



Technical Note joint evaluations

1 Introduction	2 What is a 'Joint' Evaluation?	3 When to opt for a Joint Evaluation?	4 How should joint evaluations be steered and managed?
5 How to budget for a Joint Evaluation?	6 What criteria and questions should a Joint Evaluation assess?	7 How to review evaluation deliverables and ensure their quality?	8 What are specific considerations for joint evaluations across all evaluation phases?

1. Introduction

1. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, joint evaluations, particularly at decentralized level, are increasingly relevant for collective accountability and learning, and for strengthening national leadership. WFP's practice in this area has been expanding since 2016 and key learning from CO/RB colleagues contributed to enrich this Technical Note (TN).
2. The purpose of this TN is to clarify the specific considerations when planning a joint evaluation with partners. The DEQAS Process Guide remains the main reference document providing guidance on the overall process for decentralized evaluations.
3. The United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations is also a helpful tool for planning, preparing and managing a Joint Evaluation in the UN system.¹
4. To facilitate continuous learning and improvement in the area of joint evaluations, WFP Evaluation Managers and REOs are encouraged to document good practices and communicate those to OEV.

¹ UNEG's Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations, 2013, <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2111>

2. What is a 'Joint' Evaluation?

5. 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. In line with the above definition, a joint evaluation can assess either:
 - a. joint interventions co-financed or implemented by multiple partners; or
 - b. interventions that were not (or only partially) jointly implemented, but that had a strong convergence in terms of objective, sector/theme or implementation modalities.
7. A joint evaluation implies joint decision-making concerning the evaluation's planning, design and delivery. This includes the definition of its scope, approach and methodology, the selection of the team, as well as the approval of the key deliverables such as the evaluation report. For WFP, an evaluation is considered a joint evaluation if WFP and at least one partner have joint decision-making authority in the evaluation process.² If instead WFP is only a member of the ERG (advisory role), this is not a WFP joint evaluation and falls outside the scope of this note.
8. Joint evaluations can be undertaken with any type of partner (UN, NGO, government, donor, think tank, etc). They can vary greatly in terms of their focus and potential geographical coverage as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Potential focus and scope for joint evaluations

Potential focus areas	Potential geographic scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint programmes (two or more agencies) • Sector-wide interventions (e.g. food security) • System-wide interventions • Cross cutting themes (e.g. gender) • Co-financing arrangements • Government programmes supported by one or more cooperating agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single country • Multi-country (within one or several regions) • Global (would typically be commissioned by a central Office of Evaluation or another HQ Division)

9. Joint evaluations can assess process elements (e.g. efficiency and effectiveness of coordination mechanisms) and results (i.e. achievement of joint results). They are typically conducted to (i) understand how interventions carried out jointly with other agencies/government 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.

² 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.

3. When to opt for a Joint Evaluation?

10. 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.³ 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.⁴
11. 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 developing partners' evaluation capacities.
12. 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.
13. 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. Two core questions should guide decision-making by WFP CO, RB or HQ divisions on the best approach to follow in their specific context and circumstances:
 - Do 'push factors' exist that call for a joint approach?
 - Are minimum requirements for a joint evaluation in place?
14. Box 2 highlights the 'push factors', i.e. situations in which joint evaluations may be especially useful.

Box 2: Situations where a Joint Evaluation should be considered⁵

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, water and sanitation, and 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)⁶, common humanitarian response plans).
4. There is a need to address broad policy issues or concerns (e.g. gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE)).
5. Stakeholders aspire to design programmes based on more comprehensive evidence than an evaluation of their own programme could offer.
6. The issues being addressed are too sensitive or potentially controversial for one agency/partner alone to tackle.
7. The overall evaluation burden on national actors can be reduced by combining evaluations.
8. Individual agencies' budgets are too small for commissioning individual evaluations but pooled together they are sufficient for a joint evaluation.
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 *modi operandi* of public institutions.
10. One or more donors requested the evaluation to be a joint evaluation.

15. 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 contexts.
16. 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. Table 3 below lists the requirements to meet before embarking on a joint evaluation.

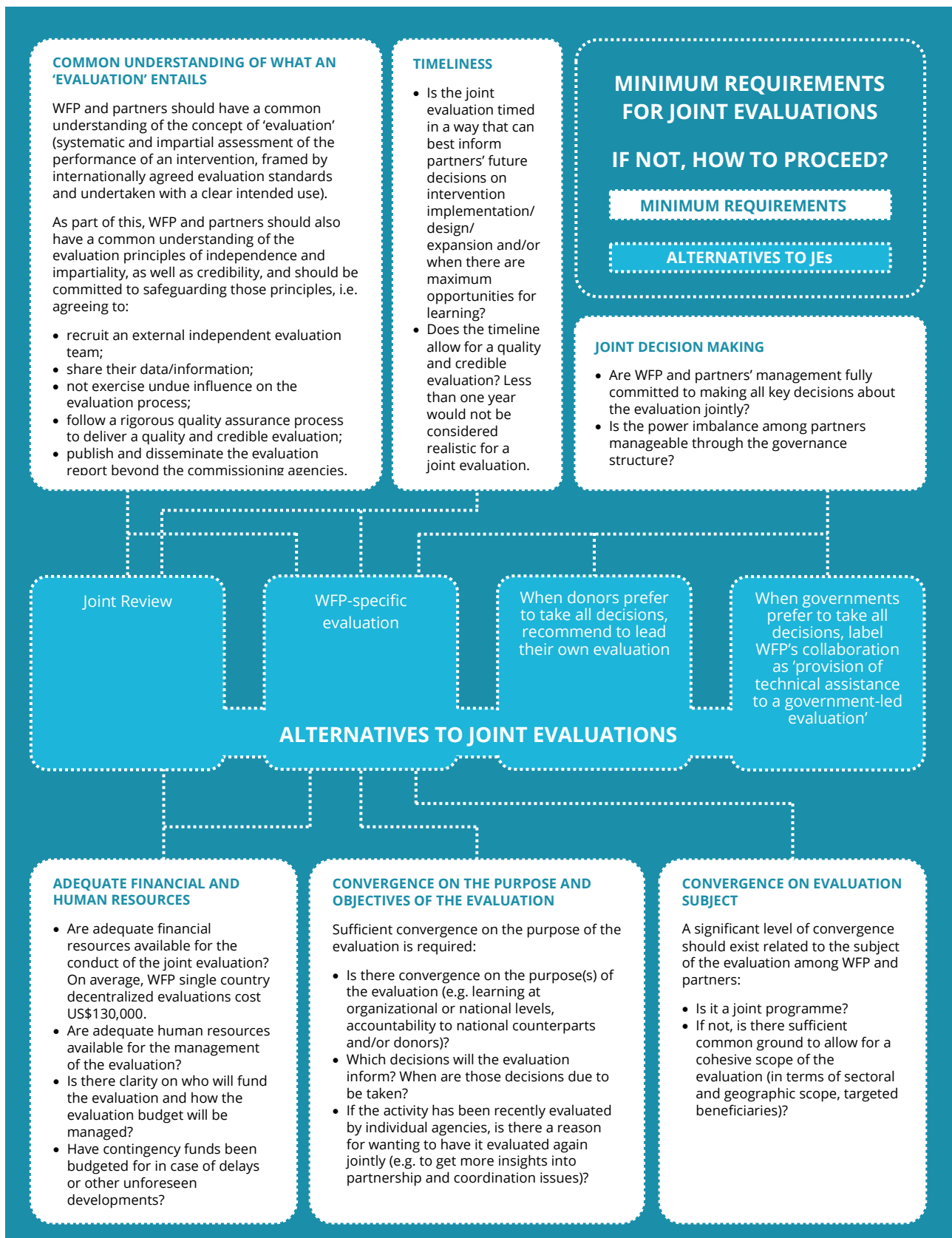
³ ALNAP (2013): What we know about Joint Evaluation, <http://www.alnap.org/resource/9537>.

⁴ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-humanitarian-evaluations>.

⁵ Adapted from UNEG 2013 Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations, <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1620>

⁶ <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/3159.pdf>

Box 3: Minimum requirements for WFP to undertake a Joint Evaluation



17. **When ALL minimum requirements are met, partners should opt for a Joint Evaluation. If some of the requirements are missing, the Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) and/or OEV Helpdesk should be contacted to discuss the way forward.**
18. The UNEG Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations also summarizes the advantages and potential challenges of joint evaluations for the UN system (see adapted table 2 below). These also apply to scenarios where donors or other partners are co-commissioners.

Table 2: Advantages and potential challenges of joint evaluations⁷

Advantages	Potential challenges
Increases impartiality and legitimacy	Independency/impartiality of joint evaluations (with government) may come under threat in situations of political interference
Helps foster a collective sense of accountability	Lack of clarity on responsibilities for the follow-up actions can weaken evaluation accountability
Broader scope and more holistic assessment	The number of evaluation questions can become too high to be realistically addressed if partners' expectations are not well managed
Enhances mutual understanding and joint learning; strengthens partnership among commissioning agencies	Power and engagement differences among partners, particularly when one agency is a significant funder of an activity
Builds coordination and collaboration towards future intervention design and implementation	Potentially longer time frames given the need for greater coordination; this might affect timeliness of the report, reducing utility of the findings
Promotes cost-sharing, thereby reducing financial costs and administrative demands on each commissioner	Wider and more complex scope combined with extensive consultation process can increase costs of the evaluation
Useful for developing consistent policy messages	Potential differences in policy priorities may be hard to reconcile within the evaluation process, which can make decision-making challenging
Greater credibility and broader ownership of findings and recommendations	Findings may not address individual agency/partner accountability requirements
Helps limit the overall number of evaluations undertaken, thereby reducing the burden on stakeholders	Coordination arrangements may be more complex
May yield higher quality evaluations	Multi-sector data may be more complicated to collect and analyse; Lack of agreement on the quality standards to be applied
Contributes to strengthening national evaluation capacity if conducted in partnership with a government (see Annex 3)	Considerations of inclusion need to be balanced with those aimed at minimizing overburdening of national partners

19. WFP has produced a short [video](#) that illustrates the added value of joint evaluations in the context of evaluating school feeding programmes.

⁷ UNEG 2013 Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations, <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1620>

4. How should joint evaluations be steered and managed?

20. 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. To keep it effective and manageable, the number of agencies that are part of the governance structure should not be too large. 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 make decisions on behalf of his/her agency. The governance structure of joint evaluations slightly differs from evaluations where WFP is commissioning the evaluation alone as outlined in Table 3:

Table 3: Key Governance Structures – WFP Evaluation versus a Joint Evaluation

Role in the Evaluation Process	WFP Evaluation	Joint Evaluation
Providing overall strategic direction and making key decisions about the evaluation, including the approval of evaluation products	Evaluation Committee: Composed of WFP staff and chaired by WFP Country Director/Deputy Country Director ⁸	Steering Committee: Composed of the heads of the various agencies/entities commissioning the evaluation and chaired or co-chaired by one or more of them.
Steering the evaluation process through all six phases including drafting the TORs, identifying the evaluation team, quality assuring the evaluation products, ensuring regular communication with stakeholders and advising the Evaluation Committee/Steering Committee on key decisions regarding the evaluation	WFP Evaluation Manager	<p>3 options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single Evaluation Manager • Joint Evaluation Management Group with partial representation of the commissioning units • Joint Evaluation Management Group composed of all commissioning units <p>See paragraph 21 below for more information.</p>
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 ⁹ 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 the different commissioning agencies/entities and external stakeholders. However, in order to remain workable, each agency should nominate only one staff to be part of the ERG. This person will consolidate comments from other staff members. In case there are many stakeholders, the ERG may be split in two groups: An internal ERG (composed of representatives from the commissioning agencies/entities) and an external ERG (composed of other external stakeholders). ¹⁰

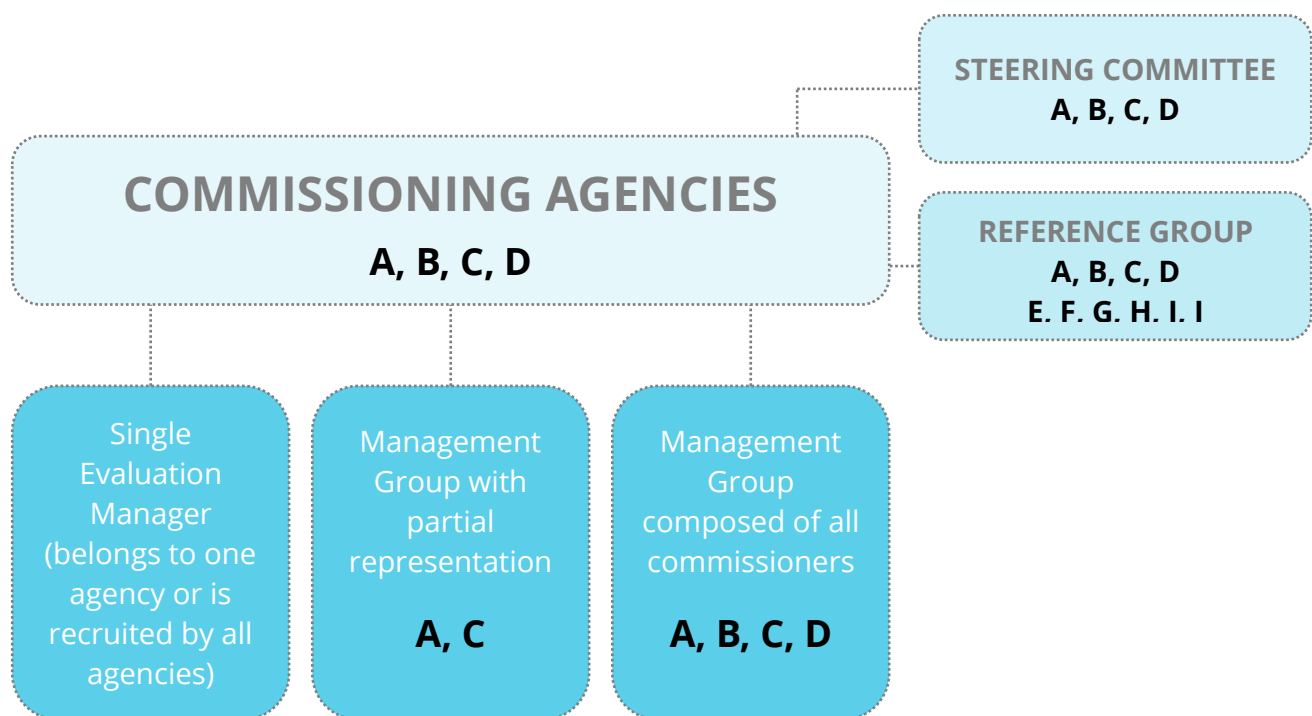
⁸ Or a senior manager in RBs/HQ respectively in the case of a DE commissioned by the RB or an HQ Division.

⁹ See footnote 8 above.

¹⁰ The ERG terms of reference provided in the [Technical Note on Evaluation Reference Group](#) should be adjusted to suit the context of the joint evaluation.

21. The level of engagement of the various agencies/entities in the management of the joint evaluation may vary. While each joint evaluation tends to have a unique set-up, we can broadly categorize the various management arrangements according to the following options (see also Figure 1):
- **Model 1: A single Evaluation Manager:** One agency leads the management of the evaluation. Other commissioners are consulted. Alternatively, an external Evaluation Manager is recruited by all commissioning agencies to manage the evaluation process on their behalf.
 - **Model 2: Joint Evaluation Management Group with partial representation of the commissioning units:** Some of the commissioning agencies assume evaluation management responsibilities. Other commissioners are consulted.
 - **Model 3: Joint Evaluation Management Group composed of all commissioning units:** Each agency nominates a staff who will participate actively and equally as co-evaluation manager.

Fig 1: Options for the management of joint evaluations



22. In any Joint Evaluation, WFP is a full member of the steering committee and as such makes decisions about the evaluation. At the same time, WFP may have different levels of involvement in the management of the evaluation: 1) WFP leads the evaluation management; 2) WFP co-leads the evaluation management with other partner agencies; and 3) WFP is not directly involved in the evaluation management. When WFP manages or co-manages the Joint Evaluation, it counts towards WFP's DE coverage norms. However, when WFP is not directly involved in the management of the Joint Evaluation, it does NOT count towards WFP's DE coverage norms.
23. If WFP leads the evaluation management, WFP's HR or procurement processes should be used to contract the evaluation team. If WFP co-manages the evaluation together with other partners or an externally recruited evaluation manager manages the evaluation on behalf of the partners, either WFP's or another partner's systems and processes can be used. If a partner other than WFP leads the evaluation management, this partner would be expected to contract the evaluation team through its own HR or procurement processes.
24. Table 4 displays a number of 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 4: Criteria to determine WFP's role in the management of a Joint Evaluation

<p>Role in the management of a grant for a joint programme</p>	<p>If WFP is the lead agency under a joint programme, it makes sense to play a strong 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 best overview of programme design and implementation; and/or • It has established communication lines with key stakeholders.
<p>Agencies' respective evaluation management capacity</p>	<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 enough 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 evaluation manager has those competencies, with the understanding that the Regional Evaluation Officer is available to support the CO Evaluation Manager 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>
<p>Time availability</p>	<p>When agreeing to lead the management or co-manage a joint evaluation, 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 joint evaluation, agencies should consider combining resources to recruit 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.</p>
<p>Variations in the level of maturity of the evaluation function of the commissioning agencies</p>	<p>Not all international organizations or national counterparts may be at the same stage in terms of level of maturity of their respective 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 in the joint evaluation 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 Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System.</p>
<p>Funding of the evaluation</p>	<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.</p> <p>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 do a joint evaluation with a national counterpart and encourage the Government to be fully part of the Evaluation Management Group.</p>
<p>Overall number of agencies commissioning the Joint Evaluation</p>	<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 best resourced agencies, it should be part of the management group (model 2).</p>

25. 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 Joint Evaluation. 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 described in the evaluation TOR and/or a specific TOR for each element.
26. Even if WFP is not the lead evaluation manager, it should guide the selection of the lead agency based on the above criteria (role in implementation, maturity of evaluation function, evaluation management capacity, time availability and financial contribution to the evaluation).
27. 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. dedicated communication staff, access to key stakeholders, deep field presence, or remote data collection systems.
28. There are some particularly challenging circumstances, in which a cautious approach is warranted:
 - a. **Centralized and decentralized levels combined.** One of the commissioning agencies engages in the Joint Evaluation through its centralized evaluation function, whereas the other agency/ies engage(s) at decentralized level. In this case it is likely that the different partners have different levels of experience/expertise in evaluation management. Therefore, all co-managing agencies would need to commit to systematic knowledge sharing and communication to support joint decision-making. In such cases, WFP COs will benefit from particularly close support from the Regional Evaluation Officer.
 - b. **Mixed internal and external evaluation team members.** Some independent evaluation offices (not OEV) may assume a dual role of managing and conducting the evaluation (the Evaluation Manager is also part of the evaluation team). In such cases, it will be important at planning stage to reflect on how potential bias of the evaluation exercise towards one of the agencies can be prevented. For instance, it would be helpful if one of the other members of the evaluation team 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 and data collection tools equally reflect the interests of all commissioners, and that the activities to be visited and the people to be interviewed adequately cover the evaluation's scope. In any case, it is not an option for a member of a decentralized evaluation function to be part of a mixed evaluation team as they should not have access to confidential information provided by respondents in the framework of the evaluation.
 - c. **Multi-country joint evaluations.** The management structure of a Joint Decentralized Evaluation 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 country office 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 could bundle resources to recruit a dedicated and experienced evaluation manager who will represent all agencies.

5. How to budget for a Joint Evaluation?

29. Agreeing on the budget for a joint evaluation 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.
30. Depending on the number of actors involved, joint evaluations can sometimes be more costly than single agency evaluations, as they may require larger teams and a longer time to conduct. In particular 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 joint evaluations, 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.
31. While overall evaluation costs are generally higher for joint evaluations, 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.
32. Budget allocations for joint evaluations with government partners do not have to come from the Country Portfolio Budget's evaluation budget only. As evaluations with government partners typically contribute to strengthening national evaluation capacity, part of their costs could also be covered by available funds from the 'implementation costs' of a 'capacity development' activity.

6. What criteria and questions should a Joint Evaluation assess?

33. Whilst each Joint Evaluation has different questions, it typically assesses the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, appropriateness, coverage, and/or connectedness of a joint intervention or a range of convergent interventions (See [Technical Note on Evaluation Criteria and Questions](#)).
34. 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 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](#)).
35. By default, some of the questions of a Joint Evaluation should relate to the appropriateness of collaboration among the organizations during design and implementation of the programme/project activities. Box 4 below provides some examples of evaluation questions that relate to collaboration.

Box 4: Examples of Evaluation Questions related to joint programming/implementation 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 contributed to broader national policy outcomes/results?
Efficiency	To what extent and how has any joint programming led to improved coherence within the intervention?
Sustainability	To what extent has any joint co-ordination led to longer-term partnerships and synergies?

7. How to review evaluation deliverables and ensure their quality?

36. The quality and credibility of the evaluation should not be compromised under any circumstance.
37. 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 joint evaluations. It is therefore advised to:
 - Limit the number of evaluation reference group members to one staff per agency. This staff is then responsible for submitting feedback for the agency as a whole (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 face-to-face or virtual meetings (i.e. not by 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=agree) so that the process is not halted for an unnecessarily long time.
38. 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 Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) is comprised of a comprehensive guidance package¹¹, an outsourced Quality Support (QS) Service, technical assistance from REOs 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 2 for the decision tree on the quality assurance system.
39. **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 Joint Evaluation. WFP may still offer to be part of the Evaluation Reference Group but this evaluation would not be considered a WFP Joint Evaluation.**

¹¹ WFP DEQAS comprises of a process guide, Technical Notes, quality checklists and templates for the evaluation deliverables (TOR, Inception Report, Final Report).

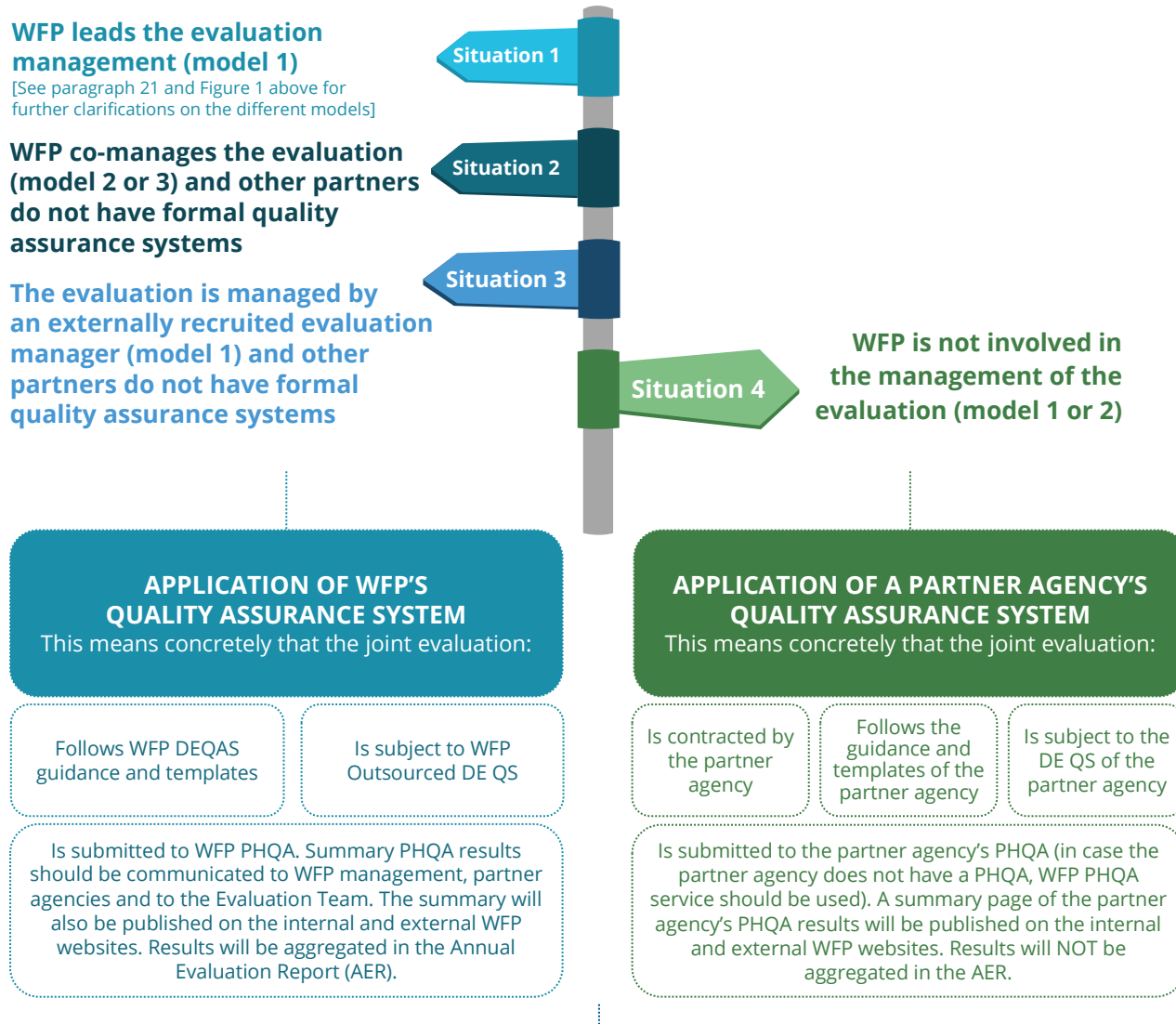
Fig 2: Decide which quality assurance system applies to the Joint Evaluation

The following criteria can guide the Evaluation Steering Committee decision:

- Select the most comprehensive/effective system
- Select the system of the agency that will lead the management of the evaluation; this is often also the agency that will contract the evaluation on behalf of the other agencies

The following key principles should be adhered to:

- To avoid duplication, commissioning partners should not apply different QS or PHQA systems in parallel
- Commissioning partners should not mix elements of various agencies' quality assurance systems. Rather, they should select one agency's guidance/templates, DE QS and PHQA system and apply them consistently to all evaluation deliverables (TORs, IRs, ERs), making sure to fully use the feedback received



In either case, partners should make sure they have a common understanding of a realistic timeframe to apply the QA mechanisms and be able to invest the estimated level of effort to review the draft deliverables. This is particularly crucial for Joint Evaluations with national partners.

8. What are specific considerations for joint evaluations across all evaluation phases?

40. The main phases and steps for a WFP Decentralized Evaluation 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 5 below. More guidance is available in the UNEG Resource Pack.

Table 5: Evaluation phases – specific considerations for joint evaluations

<p>Phase 1 PLANNING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When considering the scope and timing of the Joint Evaluation, check synergies with other evaluations in the country/region, and with UNSDCF planning and evaluation cycles. • If possible, get a letter of commitment from other agencies confirming the intention to commission a Joint Evaluation. • Check whether minimum requirements (box 2 above) for WFP engagement in joint evaluations are met. • Enter the evaluation into the MIS. <p style="color: #4F81BD; margin-top: 10px;">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 and consensus through a face-to-face meeting. • Analyze institutional and contextual risks which may include, for example: <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, 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 the evaluation deliverables and determine the evaluation process steps. Clarify that the Joint Evaluation will result in a single report and 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. • Assess and agree on QS 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 longer preparation phase than is foreseen in the DEQAS.
<p>Phase 2 PREPARATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-confirm participation of WFP in the joint evaluation, as well as WFP's and partners' role in the management of the evaluation.

- Promote mutual trust and confidence among partners, rather than tight bureaucratic control and predetermined administrative processes.¹²
- 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.
- 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.

Note: If staff involved in evaluation management are based in different locations, it is important to plan and budget for travel costs to allow for a few face-to-face meetings especially at initial stages.

With Government

- In case of joint evaluations with a government with limited evaluation capacity, particular efforts are needed to ensure active government participation. Examples of actions and approaches include:
 - provide appropriate orientation as well as access to training and other capacity building initiatives;
 - arrange for a secondment to the government institution;
 - systematically update government representatives in the Steering Committee on latest developments;
 - mobilize CO management and programme colleagues to reinforce messages and requests to government;
 - have all communication to ERG members signed/sent by the co-commissioning government ministry.

Purpose, scope, methodology

- Refine and agree on the purpose of the evaluation and a well-defined scope.
- Agree on a limited 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-off.
- 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. In-kind contribution in the form of staff time, for example, can be factored in. Explicitly acknowledging different types of inputs will increase ownership and help balance power relations.

¹² 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 contracting arrangements (i.e. which agency will formally contract the evaluation team? Will it be through an LTA or a tender-based process or HR recruitment?).
- 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 evaluation team members, (ii) shortlisting CVs/LTA proposals (WFP's tools to assess proposals/evaluation teams can be proposed for this purpose), (iii) interviewing, and (iv) drafting recommendations for hiring.

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

- Prioritize the key documents and data-sets 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 other 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 on.
- Select which quality assurance and assessment system will be applied (guidance, templates, internal or external quality assurance, post-hoc quality assessment) and ensure that all (co)managers and agency focal points are familiar with it.
- Clarify requirements for the evaluation recommendations (single or joint). Recommendations in principle should target each and/or all of the commissioning agencies. However, for joint evaluations with government where WFP has had a truly minor 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 evaluation team at TOR formulation or, latest, at the inception phase.
- Agree on modalities for preparing a management response to the evaluation recommendations, and an action plan for its implementation.

Communication and dissemination

- Refine communication and dissemination plans. Activities should build on the comparative advantages of each agency in terms of networks, (social) media channels in place, local languages, knowledge on communication for specific target groups (e.g. UNICEF- children), and HR capacities.
- Make an inventory of agency/government regulations in terms of publication rules, copyright and branding requirements.
- Agree on dissemination protocols.
- Document/record 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

- Provide the evaluation team with a complete list of project sites, so that the evaluation team can easily see in which geographical areas one or more of the commissioning agencies have a common presence.
- Ensure that all agencies are equally consulted and represented:
 - during the initial briefing to the evaluation team (all commissioning agencies should be present for this meeting);
 - when agreeing on the evaluation matrix;
 - when agreeing on 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 answers in a transparent manner and obtain written approval of the report from each commissioning entity.

<p>Phase 4</p> <p>DATA COLLECTION</p>	<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 with one voice, by holding debriefing meetings jointly, with all commissioning agencies present.
<p>Phase 5</p> <p>DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment on the 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. • Register and communicate comments and answers in a transparent manner. • Organize a workshop with all commissioning agencies to discuss draft recommendations and follow-up. Where the scope of the evaluation covers more than one country, conduct a management response formulation exercise at the level of each country. • Even more than for single agency evaluations, recommendations in joint evaluations risk going beyond the scope of the evaluation. When discussing the recommendations, it is therefore crucial to remind stakeholders of the precise scope that had been agreed in the inception phase. • Recommendations should be formulated in such 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. • Ensure written approval of the evaluation report is given by all members of the evaluation steering group, circulating a PDF file that cannot easily be modified.
<p>Phase 6</p> <p>DISSEMINATION, MANAGEMENT RESPONSE, AND FOLLOW-UP</p>	<p><i>Dissemination</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abide by WFP's and partner organizations' publication rules. Copyright of Joint Evaluation 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 Joint Evaluation products in alpha order, e.g. FAO, IFAD, WFP. • Publish Joint Evaluation products on WFP's systems, irrespective of WFP's level of engagement in the management of the evaluation. • Implement joint dissemination activities. If applicable, rely on the participating agency that has the best access to media, academic fora, conference organizers, etc. <p><i>Management Response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not done in phase 5, organize a workshop with all commissioning agencies to discuss recommendations and draft a management response outlining the follow-up actions. • Issue a joint management response to evaluation recommendations, ideally complemented with agency-specific ones. • Agreed follow-up actions should be agency-specific to ensure adequate commitment to implement them. • Ensure that WFP management prepares a management response to recommendations specifically addressed to WFP, even if partners do not have a policy or process in place for following-up on evaluation recommendations. <p><i>Follow-Up (Responsibility of Management)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on a mechanism to ensure that agencies indeed act on the identified follow-up actions within the established deadlines. Nominate a responsible staff within each agency to periodically undertake joint oversight, in particular 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. • Some of the evaluation recommendations may not require action on the side of WFP. Those recommendations do not need to be registered in WFP's Corporate Management Response database.

For more information on Decentralized Evaluations visit our webpage <http://newgo.wfp.org/how-do-i-do-an-evaluation>
Or contact OEV Cap/Qual Unit at: wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org