commissioners • A management group with full representation of all commissioners. 	Official of the national institutions that is commissioning the evaluation, or another mechanism as may be guided by the respective national evaluation frameworks (e.g., planning commissions, M&E directorates, etc).	RC and UNCT designate an evaluation manager, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a representative of UN agency chairing M&E or programme working group; or • any other agency with a substantive M&E officer.
6-Who governs/ steers evaluation, makes decisions and approves products	Steering committee made up of directors or deputy directors of commissioning entities (or their designate). It is co-chaired by two or more members of the committee.	National entity with M&E mandate (such as the Ministry of Development Planning; Planning commission; M&E directorate, etc.) or line ministry responsible for the policy, strategy, or programme being evaluated.	Oversight and technical support provided by the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO). DCO approves all evaluation products.
7-Who prepares Management Responses (MR) and follow up to recommendations	Agencies may have different requirements for MRs. In principle, a joint MR or action plan is prepared by commissioning agencies. Implementation of agreed actions is followed up as part of ongoing coordination between partners.	As per appropriate national provisions. In some countries, the national evaluation framework provides the guidance on roles and responsibilities. Where these do not exist, UN agencies may take the opportunity to support their establishment as part of NECD	All CF evaluations require a management response. Once the evaluation report is approved and signed off by DCO, the RC/RCO and Evaluation Steering Committee coordinate preparation of the formal MR. [see Annex 1 of CF evaluation Guidelines]
8-Other considerations including planning, guidance, tools etc	Different agencies may have different perspectives, especially with regards to understanding of independence principle (e.g. whether agency staff can be part of evaluation teams), phases of an evaluation (e.g. very brief inception phases), how evidence is used, or the programming of the subject being evaluated. JEs, on average, require more time due to the need to negotiate and get agreements and consensus on such matters throughout the process.	National M&E mandated institutions may have national evaluation plans. It is important to be aware of such plans. Where such plans may not exist, as part of strengthening national evaluation capacities, WFP and partners may support countries in developing costed national evaluation plans to facilitate CLE support. Partners may offer to share their evaluation guidance/ tools in full or in part for use by national actors. It is up to the actors to decide whether/what to use and how.	CF evaluations are planned on a quadrennial basis and are initiated in the penultimate year of CF prior to start of next CF design phase, which begins with common country analysis. WFP and other agencies should include 'engagement with and support to CF evaluations in their M&E plans during the year'

3. What is a 'Joint' Evaluation?

8. The UNEG defines a joint evaluation as follows:

Box 1: Definition of a Joint Evaluation

*A **Joint Evaluation** is a joint evaluative effort by more than one entity of a topic of mutual interest or of a programme or set of activities which are co-financed and implemented, with the degree of 'jointness' varying from cooperation in the evaluation process, pooling of resources, to combined reporting.⁶*

9. In line with the above definition, a JE can assess either:
- joint interventions co-financed or implemented by multiple partners; or
 - interventions that were not (or only partially) jointly implemented, but that had a strong convergence in terms of objectives, sectors/themes or implementation modalities.
10. A JE implies joint decision-making concerning the evaluation's planning, design, management, and conduct. This includes the definition of its scope, approach and methodology, the selection of the team, as well as the approval of the key deliverables including Terms of Reference (TOR), Inception Report (IR) and Evaluation Report (ER). For WFP, an evaluation is considered a joint evaluation if WFP and at least one partner have joint/shared decision-making authority in the evaluation process even if a lead agency may take more responsibility in some asks of the evaluation process.⁷ There are three types of evaluations that may involve WFP and other stakeholders but are not JEs and fall outside the scope of this note:
- If WFP is a member of the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), which serves only an advisory role in an evaluation commissioned by other entities, and if that evaluation is commissioned by national government institutions, it is a Country-Led Evaluation.
 - If the evaluation is commissioned by a donor – even if evaluating WFP activities – and WFP is not involved in direct decision-making, this is a donor/partner-led evaluation. WFP engagement is guided by TN on Engagement with [Donors on Evaluation](#).
 - If WFP is evaluating its contributions to the results of an intervention that may involve joint efforts or other contributing partners, including the government, but where only WFP has decision-making authority, this is considered a WFP specific DE and not a JE. While it may involve collaboration with stakeholders, it should not be labelled a JE.
11. Joint evaluations can assess process elements (e.g. efficiency and effectiveness of coordination mechanisms) and results (i.e., achievement of joint results/collective outcomes). They are typically conducted to (i) understand how interventions carried out jointly with other agencies/government/development actors are performing, (ii) assess the value of joint programming, and (iii) deepen a shared understanding of what is working well and what needs to be replicated, adjusted, or discontinued.

⁶ Joint evaluations are different from country-led evaluations commissioned by the government and supported by WFP and other stakeholders. Guidance on WFP engagement on country-led engagements are under development.

⁷ For example, if WFP is part of the Steering Committee responsible for approving the key deliverables of an evaluation that is managed by another agency. This also applies to inter-agency humanitarian Evaluations (IAHE) in which WFP is in the evaluation management group and therefore has decision-making roles.

4. When to opt for a Joint Evaluation?

12. Joint evaluations are useful in humanitarian settings where the emergency or recovery response involves several humanitarian agencies working side-by-side toward a common goal.⁸ Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHEs), for example, are independent assessments of results of the collective humanitarian response by member organizations of the Inter-Agency Steering Committee.⁹
13. Joint evaluations are also worthwhile in development settings where multiple actors design joint programmes to collectively support national development priorities. In this regard, they are important instruments for moving towards country-led evaluations, and for strengthening partners' evaluation capacities.
14. The overall assessment of whether beneficiary needs are met, and the identification of potential gaps become clearer when the contributions of multiple actors are examined in a holistic manner. Joint evaluations can reveal how factors such as geographic coverage, sector-specific interventions, and stakeholder involvement all fit together.
15. The decision to conduct a joint evaluation should be taken on a case-by-case basis, considering its potential value added, benefits, costs and risks involved. Decision-making by WFP CO, RB or HQ divisions on the best approach to follow in any specific context and circumstances should be informed by what push factors exist that call for a joint evaluation (see Box 2).

Box 2: Situations where a Joint Evaluation should be considered¹⁰

1. The intervention is a co-financed or joint programme, i.e., jointly designed and implemented with a broad focus (e.g., a joint food security, school meals, social protection or nutrition programme with different agencies leading these individual components).
 2. The results of the evaluation are envisaged to feed into a potential joint programme.
 3. There are systemic questions and concerns about the UN's broad contribution to national development goals or a systemic issue is being addressed (e.g., an assessment of collective UN results through UNSDCFs, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs)¹¹, common humanitarian response plans etc.).
 4. There is a need to address broad policy issues or concerns (e.g., gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE), accountability to affected populations etc.).
 5. Stakeholders aspire to design programmes based on more comprehensive evidence than an evaluation of individual actor programme could offer (i.e., mutual learning).
 6. The issues being addressed are too sensitive or potentially controversial for one agency/partner alone to tackle.
 7. Evaluation burden on national actors can be reduced evaluating jointly instead of several single evaluations.
 8. Individual agencies' budgets are too small for commissioning individual evaluations but pooled together they are sufficient for a joint evaluation (i.e., efficiency).
 9. There is an opportunity for enhancing national ownership and buy-in, as well as national policies, governance arrangements, procedures, and tools through a joint evaluation. In turn, joint evaluations can provide WFP with the opportunity to gain in-depth insight into the functioning of public institutions.
 10. One or more donors requested the evaluation to be a joint evaluation.
16. Since WFP works with a broad range of partners at country level (UN agencies, national government actors, NGOs and civil society), many of these rationales will apply to varying degrees in different country and regional contexts.
 17. If one or more of the 'push factors' described in Box 2 are present, WFP and partners should carefully assess whether minimum requirements are in place before deciding to commission a joint evaluation.

⁸ [ALNAP \(2013\): What we know about Joint Evaluation](#),

⁹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-humanitarian-evaluations>.

¹⁰ Adapted from UNEG 2013 Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations, <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1620>

¹¹ <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3159.pdf>

Minimum requirements for WFP to undertake a Joint Evaluation

18. There are three minimum requirements for WFP to commit to a JE.

- WFP and partners should have a common understanding of the concept of 'evaluation' (i.e. *systematic and impartial assessment of the performance of an intervention, framed by internationally agreed evaluation standards and undertaken with a clear intended use*). (see table 2)
- WFP and partners should have a common understanding of the evaluation principles of independence, impartiality, as well as credibility (includes which stakeholders to be involved) and should be committed to safeguarding those principles (see table 2)
- There should be convergence on the subject, purpose, scope of the and evaluation management processes as these elements drive the timing and resource (human and financial) requirements (see table 3)

Table 2: Checklist for assessing minimum requirements on common understanding of what an 'Evaluation' entails, and convergence on subject, purpose, scope and management processes

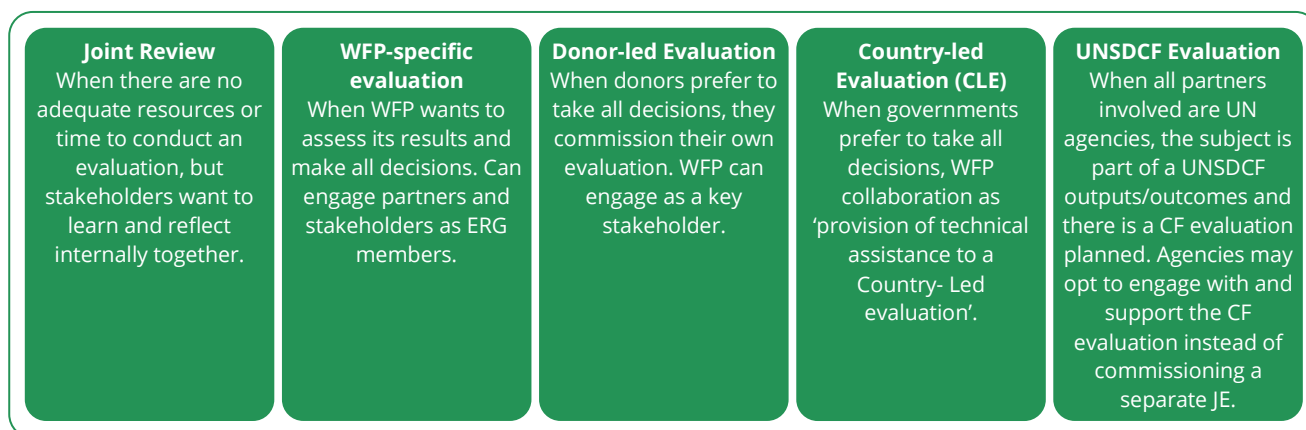
#	Minimum Requirement	Yes	Partly	No
A1	Is it a joint programme? If not, is there sufficient common ground to allow for a cohesive scope of the evaluation (in terms of sectoral and geographic scope, targeted beneficiaries)?			
A2	Have all partners agreed to use external independent evaluators and that no staff of any of the partners will be part of the team?			
A3	Have partners agreed to share their data/information while adhering to appropriate data protection protocols?			
A4	Have all partners agreed to not exercise undue influence on the evaluation process?			
A5	Have all partners agreed to follow a rigorous quality assurance process to deliver a quality and credible evaluation? Has the decision been made which partner's system will be used?			
A6	Are WFP and partners' management fully committed to making all key decisions about the evaluation jointly?			
A7	Is the power and capacities imbalances (if any) among partners manageable through the governance structure?			
A8	Is there convergence on the subject, purpose(s) of the evaluation (e.g., learning at organizational or national levels, collective accountability to national counterparts and/or donors) and scope?			
A9	If the activity has been recently evaluated by individual agencies, is there a reason for having it evaluated again or would a synthesis of evidence from those evaluations serve the purpose?			
A10	Is it clear which decisions the evaluation will inform and what are the time implications?			
A11	Is there clear understanding how the different levels of the partner organizations will be involved (country, regional, HQ) and who at each level will be involved, e.g. in the EC, ERG?			

Table 3: Checklist to assess minimum requirements for resources (human and financial) and time

#	Minimum Requirement	Yes	Partly	No
B1	Is the JE timed to best inform partners' future decisions on intervention implementation/ design/ expansion and/or when there are maximum opportunities for learning?			
B2	Does the timeline allow for a quality and credible evaluation within the country context, the scope of the evaluation and the administrative and QA systems to be used? For example, less than one year would not be realistic IF JE uses WFP procurement and QA system.			
B3	Are adequate financial resources available for the conduct of the joint evaluation?			
B4	Are adequate human resources available (staff with capacities and time) for the management of the evaluation? Are the arrangements for management clear as per Figure 1?			
B5	Is there clarity on who will fund the evaluation, the sources of budgets and how the evaluation budget will be managed?			
B6	Has a contingency been budgeted for in case of delays or other unforeseen developments?			

19. When the minimum requirements are met and/or satisfactory rationale provided for those that may not yet be met¹², partners should opt for a JE. If some of the requirements are not met (some **answers are Partly or NO**) and there is no clear rationale, the country office should reach out to the REU and if necessary OEV through the Helpdesk to discuss the way forward. Depending on the context and if there are no workarounds on some of the minimum issues, WFP and partners may consider other options to generate evidence (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Alternative Evidence Generation Exercises when minimum requirements for JE are not met.



20. A joint review¹³ would follow appropriate programme review protocols of the involved partners. Donor-led evaluations follow donor processes, and WFP engages as and when requested.
21. It is important for all WFP staff to understand the differences between JE, CLEs and UNSDCF evaluations and the underlying principles that guide WFP engagement from programmatic and evaluation perspectives. While UNSDCF evaluations are joint in the sense of commissioning by UN Country Team (UNCT), they are distinct because they are system-wide and follow specific guidance. On the other hand, some UN agencies may consider evaluation of their country programmes as country-led because of engagement of country-level partners. **Annex 1** provides a summary of the differences including definitions, principles of WFP engagement and governance, management arrangements.
22. The collaborative nature of JEs requires higher level of effort and time. COs and RBs experiences have shown that JEs take more efforts in communication and collaboration than is typical for WFP DEs. As this increases the overall management burden and thus agency staff time, it is critical to have management buy-in/commitment among the co-commissioners at the onset to minimize challenges including delays in decision making for hiring the evaluation teams, approval of evaluation products and finalization of the management response.
23. Within WFP, the engagement of the Country Director/Deputy Country Director remains critical when commissioning and steering JEs. It is recommended that for other partners, persons with decision-making authority are appointed to the Evaluation Committee to make decision making processes smooth.
24. The UNEG Resource Pack summarizes the advantages and potential challenges of joint evaluations for the UN system (see Table 4 below adapted to WFP context with some examples and issues identified in the last few years of commissioning JEs). These also apply in scenarios where donors or other partners are co-commissioners. Most of the challenges can be addressed/mitigated through a shared understanding of the purpose and process of the evaluation.

¹² For example, B1 may be met for some partners at the time of commissioning but not others.

¹³ See [technical note on decentralized evaluation vs review](#) for more information on support options.

Table 4: Advantages and potential challenges of joint evaluations and potential mitigation measures¹⁴

Advantages	Potential challenges and some potential mitigation measures
1-Increases impartiality and legitimacy due to joint decision making including joint review and approval of evaluation products	<p>Independency/impartiality of joint evaluations (with government) may come under threat in situations of political sensitivities. In addition, different agency models/evaluation practices may affect perceived and actual impartiality¹⁵.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Staff appointed to manage evaluations should have the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to navigate sensitive situations. In some cases, it may be more effective to hire an impartial consultant to manage the evaluation rather than relying on agency staff. Regular updates and meetings at key stages of the evaluation process can facilitate discussions and foster consensus.</i>
2-Helps foster a collective sense of accountability, especially for collective outcomes and/or commitments	<p>Lack of clarity on responsibilities for the follow-up actions can weaken evaluation accountability, learning and utility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Regular engagement meetings at key stages to create opportunities for discussions and identify common learnings. A designed lead should be identified for each action in response to the recommendations.</i>
3-Broader scope and more holistic assessment	<p>The number of evaluation questions can become too high to be realistically addressed in any meaningful depth if partners' expectations are not well managed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Prioritise common learning and accountability needs; limit questions aimed at individual partners unless they can provide additional resources to meet specific needs.</i>
4-Enhances mutual understanding and joint learning; strengthens partnership among commissioning agencies	<p>Power and engagement differences among partners, particularly when one agency is a significant funder of an activity, has significant capacities (seniority/skills of staff involved) and taking the main lead role. The lead agency may have more visibility in terms of the scope and subject of the evaluation and reporting of results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Joint activities led by all partners should be reflected in the TORs. Use the evaluation committee for all decisions and approvals of TOR, IR, ER.</i>
5-Builds coordination and collaboration towards future intervention design and implementation	<p>Heavier coordination burden, potentially longer time frames; this might affect timeliness of the report, reducing utility of the findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Incorporate, where appropriate, updates on evaluation into regular forums such as programme coordination meetings, UNCT meetings etc. Use e-consultation where possible.</i>
6-Promotes cost-sharing, thereby reducing financial costs and administrative demands on each commissioner	<p>Wider and more complex scope combined with extensive consultation processes can increase overall costs of the evaluation though this is mitigated by cost-sharing which leads to less than individual DEs would cost each partner.</p>
7-Useful for developing consistent policy messages within the sector/country	<p>Potential differences in policy priorities may be hard to reconcile within the evaluation process, which can make decision-making on what are the key messages challenging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Where appropriate, be guided by UNSDCF outcomes and/or humanitarian Response plan commitments and priorities.</i>
8-Greater credibility and broader ownership of findings and recommendations	<p>Findings may not address all individual agency/partner accountability and learning requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Manage expectations of what a JE can address and be clear on scope in the TOR.</i>
9-Helps limit the overall number of evaluations undertaken, thereby reducing burden/ transaction costs especially on external stakeholders such as government partners	<p>Coordination/engagement arrangements may be more complex because of factors such as different structure of evaluation functions and governance arrangement levels (e.g., some agency with senior evaluation staff reporting to CDs while in others junior).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>discuss openly how to find balance/workable engagement arrangements.</i>
10-May yield higher quality evaluations especially if co-management and quality assurance benefits from a group of evaluation professionals and if there is an overall agreed quality assurance framework	<p>Multi-sector data may be more complicated (and thus expensive) to collect and analyse. Lack of agreement on the quality standards and quality assurance framework to be applied could complicate evaluation management and QA processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>Be realistic about the scope of the JE and match the expectations with the resources (time and money) available.</i>
11-Contributes to strengthening national evaluation capacities if conducted in partnership with a government partner and they have substantive role in the process	<p>Considerations of engagement need to be balanced with those aimed at minimizing overburdening of national partners. Objectives of NECD may sometimes not always align with those of an independent evaluation especially in sensitive situations where findings may be 'hard/tough' to accept from both sides – WFP staff and partners at different levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: <i>to the extent possible, the person (s) involved from national partners should be identified based on appreciation/understanding of evaluation practice.</i>

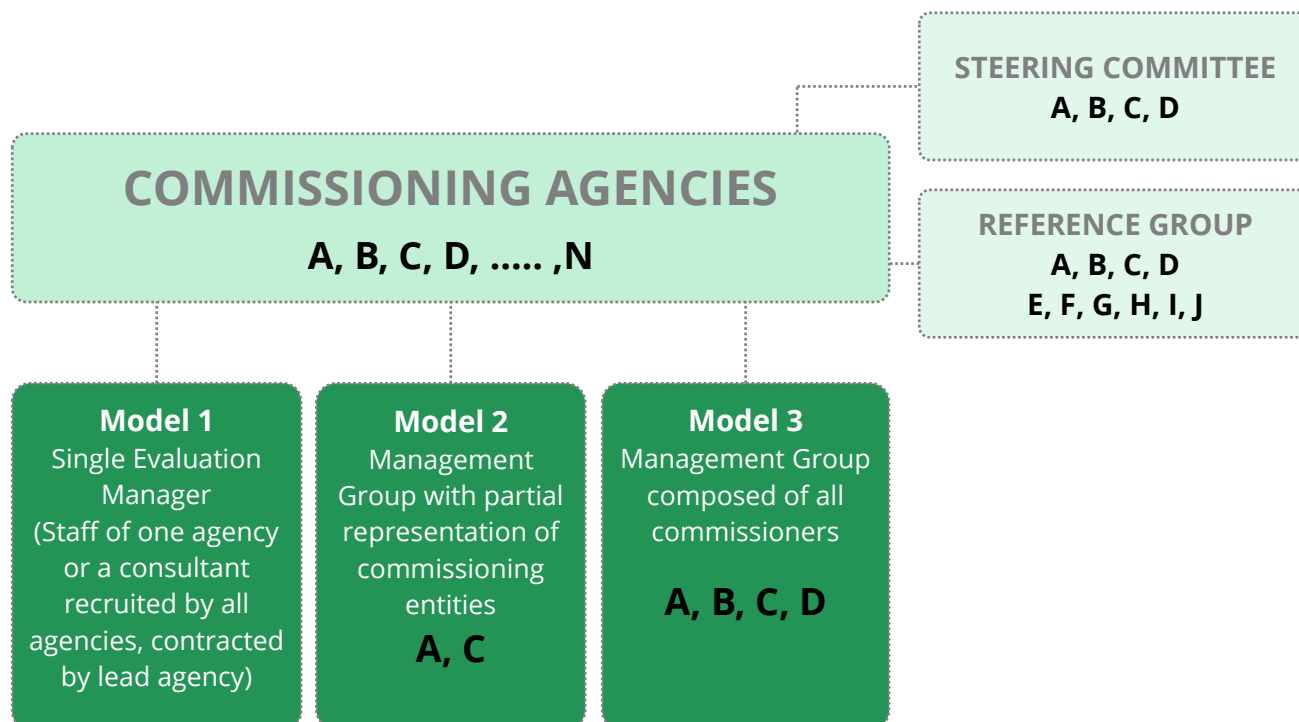
¹⁴ UNEG 2013 Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations, <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1620>

¹⁵ Some partners use their evaluation staff of their central offices of evaluation as team members while others do not. There are differing perceptions as to whether agency staff in offices of evaluation are considered independent.

5. How should joint evaluations be steered and managed?

25. Creating an effective governance structure is one of the most critical steps for joint evaluations. The structure should be comprised of all key agencies/partners that are expected to have a decision-making role. Comparative advantage of each agency/partner should be considered when determining the roles and responsibilities. A **good practice is to have a signed document by all partners at the onset**. This document can be an MOU, or a concept note that outlines the roles and responsibilities, including, who will be the lead agency/partner, which administrative and QA system will be followed, what the governance arrangements for evaluation management and decision-making will be, the cost sharing arrangement for an evaluation, among others.
26. To keep the JE process effective and efficient/manageable, the **number of agencies that are part of the day-to-day decision-making structure should not be too large**. It can be a sub-set of the group to whom other actors delegate if the overall number of partners is higher than five. It is important to nominate only one representative for each agency and ensure that this person has the right profile to engage appropriately in the discussions and can make decisions on behalf of their agency. In some cases, the agencies may delegate authority to the lead agency to make certain decisions and keep the rest informed and update them regularly.
27. A good **communication strategy** is crucial to keep agencies/ partners involved and informed and to build trust in the evaluation process. Agencies/partners can ensure they maintain the required resources in terms of staff time and any financial outlay for the entire evaluation period if they are clear what is planned and what is required at different stages. Frequent changes in the membership of the evaluation steering committee or evaluation reference group, including due to staff turnover, is a risk that will need to be managed.
28. The Evaluation Co-Managers should be at sufficiently senior level and capable of managing engagement with high-level stakeholders and/government officials. While this is ideal, WFP Evaluation Managers may be at lower levels of the Country office structure and expected to engage with high level UN agency/government officials. In this case, it is critical for **EM to know when to escalate issues**. Directors of commissioning office (CD and DCD for CO commissioned DEs) should ensure they receive regular feedback on the evaluation progress and know when to step in and engage. Part of **REUs oversight role** is to identify where the issue is **capacity constraints** (e.g., small size COs) versus because of **CO management not prioritizing** the evaluation. Solutions should be discussed for each case.
29. The level of engagement of various agencies/entities in the management of the JE may vary. While each JE tends to have a unique set-up, we can broadly categorize the various management arrangements according to the following options (see Figure 3):
 - **Model 1: A single Evaluation Manager (EM):** One agency leads the management of the evaluation and appoints one of their staff as EM. Other commissioners are consulted. Alternatively, an external EM is recruited by all commissioning agencies to manage the evaluation process on their behalf and contracted by the lead agency for the evaluation.
 - **Model 2: Joint Evaluation Management Group with partial representation of the commissioning agencies/entities:** Some of the commissioning agencies assume evaluation management responsibilities on behalf of the others. Other commissioners are consulted as part of the steering committee.
 - **Model 3: Joint Evaluation Management Group composed of all commissioning agencies/entities:** Each agency nominates a staff who will participate actively and equally as co-evaluation manager.

Fig 3: Options for the management of joint evaluations



30. The governance structure of joint evaluations slightly differs from WFP commissioned evaluations (see Table 5).

Table 5. Key Governance Structures – WFP Evaluation versus a Joint Evaluation

Role in the Evaluation Process	WFP Specific Evaluation	Joint Evaluation
Providing overall strategic direction and making key decisions about the evaluation, including the approval of evaluation products	Evaluation Committee: WFP staff and chaired by WFP CD/ DCD ¹⁶	Steering Committee: Composed of the heads of the various agencies/entities commissioning the evaluation and chaired by one with delegation by others co-chaired.
Managing the evaluation process including drafting the TORs, identifying the evaluation team, quality assuring the evaluation products, regular communication with stakeholders and advising the Evaluation Committee/ Steering Committee on key decisions	WFP Evaluation Manager	3 options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single Evaluation Manager from one of the partners • Joint Evaluation Management Group with partial representation of the commissioning units • Joint Evaluation Management Group composed of all commissioning units See paragraph 31 below for more information.
Reviewing and commenting on draft evaluation products in an advisory manner, without management responsibilities	Evaluation Reference Group: Chaired by WFP Country Director/Deputy Country Director and composed of WFP internal and external stakeholders	Evaluation Reference Group: Chaired by the Chair(s) of the Steering Committee and composed of internal stakeholders representing commissioning agencies/entities and external stakeholders. However, to remain workable, each agency should nominate only one staff to be part of the ERG. In case there are many stakeholders, the ERG may be split in two groups: An internal ERG composed of the commissioning agencies/entities and an external ERG of external stakeholders). ¹⁷

31. In any JE involving the evaluation of WFP’s work, WFP should be a full member in both the steering committee and the ERG. This will enable WFP to actively participate in decision making, provide feedback and advisory support throughout the evaluation process. WFP may have different levels of involvement in the management of the evaluation: 1) WFP leads the evaluation management in a model 1 JE; 2) WFP co-leads the evaluation

¹⁶ Or a senior manager in RBs/HQ respectively in the case of a DE commissioned by the RB or an HQ Division.

¹⁷ The ERG TOR provided in the [Technical Note on Evaluation Reference Group](#) should be adjusted to suit the JE context.

management with other partner agencies as part of models 2 or 3 JEs; and 3) WFP is not directly involved in the evaluation management.

32. **JEs and coverage norms:** When WFP manages the JE and uses its quality assurance systems, including contracting evaluators, DEQS and PHQA, the evaluation **counts towards meeting DE coverage norms**. If WFP co-manages the JE, it may count towards these coverage norms, provided WFP systems are used or the partner agency's systems meet **minimum standards, including the use of independent evaluators and the publication of reports**. When WFP is not directly involved in the management of the Joint Evaluation, it may count towards WFP's DE coverage norms if the evaluation follows the aforementioned minimum standards.
33. Table 6 shows criteria to consider when determining which role WFP will play in the management of a joint evaluation - from the lead manager to one of the co-managers.

Table 6: Criteria to determine WFP's role in the management of a Joint Evaluation

Role in the management of a grant for a joint programme	<p>If WFP is the lead agency/funds administrator under a joint programme or if WFP proportion of the budget is the largest, it makes sense to play a stronger role in the management of the evaluation, most likely as the Evaluation Manager (model 1) or one of the co-Evaluation Managers (model 2).</p> <p>Key reasons for WFP to play a key role may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the budget holder for cross-cutting monitoring and evaluation activities for the joint programme. • It generally convenes key meetings/consultations. • It has the good overview of programme design and implementation; and/or • It has established communication lines with key stakeholders including national partners.
Agencies' respective evaluation management capacity	<p>An Evaluation Manager requires a set of competencies that range from technical skills to communication and interpersonal skills (refer to the UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework for further details). He/she should demonstrate sufficient experience and skills to be considered credible by stakeholders.</p> <p>If WFP management considers proposing WFP to assume the lead management role (model 1), it should be confident that the appointed staff has those competencies, with the understanding that the Regional Evaluation Unit is available to support him/her as required.</p> <p>Furthermore, if WFP considers that (the) other commissioning partner(s) lack sufficient competence to manage the evaluation, it should make sure to bring in the required competencies and to be part of the management group.</p>
Time availability	<p>When agreeing to lead the management or co-manage a JE, WFP needs to be sure that it can meet the requirements in terms of staff time for the entire duration of the evaluation. Experience has shown that lack of continuity in the evaluation management will undermine the quality and timeliness of the evaluation.</p> <p>If none of the staff of the commissioning agencies have sufficient time or capacity to manage the JE, agencies should consider pooling resources to recruit a consultant as a dedicated Evaluation Manager who will represent all commissioning agencies. He/she needs to have evaluation management experience and some familiarity with (one or more of) the commissioning entities or the subject of the evaluation. If the external evaluation manager has no experience in managing an evaluation but is a subject matter specialist, the REU need to ensure proper onboarding and orientation of the EM in relation to the evaluation process and quality assurance processes.</p>
Variations in the level of maturity of the evaluation function of the commissioning agencies	<p>Not all international organizations or national counterparts may be at the same stage of maturity of their evaluation functions, including definition of clear norms and standards, availability of guidance and other support mechanisms, impartiality provisions, quality assurance and assessment systems, etc.</p> <p>Should commissioning partners be at an emerging stage, it makes sense for WFP to assume a lead role in evaluation management. This will ensure that the evaluation process can be confidently managed, following WFP's DEQAS. Experience has shown that where another agency is leading the evaluation, WFP is regularly consulted and has significant role in terms of the QA processes because of the WFP's rigorous evaluation and QA processes.</p>
Funding of the evaluation	<p>If all or a substantial portion of the evaluation budget is funded by WFP, it should be actively involved in the management of the evaluation. The opposite is not true: partners (including WFP) who do not or minimally contribute to the evaluation budget can still be part of the management group. For example, WFP may cover most of the evaluation costs but decide to commission a JE with a national counterpart and encourage the Government to be fully part of the Evaluation Management Group.</p>
Overall number of agencies commissioning the JE	<p>Should there be more than four commissioning agencies, it will not be practical to have all of them fully participate in the day-to-day management of the evaluation. If WFP is among the well-resourced agencies, it should offer to manage the evaluation (model 1) be part of the management group (model 2).</p>

34. All commissioning agencies should have a common understanding of the role of the Joint Management Group versus the role of the Steering Committee when setting up a governance structure for a JE. All commissioning units must be comfortable with the final decision regarding the management and governance structure – this decision cannot be imposed by one of the partners. The responsibility and composition of the different elements of the governance structure should be outlined in the evaluation TOR and a detailed specific TOR for each element (Evaluation Committee/Steering group, Evaluation Reference group).
35. Even when WFP is not the lead evaluation manager, WFP should support the selection of the lead agency based on the above criteria.
36. To alleviate the burden on the agency leading the management, specific managerial tasks can be assigned to other commissioning agencies. When doing so, it is important to identify the comparative advantages of each agency that can make the evaluation more efficient, e.g., agency with dedicated communication staff, access to key stakeholders, field presence for logistical support field work, remote data collection systems, etc. Partners should aim at optimising use of their collective capabilities in delivering high quality and useful JE.
37. There are some particularly challenging structural and procedural circumstances, in which a cautious approach is warranted to maintain credibility of JEs:
 - a. **Centralized and decentralized evaluation functions combined.** Some commissioning agencies evaluation function structure necessitates engagement in the Joint Evaluation through its centralized function, whereas others engage at decentralized level (RBs or COs).¹⁸ In this case it is likely that partners have different levels of experience/expertise in evaluation management as well as time to dedicate. Co-managing agencies would need to commit to systematic knowledge sharing and communication to support joint decision-making. In such cases, WFP COs without adequate capacities (staff time, knowledge and skills) will benefit from particularly close support from the REU to ensure WFP engagement is sufficient.
 - b. **Government processes and decision making:** When jointly evaluating national programmes, national institutions may seek to make decisions in the evaluation process, such as those related to the recruitment of the evaluation team. This becomes challenging when WFP systems are used, and WFP is funding the evaluation. In some instances, the national institution may be unwilling or unable to adhere to international evaluation standards and norms. If these issues remain unresolved, WFP can withdraw from co-commissioning the evaluation as a JE and instead support the government in commissioning a country-led evaluation. This has happened in the past, highlighting the critical importance of ensuring that all stakeholders involved share the main principles and standards for the evaluation and have a sound management structure in place before committing to the JE.
 - c. **Mixed internal and external evaluation team members.** Some agency evaluation functions may allow agency evaluation staff a dual role of managing and conducting evaluations (the Evaluation Manager is also part of the evaluation team).¹⁹ In such cases, it will be important at planning stage for the agencies to agree to use only independent evaluators to avoid actual and perceived bias. If this option is not feasible, it would be helpful if one of the independent evaluators has evaluated or worked for WFP (and for other partners that are not part of the evaluation team) before. Furthermore, it would be important to make sure that evaluation questions sufficiently reflect the interests of all JE commissioners and are given equal attention during data collection and analysis.
 - d. **Multi-country joint evaluations.** The management structure of a JE becomes even more complex if the evaluation covers multiple countries. Headquarters units or Regional Bureaus planning to embark on this type of joint evaluation are encouraged to reach out to OEV Helpdesk for more tailored guidance and support. Joint programme coordinators in HQ or RB, albeit not having had day-to-day involvement in the joint programme at CO level, should not be nominated as evaluation manager if an assessment of the relevance and/or performance of the coordinating body will be part of the scope of the evaluation. This is to respect the principle of independence and impartiality. Ideally, agencies should pool resources to recruit a dedicated and experienced evaluation manager who will represent all agencies.

¹⁸ Some agencies (e.g. UNICEF) have evaluation specialists at CO, other agencies (e.g. WFP, UN Women) have decentralized evaluations units at RB level but no specialists at CO level. Other agencies may not have different models.

¹⁹ FAO has this model, but WFP evaluation policy does not allow for WFP staff to be part of evaluation conduct.

6. How to budget for a Joint Evaluation?

38. Agreeing on the budget for a JE is another crucial step in preparing the ground for a successful exercise. The budget should be elaborated in a realistic manner based on the scope and complexity of the evaluation. It should be broken down as per different cost components including a line for contingencies. This will facilitate a quick resolution and prevent disagreements should unforeseen additional costs be incurred during the evaluation.
39. Depending on the number of actors involved, JEs can sometimes be more costly than single agency evaluations, as they may require larger teams and a longer time to conduct. Evaluations jointly undertaken with government should plan enough time for several rounds of consultation. In view of the high level of effort and strong skillset required for the management of JEs, the budget may also include the costs of a full-time dedicated evaluation manager if there is insufficient capacity or staff time within the commissioning agencies.
40. While overall evaluation costs are generally higher for JEs, in many cases these can be shared between agencies, thereby reducing the financial burden for each agency. The overall evaluation budget and respective agencies' contributions should be discussed at planning stage, ideally when the intervention(s) to be evaluated is being designed. In the case of a joint programme, where the evaluation budget is managed by a lead agency, the financial arrangements for the evaluation are straightforward. Where this is not the case, partners need to decide which agency will contract the evaluation team on behalf of all partners. Situations should be avoided, in which budget lines are split between agencies (for example, one agency recruiting national evaluators and covering travel costs; the other recruiting international evaluators). Contracting by one agency requires clarifying beforehand the procedure for and potential application of indirect cost for transferring funds between agencies.
41. Budget allocations for JEs with government partners do not have to come from the Country Portfolio Budget's only. As evaluations with government partners typically contribute to strengthening national evaluation capacities, part of their costs could also be covered by available funds from the 'implementation costs' of a 'capacity strengthening' activity if the JE is part of National Evaluation Capacities Development.
42. Within WFP, the Contingency Evaluation Fund (CEF) is a mechanism to support COs who have adequately planned and budgeted for an evaluation but face genuine resources constraints²⁰ (see Technical Note Contingency Evaluation Fund). The eligibility and assessment criteria apply for all evaluations and must be met before a JE can be funded by the CEF. At planning and preparation stages, the CO should explore all other funding options for JE before applying for the CEF to fund WFP's contribution to the JE budget (the assessment criteria are stipulated in the Technical Note Contingency Evaluation Fund).

7. What evaluation questions should a Joint Evaluation assess?

43. It is important that partners agree on a focused and concise list of evaluation questions during the planning and preparation phases of the evaluation to avoid a too many questions that may lead to shallow analysis. A good starting point is to ensure that there is consensus around the Theory of Change for the intervention. If no Theory of Change is available, it can be reconstructed (see the [Technical Note on Logical Models](#)). Each evaluation question should respond to one or more of the evaluation criteria - relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, appropriateness, coverage, and/or connectedness (see [Technical Note on Evaluation Criteria and Questions](#)).
44. By default, some of the questions of a JE should relate to the appropriateness of collaboration among the organizations during design and implementation of the programme/project activities. Table 7 below provides some examples of evaluation questions that relate to collaboration.

²⁰ docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000011828/download/

Table 7: Examples of Evaluation Questions related to joint programming and associated OECD DAC Criteria

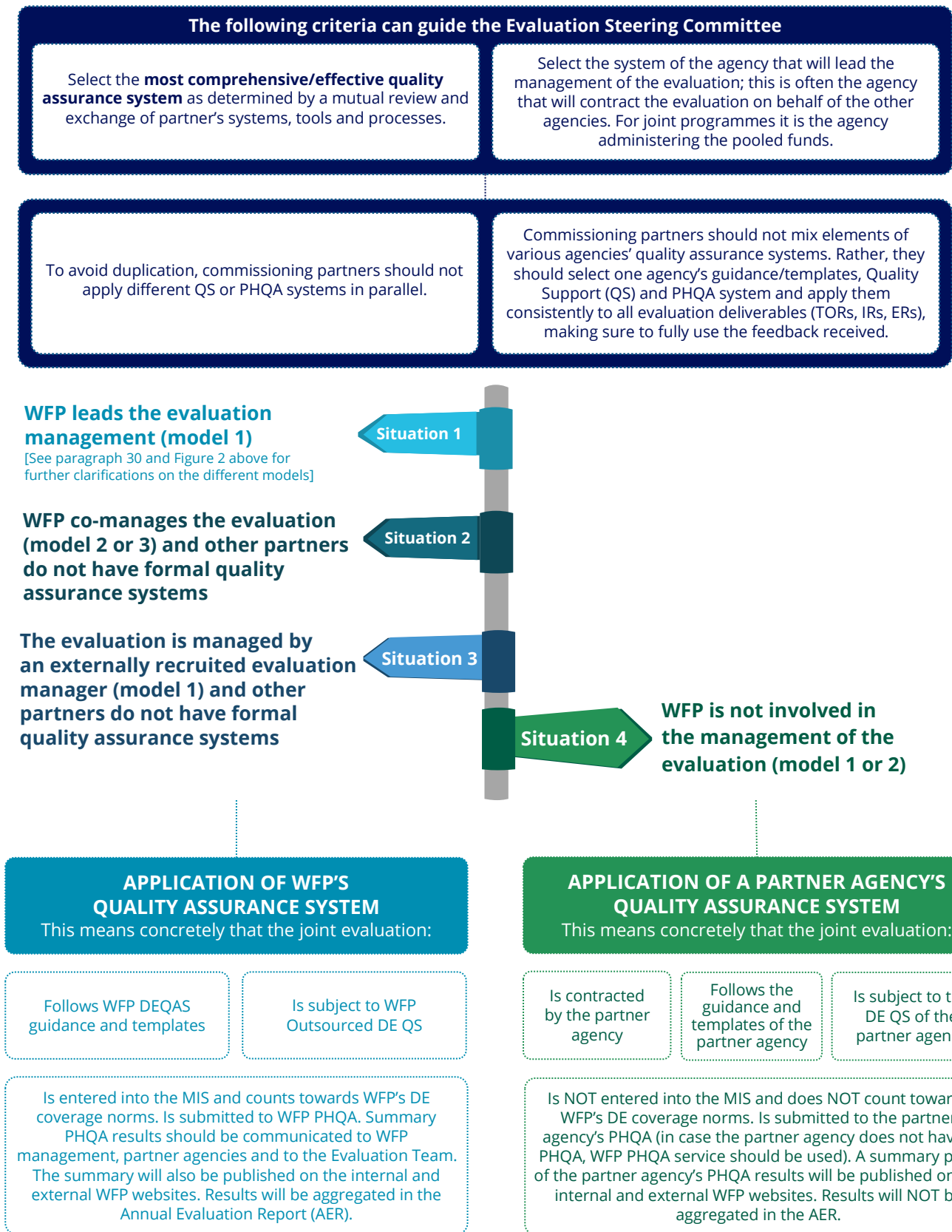
Coherence	To what extent were contextual factors (political stability/instability, population movements, etc.) considered in the design and delivery of the joint intervention?
Effectiveness	How has any joint programming enhanced the intended outcomes in terms of results and operational effectiveness?
Impact	How has any joint planning, analysis and design and implementation contributed to broader national policy outcomes/results?
Efficiency	To what extent and how has any joint programming led to improved efficiency?
Sustainability	To what extent has any joint co-ordination and working partnerships led to synergies in achieving longer term results?

8. How to review evaluation deliverables and assure quality?

45. The quality and credibility of the evaluation should not be compromised under any circumstance. Ensuring the quality of an evaluation starts with the review of the deliverables. Coordination of feedback to draft evaluation deliverables risks becoming very complex for JEs. It is therefore advised to:
- Limit the number of evaluation reference group members to one staff per agency. This staff is responsible for representing the agency and submitting feedback (cascade mechanism).
 - Orient stakeholders towards reviewing and commenting on specific parts of the report that are directly relevant to them (or at least prioritize those specific sections).
 - Consult in person or virtual meetings instead of email, to allow for more efficient consensus building.
 - For controversial issues, hold bilateral preparatory meetings (in advance of the formal consultation) with key decision makers among the participating agencies.
 - Allow for ample time to review the final report but request for comments on a 'non-objection' basis (no response is considered agreement) so that the process is not halted for an unnecessarily long time.
 - Use the Programme staff as an entry point to solicit for stakeholder's comments as they may have day-to-day engagement with them as part of programme implementation and/or coordination.
46. UN agencies and governments are also increasingly using a combination of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the quality of evaluation reports. WFP's DEQAS is comprised of a comprehensive guidance package,²¹ an outsourced Quality Support (QS) Service, technical assistance from REUs and OEV's Helpdesk, and a Post-Hoc Quality Assessment (PHQA). WFP's quality assurance mechanisms have been referred to very positively by other UN agencies, yet other partners may have systems that are equally strong. The Evaluation Steering Committee should decide at planning stage which quality assurance system will be applied to the Joint Evaluation and specify this information in the TOR. See figure 3 for the decision tree on the quality assurance system.
47. In the absence of a common understanding on evaluation norms and standards and a clear agreement on QA mechanisms meeting those standards, the CO/RB/HQ division should propose to its partners to conduct another type of exercise (a review for example) or opt out of the JE. WFP may still offer to be part of the Evaluation Reference Group, but this evaluation would not be considered a WFP JE.

²¹ A process guide, Technical Notes, quality checklists and templates for (TOR, Inception and evaluation Report).

Fig 3: Decide which quality assurance system applies to the Joint Evaluation



Annex 1: What are specific considerations for joint evaluations across all evaluation phases?

48. The main phases and steps for a WFP DE are set out in the DEQAS Process Guide. At the same time, some additional steps or considerations apply for joint evaluations. Those are set out in Table 8 below. More guidance is available in the UNEG Resource Pack.

Table 8: Evaluation phases – specific considerations for joint evaluations

Phase 1 Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When considering the scope and timing of the JE, check synergies with other evaluations in the country/region, and with UNSDCF planning and evaluation cycles. • If possible, get a letter of commitment by all concerned confirming the intention to commission a JE. • Check whether minimum requirements (tables 2 and 3) for WFP engagement in JE are met. <p>Building consensus on key features of the Joint Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine who the partners at global, regional and country level are and which agencies should be part of the Steering Committee and Joint Management Group. Seek broad buy-in from them and create a collaborative environment, cohesion and consensus through a in person meeting. Informal communication via conference calls emails, telephone conversations enhance confidence and transparency. Records of all meetings should be circulated to those involved. • Analyse institutional and contextual risks and mitigation measures (see table 4); which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different views on the objectives and purposes of the joint evaluation; - differences in accountability principles (e.g. in relation to public dissemination); - challenges in identifying and pooling funds for the evaluation. - inadequate human resources, limiting agencies' ability to steer and manage the evaluation; - lack of agreement on roles and responsibilities, quality assurance systems, templates, and procedures. - limited availability and coherence of monitoring data across the agencies. - political sensitivities in relation to one or more of the agencies including national partners, which may challenge data collection and the dissemination of the evaluation results. • Reconfirm broad features of the evaluation (purpose, scope, timeline, budget, and governance arrangements) with partners, if possible, in formalized agreements. Set aside ample time to align expectations on evaluation deliverables and determine evaluation process steps. Clarify that the JE will result in a single report. Agree if specific additional deliverables are required for each agency. • Agree on procedures for the selection of the evaluation team and its contracting, involving procurement/HR of the various agencies. Offer WFP's Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) as an option to source evaluation teams if the lead agency does not have similar mechanisms for sourcing teams. • Assess and agree on Quality Assurance/Quality Support and PHQA systems to be applied. • Broadly define key elements of the evaluation dissemination and communication plan, looking for opportunities to organize joint events and/or develop joint communication products (videos, social media, etc.). • Plan for a preparation phase that is at least one week longer than is foreseen in the DEQAS.
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Phase 2 Preparation

- Re-confirm participation by and role of WFP in the JE as well as partners' role in the management of the evaluation.
- Promote mutual trust and confidence among partners, rather than tight bureaucratic control and predetermined administrative processes.²²
- Create a work plan and meeting schedule to inform partners in advance on when their inputs/engagement will be required.
- Agree on logistical and administrative arrangements, explicitly outlining respective responsibilities.
- Agree on impartiality and independence mechanisms.

Governance mechanisms and partnership engagement

General

- Determine with the other agencies/partners whether a joint management group will be established or whether a dedicated lead manager will be appointed. If a dedicated evaluation manager will be recruited, ensure that sufficient working days have been included for the management of the whole evaluation process, including to maintain close coordination among partners.
- Establish the evaluation steering committee and evaluation reference group, in which each of the commissioning agencies is represented. Appoint individual members. The steering committee and the evaluation reference group need to be strategically identified for a good balance of strategic/ technical inputs between both governance mechanisms. A good practice is to request nominations before the Terms of Reference design and if possible, organise TOR design workshop.
- For each of the components of the governance structure develop TORs describing roles and responsibilities and agree on communication lines and meeting frequency. The agreed provisions should be formally endorsed by agencies/partners' senior management.

With Government

- Stronger engagement with government is beneficial for closer relationship and deeper understanding of evaluation process and results. JE create a good platform to sow the seeds of evaluation culture in the government ministries. The process is useful to raise awareness of national partners on the evaluation processes, clarify expectations and the next steps.
- In case of JE with a government with limited evaluation capacities (time, skills), particular efforts are needed to ensure active government participation. Examples of actions and approaches include:
 - providing appropriate orientation and access to trainings/capacity building initiatives
 - arranging for a secondment to government institution if resources allow.
 - systematically updating government representatives in the Steering Committee on progress.
 - mobilizing CO management and relevant staff to reinforce messages/requests to government.
 - having all communication to ERG members signed/sent by the co-commissioning government entity.
 - Advocating for Nomination of co-managers or focal points with M&E profile to manage a JE as part of evaluation capacity development support and enhanced partnerships.
- It is critical to ensure there is an alternate government representative at the appropriate level in the steering committee, if the assigned steering member has a high political profile, for example, an Minister or Vice- Minister.

Purpose, scope, methodology

- Refine and agree on the purpose of the evaluation and a well-defined scope (activities, period, geographical coverage).

²² Adapted from: Niels Dabelstein and Ted Kliet (2013) Preparing, Governing and Managing the Paris Declaration Evaluation, The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation. Vol. 27, No 3. Pp. 37- 67.

- Agree on a realistic set of evaluation questions, acknowledging that the evaluation cannot accommodate all specific evidence needs of each agency. This needs to be carefully managed and will require some trade-offs.
- Agree with all commissioning agencies on the methodological approach of the evaluation.
- Include a requirement for the evaluation team to develop an overarching theory of change, integrating result chains of each of the participating agencies (if not available).

Budget and contracting

- Agree on the overall budget and respective agencies' contributions, including in-kind contribution in the form of staff time. Explicitly acknowledging different types of inputs will increase ownership and help balance power relations.
- Agree on contracting arrangements (i.e., which agency will formally contract the evaluation team? Will it be through an existing frameworks/agreement or a tender-based process or individual consultants?).
- Agree on a realistic timeline, with ample time provisions for the review of the inception and final evaluation report. Revised timelines should always be shared with all partners.
- Ensure that all agencies are consulted when (i) drafting profiles of evaluators, (ii) shortlisting CVs/proposals (WFP's tools to assess proposals/evaluation teams can be proposed for this purpose if the leading agency does not have similar tools), (iii) interviewing, and (iv) drafting recommendations for contracting.

Preparations for document sharing, data collection, quality assurance, and follow-up

- Prioritize the key documents and datasets that commissioning agencies will share with the evaluation team, keeping the overall number at a manageable level.
- Agree on a document sharing platform that is in line with data protection policies of all partners and establish the e-library.
- Request permissions/ethical clearance for data collection as required by national entities or by evaluation functions of agencies. Clearance processes can take significant time. Therefore, this action should not be postponed so as not to risk a halt in the evaluation process later.
- Select which quality assurance and assessment system will be applied and ensure that all (co)managers and agency focal points are familiar with it.
- Clarify requirements for the evaluation recommendations which in principle should target each and/or all the commissioning agencies. However, for JEs with government where WFP has had a major and very detailed role in programme implementation, a set of WFP-specific recommendations could be presented separately from the core set of recommendations. This would need to be communicated to the evaluators at the inception phase.
- Agree on modalities for preparing a management response to the evaluation recommendations (see [technical note](#) for further guidance), and an action plan for implementation and follow up.

Communication and dissemination

- Refine communication and dissemination plans/activities, building on comparative advantages of each agency in terms of networks, (social) media presence, local languages, knowledge on communication for specific target groups (e.g., UNICEF with children), and HR capacities.
- Make an inventory of agency/government regulations in terms of publication rules, copyright, and branding requirements etc.
- Agree on dissemination protocols and document key points agreed and have all commissioners sign off on them. This is to avoid having to re-negotiate in case of staff turn-over.

Phase 3 Inception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the evaluators with a complete list of project sites, so that they can easily see in which geographical areas the commissioning agencies have a common presence. • Ensure that all agencies are equally consulted and represented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - during the initial briefing to the evaluation team - when agreeing on the evaluation questions as presented in the evaluation matrix; - when agreeing on overall methodological approach and evaluation methods; - when composing lists of interviewees and project sites that will be visited. • Comment on the inception report and ensure others do as well. Meet with other commissioning agencies to reach consensus on proposals for sampling/geographical coverage of site visits, evaluation methodology as well as on data collection instruments that are included in the Inception Report. • Register and communicate comments and evaluator’s responses in a transparent manner using a comments matrix that is shared with all stakeholders together with final inception report. • Obtain written approval of the final report from each commissioning entity by way of response to the submission.
Phase 4 Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all commissioning entities are included as key informants during data collection. • Ensure feedback to the evaluation team is given coherently, by holding exit debriefing meetings jointly, with all commissioning agencies present.
Phase 5 Data Analysis and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on draft evaluation report and ensure others do as well. If necessary, meet with other commissioning agencies to get consensus on content elements on which opinions diverge. • Communicate clearly with all commissioning agencies and ERG members to limit the number of rounds of commenting and adhere to the evaluation timeline. • Organize internal sessions with WFP colleagues prior to any evaluation workshop to ensure a common reading and understanding of evaluation results before discussing externally. • Organize a workshop with the evaluators and all commissioning agencies to discuss draft recommendations to ensure that they are informed by findings and conclusions and adhere to quality standards²³. Stakeholders can start reflecting on potential follow-up actions. • , Recommendations by joint evaluations risk going beyond the scope of the evaluation especially if the evaluation did not include questions related to coordination. When discussing the recommendations, it is therefore crucial to remind stakeholders of the precise scope that had been agreed in the inception report. • Recommendations should be formulated in way that it is clear which commissioning agencies is/are targeted. Recommendations targeted to more than one agency should ideally specify which agency is to lead/coordinate follow-up actions. • Register and communicate stakeholder comments on all drafts of the evaluation report and evaluators’ responses in a transparent manner using a comments matrix. The matrix should be shared together with the final report. • Ensure written approval of the final evaluation report is given by all members of the evaluation steering group, circulating a PDF file that cannot easily be modified.

²³ See technical note on Quality of recommendations [TN Evaluation Recommendations](#).

Phase 6

Dissemination, Management Response (MR), and Follow-Up

Dissemination

- Abide by WFP's and partner organizations' publication rules. Copyright of JE products is shared by all partners. Ensure that the disclaimer at the beginning of the evaluation report includes all commissioning partners. Present the logos of the commissioning partners on the JE products in alphabetical order, for example FAO, IFAD, WFP.
- Publish JE products on WFP systems, irrespective of WFP role in the management of the JE.
- Implement joint dissemination activities. If applicable, rely on the participating agency that has the best access to media, academic fora, conference organizers, Etc.

Management Response

- Organize a workshop with all commissioning agencies to discuss recommendations and prepare the MR outlining the follow-up actions. A good practice is to involve key people that are part of the implementation of the subject of evaluation even if they were not part of the ERG. MR discussions may be incorporated in a programme coordination meeting for example, especially if the subject of evaluation is a joint programme. Agreed follow-up actions should be agency-specific to ensure adequate commitment to implement them.
- Ensure that WFP management prepares a MR to recommendations specifically addressed to WFP, even if partners do not have a policy requirement or process in place for following-up on evaluation recommendations.
- Issue a joint MR to evaluation recommendations, ideally complemented with agency-specific action plans where each agency prepares to follow up in line with their internal systems.

Follow-Up (Responsibility of Management of the commissioning office)

- Agree on a mechanism to ensure that agencies act on the identified follow-up actions within the established deadlines. Nominate a responsible staff within each agency to periodically undertake joint oversight, on those actions that are shared and/or require coordination. Members of the evaluation reference group would in many cases be well placed to take up this responsibility.
- Only recommendations that requires action by WFP should be registered into WFP corporate system for follow-up. Status of implementation may be discussed during regular programme coordination meetings.

The lessons above are accumulated since 2017 when decentralised evaluation function and the regional evaluation units were established. Out of the total of 42 JEs commissioned as of May 2024, 31 involved UN partners and 17 involved the government institutions 2 involved donors.

For more information, visit our [external](#) and [internal](#) webpages
or contact OEV Cap/Qual Unit at: wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org