POLICY EVALUATION

WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)

Evaluation Report

March 2017

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Commissioned by the

WFP Office of Evaluation

Report number: OEV/2016/010

World Food Programme
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Executive Summary

Introduction and Evaluation Features

1.   The WFP Executive Board approved the Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017) (CPS) in June 2014. Although it was called a strategy, the CPS was included in WFP's Policy Compendium to aid implementation of the Strategic Plan. While the CPS had been implemented for only two and a half years before being evaluated, this policy evaluation is timely given the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the development of WFP's Integrated Road Map (IRM) (2017–2021).

2.   This policy evaluation posed three main questions:

- How good is the strategy?

- What were the initial results of the strategy?

- Why has the strategy produced the results that have been observed?

3.   Between June and November 2016, evaluation data were collected at the global, regional and country levels through the following lines of inquiry, which were fully triangulated during the data analysis phase:

- a retrospective construction of a theory of change underlying the CPS;

- extensive document and literature review;

- field missions to country offices in Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Honduras, Mozambique and Somalia, the regional bureaux in Bangkok, Johannesburg and Nairobi, and WFP offices in Dubai and New York, representing a cross-section of WFP's operating environments;[1]

- review of comparator organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, through document reviews and interviews;

- analysis of WFP's partnership data, particularly from Standard Project Reports and WFP's country office tool for managing effectively (COMET); and

- key informant interviews with staff at WFP Headquarters.

4.   Limitations to the evaluation included the absence of comprehensive and reliable data on partnerships prior to the roll-out of COMET in 2016 and the low response rate to the survey of Board members,[2] which could not be used as a separate line of

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[1] Different criteria were used to make these selections. For country offices: data availability, including the number and types of WFP partners reported; contributions from the host government; the availability of draft regional partner engagement strategies; cluster activity; country income status; and inclusion in piloting of country strategic plans or the Financial Framework Review. For regional bureaux, the main selection criterion was progress in the roll-out of COMET. WFP offices were selected based on their reporting relationship to WFP's Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department, Operations Management Department, Government Partnerships Division or Communications Division; coordination features; and the efficiency of travel arrangements within the brief evaluation timeframe.

[2] Of approximately 400 Board members and observers contacted, 12 – 3 percent – responded to the survey.

evidence. Despite these limitations, the evaluation team was able to develop valid findings and conclusions.

Context

5. The evaluation applied the definition of partnership provided in the CPS:[3]

- Partnerships refer to collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people WFP serves by:
  - combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds;
  - working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; and
  - sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability.

- Partnerships serve to achieve objectives (both the collective partnership's objectives and individual partner goals) that could not be achieved as efficiently, effectively or innovatively alone, and where the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved.

6. In the CPS, "types of partners" refers to the nature of the partnerships between WFP and other entities. They include:

- *resource partners* providing human, financial and technical resources;

- *knowledge partners* contributing information, evaluation and analysis;

- *policy and governance partners* working on WFP's own policies and governance, regional and country hunger and nutrition policies, and hunger and institutional governance;

- *advocacy partners* supporting WFP's work to advocate for food security and nutrition; and

- *capability partners* supporting the design and implementation of programmes and operations.

7. For WFP, partnership sits at one end of a continuum of collaborative relationships. At the opposite end of this continuum are transactional relationships, which are purely contractual or quasi-contractual. The CPS does not attach a value judgement to either.

8. During the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, the importance of partnerships for humanitarian assistance was reaffirmed. WFP and several of its partners committed to deepening collaborative action.

9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirms commitments to partnership as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development in 2012. SDG 17 calls on actors to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

10. WFP's increased focus on partnerships was described in the Strategic Plan (2008–2013). The 2012–2016 Fit for Purpose process and subsequent organizational

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[3] WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017).

restructuring led to the creation of the Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department in 2013. The focus on partnerships was reiterated in the Strategic Plan (2014–2017) and is reflected in the IRM (2017–2021).[4]

11.　Prior to approval of the CPS in 2014, WFP defined its approach to partnering in various policy documents[5] covering partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, the Rome-based agencies and the private sector. Despite this, the 2012 evaluation "From Food Aid to Food Assistance: Working in Partnership" revealed that there was "no commonly accepted definition of partnership in WFP [and] limited understanding of what makes an effective partnership, the principles of good partner and how to monitor the effectiveness of partnerships."[6] It recommended that WFP develop an organization-wide partnership strategy, increase training for staff, conduct direct outreach to partners, and develop internal incentives for managers to promote the partnership strategy.[7]

12.　The evolution of WFP's work on partnerships is captured in Figure 1.

Figure 1　　Evolution of WFP's work on partnerships

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13.   WFP approved the CPS (2014–2017) to establish a sound basis for excellence in partnering, with the aim of becoming the "partner of choice"[7] in food assistance.

14.   The CPS seeks to promote excellence in partnering by: i) establishing principles and practices to govern WFP's partnering arrangements and guide the selection and development of partnerships; ii) bringing together insights from past and current partnership work; iii) providing an overarching vision for WFP's work in partnerships; and iv) reinforcing the evolution of WFP's culture from "we deliver"' to "we deliver better together".

15.   Resources for CPS implementation were deliberately kept to a minimum to encourage the mainstreaming of partnering as an operating modality rather than a stand-alone initiative requiring substantial additional funding to ensure implementation.

16.   Following CPS approval, WFP's Partnership and Advocacy Coordination Division (PGC) drafted the CPS Action Plan (2014–2017). To date, PGC has completed tasks in the following areas of the action plan:[8]

- strategy – conducting an annual partnership mapping exercise since 2014;

- advocacy – developing and disseminating the WFP Advocacy Framework;

- engagement strategies – developing and disseminating a strategy for engagement with NGOs;

- partnership agreements – developing a new template for trust fund and emergency field-level agreements;

- relationship management – compiling contacts of Headquarters-based partnership focal points for major partners;

- partnership management – creating a network of partnership focal points in regional bureaux; and

- implementation support:

  - creating and managing the Intranet partnership page, including the online Partnership Resource Centre;

  - developing training materials and facilitating WFP-wide training;[9]

  - implementing training and training of trainers in core partnering skills, facilitated by PGC; and

  - implementing a training course on engaging with host governments.[10]

17.   Other WFP evaluations conducted since 2012[11] confirmed that partnerships play a central role in WFP's work. This can be noted in WFP's role as leader or co-

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[7] WFP/EB.A/2014/5-B.

[8] CPS Implementation Approach and Priorities 2015 (May 2016 update) and PGC Action Plan 2014 (as of August 2016).

[9] Such as the Policy and Programme Division's Learning Journey and Human Resources Division's Leading for Zero Hunger.

[10] This training was created and facilitated by the Centre for Political and Diplomatic Studies.

[11] These include country and regional portfolio evaluations completed between 2013 and 2016, annual evaluation reports for 2012 to 2015, three policy and six strategic evaluations conducted between 2012 and 2015, and syntheses of operations evaluations since 2014.

leader of the logistics, emergency telecommunications and food security clusters.[12] Areas for improvement include: i) missed opportunities for synergies resulting from WFP's engagement in predominantly contractual relationships; ii) an inability to partner with other United Nations agencies because of disagreements over mandate boundaries; and iii) the short-term nature of WFP's funding, which limits longer-term partnerships.

Key Findings

Quality of the Strategy

18.   The CPS outlines a clear vision of partnership for WFP, but most WFP staff and partners consulted were not familiar with the strategy or its partnership vision. However, the definitions of "good partnering" provided by most respondents were similar to those in the CPS.

19.   The CPS notes that to be meaningful, the term "partnership" should not be applied to every collaborative relationship that WFP engages in, but only to those at the "partnership" end of the continuum. WFP's current practice in the field does not yet reflect this, however. The term "partnership" is still used inconsistently in WFP.

20.   The CPS reflects good partnership practices as outlined in the literature at the time of its design, including the conviction that partnerships should be driven by agreed goals and that transparency, accountability and communication are fundamental to successful partnering.[13]

21.   The CPS and accompanying action plan fully or partly reflect six of the seven recommendations from the 2012 evaluation. The recommendation to articulate a comprehensive partnership strategy, define "partnership" and articulate partnership principles has been addressed. Recommendations noted in the CPS and action plan that have not been fully addressed include the development of clear incentives for WFP staff and managers to engage in stronger partnering, and an explicit communications strategy for partnerships.

22.   The vision and principles for partnership outlined in the CPS are similar to those in the partnership strategies and practices of FAO, UNICEF and Save the Children, which also consider partnering as essential to fulfilling the organization's mandate and emphasize that partnering must be based on shared values and objectives; be transparent and results-oriented; and involve shared ownership and accountability.

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[12] WFP leads the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters, and co-leads the Food Security Cluster with FAO.

[13] For example, Witte, J.M. & Reinicke, W. 2005. *Business UNusual: Facilitating United Nations Reform Through Partnerships*; Selsky, J.W. & Parker, B. 2005. Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address Social Issues: Challenges to Theory and Practice. *Journal of Management*, 31(6): 849–873; Dahan, N.M., Doh, J.P., Oetzel, J. & Yaziji, M. 2010. *Corporate-NGO Collaboration: Co-creating New Business Models for Developing Markets*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee. 2014. *Empowered Leadership* (concept paper); and Bexell, M. 2012. *Global Governance, Gains and Gender*.

23.   The CPS was relevant to WFP's partnership-related commitments at the time of its approval.[14] While the strategy remains broadly relevant in light of major external developments, its direct applicability to the IRM (2017–2021) is limited.

24.   The CPS filled a gap in WFP's strategic framework by providing definitions of partnership and related principles. However, the views of WFP staff consulted about the strategy's relevance to their work varied. Some staff members involved in developing partnership strategies or their equivalents noted that the CPS provides them with high-level guidance and inspiration to "think outside the box". Most other staff members who had read the CPS noted that it is too generic to be of practical use. At Headquarters, several staff members reported that the CPS is primarily a document "for PGC", with limited relevance to their units.

25.   The CPS reflects gender equality and equity considerations, positively distinguishing itself from the strategies of comparator organizations, with the exception of FAO. However, at the time of the evaluation, there was no guidance available to ensure that partners complied with gender and equity principles.

Initial Results of the Strategy

26.   While the CPS does not include an explicit results framework, it outlines key milestones (Figure 2) and expected results.[15] Given the early stage of implementation, the evaluation team did not limit its assessment to changes that were directly attributable to CPS implementation, but also explored the extent to which the partnering behaviours of country offices, regional bureaux and WFP offices are aligned with or indicate progress towards the strategy's vision and expected results of partnership.

Figure 2   Key milestones in CPS implementation

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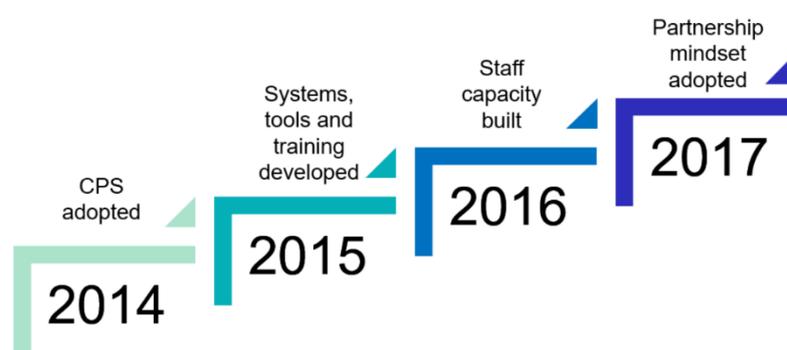
[14] These include commitments to: the 2007 Principles of Partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform; operating in the cluster approach adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2005; enhancing inter-agency cooperation as reflected in the Delivering as One initiative; strengthening system-wide coherence by partnering and coordinating with other agencies and programmes on implementing the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review; and collaborating with other Rome-based agencies.

[15] These are: i) range of best practice tools, guidance, training and support to help country offices select and manage partnerships; ii) strategic focus on partnerships at the global, regional and country levels; iii) consistent approach to the selection, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of, and reporting on, partnerships; iv) common understanding throughout WFP of the benefits and principles of partnership; and v) cost-effective collaboration, reduced overlap and duplication, and minimized transaction costs.

Quality, availability and applicability of CPS-related guidelines and tools

27.   PGC has produced and disseminated a range of guidelines and tools on partnerships and partnership management. These materials reflect the principles of good partnership in line with the CPS; draw on current literature; are usually concise and clearly articulated; and address acknowledged gaps in the knowledge and skills of WFP staff. However, most materials are available only in English and the materials on engaging with host governments are insufficiently adapted to the WFP context.

28.   To date, WFP's resources have been accessed primarily by staff at Headquarters and WFP offices, who constituted 84 percent of traffic to the online Partnership Resource Centre and 74 percent of traffic to the partnership homepage.[16] Most respondents from country offices and regional bureaux had never heard of the Partnership Resource Centre.

29.   The development of regional partnership strategies is taking longer than anticipated. At the end of 2016, only three of the six regional bureaux – Bangkok, Nairobi and Panama – had drafted regional partnership documents.[17] Uncertainty also exists about the role of the regional partnership strategies in guiding country-level roll-out of the CPS.

Importance and centrality of partnerships in WFP plans and operations

30.   Since 2014, WFP has made progress in integrating partnership into its evolving polices, systems and tools. The evaluation found explicit reference to the importance of working in partnership in WFP policies and strategies developed since 2014; operational guidance documents such as planning and reporting templates; the four partnering capabilities that are now reflected in all job profiles; and WFP Strategic Plans for 2014–2017 and 2017–2021. However, these documents do not uniformly reflect the full spectrum of partner types outlined in the CPS, and most do not reflect the gender or equity dimensions of partnering.

31.   WFP has undertaken organizational restructuring at Headquarters and regional bureaux to improve its focus and work on partnerships, including by creating PGC to facilitate CPS implementation and establishing a network of partnership focal points. Some WFP offices are also making changes to improve partnering; most of the country office leadership consulted did not see a need for significant restructuring given that most limitations to partnering were related to other factors.

Strengthening partnership-related monitoring and reporting

32.   Since 2014, WFP has strengthened its data collection and reporting on partnerships. At Headquarters, WFP collects data on many aspects of partnering, including with the private sector, with NGOs and in the context of South–South collaboration. Finalizing the roll-out of COMET in 2016 enhanced WFP's data collection on partnerships by capturing information on new areas such as partner type.

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[16] Google Analytics report – Partnerships for the period 15 July 2015–17 February 2016. There were 3,282 individual visits to the homepage during this period and 942 visits to the Partnership Resource Centre.

[17] The Regional Bureau Johannesburg finalized a draft regional partnership strategy in January 2017.

33.   Despite this progress, WFP staff do not yet fully utilize COMET and other information systems[18] to capture and analyse data on the effectiveness and efficiency of partnerships. Standardized data available through platforms such as COMET and the WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS)[19] are not able to capture complementarities among partners, duplication of efforts or innovations from partnering.

Expanding collaboration beyond transactional relationships and forming more sustainable partnerships

34.   According to COMET data from November 2016, WFP partners with 2,951 entities worldwide in 31,515 reported "types" of partnership, indicating that relationships with a single organization tend to serve multiple functions. While multi-functional partnerships were already observed in the 2012 thematic evaluation on partnerships,[7] data collected in this evaluation reflect a positive trend in expanding partnership functions and engaging in longer-term relationships, although this trend was not directly influenced by the CPS.

Figure 3   Partner type by region*
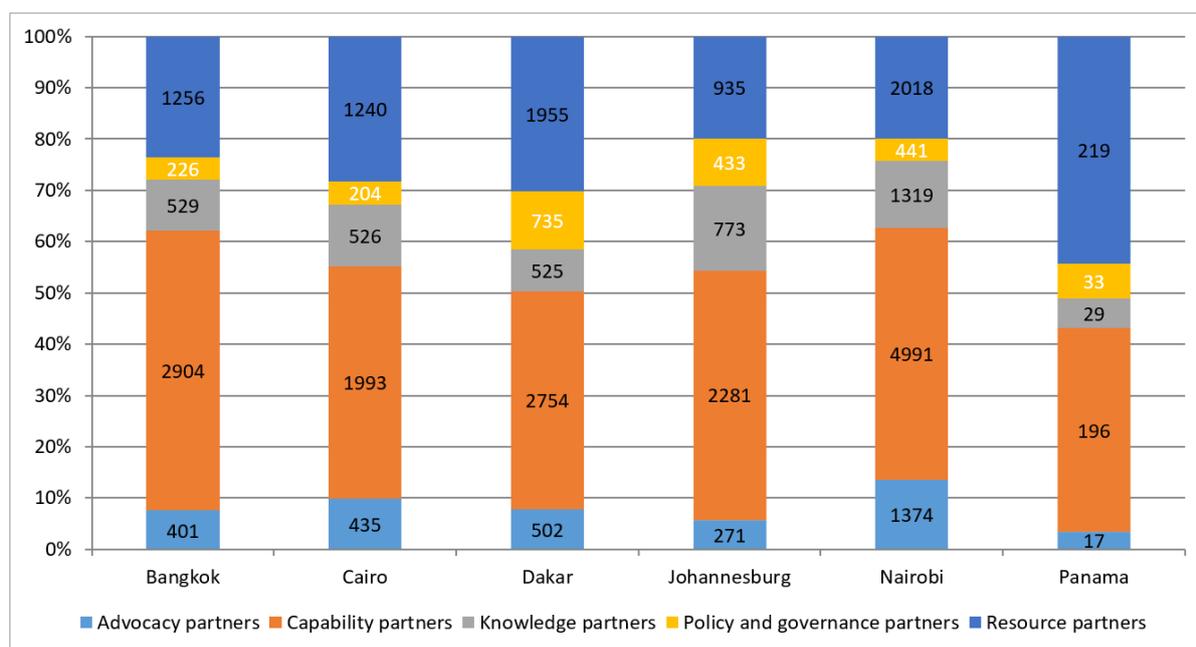
* Total partnership types: 31,515.

Sources: PGC report "Mapping of WFP Partnerships at the Global Level"; COMET Data, November 2016.

35.   WFP's relationships with national NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) still tend to focus on delivery and be primarily contractual. However, the

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[18] These systems include Standard Project Report Intelligent Next Generation (SPRING), the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS) and new online platforms such as Insight/Foresight (IN/FO).

[19] WINGS is used to manage WFP's programme planning and implementation, procurement, logistics, finance travel and human resources.

evaluation found evidence[20] that these relationships are broadening. The 2012 evaluation on working in partnership noted that 91 percent of NGOs working with WFP in 2009 were defined as "cooperating partners" with which WFP had primarily transactional relationships. According to COMET data from November 2016, only 67 percent of NGO and CBO partners were classified as cooperating partners, while 31 percent were listed as both cooperating and complementary, and approximately 1 percent were listed as complementary partners.[21]

36.   Most WFP partners consulted described their relationship with WFP as generally consistent with the CPS partnership principles of equity, transparency, complementarity, results orientation and responsibility. However, some NGOs noted room for improvement on administrative arrangements and the need to continue expanding NGO partnerships beyond transactional relationships. Other partners noted that WFP takes unilateral decisions without adequately listening to or consulting partners.

Synergies and cost efficiencies resulting from partnering

37.   By drawing on complementary strengths and reducing duplication of efforts, partnering enhances the reach and/or quality of programming by WFP and its partners. This has been illustrated by WFP's leadership in the cluster system; however data on the benefits derived from other partnerships are uneven and largely anecdotal.

Explanatory Factors for Results Achieved

External context – enabling factors

38.   WFP's operating environments have changed since 2014, requiring new partnership modalities to respond to the demands and commitments deriving from the 2030 Agenda.

39.   Regional and country contexts are shaped by the fact that a growing number of countries have reached or are approaching middle-income status, which often includes strengthened public-sector capabilities. Thus, there is an increasing appetite among host governments to engage with development and humanitarian actors in partnerships that go beyond transactional service provider–recipient interactions. WFP engages in partnerships related to policy, governance, knowledge and advocacy in all regions, especially in middle- and upper-middle-income countries.

External context – limiting factors

40.   There have been successes related to enhanced collaboration within the United Nations; however some agencies view WFP as a competitor in countries where food assistance is no longer required and where WFP is strengthening government

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[20] Based on evidence from document reviews, stakeholder consultations and partnership data presented in the 2012 evaluation and COMET.

[21] Complementary partners have shared objectives and common target groups and are not involved in transactional relationships with WFP. This definition excludes partner organizations that have signed field-level agreements with WFP, which are referred to as "cooperating partners". The cooperating and complementary partner categories are used in COMET but not the CPS, which describes a continuum of collaborative relationships from transactional to partnership. However, the two terms are sufficiently aligned to justify the assumption that cooperating partners tend to be transactional, while complementary partners engage in partnerships as outlined in the CPS.

capacity. Issues related to effective collaboration among the Rome-based agencies were highlighted in the Board discussions leading to approval of the WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021).

41.   In least-developed countries and countries experiencing or recovering from acute crises, WFP plays a significant role in food or cash transfers. During the period under review, global crises placed high demands on WFP to provide humanitarian assistance. To fulfil this role, the organization works with numerous implementing partners, especially NGOs. The sheer number of WFP's partners, the absence of dedicated resources for strengthening partners' capacity and the imperative for rapid response make it difficult for country offices to engage with NGOs in anything but transactional relationships with one-way accountability.

Internal context – enabling factors

42.   WFP's perceived organizational strengths make it a strong and desirable partner. These strengths include its field presence and the "can-do" attitude, technical expertise and skills of its staff, especially in such areas as vulnerability analysis and mapping, logistics, supply chains and transport. Most United Nations agencies and some NGOs highlight WFP's strong performance as a leader in humanitarian clusters.

43.   While some large NGOs perceive WFP as a competitor for donor resources, many local and international NGOs appreciate WFP as a financial partner and provider of infrastructure and logistics support in challenging environments. In the country offices, regional bureaux and WFP offices visited, partners also highlighted the constructive attitude, commitment and leadership of individual WFP staff members and managers.

44.   In WFP's internal discourse, partnership has been prominent for several years. This is likely to have contributed to staff's awareness of the issue irrespective of knowledge of the CPS. The inclusion of partnership as a core competency for assessing managers' performance will help to strengthen results in this area.

Internal context – limiting factors

45.   Despite the emphasis on partnership within WFP, implementation of the CPS has been hampered by inconsistent and narrow ownership of the strategy and a lack of accountability. While the CPS assigns responsibility and accountability for its implementation to all Headquarters units, regional bureaux and country offices, only PGC has been held accountable. There is no organization-wide workplan to define milestones for other units, several of which consider the CPS to be "for PGC, but not for us".

46.   The financial investment in CPS implementation is incongruent with WFP's aspirational vision for partnership as outlined in the IRM. Commensurate with available resources, CPS implementation has focused largely on the Partnership Resource Centre, staff training and integrating partnership dimensions into internal systems and tools. The results of CPS implementation have yet to reach the country level; country offices, regional bureaux and WFP offices have not received adequate resources for country-level partnering or partnership-related staff training.

47.   While there are differences among individual WFP offices and units, the staff consulted for this evaluation agreed that WFP's culture still tends to focus on delivery and short-term impact. Legal frameworks used to manage collaborative relationships focus on audit and control, impeding the development of sustainable partnerships based on mutual trust. WFP's efforts to expand partnerships with the private sector face particular challenges. Field staff noted difficulties in distinguishing a "vendor" from a "private partner", and that WFP's procurement, due diligence and cost-recovery processes limit the organization's ability to develop complex, multi-faceted relationships.

48.   WFP staff also indicated the need to enhance their partnership-related knowledge and skills, especially in relation to strengthening national capacities, engaging in high-level policy dialogue and advocacy with governments, and country- and regional-level partnering with the private sector.

Conclusions

49.   Although the CPS includes a clear vision for partnership, several conditions for its successful implementation have not been met.

50.   The CPS includes attention to gender equality and equity concerns, but there is a lack of guidance to ensure that these principles are appropriately integrated into all partnerships.

51.   WFP is making progress towards most of the five results outlined in the CPS, but there remains considerable scope for increasing the strategy's impact.

52.   WFP's partnership practices are both positively and negatively affected by a variety of internal and external factors. The evaluation highlighted:

- the limited financial resources invested in CPS implementation to date, which are incongruent with WFP's aspirational commitments to partnership;

- the absence of organization-wide ownership of and accountability for CPS implementation;

- the need to ensure that existing guidance and tools on partnering are disseminated and used, and that data collection and reporting on partnerships are strengthened; and

- an internal environment within WFP that has improved but is not yet consistently conducive to partnering.

Lessons

53.   The 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review all highlight the importance of partnerships in humanitarian response and sustainable development. WFP's IRM (2017–2021) reflects the organization's commitment to this partnership mind set. However, mainstreaming of a partnering approach that underpins the way in which WFP operates requires a significant organizational transformation with consistent leadership, accountability, resources, capacities and systems able to capture and report on change.

Recommendations

54.   The following six recommendations are derived from the evaluation findings and conclusions and were informed by a February 2017 workshop attended by staff from across WFP. They reflect recent changes in WFP's approach to partnerships, including the "whole of society" approach to zero hunger.[1]

55.   **Recommendation 1**: By the end of 2017, the IRM steering committee should finalize a costed action plan for implementing the partnership pillar of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021) that builds on the principles outlined in the CPS, clearly identifies major milestones by unit and is aligned with the Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021).

56.   **Recommendation 2**: WFP should immediately include the development of a partnership action plan as a mandatory component of each country strategic plan and interim country strategic plan, with resources allocated to partnering activities in country portfolio budgets.

57.   **Recommendation 3**: By the end of 2017, WFP should update guidance and revise or develop practical tools that enable staff to engage in a broad range of partnerships, including long-term, multi-functional and non-commodity-based partnerships.

58.   **Recommendation 4**: By June 2018, the Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department should assist country offices and regional bureaux in strengthening their partnering skills by developing guidance on the preparation of country-level partnership action plans, working with regional bureaux to prepare and roll out context-specific country-level partnership training modules, and developing tools for partnership-related knowledge management and dissemination.

59.   **Recommendation 5**: By the end of 2018, WFP should strengthen its systems for capturing qualitative data on partnering and develop templates that include a requirement to report on the effectiveness, efficiency and innovative nature of partnerships.

60.   **Recommendation 6**: By the end of 2018, WFP should ensure that prioritized partnership agreements with United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, private-sector actors, international and regional financial institutions, regional economic organizations have been revised to support the partnership pillar of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021).

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[1] The Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department is integrating the "whole of society approach" into roll-out of the IRM. The approach commits WFP to investing in civil society organizations, governments, national disaster management agencies, national NGOs, the Red Cross and other organizations.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Evaluation Features

Evaluation Rationale and Scope

1.   Rationale: The World Food Programme's (WFP) policy on the formulation of corporate policies specifies that they should be evaluated within four to six years from the start of implementation. While titled a 'strategy', the WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017) (hereafter referred to as the 'CPS') was approved by the Executive Board and included in the WFP Policy Compendium to aid implementation of the Strategic Plan (2014-2017).

2.   Although the CPS has only had two years of implementation, its evaluation is timely considering the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in September 2015, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, as well as the development of a new WFP Strategic Plan (SP) 2017-2021 and related documents in the Integrated Roadmap (IRM) approved at the second regular session of the WFP Executive Board (EB) in November, 2016.

3.   Objectives: As stated in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), the evaluation serves the dual objectives of accountability and learning, with an emphasis placed on learning from the early implementation of the CPS and lessons for WFP's future partnerships in an SDG era.

4.   Scope: The evaluand is the WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017) and the tools developed to implement it, including the Corporate Partnership Strategy Action Plan and other corporate partnership-related guidance documents, including training modules and partnership guidance materials available on WFP's Partnership Resource Centre. The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, connectedness and coherence of the CPS and its early implementation from 2014 to 2016, but also refers to earlier years to understand the evolution of WFP's approach to partnering.

5.   Intended users: Principal intended users of the evaluation are the members of the Internal Reference Group (see TOR in Annex 1), and other internal stakeholders as shown in Table 1 in section 3.1. It is expected that the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation will be used by these groups to inform WFP's policy making and management decisions related to partnership practices in the context of the new Integrated Roadmap.

Methodology

6.   The evaluation was conducted between June and November 2016 by an independent team of eight international and six regional/national evaluators, as well as two senior advisors for comparative analysis and evaluation methodology respectively. The WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) prepared the Terms of Reference in consultation with key stakeholders, oversaw the evaluation's design and quality assured its implementation and products.

7. A full methodology for the evaluation was set out in the Inception Report (September 2016) and is summarized in Annex 2. All WFP policy evaluations address three main evaluation questions (EQ), which also provide the structure of section 2 of this report:

- EQ1: How good is the strategy?

- EQ2: What were the results[1] of the strategy?

- EQ3: Why has the strategy produced the results that have been observed?

8. The main features of the evaluation methodology included: (i) retrospective construction of a theory of change underlying the CPS (see Annex 3); (ii) a full evaluation matrix (Annex 4); (iii) extensive reviews of internal and external documents and relevant literature; (iv) field missions to Country Offices (CO) in Cambodia, Chad, Egypt, Honduras, Mozambique, and Somalia; to the Regional Bureaux (RB) in Bangkok, Johannesburg, and Nairobi; and, to the WFP Offices in Dubai and New York;[2] (v) a review of four comparator organizations - the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) - using document review and interviews (see Annex 5 for a summary of key insights); (vi) an analysis of partnership data with focus on Standard Project Reports (SPR) and COMET (see Annex 6); (vii) key informant interviews with WFP HQ staff based in Rome; (viii) an electronic survey with WFP Executive Board members (Annex 7). English versions of the interview protocols and survey questions are presented as Annex 8.[3]

9. A list of the 449 stakeholders (194 female, 256 male) consulted is provided in Annex 9. A full bibliography is presented as Annex 10, and an updated version of the triangulation and evidence matrix included in the inception report is shown in Annex 11.

10. Evaluation data were used to test the validity of the constructed theory of change, including the causal link assumptions (Mayne 2014) related to how and why the transitions between different stages of change that are logically implied by the CPS and its Action Plan occur (see Annex 3 for a detailed analysis of the Theory of Change).

11. Gender and equity-related questions and indicators were included in the evaluation matrix and in data collection tools. The evaluation team members ensured that interactions with stakeholders were appropriate to the respective socio-cultural contexts, and in relation to gender and other social roles of the respondents. Confidentiality of stakeholder contributions was ensured by avoiding direct attribution of views to specific individuals. There was no indication that existing power balances among consulted stakeholders, such as asymmetric balances deriving from donor-recipient relationships between WFP and some of its partners, affected stakeholder responses to the evaluation questions.

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1 This standard question was modified slightly to read 'What were the initial results of the strategy?' given the formative nature of the evaluation.
2 Visits to COs lasted between four and five days, visits to RBs and WFP Offices between one and three days. Follow-up consultations via telephone, Skype or email were conducted as necessary.
3 The interview protocols were translated into French, Spanish and Portuguese. The survey for Executive Board Members was conducted in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

12.   The evaluation team used the services of an External Quality Assurance Reviewer who was not involved in data collection or analysis, but focused on providing autonomous quality assurance. The evaluation team systematically applied WFP's Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) quality criteria, templates and checklists.

13.   The main limitations of the evaluation are outlined below along with brief mitigation strategies.

14.   Given the short period of its implementation, the CPS has not yet left a distinctive footprint on WFP's work. The evaluation TOR therefore specified that the second evaluation question would assess the achievement of 'initial' results of the strategy. To answer this question, the evaluation team explored whether observed changes in WFP partnering behaviors at the country and regional levels and in WFP Offices were consistent with the principles outlined in the CPS, rather than limiting the assessment to whether these changes could be attributed to CPS implementation.

15.   The terms 'partner' and 'partnerships' are still used in a variety of ways in WFP. This, along with the fact that the notion of partnerships is relevant to all of the agency's units and departments, has made it difficult for the evaluation to capture the full spectrum of WFP's partnering work. Illustrative examples provided in the report have been drawn from evaluation site visits as these allowed fuller triangulation of data than examples noted in documents only.

16.   During the period under review, WFP completed the full implementation of the Country Office Tool for Managing Effectively (COMET) system. While COMET roll-out and staff training were completed in 2016, partnership related-data were not yet available for all countries at the time of writing the evaluation report.[4] However, the evaluation team was able to assess a complete data set from COMET provided by the Partnership and Advocacy Coordination Division (PGC) in November 2016 at the end of the data collection phase. Data limitations are further elaborated on in Annex 6.

17.   The evaluation took place during a period of significant organizational transformation focusing on the development of the Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021. The evaluation team acknowledged the partnership-related implications of this new strategic direction with challenges to partnering deriving from WFP's systems and processes currently in place.

18.   The response rate to the survey of WFP Executive Board members at 3%[5] is far below the common industry standard of 30% for unsolicited surveys. This low response was due to the coinciding of the survey with intense Board consultations on draft IRM documents. As a result of this low rate, the survey results are not statistically reliable. The twelve responses received were considered in the same way as other individual interviews given that the survey data could not be used as a separate line of evidence with which to triangulate data.

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4 A mapping report compiled by PGC in November 2016 noted that partnership-related data from COMET was not yet available for India, Indonesia, Cape Verde, Angola, Namibia, Eritrea, the Dominican Republic, and Peru.
5 12 out of approximately 400 contacted EB members and alternates responded.

1.2   Context

Terminology

19.   The evaluation used the definition of 'partnership' provided in the CPS,[6] according to which:

- Partnerships refer to collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people WPF serves by:
    - Combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds;
    - Working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; and
    - Sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability.

- Partnerships serve to achieve objectives (both the collective partnership's objectives and individual partner goals) that could not be achieved as efficiently, effectively or innovatively alone, and where the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved.

20.   WFP's definition of partnership sits at one end of a continuum of collaborative relationships. Located at the opposite end of this continuum are 'transactional relationships', which are purely contractual or quasi-contractual. The CPS emphasizes that the continuum from transactional relationship to partnership does not imply a value judgement as the appropriate forms of collaboration vary by context.

21.   The CPS describes three types of 'Guiding Principles for WFP Partnerships'[7]:

- *strategic*, including cost-effectiveness, ethical practice, contribution to WFP's Strategic Objectives;

- *precautionary*, including attentiveness to risk assessment and mitigation; and,

- *prescriptive*, deriving from the 2007 United Nations Global Humanitarian Platform's (GHP) 'Principles of Partnership' and including equity,[8] transparency, results-orientation, responsibility, and complementarity, which are elaborated on in Annex 12.

22.   The evaluation also used terminology set out in the CPS to describe the types, groups and categories of partners that WFP engages with.

- "Types of partners" refers to nature of the partnership with WFP – that is, what the partnership is based on. The CPS distinguishes between:
    - *Resource partners* who provide human, financial, and technical resources;
    - *Knowledge partners* who contribute information, evaluation and analysis;

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6 Ibid, p8.
7 CPS, paragraphs 20-26.
8 While the GHP referred to 'equality', WFP prefers the term 'equity' to reflect that all partners contribute something to a collaborative relationship and must be respected regardless of size or status (CPS, paragraph 25).

- *Policy and governance partners* who work on WFP's own policies, governance, regional and country hunger and nutrition policies, and hunger and institutional governance;
- *Advocacy partners* who support WFP's work to advocate for food security and nutrition;
- *Capability partners* who support the design and implementation of programs and operations.

- "Groups of partners" refers the organizational classification of the partner, such as government partners, NGO partners, United Nations (UN) partners, etc. As is further discussed under Finding 3, WFP is inconsistent in its reporting on partners and sometimes uses the term 'type' of partner to refer to these organizational classifications.

- "Category of partners" refers to the sub-classification within a group. For example, the group of NGO partners includes the categories of local NGOs and international NGOs.

External context

23. Over the past decade, the humanitarian sector has seen a range of new approaches to improving collaboration between humanitarian organizations. These partnership-oriented relationships need to be based on trust, mutual respect and accountability, shared risk and a combined effort to reach common goals. The Humanitarian Reform Agenda, launched in 2005, led to the development of the Cluster Approach and formation of Humanitarian Country Teams. In 2007, the Global Humanitarian Platform adopted "Principles of Partnership" to enhance equality, transparency, results-orientation, responsibility and complementarity among United Nations and non-UN humanitarian actors. The global framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), explicitly identifies international cooperation and global partnership as key considerations for scaling up resilience to cope with risks.[9]

24. Simultaneously, a narrative has emerged around the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships that involve long-term working relationships, through joint programming and strategic alliances, to combine resources and share risk.[10] These multi-stakeholder partnerships involve more than two stakeholder groups and may include partnerships with or between the private sector and foundations and/or triangular cooperation as part of a collaborative humanitarian response.[11]

25. During the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul in May, 2016, the importance of partnerships for the humanitarian sector was reaffirmed. At the WHS, WFP and several of its partners entered into commitments to deepen collaborative action – based on each partner's comparative advantages - in both humanitarian response and development programming. These include participation in a global partnership to strengthen capacities for disaster preparedness at both national and community levels,[12] and signing on to the Commitment to Action on

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9 https://www.wfp.org/stories/three-things-wfp-will-be-doing-world-conference-disaster-risk-reduction; and, https://www.unisdr.org/archive/43289
10 Global Multi-stakeholder Partnerships: Scaling up public-private collective impact for the SDGs. (Hazelwood 2015).
11 Ibid.
12 World Humanitarian Summit Launches Commitments to Take Action. (IISD 2016).

'Transcending humanitarian-development divides: Changing People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need'.[13]

26. At the same time, recent studies by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) in Humanitarian Action[14] and Overseas Development Institute/Humanitarian Policy Group[15] identified key performance gaps for partnerships in the sector due to bureaucratic systems, divergent approaches to coordination, and asymmetrical relationships between aid providers and aid recipients, in particular, with 'interactions [that] remain largely transactional and competitive, rather than reciprocal and collective.[16] Overall, recent literature on partnerships suggests that humanitarian actors have not been able to match the reality on the ground with the rhetoric of partnerships in international discussions.[17] Greater investment is required to build both national and international capacity and support coordination mechanisms between local governments, civil society, international non-governmental organizations and UN agencies, to scale and coordinate the response to humanitarian crises, whilst moving away from purely transactional, contractual relationships.[18]

27. For the past two decades, working in partnerships has also been a key component of international commitments for development, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000) and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development (2012). This approach has been carried forward into Agenda 2030 and its' Sustainable Development Goals (2015). SDG 17 calls on actors to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, while also emphasizing the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships to scale up innovation, increase resources and deliver on the SDGs.

28. The report from Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in September 2016[19] identified the need for a clear definition of partnership across the UN system, a common set of standards for partnering and heightened oversight and accountability of partnership efforts.

29. During the period under review, the global context has been characterized by various large scale humanitarian crises due to natural disasters, armed conflicts – such as in Syria-, and mass displacements contributing to unprecedented numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe and other parts of the world.[20]

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13 Ibid.
14 Working together in the field for effective humanitarian response. (Saavedra and Knox-Clarke 2015b)
15 Time to let go: Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era. (ODI 2016)
16 Ibid.
17 Humanitarian Exchange. Humanitarian Partnerships. (HPN 2011); Missed Opportunities: The Case for Strengthening National and Local Partnership-Based Humanitarian Responses. (Ramalingam, Gray and Cerruti 2013); and, Humanitarian Partnerships: Reality Lags Behind the Rhetoric. (Street 2015)
18 Humanitarian Partnerships: Reality Lags Behind the Rhetoric and Relief Supply Chain Management For Disasters: Humanitarian Aid And Emergency Logistics. (Kovacs and Spens 2012)
19 UN Secretary General. Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system: recommendations. (September 2016) p. 20-21.
20 See, for example: "Is this humanitarian migration crisis different? Migration Policy Debates N.7, OECD, .

WFP context

30.   A timeline illustrating the evolution of WFP's work on partnerships over the past decade is presented in Figure below.

Figure 4   Evolution of WFP's Work on Partnerships
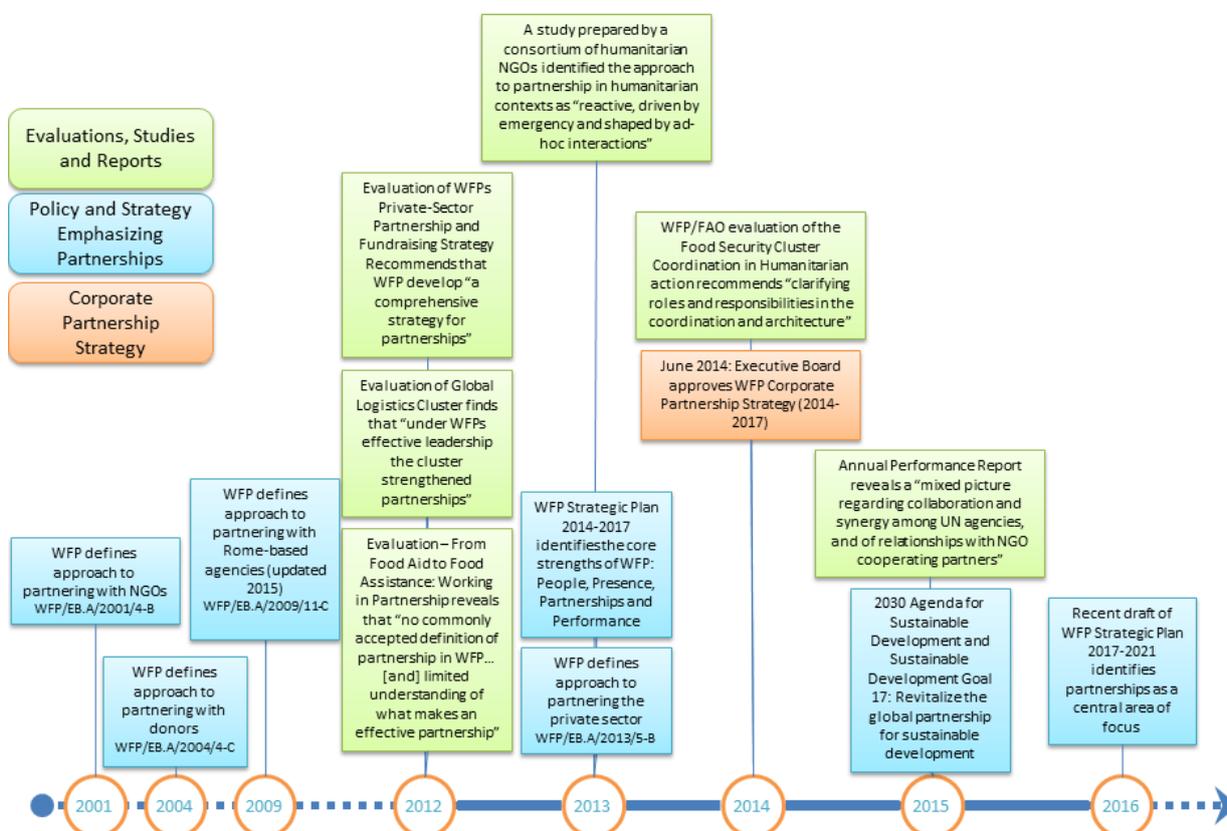
31.   Prior to the approval of the CPS in 2014, WFP defined its approach to partnering in various policy documents: partnerships with NGOs (2001)[21], donors (2004)[22], among the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) (2009,[23] with updates in 2011, 2013 and 2015[24]), and the private sector (2013). WFP's increased focus on partnerships was described in the SP 2008-2013 through the organization's shift from food aid to food assistance, where partnerships were identified as one of the ways of working to achieve the Strategic Plan's five strategic objectives.

32.   WFP carried out a strategic evaluation of partnerships in the transition from food aid to food assistance in 2012. This evaluation revealed that there was, "no commonly accepted definition of partnership in WFP [and] limited understanding of what makes an effective partnership, the principles of good partner and how to monitor the effectiveness of partnerships."[25] It recommended that WFP develop an organization-wide partnership strategy, increased training for staff, directed outreach to partners

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21 WFP Working with NGOs: A Framework for Partnership. WFP/EB.A/2001/4-B. (WFP 2001)
22 New Partnerships to Meet Rising Needs – Expanding the WFP Donor Base. WFP/EB.3/2004/4-C. (WFP 2004)
23 Directions for Collaboration Among the Rome-Based Agencies. WFP/EB.2/2009/11-c. (WFP 2009a)
24 Update on Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies: A WFP Perspective. WFP/EB.2/2015/4-C/. (WFP 2015 oo)
25 Summary Report of the Strategic Evaluation – From Food Aid to Food Assistance: Working in Partnership. WFP/EB.1/2012/6-A., p. 16. (WFP 2012m).

and internal incentives for managers to promote the partnership strategy.[26] Similar findings were noted in the 2012 evaluation of WFP's Private-Sector Partnership and Fundraising Strategy, which noted the lack of a strategic framework within which to understand and communicate WFP's strategic approach to partnerships.

33.   WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance went along with a gradual increase in the use of cash-based, in addition to, or replacing, in-kind food assistance. This has had implications for the types of technical capabilities that WFP is seeking in country level partners who support programme implementation.[27]

34.   In 2012, WFP's newly appointed Executive Director launched the organizational strengthening process, 'Fit for Purpose', which emphasized the importance of partnerships for WFP's way of working.[28] In 2013, WFP underwent an organizational restructuring, which led to the creation of the Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department (PG), including the Communications Division (PGM), which had previously reported to the ED. In July 2014, the NGO Office was moved from the Programme Division into PG as part of a new unit focusing on Partnership and Advocacy Coordination (PGC). In addition to PGC, PG manages the following divisions: Government Partnerships (PGG), Private Sector Partnerships (PGP), Rome-Based Agencies and Committee on World Food Security Division (PGR), EB Secretariat (PGB) and the WFP Offices in Brussels, Dubai, London, Tokyo and Washington.

35.   The centrality of partnerships for WFP was reiterated in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, as one of the four core strengths of WFP: People, Presence, Partnerships and Performance.[29] Results statements and indicators on partnership were included in both the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and Management Results Framework (MRF) 2014-2017.

36.   Partnerships will continue to be a central focus for the organization as articulated in the Integrated Roadmap for 2017-2021.

- The Strategic Plan 2017-2021 is explicitly aligned with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs and highlights the relevance of effective partnerships for realizing WFP's Goals and Objectives. WFP's Strategic Goal 2 specifically focuses on the intent to 'partner to support implementation of the SDGs'.[30]

- The Policy on Country Strategic Plans (CSP) elaborates how the envisaged two-staged country strategic planning process, consisting of a national zero hunger strategic review process followed by formulation of CSPs, adheres to, and helps to promote, the principles of partnership outlined in the Corporate Partnership Strategy.

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26 Ibid.

27 The extent of related changes on numbers or technical capabilities of WFP partners is not yet well documented given that country level data on partners prior to the roll-out of COMET in 2016 are incomplete.

28 Fit for Purpose. WFP's New Organizational Design. (WFP 2012t) http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/reports/wfp262553.pdf

29 Commonly referred to as the "4Ps".

30 Annex 15 provides further details on how the notion of partnership is reflected in the 2014-2017, and the 2017-2021 SPs respectively.

- The Corporate Results Framework (CRF) includes partnership-related indicators to measure the effectiveness, coherence and results of WFP partnerships.

37. Other WFP evaluations conducted since 2012[31] confirmed that partnerships play a central role in WFP's work, and identify various achievements in this regard, including benefits for both WFP and other actors deriving from WFP's role as cluster lead for logistics and emergency telecommunications, and its joint lead, with the Food and Agriculture Organization, of the global food security cluster. Evaluations also noted examples of successful partnerships with private sector actors, and effective collaboration with other UN agencies. However, the reviewed evaluations also observed several areas for improvement related to partnering[32]:

- WFP sometimes over-estimates the technical/financial capability of local partners, leading to over-ambitious programming and weak accountability;

- At times, WFP makes strategic decisions without adequately consulting with its partners;

- Except with UN agencies, WFP still tends to take a largely contract-based approach to partnerships;

- Partnering with other UN agencies is sometimes challenging due to disagreements over mandate boundaries;

- WFP does not always apply systematic approaches to strengthening the capacities of national partners; and,

- The short-term nature of WFP funding constitutes a challenge for longer term partnerships.

1.3   The WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017) and its Implementation

38. The WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy 2014-2017 was approved in June 2014 (WFP/EB.A/2014/5-B.). While titled a 'strategy', the CPS was meant to carry the same agency-wide importance and legitimacy as other corporate policies.

39. The stated objective of the CPS is to establish a sound basis for excellence in partnering with the aim for WFP to become the "partner of choice"[33] on food assistance. Successful partnering is meant to lead to increased cost-effectiveness and sustainability of WFP operations and a greater positive impact on the people the organization serves. The CPS seeks to promote excellence in partnering by: (i) establishing principles and practices to govern WFP's partnering arrangements and guide the selection and development of partnerships; (ii) bringing together insights from past and current partnership work; (iii) providing an overarching vision for

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31 Country and Regional Portfolio Evaluations completed between 2013 and 2016, WFP Annual Evaluation Reports 2012 to 2015, three policy and six strategic evaluations conducted between 2012 and 2015, as well as the WFP Syntheses of Operations Evaluations since 2014. Please see Annex 10 (Bibliography) for a list of reviewed evaluation reports.
32 Some of these insights on partnering challenges are also reflected in the draft WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021.
33 CPS (WFP 2014e), page 2.

WFP's work in partnerships; and, (iv) reinforcing the evolution of WFP's culture from 'we deliver' to 'we deliver better together'.[34]

40. Consultations at WFP HQ indicate that resources for CPS implementation were deliberately kept at a minimum given the intention to make partnering into a standard operating modality for WFP, rather than a stand-alone initiative requiring substantial funding to ensure implementation.

41. A brief analysis of the key stakeholders that the CPS targeted internal and external to WFP is presented in Table 1. It illustrates that while the Strategy was conceptualized as a policy document with agency-wide relevance, specific time-bound accountabilities for its implementation were only assigned to PGC. A more detailed version of the stakeholder analysis is included as Annex 13.

Table 1   Stakeholders affected by implementation of the CPS

Stakeholder	Reports to[35]	Responsibility for CPS implementation as per CPS and Related Action Plan
Internal		
WFP Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department (PG)	ED	Lead department, accountable to ED and the Board for facilitating and coordinating the full implementation of the CPS.
Partnership and Advocacy Coordination Division (PGC)	AED, PG	Explicit measurable deliverables and timeline for actions and reporting on the implementation of the CPS.
Private Sector Partnerships Division (PGP)	AED, PG	User of the CPS, but no specific related milestones or timelines described. PGP's work is guided by WFP's *Private Sector Partnership and Fundraising Strategy* (2013-2017). It is unclear if the CPS is intended to complement or to supersede (parts of) this strategy and with what practical implications.
Rome-based Agencies and the Committee on World Food Security (PGR)	AED, PG	As per the CPS, WFP's work with the other Rome-based agencies (RBAs) is governed by *Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies*.[36] It is unclear if and how the CPS is intended to complement these existing directions.
Government Partnerships Division (PGG)	AED, PG	User of the CPS, but no specific related milestones, actions or timelines described.

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34 Ibid.
35 Based on the current WFP Organigramme shared by OEV.
36 CPS, paragraph 54.

Stakeholder	Reports to[35]	Responsibility for CPS implementation as per CPS and Related Action Plan
South-South and Triangular Cooperation	Policy and Programme (in OS)	User of the CPS, but no specific related milestones, actions or timelines described. The 2015 *South-South and Triangular Cooperation Policy* (p.2) notes that it is "in line" with the CPS, but does not further elaborate on how the two documents relate to each other. Reporting relationships mean that PG does not have a direct line of sight on the work of this unit.
Regional Bureaux	ED	Responsible and accountable for developing regional partnership strategies, supporting country offices work on partnership, and for partnership selection and management at the regional level.
Country Offices	RDs	Responsible for partnership selection and management at the country level. No specific milestones for CPS implementation.
WFP Offices	DED/AED, PG	Users of the CPS, but no specific related milestones or timelines described.
External to WFP		
National Counterparts, Regional organizations, UN agencies, NGOs, Foundations, Private Sector, Research institutes, Academia	Where applicable, division or office with whom they collaborate and have a partnership agreement.	Envisaged role as resource partners, knowledge partners, policy and governance partners, advocacy partners, and/or capability partners.

Theory of Change for the CPS

42.   While the CPS does not include an explicit logic model, it defines an objective, expected results, and identifies actions required for the implementation of the Strategy. The CPS Action Plan provides additional detail on the planned activities for the first stage of CPS implementation. The evaluation team drew on these elements to construct an overview theory of change, which reflects an approach based on two complementary change 'pathways'.

- Pathway 1: Efforts to build the capacity of WFP to identify, select, maintain, monitor, evaluate and report on partnerships; and,

- Pathway 2: Efforts to better inform existing and potential partners about the benefits of working with WFP in accordance with the principles of partnering.

43.   The evaluation team developed a more detailed theory of change for Pathway 1, shown in Figure 55. It includes key underlying assumptions that are logically implied

by the depicted change processes.[37] The extent to which available evidence validates this theory of change and its underlying assumptions is discussed in sections 2.2, 2.3, and 3.1 as well as in Annex 3.

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[37] A detailed theory of change for pathway 2 was not developed given that CPS implementation to date has focused on pathway 1.

Figure 5   Detailed Theory of Change Pathway 1

Not included in the Evaluation

Wellbeing Changes
- Improved benefits to WFP targeted populations

Impact
- More appropriate, relevant and cost-effective WFP (and partner) programming and accountability

Direct Benefits
- More relevant partnerships with access to more people skills and knowledge
- More innovative and sustainable partnerships

Pathway 2: Building Stronger Partners

HQs' and RBs' Partnership Managers' Direct Benefits
- Solid support partnerships

Direct Benefits Assumptions
A9 – suitable partners can be found and agreements reached in a timely manner
A10 – risks to WFP minimized
A11 – resources are adequate

Included in the Evaluation of the CPS

HQs' and RBs' Partnership Managers' Practice Changes
- Building stronger support partnerships

COs' Practice Changes
- Building stronger partnerships

Practice Change Assumptions
A4 – Partnership mindset established
A5 – COs develop suitable action plans
A6 – results from better partnering visible
A7 – time spent on partnering recognized
A8 – WFP culture, incentives, systems supportive

HQs' Outputs
- CPS and PGC created
- PGC strategies
- PGC guidance and online platform
- Partnership workshops (ToT)

RBs' Outputs
- Regional strategies
- Regional guidance
- Partnership workshops
- Implementation support services to COs

Output Assumptions
A1 – adequate capacity building undertaken with senior HQ and RB staff
A2 – WFP senior leadership visible
A3 – adequate HQ and RB resources available for CPS roll-out

HQs' and RBs' Activities
- Building partnering infrastructure (includes staffing)
- Communications with staff
- Developing guidance and training
- Conducting partner mapping

Legend

⇨ Causal link with embedded assumptions not made explicit.
→ Causal link with embedded assumption made explicit.
— Link between a causal link and the corresponding assumption.

Activities for Policy Implementation

44. The CPS[38] outlines key actions needed to increase the effectiveness of WFP partnering and implement the CPS. Following its approval, PGC then drafted the CPS Action Plan (2014-2017) with a phased implementation approach.

Figure 6   Key envisaged milestones of CPS implementation as per PGC Implementation Approach[39]
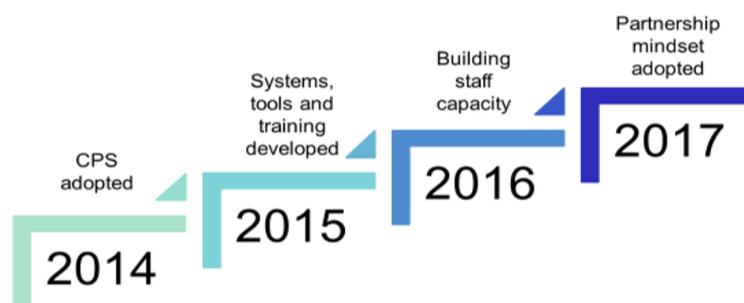
45. The Action Plan is an internal workplan to guide the work of PGC. It elaborates activities in six key dimensions plus the category of "Implementation Support" (see paragraph 38). It does not address the topic of resources for CPS implementation given that these are expected to be covered in WFP Management Plans.

46. As a dynamic tool, priorities outlined in the Action Plan evolved based on PGC capacities and organizational needs. Since 2014, PGC, in collaboration with other units at HQ, Regional Bureaux, and external partners, such as The Partnering Initiative (TPI), has completed 13 of the 26 tasks initially outlined in its Action Plan, and is in the process of implementing 13 remaining ones.[40] Examples of completed tasks under the plan's seven dimensions include the following[41]:

- **Strategy**: Conduct of annual partnership mapping exercises in 2014 and 2015. Work with Regional Bureaux on developing Regional Partnership Strategies or equivalent documents.

- **Advocacy**: Development and dissemination of the *WFP Advocacy Framework* that further elaborates on WFP's unique, advocacy-related value proposition and positions it in the context of the SDGs.

- **Engagement Strategies**: Development and dissemination of a new NGO Engagement Strategy.[42]

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38 p. 19-22

39 Source: Corporate Partnership Strategy (CPS) – Implementation Approach and Priorities 2016. PGC, February 2016.

40 According to the latest status update from August 2016, Action Plan Item 5.3 on developing "simple tool(s) to help managers chart the current and desired relationship for a range of partners" is not being pursued given that this tool had been considered to have become less relevant under CPS implementation. Instead, partner and stakeholder assessment tools that have been developed are expected to serve the intended function.

41 Sources: PGC: Corporate Partnership Strategy (CPS). Implementation Approach and Priorities 2015. Update as at May 2016; and PGC Action Plan 2014 with status as of August 2016, (WFP internal Excel file).

42 In its Action Plan, PGC had also considered developing and agreeing on engagement strategies for several other major partners, including UNDP, OCHA, and the World Bank. As is further discussed under finding 19, this has not yet taken place.

- **Partnership Agreements**: Collaboration with the WFP Legal Office to develop new programming templates, such as for Trust Fund Agreements.

- **Relationship Management:** Compilation of HQ Partnership contacts for key corporate partners.

- **Partnership Management**: Creation of a network of RB partnership focal points (community of practice). Ongoing provision of technical assistance and advisory services, until now, primarily to HQ and RB.

- **Implementation Support**:
  – Creation and management of a WFP Partnership website and of the *Partnership Resource Centre,* which includes a repository of guidance and training materials (see Finding 11).
  – Definition of core partnering skills based on list of WFP job profile capabilities.
  – PGC facilitation and content input on corporate wide training, such as the OSZ 'Learning Journey', and Human Resource's 'Leading for Zero Hunger' reaching almost 500 staff to date.
  – Implementation of PGC-facilitated core partnering skills training, and Training of Trainers reaching approximately 160, primarily RB, staff to date.
  – Implementation of a training on Engaging with Host Governments created and facilitated by the Centre for the Political and Diplomatic Studies (CPDS), reaching approximately 80 senior RB and CO staff.

47. According to PGC, a total of 1,571 people have been reached so far through advisory, awareness raising, coordination or training activities.[43]

48. PGC has also worked to integrate partnering approaches into existing corporate systems for monitoring and reporting, as well as into elements of the Integrated Roadmap for 2017-2021 as it was being developed. This is further discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

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[43] This included 690 people at CO level, 364 at HQ, 432 at RB, and 85 not further specified 'other'. Source: Summary of PGC activities. WFP internal Excel document, 2016.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1 Quality of the Strategy

Introduction

49. This section provides an analysis of the quality of the CPS as designed. It is organized by overall findings against the main themes raised in the sub-questions related to EQ1 – 'How good is the Policy?' shown in the evaluation matrix in Annex 4. As outlined in the evaluation matrix, the quality of the CPS was assessed against three benchmarks: a) comparison with good/best partnership practice; b) comparison with other organizations; and c) relevance for WFP against the backdrop of evolving internal and external contexts. The analysis primarily focuses on the CPS document itself, with occasional reference to follow-up materials for CPS implementation such as the PGC Action Plan. The quality and use of CPS-related guidance and tools are, however, discussed in more detail under EQ2 in section 2.2.

Communicating WFP's vision on partnership and measurable expectations to stakeholders[44]

Finding 1   The CPS outlines a clear partnership vision for WFP. However, this vision and related expectations of 'good' partnering behavior have not yet been widely communicated to WFP staff and partners.

50. The CPS clarifies what partnership is, why it matters, what 'good' partnering should look like and how it can be achieved. See Box 1.

51. With exception of Regional and Country Directors and their Deputies and designated partnership focal points or units, most consulted WFP staff were not familiar with the CPS.[46] Similarly, only very few WFP partners – including host governments, other UN agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors – were aware of the CPS' existence or of WFP's specific partnering vision. Several interviewed NGO representatives were surprised to hear that WFP was interested not only in transactional relationships, but 'deeper' partnerships including related to advocacy and knowledge creation.

> **Box 1: CPS Definition of Partnership[45]**
>
> "Collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people we serve by combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds; working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; and sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability"
>
> "To achieve objectives (both the collective partnership's objectives and individual partner goals) that could not be achieved as efficiently, effectively or innovatively alone, and where the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved"

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44 Evaluation question 1.1.

45 CPS page 8, Figure 1.

46 This observation is closely linked to the noted varying views on the role and status of the CPS (finding 12) and progress made in rolling out the CPS at regional and country levels (finding 13).

52.   Expectations of WFP partners are addressed in the CPS and include that WFP partners are to (i): be honest about their strengths, weaknesses and reasons for, and benefits arising from, their collaborative work with WFP; (ii) maintain dialogue on problems and issues arising during collaboration; and, (iii) work in ways that protect vulnerable people and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These qualitative expectations are observable but not measurable. This is appropriate given their focus on process and principles of interaction.

53.   Consultations with various groups of WFP partners indicated that while they were not aware of the CPS, they usually shared similar expectations based on their existing understanding of what constituted 'good' partnership.

Comprehensiveness and Clarity of the CPS[47]

Finding 2   The CPS and the related Action Plan elaborate on some, but not all, of the interrelated elements required to ensure achievement of the CPS's intended results.

54.   The CPS defines a variety of actions required for its effective implementation and for strengthening WFP partnering. However, there are some issues that are neither elaborated on in the CPS nor its Action Plan. These include:

- The conceptual and practical linkages between the notions of 'partnership' and 'capacity strengthening (see Box 2);

Box 2: Linkages between Partnership and Capacity Strengthening

While both the CPS and the WFP Policy on Capacity Development Update (WFP 2009f) mention that capacity strengthening and partnership are closely linked, neither document nor related follow-up tools elaborate on what this means in practice. This also applies to the documents of the Integrated Roadmap.

For example, there is no explicit discussion of whether or how the existing budget line for 'Capacity Development and Augmentation' (CD&A) is to facilitate or contribute to effective partnering with actors such as host governments or national NGOs. The same applies to the new cost structure outlined under the Financial Framework Review, which conceptualizes capacity strengthening as one of four types of transfer modalities.

Similarly, it is unclear if or how achievements deriving from WFP capacity strengthening efforts – currently measured primarily through the National Capacity Index (NCI) – are considered relevant for selecting, managing, monitoring and assessing WFP partnerships.

- Implications of various internal and external factors, such as existing partner capacities; stage of development of partner countries; or effects of competition over resources among humanitarian and development actors on WFP partnering at global, regional and country levels respectively (see section 2.3 for a discussion of these factors);

- Existing and required incentives for WFP staff and managers to excel in partnering (see Finding 25);

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47 Evaluation Question 1.2

- Expected actions, milestones and timelines for CPS implementation to be achieved by different units in WFP that are not captured by the PGC-focused Action Plan (see Finding 23).

Finding 3 While the CPS provides a definition of 'partnership', the term is still used inconsistently by WFP staff.

55. The CPS notes that, to be meaningful, the term 'partnership' should not be applied to every type of collaborative relationship that WFP engages in, but only to those at the 'partnership' end of the continuum. This implies that the term 'partner' should not apply to actors with whom WFP has a relationship that sits at the 'transactional' end of the spectrum, or anywhere in the middle.

56. Document review and evaluation site visits indicate that this proposed terminology is not yet, and is not likely to be, widely applied within the agency as it does not sufficiently reflect current practice and, as such, does not always resonate with WFP staff.

- In most of the visited COs, the terms 'partnership' and 'partner' tend to be used, not exclusively but predominately, to refer to NGOs with whom WFP has Field Level Agreements (FLA), as well as to relationships with donors. One CO staff member noted that "While we work a lot with other UN Agencies we do not really think of them as 'partners'. They are 'family' and as such it's not really a choice if we work with them or not."

- Several WFP staff at both RB and CO levels differentiated between 'operational' or 'implementing' partners' on one end, and 'strategic partners' on the other end of the spectrum. This reflects a similar differentiation regarding the 'depth' of the collaborative relationship, but one that applies the term 'partnership' to both ends of the spectrum.

- Site visits to the WFP Offices indicated that the terminology used to refer to different relationships was influenced by WFP's specific role - for example, as customer, service provider, facilitator - and the organization it was relating to as client, delivery partner, donor, and sub-contractor. In the WFP Office in Dubai, for example, relationships with suppliers were the least likely to be associated with the language of 'partnership', whereas the term 'partner' was frequently used to refer to 'clients' or 'donors', even if the actual relationship was primarily transactional.

- Overall, staff in WFP Offices, RB and CO alike indicated that the function of a relationship (capability, resource, knowledge and so forth) was considerably more relevant than determining whether they should be referred to as a 'partner' or not.

57. The evaluation also noted inconsistencies between the terminology used in the CPS and other guiding frameworks and tools that WFP staff use.

- The Indicator Compendium accompanying the 2014-2017 Strategic Results Framework, which provided guidance on what data WFP staff needs to report on results, defines 'partners' as "all organizations (...) who work with WFP towards common objectives". It does not differentiate the use of the term based on the depth of the collaborative relationship.

- Indicators in the SRF and data categories in COMET both distinguish between 'cooperating' and 'complementary' partners[48] while these concepts are not used in the CPS.

- While the CPS was used to inform the categories developed to collect partnership-related data in COMET, there are differences in the terminology used. See Box 3.

> **Box 3: Inconsistent terminology in CPS and COMET**
>
> The differentiation between resource, knowledge, advocacy, policy and governance, and capability partners is reflected in both the CPS and in COMET. However, the CPS refers to these categories as 'types' of partners, whereas COMET uses the term 'categories'. In COMET, the term (partner) 'types' is used to describe what in the CPS are called different 'groups' of partners, such as NGOs, UN agencies, or governments.

58. Within the CPS itself, it is not clear whether or how 'capability partners' differ from actors with whom WFP has transactional relationships. While the CPS implies that there is a difference, consultations with WFP staff indicates that, in practice, the two concepts are often used synonymously (see also Finding 20).

Reflecting Findings and Recommendations from other partnership-focused WFP Evaluations[49]

Finding 4   The Corporate Partnership Strategy and its implementation mechanisms reflect key findings and recommendations from the 2012 evaluation 'From Food Aid to Food Assistance: Working in Partnership'.

59. Out of the seven recommendations made in the 2012 evaluation, the development of the CPS and accompanying Action Plan respond to three fully and three partly.

- The existence of the CPS constitutes a response to one component of the first recommendation from the 2012 strategic evaluation on partnerships – namely, to articulate a comprehensive partnership strategy, define 'partnership' and articulate partnership principles. The CPS also constitutes a response to the sixth recommendation to "promote the longer-term approach needed to sustain partnerships and contribute to capacity development".

- In other cases, the CPS and/or the Action Plan for CPS implementation outline envisaged steps for addressing recommendations of the 2012 evaluation, such as the second recommendation on partnership-related training for WFP staff and the third related to the need for discussions with United Nations partners to clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to WFP's shift to food assistance.[50]

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48 'Complementary partners' are entities with shared objectives and common target groups that are not involved in a transactional relationship with WFP. This excludes partner organizations that have signed a field-level agreement with WFP, which are, instead, referred to as 'cooperating partners'.

49 Evaluation Question 1.3. As per evaluation TOR, this question focused on the extent to which the CPS reflects findings and recommendations of the *From Food Aid to Food Assistance-Working in Partnership* (WFP 2012j) and *WFP's Private Sector Partnership and Fundraising Strategy* (WFP 2012s) evaluations.

50 Another example is the first part of Recommendation 6 to strengthen project planning and reporting systems to include specific references to partnership and partnership-related outcomes. Please also see Finding 21 on the extent to which Recommendation 3 has been addressed to date.

- Recommendations made but not fully addressed include: i) to develop clear incentives for WFP staff and managers to engage in stronger partnering behaviors; ii) to develop an explicit communications strategy and approach for partnerships[51]; and, iii) to expand and formalize the country-level partnership evaluation system.

60.   While the CPS is also relevant to some of the recommendations from the 2012 evaluation of WFP's first (2008) Private Sector Partnerships and Fundraising Strategy,[52] these recommendations have primarily been addressed in the new version of that specific Strategy for 2013-2017.

Comparison with the Strategies or Policies of other Organizations [53]

Finding 5   The partnership vision and principles outlined in the CPS are of a similar quality to those reflected in the evolving partnership strategies and practices of the reviewed comparator organizations.

61.   Three of the four comparator organizations- namely, FAO, UNICEF and Save the Children - have explicit corporate partnership strategies and address the importance of partnering in their current strategic plans or equivalent documents. The fourth comparator organization, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), does not have a corporate partnership strategy. All four organizations evaluate activities that are carried out in partnerships, but have not recently conducted evaluations of partnerships per se.[54]

62.   The existing partnership strategies of FAO, UNICEF and Save the Children contain similar visions and partnering principles as described in the CPS.[55] All three organizations:

- Consider partnering as essential to fulfil their mandate;
- Emphasize that partnering must be based on shared values and objectives, need to be transparent and results-oriented, and involve shared ownership and accountability of all partners;
- Distinguish "partners" from "partnerships";
- Distinguish global from country-level partnerships;
- Identify similar groups and categories of partners, such as NGOs, commercial private sector, and developing country governments;
- Identify similar types or purposes of partners, such as advocacy, knowledge, implementation, and mobilizing partnerships — albeit not necessarily by using the same terminology. Save the Children further distinguishes between strategic partnerships (long-term, programmatic), project partnerships (short-term, project-based), and alliances and networks. Similar distinctions are made

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51 Both sub-components of Recommendation 1.
52 Especially Recommendation 1 (ii) on developing a comprehensive strategy for partnerships.
53 Evaluation question 1.4, sub-question 1.4.1. The comparator organizations were: UNICEF, FAO, Save the Children, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
54 FAO did a corporate partnership evaluation in 2005, UNICEF in 2009.
55 Both WFP and UNICEF worked with The Partnering Initiative to develop their respective partnership strategies, which is likely to have contributed to similarities between the resulting documents.

in the CPS's concept of a continuum of collaborative relationships, and by differentiating between bilateral, multi-stakeholder, and networked partnerships.

63. The Gates Foundation does not have a Foundation-wide approach to partnerships, although, as a global philanthropist organization, it undertakes almost everything in partnership with its grantees. Each of its major programmatic areas conducts its own strategic planning, with its own approach to partnering. In addition, the Foundation supports global programme partnerships like the Global Fund, Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative, and the CGIAR (formerly the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research) for the purposes of coordination and alignment.

64. All four organizations contributed to the development of Agenda 2030 to varying degrees and are aligning their activities with it, in particular its emphasis on greater involvement of the private sector. It is not yet clear how this will be reflected in relevant corporate strategies, policies or approaches.

65. Both FAO and UNICEF have introduced private sector partnerships of a non-financial nature in order to serve their respective principal clients —smallholder farmers (FAO) and children (UNICEF). Recognizing that managing partnerships requires a certain skill and training to do effectively, UNICEF and Save the Children have recently instituted and provide training for "global partnership managers" for each of their major partnerships. These efforts to strengthen expand partnerships with the private sector and to strengthen internal capacities are not significantly different from WFP's efforts in these areas.

Alignment with Good Practice in the Field[56]

Finding 6   The CPS reflected good partnership practice outlined in the relevant literature at the time of its design.

66. The CPS reflected key principles of 'good' partnership that were promoted in the partnership literature at the time of the strategy's development and approval.[57] These principles are also confirmed by more recent literature that discusses partnerships in the context of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.[58]

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56 Evaluation question 1.4.
57 See Table 1 for selected sources.
58 See IASC (2015), Fowler (2016), Sakurai (2015), United Nations (2015a and 2016d).

Table 2   CPS alignment with good practice

Good Practice Principles (2013/2014)	Reflected in CPS?
1. Partnerships should be driven by agreed upon goals, not by the intent to partner per se.[59]	✓
2. Transparency, accountability and communication are fundamental to successful partnerships[60]	✓
3. Partnerships must be based on genuine collaboration and trust, while mitigating the risks of power imbalances[61]	✓
4. A long-term approach to partnership is key to sustainability and success[62]	✓
5. Partnerships need to be embedded in local/national contexts[63]	✓
6. Internal capacity building of participating actors/organizations, and continuous learning are critical to the delivery of partnership in practice[64]	✓
7. Gender equality needs to be explicitly and strategically directed in partnerships[65]	✓
8. Triangular and South-South collaboration constitute effective partnership modalities[66]	✓

CPS relevance in relation to the evolving contexts in which WFP and its partners work[67]

Finding 7   While the CPS remains relevant in light of WFP's partnership-related commitments at the time of its approval, it does not reflect recent developments in the agency's external contexts, which have shaped WFP's partnership vision as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and other elements of the Integrated Roadmap.

67.   The CPS affirmed WFP's partnership-related commitments in place at the time of its approval.[68] The Strategy also supported WFP's transition from food aid to food assistance by elaborating that the transition meant, "a greater focus on listening to and understanding long-term needs; identifying partners who can deliver complementary

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59 See, for example Witte, J. M., & Reinicke, W. (2005), Selsky, J. W., & Parker, B. (2005), Dahan, N. M., Doh, J. P., Oetzel, J., & Yaziji, M. (2010).
60 See, for example Witte, J. M., & Reinicke, W. (2005), United Nations (2014a),
61 See, for example Osborne, S. (2002), United Nations (2014a)
62 See, for example Witte, J. M., & Reinicke, W. (2005).
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 See, for example Bexell, M. (2012).
66 See, for example, Zhou (2013), Sakurai (2015).
67 Evaluation sub-questions 1.5.2 and 1.6.2
68 These include commitments to: the 2007 Principles of Partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform; Operating within the cluster approach, adopted by the IASC in 2005; contributing to enhancing inter-agency cooperation as reflected in the Delivering as One initiative; contributing to strengthening system-wide coherence by partnering and coordinating with other agencies and programmes on key aspects of implementing the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR); collaborating with other Rome-based Agencies.

skills to those of WFP; and being prepared to contribute to partnerships and programmes without assuming a directive role."[69]

68. WFP's Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021 responds to key developments in the global context, in particular the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. These all re-affirm, strengthen and further nuance international engagements on effective partnering.[70] While the partnership vision and principles outlined in the CPS remain broadly relevant, the Strategy provides only limited guidance on how to make WFP 'fit for purpose' in the context of WFP's new strategic direction and global engagements.

69. Consultations with WFP staff at all levels indicated the need for clear guidance and direction in relation to the following questions:

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs

(i) What strategic direction will be provided to ensure that the SP 2017-2021 Strategic Goal 2 on 'Partnering to support implementation of the SDGs' is met?

(ii) The SDGs' emphasis on host governments being in the 'driver's seat' is reflected in WFP's envisaged approach to developing Country Strategic Plans based on country-led national zero hunger strategic reviews. Does this also mean that WFP's partnerships with host governments generally deserve elevated status over its relationships with other groups of partners? If that is the case, what – if any - implications does this have for WFP's partnerships with other national actors, such as NGOs? What implications does it have for the role of capacity strengthening in the context of partnering with host governments?

(iii) While the MDGs had only invited private sector actors to contribute to the envisaged achievements, the SDGs require such an engagement. The SP 2017-2021 reflects this commitment, but guidance is needed on its practical implications.

World Humanitarian Summit

(i) What specifically will WFP do to increase localization, which include doing more to strengthen the ability of national first line responders such as NGOs and government institutions at central, regional and local levels;

(ii) How will WPF address the theme of clarifying and optimizing the role of the private sector in humanitarian action?

(iii) What implications will the "new way of working"[71] with other UN agencies have for specific collaborative relationships at different organizational levels?

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69 CPS paragraph 61.

70 As per evaluation TOR, the evaluation team also reviewed continued CPS relevance in relation to WFP commitments related to Habitat III, the third United Nations Conference on Human Settlement that took place in October 2016. While Habitat III is reflected in the new WFP SP 2017-2021 as one of several global conferences relevant to ending hunger, the event does not have the same relevance for shaping the strategic direction of WFP as do Agenda 2030 and the WHS.

71 Transcending humanitarian-development divides. Changing People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need. WHS 2016.

Relevance in relation to WFP's Policy Framework[72]

Finding 8   The CPS filled a gap in WFP's strategic framework, but the views of WFP staff on the Strategy's relevance to their work vary considerably.

70.   Before the CPS, no other existing corporate policy or strategy provided a clear, agreed definition of 'partnership' or its related principles. By filling this gap in WFP's strategic framework, the CPS was intended to act as a high-level framework for the entire organization that would complement, if not supersede, other existing corporate guidance related to partnership.[73]

71.   Consultations with WFP staff at all levels show, however, that while most of those who have read the CPS find it to be a well-written concept paper, they vary in their assessment of the CPS' relevance to their work.

- A small number stated that the CPS had provided them with needed high-level guidance and with inspiration to 'think outside of the box' - for example, in relation to pursuing not only resource and capability, but also knowledge or advocacy partnerships. However, the majority of staff in WFP Offices noted that the high-level nature of the CPS lacked relevance for their specific roles and contexts. See Box 4.

- The most frequent use of the CPS appears to have been in relation to developing (draft) regional, WFP Office, or country-level partnership strategies or equivalents.

- Other non-HQ based staff who had read the CPS found it to be an accurate and well-written framework, but also noted that it was of limited practical relevance for their day to day work.

- A small number of staff, especially at CO level, noted that most of the issues that they need guidance on relate to practical questions around managing partner agreements;

- At headquarters, several staff expressed the view that the CPS was primarily a document "for PGC", but with little or no practical relevance to their own work. Others indicated that for areas such as engaging with private sector actors or collaboration with Rome Based Agencies, they considered other existing corporate guidance[74] to be more specific and, hence, more relevant than the relatively broad and high-level CPS.

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72 Evaluation question 1.6, sub-question 1.6.1
73 Such as the Private Sector Partnerships and Fundraising Strategy (2013-2017) and the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Policy (2015).
74 Specifically, the WFP Private-Sector Partnerships and Fundraising Strategy (WFP 2013m), and the Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies (WFP 2009a and WFP 2015 00).

Reflecting principles of gender equality and equity[75]

Finding 9   The CPS reflects gender equality and equity considerations, thereby positively distinguishing itself from similar strategies of some comparator organizations.

72.   As outlined in the current WFP Gender Policy (WFP 2015), WFP has committed to delivering on the inter-governmental mandates of the United Nations system to promote and protect human rights and gender equality, as declared in the 1945 United Nations Charter, Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals and other declarations and agreements.[76] Further, the Gender Policy's Objective 1 on adapting food assistance to different needs and ensuring that WFP is focusing on service to the most vulnerable underlines WFP's commitment to the concept of equity.[77]

73.   The CPS makes several references to the notions of gender equality and equity and confirms their relevance and applicability in the context of WFP's partnering approach. In this regard, the CPS differs from the partnership strategies of some comparator organizations. Consulted representatives of all four comparator organizations noted that they expect their partners to be aware of and sensitive to gender equality and equity issues. Nevertheless, with exception of FAO's specific 2013 Strategies for Partnerships with Civil Society and the Private Sector, none of the comparators' organization-wide partnership strategies or principles explicitly refer to these concepts or to related expectations.

74.   In the CPS, gender equality and equity are addressed in the following ways:

- The envisaged results of the Partnership Strategy include acknowledging and closing gender gaps;[78]

- The description of WFP's strengths and value proposition includes a commitment to placing emphasis on reaching goals that promote gender equality;[79]

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75 Evaluation question 1.6 sub-questions 1.6.3 and 1.6.4
76 WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020), paragraph 2. WFP has further pledged to meet the requirements of the standards incorporated in the eight gender-related indicators of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and to exceed requirements for all 15 indicators of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP).
77 Ibid, paragraph 18f.
78 CPS, p.27.
79 Ibid, p. 17.

- The CPS explicitly refers to WFP serving men, women, and children alike;[80]
- The CPS outlines the expectation that WFP's partners work in ways that protect vulnerable people and promote gender equality and women's empowerment";[81] and,
- One of the prescriptive principles outlined in the CPS is 'equity'.[82]

75.   Staff in several of the visited RB and CO noted that WFP has no means to promote, monitor or ensure partner compliance with principles of gender equality and equity beyond specific targets identified in collaboration agreements, for example related to the proportion of men and women envisaged to benefit from a service. In most cases, compliance with these principles is dependent on the extent to which the respective partner organization is already sensitized to, and has internal capacities to address these dimensions.

2.2   Initial Results of the Corporate Partnership Strategy

Box 5: Envisaged Results of CPS Implementation[83]

1 - Range of best practice tools/guidance/training/support to help country offices select and manage partnerships;

2 - Strategic focus on partnerships at the global, regional and country level;

3 - Consistent approach to the selection, maintenance, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of partnerships;

4 - Common understanding across WFP of the benefits and principles of partnership;

5 - Cost-effective collaboration, reduced overlap and duplication, minimized transaction costs.

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76.   While the CPS does not include an explicit results framework, it does outline the expected results shown in Box 5. This section reviews initial progress made towards achieving these results.[84]

77.   Given the early stage of CPS implementation the evaluation team did not assess changes that could directly be attributed to CPS implementation, but explored more broadly to what extent the actual partnering behavior of RB, CO, and WFP Offices is aligned with, or indicates progress toward, the partnership vision and results outlined in the CPS.

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80 Ibid., p. 16.
81 Ibid., p. 13.
82 Ibid., p.11.
83 CPS, paragraph 6. These results are also reflected in the constructed theory of change in Figure 2 and Annex 3.
84 The findings are structured by evaluation questions as outlined in the evaluation Matrix, with indication of which CPS results they relate to included in footnotes.

Quality, Availability and Applicability of CPS-related guidelines and tools[85]

Finding 10   PGC has produced and posted a range of high quality guidelines and tools on partnerships and partnership management. To date, however, these resources have been primarily accessed by HQ staff.

78. PGC, in collaboration with other units at HQ and external partners, has developed a range of partnership guidelines, training modules and tools.[86] These are available on the partnership intranet page and the Partnership Topic page of the intranet 'WFPgo', and some of them have been used in staff trainings.[87] PGC-developed tools have also been integrated into a compendium of IRM guidance compiled by PG.

79. Most of the available materials are of high quality in that: (i) they reflect principles of 'good partnership' as outlined in the CPS as well as in current literature; (ii) they draw upon the expertise and experience of acknowledged leaders in the field of partnership training, such as The Partnering Initiative; (iii) they are concise and written in clear, understandable language; and (iv) they address gaps in existing guidance, knowledge and skills of WFP staff as determined through the Needs Analysis for Effective Partnering conducted in December 2014.[88]

80. The available resources cover a variety of thematic areas: generic partnering and partnership management issues, such as the publication, "*What is needed for good Partnership Management?*"; specific aspects of partnership management, such as

> **Box 6: Adaptation of training and materials on "Engaging with Host Governments" to the WFP context**
>
> PGC had initially planned to develop an explicit strategy for Engaging with Host Governments, but this was superseded by the corporate process to pilot the new Country Strategic Plans.
>
> Instead, PGC worked with the UK-based *Centre for the Political and Diplomatic Studies* (CPDS) to implement a training module on Engaging with Host Governments. The training has been attended by approximately 80 senior staff from Regional Bureaux and Country Offices.
>
> While participant feedback on the training sessions was largely positive, consultations with WFP staff at HQ, RB and CO levels elicited a commonly held view that the training and related guidance materials strongly reflected CPDS's own background in international diplomacy, which resulted in a focus on influencing host governments to promote one's own agenda, which was less appropriate for a UN agency acting in the context of Agenda 2030 that firmly positions host governments in the 'driver's seat'. The approach was seen to further solidify WFP's persistent reputation as a 'doer' that works alone, and contradicts the partnership principles of equity and transparency as outlined in the CPS.
>
> The evaluation further noted that the existing partnership-focused materials on engaging with host governments, including guidance on how to integrate partnerships into the new Country Strategic Plans, do not make any explicit links to other WFP corporate guidance on capacity strengthening, such as materials developed by OSZI.

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85 Evaluation question 2.2, 2.3 and 2.7, relevant in relation to CPS Result 1 as shown in Box 5.

86 Materials available through the partnership resource centre are include in the Bibliography in Annex 10.

87 According to PGC, 883 people have so far been reached through training.

88 This positive assessment of the quality of existing materials as well as of training modules was confirmed by consulted WFP staff who had accessed resources or participated in training sessions.

partnership monitoring and review; and, specific tools and templates.[89]

81. Weaknesses of the available materials noted by WFP staff include: (i) limited linguistic accessibility –as most materials are available only in English; (ii) breadth of available guidance on partnering with private sector actors (see Finding 27); and, (iii) insufficient adaptation of the training and guidance materials on Engaging with Host Governments to the specific WFP context. See Box 6.

82. Document review and consultations with WFP staff at all levels indicate that the Partnership Resource Centre and the full partnership website have been almost exclusively used by staff at HQ and WFP Offices. Combined, these staff constituted 84% of traffic on the Resource Centre and 74% of traffic for the partnership homepage.[90] In contrast, most consulted RB and CO staff had never heard of the Partnership Resource Centre.

Finding 11   CPS roll-out at the level of Regional Bureaux is taking longer than anticipated and it is not yet clear when or how the RBs will support the engagement with partners at the country level as is called for in the CPS.

83. The development of regional partnership strategies was envisaged as a key step in the process of implementing the CPS with an aim to contextualize and articulate the specific approaches required at both regional and country levels[91].

84. To date, three of the six Regional Bureaux (RBB, RBN and RBP) have developed draft regional partnership documents that were at various stages of completion, at the time of writing.[92] While WFP had not set a specific date by which time the regional strategies were supposed to be completed, consulted staff at HQ indicated that they had expected them to be in place by late 2016.

85. However, consulted RB staff noted uncertainty both over the envisaged timing and the role that these regional documents are expected to play beyond guiding the RB's own partnering work (see Box 7).

> **Box 7: Uncertain role of Regional Partnership Strategies**
>
> "We are not sure yet if and how we will use the Regional Partnership Strategy. For us, the most valuable part of developing that strategy was the related process of consulting with Country Offices in this region and getting a sense of their existing partnering work. This process has been helpful both for our own learning but also in terms of raising awareness and engaging in a discussion with the COs. The actual resulting document may not play any role at all when it comes to country-level roll-out of the CPS, which, in our view, should be closely linked to the development of the new Country Strategic Plans." RB partnership focal point

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89 See, for example, booklets on "Partnership Tools and Guidelines" and "WFP Agreements – Guidelines and Templates" The latter was developed in collaboration between the WFP Legal Office (LEGC) and PGC.

90 Source: Google Analytics report – Partnerships for the period 15 July 2015 – 17 February 2016. The total number of individual visits to the homepage during this period was 3,282, the number of visits to the resource centre was 942.

91 CPS, p. 24, para 72.

92 RBD has developed a guidance note on partnerships. RBJ has a draft Regional Partnership Action Plan that was not yet available at the time of the field visit but that since has been shared with PGC. RBC is in the process of hiring a new Regional Partnership Focal Point, which has delayed the drafting process.

86. Most consulted CO and RB staff stated that instead of developing stand-alone country level partnership strategies, the country level approaches to partnering should be embedded in the process of developing new Country Strategic Plans (CSP) or Interim CSPs.[93] See Box 8.

87. There is also uncertainty about when and how the partnership training modules developed by PGC and/or partner organizations, such as TPI, will be shared with Country Offices and who they will target. To date, a total of 20 staff from all RBs have attended train-the-trainer workshops, but have not yet embarked on implementing existing modules at the country

> **Box 8: Tailored Partnership Strategies**
>
> At the time of data collection for this evaluation, out of the visited Country Offices only the <u>Egypt</u> CO had proactively developed a country level strategy deriving from the perceived need to strengthen its partnering work, especially in relation to governance and policy, advocacy and knowledge partnerships.[94]
>
> To date, WFP Offices have not been officially mandated to develop their own partnership strategies or action plans, but some have undertaken work in this regard. The <u>WFP Office in Dubai</u>, for example, has created an Engagement Strategy for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to develop the existing relationship into a longer-term relationship.

level. This is due to several factors, including a lack of funding[95], and the fact that RBs and COs were awaiting finalization of the Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021 before engaging in longer term planning.

Importance and Centrality of Partnerships in WFP plans and operations at all levels[96]

Finding 12 Since 2014, WFP has made progress in integrating partnership into evolving corporate policies, systems and tools, albeit to varying degrees.

88. A review of corporate documents, tools and systems confirms that partnership constitutes a central concept within WFP. For example:

- Corporate policies and strategies developed since 2014 make explicit reference to the importance of working in partnership.[97]

- Six of the ten operational templates and reporting tools reviewed make explicit reference to notions of partnership[98]. Existing templates provide varying levels

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93 In October 2016, PGC developed a draft guidance on positioning, partnerships and resources mobilization in Country Strategic Plans, which as of November 2016 had not yet been widely disseminated. In February 2017, the newly established PG Integrated Road Map taskforce recommended that all COs should develop explicit partnership actions plans to accompany their (I)CSPs.

94 Country partnership strategies have also been developed in some countries that had not been included in the site visits, for example in South Sudan.

95 Please see section 2.3 for a discussion of availability and use of resources for CPS implementation.

96 Evaluation question 2.4, relevant in relation to CPS result 2 as shown in Box 5.

97 The evaluation team reviewed the Update on WFP Peace Building Policy (2014), the WFP Gender Policy (2015), the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Policy (2015), the Update on the People Strategy (2016), as well as elements of the Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021, in particular the Draft Policy on Country Strategic Plans, the Strategic Plan 2017-2021, and the Financial Framework Review.

98 Out of 10 reviewed templates and reporting tools, including CP, DEV, PRRO and CP Activity templates, 6 referred to notions of partnership or partnering explicitly and with some detail. Partnership was not addressed in the Annual Workplan Template, the Country Program Activity Template, or the two guidance tools on SPR outcomes and outputs.

of instruction on, for example, how to develop partnership indicators, provide concise instructions on what is expected from partners, or detail reporting requirements.

- The concept of partnership, which had already been emphasized in the WFP Strategic Plan 2014-2017, figures even more prominently in the Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021, especially in the new Strategic Plan, the Corporate Results Framework, and documents related to developing the new Country Strategic Plans.[99]

- Since 2014, WFP has made further progress in mainstreaming partnerships by integrating a set of four partnering capabilities[100] into its Core Capability Framework, which is reflected in the Update on WFP's People Strategy (WFP 2016aa) and all current job profiles. Partnership skills are further reflected in the functional capabilities for all job profiles.

89. Corporate documents vary slightly in how they conceptualize partnership. While some planning and reporting templates discuss it in combination with other cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and protection, others assign it more visible relevance as a stand-alone area. Also, documents vary in the extent to which they

> **Box 9: Partnership foci as reflected in WFP job profiles**
>
> The External Partnerships Officer job profile is the only one out of eight reviewed that explicitly references the CPS and that conceives of partnerships as a means for innovatively resolving problems to advance food security.
>
> Other profiles, such as for Private Sector and Government Partnership Officers, primarily address partnership in relation to resource mobilization and ensuring WFP visibility.
>
> None of the reviewed job profiles visibly integrated aspects of equity or gender equality.

reflect the full range of partner types as outlined in the CPS. This is illustrated by different job profiles, as shown in Box 9.

90. The principles outlined in the CPS are not yet consistently reflected in WFP guidance materials on issues that are not partnership-specific but for which the notion of partnership is relevant. This is the case, for example, with the 'Quick Guides' for WFP staff published by the New York Office on the topics of 'Delivering as One' or 'Pooled Funds'.

Organizational Changes in WFP[101]

Finding 13 WFP has undertaken organizational restructuring at headquarters and Regional Bureaux levels to improve the focus and work

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99 Such as the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans, Country Strategic Plans (CSP) Interim Guidelines, National Zero Hunger Strategic Review CO Guidelines, and CSP template
100 (1) connect & share across WFP; (2) build strong external partnerships; (3) be politically agile & adaptable; (4) be clear about the value WFP brings to partnerships
101 Evaluation question 2.5, relevant in relation to CPS result 2 as shown in Box 5.

on partnerships. In addition, some WFP offices are making explicit changes to improve partnering.

91.   The corporate 'Fit for Purpose" process led to an organizational restructuring at headquarters level that included the creation of a new Department focused on partnerships, governance and advocacy. The Partnerships and Advocacy Coordination Division, was established specifically to take responsibility for facilitating and coordinating the full implementation of the CPS, among other things.

92.   Since 2015, five of the six Regional Bureaux have appointed quite senior level partnership officers as Regional Partnership Focal Points[102]. The amount of time they spent on partnership issues varies by RB, with two focal points working half-time, two working full-time and the other two spending more than half of their time on partnership work. In three RBs, the focal points supervise between one and four colleagues who also work full- or part-time on partnership issues.[103] Thematically, the focal points tend to focus on government and/or external relations to donors, while more junior colleagues tend to be responsible for relationships with NGOs and other non-government partners.

93.   In the Regional Bureaux that have developed draft Regional Partnership Strategies, the Partnership Focal Points have played a lead role in developing these documents, including, in some cases, through extensive consultations with Country Offices. Other than that, however, given that the positions are still relatively new, there is no conclusive evidence yet on whether their establishment has made a difference on strengthening partnering capacity and performance of RB and COs. The appointment of the regional Partnership Focal Points is closely linked to, and influenced by, the CPS and the process of its implementation.

94.   The structure of WFP Country Offices is not mandated by headquarters but is falls under the delegated authority of Country Directors. Some of the Country Offices visited have undertaken or are planning to undertake relatively minor organizational changes to strengthen partnering. In the Honduras CO, for example, the role of the Communications Officer has been expanded to also cover private sector partnerships. The Somalia CO is exploring the addition of an officer responsible for capacity strengthening of NGO partners. However, there is no indication that these changes were directly linked to the respective CO's knowledge or implementation of the CPS.

95.   Overall, consulted CO leadership did not see significant restructuring as something that would address existing partnering limitations, given that most of these derive from factors in the broader WFP and external contexts. These factors are further explored in section 2.3.

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102 In 2016, RBD relied on a consultant who worked approximately 50% of her time on partnership issues. As of November 2016, RBD does not have dedicated staff to work on partnerships, but responds to emerging issues on an ad hoc basis, usually through the regional programme advisor, or the regional donor relations officer. Focal Points in other RBs are at P4 and, in one case, P5 levels.
103 This is the case in RBC, RBN and RBJ. The Senior Government Partnerships Officer in the RBB is anticipated to supervise two Private Sector colleagues as of 2017.

Strengthening partnership-related monitoring and reporting[104]

Finding 14 WFP has strengthened its data collection and reporting on partnerships from different perspectives.[105]

96. The 2012 evaluation 'From Food Aid to Food Assistance- Working in Partnership'[106] noted gaps in the available data on partnerships and recommended strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of partnerships and partnership-related outcomes. The WFP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 included three partnership-related indicators in its Strategic Results Framework (SRF).[107] This has allowed systematic gathering of quantitative data on partners and partnering. In addition, the Management Results Framework (MRF) for 2014-2017 included ten partnership-related indicators, one of which directly related to CPS implementation. See Finding 26 for an analysis of this data.

97. At HQ level, WFP conducts data collection on various aspects of partnering at global, regional and country levels. For example, at HQ, PG tracks private sector and host government partner financial contributions, captures insights deriving from the annual NGO partner consultations, and compiles regular reports and updates on the agency's collaboration with other Rome Based Agencies, as well as on lessons learned from, and good practice examples related to, South-South Collaboration.

98. Systematic data collection on partnerships was enhanced with the roll-out of the COMET system across WFP Country Offices, which was completed in 2016. COMET includes a dedicated section on partnerships, which has been informed by the categories outlined in the CPS. It captures information on a wider variety of areas than had been possible in the past, including on the *type* of partner (knowledge, resource, policy and governance, advocacy or capability). PGC's partnerships mapping reports have been able to draw upon increasingly complete data sets from HQ, RB and CO levels with the roll-out of COMET.[108] The most recent mapping report compiled in November 2016 covers 75 countries from all six regions (3 where WFP has no Country Office).[109]

Expanding collaborations beyond transactional relationships and forming more sustainable partnerships[110]

99. As noted in paragraph 15, the CPS does not attach a value judgment to the continuum of collaborative relationships. That means that 'full' partnerships are not

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104 This evaluation question was originally captured under EQ3 – sub-question 3.2.6 - on factors influencing results achievement. However, given that the CPS specifically addresses the issue of consistent and effective monitoring and reporting, the evaluation team found it appropriate to mention progress made in this regard under EQ2, while discussing limiting factors under EQ 3.
105 Despite these improvements, there remains room for improvement, which is further discussed under Finding 26.
106 Recommendation 6.
107 The three partnership-related indicators in the SRF measure 1. The proportion of project activities implemented with the engagement of complementary partner; 2. the amount of complementary funds provided to the project by partners; and 3. the number of partner organizations that provide complementary inputs and services.
108 The evolving nature of WFP's information platforms and thus the nature and scope of available data prevents establishing time series based on the existing mapping reports. For example, partnership data for 2015 focus on HQ, RB and WFP Office level, while COMET data relate to the country level only.
109 The following eight countries were not included in this report: India, Indonesia, Cape Verde, Angola, Namibia, Eritrea, the Dominican Republic, and Peru.
110 Evaluation questions 2.6.1 and 2.6.2, relevant in relation to CPS results 4 and 5 as shown in Box 5.

inherently better or more appropriate than transactional relationships. At the same time, previous evaluations[111] have noted that by limiting relationships to short-term, contractually defined transactions, WFP has sometimes missed opportunities for synergies, innovation, or cost savings.

Finding 15   While not directly influenced by the CPS in most cases,[112] actual partnering practices in WFP reflect efforts to expand partnerships beyond mono-functional relationships, and engage in longer-term relationships with a variety of actors.

100. COMET data from November 2016 indicated that WFP was partnering with 2,051 different organizations worldwide at that time. The agency interacts with these partners in 31,515 reported ways (partner types),[113] indicating that relationships with the same organization tends to serve multiple functions.

Figure 7   Partner Type by Region as per COMET, November 2016[114]
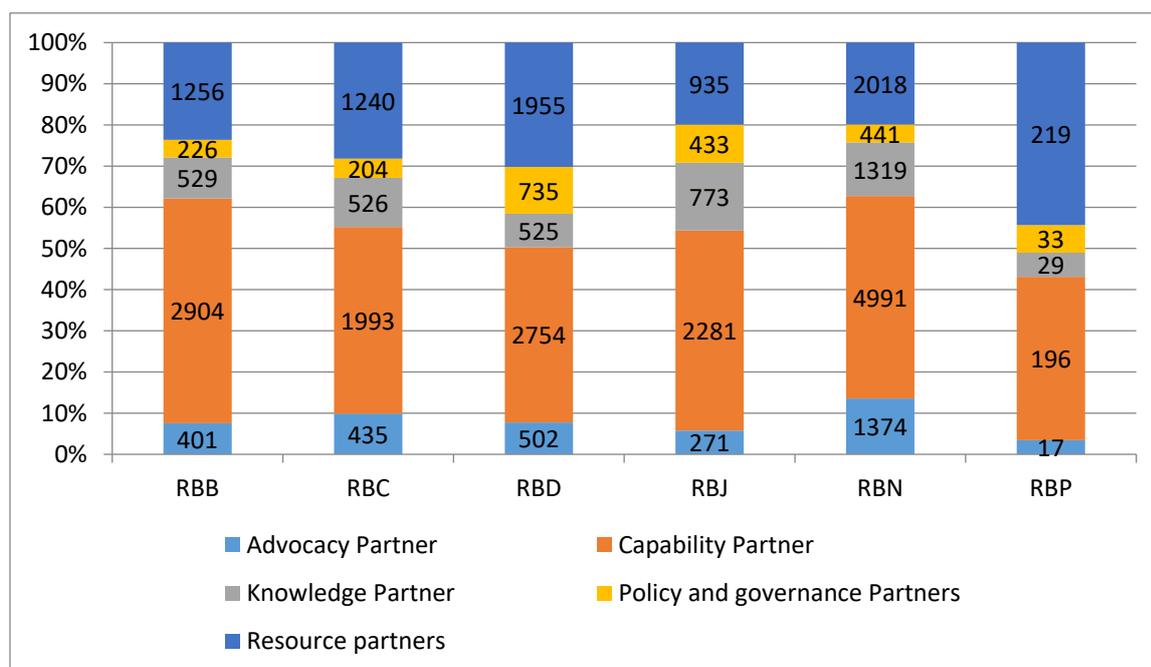
Source: PGC Report "Mapping of WFP Partnerships at a Global Level", November 2016

101. A number of examples deriving from the site visits are outlined below that illustrate WFP efforts to engage in multi-purpose partnerships, and/or in

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111 Country and Regional Portfolio Evaluations completed between 2013 and 2016, Strategic and Policy Evaluations, and WFP Annual Evaluation Reports since 2014.

112 The Egypt CO, all visited RBs and the WFP Offices have consulted the CPS primarily for developing draft country or regional partnership strategies. Consultations with RB staff in different thematic units indicated, however, that the CPS has not significantly influenced their day to day partnering activities.

113 See Annex 6. These figures are somewhat misleading insofar as the instances of different partner types double count relationships with the same actors. For example, in Egypt one of WFP's partners is the NGO Terre des Hommes. With this NGO, WFP has had two FLAs in 2015 covering different timeframes, with each FLA covering several different services such as Monitoring, Storage, Transport, and Distribution. For each of these services, several partner types are listed, such as capability, knowledge, and advocacy partner. That means that the same single FLA appears in COMET as constituting five instances of a 'knowledge partnership'.

114 n = 31,515 reported partner types in 75 countries. Total of 34,278, yet considered 31, 515 due to repetition. See Annex 6.

33

relationships with a longer-term perspective. Additional examples are included in Annex 14.[115]

- In <u>Cambodia,</u> WFP collaborates with the Cambodian government, UN, and NGO partners under the umbrella of the *Humanitarian Response Forum* – a multi-stakeholder partnership that simultaneously fulfills functions related to governance and policy, advocacy, knowledge, and resource mobilization.[116]

- In 2015, the <u>Honduras CO</u> was instrumental in establishing a South-South cooperation focused on knowledge exchange between the Government of Chile, several Honduran government ministries, including the Ministries of Agriculture and Health, as well as Honduran NGOs and community leaders. The collaboration aims to boost local production of bio-fortified maize and beans with the dual purpose of supporting agriculture and improving nutrition in the poorest communities. The modality of South-South cooperation implies a long-term and sustainability perspective focused on strengthening existing national capacities and networks.

- The <u>Regional Bureau Bangkok</u> (RBB) has a knowledge, resource, and capability partnership with the *ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management* (AHA Centre) to strengthen AHA's capacities to prepare for and respond to disasters in the region. The partnership is mid- to long-term with the intent to support the regional organization in assuming leadership for a regionally driven response to disaster preparedness and response.

102. The 2012 evaluation "From Food Aid to Food Assistance" had already identified that "many partnerships were found to have multiple and complementary objectives to deliver food aid/assistance, to develop knowledge or transfer skills and/or to create or maintain a supportive policy environment."[117] Given that comprehensive COMET data are not available prior to 2016, it is not possible to precisely asses to what extent current figures indicate a change. Consultations during the site visits indicated, however, that at least in the perception of most WFP staff and consulted partners' current figures reflect a positive trend as regards deliberate and consistent efforts by WFP COs to deepen and sustain partnerships.

103. One area in which available data allow for a certain degree of comparison though is the extent to which WFP has been broadening its engagement with NGO (and CBO) partners beyond purely transactional relationships. The 2012 evaluation "From Food Aid to Food Assistance" noted that 91% of NGOs working with WFP in 2009 had been defined as 'cooperating partners', that is partners with whom WFP has a primarily transactional relationship.[118] According to COMET data from November 2016, only 67% of NGO and CBO partners are classified as purely cooperating partners, while 31% are reported as both cooperating and complementary, and approximately 1% as

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115 Examples provided in this section are intended to be illustrative in nature, and do not mean to imply that the noted types of positive changes have occurred only in these cases. Examples are primarily taken from the evaluation site visits, given that these allowed triangulating WFP reports with stakeholder consultations.
116 Information on the HRF can be found at https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/cambodia
117 Strategic Evaluation. From Food Aid to Food Assistance – Working in Partnership. (WFP 2012j)
118 Ibid, p. 91. The categories of cooperating and complementary partner are not identical with the distinction between transactional relationship and full partnership that is made in the CPS, but they are sufficiently closely aligned to justify the assumption that cooperating partners tend to be located closer to the transactional end of the spectrum, while complementary partners are located towards the partnership end of the spectrum as outlined in the CPS.

complementary partners.[119] Whereas the specific percentages need to be read with caution given differences in how related data were obtained and verified, evidence deriving from document review[120] and site visits corroborates the observation that, while WFP relationships with NGOs and CBOs still tend to be primarily transactional, they often have expanded to also include elements of fuller partnerships as described in the CPS. See also Finding 17. One illustrative site visit example is outlined below.

- In 2016, the Somalia CO signed "Letters of Intent" with the three international NGOs Save the Children (SC), World Vision (WV) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The envisaged purpose of the letters was to broaden the scope of collaboration beyond transactional Field Level Agreements, which will continue to exist, to more strategic engagement for example through joint advocacy and complementary knowledge and resource generation. Also, the three international NGOs are meant to play an increasing role in strengthening the capacities of WFP's local NGO partners in Somalia.

104. In regard to WFP partnerships with the private sector, document review and stakeholder consultations indicate that WFP has tended to focus on these actors as global or regional level resource partners with comparatively less attention being paid to other partner functions, such as related to advocacy, knowledge, or capability. Nevertheless, the evaluation found several examples of relationships which WFP has developed with private sector actors that fulfil several partnership functions and are based on mutual benefits and accountability of the involved actors. For example:

- At the global level, WFP has engaged with the telecommunication firm, Ericsson, for over 15 years. Regular exchanges between Ericsson and WFP staff has led to the development of evolving and continuously improving mobile communications support during disaster relief operations. For both partners, the relationship fulfils functions related to capability, knowledge, and advocacy. Both parties see the partnership as beneficial to their objectives: it provides WFP with state of the art telecommunication technology for its operations, which has been shown to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian responses; at the same time, Ericsson gains opportunities to strengthen its staff's capacity, and fulfil requirements under its corporate social responsibilities policy.

- Through the WFP Office in Dubai, WFP is engaged with Emergency.LU, a multi-partner, public-private partnership funded primarily by the government of Luxembourg. It is aiming to ensure worldwide rapid response capacity and preparedness for humanitarian emergencies by providing satellite infrastructure and capacity, as well as communication and coordination services.[121]

Synergies and cost-efficiencies due to partnering[122]

Finding 16   Effective partnering enhances the reach and/or quality of WFP's and its partners' programming. Where such synergies are evident,

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119 See Annex 6, Figure 9. Not mentioned above are an additional 0.004% made up by one reported case of an NGO partner being classified as third party (monitor) rather than as cooperating or complementary partner. The noted percentages are the same regardless of whether the calculation takes into account CBOs and NGOs only, or if it also includes International and National Red Cross Societies and the small number of Private Sector Actors reported upon in COMET.
120 In particular reports from the annual WFP NGO consultations.
121 For more information, please see: http://www.emergency.lu/index.php/about/vision-principles
122 Evaluation sub-questions 2.6.3 and 2.6.4, relevant in relation to CPS results 4 and 5 as shown in Box 5.

the benefits of partnering are perceived to outweigh related transaction costs. There is no systematic approach, however, to assessing cost-efficiencies derived from partnering.

105. The WFP definition of 'partnership' outlined in the CPS[123] reflects the assumptions that: (i) partnerships have the potential to achieve results more efficiently, effectively or innovatively than individual actors could; and (ii) that in a 'good' partnership the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved.

106. This assumption is supported by the findings of previous evaluations and studies,[124] which demonstrated that, when drawing upon their respective complementary strengths, partnering enhances both WFP's and its partners' programming in terms of their:

- Reach/coverage, by being able to address wider geographic and/or thematic areas, and engage with more diverse types of stakeholders;

- Quality, by bringing to bear a wider set of relevant knowledge, skills, experience, and spheres of influence;

- Efficiency, by reducing duplication of efforts, ensuring effective flow of information, and offering economies of scale.

107. These benefits are best documented in relation to WFP's engagement as (co-) lead for the logistics, emergency telecommunications, and global food security clusters.[125] For other contexts, WFP does not systematically gather data on synergies and/or reduced duplication of efforts deriving from partnering. Related evidence is, therefore, largely anecdotal and not quantifiable. Some illustrative examples from the site visits are outlined below.

- In Egypt, the WFP CO is collaborating with a wide range of partners in various ways to implement a project to strengthen resilience to climate change in Upper Egypt. Partners include national ministries, community-based organizations, the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, the National Research Center, several universities in Upper Egypt, as well as local governments and the relevant governates. By combining their complementary strengths, partners are able to expand their reach within vulnerable communities, broaden their collective skills, knowledge, experience, and spheres of influence.

- In Honduras, the WFP CO and FAO effectively partnered on a Purchase for Progress project and, more recently, on agricultural value chains. In both cases, the agencies were complementary with WFP focusing on issues such as contractual frameworks, warehousing, maintenance of stocks, quality control, while FAO worked on issues related to seed quality and business models.[126]

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123 CPS page 8, Figure 1

124 Such as the 2012 WFP evaluation From Food Aid to Food Assistance; the Joint WFP, UNICEF and Government of Netherlands Evaluation of the Global Logistics Cluster (2012); the Joint WFP/FAO evaluation of the Food Security Cluster Coordination (2014); and the Humanitarian Policy Group study on "The Future of WFP's Engagement with NGOs: An Option Paper". (HPG 2015b) .

125 Source: cluster evaluations noted in previous footnote, as well as cluster user satisfaction surveys.

126 Other examples of effective collaboration with FAO that was drawing on complementary organizational strengths and profiles of the two agencies were highlighted by consulted staff of both agencies in Mozambique (Accelerating MDG1 Project), Cambodia (Analysis of the determinants of malnutrition) and in the RO Bangkok (Scaling Up Rice Fortification).

- In Cambodia, the WFP CO has been engaging with a range of different partners to continuously expand and improve the use of its Platform for Real-time Information Systems (PRISM) for emergency preparedness and response. This continually-expanding GIS platform brings cartographic and other data[127] collected and entered by Government, the World Bank and other UN agencies, the private sector, universities, NGOs, as well as crowd-sourced data collected by the public, together into a single knowledge platform. In doing so, it is reducing duplication of mapping efforts, while enhancing the comprehensiveness and the relevance of data available for risk monitoring and response in one platform.

108. Partnering does not automatically lead to synergies, but can result in organizations merely working in parallel to each other.[128] One illustrative example from one of the visited countries follows:

- In Somalia, the WFP CO, UNICEF and FAO have worked together since 2012 to implement a Joint Resilience Strategy. In 2016, an interim evaluation of the strategy's implementation found positive effects in terms of increases in the resilience of targeted beneficiaries.[129] However, consulted WFP and FAO staff members noted that, in fact, programming under the Joint Strategy had largely taken place in parallel, leading to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for maximizing programming reach and effects. Based on lessons learned from this experience, and encouraged by donors, the three agencies are currently in the process of developing a Joint Resilience Programme, which will incorporate joint fundraising, implementation and monitoring, as well as joint use of the WFP-developed SCOPE platform for registering and tracking programme beneficiaries to ensure that the complementary nature of the three agencies' services can have the greatest effect.

109. At present, there is no common or standardized approach to comprehensively calculating the cost-benefit ratio of, or cost savings deriving from partnerships. This makes it difficult to fully assess cost-efficiencies deriving from partnering.

- WFP tracks information on financial resources contributed by partners to specific projects/initiatives as well as, to some extent, staff costs – for example, related to specific coordination tasks. However, this does not fully capture the investments required on all sides to make a partnership work, such as staff time required for participating in ongoing information sharing and relationship building.

- By linking data entered into COMET and the WFP Information Network and Global Systems (WINGS), WFP can analyses the efficiency of initiatives implemented by partner organizations by comparing planned versus actual expenditures. This analysis is focused, however, on WFP's organizational priorities and is appropriate only for transactional relationships that involve the transfer of resources from WFP to another organization. It provides only limited insights for assessing the cost-benefit ratio of more symmetric

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127 Such as on number of female-headed households, population density, wet and dry season rice cultivation, evacuation sites.
128 See, for example, WFP Annual Evaluation Report 2015, as well as Country Portfolio Evaluations for Niger and Uganda.
129 FAO (2016b).

partnerships with two-way accountability, especially those that do not involve resource transfers.

110. The overall assessment of whether efforts put into a partnership (as opposed to a purely transactional relationship) 'were worth it' thus largely rely on the subjective assessment by the individuals involved based on their perception of whether the benefits of partnering outweigh – or are likely to outweigh -related transaction costs.[130]

- Recent WFP evaluation reports indicate that in country-level UN coordination mechanisms, the efforts involved in partnering were frequently seen to outweigh any concrete benefits of UN agency programming.[131].

- In contrast, in many of the above-noted site visit examples, both WFP staff and their partners felt that partnership costs had been justified by the deriving benefits in terms of programming coverage, speed, quality, or innovation.

- Surveys conducted as part of the 2012 Joint Evaluation of the Global Logistics Cluster and the 2014 Joint Evaluation of the Food Security Cluster found that the clear majority of respondents felt that working in partnership with the cluster resulted in cost savings and was a worthwhile investment.[132] However, in case of the Logistics Cluster, most respondents also said they did not have enough information on the cost structure of the cluster's operations to be able to adequately assess its real cost effectiveness.[133]

Finding 17 While most consulted groups of partners described their relationship with WFP as being generally consistent with the partnership principles outlined in the CPS, some criticized aspects of WFP's partnering behavior.

111. Most consulted groups of WFP partners described their partnership with WFP as being aligned with the prescriptive principles of equity, transparency, complementarity, results-orientation, and responsibility.

112. Site visits and document review[134] indicated, however, that for national and international NGOs, the experience of WFP as a partner at country level has often been uneven due to factors both internal and external to WFP (see section 2.3). While some

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130 The summary report of WFP's 2013 NGO partner consultation notes that a survey on the issue of Value for Money had been sent out to partners and that organizations had been invited to submit information on their own approaches to assessing this issue. The evaluation did not find further information on the results of this survey or on assessing the value added and cost-effectiveness of partnerships.

131 WFP Annual Evaluation Report 2015, p.13. The Country Portfolio Evaluations for Niger and Uganda found that high-level coordination among UN agencies rarely translated into effective field-level collaboration or synergies. Another example was noted in the draft Regional Partnership Strategy for East and Central Africa (p.16), which found that several COs in the region reported on lengthy negotiations with potential private sector partners whose results were disproportionate to the transaction costs involved.

132 In case of the Logistics Cluster, 61% of survey respondents stated that working with the cluster resulted in cost savings for them. For the Food Security Cluster, 44 percent of respondents perceived the coordination mechanism as a clearly worthwhile investment and 32 percent as a somewhat worthwhile one.

133 The Global Food Security Cluster Annual Report 2015 points out that "When donors contribute US$100 for a food security intervention in any given crisis, US$0.3 is required to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated, efficient and effective response." While, intuitively, this seems like a reasonable ratio, there is no actual agreed upon standard to determine what constitutes a 'good' or 'adequate' cost-benefit ratio for partnering.

134 In particular, review of the summary reports of WFP's Annual Partnership Consultations for the year 2013-2015, the document "The Future of WFP's Engagement with NGOs: An Options Paper" (HPG 2015), as well as the 2016 Internal Audit of WFP's Management of NGO Partnerships (WFP 2016).

NGOs are satisfied with the nature and depth of their relationship with WFP, others see room for improvement in terms of administrative arrangements and in view of the substance and nature of their engagement with WFP. This was noted, for example, in relation to clarifying and systematizing WFP's approach to strengthening the capacities of national NGOs, and in the context of ensuring timely payments to NGO partners.

113. In several cases, consulted WFP partners,[135] as well as WFP staff, also noted instances of WFP taking unilateral decisions without adequately listening to or consulting its partners. Stakeholders inside and outside of WFP further noted that the agency was not always good at identifying and acting upon partnership opportunities by, for example, broadening existing resource or capability partnerships to also encompass knowledge and advocacy components. See Box 10.

> **Box 10: Critique of WFP partnering behavior**
>
> "WFP sometimes makes decisions without consulting us, like it is implementing the project by itself" Host government partner
>
> "We talk a lot about partnership but we do not walk the talk" WFP staff member
>
> "Our Country Offices' perception is that the WFP think of us as a pure implementation partner, so there is still not enough room to contribute to strategy thinking and development" NGO partner, global level
>
> "WFP claims to be collaborative but what they do is make decisions and go ahead with what they want to do, and then say 'You're welcome to join us if you want'." UN Agency partner, regional level

114. Criticism of WFP's partnering behavior was not limited to relationships at regional or country levels, but also included disagreements at the highest organizational levels. In the context of developing the WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021, issues centered around the extent of related RBA consultation and the perception of WFP expanding its mandate.

2.3 Factors Influencing Results from the Corporate Partnership Strategy

Introduction

115. This section explores key factors within the external and internal WFP contexts that positively or negatively affected implementation of the Corporate Partnership Strategy and, more broadly, that are likely to have affected WFP partnering behaviors. The section is structured in four parts that address enabling and inhibiting elements of WFP's external and internal environments, respectively.

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135 Not limited to NGO partners.

External Contexts – Factors Enabling of Partnering[136]

Finding 18   Since 2014, the global, regional and country level environments where WFP works have changed, thereby requiring new partnership modalities.

116. As outlined in sections 1.2 and 2.1, Agenda 2030 - in particular, SDG 17 - emphasizes the centrality of effective partnerships to achieve its complex and inter-related goals. Related commitments will influence the strategic direction not only of WFP but of all UN agencies and other development actors, as well as expectations and priorities of donors. Similarly, the 'Grand Bargain'[137] agreement and the shift to a "new way of working" reflected in the World Humanitarian Summit have reaffirmed the need to strengthen the capacities of national responders and meaningfully involve private sector partners in humanitarian response.

117. Many regional and country contexts include an increasing number of countries that have reached, or are approaching, middle income status, which often goes along with strengthened public sector capabilities. As a result, there is an increasing appetite among host governments to engage with development and humanitarian actors as strategic partners, rather than limiting their relationships to largely transactional, service-recipient interactions. See Box 11. This has implications for WFP's role especially in middle income countries, and in relation to (sub) regional organizations, which has been changing from programme

> **Box 11: Evolution of Host Government Contributions**
>
> Over the past five years, financial contributions by host governments to WFP operations in their countries (PRRO, EMOP, DEV, and Trust Funds) have steadily increased. In 2011, India was the top contributor with a total of $ 14.6 million. From 2012 to 2015, Pakistan was the top host government contributor, with contributions rising from $ 22.2 million in 2012 to $ 80.6 million in 2015. In 2016, Malawi took the top position by contributing $98.6 million to one PRRO.[138] The significant financial contributions are one indicator of host governments increasingly acting not as mere beneficiaries of WFP programming, but as partners.

implementation to providing targeted technical assistance and strengthening host government capacities. This is further discussed under Finding 20.

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136 Evaluation question 3.1

137 Of the 10 items of the Grand Bargain, 8 significantly relate to partnerships. Additional issues that will need to be addressed, but which consulted WFP staff did not specifically mention as requiring urgent guidance are: (i) Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming; (ii) Reduce duplication and management costs with periodic functional reviews; (iii) Improve joint and impartial needs assessments; (iv) include people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives; (v) Increase collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding; (vi) Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements; and (vii) Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

138 Source: Data on Top 5 Largest Host Government Contributors 2011-2016 provided by PGG.

Finding 19   Some UN agencies view WFP as a competitor in countries where food assistance is no longer required and where WFP is providing capacity strengthening support to governmental institutions.

118. For almost two decades, UN reform efforts have included initiatives to strengthen coordination and collaboration among UN agencies, such as the Delivering as One initiative. Despite related improvements and successes, partnering among UN actors is sometimes facing challenges since agencies with similar or overlapping thematic foci are competing over a limited,

> **Box 12: Diverging views over mandate boundaries and comparative advantage**
>
> "WFP is expanding its mandate and areas of responsibility here without any consultation" UN partner (country level)
>
> "We do not fully understand why WFP unilaterally entered [this area] and are trying to remedy what we see as duplication" Donor (country level)
>
> "WFP is not consultative, makes unilateral decisions, and is trying to do things that it is not very good at, but which we have been doing for years. WFP should at least use our technical expertise if they are not going to focus on what they do best, which is delivering food". UN partner (country level)
>
> "WFP sometimes gets involved in [new areas of work] where they are not knowledgeable and they are not willing to take our advice even though we have been doing it for decades". UN partner (country level)

and generally decreasing, pool of resources. In this context, organizational mandates and both actual and perceived comparative advantages become valuable assets - the boundaries of which agencies seek to protect.[139]

119. Under its transition from food aid to food assistance, WFP has moved from a predominant focus on humanitarian delivery to increasingly engaging with host governments on upstream, medium-term programmes to create sustainable hunger solutions.[140] In some countries, consulted UN partners, in particular from FAO and UNICEF, were of the opinion that WFP had, at times, encroached on their own agencies' domains. Moreover, some partners felt that WFP had occasionally done so "with its humanitarian DNA", and – in their view- without the required development expertise, thereby creating policy incoherence between UN agencies. See Box 12.

120. Site visit data, while based on only a limited sample, indicate that such disagreements over mandates and comparative advantages are often more visible in countries where the need for food assistance is reduced and where conventional donors were withdrawing their support.[141] Similar observations have been made in

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139 In the context of the SDGs, the global discourse around the role of the United Nations has somewhat shifted from focusing on individual agencies' mandates to their respective comparative advantages for contributing to the achievement of different SDGs.

140 WFP's mandate has always spanned both humanitarian and development elements. However, over the past decade or so, the agency has strongly focused on humanitarian settings, which has shaped stakeholder perceptions of WFP's comparative strengths but also expectations regarding the boundaries of its mandate.

141 This was not always the case. WFP in Honduras is solely focusing on upstream capacity development work, especially with government partners.

recent country portfolio WFP evaluations.[142] Some challenges also exist in humanitarian settings, for example, due to the increasing use of biometrics in serving refugee populations, and related discussions on which UN agency is best positioned to take the lead in this regard.

121. The CPS[143] outlines four actions that WFP would undertake by 2017 to promote better partnership with UN organizations. Out of these four actions, the first two were partly under PGC's responsibility and therefore included in the CPS Action Plan. Only the first one has been completed to date while the other three actions remain under implementation.

- *Identify key relationship focal points for engaging with UN agency partners*: completed.

- *Develop and agree on engagement strategies for all major partners*: The PGC Action Plan had identified UNDP and OCHA as possible UN organizations with whom to develop engagement strategies. The ultimate decision lies with senior management, which has not requested such engagement strategies.

- *Develop effective MOUs with each organization to clarify areas of joint work and the means of resolving any disagreements arising*: At present, all existing MOUs, such as cooperation framework agreements with other UN agencies pre-date the CPS.[144] As part of developing its Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021, WFP contributed to a joint paper on RBA collaboration, which was finalized in time for EB.2 2016.

- *Develop a clear and, where possible, joint communication strategy on the key features of the partnership*: Internal WFP guidance is available on the collaboration with RBAs, but there are, to the evaluation team's knowledge, no joint communication strategies at headquarters level.

Finding 20   Contextual factors, such as countries' stages of development and the existence or absence of acute conflict or crisis, influence the number of partners that WFP engages with and the extent to which collaborative relationships tend to be located at the 'transactional' or 'partnership' end of the spectrum.

122. Document review and evaluation site visits indicate that in Least Developed Countries and in countries that are involved in or recovering from acute crises, WFP tends to play a significant role in programming involving food or cash transfers.

123. To fulfil its role in humanitarian and emergency settings, WFP works with numerous implementing partners, primarily international and national NGOs. In Somalia, for example, the country's internal fragmentation and clan structure requires WFP to work with many different local NGOs as implementing partners, given that external actors do not have access to many of the targeted areas.[145] In such contexts,

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142 For example, in regional/country portfolio evaluations for Central America (2013), Uganda (2014), Tanzania (2015), and Palestine (2016).
143 Paragraph 53.
144 For example, the "Directions for Collaboration among the Rome-Based Agencies" date back to 2009, the existing MOU with UNICEF to 2011, and an MOU with UNHCR also to 2011. At the time of finalizing this report (February 2017) an MOU with UNDP is under consideration for approval, and a new MOU with UNICEF is under development.
145 According to COMET data from May 2016, Somalia had 118 partners in 2015. According to information provided by the Somalia CO during the site visit, the office currently has 105 partners Out of these 105, 86 (82%) are local NGOs.

the sheer number of partners, as well as the absence of dedicated resources for partner capacity strengthening, makes it difficult for COs to engage with each of these NGOs in anything but clearly defined primarily transactional relationships with one-way accountability. These relationships usually do not include significant NGO input on bigger-picture decision making.

124. As emphasized in the CPS, transactional relationships are not inherently 'better' or 'worse' than full partnerships. [147] However, consulted WFP staff in countries with many such implementing relationships noted that they were unsure how to fulfil expectations to strengthen the capacity of national responders. See Box 13.

125. As shown in Figure 5, PGC partnership mapping reports from 2015 and 2016 indicate a considerable increase in partners contributing to WFP Strategic Objective 1, which focuses on saving lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies, and SO 2, which addresses food security, nutrition and rebuilding livelihoods in fragile settings and following emergencies. This increase, which reflects the large humanitarian crises that WFP has been engaged in during the period in question (5 Level 3 emergencies in 2016), can, at least partly, explain why WFP's relationships especially with NGOs still tend to be relatively short-term cooperating relationships focused on the implementation capabilities of its partners.

Box 13: Desired partnership 'depth' in humanitarian settings

There appears to be a sensitive balance regarding the perceived 'right' degree of partnering depth in humanitarian settings. One the one hand, user surveys and previous evaluations of the three clusters that WFP leads or co-leads have shown that the clear majority of WFP staff and partners highly value the benefits deriving from coordination and information sharing provided through the cluster structure.

On the other hand, however, WFP staff often perceive 'deeper' partnering beyond the coordination of individual efforts that would require time and effort related to joint planning and decision making, as inappropriate in light of the urgent needs that need to be met in emergency settings.[146]

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146 Source: HPG (2015), page 11.
147 The 2015 HPG report on the Future of WFP's Engagement with NGOs noted, that while some, especially larger, international, NGOs desire a deeper engagement with WFP, others, in particular smaller organizations with narrow geographic and thematic portfolios and limited organizational capacities are often content with relating to WFP as a donor for their activities.

Figure 8   2015 and 2016 Partner Contributions to WFP Strategic Objectives under the SP 2014-2017[148]

2015

2016

- SO1 - SO2 - SO3 - SO4
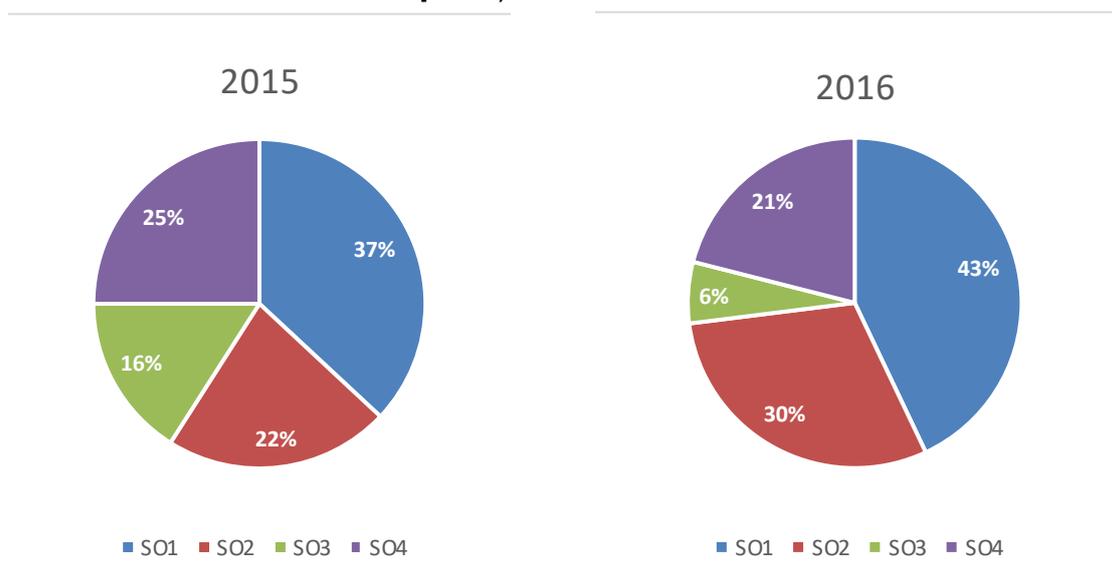
126. COMET data (November 2016) indicate slight regional variations of predominant partner categories. Globally, about 23% of WFP partners are government counterparts.[149] As shown in Figure , however, this percentage is notably higher in RBP (approaching 35%), a region where more than half of its countries are Middle, Upper Middle, of High Income countries. The percentage of government partners is lower in RBN (18%), a region with predominantly Low Income countries.

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148 Sources: Mapping 2015 Partnerships at Country Office Level (May 2015); and Mapping WFP Partnerships at the global level (November 2016). The 2015 PGC mapping report draws upon both DACOTA and COMET data from 77 countries, but does not include information on government counterparts, CBO and private sector partners, while the November 2016 report reflects COMET data from 75 countries and includes data on the three noted partner categories. Comparisons between the two data sets thus need to be viewed with caution and focus on a possible trend rather than on exact percentages deriving from each dataset.

149 WFP Mapping of Partnerships at the Country Level, November 23, 2016

Figure 9   Partner Category by Region as per COMET, November 2016[150]

100%
	18	65	5	77	49	5
90%	1			5	1	
	138	4	166	5		53
80%		103			208	
70%				210		
60%	54	116	85			11
50%	3	6	2	99	123	1
40%	83	89	133	3	4	36
30%				86	76	
20%						
10%	1	49	18	1	3	6
0%	RBB	RBC	RBD	RBJ	RBN	RBP

- ■ CBO
- ■ Government Counterpart
- ■ National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society
- ■ NGO Global
- ■ NGO Local
- ■ Private Sector
- ■ UN Agency
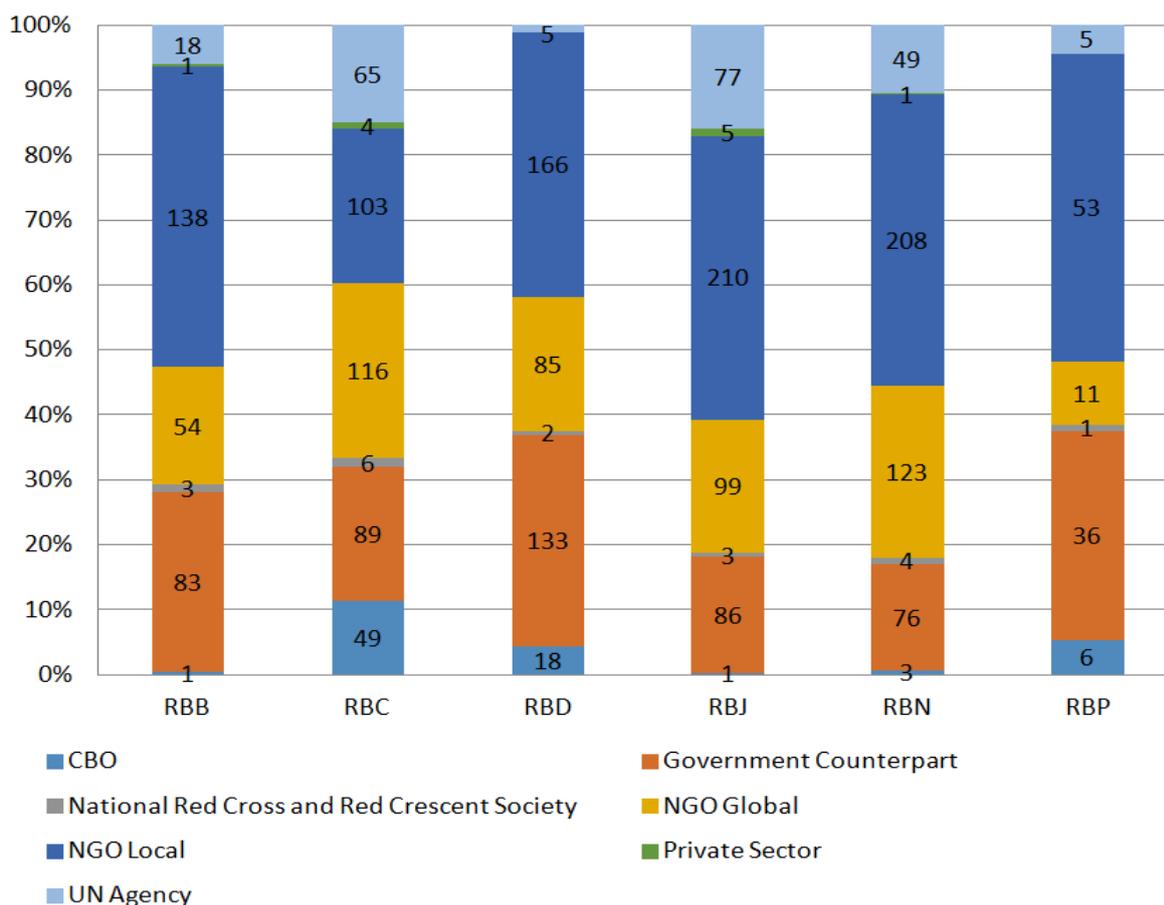
Source: PGC Report "Mapping of WFP Partnerships at a Global Level", November 2016

127. COMET data further indicate a possible correlation between income levels and predominant types (functions) of partners. Figure below shows that the percentage of capability partners is visibly lower in Middle Income Countries (MIC) than is the case in Low Income (LI) and Lower Middle Income Countries (LMIC), while, at the same time, the percentage of knowledge partners is higher in MICs than in LICs and LMICs. This corresponds with the above noted shift from WFP's role as a provider of direct assistance to a role increasingly focused on capacity strengthening and technical assistance.

128. The higher percentages of capability partnerships in Upper Middle and High Income countries (UMIC and HIC) shown in Figure may partly discredit the noted link between income levels and types of partners. However, care must be taken not to over-emphasize these data, given that only approximately 3% of all WFP partnering activities take place in UMIC and HIC contexts, and, as discussed under Finding 26, COMET data do not yet reliably capture the whole universe of WFP partnerships.

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150 n= 2,051 partners.

Figure 10   Partner Types by Income Status as per COMET, November 2016[151]
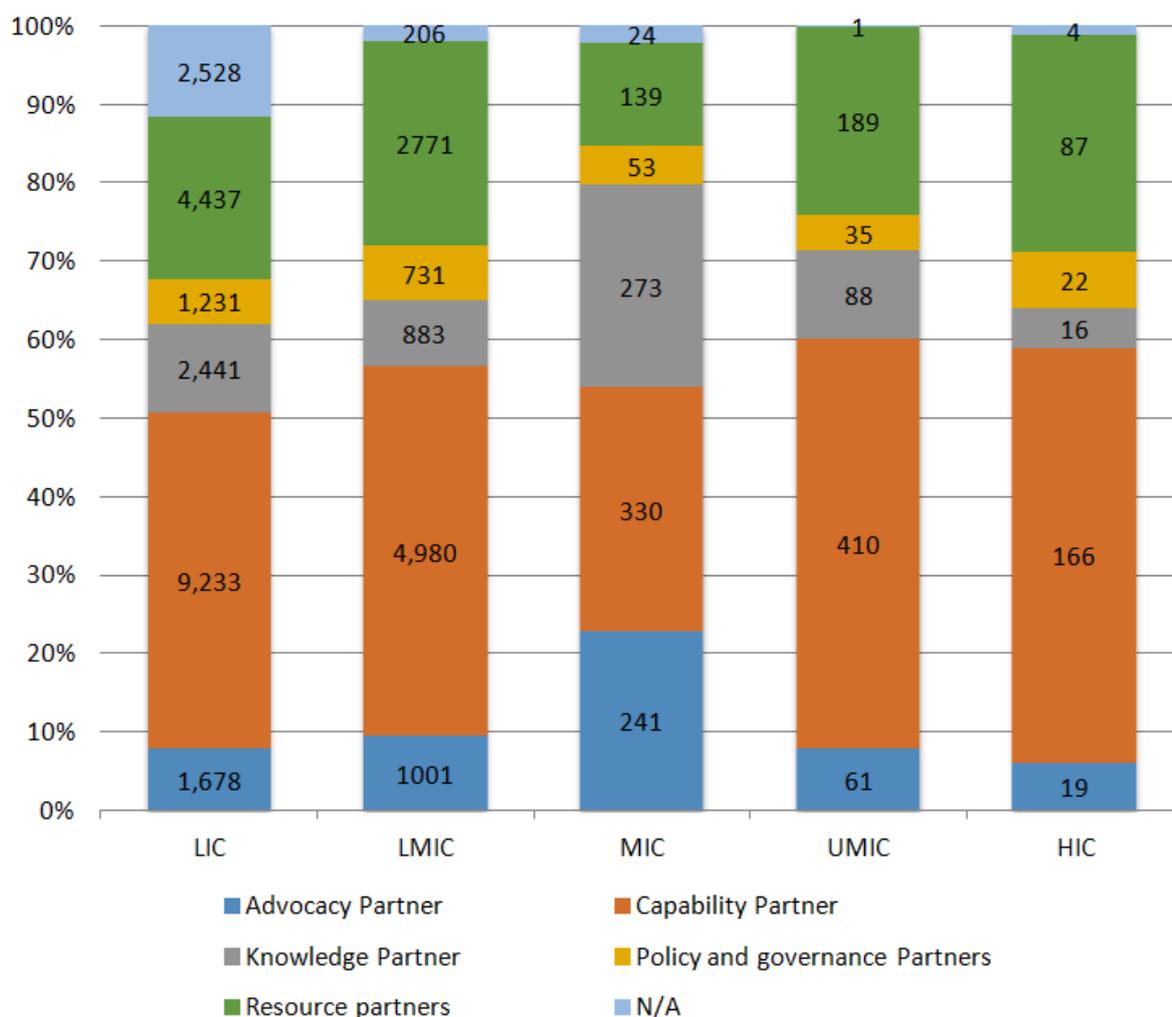
Source: World Bank List of Economies 2016 and PGC Report "Mapping of WFP Partnerships at a Global Level", November 2016

Internal Factors[152]

129. The evaluation noted a range of internal factors that are affecting CPS implementation. While several of these are supportive, there are a number that have limited both the speed and scope of progress of the envisaged organizational change process. This section captures key such factors, both those closely linked to the immediate process of CPS dissemination and implementation within WFP, as well as, more broadly, factors affecting current WFP partnering practices given that these influence the environment in which the CPS is aiming to affect change.

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151 n=31,515 partner types across 75 countries
152 Evaluation question 3.2.

Finding 21   WFP's perceived organizational strengths make it a strong and desirable partner.

130. The normative expectation that working in partnership is both the 'right' and the 'smart' thing to do applies to actors in development and humanitarian contexts alike. It is thus not surprising that all consulted WFP partners were generally supportive of WFP's commitment to partnering as outlined in the CPS and in the Strategic Plans 2014-2017 and 2017-2021. This was especially the case with other UN agencies as they are bound by similar commitments. Even in cases of disagreements over mandate boundaries as discussed under Finding 19, UN agency representatives were generally supportive of the idea of partnering, but were of the opinion that WFP was not consistently behaving in accordance to the partnership principles of transparency and complementarity.

131. Partner consultations further illustrated that WFP is generally seen as a strong and, therefore, desirable partner.

- Key strengths highlighted by all groups of partners were WFP's field presence, 'can do' attitude, and WFP staff technical expertise and skills especially in areas such as VAM, logistics, supply chain, and transport.

- Most UN and some NGOs highlighted WFP's strong performance as a humanitarian cluster lead and, albeit with variations, its active role as a member of UN Country Teams.[153]

- While some, especially large international NGOs perceive WFP as a competitor in relation to donor resources, many local and international non-government organizations appreciate WFP as a financial partner, but also as a provider of infrastructure and logistical support in challenging environments.

132. In most of the visited RB, WFP Offices and CO, consulted partners highlighted that besides these organizational strengths one key factor for effective partnering were the attitude and leadership of individual staff members - especially by the senior leadership in different WFP offices. Partners attributed many of the partnering achievements and trends outlined in section 2.2 above primarily to the commitment of the specific WFP staff and managers involved.

Finding 22   Within WFP's internal discourse, the importance of partnership has been prominent for several years. Evidence indicates that this is likely to have contributed to heightened staff awareness of the issue regardless of their knowledge of the CPS.

133. Consulted staff and managers in almost all visited RB, WFP Offices and CO – regardless of whether they had read the CPS or not - emphasized that effective strategic partnering was essential for achieving desired results.

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153 This positive assessment of WFP's role as a cluster lead has also been noted in the Joint Evaluation of the Global Logistics Cluster (WFP, UNICEF, and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012), as well as in responses to user satisfaction surveys related to the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (2014), the Global Food Security Cluster (2014), and the Logistics Cluster (2012).

134. WFP staff partly attributed this view to the evolving global and local contexts that they operate in, including global discussions linked to Agenda, as well as national or regional level changes in terms of partner needs and expectations, as well as in WFP's evolving role. They also repeatedly pointed to the fact that the importance of pursuing meaningful partnerships has been actively promoted by senior leadership in WFP at least since the approval of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

135.   As is discussed under Finding 23, however, senior level promotion of the overall issue of partnership is not synonymous with ownership for implementation of the Corporate Partnership Strategy.

Internal Context – Factors Limiting CPS Implementation and Partnering

Finding 23   Effective implementation of the CPS is hampered by inconsistent and narrow ownership of the strategy, and by a related accountability vacuum.

136. The CPS assigns responsibility and accountability for CPS implementation to all Headquarters departments, Regional Bureaux and Country Offices in WFP, while at the same time stressing the "leadership role" of PG in "implementing the CPS and promoting the shift of culture within WFP".[154] Document review and consultations with WFP staff at all levels indicate that, in practice, no other departments or units besides PGC have been held accountable for CPS implementation.

137. PG's leadership role in relation to the CPS includes responsibility for "facilitating and coordinating its full implementation across WFP" but stops short of a formal supervisory role for organization-wide progress in implementing the strategy. PGC, as the key unit tasked with CPS implementation, is accountable for implementing the Action Plan for CPS implementation, which entails support, but not direct responsibility for issues such as CPS implementation at regional levels or clarifying mandate questions with other UN agencies.

138. As noted in Finding 8, staff perceptions of the relevance of the CPS for their work vary, with several units at HQ stating that they considered the CPS to be "for PGC, but not for us". The limited ownership of the CPS is both reflected and enhanced by the fact that there is no agreed upon plan for CPS implementation that would include agency-wide commitments and related timelines, or that specify partnership-related milestones to be achieved by divisions at HQ other than PGC. Thus, there is no system or process in place to both ensure and capture progress related to the overall process of organizational change implied by the CPS. One example of this is the slow and inconsistent progress that has been made to date on the regional partnership strategies (see Finding 11).

Finding 24   Financial resources for CPS implementation have constituted an investment that is incongruent with the internal and

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154 CPS paragraph 63.

external challenges to fulfilling WFP's aspirational commitment to partnering under the Integrated Road Map.

139. The financial resources invested in CPS implementation have included: (i) the cost of the PGC Deputy Director from the PSA budget; and (ii) US 300,000 allocation for the Partnership Resource Centre developed and managed by the 4-person strong PGC team, which was provided in 2015 and 2016 through the Critical Corporate Initiative (Investment Case) envelope.[155]

140. Commensurate with the modest available resources, CPS implementation so far has largely focused on the establishment of the Partnership Resource Centre, training of staff, and integrating partnership dimensions into existing and evolving corporate systems and tools. As discussed in section 2.2, these achievements have yet to penetrate to the country level and have had only minimal impact on staff awareness, mindsets, or partnering capacities.[156]

141. At the same time, RB, CO and WFP Offices have not received additional or dedicated resources for CPS implementation – such as for staff training at the country level - or for partnering in general. Several of the visited COs mentioned, for example, that they do not have financial or human resources to systematically engage in capacity strengthening of local NGOs, which - in at least some cases - would be essential for deepening the relationship with these organizations.

Finding 25   WFP's corporate culture and legal frameworks still tend to be delivery-focused and short-term; as such, the organizational context does not constitute a consistently enabling environment for partnering.

142. While there are considerable differences between individual RB, CO WFP Offices and different units at HQ, consulted WFP staff widely agreed that the agency's overall institutional culture still tends to be delivery-focused and short-term, which can pose challenges to effective and strategic partnering.

143. Several consulted WFP staff, NGO and government partners further noted that existing WFP legal frameworks used to manage collaborative relationships tend to focus on audit and control. While this is appropriate for transactional relationships, it is not helpful for full partnerships. Document review and consultations with WFP staff and partners noted the following challenges:

- Inconsistent standard operating procedures (SOPs) at CO level detailing WFP's and NGO partners' roles and responsibilities for project activities;[157]

- Partner reporting to WFP tends to be mechanical and onerous, with little room for context-specific adaptation;[158]

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155 Under WFP's 'Fit for Purpose' Initiative, launched by the Executive Director in 2012, departmental Management Plans included funds dedicated to support the organizational strengthening of WFP. Divisions involved in Fit For Purpose initiatives were able to make applications for 'Investment Cases' to fund the strengthening. The 'investment case' funding for the Partnership Resource Centre has now been extended to 2017.

156 This may reflect the fact that PGC did not have a budget for field missions to allow for greater penetration at CO and RB levels.

157 Source: Internal Audit of WFP's Management of NGO Partnerships. (WFP 2016).

158 The Good Partnership Survey conducted by the PGC NGO unit in 2016 by eliciting responses from 30 international NGOs, found that 58.62% of respondent assessed WFP as "sometimes" being prepared to be flexible in achieving the objectives of a collaboration agreement, while only 27.59% stated that this was 'frequently", and 10.34% that this was "always" the case. The

- Existing partnership agreement templates are largely unsuitable for non-contractual partnerships covered by standard FLAs;

- WFP rules on overhead/operating costs are mostly tied to flow-through expenses, such as food and cash, which inhibits knowledge or advocacy partnerships that are not commodity based;

- WFPs one-year funding cycle and the related lack of predictability of funding makes it difficult to engage in sustainable, strategic or visionary partnerships that envisage growth and are, as such, dependent on evolution over several years; and,

- There are no tools or processes to assess NGOs or private sector actors for their overall partnership potential. At present, screenings tend to focus on potential risks, partner management and/or delivery capacity.

144. There are also several specific challenges to expanding WFP partnering with private sector actors deriving from existing WFP systems, including:

- Current WFP procurement, due diligence and cost recovery processes are not set up to deal with potentially complex and multi-faceted relationships in the field that encompass not only contractual, but also other partnering dimensions;[159]

- WFP does not have a global account management structure to develop and manage relationships with the private sector across geographical boundaries and functions. This can lead to reputational risks for the organization, where contradictory positions towards the same partner organization can be taken in different places. It can also lead to high transactional costs and ineffective partnership development.

145. These challenges may have contributed to the fact that private sector actors still constitute a very small proportion of the different groups of actors that WFP engages with. According to COMET data from November 2016,[160] private sector partners make up less than 1% of entities that WFP partners with across countries.[161]

Finding 26 Despite the noted progress in monitoring and reporting, available intelligence on partners and partnerships is still only partially complete. There remains a gap in comprehensively analyzing the effectiveness, efficiency or innovation of partnering across the organization.

146. The partnership indicators included in the SRF 2014-2017 solely focus on quantitative information related to the number of partners that WFP engages with, and the amount of complementary funds provided to a project by partners. Consulted WFP staff noted that this implied an attitude of 'more is better', rather than – as promoted in the CPS – assigning value to, and capturing information on, the quality

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2016 Internal Audit of WFP's Management of NGO Partnerships (WFP 2016qq, paragraph 9) noted that frequently WFP payments to NGO partners are delayed due to lengthy invoice verification processes, and because of minor discrepancies in commodity amounts.

159 For example, under current rules a partner has to stop any pro bono activities with the agency in order to become a contractor.

160 November 2016.

161 As shown in Figure 6 under finding 20, this does not significantly vary by region.

and effectiveness of partnerships. In the 2016 Evaluability Assessment of WFP's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 (WFP 2016gg), the SRF results statements and related indicators on partnership were rated as 'moderate' for their relevance, validity and testability. The Assessment further found that indicators were perceived to tell only a limited partnership story as COs struggled to document the richness of their partnerships outside of Field-Level Agreements. On the partnership-related indicators included in the Management Results Framework (MRF) 2014-2017, the Evaluability Assessment noted that while these indicators cover adherence with the principles of partnership outlined in the CPS, they only assess basic user satisfaction for cluster work, and do not sufficiently cover partnering with national governments.[162]

147. As noted under Finding 17, the roll-out of COMET constitutes a notable improvement in WFP's ability to systematically capture comprehensive partnership data.

148. However, while COMET allows for reporting upon partnerships with private sector actors, academic and think tank like organizations and Community Based Organizations (CBO), staff do not yet consistently enter related data into the system. See Box 14. This limits WFP's ability to fully capture the scope of actual partnerships that it is engaged in at the country level.

149. In theory, COMET enables the analysis of partnerships in terms of their effectiveness from WFP's perspective by allowing Country Offices to capture partners' commitments and delivered results at output and outcome level. To date, however, the system is not yet widely used to

> **Box 14: Partnerships not captured in WFP systems**
>
> In <u>Cambodia</u>, the COs multi-type, multi-partner engagement in the Humanitarian Response Forum (see ¶ 94 above), while mentioned in the narrative sections of Standard Project Reports (SPR), has not yet been captured in COMET. Similarly, the COs work in relation to PRISM – although it has been recognized for a WFP Innovation Challenge Award in 2016 – has not been captured in neither SPRs nor COMET.
>
> In <u>Honduras</u>, consultations with WFP staff indicated that the groups of partners that the CO engages with are NGOs (32%), the Government of Honduras (18%), Municipalities and Communities (25%), UN agencies (12%), Academia (11%), and Private Sector actors (2%). However, reporting in COMET only reflects two local NGOs, creating the misleading impression that 100% of the CO's partnering takes place with this group of organization.

analyses such performance data using a partnership lens. As noted under Finding 16, COMET has also ensured linkages to financial information in WINGS,[163] thus enabling the analysis of partnership agreements from a value for money perspective. This is dependent, however, on COs entering Service Outline Agreement (SOA) codes into WINGS and partner vendor code numbers into COMET, which is not yet consistently the case across COs and projects. Likely factors explaining the noted gaps are: (i) a need for further training to ensure that WFP staff become familiar with the nuances of the still new COMET system, in particular the types of analysis that correctly entered data permit, and its ability to 'speak' with other corporate platforms; (ii) outdated

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162 WFP 2016gg, p.13.
163 WINGS represents a number of systems which are integrated with WFP's Enterprise Resource Planning system SAP. It is used to manage the many facets of WFP's business, including programme/project planning and implementation, procurement, logistics, finance travel and human resources.

WINGS guidelines under which SOA are optional entries – which means that busy staff tend to leave them empty - and the fact that entering vendor numbers into COMET is mandatory only for FLAs.

150. Further, even if used to their full potential, standardized data available through platforms such as COMET and WINGS are not able to capture issues such as the extent and nature of synergies, reduced duplication of efforts, or innovation deriving from partnering. To date, the extent to which WFP gathers qualitative information that would be suited to address these questions is limited.

- Some qualitative partnership-related information is contained in the management sections of Standard Project Reports (SPR). These narrative paragraphs of varying lengths describe what the Country Office considered to be highlights of partnership-related activities, but vary considerably in their foci, comprehensiveness, and depth of analysis. Qualitative information on partnerships deriving from SPRs has not been systematically synthesized at the corporate level.[164]

- To monitor progress against the MRF indicator related to alignment with the CPS partnership principles, PGC has planned to conduct regular partnership surveys to assess the extent to which partners perceive WFP to act in alignment with the partnership principles outlined in the CPS. In 2016, this survey was limited to 30 international NGOs, which is a very small section of WFP's existing partners. A more comprehensive survey is planned for 2017 as part of the Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021.[165] The survey as implemented to date does not elicit data on the benefits of specific partnering activities.

Finding 27   WFP staff identified the need to further enhance their partnership-related knowledge and skills, especially in relation to strengthening national partner capacities and partnering with the private sector.

151. WFP staff and several partners noted room for improvement in relation to partnering skills and knowledge within the agency.

152. Gaps exist in relation to strengthening national partner capacities, including engaging host governments in high-level policy dialogue and advocacy.[166] In this context, several WFP staff noted a disconnect between available corporate structures, guidance and tools for partnership and capacity strengthening respectively.[167]

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164 Please see Annex 6 for details on the partnership-related information contained in SPRs. A list of SPRs reviewed for this evaluation is provided as Annex 16.

165 The Corporate Results Framework 2017-2020 includes partnership-related indicators for measuring the effectiveness, coherence and results of WFP partnerships with the public and private sectors, Rome-based agencies and other operational partners via qualitative review. Applying these indicators holds the potential for closing some of the currently existing gaps in capturing qualitative partnership information

166 Similar observations were noted in the Evaluation of the WFP Policy on Capacity Development Update (WFP 2017).

167 To address their existing internal capacity needs, some offices are taking proactive steps. For example, the Regional Bureau Nairobi has entered into a (resource and capability) partnership with the University of Lund and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to develop an approach to strengthening Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) capacities of national partners in the RBN region.

153. Until now, there is only limited professional recognition given to staff time spent on partnering.[168] One promising development in this regard is the noted integration of partnership criteria into capability frameworks that are now being used to assess WFP staff and managers' performance.[169] It remains to be seen, whether partnership-related performance assessments will play a role in decisions over staff promotion. See Box 15.

> **Box 15: Perceived status of partnering within the informal WFP hierarchy**
>
> "At present, high positions in WFP to go people with a logistics background. It is not partnering experience that helps you move up in the organization". Senior WFP manager

154. In addition, some staff noted the desire to enhance their ability to effectively engage with private sector partners. At present, existing WFP guidance tools tend to address private sector actors primarily in their potential role as resource partners, and do not yet help WFP staff on the ground solve practical challenges, such as how best to engage with private sector actors as capability, knowledge or advocacy partners.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Overall Assessment

Conclusion 1: The CPS includes a clear partnership vision but several of the conditions for successful CPS implementation are not yet fully in place.

155. The CPS outlines a clear partnership vision for WFP. An analysis of the theory of change assumptions indicates, however, that key elements necessary for the successful implementation of the CPS are not yet firmly established. These include adequate capacity strengthening of staff, building a clear partnership mindset throughout the organization, sufficient professional recognition for time spent on partnering work, and adequate resources to ensure cost-effective partnering.

156. While the general partnership characteristics and principles described in the CPS remain valid, the document is outdated in view of important developments in WFP's internal and external contexts, in particular Agenda 2030 with SDG 17, which are essential for anchoring WPF's partnering vision.

Conclusion 2: Whereas the CPS includes attention to gender and equity concerns, there is a lack of guidance within WFP to ensure that gender and equity principles are integrated into all partnerships.

157. The CPS makes several references to the notions of gender equality and equity and confirms their relevance and applicability in the context of WFP's partnering approach. In this regard, the CPS differs from the partnership strategies of some comparator organizations, which do not explicitly mention gender equality concerns.

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168 The 'Award of Excellence: Rome Based Agencies Collaboration at Country Level', which has been presented every two years since 2012, is one notable exception.
169 See paragraph 81.

However, there is currently no explicit guidance available on whether and how WFP staff should ensure partner compliance with these expectations.[170]

Conclusion 3: Commensurate with limited financial resources allocated to CPS implementation, the Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department has focused on laying the foundations for change, such as creating PGC and developing a repository of partnership tools. The minimal investment made is now, however, incongruent with WFP's aspirational commitment to partnering under the IRM.

158. Modest financial resources invested in CPS implementation to date have largely been used to finance the work of PGC. Accordingly, the CPS Action Plan was not a corporate workplan but focused on PGC's tasks for strategy implementation. In accordance with PGC's mandate, size and available resources it was limited to addressing only certain elements of WFP's internal environment. Investing in innovative areas, such as capacity strengthening of national government, NGO and CBO partners, would allow for engagement in deeper partnerships than is currently the case. At present, however, there is a lack of dedicated resources for this purpose.

Conclusion 4: WFP is making progress towards three of the five envisaged results outlined in the Strategy despite the lack of broad awareness of the CPS itself among staff. There is room for improvement in ensuring that existing guidance tools on partnering are disseminated and used, and that data collection, analysis and reporting on partnerships is further strengthened including in relation to capturing intelligence on partnership transaction costs.

159. Although the CPS is not yet widely known or used by WFP staff, actual partnering attitudes and behaviors largely reflect the envisaged results outlined in the CPS.

- There is a shared understanding among WFP staff of the benefits of partnership. The actual portfolio of WFP partnerships at global, regional, and country levels reflects the whole spectrum of collaborative relationships envisaged in the CPS. WFP has a clearly formulated strategic focus on partnerships at the global, regional and country levels, which is being reaffirmed and expanded in the Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021.

- The guidance materials, tools, and training modules developed by PGC are generally of good quality in that they reflect current partnership thinking and good practice, and are written in clear language. Nevertheless, to date available resources have not yet been widely accessed by staff outside of HQ.

- Whereas it has not been possible to present a consolidated picture of the full range of partnerships at country level in past years due to data system limitations, WFP has strengthened its ability to systematically collect quantitative data on partnerships including through the roll-out of COMET in 2016. To date, however, WFP staff have not fully used the analytical potential of COMET and other related platforms to generate and analyze comprehensive partnership data. Further, there remains a gap in systematically gathering and

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170 Providing such operational guidance goes beyond the scope of the CPS itself.

analyzing qualitative data on the effectiveness, efficiency, or innovations related to 'full' partnerships that go beyond transactional relationships.

- It appears that many of WFP's partnerships create synergies and avoid or minimize duplication of efforts. In doing so, they contribute to increasing the reach, quality, and/or cost-efficiency of WFP's and its partners' programming. Such benefits are most systematically documented in the context of the clusters that WFP leads or co-leads, and less so in the context of other partnerships at the country level. However, related assessments - especially of the extent to which partnerships contribute to minimizing transaction costs -are largely based on the perceptions of WFP staff and partners. Also, they are not carried out consistently for all partnerships, which prevents assessing whether current practices constitute a positive change from previous years.

Conclusion 5: WFP partnership practices are both positively and negatively affected by a variety of internal and external factors. There remains considerable scope for increased impact of the CPS.

160. Among the factors supporting effective partnering that the evaluation identified are external influences such as overall conducive global environment characterized by wide consensus on the importance of partnerships in both humanitarian and development contexts; but also internal factors such as the commitment to and leadership for partnering of individual staff members and managers, and WFP's perceived organizational strengths that make it a desirable partner.

161. WFP partnership practices are negatively influenced by internal factors such as an insufficient professional recognition for those who invest significant time and efforts at partnering, and WFP legal frameworks that are not always conducive for longer-term relationships based on trust rather than controls. Externally, competition over resources and, in consequence, disagreement over mandate boundaries poses another challenge, especially in contexts where little or no food aid is required and where WFP is increasingly engaged in upstream work. WFP staff members noted room for improvement as regards their own capacities for effective partnering, such as in the context of capacity strengthening, engaging in upstream and policy work, and broadening partnering with the private sector.

162. While the CPS and related implementation tools have been used to inform the development of draft regional, and some WFP Office and country partnership strategies, it has not yet had significant influence on day to day partnering practices in the field.

Conclusion 6: Implementation of the CPS has progressed more slowly than anticipated as a result of several factors, including varying degrees of ownership and accountability for its implementation, as well as the conjuncture of other competing strategic change processes.

163. Evaluation findings indicate that, in simplified terms, 'if everyone is in charge, nobody is accountable'. While the CPS assigns responsibility for its implementation to all WFP units at headquarters, RBs and WFP COs, it has only been PGC that has formulated clear milestones and timelines against which it can be held accountable.

164. Contributing to inconsistent ownership of the CPS is the fact that staff in several units at HQ, as well as, to varying degrees, in WFP Offices, RBs and COs do not consider the relatively broad CPS as relevant to the specific partnership aspects of their work.

165. The overall backdrop against which early implementation of the CPS has taken place is another factor affecting the degree of attention paid to, and pace of CPS roll-out. During the period under review, WFP has been actively engaged in shaping the post-2015 development and humanitarian agendas, specifically by contributing to developing Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Since the adoption of these agreements, considerable focus has been placed on translating and reflecting them in WFP's emerging priorities for the upcoming period as of 2017.

3.2 Recommendations

166. Establishing "full" partnering, as opposed to focusing on primarily transactional relationships, as a general principle for how WFP does business constitutes a significant organizational transformation requiring an enabling external environment, consistent leadership, accountability, resources, capacities, and systems able to capture and report on change.

167. WFP's Integrated Roadmap 2017-2020 reflects the agency's commitment to establish and work according to such an overall partnership mindset. To assist executive leadership in the attainment of this vision under the 2017-2021 IRM and thus contribute to the global attainment of SDGs 2 and 17, the evaluation team developed a total of six prioritized and sequenced recommendations outlined below that are based on evaluation findings and conclusions.

168. The recommendations are actionable and measurable initiatives. To the extent possible, they have been framed to take recent developments into account that have occurred since the end of data collection in late 2016. Two such changes are: (i) the creation of an IRM taskforce within PG in early 2017, which brings together representatives of the different units under PG to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to supporting implementation of WFP's partnership commitments under the IRM; (ii) the development of a draft concept paper in March 2017 clarifying the notion of WFP's "Whole of Society Approach", that would be WFP's commitment to civil society inclusion and capacity strengthening under the IRM.[171]

169. Annex 17 maps the recommendations to the evaluation findings and conclusions.

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[171] WFP. The Whole of Society Approach to Zero Hunger: Civil Society Engagement and Capacity Strengthening. Internal document. March 2017.

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
1. By the end of 2017, the IRM steering committee should finalize a costed action plan for implementing the partnership pillar of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021) that builds on the principles outlined in the CPS, clearly identifies major milestones by unit and is aligned with the Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021). Based on: Findings 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, and especially 23 and 24; and conclusions 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6.	Priority: Very high. Responsible: WFP Executive Management Group (EMG) in consultation with Regional Bureaux, COs, PGC, and the Operations Services Department (OS)	• CPS roll out to date – and thus implementation of WFP's partnership vision – has been limited by the fact that, besides the small PGC unit, no one in WFP has been held accountable for ensuring good partnering practices. • Several recommendations of the 2012 evaluation 'From Food Aid to Food Assistance: Working in Partnership' have not yet been fully implemented. • The process of expanding the application of the CPS is one of change management, a major principle of which is strong demonstration of executive leadership. • To combat the perception identified during this evaluation of the CPS being "something for PG(C) only", clear commitments related to the implementation of the IRM's partnership pillar, in alignment with the CPS, need to be developed for all of WFP. • In February 2017, the PG IRM taskforce has recommended that COs develop explicit partnership action plans in support of their (I)CSPs (see Recommendation 2).

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
2. WFP should immediately include the development of a partnership action plan as a mandatory component of each country strategic plan and interim country strategic plan, with resources allocated to partnering activities in country portfolio budgets. <u>Based on</u>: Findings 8, 11, 15, 23, 24 and conclusions 1, 3 and 4.	<u>Priority</u>: High <u>Responsible</u>: Executive Management Group (PMG), standing s-PRP members and s-PRP chair; Governance and Advocacy Department (PG) IRM taskforce; Regional Bureaux and Country Offices.	• The current CPS, as well as related implementation tools, do not yet clarify how WFP understands the relationship between partnerships and capacity strengthening. The evaluation noted, however, that in some cases, capacity strengthening of national partners, including government, NGOs and CBOs, may allow for engaging in deeper partnerships than is currently the case. • The Whole of Society Approach being considered as part of the IRM roll-out commits WFP to invest in civil society, including government, national disaster management agencies, national NGOs, Red Cross and other institutions. This includes promoting collective outcomes, prioritizing and resourcing joint capacity strengthening, and engaging in multi -stakeholder partnerships for capacity strengthening. Country Offices need to have a clear and explicit vision of how the Whole of Society Approach will inform and be reflected in their CSPs. • Provided that there is clarity of the role of capacity strengthening for effective partnering, Country Portfolio Budgets open opportunities for ensuring more adequate resources being allocated to partnership-relevant purposes. • Standing members of the s-PRP currently include the Government Partnerships Division and the Private Sector Partnerships Division, but, for example, not PGC.

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
3. By the end of 2017, WFP should update guidance and revise or develop practical tools that enable staff to engage in a broad range of partnerships, including long-term, multi-functional and non-commodity-based partnerships. Based on: Finding 25 and conclusion 5.	Priority: High Responsible: Legal Office (LEG), PG, in collaboration with Regional Bureau and Country Offices.	• While WFP will not be able to significantly alter its overarching legal framework, there may be room for some modifications of rules, tools and guidelines within this framework to make them more conducive for engaging in longer-term strategic partnerships that do not involve food or cash transactions. • At present, WFP rules on overhead/operating costs are mostly tied to flow-through expenses such as food and cash, which inhibits knowledge or advocacy partnerships that are not commodity based, but that involve partners – such as NGOs and CBOs – who have to cover ongoing overhead or operating costs. • Country Office staff are not always aware of the available range of partnership-related tools and templates, such as using a letter of agreement as opposed to an FLA for a relationship that does not involve transactional elements. • As partnerships evolve, partners, such as private sector actors, may express an interest in expanding their relationship with WFP from being suppliers to also becoming resource, advocacy, or knowledge partners. Different standards apply, however, for the required degrees of due diligence around different types of relationships. This sometimes makes it difficult for WFP Country Offices to engage in strategic partnerships that fully draw upon all comparative advantages of its partners.

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
4. By June 2018, the Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department should assist country offices and regional bureaux in strengthening their partnering skills by developing guidance on the preparation of country-level partnership action plans, working with regional bureaux to prepare and roll out context-specific country-level partnership training modules, and developing tools for partnership-related knowledge management and dissemination. Based on: Findings 3, 7, 10, 11, 26 and 27; and conclusions 1, 3 and 4.	Priority: Medium Responsible: PG, the Performance Management and Monitoring Division (RPM), WFP unit(s) responsible for capacity strengthening, Regional Bureaux and Country Offices.	• During the period under review, PG, especially, but not limited to PGC, has contributed to laying important groundwork for strengthening WFP's internal capacities for effective partnering. Evaluation data indicate, however, that many of the partnership resources developed by PGC to date are not yet widely accessed by WFP staff, and that only a limited number of staff have taken part in partnership-related training events. This indicates the need to complement PG's programme of work with initiatives that focus on providing tailored assistance to RBs and COs to help them meet their specific needs. • PG is well positioned to provide hands-on support and feedback on evolving country level partnership action plans (see Recommendation 2), and to play a lead role in relation to capturing and sharing emerging good practice across the organization. • The creation of the PG IRM taskforce indicates the intent for PG to ensure coherent and integrated approaches across different groups of partners that WFP engages with.

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
5. By the end of 2018, WFP should strengthen its systems for capturing qualitative data on partnering and develop templates that include a requirement to report on the effectiveness, efficiency and innovative nature of partnerships. Based on: Findings 14, 16 and 26; and conclusion 4.	Priority: Medium Responsible: Performance Management and Monitoring Division (RPM), in consultation with PG, thematic units at HQ, Regional Bureaux and Country Offices.	• WFP has made several improvements – especially through COMET and the system's ability to 'speak' with other WFP platforms - that are enabling it to better capture more comprehensive partnership data than ever before. • The evaluation noted, however, that WFP staff do not yet use existing platforms to their potential both in terms of entering data, and in relation to linking and analyzing data from complementary systems to draw conclusions on, for example, the effectiveness and efficiency of initiatives implemented with or through partners. • Even if used effectively, the quantitative data available through WFP's platforms only allows analyzing the effectiveness and efficiency of collaborative relationships from a transactional perspective that is focused on partner contributions to WFP's strategic objectives, and in terms of planned versus actual resources provided or received by WFP. WFP does not yet systematically capture intelligence that would allow assessing the mutual benefits of partnering deriving from synergies or reduced duplication of efforts, nor does it have an agreed upon approach to assessing the cost-benefit ratio of partnerships, or determining what constitute an appropriate such ratio. • A related observation is that WFP does not consistently collect or analyze qualitative partnership information beyond capturing some partner perceptions of WFP's partnering behaviors. Given that qualitative data does not lend itself to being measured by means of standardized indicators, illustrative qualitative studies may constitute a useful complement to WFP's Corporate Results Framework. Similarly, thematic, policy, and portfolio evaluations should systematically explore the benefits deriving from partnering and outline related challenges.

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
6. By the end of 2018, WFP should ensure that prioritized partnership agreements with United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, private-sector actors, international and regional financial institutions, regional economic organizations have been revised to support the partnership pillar of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021). <u>Based on</u>: Findings 19 and 25; and conclusion 5.	<u>Priority</u>: Medium <u>Responsible</u>: WFP Legal Office (LEG), WFP New York Office, supported by the PG IRM taskforce.	• A recommendation from the 2012 evaluation 'From Food Aid to Food Assistance' that suggested to review and revise MOUs and similar agreements with key partners, especially UN agencies, has not yet been fulfilled. This has contributed to challenges deriving from diverging views over the mandates and/or comparative advantages of WFP and some other UN agencies respectively, which cannot be resolved at the country level alone. • Several WFP staff at WFP Office, RB and CO levels noted that they did not always feel well informed about existing global partnership agreements with different groups of actors, and their implications for partnering at the country level. • As of early 2017, WFP has terminated all existing global MOUs with international NGOs with the intent to (re-)establish chosen strategic partnerships based on the IRM.

Acronyms

AED	Associate Executive Director
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CBO	community-based organization
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CO	Country Office
COMET	Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool
CPS	WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DaO	Delivering as One
DED	Deputy Executive Director
DFID	Department for International Development
EM	Evaluation manager
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
ET	Evaluation team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLA	Field-Level Agreements
HQ	Headquarters (Rome)
HR	Human Resources
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICSP	Interim Country Strategic Plan
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INC	Innovation and Change Management Division
IR	Inception Report
IRG	Internal Reference Group
IRM	Integrated Road Map
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRF	Management Results Framework
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

OEV	Office of Evaluation
PG	Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department
PGB	Executive Board Secretariat
PGC	Partnership, Policy Coordination and Advocacy Division
PGG	Government Partnerships Division
PGP	Private Sector Partnerships Division
PGR	Rome-based Agencies and the Committee on World Food Security
RB	Regional Bureau
RBAs	Rome-based Agencies
RBB	Regional Bureau Bangkok
RBC	Regional Bureau Cairo
RBD	Regional Bureau Dakar
RBJ	Regional Bureau Johannesburg
RBN	Regional Bureau Nairobi
RBP	Regional Bureau Panama
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SER	Summary Evaluation Report
SP	Strategic Plan
SPR	Standard Project Report
s-PRP	Strategic Programme Review Process
SOA	Service Outline Agreement
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United National Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global Systems

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