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Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Capacity to Respond to Emergencies

Evaluation Report: Volume I

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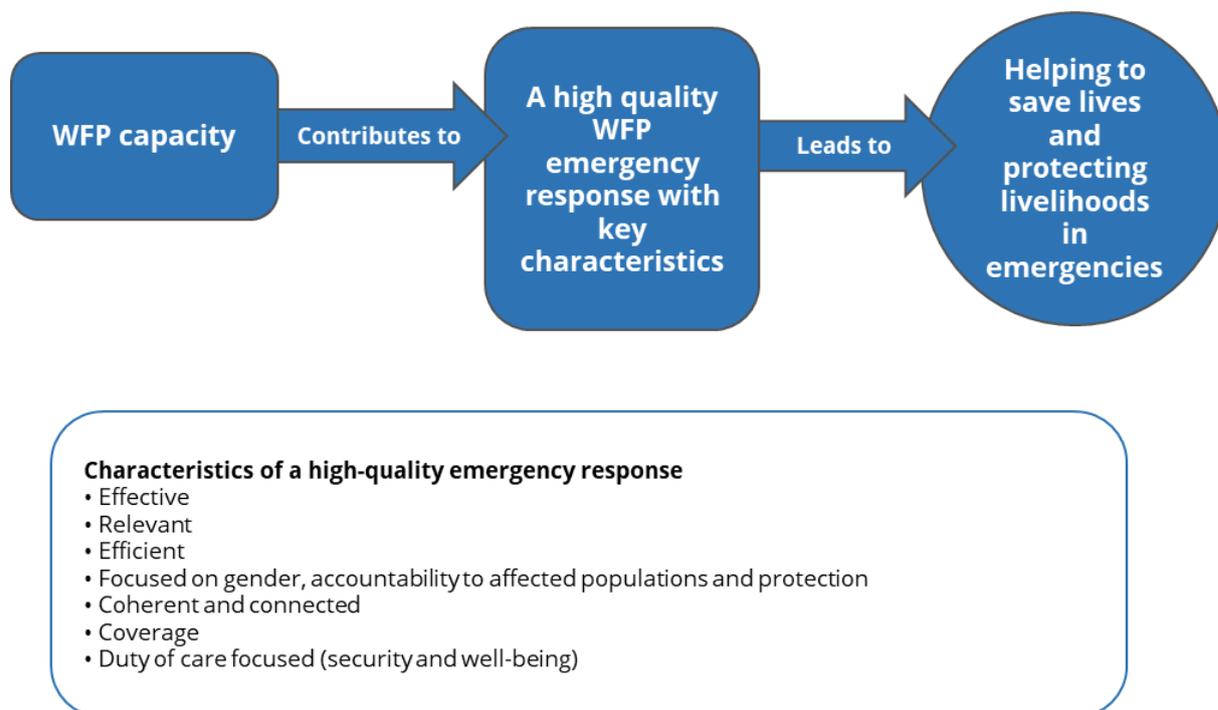
Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION AND EVALUATION FEATURES

1.   This strategic evaluation considers WFP's capacity to respond to emergencies from 2011–2018. It has the dual objectives of accountability and learning. It covers the full range of emergencies to which WFP responds. This includes L1, L2 and L3 emergencies. It also considers WFP preparedness for response, including immediate response and long-term response through to exit.

2.   The evaluation is based on a logic model organized around the contribution that WFP capacity makes to the quality of its emergency responses. High quality responses are those that have the characteristics listed in figure 1. The evaluation considers WFP capacities at three levels: the enabling environment, the organization and the individual – which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing:

> ➢ **Enabling environment** – WFP's corporate strategic plan and policy framework for guiding, supporting and directing WFP emergency responses, including the Integrated Road Map and knowledge framework.

> ➢ **Organization** – business processes, guidance, tools, decision making processes and investments in organizational processes to support and enable the design and implementation of emergency responses, as well as learning at the organizational level.

> ➢ **Individual** – needed skills, knowledge and performance provided through training, motivation and incentive systems, mechanisms for rapid access, and investment and learning processes aimed at ensuring that WFP has access to individuals with the skills required for emergency response.

Figure 1: Evaluation framework

Characteristics of a high-quality emergency response
• Effective
• Relevant
• Efficient
• Focused on gender, accountability to affected populations and protection
• Coherent and connected
• Coverage
• Duty of care focused (security and well-being)

3.   The data used in the evaluation were collected through an in-depth systematic review of evaluations and reports from lessons learned exercises covering major emergencies since 2011, an extensive review of strategies, policies and guidance documents, six emergency case studies (see figure 2), visits to six country offices and the six WFP regional bureaux and interviews with over 400 internal and external stakeholders.

Figure 2: Emergency response case studies and evaluation visits

Iraq: 2014–2018
Islamic State in Iraq and
the Levant insurgency

Nepal: 2015–2018
Earthquake and flood responses

El Salvador: 2014–2018
Recurrent shocks causing food
insecurity

Mauritania: 2017–2018
Sahel regional food insecurity

South Sudan: July 2016–end 2017
Complex emergency

Philippines: 2013–2014
Typhoon Haiyan

Countries covered by emergency case studies and regional bureau visits:
El Salvador, Iraq, Mauritania, Nepal, Philippines, South Sudan

Regional bureau visits:
Bangkok, Cairo, Dakar, Johannesburg, Nairobi and Panama City

Humanitarian context and WFP emergency response

4. The humanitarian context has changed significantly during the period covered by the evaluation (2011–2018), which saw an increase in the number, complexity and duration of humanitarian crises, resulting in high levels of humanitarian need. A significant feature is an increase in conflict-related emergencies, and there is no indication that this trend will change in the near future.

Figure 3: WFP expenditure on relief activities and number of L2 and L3 emergencies 2011–2018*
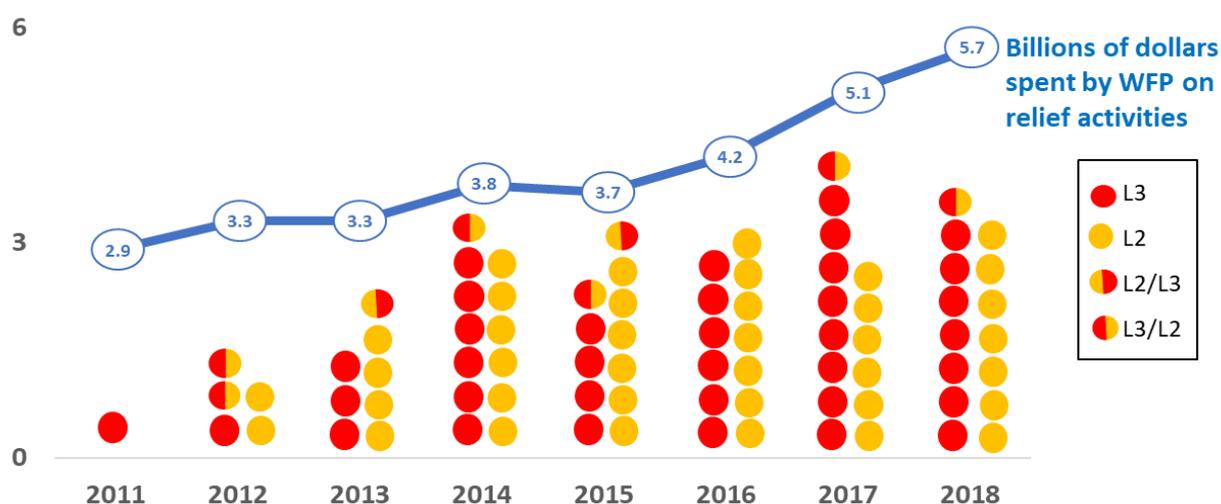
*Note that expenditure figures for relief include protracted responses.
Source: Data from WFP annual performance reports for 2011–2018

5.   The evaluation period started after WFP made a significant shift in its approach, from food aid to food assistance. An important trend has been the rapid increase in the scale of cash-based transfers (CBTs). There has also been divergence between ways of working, with some countries, particularly in middle-income countries in Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa, where there is more focus on WFP's enabling role, unlike in other regions where the focus remains on large-scale direct food assistance.

6.   The evaluation period has seen several significant capacity developments in WFP intended to enhance its emergency responses. These include new emergency-related policies to complement earlier ones already part of the policy framework and from 2016 the roll-out of the Integrated Road Map framework. Organizational structural developments include continued support for the decentralization of WFP and changes in the structure of central divisions and departments. Significant operational developments also occurred, while new guidance and tools were developed in technical areas. WFP also invested in capacities at the individual level through training and in mechanisms for rapid access to individuals with key skills.

FINDINGS

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

7.   **Policy framework.** WFP developed relevant new emergency-response-related policies, including on humanitarian protection, emergency preparedness, duty of care to employees and enterprise risk management. Older policies remain part of the guiding framework. However, most policies have been developed through standalone processes, resulting in some overlaps and competing priorities. There are also some gaps in the current overall policy framework, for instance to respond to the growing leadership of emergency responses by governments and in relation to technological developments. Policies are generally poorly communicated and there is limited guidance to enable their practical application across the wide range of contexts in which WFP operates, notably urban and middle-income contexts.

8.   **Strategic planning framework.** Emergency response is consistently profiled in WFP strategic plans, although it is less visible in the most recent plan (covering 2017–2021), which lays more emphasis on WFP's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The development of country strategic plans (CSPs) allows a more integrated approach that offers the potential to link emergency responses and long-term solutions.

9.   There were concerns that the new system would be more time-consuming and less flexible and would slow WFP emergency responses. However, WFP's flexible approach (e.g. using waivers), together with a commitment to learning lessons to streamline procedures, including in the development of new guidance to support revision processes, indicate that CSPs should facilitate agility in emergency response. The use of criteria

and processes to enable the rapid revision of CSPs is not yet systematic, however. The impact of the use of waivers for certain standard procedures such as the gender and age marker on other characteristics of a high-quality response, such as gender responsiveness, is also less clear.

10. WFP policies and CSPs make it possible for WFP emergency responses to be coherent with the activities of other humanitarian and development actors as well as with national governments' priorities and emergency response approaches. There remains some potential tension between WFP's striving for coherence with government priorities on the one hand and adherence to humanitarian principles on the other.

11. **Structural framework.** Structural changes in WFP have achieved positive results contributing to more integrated and efficient emergency responses. Regional bureau structures have evolved in relation to regional strategic priorities, and these priorities are becoming more diverse. However, the frequency of and rationale for headquarters changes, as well as growth in the number of headquarters staff, contrast with the move towards increased decentralization. Moreover, the lack of continuity at headquarters causes confusion in the field and a sense of distance from headquarters.

12. **Knowledge management framework.** WFP has implemented measures responding to an acknowledged need for improved knowledge management. While these have resulted in an impressive library of documented lessons in emergency response, their application has been inconsistent. Significantly, a two-year investment made to develop a knowledge management strategy completed in 2017 remains without resources. This seems to reflect the ongoing low prioritization of knowledge management in an organization with a culture more focused on action.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: COMPONENTS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

13. **Decision making for emergency response.** WFP has strengthened its decision making processes for emergency response, enabling more coordinated decision making across the organization. However, strengthened risk management systems create tensions and challenges for WFP's ability to respond quickly to emergencies while at the same time meeting the expectations of donors. At times risk management systems are relaxed to enable operational efficiency, but this approach is not systematic, and its impact on other characteristics of a high quality response is unclear.

14. WFP responds to constraints in funding shortfalls by reducing rations or activities that are less urgent as well as by reducing the geographical range and operational scope of its responses. This approach yields mixed results in terms of coverage of affected populations. It also reduces short-term effectiveness as well as contributions to long-term resilience. These impacts are not tracked systematically.

15. WFP capacity for geographical targeting was generally good; its ability to focus targeting, however, was constrained by the drive to reach as many people as possible quickly. There is often limited involvement of partners and affected populations in the development of targeting approaches, although there are positive examples of community-based targeting systems and cooperation with specialist organizations, such as those focused on people with disabilities and women.

16. **Mechanisms, technical guidance and tools.** Developments in WFP advance financing mechanisms and related facilities have yielded positive results in terms of the timeliness and cost of responses, particularly for slow-onset and protracted crises. However, their potential contribution is at times constrained by illiquidity, which is exacerbated by limited funding for some crises and, in some cases, a lack of country office planning.

17. WFP has developed technical guidance and tools in areas identified as priorities to support the design and implementation of high-quality programmes, but field-level awareness and consistent use of guidance is not strong. The use of guidance and tools that are flexible enough to be adaptable to different contexts is good, but it increases reliance on teams' access to experts to assist in the customization of responses. Guidance is often hard to locate, lengthy and in some cases quite theoretical. Difficulties in applying guidance and other tools can contribute to shortcomings in the quality of responses. The most valuable guidance for the field is technical expertise but it is not always available due to individuals' skills gaps.

18. WFP has developed technological tools and ways of working to reach affected people in insecure locations, which combined with high level skills for negotiating access, which is an urgent and growing need, have achieved good results in terms of beneficiary coverage. Yet, while WFP has capacity to reach affected people in

insecure areas, it faces difficulties in responding to varied needs, particularly in the early stages of responses and with regard to evolving needs in protracted emergencies.

19.   **Cooperating partners.** WFP has widened its range of partnerships, which in turn has enhanced its ability to reach affected people during emergency responses. It strengthened guidance to address identified partnership issues but further development is needed with regard to efficiency in contracting, partner participation in programme design, capacity development and managing risk. WFP often transfers risk to partners in insecure contexts, and there is widespread discomfort with this approach among WFP employees. It should be noted that WFP duty of care policies do not cover cooperating partners.

20.   **Monitoring.** Corporate systems for monitoring WFP's overall emergency response performance focus on the efficiency of responses. Existing initiatives aim to broaden their focus to include the cross-cutting issues of gender responsiveness, protection and accountability. However, oversight of the effectiveness of WFP emergency response is constrained by the corporate results framework's focus on WFP contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as by data quality. These shortcomings constrain the assessment of the effectiveness, relevance and impact of WFP responses, as well as the ability to make comparisons between responses and over time.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: ELEMENTS OF AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

21.   **Cash-based transfers.** Significant investment in capacity relevant to CBTs enabled their use on a large-scale as a response modality as well as WFP's ability to respond to risk management challenges. Beneficiary feedback indicates the appropriateness of using CBTs when market conditions are suitable. Evidence shows the importance at the country level of preparedness for efficient CBT scale-up, which is an ongoing need. Some systems developed are more appropriate to large-scale, protracted crisis responses.

22.   **Data management.** The scale of data collected by WFP together with the rapid evolution of data management technology and ways of working pose challenges for WFP with regard to data sharing as part of cooperation with governments and other agencies; country offices require support if they are to manage such sharing effectively.

23.   **Preparedness and early warning.** Investment and developments in WFP's preparedness for response, including WFP early warning systems, have improved the efficiency of responses in terms of time and cost. WFP has continued to develop its early warning systems at the corporate, regional and country levels. However, more limited investment in sustained preparedness planning beyond logistical preparation limits WFP's capacity to respond quickly with a relevant response. There are also limitations in tools that support planning and preparedness for WFP response, as well as in employee capacity to undertake and use analysis. The lack of an updated framework for WFP emergency response limits the strength of cross-organizational planning and the development of capacity to meet response needs and WFP ambitions.

24.   **Nexus approaches.** WFP policy and strategic commitments to maximize WFP's potential contribution to approaches connecting humanitarian, development and peace work are limited by lack of practical guidance and tools and the limited use of programme options. Other constraints include donor perceptions that WFP does not have this type of expertise, the range of partners and partnership management systems led by short-term agreement, potential overlap with other organizations' mandates and an organizational focus on outputs that build immediate food security rather than the outcome of long-term community resilience. There is increasing interest in linking with national social protection systems, which are highly relevant to WFP's role in responses, through working closely with government systems. However, this can present challenges to humanitarian principles in some contexts.

25.   **Inter-agency contributions and coherence.** WFP capacity in common service provision (including in the logistics, food security and emergency telecommunications clusters, aviation and the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot) has made a significant contribution to humanitarian responses, enabling efficiency and coverage, and includes new ways of deploying WFP's capacities (e.g. in the health sector during Ebola responses). Inter-agency cooperation is evolving towards single-platform CBT initiatives as well as multi-purpose CBT interventions. WFP's contribution to the United Nations reform process has been appreciated, along with the organization's ongoing leading role in inter-agency dialogue on humanitarian response. New developments in the humanitarian sector highlight the need for guidance to support new ways of working including in relation to WFP cost recovery, and clarity regarding WFP's evolving role in inter-agency approaches.

26.   **Accountability to affected populations.** WFP has developed a practical approach to accountability to affected populations (AAP), but significant delays between making commitments and developing guidance have hindered the pace of scale-up, resulting in regular findings of shortcomings in consultation with affected populations, which indicate that while progress is positive WFP still has some way to go to meet the commitments it made in 2011.

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY

27.   **Access to individual skills, knowledge and experience.** WFP successfully scaled up and allocated its workforce to support emergency responses, particularly in the first stages of large-scale L3 emergencies. A range of formal and informal mechanisms enabled this, with the prevalence of informal systems reflecting the preference of WFP senior personnel for more control over who is deployed.

28.   There have been skills gaps, however, particularly beyond the initial wave of deployments as well as in smaller scale emergencies. WFP does not track gaps in emergency response skills or wider human resource needs. For example, the evaluation found that there was a shortage of emergency coordinators. It also found shortages of other staff in some core technical areas, including nutrition, CBTs and cross-cutting issues such as gender, protection and accountability as well as in expertise relevant to responses in urban environments and resilience issues. WFP's ability to keep individuals with these skills throughout protracted crises is a challenge. Country offices were stretched also in their L1 response role in the case of responses that were extended or where they dealt with emergencies that were unusual in the region.

29.   Factors influencing skill gaps go beyond the availability of employees with skills and expertise within WFP and available to WFP (e.g. through partnerships). Continuing areas of concern include high turnover rates of staff and slow human resource procedures that hinder rapid scale-up and continuity in the staffing of responses. Other significant factors include variable willingness on the part of employees to deploy, unwillingness of country directors to release staff for temporary duty assignments and governments' limitations on team composition, including in terms of nationality.

30.   The availability of skills has had a considerable impact on the quality of responses. Given the evidence of limited use of technical guidance and reliance on the availability of expertise for high-quality responses, these gaps and delays are significant. The overall trend of high turnover is a constraint on plans to grow internal emergency response individual capacity. In addition, the size of WFP's permanent pool of long-term staff has decreased relative to the increased scale of emergency responses.

31.   **Investment in individual capacity.** Substantial investment in training and initiatives to build skills reflect WFP awareness of skills gaps, but there is mixed evidence regarding their effectiveness in improving emergency response capacity. A key issue is the limited link between formal learning and support for the practical application of new skills. There are initiatives across WFP to increase skills but over time they have not resulted in the building of a national cadre and international staff ready to serve effectively in emergency responses. Training initiatives are often disjointed and do not result in cumulative learning.

32.   WFP's efforts to enhance its access to expertise has focused on surge mechanisms. These have had some positive results but proven insufficient to meet all emergency response needs across stages and types of emergency responses, which are influenced by wider human resource systems. Moreover, overall investment in building individual capacity for emergency response has been irregular and not sustained. Operational gaps and challenges are often addressed through solutions such as employees "double-hatting" or extended use of temporary duty assignments; such approaches do not necessarily address long-term challenges and may have knock-on effects on other parts of the organization that are not tracked.

33.   **Duty of care.** WFP has made significant progress in meeting its duty of care to employees, keeping abreast of developments in operational contexts, maintaining compliance with United Nations security policies and guidance and creating a wellness unit in 2015 that focuses on employee health and working conditions. Trends in the scale and complexity of emergencies highlight the ongoing need for capacity in wellness and security.

34.   A challenge is the tension between the duty of care and enabling access to affected populations and coverage of WFP's responses. Some challenges relate to contracting practices that fail to provide some categories of WFP personnel with appropriate security and health coverage. WFP's efforts to meet its duty of care is visible

across the organization; there are inconsistencies, however, with security awareness more embedded in organizational processes and culture than staff wellness.

CONCLUSIONS

35. **Conclusion 1:** WFP has increased its capacity to respond to the increased number and scale of emergency responses over the past decade. Significant investments, organizational culture and employee commitment to reach and assist affected people have supported the increased scale of WFP responses. However, capacities, notably at the individual level, are over-stretched, which poses urgent challenges for WFP's future responses in terms of its ability to respond with high quality, relevant and effective programmes, including in relation to small-scale and protracted crises.

36. **Conclusion 2:** WFP has invested in surge mechanisms, training and duty of care for employees as part of capacity development with some success. But constraints to developing and sustaining access to needed skills and expertise across emergency contexts and phases of responses risk undermining the quality of emergency responses. Needs in relation to duty of care also remain high. The complexity of emergency contexts and the broadening range of approaches and roles being undertaken by WFP in emergency responses also demand a wider range of skills than those typically possessed by traditionally recruited employees. This requires a sustained and long-term approach to building capacity within WFP and access to skills externally.

37. **Conclusion 3:** WFP has developed capacity to deal with the growing complexity of emergency responses and to respond to external trends. The organization has laid a strong foundation to support a more integrated approach to food insecurity that more closely links immediate response and long-term approaches in humanitarian and development programming. However, the lack of an organization-wide emergency response framework based on WFP policies, analysis of trends and assumptions about the intended scale and scope of WFP responses constrain linked-up organization-wide planning for the development of WFP capacities. Importantly, the broadening range of roles that WFP is undertaking, and the complexity of the emergencies to which it responds, means that WFP requires staff with a broad range of capacities; enabling WFP to find such staff in a timely manner will require significant investment. If this is not possible then a clear and strategic prioritization of WFP's roles and approaches will be necessary.

38. **Conclusion 4:** When confronting competing priorities, WFP consistently prioritizes efficiency – in terms of speed and cost – and coverage – in terms of numbers reached. Investment, notably in advance financing mechanisms and logistics preparation, has improved the efficiency of responses but there is a need for more attention to other aspects of preparedness to ensure that responses are relevant. Areas for capacity development include strengthened contextual and trend analysis and relationship development with partners, governments and others, including in countries without a WFP presence; these depend on capacity at the regional bureau and country office levels.

39. **Conclusion 5:** WFP's contribution to sector-wide responses is highly valued and contributes to inter-agency efficiency and the enhanced coverage of responses. WFP capacity to fill roles for the common services it provides (including in cluster coordination, aviation and through the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot) effectively has been made possible by the allocation of dedicated funds for support roles, specialist partners and a focus on learning and improvement within a culture of innovation. Evolving roles, such as in health emergencies and integrated responses to vulnerability, along with the United Nations reform process, mean that new guidance and clarification are and will be needed. WFP can also play a strong role in the humanitarian sector and the United Nations system to ensure that humanitarian space and principles are safeguarded.

40. **Conclusion 6:** WFP invested in its results frameworks, notably introducing some indicators to facilitate greater focus on the performance of emergency responses. However, limitations in WFP corporate monitoring frameworks and systems constrain oversight of the effectiveness of its responses over time, across responses and across all quality criteria. Learning platforms that allow access and greater use of information and knowledge are also lacking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

41.   The recommendations for action below are of equal priority and should be implemented as an integrated package to achieve the best results.

PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE: INDIVIDUAL LEVEL (CONCLUSIONS 1 AND 2)

Recommendation 1: Significantly increase and maintain investment in the scale and pace of the development of long-term, sustainable human resources systems to ensure sustained access to skills needed in emergency responses across emergency contexts, roles and response phases.
Responsibility: Director of Emergencies and Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Resource Management Department, Human Resources Division and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 30 June 2021

a) Develop a detailed capacity development plan and strategy for employee skills and expertise that is designed to meet the operational needs for emergency response (based on the current and intended range of WFP response options) and skills identified as key for emergency response. Include:
 	
    o Leadership skills (e.g. for emergency coordinators) as well as specialist and generalist emergency response skills needed in multi-functional teams (i.e. staff who are expected to have emergency response and capacity development or other skills for long-term roles).
 	
    o National and international staff in the plan.
 	
    o Create a coherent framework to bring together the range of training initiatives and in particular ensure links between classroom/online training and practical support in the field for the application of new skills. Provide guidance to staff on training and development opportunities that will allow them to progress in emergency response.
 	
    o Bring together the wide range of formal and informal systems for the deployment of personnel for emergency responses (as recommended in the "Rapid Response Workforce Planning" report[1]) to operate a comprehensive deployment system supported by greater investment from the programme support and administrative budget.
 	
b) Invest in building a WFP pool of emergency response skilled staff, including through systems to enable country offices to recruit long-term staff.
 	
c) Establish an evidence base of the true costs and benefits of the effects of long-term transfer of WFP personnel (e.g. through temporary duty assignments longer than one month) from their duty stations to support emergency responses (include a focus on small country offices) to support evidence-based decisions on human resource options for emergency response.

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[1] C.R. Bosch and G. Shaver. 2017. *Rapid Response Workforce Planning report*.

Recommendation 2: Build on current momentum and invest in strengthening measures to meet the duty of care across the organization, including with regard to the wellness, safety and security of employees, and to build awareness and understanding of relevant cross-organizational responsibilities.

Responsibility: Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Human Resources Division, Staff Wellness Division, Security Division and Gender Office.

Deadline: 30 June 2021

a) Develop a duty of care framework for emergency response contexts, including gender markers for tracking progress and any differential experiences of the duty of care. Promote duty of care as a shared responsibility across teams.

b) Ensure more investment to increase the proportion of WFP security employees on staff contracts to facilitate continuity and the internal development of crucial skills.

c) Ensure that both security and wellness competencies are included in senior managers' job descriptions and undertake assessments using the Performance and Competency Enhancement tool.

PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL (CONCLUSIONS 3 AND 4)

Recommendation 3: Significantly strengthen WFP emergency preparedness through context-specific preparation and sustained liquidity of advance financing and commodity management mechanisms, including for pre-emptive responses.

Responsibility: Director of Emergencies and Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Budget and Programming Division, Finance and Treasury Division, country offices and regional bureaux.

Deadline: 30 September 2020

a) Better define the institutional preparedness framework for WFP, governments and partners.

b) Task regional bureaux and country offices with developing a plan for WFP's own preparedness for response as part of CSP processes in countries identified as potential hotspots (i.e., with potential emergencies in the next three years – including those with and without a WFP regional presence). Ensure corporate support for the process with relevant tools and quality assurance.

c) Develop the plans through in-country consultations to build response strategies based on context analysis, consultation with the government, regional emergency response bodies, civil society and potential partners for implementation across all potential programme components and modalities.

d) Ensure that institutional systems and arrangements, e.g. with service providers, are updated.

e) Put in place a system to safeguard the liquidity of advance financing mechanisms to enable the swift release of funds, including from the Immediate Response Account and the Global Commodity Management Facility, including for pre-emptive action and action on early warning triggers.

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE (CONCLUSION 3)

Recommendation 4: Develop a consolidated framework for emergency response to support planning for capacity development and the implementation of WFP responses across contexts reflecting the organization's level of ambition for the quality of responses and the range of WFP roles.
Responsibility: Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Security Division, Supply Chain Operations Division, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Human Resources Division and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 30 September 2020
a) Bring together the existing emergency-related policies into a coherent framework and link them to implementation guidance that includes clarification of terminology for emergency, crisis and humanitarian response and supports planning for contextualized responses.   b) Use the framework to develop business plans for investment in WFP emergency response capacity at the corporate, regional bureau and country office levels.   c) Include updated assumptions regarding the scale and types of emergencies that WFP will respond to and capacities needed for each type and stage of response, based on trends in emergencies and WFP's ambitions in response, maintaining the prioritization of flexibility for a customized approach to different contexts.   d) Make explicit the criteria for waivers of any decision-making procedures, including in activation protocols and CSP revision, and actively disseminate lessons so that CSPs enable relevant and flexible responses.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESPONSES (CONCLUSIONS 3 AND 4)

Recommendation 5: Pursue more equitable approaches to partnerships to include improved and consistent risk management of partners in insecure contexts as well as partner participation in response design and capacity building.
Responsibility: NGO Partnerships Unit, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Logistics Cluster, Food Security Cluster, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, country offices and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 30 September 2020
a) Identify partners in high-risk countries and establish agreements for cooperation during responses. Ensure that partner selection enables WFP to reach at-risk geographic areas and marginalized vulnerable groups.   b) Establish a clear process to be used systematically across country offices on risk management in respect of partners' security, including guidance on what risks should and should not be transferred to partners, acceptable levels of risk and a process for determining them.   c) Put in place systems to increase partner participation in the design and adaptation of emergency responses. Simplify field level agreements for emergencies.

Recommendation 6: Intensify investment in organizational and staff capacity strengthening to ensure that WFP can operate through a broad range of roles in increasingly complex settings and profoundly changing environments.
Responsibility: Director of Emergencies, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Budget and Programming Division and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 31 December 2020
a) Develop policy-level guidance to support country office and regional bureau emergency response preparation and implementation in contexts with strong government leadership to guide the development of WFP strategy, roles and capacity development. b) Increase practical support for country offices in applying WFP approaches and guidance in various contexts and stages of response, such as through the development of an online tool for application of guidance in various contexts linked to expertise (e.g. expert adviser from within WFP, community of practice). Provide support for its use through focused webinars and on-the-spot mentoring (in-country or through training and development secondments) and ensure that guidance is simplified and accessible. c) Consult with country offices, with special focus on small country offices, regarding the utility of corporate tools including SCOPE and data analysis and mapping to inform revisions and any new tools (if required) to support small-scale emergency responses (usually L1). d) Develop dedicated internal expertise to deal with increasing field requests for advice on data protection, management and privacy, particularly in relation to close work with other agencies and governments. e) Establish targets and track satisfaction levels regarding communication between headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices to identify trends or needs with regard to improving communication (e.g. questions in the global staff survey). Ensure any corporate initiatives include the full participation or potentially leadership of regional bureaux and country offices and involve headquarters.

Recommendation 7: Significantly strengthen support for the practical application and mainstreaming of a principled approach and for the centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations and gender responsiveness in emergency response.

Responsibility: Director of Programme – Humanitarian Development Division, in collaboration with regional bureaux, Human Resources Division, Emergencies Operations Division and Gender Office.

Deadline: 30 September 2020

a) Ensure that senior managers and staff at other levels are supported through accessible guidance, training and on-the-spot advice and demonstrate capacity to navigate tensions related to humanitarian principles if experiencing political interference in humanitarian assistance. Invest in hands-on and easy-to-use protection-related guidance and other tools for achieving consistency across emergency responses and contexts. Increase the emergency response focus in gender-related guidance. Ensure that gender, protection and accountability expertise are present from the outset of a response by building gender, protection and AAP profiles into emergency response rosters and including them in the first wave deployments as well as measures to ensure that these issues are seen as cross-cutting responsibilities of the team.

b) Ensure that capacity and understanding in respect of protection, AAP and humanitarian principles are included in field-level agreements alongside gender, with explicit related principles and clear processes that WFP expects its partners to implement. Scale-up the establishment of complaint and feedback mechanisms across all operations through the provision of appropriately skilled employees, use of practical guidance and investment to enable operations to reach minimum standards. Increase expertise and the use of communication technology for accountability to affected populations through the production and promotion of practical guidance on complaint and feedback mechanisms and the broader use of communication tools such as social media, mass media (radio, television), text messages and other emerging methods as part of accountability systems.

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION (CONCLUSION 5)

Recommendation 8: Continue WFP's meaningful engagement with United Nations development system reform to ensure that humanitarian space is safeguarded and clarify WFP roles in inter-agency collaboration within new and evolving shared approaches in humanitarian response. Develop WFP internal systems for sustaining support for new forms of partnership in inter-agency cooperation.

Responsibility: Deputy Executive Director with collaboration of Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Senior Director Operations, Supply Chain Operations Division, Emergencies Operations Division, Rome-Based Agency and Committee on World Food Security Division, Budget and Programming Division, Logistics Cluster, Food Security Cluster and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster.

Deadline: 30 September 2020

a) Take an active role in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee regarding the clarity of individual agency mandates in all phases of emergency responses and the implications for cooperation of:

- o single platform and multi-purpose cash approaches

- o the operationalization of nexus ways of working in emergency response to enable cross-organization guidance to country offices and operations.

b) Establish systematic cost recovery approaches for the expanding range of common services provided by WFP, including through partnerships with health-focused organizations, provision of engineering as well as ongoing logistics and emergency telecommunications cluster support.

MONITORING OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE (CONCLUSION 6)

Recommendation 9: Strengthen the monitoring of emergency response performance by tracking results over time. Specifically, enable the comparison of responses by adapting WFP's monitoring framework, regularly analysing results and linking findings to planning for capacity needs.

Responsibility: Director of Performance Management and Reporting Division, in consultation with Budget and Programming Division, Emergencies Operations Division and Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division.

Deadline: 30 June 2020

a) Define success in emergency response and establish monitoring and evaluation processes and guidance to track success across emergencies. Include qualitative data questions to facilitate assessment of issues like relevance and responsiveness of operations to various needs of populations. Report on the assessment of these issues annually to enable the tracking of trends over time and comparison across responses. Monitor and report coverage of WFP assistance more systematically and in more detail through the establishment of operational monitoring systems at response and corporate levels in order to track:

   o proportion of those in need of WFP assistance reached;

   o proportion of planned assistance actually provided per beneficiary;

   o regularity of assistance provided;

   o effects of reductions in assistance in the short-term and medium-term;

   o gender responsiveness of operations.

   The resulting reporting ability will enable a more complete picture of emergency response coverage and effectiveness.

b) Ensure that monitoring is owned and focused on support to country offices to support response adaptation and corporate oversight.

LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (CONCLUSION 6)

Recommendation 10: Increase organization-wide access to and use of emergency response lessons learned by strengthening knowledge platforms and providing incentivizes for the use of lessons.

Responsibility: Director of Emergencies, in collaboration with Programme and Policy Development Department, Supply Chain Operations Division, Budget and Programming Division, Innovation and Change Management Division.

Deadline: 30 September 2020

a) Create a user-friendly knowledge platform that combines access to customized products for specific responses that communicate relevant lessons for decision makers and access to people with expertise and experience. Ensure broad access to the knowledge platform, provide incentives for its use and link it to capacity development programmes and frameworks.

b) Implement and regularly report on progress in the implementation of the knowledge management strategy and on the application of lessons.

1. Introduction

1.1. EVALUATION FEATURES

1.   The subject of the evaluation is the capacity of the World Food Programme (WFP) to respond to emergencies and how that capacity has evolved to contribute to the quality of WFP emergency responses from 2011 to 2018. This is a strategic evaluation commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation and undertaken by an external, independent team. It has dual objectives:

- Assess and report on the evolving capacity of WFP to meet changing needs in responding to emergencies (accountability)
- Understand how WFP capacity has been able to meet emergency response needs of different categories of affected people (learning).

2.   The rationale for the evaluation is based on the relevance of WFP capacity in emergency response to the organization's ability to end hunger and improve nutrition. The increased scale and number of emergencies has placed a strain on WFP systems. Evaluation, risk management, and lessons-learned exercises of recent years have consistently raised a variety of factors related to WFP emergency response capacity. In addition, leadership in emergency preparedness and response has been a priority for WFP since 2018.

3.   There is a wide range of evaluation stakeholders - internal and external - including WFP governance, management, employees and partners at global, regional and country levels. The subject is particularly important to key internal stakeholders given the shift in the corporate focus to alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). For external stakeholders, the capacity of WFP for emergency response is crucial because of both its key role in addressing food insecurity in emergencies and its role as the provider of common services and platforms to the humanitarian sector enabling the wider, intersectoral response to emergencies.

4.   Anticipated users of the evaluation are the WFP Executive Board, WFP senior management and WFP employees and partners at the global, regional and country levels. Findings aim internally to support stakeholders' decision-making regarding future investments in the enabling environment, organizational framework and individual capacity, and externally to support learning about emergency response and key capacities to improve emergency response quality.

5.   The scope of the evaluation includes the full range of emergencies WFP responds to in terms of their geographic coverage, scale and type of emergency, including slow onset, rapid onset, pandemics and complex (including protracted and recurrent). This includes L1, L2 and L3 emergencies.[2] It also considers emergency response to include all stages including WFP preparedness for response, immediate and longer-term response through to transition and exit. The evaluation considers WFP capacities for emergency response at three levels: enabling, organizational and individual - which together are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

6.   The evaluation considers how WFP capacity at the three levels over the evaluation timeframe of 2011-2018 evolved to help or hinder the achievement of a high-quality WFP emergency response, rather than focus on an assessment of WFP performance in emergency response. This is partly due to the relatively high coverage of emergencies by evaluations (operations evaluation, corporate emergency evaluations and country portfolio evaluations) since 2012. The inception phase of the evaluation identified focus areas at each capacity level (described below) and these are guided by the United Nations Development Group definition of capacity.[3]

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[2] WFP classifies emergency response operations according to a three-level scale:
- **Level 1 emergency response:** Emergency operations within the response capabilities of the relevant WFP country office (CO), with routine support from regional bureaux (RB).
- **Level 2 emergency response:** Emergency response operations requiring regional augmentation of country level response capability.
- **Level 3 emergency response:** Emergency response operations requiring mobilization of WFP global response capabilities in support of the relevant CO(s) and/or RB, i.e. a corporate response.

Source: WFP emergency response classifications, 2014.

[3] Definitions adapted from the UNDG "Capacity Development. UNDAF Companion Piece" 2018.

7.   Key areas are considered within each capacity level:

-    Enabling environment — the evaluation considered the WFP corporate strategic plan and policy framework to guide, support and direct WFP emergency responses, including the introduction of the Integrated Road Map (IRM) and knowledge framework.
-    Organizational — the evaluation considered the WFP organizational framework with a focus on business processes, guidance, tools, decision-making processes and investments in organizational processes to support and enable the design and implementation of emergency responses as well as learning at an organizational level.
-    Individual — the evaluation considered WFP access to individual capacity, such as skills needed, knowledge and performance through capacity development processes of training, motivation and incentive systems, mechanisms for rapid access (for example, the emergency response rosters (ERR) and partnerships), as well as investment and learning processes aiming to ensure skills availability for emergency response.

Figure 1: The evaluation logic model - qualities of a WFP high-quality emergency response defined
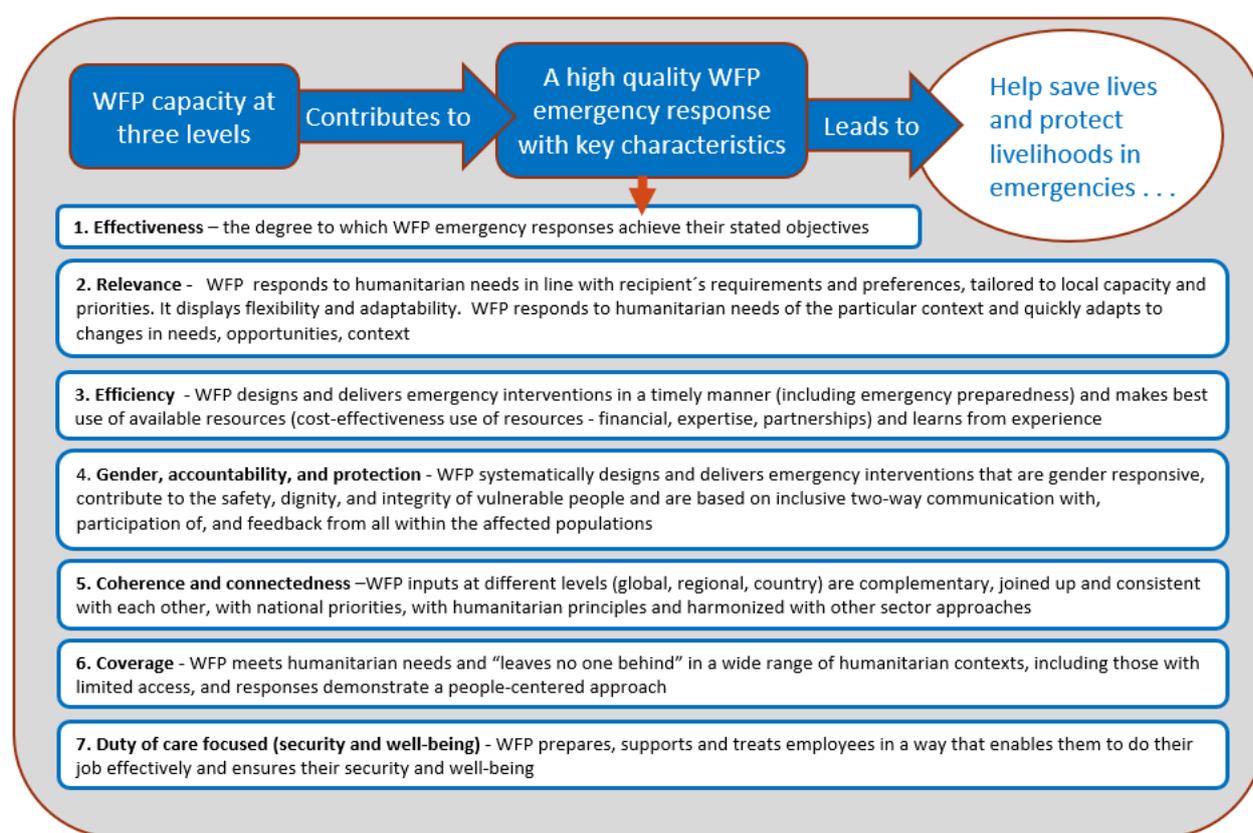
Source: Evaluation team

8.   A high-quality response is considered in the evaluation to be a response that demonstrates a set of characteristics as laid out in Figure 1. Characteristics include: effectiveness; relevance; efficiency (including learning); gender responsiveness;[4] accountability to affected people and demonstrating protection for those people's internal and external coherence and connectedness; coverage; and duty of care for employees. The definitions of the characteristics correspond to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) criteria as well as other relevant sources such as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) and the Core Humanitarian Standards.

9.   The evaluation approach was set out in an inception report. Full details on the evaluation methodology including the evaluation matrix, details of tools and methods used are included in Annexes 4 and 5. In brief, data-collection processes included:

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[4] Responds to the food security and nutrition needs of men, women, girls and boys.

- An in-depth systematic literature review of 44 evaluative documents, including evaluations, audits and lessons-learned documents (Annex 5. Section 4.1). This approach was a distinctive feature of the evaluation and drew on a large body of high-quality reports prepared since 2012
- Extensive review of additional documents, including strategies, policies and guidance (Annex 3)
- Six emergency case studies, as shown in Table 1, selected to represent a range of emergency contexts and scale of response across the evaluation period (four involving country visits), which included key informant interviews with internal and external stakeholders, group discussions and a further document review
- Visits to the six WFP regional bureaux (RB) and key informant interviews, which were held with internal and external stakeholders. An additional document and corporate data review was also undertaken, drawn predominantly from internal WFP sources.

Table 1: Emergency case studies

Country	Iraq	Nepal	Philippines	Mauritania	South Sudan	El Salvador
Emergency response phase focus	2014-2018 ISIL insurgency	2015-2018 Earthquake and flood responses	2013-2014 Typhoon Haiyan	2017-2018 Sahel regional food insecurity	2016-2017 Complex emergency	2014-2018 Recurrent shocks causing food insecurity

Source: Evaluation team

10.   Interviews of key stakeholders at WFP headquarters involved a total of 409 people (52 percent of whom were men and 48 percent of whom were women). Key informant interviews and group discussions were held across the global, regional and country levels, including 63 external stakeholders made up from partners, government representatives and international organizational representatives in country, regional and global positions. WFP respondents were drawn from headquarters (35), regional bureaux (169) and country offices (131) (Annex 2 has a full list). The evaluation did not include direct consultation with affected populations because of time constraints and challenges involved with consulting with a representative group. However, it did include evaluations and literature that incorporated the input from affected populations.

11.   The terms of reference set out five evaluation questions:

- Question 1: To what extent did WFP provide a high-quality response to emergencies between 2011 and 2018?

- Question 2: To what extent did WFP establish an appropriate enabling environment for ensuring a high-quality response to emergencies?

- Question 3: To what extent did WFP put in place the appropriate organizational framework for a high-quality response to emergencies?

- Question 4: To what extent did WFP employees have the right skills, knowledge, experiences and incentives to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?

- Question 5: To what extent did WFP undertake appropriate actions to ensure adequate capacity to respond to emergencies?

12.   In the inception phase it was agreed that evaluation questions 1 and 5 would be integrated into evaluation questions 2, 3 and 4. Evaluation question 1 is addressed through the analysis of evidence of WFP capacity to enable characteristics of a high-quality emergency response, including the effectiveness, relevance and timeliness of responses. This analysis is incorporated into the evaluation matrix for questions 2, 3 and 4 to enable focus on the area of interest of this evaluation, that is to say, the capacity for emergency response, rather than a focus on the performance of WFP. In relation to evaluation question 5, the evaluation matrix highlights how investment and learning questions have been incorporated into the sub-questions for each of the three core evaluation questions exploring the issue at different levels of capacity. Evaluation questions 2, 3 and 4 are the three core questions that will be used to guide data collection and analysis. Details of the evaluation approach was set out in an inception report and is summarized in Annex 5.

13.   Gender is a key consideration in the evaluation framework. Gender responsiveness was an evaluation focus identified as one of the characteristics of a high-quality emergency response. Gender was also incorporated into

the assessment of other characteristics, for example, in relation to the relevance of responses to different needs (women, men, boys and girls). Gender considerations were also built in evaluation methods, for example, in the interview checklists and the selection of interviewees. The evaluation aimed for gender parity in interviewees (and achieved a 48 percent women/52 percent men distribution of interviewees). Sex-disaggregated data was used where available.

14.   Methodology limitations included constrained data analysis due to the lack of: some anticipated data - including data on gaps in fulfilling human resource requirements for emergency response; some sex-disaggregated data for human resources; and financial data on WFP investments into the development of capacity at all levels. Changes in corporate data systems (for example, corporate management and results frameworks) also presented challenges by making it more difficult to identify trends. Also, as foreseen, the limited number of country visits and challenges to establish details of responses, particularly from the earlier phase of the evaluation period, also presented constraints. These constraints were exacerbated by a lack of documentation, turnover of WFP staff and external stakeholders, and challenges to recall. However, substantial data has been gathered and the evaluation team (ET) made extensive use of the WFP library of existing documentation (which includes audits, lessons learned, other evaluations, and independently authored documentation) to develop and support robust findings (Annex 3 has a full list of documents reviewed).

15.   The evaluation was guided by the WFP and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards and norms. The evaluation team ensured informed consent for all interviewees, protected privacy, ensured confidentiality and anonymity of participants, including for those who did not want to be named in the list of participants. The evaluation team was culturally sensitive, respecting the autonomy of participants and it aimed for parity at least in terms of men and women participants. The evaluation also included WFP employees from a range of different levels of seniority and involved national and international employees. The evaluation team has a full documented record of interview notes, which has not been shared outside the evaluation team for reasons of confidentiality.

16.   Quality assurance of the evaluation is based on the WFP Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CEQAS) itself based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (ALNAP and DAC). The evaluation products undergo internal quality assurance by the KonTerra[5] quality assurance system and then the two levels of quality assurance used by the Office of Evaluation in the evaluation process. There is no conflict of interest affecting members of the evaluation team. WFP has established an internal reference group and consulted with an external advisory group to provide additional input to support the validity of evaluation findings and relevance of recommendations.

17.   All findings are triangulated. Triangulation methods included (i) the use of different team members to explore the same aspect of the evaluation and ensure that findings are fully endorsed by all team members rather than being the "province" of one particular area of specialism; (ii) the use of different methods to explore the same aspect; and (iii) the use of multiple sources of data. The report states if a finding is relevant to only a specific time or place.

18.   The analysis draws on evidence from the in-depth systematic review of relevant literature and the emergency case studies including field missions to four country offices and all six regional bureaux. This also enabled further document and data review, as well as external and internal key informant interviews. The available evidence base was solid in relation to the evaluation question/sub-questions and allowed for adequate triangulation of data sources.

19.   The evaluation team identified parallel learning and evaluation processes of direct relevance to this evaluation and aimed to ensured minimal duplication and maximum complementarity with them, particularly in relation to parallel evaluations that consider the funding of WFP work and of the WFP People Strategy (Annex 5).

20.   Section 2 of this report presents the evaluation findings in relation to its three core questions:

- To what extent did WFP establish an appropriate enabling environment to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?
- To what extent did WFP put in place the appropriate organizational framework for a high-quality response to emergencies?
- To what extent did WFP employees have the right skills, knowledge, experiences and incentives to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?

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[5] The KonTerra Group is the independent evaluation firm carrying out the evaluation.

21.   Section 2 also presents the evaluation team's analysis of findings by characteristics of a high-quality response, as used by the evaluation. Section 3 presents the evaluation team's conclusions and recommendations for the future to guide investment in the development of WFP capacity, including in its policy for high-quality emergency response.

1.2. EXTERNAL EVALUATION CONTEXT

22.   The humanitarian context has changed significantly during the evaluation period (2011-2018), which has witnessed growth in the number, complexity and duration of humanitarian crises. In quantitative terms alone, the number of large-scale emergencies occurring simultaneously has risen significantly from one Level 3 (L3) emergency in 2011 to 15 major emergencies in 2018, of which seven were L3s. Of these, seven lasted more than five years (Annex 6, Figure 4 has more detail). Over the same period the direct expenditures of WFP on emergency relief increased from USD 2.9 billion in 2011 to USD 5.7 billion in 2018.

23.   Over the evaluation period there have also been significant developments and trends in the humanitarian sector. Key trends are discussed below:

- Moves to greater coordination - in 2011 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) introduced the Transformative Agenda. This set the parameters for improved collective response to major humanitarian crises focusing on experienced and competent leadership, inter-agency and partner coordination and accountability. In 2011 the inter-agency cluster system was finalized with WFP leadership of the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters (ETC) and co-leadership of the food security cluster (FSC) agreed. IASC emergency protocols were established in 2011 and most recently revised in 2018 for system-wide activation of responses and for empowered leadership at country level.
- Localization agenda – debate in the sector regarding the role of local actors in humanitarian response moved forward with, for instance, the establishment by the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team of a "localization marker working group" in 2016. However, a 2018 analysis of progress in relation to World Humanitarian Summit commitments on localization notes the slow rate of progress in moving resources to local actors.[6]
- Increased leadership of national governments of emergency response - this has been evidenced in a number of countries particularly, but not only middle-income countries (for example, in the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2014 and to the Sulawesi earthquake in Indonesia in 2018 and identified in various studies in the time period).[7] Other examples include national leadership of emergency responses in Ecuador (2016 earthquake), Peru (2017 floods), and Dominica (2017 hurricane).
- Funding has been growing, but needs outpace resources - funding for humanitarian action is higher than it has ever been, but growing humanitarian needs are outpacing available funding and current capacity for humanitarian response.[8] This has contributed to an increased focus on innovation and attention to work in new ways to bridge the gap. Funding continues to be concentrated towards a limited number of international organizations. This has contributed to calls for more support to local organizations as part of the localization agenda.
- Concentration of funds in a small number of crises - a few significant crises continued to absorb the majority of funds: in 2017 just five crises absorbed 58 percent of all humanitarian assistance.[9]

24.   There have also been significant developments in policy related to emergency response – there have been a number of recent emergency-related policy developments, for instance:

- The introduction of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and approval of the Sustainable Development Goals
- The convening of a high-level panel to explore the transformative potential of cash in humanitarian response10

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[6] ALNAP, 2018. State of the Humanitarian System.
[7] OCHA, 2014. Interagency evaluation of Typhoon Haiyan Response; ALNAP, 2014. Ramalingham, B. and Mitchell J. Responding-to-changing-needs-Challenges and opportunities for humanitarian action; Rowherder, B. 2016. Humanitarian response in middle-income countries. https://gsdrc.org/publications/humanitarian-response-in-middle-income-countries.
[8] OCHA, 2015. World Humanitarian Data and Trends Report.
[9] ALNAP, 2018. State of the Humanitarian System.
[10] https://www.odi.org/projects/2791-high-level-panel-humanitarian-cash-transfers

- IASC strategic priorities from 2018 related to humanitarian financing, collective advocacy, accountability and inclusion, humanitarian/development collaboration and operational response,11 as well as changes in organizational structure to address these priorities
- The World Humanitarian Summit, which promoted increased use of cash-based approaches, greater cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, moves towards multi-year funding for operations in humanitarian crises, more support to local actors and greater participation by - and accountability to - affected populations
- A significant increased focus in the sector on resilience, including as part of emergency response linked to a focus on the nexus (that is, the interaction between humanitarian-development-peace dynamics and actors and the potential for interventions to have benefits beyond the one sector)
- A new gender policy and accountability framework issued by the IASC.[12]

25. All these developments have significant capacity implications in terms of skills and ways of working individually at the inter-agency level. Considering these developments and the inception phase consultation, the evaluation team identified a set of key trends to consider in relation to WFP capacity and in particular in relation to the implications of findings for the future. These are:

- The changing scale, scope and number of emergencies, including a larger case load of people requiring assistance, increased displacement and these emergencies occurring increasingly in urban areas[13]
- Developments in technology - the potential new technology provides opportunities as well as risks, including to reputation; for example, through the increased use of social media[14]
- The rise of consideration of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in emergency response design and implementation[15]
- A broadening range of modalities for providing assistance, notably through cash-based responses[16]
- Increasing evidence of the impact of climate change on emergency needs and the appropriate responses[17]
- The evolution of humanitarian architecture including United Nations reform (Transformative Agenda and Delivering as One) over 2011-2018.[18]

26. Developments in the context and sector have implications for WFP capacities for emergency response. For example, the increase in scope, scale and duration of emergencies all place considerable strain on WFP resources. Similarly, the various types of emergency contexts mean that WFP needs to be able to work simultaneously through a range of modalities. The growing gap at sector level between resources and needs has increased the pressure on all organizations (including WFP) to maximize the use of their resources. It sometimes presents difficult choices, such as whether to reach more beneficiaries with smaller rations or fewer people with more comprehensive coverage of needs. The development of new sector-wide resources, such as the stand-by capacity of gender specialists (GenCap) and protection specialists (ProCap), can provide resources that WFP can draw upon for use in emergency responses. New sector-wide developments have implications for WFP and aim to enhance inter-agency capacity across humanitarian-development-peace sectors through, for instance, the United Nations reform process and adherence to the 2012 United Nations System Wide Action Plan on gender equality and empowerment of women.

1.3. WFP STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS IN RELATION TO DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

27. The scale of the WFP emergency response has grown significantly over the evaluation period. Figure 2 illustrates the steady increase in emergency response expenditure on L2 and L3 emergencies from 2011 to 2018; the number of emergencies has stabilized in recent years although it continues to be significantly higher than in

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[11] IASC (undated) IASC strategic priorities for 2018-2019. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/session_3_-_strategic_priorities_and_iasc_structures_31_may_2018.pdf
[12] IASC, 2017. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action.
[13] ALNAP, 2015. State of the Humanitarian System.
[14] OCHA, 2016. Leave No-One Behind.
[15] De Bois, M., 2018. the New Humanitarian Basics. ODI
[16] UN. 2018. Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization.
[17] OCHA, 2018. Global trends.
[18] UN. 2018. Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization.

previous decades. Financial expenditure has almost doubled in size, remaining at over 80 percent of WFP corporate budget each year.

Figure 2: WFP expenditure on relief activities and the number of Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies 2011-2018 [19]
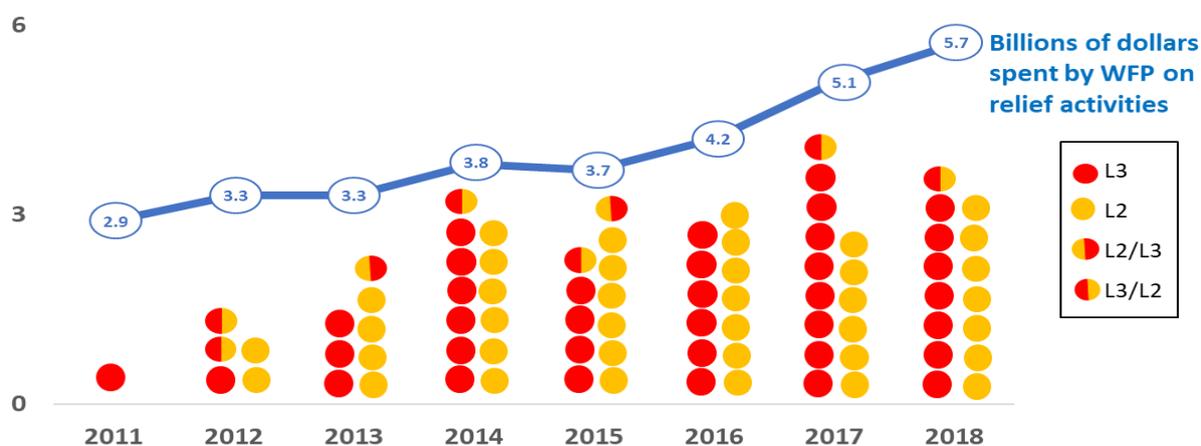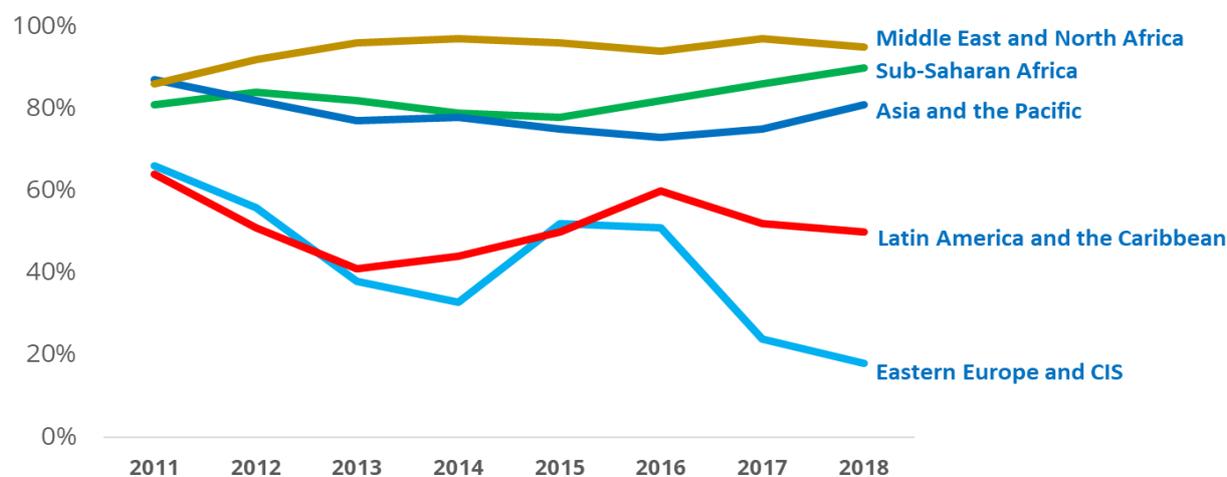

Source: Data from WFP APR 2011-2018

28.   However, the spread of resources and responses has not been uniform. WFP analysis shows the concentration of its resources in ten emergencies and under-resourcing of smaller-scale operations and low-visibility protracted crises.[20]

29.   As shown in Figure 3, the extent to which emergency response expenditure forms a significant portion of regional budgets varies by region. Figures for the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and, to a lesser extent, Asia-Pacific (AP) show a significantly higher proportion of expenditure on emergency response compared with Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region as well as Europe. The two regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East make up the majority of WFP emergency response expenditure (Annex 6, Figure 1 has further details).

30.   Analysis of the percentage of total expenditure of each region allocated to relief operations over the period 2011-2018 reveals clustered trends; three regions show rather flat trends with consistently high percentages of total expenditure on emergency operations (above 70 percent over eight years); two regions show more variability, with Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States showing the most variance (from 66 percent in 2011 down to 18 percent in 2018).

Figure 3: Proportion of total expenditure allocated to relief operations by region (2011-2018)

Source: Data from WFP APR 2011-2018.

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[19] Note that expenditure figures for relief include protracted responses.
[20] WFP, 2018. Annual Performance Report.

31. The evaluation period begins after a significant shift in the approach of WFP from food aid to food assistance, though some internal processes were still being developed to support this focus; for example, in internal systems and guidance for targeting and partnerships, as well as in clarifying the WFP role vis-à-vis other agencies - notably FAO and UNICEF.[21]

32. A significant trend over the evaluation period has been the diversification in how WFP responds to emergencies. First, there has been a rapid increase in the scale of cash-transfer programming as a modality since 2011, while in-kind assistance has also remained important (Annex 6, Figure 14). Second, there has been divergence between ways of working in middle-income countries, particularly Asia and Latin America, where there is more focus on the enabling role of WFP: the provision of technical assistance, the linkage with government social protection programmes and a focus on longer-term resilience. In parts of Africa the focus remains more on large-scale, direct food assistance.[22]

33. The evaluation period (2011-2018) has seen several significant developments in WFP intended to enhance its emergency response capacity at all levels. The direction of WFP is guided by a series of strategic plans (SP). In its Strategic Plan (2008-2013), WFP declared an institutional shift from a model of food aid to one of food assistance to improve nutrition and reduce hunger in low- and middle-income countries. Strategic Plan (2014-2017) acknowledged the changing contexts and the increasing trend of conflict-caused crises. In Strategic Plan (2017-2021), its objectives and strategic results stress national ownership and country-driven strategies for sustainable development and it aligns WFP to the 2030 Agenda to achieve the SDGs.

34. WFP policy framework has continued to be populated by policies that were developed to guide the WFP emergency response in the early 2000s and that remain active as part of the WFP policy framework. New emergency-related policies have been developed during the evaluation period: humanitarian protection, emergency preparedness, as well as other broadly relevant policies including gender, corporate partnerships and enterprise risk management. In addition, since 2011, several Executive directives and circulars influenced the WFP response, including updates on WFP Activation Protocol (2012, 2015, 2018) and decisions on delegated authority in different categories of emergency (L2, L3).

35. A key development at the enabling environment level was the Executive Board agreement in 2016 and subsequent roll out of the Integrated Road Map framework with its four components (the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021), the Policy on Country Strategic Plans, the Financial Framework Review and a new Corporate Results Framework (2017-2021) - discussed in Section 2.2). The Integrated Road Map has implications for the WFP approach to planning for all programmes, including emergency response. Its framework was designed to increase connectedness between different elements of WFP programming, including longer-term and emergency response programming, and to support WFP as it works towards SDG 2. The aim of the country strategic plans in particular is to bring all WFP country level activities under a single integrated plan, which would enable more flexible approaches to programming and simplified reporting and budgeting, as well as align WFP activities more closely with the national agenda for the country.

36. Also at the enabling framework level, there have been significant developments in organizational structure, such as continued support to the decentralization of decision making in emergency response and a range of changes in the structure of divisions and departments. For instance, in 2012 WFP established an Operations Management Department with the emergency preparedness unit as a standalone unit under the Director of Operations and office of the Deputy Executive Director Operations; WFP also established the Supply Chain Division, which integrated previously separate procurement and logistics functions. A major reorganization in 2019 put the emergency-related departments under the Deputy Executive Director, including the Supply Chain and Emergencies divisions.

37. At the organizational capacity level, WFP introduced several mechanisms and developments and refined existing ones with the aim of improving emergency response. These include developments in advance financing mechanisms, the establishment of a Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) in 2011, the 2011 piloting of the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS) in Liberia and Sierra Leone (and rolled out corporately by 2016), and development of the Country Office Tool for Managing (programme operations) Effectively (COMET).

38. Significant operational developments also occurred. Worth noting are the evolution of new modalities such as cash-based transfers (CBT), the growth in WFP programming aimed at supporting the resilience of affected

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[21] WFP, 2012. Four Strategic Evaluations on the transition from food aid to food assistance.
[22] See Annex 6 Figures 1,2,3 and 4 with details of trends in WFP emergency response including differences between regions.

populations, developments in nutritional approaches (for example, the introduction of new specialized foods for the management of acute malnutrition), and the consideration of school feeding as an intervention that can link humanitarian assistance and longer-term aims. The use of new technology for community engagement and accountability, beneficiary registration and data management, and vulnerability analysis and mapping also affected the operational environment.

39.   WFP continued investing in its organizational framework. For example, it implemented a three (extended to four) year preparedness and response enhancement programme (PREP) (2011-2014) and updated its emergency preparedness and response package (EPRP) guidance. It also developed the corporate partnership strategy (2014) and the supply chain strategy (2017-2021). Technical areas produced a range of tools to support operations, such as use of the gender and age marker and guidance on the integration of gender considerations into operations and elaboration of nutrition minimum standards and support to mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping, to name just a few.

40.   Lastly, WFP has also invested in capacities at the individual level. Examples include: training initiatives (for example, Function and Support Training for Emergency Response (FASTER)); mechanisms for rapid access to key skills (for example, the re-establishment of the emergency response roster (ERR)); and the establishment of various rapid response mechanisms for deployment within divisions and continued development of standby partnerships (SBP) (for example, through the Augmented Logistics Intervention Team for Emergencies (ALITE)). The ALITE, situated within the Supply Chain Division, was established in 1995 to augment WFP operations with various support services – specifically, logistical preparedness, standby arrangements, civil military cooperation, and rapid response equipment. By the beginning of the evaluation period (2011) it had expanded beyond these roles to provide access to other skills.

2. Evaluation Findings

41.   This section presents the evaluation findings in relation to its three core questions. Each question focuses on a level of capacity for emergency response:

- Enabling environment: To what extent did WFP establish an appropriate enabling environment to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?
- Organizational framework: To what extent did WFP put in place the appropriate organizational framework for a high-quality response to emergencies?
- Individual capacity: To what extent did WFP employees have the right skills, knowledge, experiences and incentives to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?

42.   The following sub-sections consider how each of the three levels of capacity has evolved, including in relation to external trends, and that level's contribution to the quality of the WFP emergency response. A fourth section, (Section 2.4) presents the evaluation team's analysis of the key developments, strengths and areas for development in relation to the characteristics of a high-quality emergency response as defined in this evaluation.

2.1. THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

To what extent did WFP establish an appropriate enabling environment to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?

43.   This section considers the enabling environment created by WFP for emergency response. It focuses on key components of the enabling environment, including the WFP corporate strategic plans and policy frameworks that guide, support and direct the WFP emergency responses, as well as the introduction of the Integrated Road Map framework from 2016. The overall thrust of the Integrated Road Map, including the country strategic plan (CSP) approach, is discussed in this section. The approach to monitoring, including the Corporate Results Framework, is discussed in Section 2.2 as part of the organizational framework. The enabling environment also includes WFP structural developments at the corporate level, as well as the knowledge management framework for the organization.

2.1.1 Policy Framework

Finding 1: WFP has developed new emergency response-related policies that respond to key external trends. These include: humanitarian protection, emergency preparedness, accountability to and protection of affected populations, duty of care to employees and enterprise risk management. Older policies remain part of the guiding framework. However, most policies have been developed through stand-alone processes and there are some gaps and overlaps in areas covered by current policies. This reduces the overall coherence of the policy framework.[23]

44.   There is no single policy guiding emergency response in WFP. The February 2018 WFP Policy Compendium[24] identifies 32 policies as relevant to the current WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and this includes policies developed both before and during the evaluation period of 2011-2018, but which are still active.

45.   During the evaluation period, WFP developed new policies directly relevant to emergency response, including in humanitarian protection (2012) and emergency preparedness (2017). The evaluation team identified 11 other policies, developed between 2011 and 2018 of relevance to emergency response. They include policies on gender (2015), nutrition (2017), enterprise risk management (2015), school feeding (2013), the WFP People Strategy (2014) (currently being evaluated in parallel to this evaluation) and climate change (2017). In addition, there are a number of other policies that pre-date 2011 but that are still included in the Policy Compendium, including policies on urban food insecurity (2002), food aid and livelihoods in emergencies (2003), emergency

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[23] The policy framework here refers to the policies included in the WFP Compendium of Policies.
[24] WFP, 2018. Compendium of policies relating to the Strategic Plan (WFP/EB.1/2018/4)

needs assessment (2004) and exiting emergencies (2005). This evaluation reviewed 18 of the current WFP policy documents linked to emergency response, as well as eight Executive Director (ED) circulars on the same theme.[25]

46.   The analysis found that various policy areas developed by WFP over the years can compete and overlap. This has already been identified in at least one earlier evaluation[26] and further confirmed during the current data review. Analysis of several policy evaluations, as well as feedback from key informant interviews, pointed to a degree of incoherence between the policies.[27] For example, a number of policies fail to consider how their effects and functions may impact upon other policies. Seven of the 18 current WFP policy documents make no reference to other policies at all; only nine explicitly refer to other policies.[28] Other policies, specifically the more recent ones such as the Emergency Preparedness Policy (2017) and the Policy on Country Strategic Plans (2016) as well as the earlier policy on Targeting in Emergencies (2006), do make explicit mention of other policies. Overall, the policies give the impression of being stand-alone documents, having been developed as and when the need for having such a policy was identified, rather than as a coordinated exercise to ensure a robust set of guiding principles for the organization.

47.   Evaluations of these policies have found them to be of mixed quality, varying in the extent to which field input was incorporated. More recent policies, for instance those on humanitarian protection, nutrition, cash and vouchers and the People Strategy, have resulted from considerable field input.[29] Other policies, such as the Corporate Partnership Strategy have been more headquarters-led and desk-based exercises.[30]

48.   WFP has developed a clear policy framework on gender, protection, and accountability to affected populations (AAP); and for the mandatory use of the Gender and Age Marker (GaM),[31] including in its country strategic plans. In December 2011, WFP endorsed the IASC's five commitments to accountability to affected populations and agreed to incorporate them into existing policies and operational guidelines. In 2012 WFP developed the humanitarian protection policy and in 2015 WFP approved a new gender policy (which is currently being evaluated). In addition, the evaluation found references to accountability to affected populations in the cash and vouchers and protection policies, and signs of alignment of operations to the existing policy on gender in various operations.[32]

49.   WFP has also strengthened its policy framework in relation to duty of care of employees. The WFP approach follows United Nations directives, which acknowledge that duty of care involves security, safety, health, psychosocial support and broader wellness in terms of living conditions and human resources. WFP has built a strong enabling environment making clear its commitment to the duty of care it owes to its employees in various policy statements. These include: the focus on a healthy and supportive workplace for employees in the People Strategy; the inclusion of security and wellness in the Corporate Risk Register; the establishment and use of a separate Security Emergency Fund to support practical implementation of its duty of care commitment; and the introduction of a global staff survey that includes questions on security and wellness. The implementation of these policies is further discussed in Section 2.3.

50.   Policies approved after 2011 are supposed to be evaluated four to six years after the start of implementation and nine policy evaluations have been undertaken in this evaluation period. However, many of the older emergency-related policies approved before 2011 have not been evaluated. For some of the more recent policies, there are regular updates to the Executive Board, but for a large number of older policies there are not. In addition, there is no system to hold WFP management to account for adherence to the policy

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[25] Those selected for more detailed enquiry were those most closely linked to emergency response: some are specifically emergency focused, although others (such as gender or school feeding) are broader and cover all types of WFP interventions, including emergencies.

[26] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP's Humanitarian Protection Policy.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Exiting Emergencies, 2005; Humanitarian Access, 2006; Targeting in Emergencies, 2006; Food Procurement, 2006; School Feeding, 2013; Gender, 2015; Building Resilience, 2015; CSPs, 2016; and Emergency Preparedness, 2017.

[29] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP's Humanitarian Protection Policy; WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Principles and Access Policy; WFP, 2018, Policy Evaluation: WFP Cash and Voucher Policy 2014-2018; WFP, 2014. WFP People Strategy.

[30] WFP. 2018. Policy Evaluation- WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017).

[31] The gender and age marker has been applied since 2018 and was preceded by the gender marker.

[32] WFP, 2014. Evaluation of the Cash and Voucher Policy; WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Protection Policy; WFP, 2018. Niger PRRO Mid Term Evaluation; WFP, 2015. Tanzania Country Portfolio Evaluation ER (2011-2014); and WFP, 2014. Zimbabwe PRRO Evaluation.

framework and indeed feedback from key informant interviews revealed an often-limited knowledge at country office level of the set of policies that are relevant to emergency response.

51.   An important point for this evaluation is that there has been no review or update of the 2005 WFP definition of "emergency", originally developed in 1970 for the purposes of "emergency projects". When defined originally, emergencies were predominantly related to natural factors and fewer cases of large-scale socially and politically inspired emergency existed; though the definition acknowledges the potential for different types of emergency – slow onset, sudden onset and protracted – and also that they may be due to human-made causes and/or be complex. In 2011 WFP developed the L1 to L3 classification for emergencies, updated several times in emergency activation protocols (discussed further in section 2.2.1). This classification is a functional and operational classification, not one that considers the different types of emergencies and potential differences in responses and/or specific capacities these may require beyond whether it is within the capacity of the country office or regional bureau. It is aligned with the IASC emergency activation system.[33]

52.   The WFP definition of emergencies is broad enough to include most emergency contexts. However, its value could be enhanced by providing more clarification in relation to different types of emergency. This would support planning for the different WFP capacities that might be needed for emergency response according to event type and level of impact. The definition also does not consider the language used in relation to emergency response, including that of humanitarian and crisis response. Some of the differences in response include the types of instrument that are appropriate to use for assessment and the relevance of resilience and nexus approaches, which vary between types and levels of emergency context. These approaches are influenced by factors such as security constraints and the political environment. The current definition of emergencies and the related policy framework do not facilitate analysis of these differences so as to guide planning for investment into WFP capacity at different levels.

53.   The terminology of emergency and emergency response, both in everyday use and also in WFP, tends to be associated with short-term situations and responses to them. Indeed, short-term, immediate response is the way that evaluation interviewees tended to use the term "emergency response", referring usually to the initial three months or so of activity in response to a crisis. The need for some distinction between this immediate response phase and longer-term humanitarian assistance, for instance in protracted crises also considered in this evaluation, is currently lacking in the WFP policy framework.

54.   It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to evaluate in depth each of the emergency-response related policies. But the evaluation team did find two trends in relation to those dating from 2011:

- On the whole, the focus of the emergency-related policies and their subject matter continue to be relevant, for example, in relation to urban food security strategy, needs assessment, exiting emergencies and targeting.

- There are a number of gaps in policies particularly in relation to consideration of their application to specific contexts, including urban and middle-income emergency contexts. In addition, there are technological developments, for example, in relation to assessments and targeting that are not covered in the current policies, and other areas where sector developments have made the policies somewhat outdated (for example, the WFP 2004 policy on transition from relief to development does not take into account later statements on the nexus).

55.   Findings on the current relevance of the policy framework suggest that, rather than an evaluation of each individual policy and its updating, at this point the policies should be brought together into a more coherent framework; one that addresses where there may be trade-offs and that links with more practical guidance on how to implement policies in different contexts.

56.   There are also some gaps in the current overall policy framework. For instance, in response to the growing leadership of emergency responses by governments - most notably in Asia and the Pacific and Latin America Caribbean regions as well as parts of Africa - regional bureaux developed strategies that work in a more enabling way. Feedback from key informant interviews in these regions consistently found, however, that WFP employees felt they were forging a way independently in this approach without strong policy guidance from WFP (for example, in terms of WFP services and roles to offer to the government and how to negotiate any tensions concerning independence). Findings indicate a growing range of relationships with governments, each presenting

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[33] IASC (2012) Transformative Agenda Reference Document 2. Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency Activation: definition and procedures.

its own challenges and opportunities.[34] Significantly, key informant interview respondents at regional bureau level perceived that WFP has not yet taken on board the full implications of the increased government direction of responses including the implications for the WFP way of working.

Finding 2: Emergency-related policies are generally poorly communicated and there is limited guidance to enable their practical application across the wide range of contexts in which WFP operates, reducing their contribution to increasing the quality of an emergency response.

57. Policy and other evaluations found that a broad cross-section of WFP staff at all levels consider that the policies have not been disseminated adequately.[35] Training on their practical use is occasional and largely only at regional bureau level (at best),[36] seemingly due to under-resourced training capabilities.[37] Feedback from interviews indicated that the number and range of types of documents were also somewhat confusing, not aided by their poor communication with some strategies and Executive Director circulars.

58. Guidance on operationalizing the policies is variable, often developed some time after the policy or corporate commitment, as was the case, for example, with protection and accountability to affected populations. In some cases, such as the application of humanitarian principles, there is no guidance.[38]

59. There are some significant external trends in recent and current humanitarian contexts that are not well carried through from the policy framework to the field. For example, the sector has a strong stated focus on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to maximize potential benefits for affected people. This is well reflected in WFP policies and commitments (such as in WFP signing up to the Peace Promise in 2016 and the Agenda for Humanity) and it is strongly reflected in the Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and in the Integrated Road Map. However, key informant interviewees consistently reported a lack of clarity on the operational implications for emergency response. This is in line with the findings of the related resilience evaluation, which noted "there is no clear, coherent framework to advance resilience enhancement from concept to integrated programming and measurable results".[39]

60. Overall, the evaluation team's finding was that, while there was no evidence of acting outside of the policy framework, the framework itself was not a live set of documents to guide WFP decision making on the ground.

2.1.2 Strategic Planning Framework

Finding 3: Emergency response has been consistently profiled in WFP strategic plans throughout the evaluation time period, which supports emergency response. However, it is less visible in the most recent Strategic Plan (2017-2021), which has more emphasis on WFP alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

61. WFP is guided by corporate strategic plans that set its organizational direction. For the period of this evaluation, three strategic plans[40] have been in force for periods of four or five years each. In the Strategic Plan (2008-2013), WFP declared an institutional shift from a focus on food aid to food assistance in order to improve nutrition and reduce hunger in low- and middle-income countries and this focus has been paramount in the years since. A more nuanced set of tools was introduced to support food-assistance approaches, including cash-based transfers as an additional food-assistance transfer modality. This was formalized by the Executive Board in the Strategic Plan (2008–2013) and the Management Plan (2010–2011).[41]

62. The Strategic Plan (2014-2017) acknowledged the changing operational contexts and the increasing trend of conflict-caused crises that has continued through this decade: in late 2011, WFP classified the one L3-level

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[34] This was an issue also identified in the 2017 WFP policy evaluation of its policy on capacity development, Adriene, M, (2017).

[35] WFP, 2016. Evaluation of the Ebola Crisis Response, 2014-2015; WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy; WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Principles and Access policy; WFP, 2014. Evaluation of the Cash & Voucher Policy.

[36] Generally training of trainers is now done by HQ staff to RB level, with the expectation this is then cascaded down to country level.

[37] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP's Humanitarian Protection Policy.

[38] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Principles and Access Policy.

[39] WFP, 2019. Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience.

[40] WFP Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (para. 68, page 22); WFP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 (para. 55); WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

[41] WFP, 2013. Report of the External Auditor on the use of Cash and Vouchers.

emergency involving WFP as drought-related, by late 2018, of the 15 L2 and L3 interventions for WFP, all were classified as complex disasters and were economic or conflict-related emergencies.

63. Both of these earlier strategic plans included "Strategic Objective (SO) One: Save Lives and Protect Livelihoods in Emergencies" as the key approach to emergency response and planning. This objective served as the foundation of the WFP emergency mandate and was an unambiguous declaration of intent.

64. The current Strategic Plan (2017-2021) has been designed to align with the broader sustainable development agenda of the United Nations, and was intended to adjust the strategic direction of WFP and set the course for its contributions to broader country level efforts towards achieving sustainable development, aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the strategic plan focuses on SDGs 2 and 17, addressing "zero hunger" across the world, and working through partnerships. The Strategic Plan (2017-2021) notes that the SDGs require moving beyond saving lives to changing lives. While the earlier strategic plans had a specific emergency response objective, Strategic Plan (2017-2021) offers a significant change in focus: there is no direct emergency response objective mentioned. This represents a change in the results framework, which focuses more on WFP contribution to the SDGs (see Section 2.2).

65. However, within the text of Strategic Plan (2017-2021), emergency work is frequently mentioned, with the "new programmatic framework focus[ing] first and foremost on strengthening the effectiveness of WFP's response in emergency and crisis situations". It is significant to note that in its acceptance of the draft Strategic Plan (2017-2021) the Executive Board "noted its expectation that responding to food security related emergencies and providing direct humanitarian assistance that helps save lives and livelihoods and upholding the humanitarian principles [should] remain WFP's primary focus, and continue to be the major part of WFP's operations". [42] While the evolutions of the strategic plans are a significant shift to realign with the SDGs, the evaluation team did not find evidence at the strategic level of any "de-prioritization" of capacity associated with emergency response. To the contrary, its importance was emphasised in the Executive Director's statement in 2018, establishing WFP leadership in emergency response as one of five organizational priorities.

Finding 4: The introduction of the Integrated Road Map, including the country strategic plans and associated processes, is still too recent to be able to assess fully the success of the intended impact of the country strategic plan to make WFP operations more efficient and effective. But WFP application of a flexible approach (for example, using waivers), together with a commitment to learning lessons to streamline country strategic plans and revision procedures, indicate country strategic plans should be able to support agility in emergency response. However, the process for rapid revisions is not systematic yet and the impact of the use of waivers on other quality factors, such as gender responsiveness, is not clear.

66. Until the introduction of the Integrated Road Map in the last few years, operations at country level were run through a number of programme designs – those covering emergency response being the emergency operation (EMOP) and the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO), and possibly special operations (SO) – which collectively at country level were known as the country portfolio. These operations were planned and budgeted separately. By February 2019 all countries operated within the framework either through an Executive Board-approved country strategic plan or a transitional interim country strategic plan approved by the Executive Director.[43]

67. It was expected that country strategic plans would include a provision for capacity and an ability to respond to new emergencies. This has been achieved through a crisis response objective. The 2017 Management Plan showed that EMOPs represented approximately 21 percent of the corporate programme of work; by 2019, "crisis response" was recognized to be approximately 67 percent of the programme of work under the new country strategic plans. In countries where WFP has no established presence and thus no country strategic plan, a limited emergency operation (LEO) can be implemented in the event of an unforeseen and sudden-onset emergency. The Regional Director is authorized to approve this for a budget up to USD 10 million.[44] A limited emergency operation can be planned for an initial period of up to six months and may include the provision of services or capacity-strengthening support, as required.

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[42] WFP, 2016. Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (page 5).
[43] WFP, 2018, Annual Performance Report.
[44] WFP, 2019. ED circular, ED2019/04, 8. August 2019.

68.   The current Strategic Plan (2017-2021) includes a financial framework, notably a country portfolio budget (CPB), to facilitate the implementation of the country strategic plan, thus leaving much of the responsibility for raising resources at the country office level, but also enabling flexibility for resources to be moved between strategic objectives. Systems are in place to ensure that smaller-scale changes can take place without major paperwork; this is simpler than the old EMOP. These changes can be made either through a limited emergency operation or a portfolio adjustment, assuming a crisis response objective was included in the country strategic plan. A brief guidance note was produced to assist country offices in upgrading or revising their country strategic plans for new emergency response needs.[45] It indicated that, in the case of an emergency, the country office should "use the country strategic plan portfolio [resources] at its disposal to respond without delay" with subsequent donor follow-up to agree their new use. As such, flexibility to address the needs identified at country level was built in.

69.   There were concerns that the new system would be less flexible and slow down WFP emergency responses, as raised in the 2018 evaluation of the pilot country strategic plans. Indeed, the process for budget revision has been more time-consuming under country strategic plans than for the old EMOP procedure, which is reflected in the data for decision making. Key informant interviewees report there are 120 steps to revise the budget. Data for each year from 2017 to 2019 all show longer decision-making periods for budget revisions when emergency contexts change, compared to the time previously taken to launch a new, or revise an existing, EMOP. For instance, revision of an EMOP in 2015 took an average of 26 working days (31 in 2016) and for a country strategic plan revision in the case of a changing emergency context the change took 41 working days in 2018 (Annex 6, Tables 2 and 3 show more information).

70.   However, the evaluation team's data show WFP has used waivers for certain standard procedures to ensure rapid decision making in some situations. For example, in the 2018 Rohingya response in Bangladesh the country strategic plan revision was approved in nine days, enabled by waivers of some procedures. There are efforts underway within WFP to streamline decision-making processes to support rapid responses and this may remove the need for such waivers in future emergencies. Meanwhile, key informant interviews also revealed that in two recent limited emergency operation processes the usual mandatory requirement for a gender and age marker was waived. While this flexibility may have been helpful to the speed of a response and the decision-making process, it is not a systematic approach at the moment. In relation to the gender and age marker, the use of waivers risks undermining the very process that was undertaken to establish acceptance of the practice. In the response to the emergency, the priority of efficiency is therefore put in tension with measures that seek to ensure its quality across a range of characteristics, in this case gender and age integration into the design and implementation of activities.

71.   Findings from evaluation team interviews revealed that WFP is taking an active learning approach to the country strategic plan process in order to ensure its flexibility. For example, country offices discovered that reducing the level of tagging of activities and not defining beneficiary groups by geography or ethnicity enabled more agile responses. This supports country office flexibility in the use of resources between strategic objectives and activities and potentially enables a more rapid and relevant response for affected populations. Headquarters developed an "emergency revision toolkit" to support the planning and approval of an urgent budget revision or a limited emergency operation in the context of an emergency where early warnings indicate the possibility of a shock. Two pilot training exercises were delivered on this in 2019 and are to be rolled out. An evaluation of the country strategic plan process was undertaken in 2018, which recommended a further review of the process and sustained systematic learning.[46]   Key informant interviews held at headquarter level revealed an intention to learn and streamline the planning and revision process. It will be important to share lessons as the system evolves to maintain agility. Evaluation interviews at regional bureau and country office level revealed that country strategic plan processes have generally facilitated cross-office and departmental cooperation, through the establishment of shared objectives and cooperation in the development of the documents, contributing to more internally coherent strategic plans.

Finding 5: WFP policies and the introduction of country strategic plans help to ensure that the WFP emergency response can be externally coherent with the wider humanitarian sector as well as with national governments' priorities and emergency response approaches. There remains potential tension between, on the one hand, WFP striving for coherence with government priorities and, on the other hand,

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[45] WFP, undated. Practical Step by Step Guidance for Revising CSPs in Emergencies.
[46] WFP, 2018. Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans.

WFP adhering to humanitarian principles, highlighting the importance of the need to maintain and develop WFP skills to navigate between these two aims.

72. A number of measures taken by WFP encouraged coherence and connectedness with external emergency response frameworks. WFP Executive Director circulars have promoted the active participation and leadership of WFP in inter-agency emergency response. The prominent role of WFP in the Emergency Directors Group in IASC, Executive Director circulars directing active participation in humanitarian country teams and clusters, and its regular reporting on how the WFP role in collective humanitarian response, have all contributed to an enabling environment for coherent WFP emergency responses as part of the sector.

73. The process to develop country strategic plans included consultation and participation of partners - particularly the government. This should mean that, where relevant, the WFP role in an emergency response is already articulated and agreed with the government; findings from key informant interviews revealed that this is expected to facilitate faster agreement from governments for WFP response scale-up. However, the process is still too new to establish whether this is the case. Data available to the evaluation did indicate that country strategic plans were consistent with national government policies and had involved governments in their development. Consultation with other United Nations organizations had been more variable with some United Nations key informant interviewees reporting their experience was more one of being informed and updated on plans rather than one of having a more active involvement in the development of the country strategic plan.

74. Cooperating partners also had limited to no involvement in the country strategic plan development across countries visited by the evaluation team; this represents a missed opportunity to collect their insights for the design of plans.

75. A shortcoming of the country strategic plan approach was that countries without a country office presence did not benefit from country strategic plan-related dialogue. In the Asia and the Pacific region an initiative to address this shortcoming is the recent 2019 development of a regional country strategic plan that focuses on preparedness for response and the role of WFP as an enabler to governments rather than as a first responder. Likewise, the regional bureau in Panama (RBP) has now developed a sub-regional strategy for the Caribbean, which involved consultation with regional disaster management organizations.[47] These are discussed in more detail in Section 2.2 in relation to decision making and the relevance of WFP responses.

76. The country strategic plans were meant to be aligned with the broader United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)[48] procedures (and timetables) for each country, thus ensuring improved coherence and joint programming with other United Nations agencies where possible. This objective has been partially met.[49] The introduction of a country strategic plan in each country, linked to a national zero hunger strategic review, was found to have generally strengthened the alignment of WFP work with national policies and priorities.[50]

77. Close alignment with national governments, a key element of WFP capacity for coherence with national priorities, can present pressures on adherence to humanitarian principles.[51] Adherence to humanitarian principles was re-emphasized in the Strategic Plan (2013-2017), not least because of increasingly challenging operating contexts.[52] While there is little dispute that WFP prioritizes its adherence to the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, regional bureau and country office key informant interview feedback shared concerns that the ability of WFP to operate independently from governments and other authorities can be challenged or even compromised through, for example, attempted politicization of beneficiary lists. This tension affects the WFP approaches that integrate more closely with government, such as in determining beneficiary lists, integrating humanitarian assistance with social protection systems, and when working in technical assistance roles under government direction. This is further discussed in Section 2.2.

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[47] WFP, 2019. Pacific interim multi-country strategy plan 2019-2022.
[48] Now replaced by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).
[49] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans. At the time of the evaluation 45 percent of the 29 CSPs and ICSPs approved in countries with UNDAFs terminate on the same dates as their corresponding UNDAFs.
[50] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans.
[51] Slim, H., 2017. Nexus thinking in humanitarian policy: How does everything fit together on the ground. Keynote Address by Dr Hugo Slim to the World Food Programme (WFP).
[52] These are formally indicated as WFP 'core' humanitarian principles together with Operational Independence e.g. in WFP Emergencies and Transitions Unit (OSZPH) 2017, Humanitarian Access: Operational guidance manual.

78.   In addition, the United Nations reform agenda is likely to have implications for WFP emergency response. The process announced in 2017 centres on the three key areas of: (i) development, (ii) management, and (iii) peace and security. It is intended to bring about changes to support the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This three-year reform process has now been underway since January 2019, but if the plans materialize then there are likely to be some major changes – particularly at country office level – in the ways the United Nations agencies work.

79.   It remains possible that more developmental focus could affect humanitarian responses through, for instance, the revised management roles, including the greater responsibility of the resident coordinator for humanitarian planning, and could also influence decision making, response agility and funding. Findings from key informant interviews identified that key concerns relate to ensuring the primacy of humanitarian principles and the ability to access humanitarian needs for a speedy response. There are concerns that resident coordinators will be drawn from outside of the United Nations system and may have more limited understanding of development and humanitarian issues: there are already recruitment processes to attract external candidates. Some resident coordinators will be triple-hatting as humanitarian coordinator, resident coordinator and deputy special representative of the Secretary-General in the country. This is likely to result in a focus on the long-term development relationship with the government and potential sidelining of humanitarian concerns. Key informant interviews with WFP stakeholders revealed that it is too early to identify clearly the implications for country offices across all countries but emphasised the ramifications will be specific to each country, influenced by factors such as security issues.

80.   WFP contributes to the United Nations reform process in numerous ways. It works towards building common approaches to the reform process, while maintaining its own priorities of eliminating needs and reducing risks and vulnerabilities and promoting a people-centred approach.[53] External stakeholder key informant interviewees indicated their appreciation of the fact that WFP cooperates at the inter-agency level to ensure reform processes have no unintended negative impact on humanitarian programmes. However, one evaluation[54] found inconsistencies across offices in the level of engagement with United Nations reform and the Transformative Agenda, resulting in "patchy support to collective approaches such as clusters". The evaluation team did not find a more up-to-date systematic review of this level of engagement, but notes from the findings from key informant interviews that there are internal processes, including an internal working group, in place to consider the future role of WFP and the implications for WFP systems, including for funding, as well as to ensure that Country Directors are up-to-date with the implications of the reform process.

2.1.3 Structural Framework and Strategy

Finding 6: Structural changes in WFP, which have sought to build more cooperation across departments and to decentralize decision making, have achieved positive results, contributing towards more integrated and efficient emergency responses. However, the frequency and rationale for many headquarter changes - as well as its growth - are not clear to employees at all levels and the lack of continuity causes confusion and a sense of distance from headquarters. Regional bureau structural changes have tended to evolve in relation to regional strategic priorities, and these regional contexts are becoming more diverse.

81.   During the evaluation period, there were several key structural changes at WFP that relate to emergency response. Notably there were changes in the structure and leadership of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Division (OSE).[55] In 2012, the Operations Management Department, with an emergency preparedness unit, operated as a standalone unit under the Director of Operations and the office of the Deputy Executive Director of Operations. The following year, Operations Services was separated from Operations Management, although this change was reversed in 2015 with the reestablishment of a single Operations Services Department with an Emergency Preparedness Division. The post of Director of Emergencies was changed in 2011, 2015, 2016 and 2018: while some of these changes may have been due to regular rotations, having three incumbents in such

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[53] Update on WFP's implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/279 (repositioning the United Nations development system); WFP/EB.1/2019/5-B.

[54] WFP, 2015. Synthesis of series of strategic evaluations focused on emergency preparedness and response including the global logistics cluster (2012); the global food security cluster (2014); the WFP use of pooled funds for humanitarian preparedness and response (2015); and preparedness and response enhancement programme (2015). Cross referenced with seven WFP operation evaluations and IASC Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan Response.

[55] Now the Emergency Operations Division (EME)

a key post over four years is not supportive of continuity. No reference was found in the relevant management plans for these years as to why any of these changes were made, though references in "Fit for Purpose" and other documentation indicate their intention to improve efficiency and effectiveness through reorganization. Feedback from key informant interviews regularly reported fatigue in the field across regions, with the constant changes due to the fact that changes tended to bring about new initiatives for, and demands on, country offices and regional bureaux. As already noted, the 2019 structural reorganization moved key emergency divisions to the Office of the Executive Director.

82.   Recommendations to institutionalize integrated supply-chain management across the organization came from the 2013 Business Process Review. WFP has consequently made a corporate move to a fully integrated supply-chain management approach, where procurement and logistics (previously managed through separate Procurement and Logistics Divisions) are fully aligned and closely coordinated with programming. The Supply Chain Division was established in November 2015. Feedback from key informant interviews from the field level was very positive about this change and its benefits of better communication, planning and response speed; yet concerns persisted about headquarters still being too controlling of efficiency or effectiveness, such as initiatives in the regional bureau in Johannesburg (RBJ) to use secondary data to predict the scale of resources needed and allow earlier decision making for responses.

83.   Some of the structural changes, such as supply-chain integration, have been mirrored in regional bureaux, but the evaluation found regional bureau structures have tended to be adjusted in response to regional strategic priorities and operational needs. Indeed, the evaluation team found a number of reconfigurations at regional bureau level that are quite distinct: for instance, an integrated cash-based transfer unit is set up in the regional bureau in Cairo (RBC) and both the regional bureaux in Panama (RBP) and Bangkok (RBB) have realigned as part of a more resilience-focused approach that is more oriented towards technical assistance to government emergency responses than supporting direct implementation.

84.   The regional bureau in Nairobi (RBN) has framed the emergency preparedness and response unit as the crisis response team, which corresponds to country office structures in its region and the country strategic plan approach. At the same time, the increasing responsibilities of regional bureaux due to decentralization (for example, increased risk management, fund-raising, etc.) contributed to the key informant interview findings from both regional bureaux and also from some at headquarters that headquarters was proportionally over-resourced. The evaluation team's analysis of employee figures showed that there are nearly three times as many employees based in the headquarter and related global level units[56] as there are in regional bureaux.[57] The ongoing functional review being undertaken by WFP is considering the alignment of staffing to the Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and a recent decision in July 2019 by the WFP leadership group agreed to cap headquarters' headcount. However, interviews revealed that regional bureaux and country offices frequently felt there was a lack of understanding of field contexts by headquarters, which is detrimental to joined-up emergency response preparedness and planning. It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to explore this further, but the scale of investment into resourcing global, management functions rather than the more field-focused level is likely to contribute to this perception and seems at odds with the intended continued emphasis on decentralization.

2.1.4 Knowledge Management Framework

Finding 7: WFP has implemented measures responding to the need for improved knowledge management in WFP. These have produced an impressive library of documentation of lessons in emergency response. However, investment in processes to support the application of these lessons has been inconsistent over time and across the organization, with ownership of the lessons often unclear.

85.   There has long been a corporate acknowledgement in WFP of the need to improve knowledge management. Knowledge management is defined by the evaluation team as the process of accumulating data and facts - information - its transformation into knowledge and the passing on of this knowledge into action through organizational learning. While information and knowledge management are clearly related, they are not the same. External assessments have highlighted the need to address knowledge management in WFP. For example, the 2013 and 2017 Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) report highlighted the need for a systematic knowledge management strategy, an issue also highlighted in the WFP synthesis of lessons

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[56] These are based on Brussels, London, New York and Tokyo.
[57] Brussels, London, New York, Tokyo employees total 2156 while total employees across 6 RB are 862. Further details in Annex 6 Table 1 - WFP employees by duty station 2019.

from emergency responses in 2013 and a range of other evaluations.[58] Since 2009, WFP has discussed and worked towards a strategy for knowledge management in which lessons identified in evaluations would play an important part. This was finalized in 2017 but is as yet unfunded.

86.   A number of steps have been taken to address the knowledge management challenge including: a) formalizing in the activation protocol the requirement to undertake a lesson-learning exercise after every L2 or L3 response, b) expanding the Office of Evaluation, and c) setting up a new tracking system for monitoring the implementation of evaluation and audit recommendations. Since 2011, 116 evaluations, at least 44 lessons-learned exercises, and 94 internal audits or inspections have been undertaken by WFP.[59] A series of lesson-learning exercises, based on experiences from specific emergencies, were written up under the management of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Support Division (OSE) between 2014 and 2018. They were meant to provide guidance for similar situations in the future. These have been hosted on "OpWeb"[60], which provides a good platform to post documents and information relating to emergencies. However, the development of a library of documents is not sufficient to enable learning: action across the organization based on lessons identified must be included. Also of concern at the time of evaluation team data collection, was that changes in departmental structures meant that the dedicated capacity with responsibility for learning in OSE was at risk.

87.   The range of initiatives listed above are useful to identify and support the documentation of lessons, but the extent to which lessons are applied is unclear. Feedback from key informant interviews frequently referred to recurrent issues that are identified in evaluations not being resolved. A good example is the availability of nutrition products from the outset of responses and human resource challenges (this is discussed in Section 2.3).

88.   Beyond a limited number of guidance notes developed to support six specific emergency responses during 2014-2016,[61] it is unclear if or how lessons have been disseminated, who holds ownership of the lessons and whether they have been used subsequently. The evaluation team noted also that reports do not always include clear, actionable recommendations and key informant interviewees noted the proliferation of exercises within WFP as well as at inter-agency level, which places a heavy burden on some country offices. Also, the evaluation team noted the tendency that lesson-learning exercises are now more likely to be joint documents with government, due to government leadership of responses (for example, the recent lesson-learning exercises in Sri Lanka and with the Nepal floods). These are valued by partners but do not clearly document learning for internal WFP processes and responses.

89.   However, previous evaluations and assessments have noted that some individual divisions have well-developed knowledge management functions (for example, the Nutrition Division and Logistics were noted).[62] Also, as the next section of the report discusses, there have been areas, such as in the scaling up of cash-based transfers, where WFP has systematically applied lessons to future developments. These examples tend to derive from a single function or unit (for example, a regional bureau). There is less experience of applying lessons needing cross-organizational action.

90.   Significantly, an investment was made between 2015 and 2017 in the development of a knowledge-management strategy supported through an external consultancy. However, nearly two years later the specifications in terms of personnel and the functions of such a strategy have not been financed and resources have not been allocated for its development at a central and regional bureau level. Key informant interviewees were unable to identify what is blocking action on implementing the strategy but they generally shared the perspective that it reflected a low prioritization given to knowledge management in an organization more focused on action. The findings of the evaluation team align with this view, at least in terms of sustained corporate-level investment into knowledge management. In the meantime, regional bureaux and country offices are developing their own ways of dealing with knowledge management (the regional bureau in Panama's evaluation unit, for instance, is leading such a process) suggesting there are pockets of momentum on which to build.

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[58] WFP, 2013, At a glimpse: Learning from 15 years of emergency response; Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN); 2019 (rev). World Food Programme Performance Assessment 2017-2018.; UN Joint Inspection Unit; 2016. Knowledge Management in the United Nations System.

[59] Based on the number of products shared with the ET.

[60] OPweb is WFP's corporate operations intranet for management of operational information in a single location.

[61] Lake Chad Crisis, 2016; Hurricane Matthew, 2016; Preparations for Floods, 2015; Nepal Earthquake, 2015; Conflict Emergencies, 2014; Ecuador Earthquake, 2016.

[62] MOPAN, World Food Programme 2017-2018 Performance Assessment.

91.   Based on these findings, the evaluation team identified a number of strengths and areas for development in WFP capacity at the enabling environment level, which are summarized below.

Box 1: WFP emergency response capacity at the level of the enabling environment

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Evaluation Question 2: To what extent did WFP establish an appropriate enabling environment for ensuring a high-quality response to emergencies?

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In summary: WFP developments in strategy, planning frameworks and in individual policies support the quality of emergency responses particularly when linking immediate response to longer-term resilience-focused approaches. However, the limited support given to the application of policies and to guidance for the increasingly diverse ways of working in different contexts, as well as the limited investment in knowledge management, combined to constrain the quality of responses across all types of context.

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Strengths are:
- WFP responsiveness at strategic level to trends in the sector, which seek to address long-term causes of food insecurity. WFP does this through strategies that encourage linkage between emergency responses, resilience and development inputs
- The development of the country strategic plan and the corporate results and financial frameworks. These developments support a more integrated approach, which is designed to enable more coherent, flexible and connected emergency responses and long-term solutions
- The fact that individual policies have responded well to emerging areas of importance in humanitarian contexts. Increasingly new policies are linked to processes to promote awareness of them

Areas for development are:

- The fragmented nature of the overall policy framework. This does not provide an easily accessible holistic package of policies and strategies to guide decision making in the growing range of emergency contexts in which WFP is operating
- The dominance of the L1, L2, L3 operational definitions of emergencies. It would be preferable to have a policy or typology that can more usefully guide operational planning and decision making about investments into emergency response capacity
- The limited policy and corporate guidance available to guide the diverse ways in which WFP works in responding to regional contexts
- The limited guidance or support available to the practical application of policies and statements in operations across different contexts
- The inconsistent resourcing of initiatives to improve areas such as knowledge management

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2.2. THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

To what extent did WFP establish an appropriate organizational framework for ensuring a high-quality response to emergencies?

92.   This section considers the organizational framework of WFP. Given the potential scope of this level of capacity the section is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the components of the framework including the systems for decision making, risk management, advance financing, guidance and tools, monitoring and partnerships. The second part considers the organizational framework in relation to specific elements of WFP emergency response, including preparedness, modality of cash-based transfers and data management, accountability to affected populations, nexus approaches and WFP contributions to the sector. The selection of focus areas took into account inception process interviews and areas where there has been significant investment (for example, the scale-up of cash-based transfers, risk management, advance financing systems, and technological developments) and where issues were identified in earlier evaluations (for example, accountability to affected populations and other cross-cutting issues).

93.   Human resource-related investments are considered in the following section because they relate to the availability of skills and expertise. The evaluation team notes that there are parallel processes underway that focus on the organizational framework, including the funding evaluation, which will consider advance financing mechanisms and the review of WFP presence; this evaluation aims to complement but not duplicate those areas of focus.

2.2.1 Components of the Organizational Framework

Decision making for emergency response

Finding 8: WFP has strengthened its decision-making processes for emergency response over 2011-2018 through developments in activation protocols and use of collective decision-making fora (strategic and operational task forces). These developments have enabled more joined-up and internally coherent decision making across the organization.

94. Decision-making processes for WFP emergency response are governed by WFP activation protocols. These protocols detail the criteria to activate L2 and L3 responses, as well as the roles and composition of strategic task forces and operational task forces as decision-making fora and lines of authority. They mandate lesson-learning processes for L2 and L3 responses. Due to some areas needing clarification in the protocols, (specifically the roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes), and to external developments in IASC approaches, there have been updates to the protocols in 2012, 2014, 2015, and 2018. These updates seek to ensure alignment with IASC processes.

95. In 2013, the collation of lessons learned noted concerns regarding the speed and clarity in activation of corporate emergencies.[63] Since then, two audits of the management of corporate responses noted some improvements in speed of decision making and clarity of roles.[64] The 2018 Annual Performance Report suggested these improvements have been sustained, with targets met for the timeliness of the operational task forces and the concept of operations (CONOPS).[65] Evaluation case studies found general satisfaction with these systems and overall positive views of task forces, though often it was the information-sharing element of meetings that was most valued, rather than the forum itself being seen as the decision-making centre.

96. Recurring issues relate to the systematization of meetings, with senior personnel not always being present as prescribed, and with only intermittent use of the (optional) analysis process to support activation decisions (in only two of nine activations considered in the 2015 audit).[66] Two audits noted a general lack of systematic documentation of decision making, though key informant interviewees noted some recent improvements, with new leadership in emergencies refreshing the procedures.[67]

97. Clarity of reporting lines continued to be problematic despite the lines of authority being laid out in the protocols and efforts being made to address them. For example, WFP lesson-learning processes highlighted the challenge in the Rohingya response for the Bangladesh country office because of the fact that the emergency coordinator directly reported to the regional director. To some extent, the challenge lies in emergency contexts being distant in-country from the capital city but it can also cause difficulties for the organization if personnel in both locations are not completely up-to-date with developments when engaging with external stakeholders. Furthermore, in the case of the Rohingya response the lesson-learning exercise found that the activation protocol, the activation memorandum and the country strategic plan were contradictory regarding reporting lines.[68]

Finding 9: Trends in emergency response duration, pressure for resources, increased government leadership of responses as well as pressures to act quickly, all present challenges to the established system. Although WFP has responded flexibly to these pressures to enable rapid and agile responses, as well as coverage in terms of numbers reached, the process and criteria enabling this flexibility (for example, waivers) are not yet systematic.

98. A significant trend in the evaluation period has been the increased duration of emergencies. Evaluation key informant interviewees noted the frequency with which L3 categorization in WFP is used as a resource mobilization tool, understandably to some extent, given the evidence that resources do follow the

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[63]WFP, 2013. WFP emergency responses at a glimpse: learning from 1998-2003.

[64] WFP, 2015. Report of the external auditor on the management of corporate emergencies; WFP, 2018, Report of the external auditor on the scale up and scale down of resources in emergency operations.

[65] WFP, 2018. Annual Progress Report.

[66] WFP, 2015. Report of the external auditor on the management of corporate emergencies. Later data was not available.

[67] External audit office, 2015. Report of the External Auditor on the management of corporate emergencies; External audit office, 2018, Report of External Auditor on the scale up and scale down of resources in emergency operations.

[68] WFP, 2015. WFP's Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme: A Strategic Evaluation (2011-2014); WFP, 2018, Bangladesh Response 2018 - Emergency Lessons Learned Exercise.

categorization.[69] However, findings from key informant interviews indicated concerns that overuse of the L3 categorization dilutes its impact, as it was originally intended to highlight changes in crisis needs. This is a concern shared by the sector. In response, in late 2018 the IASC revised its protocols, again replacing the previous L3 activation with the system-wide surge activation protocol.[70] IASC recently released (April 2019) a new protocol for infectious diseases, which may have implications for the role of WFP in health response.[71] Also, discussion is ongoing within IASC regarding the potential of a protocol for sustained responses to protracted crises with internal discussion on issues such as how to define crises (for example, whether to relate severity to the absolute size of the population affected or the proportion of the country this comprises). Meanwhile, WFP is drafting its own revised protocols for internal use, which appear to be in line with IASC approaches. It will be important to review these in the light of the new IASC protocols when they are finalized.

99.   There is increased government leadership of response and this has implications for WFP decision making, a trend most notable in the Asia and the Pacific region and in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The case of the 2018 Indonesian disaster in Sulawesi is illustrative. In this situation, the Government led the response and tightly controlled the agencies invited to support the response as well as the composition of its response (for example, the Government required specific skills and services only and Indonesian nationals only as surge capacity). Liaison between the country office, regional bureau and headquarters was vital to enable the design of a relevant WFP response.[72] The evaluation found that a commitment to respond quickly can cause tensions arising from headquarter's desire to launch surge capacity while the country office aims to undertake sensitive engagement with the relevant government, awaiting their agreement and thus slowing down the response. Interview feedback revealed other similar examples, such as the 2019 cyclone response in Mozambique.

100. Evaluation data indicates that the ways WFP responds to constraints in meeting needs has mixed results in terms of coverage. The evaluation team's review of the Syntheses of Operational Evaluations - among other data - highlighted the constraint that funding (including donor earmarking) places on coverage. Findings from key informant interviews confirmed that operational responses to funding shortfalls are usually to reduce rations or activities that are less urgent, as well as to reduce the scope - thus reducing both short-term effectiveness as well as the contribution to longer-term individual resilience. Another approach to funding shortfalls is to focus on specific areas (for example, in Iraq, where WFP decided to focus on camp populations). The WFP evaluation on Humanitarian Principles and Access found uneven coverage of food security needs within countries.[73]Food security cluster needs and coverage data from some major operations revealed areas where emergency food security needs were severely under covered (reaching less than 10 percent of people in need), as well as areas where coverage was extremely high (reaching 100 percent of people in need).

Risk management

Finding 10: WFP has strengthened its risk-management systems in emergency response. However, this creates a tension within the organizational culture between responding quickly and prioritizing the meeting of emergency needs. At times, risk-management systems are relaxed to enable operational efficiency, but the criteria and process to enable this flexibility is not systematic at present.

101. WFP has strengthened its systems for risk management. This includes: updating the first enterprise risk-management policy (first developed in 2005 and updated in 2015 and 2018); the evolution of the risk register and risk review system (now linked with the emergency activation protocol); the integration of risk analysis into the EPRP minimum preparedness actions; and, in 2017, the creation of the new Enterprise Risk Management Division. However, interviewees indicated the need for greater coherence across these different tools. WFP risk appetite statements categorize it as "risk hungry" on strategic issues and "risk averse" on fiduciary and operational issues (which include partners and vendors, business processes, beneficiary health and safety and also duty of care elements of security and wellness).[74] Increased risk management in emergency response has been driven by

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[69] 2018 audit of scale up and scale down of resources for L2 and L3 emergencies analysed responses 2013-2016 finding L2s tended to achieve approximately 50 percent budget coverage, while L3s more often achieved the much higher coverage of nearer 80 percent (2018 audit).

[70] IASC, 2018. Protocol 1. Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-up Activation: Definitions and Procedures.

[71] IASC, 2019. Protocol for the Control of Infectious Disease Events. Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-up Activation.

[72] Leach, A. et al, 2019, After action review of the WFP emergency response operation to the natural disaster in Palu and Central Sulawesi Province Indonesia, September-December 2018.

[73] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access in Humanitarian Contexts.

[74] WFP, 2018. Risk Appetite Statement, November, WFP//EB.2/2018/5-C.

trends, including rising donor scrutiny and greater security concerns as humanitarian contexts are increasingly linked to conflicts and violence.

102. Key informant interviews revealed that some of the measures now in place are welcomed as part of corporate monitoring of cross-cutting issues (protection), such as the increased attention to duty of care for employees and the attention paid to monitoring assisted people's perceptions of safety.

103. But there are also a number of reported trends which put the WFP approach to risk management in tension with its commitment to reach affected populations quickly – for instance, in compliance measures for assessing new partners. A recurrent theme in evaluation interviews and group discussions, notably in the regional bureaux in Johannesburg, Bangkok, Nairobi and also headquarters was employees' perception of increased risk aversion in decision making. The interviewees noted the increased demands for additional and current data before regional bureaux or headquarters were willing to make decisions. The introduction of additional processes to complete before decisions are made thus slows down the decision-making process and there is an overall view that risk management or even risk aversion is slowing down response. This goes against the culture of those parts of WFP that prioritize reaching affected people with assistance quickly.

104. At the same time, and possibly in response to these trends, audits and evaluations have found a continued informality or lack of systematization in the process used for internal risk escalation and acceptance. Key informant interviews at headquarters level, audits and the evaluation team's review of other documentation revealed examples, including from Bangladesh and South Sudan, when some risk-management procedures were waived in the interest of moving ahead with response implementation.[75] Findings from headquarters interviews indicated there is demand from country offices for more explicit guidance on which risk-management processes are mandatory from the beginning of a response and which can come later – with benchmarks for when.

105. This last trend mirrors a point noted in Section 2.1 in relation to wider decision making, namely, the commitment by WFP to flexibility in country strategic plan budget revisions to enable rapid responses. For instance, the 2019 Cyclone Idai speed of response was aided by some simplifications of budget and supply-chain processes. These adaptations are not institutionalized at present.

Advance finance mechanisms

Finding 11: Innovation and a learning approach to developments in WFP advance finance mechanisms and related facilities have improved timeliness and cost-efficiency, particularly for slow-onset and protracted crises. However, their potential contribution can be constrained by their liquidity.

106. Advance financing mechanisms have been used in WFP since December 1991 and they provide WFP with the tools to enable a rapid start-up of operations. Significant mechanisms used during 2011-2018 are the Immediate Response Account (IRA) including the Immediate Response Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme (IR-PREP) (for preparedness activities) and internal project lending (IPL).[76] Advance financing mechanisms support rapid responses, preparedness activities and notably purchases through the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF). The GCMF is both a pre-financing and a pre-positioning facility (there are GCMF hubs in regions and/or countries, which allow the facility to act as a regional pre-positioning stock that countries can draw on).[77]

107. Over time, financial instruments have been added and refined based on experience (for example, ceilings had been raised on the GCMF three times by June 2018). Also, in 2016 macro advance financing (MAF) was established as an experimental window within internal project lending; it was designed to increase responsiveness by basing its spending on a general funding forecast acting as collateral instead of specific forecast contributions associated with usual internal project lending systems. Changes were driven usually by the external environment and operational needs: for instance, the first increase in the GCMF from USD 150 million to USD 300 million was because of the opening of the Middle East supply line with the Syria crisis unfolding; the next raise of USD 50 million in 2013 was linked to the food crisis in Southern Africa. Requests for

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[75] WFP, 2017. Internal audit of WFP operationalization of enterprise risk management; WFP, 2019. Report of the external auditor on fraud detection, prevention and response; WFP, 2018. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in South Sudan.
[76] WFP, 2013. Operations Management and Resource Management & Accountability Departments - Joint Directive. Policies and procedures for the use of the immediate Response account (IRA). Directive no. OM2013/003 -RM2013/009, currently under revision.
[77] WFP, 2018. Global Commodity Management Facility Information and Guidance Note (Internal).

changes came from the resource management division but were driven by country offices wanting to use the GCMF and by management support for the facility.

108. There is some evidence that these recent developments and improvements in the systems have shown positive results. For example, in Mali, the programme was able to procure food with macro advance financing earlier than when contributions were forecasted, and the operation was eligible for internal project lending. This generated savings of USD 900,000.[78] Macro advance financing experienced challenges in its replenishment partly due to donor restrictions on the use of grants to replenish the fund.

109. Data shows that advance finance mechanisms enable significant efficiency and broader quality benefits for responses. WFP reporting shows lead times are reduced to between 29-54 days by use of the GCMF and this is illustrated in Figure 4. In 2017, country offices purchasing from the GCMF received their food after an average of 34 days, which represents a 72 percent reduction from the average of 120 days needed under the "conventional" procurement process.[79] Evaluations, key informant interviews from headquarters, the regional bureaux in Nairobi and Dakar, as well as emergency case studies for Mauritania, Nepal and Iraq all note the value of the mechanisms in supporting efficient responses. Examples identified included the key role of GCMF in the 2016-2017 Sahel shock response to support pre-emptive action. The Sahel shock response combined WFP capacity in early warning, data analysis, collective working with other agencies and the use of advance financing mechanisms and facilities. Also, advance finance mechanisms have been important in South Sudan where GCMF permitted timely stocking of the strategic in-country warehouses[80] and in Northern Nigeria, where significantly more efficient procurement in local markets was enabled.[81]

Figure 4: Lead times (in days) for procurement comparing conventional processes with use of the Global Commodity Management Facility
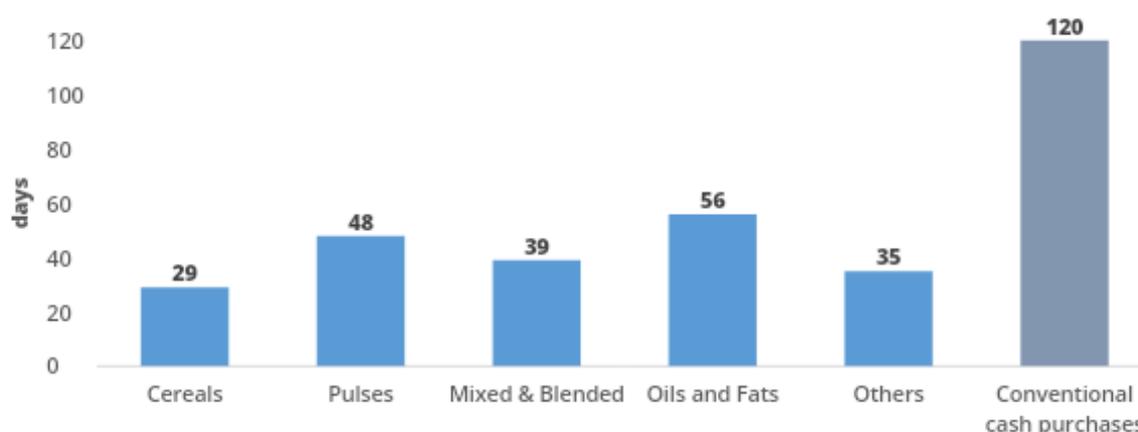
Source: WFP/EB.A/2019/6-H/1 Report on the utilization of WFP's advance financing mechanisms during the period 1 January– 31 December 2018

110. The significance of these mechanisms is illustrated by the scale of purchases now made through GCMF which, by 2018, accounted for 44 percent of all food purchases compared to only 10 percent purchased through advance financing mechanisms in 2011. This proportion of WFP purchases represents a large-scale efficiency gain for WFP, considering the savings in time and money the GCMF is able to make.

111. The scale of use of the funds indicates their relevance to operations. Analysis of internal project lending funding shows that usage of it has increased aligned with increases in its ceiling.[82] Funds are important for preparedness too; in 2018 alone, there were 26 Immediate Response Account allocations for preparedness activities including assessments to support planning and early starts to responses.[83]

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[78] WFP, 2017. Report on the Utilization of WFP's Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2016).
[79] WFP, 2018. Report on the Utilization of WFP's Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2017).
[80] WFP, 2019. Report on the Utilization of WFP's Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2018).
[81] WFP, 2019. Evaluation of the WFP's Corporate (Level 3) Response in Northeast Nigeria (2016 – 2018) (draft).
[82] See Annex 6 Figures 6,7,8.
[83] WFP, 2018. Report on the Utilization of WFP's Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2017).

112. However, the mechanisms and facilities have their limitations. In Southern Africa in 2017 the use of the GCMF was found to be less efficient. Lead times were comparatively long (with an example from Swaziland of a lead time of 111 days for maize compared to usually 79 days for conventional procurement). It appears that what hindered the functionality of the GCMF in the context was the direct uplift from traders (that is to say, no WFP warehouses were used to pre-position the goods) and the preference of the regional bureau in Johannesburg for local procurement. However, small-scale farmers appeared to have defaulted on their contracts, awaiting higher commodity prices because market prices were rising rapidly.[84] Evidence suggests certain conditions need to be in place to enable the GCMF to play its significant role to support the efficiency of responses. These are: that the GCMF envelope needs to be at the right level; that there needs to be flexibility to purchase locally, regionally or internationally; that there must be storage facilities in strategic locations; and that there has to be availability of transport corridors.

113. In relation to the Immediate Response Account, its reliance on maintaining a sufficient balance to remain responsive at times limited its ability to advance funds at the required speed. A 2015 evaluation found that lack of liquidity in the Immediate Response Account was a challenge, so funds were not always available when needed (for example, the South Sudan EMOP 2014).[85] Designed to be a revolving fund in practice, often country offices have been unable to repay the loan with detrimental consequences on the level of funding available.[86] At the corporate level, WFP has addressed the gap by either replenishing the fund through multilateral funds upon approval of the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee or converting the Immediate Response Account loan into a grant.[87] There is some evidence also, at least for the macro advance financing window, that there are examples of a lack of forward planning by country offices as a factor for insufficient replenishment.[88] The evaluation team is aware that OSE is developing proposals to address the increased need for funding for the Immediate Response Account. [89]

114. Timeliness of allocations is also key. Timely Immediate Response Account allocation enabled WFP to address pipeline disruption issues with assistance through other means (for example, in Bangladesh in January 2018 and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also in 2018). However, there were reports from key informant interviewees of reluctance to act on predictive or secondary data to release funds (for instance, in Southern Africa) – an issue discussed above in relation to decision making and risk management.

Technical guidance and tools

Finding 12: WFP has developed technical guidance and tools in areas identified as priority in order to support the design and implementation of programmes, but field level awareness and consistent use of guidance is not strong. While the model of producing guidance and tools that are flexible enough to be adapted to different contexts is good, it increases reliance on emergency response teams having access to expertise to support customizing responses to different contexts.

115. In the evaluation period, WFP developed a considerable body of guidance to support the design and implementation of emergency operations. The evaluation found that guidance responded to earlier evaluations and learning processes that identified gaps and areas requiring guidance, including nutrition (2018), gender (2016), protection (2016), humanitarian access (2015) and cash and vouchers programming (2014).[90] WFP also sought to respond to key trends and issues in the external environment, including operational challenges faced in the field, such as those relating to personal data protection and privacy where WFP developed new guidance (2016). Other guidance responded to trends in the wider humanitarian sector and to commitments made at policy and strategy level, for instance in relation to accountability and minimum standards for complaints and feedback mechanisms (2017) and in relation to linking the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (2018).[91] Earlier

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[84] WFP, 2017. Southern Africa El Nino Drought Response, 2016-17, Emergency Lessons Learned Exercise.
[85] WFP, 2015. WFP's Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme: A strategic evaluation (2011-2014).
[86] This is often due to donor conditions restricting the use of their 'later' funds to revolve against 'earlier' IRA loans.
[87] The DED/COO has the sole authority to convert an outstanding IRA loan into a grant.
[88] WFP, 2017. Report on the Utilization of WFP's Advance Financing Mechanisms (1 January–31 December 2016).
[89] WFP, 2019. Draft Internal use, Advance Financing, IRA and Impact on WFP's ability to prepare and respond.
[90] Nutrition in emergencies (2019); Gender toolkit (2016); Protections guidance manual (2016); Cash and voucher manual (2014); Humanitarian access- operational guidance manual (2017).
[91] WFP, Accountability to affected populations guidance manual (2017); WFP and the humanitarian, development and peace nexus (2018).

guidance also pointed to the need for responses that are customised to different contexts and types of emergency (2009).[92]

116. The 2015 PREP evaluation found that more consultation with the field regarding the development of guidance and tools would have increased ownership and application. This does seem to have been taken on board for some more recent processes to develop guidance and tools, such as the evolution of cash and vouchers guidance that has been largely field-led (feedback from key informant interviews indicated that these were well received and found to be field oriented). Other new corporate tools have also derived from the field, such as the 72-hour vulnerability analysis and mapping guide developed by the regional bureau in Bangkok and the monitoring of cash programmes developed in the regional bureau in Cairo to fill gaps they identified.

117. A key tool that supports the relevance of response, one catalysed by cash-based transfers, is the Transfer Modality Selection Guidance. The guidance enables comparisons of in-kind, cash, vouchers and combinations using four criteria: context, feasibility, cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness.[93] The evaluation team's case study visits found variable use of the tool, suggesting that ongoing promotion of it is needed to ensure it is used to its full potential.

118. Other tools, such as beneficiary preference monitoring, enable community preference to feed into programme design. The importance being given to beneficiary preferences, at least in some country offices, is illustrated by the case of Iraq, which is shifting to a 100 percent cash-based transfer modality in response to beneficiary preference feedback, despite the cost being higher than it would be for in-kind contributions.

119. The development of the Optimus software tool has helped country offices identify the most effective and efficient supply chain within parameters of funding and operational constraints, while also maximizing nutrition outcomes and cost-effectiveness. Using algorithms to assess all available options and propose optimized supply-chain set-ups, the tool has been piloted successfully in Iraq, Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, leading to significant cost savings reported by WFP and confirmed by the evaluation team through key informant interviews.[94]

120. Another key development has been the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS), initially developed in Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2011 and rolled out over the evaluation period. It is an online system that gives full visibility of food commodities as they move along the supply chain, from point of receipt through to final delivery for distribution, providing real-time information. Key informants across regional bureaux highlighted the benefits of the LESS system for their close management of goods. These developments are further strengthened by the increasing linkage between WFP systems, including between LESS, COMET and WINGs.

121. An improvement that supports the relevance of emergency responses has been the increased consideration and visibility of gender and age differences in response plans due to the adoption of the mandatory use of the gender marker (GM) and more recently the revised Gender and Age Marker (GaM) among other measures such as guidance developed on gender. In the 2012-2017 period, 53 percent of projects scored the required gender marker code of 2 and this has been an increasing percentage of projects year on year. However, EMOP projects achieved an average lower score than other project types (PRRO, development project, country programme), with only 28 percent of EMOPs having a gender marker code of 2 in the period 2012-2016 (Tables 4 and 5 in Annex 6 have more details).[95] Linked developments aim to capture budget allocations that contribute to gender equality.[96]

122. Evaluation analysis of selected guidance including that for gender, protection, accountability and contents of the emergency preparedness and response package (EPRP) (revised version 2016) found that on the whole the guidance promoted relevant responses (that is, emphasizing the need for local contextualization); for instance, the revised EPRP highlighted issues in insecure environments and slow-onset emergencies that were missing in the original package.

123. When experienced employees are part of the response team the provision of relatively general guidance together with their experience is often sufficient to enable a customized response. For example, the VAM Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators (CARI) methodology is a positive example of a standardized tool

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[92] WFP, 2009. WFP Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook.
[93] WFP, 2018. Transfer Modality Selection Guidance.
[94] WFP, 2016. Annual Performance Report.
[95] WFP, 2019. History of the Gender Marker. Document specifically produced by the Gender Office for the Evaluation.
[96] In terms of financial resources, WFP has a tool for planned resources, but not for tracking expenditures to measure what was done to contribute to gender equality, and what percentage of the overall budget can be attributed to it.

available in all key languages for those VAM officers who need to produce food security assessments. Positive developments were also found when country offices had capacity to take and adapt corporate guidance to their local context (for example, the monitoring of cash-based transfers in the Syria response).

124. In relation to the gender toolkit, evaluation interviews across regions indicated that there is more work needed to contextualize and internalize these into products at country level through initiatives such as country office gender action plans, including emergency response components. Key informant interviewees reported that gender tools were found to be high-quality but too theoretical rather than practical. In particular, interviewees highlighted the need for more practical examples in guidance material to help in the application of the policy in different emergency contexts. The key informant interviewees found the situation relating to protection more urgent, with guidance more recently produced and the policy less systematically tracked and implemented across operations, a finding in line with the evaluation of the protection policy.[97]

125. Difficulties in applying guidance and tools can contribute to shortcomings in the quality of responses. For instance, despite guidance encouraging gender responsiveness, the evaluation found evidence confirming the findings of the regional synthesis series whereby gender in WFP has retained a largely quantitative, "including women" approach; there is little systematic recognition of anything beyond "equal participation" as opposed to the design of responses that address different needs.[98] There are exceptions to this trend: for instance, in the 2018-2019 Rohingya response, which has developed a more gender-responsive approach to nutrition interventions (these are encouraging, if they can become more mainstream). This more gender-responsive approach has been enabled by the presence of expertise in the country and region, the protracted nature of the response enabling a more in-depth approach, and the provision in partner field level agreements to consider, and budget, gender-responsive components in their programmes.

126. Evaluation data highlights the importance of targeting systems to reach the most vulnerable people in need of assistance. The review of evaluations and case studies in sudden-onset disasters found that blanket distributions were usually a first phase response: this response minimizes exclusion risk but is expensive and challenging to sustain.

127. Evidence from across the evaluations examined, including the syntheses of operational evaluations, found that geographical targeting was generally good, but evidence from the regional syntheses of operational evaluations as well as case studies and other evaluations indicated a mixed experience with more focused targeting. Challenges they highlight include: the limited involvement of partners in developing targeting criteria; limited time to enable targeting; limited consultation and involvement of affected populations in development of targeting approaches; and continuing efforts to reach as many people as possible as the driver of decisions regarding targeting. External factors, such as funding levels were also highlighted as a challenge.

128. On the other hand, there is positive experience of community-based targeting systems, such as that used in West Africa and also in the 2017 Sri Lanka cyclone response. Evidence suggests the benefits of cooperation with organizations with specialist focus areas, for example, WFP cooperation with Handicap International in Sri Lanka aided the identification of disabled people eligible to be beneficiaries, and cooperation in Nepal with women's associations in the earthquake response increased women's access to assistance. In other examples such as in Pakistan and noted in evaluation team's case studies, short-term contracts with partners hindered in-depth targeting of beneficiaries in the later stages of responses.[99]

Finding 13: WFP has developed technological tools and ways of working in insecure locations, thereby achieving good results in terms of reaching affected people.

129. WFP has developed tools and guidance to support operations and access to affected populations in insecure areas. For example, the EPRP revisions include a new focus on insecure areas; guidance on third party monitoring (a tool often used in insecure environments) has been updated and mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) has been used to monitor food insecurity in hard-to-reach locations. mVAM (launched in 2013 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia) tracks food security trends in real-time, providing high-frequency data that supports humanitarian decision making and mobile Post Distribution Monitoring (mPDM) to monitor

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[97] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP's Humanitarian Protection Policy .
[98] WFP, 2017. Evaluation of WFP's Corporate Partnership Strategy; WFP, 2019, Evaluation of WFP's Emergency Response in NE Nigeria; WFP, 2015. Evaluation of the Regional Response to the Syrian Crisis; WFP, 2016. Evaluation of the West Africa Regional Response; WFP, 2016. Syria Crisis Corporate Response – Lessons Learned; WFP, 2016. Ukraine – Lessons Learned; OpEv Regional Synthesis RBN & RBC 2013-2017.
[99] The Decentralized Evaluation of Food Assistance to dislocated Populations in Pakistan in 2018.

distributions. There are limitations because these tools fail to include those people without access to technology such as mobile phones (more often women, elderly people, disabled people and those with less formal education). Third party monitoring has been an effective monitoring tool with evidence of its relevance drawn from evaluations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.[100] WFP guidance supports use of third party monitoring; however, the quality of data is still a challenge in these systems and one highlighted in a 2016 audit of third party monitoring.[101] Key informants also raised concerns over the ability of WFP to monitor third party monitoring and validate the data.

130. Evaluation data, including the evaluation of the policies on humanitarian principles and access, found significant levels of coverage by WFP in highly insecure areas.[102] Evaluation data from Nigeria, Somalia and Syria, among others, demonstrated that WFP has the capacity to reach affected people in insecure areas, albeit the capacity remains extremely challenged by such contexts. Evaluations of Nigeria and Somalia noted the difficulties in responding to differential needs in responses particularly in early stages of a response, though, at least in Somalia, some positive developments were identified as the response matured and more in-depth analysis and planning enabled more targeted interventions to different needs.

131. The overall feedback from regional bureau and country office interviews and group discussions on guidance and tools consistently highlighted that WFP technical guidance in general is scattered, hard to locate and often lengthy. The evaluation is aware that there is work underway to revise the Field Handbook for Emergencies to bring together the key tools and guidance for immediate response into one place. This is a positive development but only part of the solution for all stages of responses. Key informant interviewees also identified some gaps in tools and guidance to support operations in urban and middle-income contexts.[103] As mentioned earlier, policy evaluations have also often raised the challenge of the lack of guidance (or enough detail) to support their practical application.[104]

132. Evidence from regional bureau and country office visits suggests that the most valuable source of guidance for the field is access to technical expertise (be that people based in regions, headquarters or among peers). For example, country office key informant interviewees reported that they valued "communities of practice", including those among vulnerability, analysis and mapping, accountability to affected populations and gender focal points. Policy evaluations found that there is limited capacity in some technical areas to provide such support. An example of this would be in protection, which has only a small headquarters-based team. In the field, the protection role is often doubled up with gender advisor roles, which are two distinct areas, albeit related, and these are not present in all responses (this is discussed further in Section 2.3). In relation to humanitarian principles and access, the evaluation identified challenges in corporate efforts to support staff competence in this area.[105]

Monitoring

Finding 14: Corporate systems for monitoring the overall emergency response performance of WFP predominantly focus on the efficiency of WFP emergency responses. Shortcomings in this area constrain oversight of the overall effectiveness, relevance and impact of WFP responses, and result in comparisons between responses and over time being overlooked. There have been some positive developments: corporate monitoring has been broadened to include other aspects of quality factors, including the cross-cutting issues of gender responsiveness, protection and accountability. However, evidence suggests that oversight of the effectiveness of the WFP emergency response will be constrained by the focus in the Corporate Results Framework on WFP contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as data quality.

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[100] WFP, 2016. Internal Audit of Third Party Monitoring in WFP; WFP, 2014. Country Portfolio evaluation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2009-2013); WFP, 2018. Country Portfolio Evaluation of Somalia (2012-2017).
[101] WFP, 2016. Internal Audit of Third Party Monitoring in WFP.
[102] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP Policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access in Humanitarian Contexts: 44 "Based on annual reporting for 2016, WFP assisted 40 percent of people in need in the 18 countries identified as experiencing access challenges that were fully included in the quantitative analysis, compared to just over 10 percent globally".
[103] WFP, 2018. WFP Syria Corporate Response 2014; WFP, 2018. Regional Response to Syria Crisis (2015-2018); WFP, 2016. Tropical Cyclone Roanu Lessons Learned.
[104] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP's Humanitarian Protection Policy. WFP; 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Principles and Access Policy.
[105] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP's Humanitarian Protection Policy; WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Principles and Access Policy.

133. WFP has not had a comprehensive set of indicators to measure performance in corporate emergency responses. The Management Results Framework (2014-2017) required for the first time that country offices track and report on response times to sudden-onset emergencies and on supply-chain continuity. The note on the Management Results Framework highlighted the challenges to assess the effectiveness and impact of WFP interventions due to the poor quality of beneficiary number data and emergency response expenditure by operation, a finding reinforced in a 2018 external audit.[106]

134. The current performance management system used by WFP is based on a Corporate Results Framework. This replaces the previous approach based on two results frameworks – the Strategic Results Framework and the Management Results Framework. The Corporate Results Framework has been designed to bring these together: to improve the planning and management processes, the clarity of the results achieved, how they are achieved, and at what cost. The current Corporate Results Framework (2017–2021) makes limited mention of emergencies as it is focused on SDGs 2 and 17. It does have key performance indicators that consider country office emergency preparedness, the number of emergency-related trainings, and the timeliness of decision making, including that of operational task forces, CONOPs elaboration and of the immediate response preparedness facility. The functional indicators for service delivery to programmes have a focus on efficiency in relation to timeliness of food and cash-based transfer assistance delivery.

135. Since 2014 there have been positive developments in the Corporate Results Framework in terms of moves to broaden the range of emergency response quality it tracks through the inclusion of indicators that address aspects of accountability to affected populations, gender and protection. These were further refined in the current Corporate Results Framework through, for example, the establishment of separate indicators for protection and accountability to affected populations, which include an indicator on unhindered access to assistance and a new indicator on the number of activities for which beneficiaries' feedback is documented, analysed and integrated. In addition, some adjustments have been made to the current Corporate Results Framework, which enable tracking of the effectiveness of some operations; for example, reintroducing indicators for school feeding should enable WFP to show a positive impact on education indicators from school feeding in emergency settings. In addition, Corporate Results Framework reporting through the annual report is enhanced by audits, evaluations and occasional studies that provide insights into operations and themes.

136. In terms of outcomes, the Corporate Results Framework makes it mandatory that country offices report on food security outcome indicators including: the food consumption score, the consumption-based coping strategy index and the country's economic capacity to meet essential needs. However, while these are useful, they do not indicate the level of contribution of any change that can be attributed to WFP operations rather than change due to other agency interventions or developments in the wider context. A tension experienced here is in mixed donor demands with some donors wanting specific reports on WFP achievements and significance of contribution to shared responses but other donors being more focused on the collective results.

137. Reporting against the new Corporate Results Framework is at an early stage so there is limited data to draw from it. But the developments do represent some progress in efforts to track WFP operations across a broader range of criteria. However, the focus remains very much on efficiency which, while a necessary aspect of a high-quality emergency response, on its own is not enough.

138. The evaluation team found that investments in monitoring made during the evaluation period have so far had limited impact on emergency response implementation. The major corporate tool is the COMET. It includes a design module to design, plan, monitor and report on the performance of projects. Interviews revealed that developments in the tool have been focused more on the corporate system than country office operational needs at this stage. While there have been developments in the system, the monitoring module was delayed.[107]

139. A 2018 audit highlighted that the issues associated with WFP monitoring were: a) a focus on data for corporate reporting purposes, b) insufficient staff capacity and skills, c) de-prioritization of resources for monitoring, and d) poor quality data.[108] These findings were further emphasized by the 2019 audit of the WFP COMET, which identified the development of a variety of shadow systems by country offices to monitor programmes.[109] This finding was echoed in the evaluation team's case studies, which found good practice in post-distribution monitoring: in some locations focus group discussions take place to monitor programmes using well-

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[106] WFP, 2018. Report of the external auditor of the scaling up and scaling down of resources in L2 and L3s.
[107] WFP, 2019. Internal Audit of the Development and Delivery of COMET.
[108] WFP, 2018. Internal Audit of WFP Monitoring.
[109] WFP, 2019. Internal Audit of the Development and Delivery of COMET.

developed sampling systems to inform local programme adaptation. However, this data does not always feed into corporate systems, which tend to focus on monthly beneficiary numbers, themselves not always accurate due to collection methods.

140. Poor quality of monitoring data, partly due to the capacity of partners feeding into corporate reporting, has been a consistent finding in evaluations. This constrains the effectiveness and relevance of WFP evidence.[110] In addition, available data provides information on numbers of beneficiaries reached, but it is limited in showing continuity of assistance and the extent to which identified needs for individuals and households are covered (for example, whether they are on full or reduced rations).

141. An example of what can be done to improve monitoring and subsequently learning – and potentially response adaptation – was found in the Syria response, which in itself was stimulated by shortcomings in the corporate system to support the large-scale response. Enabled by dedicated funding, a monitoring and evaluation project was set up to generate more in-depth monitoring, making use of the protracted nature of the emergency. It created panel studies to explore the impact at household level of the provision of cash – beyond food security and nutrition outcomes – and develop insights into what happens when rations are cut, and other aspects of interventions.[111]

Cooperating partners

Finding 15: WFP has widened its range of partnerships, which in turn enhances coverage in emergency responses. It has strengthened guidance to address partnership issues identified in evaluations, audits and other learning processes. Partners generally report positive experience of cooperation, but there are some areas for further development regarding, partner participation in programme design, capacity development, managing risk and efficiency in contracting.

142. Cooperating partners are a key means through which WFP achieves coverage: good management of partnerships is essential to sustain the capacity of this coverage. The 2016 internal audit on non-governmental organization (NGO) partners found WFP has more than 1000 cooperating partners globally involved in food, voucher and cash distribution, asset creation and nutrition projects.[112] It found WFP had invested into partnership development with good results and with the intention of enabling coverage.

143. In an independent survey of WFP partners in 2017, cooperating partners provided very positive feedback on their cooperation with WFP.[113] However, evaluations have also found shortcomings in partnership approaches, for instance, in support to adhere to humanitarian principles and in enabling more active involvement in programme design rather than a contractual delivery relationship.[114]

144. Evidence suggests that there are benefits in cooperating with organizations with specialist focus areas to reach specific groups of beneficiaries. For example, as mentioned in paragraph 140, WFP cooperation with Handicap International in Sri Lanka aided the identification of disabled people eligible to be beneficiaries and cooperation in Nepal with women's associations in the earthquake response increased women's access to assistance.

145. The audit also identified recurrent efficiency issues in contracting partners and payment systems that also affected the efficiency of responses. These issues included: inconsistent standard operating procedures, recurrent delays in finalizing and signing field level agreements and delays in payments to partners, often due to compliance procedures.[115] These challenges match with evidence found by the evaluation team, including challenges with field level agreements in Pakistan and Nepal.[116]

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[110] WFP, 2015. OpEv Regional Syntheses – RBB, RBC, RBD, RBJ, RBN, RBP; WFP. 2015. Note on Management Results Framework.
[111] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the WFP Regional Response to Syrian Crisis 2015-2018.
[112] WFP, 2016. Internal audit of NGO management.
[113] Transtec. 2017. WFP global partner perception survey data and analysis report.
[114] WFP, 2017. Evaluation of the Corporate Partnership Strategy 2014-2017. WFP Syria Corporate Response 2014. WFP, 2018, Regional response to Syria crisis 2015-18.
[115] WFP, 2016. Internal Audit.
[116] The Decentralized Evaluation of Food Assistance to dislocated Populations in Pakistan in 2018. ET KII in Nepal found new partners established for the earthquake response to access remote mountain areas had limited understanding of the lengthy documentation they signed.

146. In 2018, WFP finalized new corporate guidance on managing partnerships as a central tool for the Integrated Road Map rollout. The guidance addressed agreed actions from the 2016 audit of NGO partnerships and issues raised in the 2017 corporate partnership strategy evaluation.[117] It is too early to identify the extent to which this has been successful, but interviews indicate that it is not sufficient to ensure operational readiness because it lacks actionable tools to leverage partner capacity across the range of potential types of partners, including the private sector, academia and commercial partners as well as NGOs.

147. Evaluation data highlights the importance of preparedness through partnership development in advance of emergencies and of considering coverage as a factor in their development. The evaluation team noted four key concerns regarding cooperating partner relations:

- Case study key informant interviews with partners revealed the partners' limited influence on operations and a sense of them being a contractor for WFP operations rather than a partner. (This is in line with feedback from the WFP evaluation of its corporate partnership strategy and the 2018 survey of partners, which noted an area for improvement around communication and discussion on programme design.[118])

- In insecure environments where WFP cannot access, partners are a crucial means to access affected people. Feedback from evaluation interviews and group discussions in the regional bureaux in Dakar, Nairobi and Cairo all highlighted the ethical issue of transferring risk to partners that this approach presents. It should be noted that WFP duty of care policies do not cover cooperating partners and key informant interviews with regional bureau*x* and country offices indicated concerns regarding the ethics of this tendency. Evaluation data found that coverage and access were the driving forces in cooperation with partners and that partners did not feel that adherence to humanitarian principles was a key part in partner selection.[119]

- Evaluation team data and key informant interview feedback indicated the importance of local partners for WFP engagement at community level, both to support targeting of assistance to reach the most vulnerable people and also in approaches that build longer-term community resilience as part of the emergency response. The traditional approaches of WFP to working with partners – often on short-term contracts – constrain this approach. Similarly, late identification of partners for key groups affects the quality of the response (for example, with women's groups in the Nepal earthquake response) rather than being established from the outset.

- Regional bureau group discussions indicated that, while cooperating partners are key to WFP response coverage and its ability to reach affected people, responses can be constrained by the lack of partners in certain geographical areas or partners able to reach certain groups.

2.2.2 Elements of emergency response

Preparedness and early warning

Finding 16: Investment and developments in WFP preparedness for response, including WFP early warning systems, have improved the speed of responses. However, more limited investment in sustained preparedness planning beyond pre-positioning and other logistical preparation limits the capacity of WFP to respond quickly with a relevant response. There are also limitations in the tools that support planning and preparedness for WFP response as well as in the human capacity to undertake necessary analysis.

148. WFP has long been well known for its strength in vulnerability analysis and mapping following significant investments since the 2000s. Evaluation case studies and regional bureau data collection consistently found, across all regions, evidence of the continued value of WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping and other systems to map vulnerability and risks of food insecurity for both WFP and the wider sector supporting early warning systems for WFP.[120] In the evaluation period WFP has continued to develop its early warning systems. An example is the development of other data sets, such as the establishment of a globally held database of geographic information system (GIS)-generated data on infrastructure. A second example is the use of new techniques to collect, analyse and use geo-spatial and socio-economic data related to natural hazard events and secondary data to predict or estimate numbers affected in order to support rapid decision making.

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[117] WFP, 2017. Annual Performance Report; WFP 2018 – NGO Partnership Guidance.
[118] Transtec. 2017. WFP Global partner perception survey data and analysis report; WFP, 2017, Evaluation of the Corporate Partnership Strategy 2014-2017.
[119] WFP, 2019. Evaluation of Policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access in Humanitarian Contexts.
[120] For example, WFP. 2018. Sahel Shock Lessons Learned.

149. The corporate alert system has also been upgraded and there are regular reports now made to the Executive Board drawing on vulnerability analysis and mapping data among other data sources and regional bureaux and headquarters consultations. Developments at corporate level include the establishment of an Analysis and Early Warning Unit in OSE. This unit undertakes horizon scanning and forward-looking analysis on emerging conflict; feeds economic and natural hazard risks into the corporate alert system to identify key situations of concern for prioritization of corporate attention; and resources and triggers early action. Further, it produces monthly early warning watchlists, flash alerts, and country-specific and field-oriented in-depth analyses (such as country risk outlooks, in-country horizon-scanning exercises, scenario building and support on CONOPS drafting). The Analysis and Early Warning Unit also facilitates the twice yearly Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness (EWEAR) reports. These reports aim to support corporate awareness and resource prioritization processes. The reports are also shared with the IASC early warning analyst group. Interviews with the evaluation team's external stakeholders indicated their value to the sector. However, feedback from key informant interviews suggested these systems remain somewhat opaque to country offices.

150. At country office level, key activities are risk analysis as part of EPRP and risk-management processes and support to governments' own early warning systems, such as the Nepal food security monitoring system. Finally, WFP is piloting new approaches that support community preparedness for response, such as the forecast-based financing being piloted in evaluation-focus countries (Philippines and Nepal).

151. There are examples when early warning systems have successfully enabled the planning and preparedness for emergencies providing action on early indications of need. This was seen in the cases of the 2017-2018 Sahel response and the 2016 Southern Africa El Nino response.[121] Advance financing mechanisms are key tools to support action based on early warning signs of emerging crises. The evaluation team also found evidence of other activities building preparedness for response, including activities supportive of the wider sector. Noteworthy examples include the Humanitarian Staging Platform, which enabled early receipt of assistance from across the sector in the 2015 Nepal earthquake (being expanded in other countries) and those more focused on WFP preparedness, such as the pre-screening of partners in the 2018 Rohingya emergency response in Bangladesh.[122]

152. Pre-registration has also been noted in evaluations, including in Somalia, to ensure rapid response.[123] Importantly, early warning enabled pre-emptive action in the Sahel response.[124]

153. However, the evaluation team identified two factors hindering the effectiveness of WFP early warning processes

- The first factor relates to capacity. While the EPRP and enterprise risk-management system includes contextual risk management as key components, the evaluation team found variable levels of capacity at country office and regional bureau levels to undertake the analysis, with emergency preparedness and response units stretched (for instance, with only two people in the regional bureau in Dakar covering 19 countries and three languages). Interviews at all levels highlighted the need for more capacity in terms of human resources for better analysis and in particular better conflict and cross-border analysis, an issue also raised in the lessons-learned exercise for the Rohingya crisis.

- The second factor relates to country presence. WFP is limited to act on early warning indications and scale-up when it does not already have presence in-country or pre-established relationships and knowledge of the context to support the design of a relevant response.[125] Evaluation team interviews at the regional bureau in Panama level with internal and external stakeholders highlighted challenges in the response to Hurricane Irma in Dominica in 2017. These interview findings echoed experiences reported by the regional bureau in Bangkok in the Pacific responses, where WFP had few relationships and limited contextual knowledge. This constrained its ability to quickly scale up an appropriate, relevant response. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the initial suggestion from WFP on response components, such as the provision of high-energy biscuits, was rejected outright in Dominica as incompatible with cultural food needs and patterns. In the Asia

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[121] WFP, 2017. Southern Africa El Nino Drought Response, 2016-2017, Emergency Lessons Learned Exercise. WFP, 2019, Sahel Shock Response Lessons Learned.

[122] WFP, 2015. WFP's Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme: A Strategic Evaluation (2011-2014); WFP, 2018, Bangladesh Response 2018: Emergency Lessons Learned Exercise.

[123] WFP, 2018. Somalia: An evaluation of WFP's portfolio 2012-2017.

[124] WFP, 2019. Sahel Shock Response Lessons Learned.

[125] WFP, 2019. Evaluation of the WFP's Corporate (Level 3) Response in Northeast Nigeria (2016-2018).

and the Pacific region, the lack of prior agreement between the regional bureau in Bangkok and the governments, plus lack of familiarity with national systems and how to link WFP support to them, hindered the rapid set-up of the response to the 2016 Cyclone Winston in Fiji and also to the 2016 Tropical Cyclone Roanu in Sri Lanka.

154. An interesting development responding to this challenge is the recent regional country strategic plan for the Pacific, which details the potential role of WFP to support Pacific island states in the event of a crisis. This responds to the lessons learned from earlier difficulties. It also responds to the trend in the region for increased government leadership of responses, which highlight the importance of pre-emergency relationships. Similarly, in the Caribbean the WFP Barbados office has now also developed a strategy for the region with significant inputs from the regional disaster-management body, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency. Both regional bureaus in Panama and Bangkok also emphasized the importance of investing in contextual analysis to increase understanding of countries (including those without a WFP presence) in order to enable relevant as well as timely responses in the future.

155. A key tool to support WFP preparedness for response is the Emergency Preparedness Response Package (EPRP) developed as part of the Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme (PREP). The EPRP includes a checklist for use at country level to ensure cross-organizational preparedness for response through minimum preparedness action. The evaluation found that adherence to completing this process has been patchy and revitalized only since around 2016. WFP monitoring of the EPRP in 2018 showed only 38 percent of country offices had completed 80 percent or more of the minimum preparedness actions. Turnover at headquarters seems to have caused inconsistent application of the tool over time, with more focus promoted recently due to progress in implementing the EPRP minimum preparedness actions in the corporate results framework.

156. However, interviews at country offices and regional bureaux consistently revealed that interviewees find the EPRP system heavy, largely theoretical and not yet closely linked to decisions or resources to support practical preparedness action. There also seemed to be differences in whether the regional bureau EPRP function fulfilled an oversight role on completion of the EPRP minimum preparedness actions or was focused on technical support only. While key informant interviewees reported that the EPRP framework was appreciated as a framework for thinking through needed actions, recurrent shortcomings noted by the evaluation team tended to be the limited linkage made between completion of the minimum preparedness actions checklist and acting on it (something found in the PREP evaluation also).

157. Cross-border monitoring of risks (for example, of population movement) to alert countries to prepare for potential emergencies is not a new challenge to WFP preparedness for response, nor is it solved by current country-focused systems. This was an issue in preparation for the Rohingya emergency in Bangladesh.[126]

158. A limitation for WFP at the corporate level to prepare for response is the lack of an updated framework for its emergency response. A generic model developed as part of PREP established the requirements for a L3 emergency response and this was designed to support corporate capacity planning based on an assumption of three L3s per year. There is no updated current model or broader framework to base cross-organizational capacity planning for emergency response at the organizational framework level. Any model and framework would need to take account of: the significant increase in duration and types of emergency and contexts; the range of roles that WFP takes in response since the earlier model was formed in 2014; and the flexibility in the WFP response to customize it to context.

159. WFP capacity-building initiatives with governments – most notably in logistics, data gathering and analysis for food insecurity mapping – have supported governments' capacity for response while also building resources for WFP responses (for example, data for assessment) thus acting as a preparedness measure. In some locations the relationships established through capacity-building processes have been key to enabling WFP entry to emergency response when the government is taking a strong leadership role in the response. One example is in the Asia-Pacific region, where the regional bureau in Bangkok both supports the inter-governmental Asia Humanitarian Agency with capacity-building support and works with the Indonesian Government. This enabled good cooperation in the 2018 Sulawesi response. A second example is in the Philippines, where the Government has strong capacity but calls on WFP for logistics support, among other areas, under its leadership

160. The evaluation team found that changes in the sector and government roles in response are driving changes in the ways WFP engages with governments. These changes are broadening and adjusting the range of roles WFP

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[126] WFP, 2018. Bangladesh Response 2018: Emergency Lessons Learned Exercise.

takes, at times acting much more under the direction of governments - with implications for how WFP links its own preparedness with its capacity-building support at national level to support other stakeholders' preparedness.

Cash-based transfers

Finding 17: WFP made significant investment in capacity for cash-based transfer, which has enabled its large-scale expansion as a response modality. It also improved WFP ability to respond to risk-management challenges. Beneficiary feedback indicates the relevance of responses based on cash-based transfers when market conditions are suitable. Evidence shows the importance at country level of preparedness for efficient cash scale-up, which is an ongoing need. Some systems developed are more appropriate to large-scale, protracted crisis responses.

161. Scale-up of cash-based transfer programming in WFP has been rapid and on a significant scale, as illustrated in Figure 5, which shows numbers of cash-based transfer beneficiaries. Key influences on the scale-up were the strategic shift by WFP from food aid to food assistance, the positive results of a pilot initiative (Cash for Change), donor funding opportunities and an Operations Department directive in 2011 to end piloting and normalize cash-based transfer programming. By 2018, WFP transferred a record-high USD 1.7 billion of purchasing power to 24.5 million people in 62 countries and 95 operations - up from USD 10 million in 10 countries in 2009.[127] Cash-based transfer, as a share of food assistance, rose from 20 percent in 2013 to 35 percent in 2018. In addition, by 2018, 33 percent of cash-based transfers were unrestricted in nature and 75 percent of all transfers were undertaken through digital payment mechanisms.[128] Though it should be noted that in-kind distributions continue to constitute a significant – and indeed, the major – part of WFP emergency relief assistance, with scale-up reflecting more of an increase in the overall scale of operations rather than a move away, in some regions at least, from in-kind assistance.[129]

Figure 5: Number of beneficiaries assisted with cash-based transfers[130]
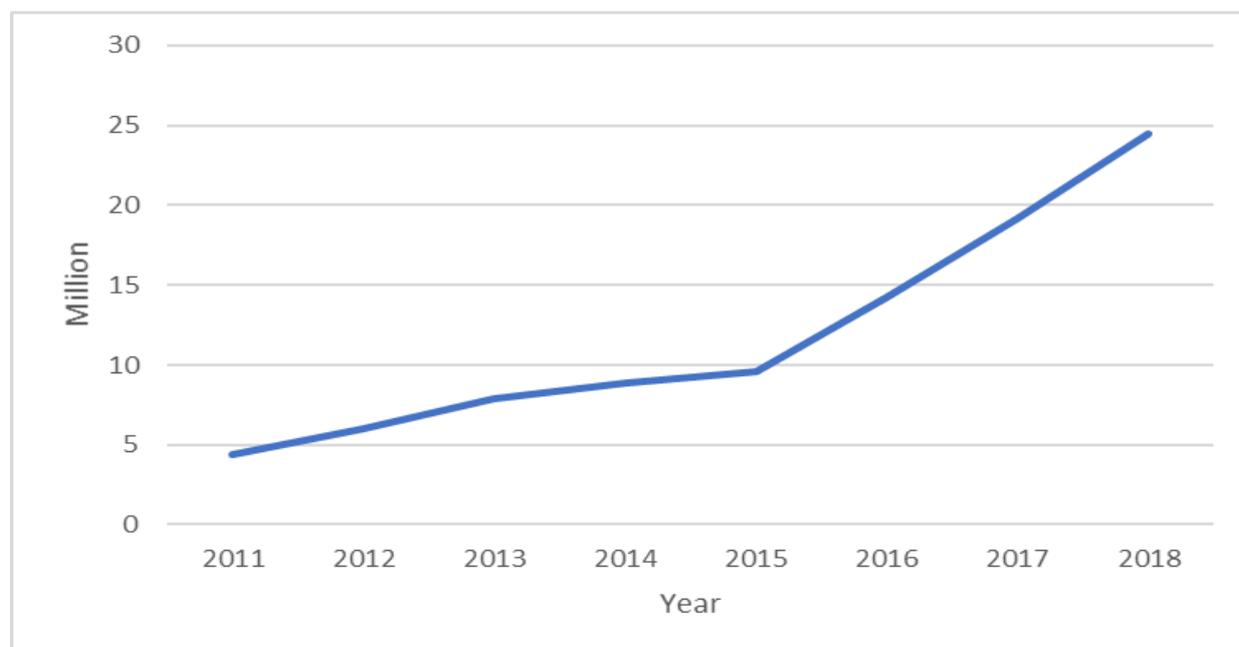
Source: WFP annual performance reports 2011-2018

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[127] WFP, 2018. Finance Annual Report; Annex 6 Figures 14,15,16 present more detail on trends in CBT.
[128] WFP, 2013. Annual Performance Report; WFP, 2018. Annual Performance Report. It should be noted that WFP annual performance reports over the period 2011 to 2018 did not consistently report on the same indicators, making it difficult to determine trends.
[129] See Annex 6 Figures 14,15,16.
[130] This is the total number of beneficiaries assisted using CBT and not only for emergency response for which data was not available.

162. Evaluation findings, including from the Nepal, Philippines and Iraq emergency response case studies, confirm the relevance of cash-based transfer to affected populations; post-distribution and beneficiary-preference monitoring show satisfaction with cash-based transfers when market conditions enable purchases.[131]

163. WFP has made significant investments into the scale-up of cash-based transfers, which has taken a learn-by-doing and innovation-focused approach. These approaches have led to improved corporate systems and processes for developing responses using the cash-based transfer modality. An internal audit in 2015 found that guidelines and tools had lagged behind the rapid scale-up of cash-based transfer modalities in the field. Functional units in the field had been pressed to adapt and align themselves to their new roles and responsibilities in the face of rapid change in operational contexts, leading to challenges in the implementation and mainstreaming of effective risk management, internal controls and monitoring practices specific to cash and voucher modalities.[132] In response, WFP has gradually augmented its capacity to provide support to field operations by creating specialized corporate units.[133] Based on experience, specialized guidance has been regularly reviewed and updated on key areas of resource management, including internal controls, financial accounting and financial risk management with updates of the 2009 manual in 2014 and 2016.[134]

164. WFP operations, particularly in its cash-based approaches, also achieved a scale and technological complexity not seen before in the humanitarian community's experience around the world, while being highly time- and cost-efficient. One of the most significant uses of cash-based transfers has been the Syria response. The scale of the use of cash-based transfers was unprecedented: in the five refugee-hosting countries, WFP provided over USD 1 billion in cash-based transfers in 2017 alone, targeting 1.3 million beneficiaries - 30 percent of the organization's cash-based transfer portfolio globally.[135] As noted in the evaluation of the regional response, the operation became a testing ground for new ways of delivering cash-based assistance at scale, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon. This followed a study that found that Syrian refugees given access to unrestricted cash (rather than restricted vouchers) had improved household socio-economic security, with their dignity preserved.[136] As also noted in the evaluation of the regional response to the Syria crisis, since 2017, WFP has faced a complex balancing act in responding to specific donor preferences on cash-based transfers, with some donors preferring unrestricted cash, others e-vouchers only, and others willing to support choice. WFP also faced stipulations on timeframes for disbursement and target populations.

165. Reliance on external supply chains and outsourced service providers has created demand for stronger corporate and field level capacities in the assessment, risk analysis and procurement of financial and retailer services. A 2015 WFP internal audit found that the supply-chain function and IT systems have strengthened, but need further investments to support the continued scale-up of cash and voucher modalities.[137]

166. Evidence suggests there have been efficiency improvements in the cash-based transfer modality over time, but there is still work to be done to improve the timeliness of cash-based transfer scale-up. For example, the 2017 annual performance report noted that in that year only 47 percent[138] of cash-based transfers were delivered in the month they were planned, though by 2018 the percentage of cash-based transfers delivered on time to targeted populations rose to 91 percent.[139] The report for 2019 will help demonstrate whether this improvement is a positive, sustained trend. In terms of cost, the 2018 annual performance report noted that the cost per ration for cash-based transfer was more expensive than for in-kind food. The difference was attributed to the adjustable cost of in-kind transfers achieved through economies of scale in procurement and transport, though the cost per ration did not account for the size of transfer, which for cash-based transfer averaged 103 percent of

[131] Noted for example also in WFP, 2018, Regional Response to Syria Crisis 2015-2018 and recent country portfolio evaluations e.g. WFP. 2018, Somalia: An Evaluation of WFP's portfolio (2012-2017).
[132] WFP, 2015. Internal Audit of Cash and Voucher Modalities in the Field, Distribution Cycle and Intervention Closure
[133] Ibid.
[134] Including WFP, 2013. Joint Directive on the Operations and Finance Procedures for the Use of Cash and Voucher Transfers to Beneficiaries (OS2013/003 RM2013/005, issued on 2 September 2013, replacing FP2008/005); 2016 Cash-based transfer manual: financial management; 2018, A guide to WFP staff to communicate on cash-based transfers.
[135] WFP, 2018. Corporate Emergency Evaluation of the WFP Regional Response to the Syria Crisis.
[136] Uekermann, F, Schuler, F and Taki, M., 2017, Food Restricted Voucher or Unrestricted Cash? Boston Consulting Group.
[137] WFP. 2015. Internal Audit of Cash and Voucher Modalities in the Field, Distribution Cycle and Intervention Closure.
[138] WFP. 2017. Annual Performance Report.
[139] WFP. 2018. Annual Performance Report.

recommended ration size in 2018 in comparison to 60 percent for in-kind food assistance. Thus, there may be less of a difference in terms of cost-effectiveness.[140]

167. The evaluation team found examples, including from the Philippines and Nepal, that showed the significance of preparedness measures to enable swift cash-based transfer scale-up, with key preparations being: pre-agreements with finance providers, WFP skills development in system for cash operations (SCOPE), functional units developing their own preparedness plan, and signing an agreement in advance with a cooperating partner with expertise in cash-based transfers. These measures are not yet established across all potential country contexts.

168. A positive trend that cash-based transfer programming has supported has been a move towards closer cross-functional cooperation in decision making around programming. Cash-based transfer programming has driven this in some locations with cross-functional cooperation in cash-based transfer preparedness and cooperation. The most integrated approach the evaluation team noted was the regional bureau of Cairo's decision, following the realignment process, to form a cross-functional cash-based transfer team.

Data management

Finding 18: The scale of data collected by WFP, together with the fast-moving technology around data protection and its management, pose dilemmas for the organization, including in relation to data sharing as part of cooperation with governments and other agencies. Country office demands for assistance indicate the need for ongoing proactive guidance and processes to support their data-management systems and approaches.

169. WFP holds significant amounts of data on affected populations, with details of some 24 million people on SCOPE alone (based on 2017 figures). Guidance on data management was developed only in 2016. However, it was not followed by an implementation plan, policy framework, and/or the establishment of specialized knowledge within WFP. It is not clear why this was not followed up, but a recent focus in current management plans on digital transformation may represent an opportunity to move the agenda forward.

170. WFP systems to support cash-based transfers evolved significantly in response to technology opportunities and operational needs. A key development is the SCOPE initiative, which was started by the Information Technology Division in cooperation with WFP operations, driven by operational needs for data management and systems to support large-scale cash-based transfer as well as technological opportunities. SCOPE provides a common platform for beneficiary registration, distribution planning, tracking of redemptions, standardizing transfer-delivery mechanisms and tying into banking and retailer systems electronically. SCOPE has evolved into a platform that can manage the entire programme intervention process for voucher, cash and in-kind transfer modalities.[141] An internal audit of SCOPE noted its benefits for strengthening beneficiary-information management and identity management systems.

171. However, data-management systems still have a long way to go. For example, by the end of 2017, 70 percent of beneficiary data was stored and managed outside of SCOPE in various legacy systems and only about 25 percent of all beneficiaries registered on the SCOPE database (about 6 million from some 24 million people registered) were being actively managed. Furthermore, evaluation interviews indicated that SCOPE has provided a valuable platform in certain contexts but at a small scale; for rapid-onset emergencies it is a cumbersome tool to introduce, particularly for small offices. This suggests the need for either an alternative tool or adaptations to SCOPE for small offices and short-term, small response situations (for example, when there is a reduced level of data to be collected).

172. There are also concerns regarding data privacy. An internal audit found that privacy policies are well-defined but there were risks in practice (for example, inconsistent back-ups and access controls by cooperating partners). Feedback from key informant interviews noted that processes such as the Privacy Impact Assessments were useful and initiatives such as the Building Block project were beneficial (by removing the need to share beneficiary data with financial service providers to enable distributions) but interviewees also shared concerns regarding the need for more[142] guidance for conflict areas.

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[140] Note that the WFP 2018 Annual Performance Report reported a change in the methodology for the calculation in 2018 when compared to 2017.
[141] WFP. 2014. SCOPE in five minutes.
[142] WFP, 2016. WFP guide to personal data protection and privacy.

173. A 2017 audit highlighted weaknesses in WFP data-beneficiary management including: a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities over the custody of beneficiary master data; insufficient digitalization of beneficiary records (severely limiting WFP ability to use data for planning and control purposes); lack of consistent processes to remove duplicate beneficiary records; and risks to data due to inconsistent back-ups and access controls by cooperating partners.[143]

174. Document review and evaluation team internal and external stakeholder interviews at headquarter and country level found growing concerns regarding some of the data protection issues relating to vulnerable people, given both the scale of data held by WFP and the increasingly close working relations with both governments and other agencies.[144]

175. The key informant interviews revealed that requests for technical assistance, including for legal advice, is a frequent demand but that there is limited internal expertise on this issue and a lack of a structured, systematic approach to the issues involving cross-departmental cooperation. There is instead a responsive approach. Evaluation team evidence suggests the need for a robust, proactive and engaged approach to data management across WFP. It should involve strategic planning, protection, IT and other relevant functions and engage country offices to ensure consistency in data management, particularly data protection and in relation to cooperation with external partners.

Nexus approach

Finding 19: A nexus approach in emergency response requires highly context-specific ways of working to incorporate developmental or resilience approaches into responses and/or transition out of food assistance in contextually relevant ways. However, there are limited practical guidance and tools available at present. This factor, combined with others, constrain WFP from implementing policy and strategic commitments that would maximize its potential contribution to nexus approaches (that is, to those approaches connecting humanitarian, development and peace interventions).

176. As described in Section 2.1, working in the nexus and maximizing the humanitarian-development-peace intersection and the dual mandate of WFP has been promoted in strategy and other public documents. But the opportunities and constraints for nexus approaches are highly context specific and so present capacity demands for skills, partners and programme approaches that are relevant to the specific context. The focus here is on a WFP nexus approach as part of emergency response, but it can also mean the opposite: programming options for emergencies in stable contexts where WFP is doing only development or resilience work that links with WFP preparedness for response, as discussed earlier.

177. Evaluation interviews at regional bureaux and country offices revealed that there was overall hesitation about the meaning of the nexus for WFP. In addition, there was a concern that, if WFP linked humanitarian, development and peace approaches in areas of conflict, such a link would constrain humanitarian principles and space.[145]

178. Based on evaluation team case studies, key informant interviews and other documentation, it would seem that engaging in "nexus approaches" is still more intention than reality. Limited guidance exists on how to implement a nexus approach, such as how best to transition from immediate emergency response to longer-term resilience-focused work. Evaluation key informant interviews revealed that available documentation is perceived as more conceptual or theoretical than practical.[146]

179. In situations where WFP has tried to build resilience thinking into its responses at community level, the evaluation found it has met with constraints due to a range of factors including: a) donor perceptions that WFP does not have this type of expertise – this presents funding limitations for this area of work (as happened in the Sahel response), b) the range of partners and partnership management systems being led by short-term field level agreements not compatible with longer-term approaches, and c) an organizational focus on outputs, which build immediate food security rather than long-term community resilience (as found in Nepal in the PRRO for the

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[143] WFP, 2017. Internal Audit of WFPs Beneficiary Management; WFP, 2017, Internal Audit of SCOPE IT General and Application Controls.
[144] Evaluation Team interviews found concerns regarding beneficiary information and WFP guidance on data management in West Africa, Iraq, Philippines and Uganda.
[145] This is acknowledged in the 2018 WFP paper: WFP and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
[146] Existing documents include WFP, 2018, WFP and linking Humanitarian, Development and Peace Action and WFP, 2018 and the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus.

earthquake response). These findings resonate with the 2014 audit of Food Assistance for Assets, which found variable quality among food for assets and approaches across offices. They also resonate with evaluations that found a lack of guidance on the practical implications for resilience in emergency response and inconsistent approaches to its application.[147]

180. As noted above in the section on decision making, the evaluation team has noted the WFP tendency to respond to funding shortfalls in an emergency response by prioritizing the immediate, life-saving activities through direct assistance. Resilience-focused activities are among those likely to be scaled back when funding is short.

181. An area of increasing interest in WFP is the link to national social protection systems. Evaluations and other studies are finding a growing level of involvement in social protection systems across country offices particularly since the establishment of the WFP Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit in 2016.[148] This focus of work was noted in the evaluation team's visits to the regional bureau of Panama region too, as the regional bureau had conducted a study on shock-responsive social protection. This provides an option for WFP to work "in the nexus", both when using social protection systems as a mechanism for distributing assistance (if this can also strengthen the system) and in preparedness work with governments to strengthen shock-responsive social protection. This is an area to explore as recommended in recent WFP work on social safety nets as part of social protection systems.[149] The intention of WFP to focus on resilience and nexus approaches potentially broadens the range of government departments it may engage with in the future, as in some countries this means involvement with ministries of finance and land use (which may be the case in some Latin American and Caribbean countries).

182. WFP has a limited range of programming options that are feasible in humanitarian settings to draw on for longer term work. Other than recent approaches linked to social protection mechanisms, work in this area has focused on WFP community-based resilience-focused initiatives (which the recent resilience evaluation highlighted as needing both greater clarification and field guidance for resilience approaches in emergency response). Other options have tended to be around either livelihood-related programmes or food assistance for assets or training programmes.

183. The key informant interview findings resonated with other evaluations, which voiced concerns that such close cooperation can potentially risk compromising WFP humanitarian principles (particularly if there are reports of politicization of beneficiary selection).[150] The evaluation team found WFP to be clearly mindful of this issue. One measure WFP has taken to address this (for instance, in the 2016 Cyclone Roanu response in Sri Lanka) was through independent monitoring of assistance.[151] The evaluation team also noted the importance of WFP independence in conflict areas and its ability to engage with all parties to a conflict; WFP needs to balance this capacity with coherence and relevance to national priorities in more stable operational environments. The examples highlight the continuing need for skilled judgement among WFP senior managers to safeguard humanitarian principles and enable emergency response across an increasing range of operational contexts. WFP involvement in the Geneva-based Centre for Competence in Humanitarian Negotiation, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières and UNHCR is a positive step forward in developing these skills.

184. Furthermore, some external key informant interviewees highlighted confusion with WFP work in this area, seeing it as overlapping with other agencies' work – notably FAO. This was discussed in a limited number of interviews, but the issue highlights a challenge in the approach. Both internal and external stakeholders noted the increased blurring of lines between agency roles as they work towards nexus approaches, undertaking similar activities as part of linking development and humanitarian approaches. A related change in ways of working is also emerging in relation to cash-based transfers. Noting that evolving agency roles in emergency response is an issue that is larger than the role and capacity of WFP, key informant interviewees further noted the importance of discussion in the sector regarding this trend and the potential WFP leadership role to take it forward.

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[147] WFP, 2014. Internal audit of WFP's management of FFA; WFP, 2019. Strategic evaluation of WFP support for enhanced resilience; WFP, 2019. Synthesis report of WFP's country portfolio evaluations in Africa, 2016-2018.
[148] Sabates-Wheeler et al, 2018. Social protection and WFP; WFP, 2019. Summary Report on the evaluation of the update of the WFP Safety Nets Policy, 2012.
[149] Ibid.
[150] WFP, 2019. Evaluation of the WFP's Corporate (Level 3) Response in Northeast Nigeria (2016-2018); WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Principles and Access Policy.
[151] WFP. 2017. Tropical Cyclone Roanu, Sri Lanka Government and WFP Joint Emergency Response.

185. Overall, the evidence suggests the need for more attention to the practical application of nexus approaches and what that means in terms of programming at country office level, including ensuring relevance to the needs of affected people. This will then inform the capacity requirements for WFP to take the approach forward. Likely requirements are new sources of funding, partnerships, skills and programme approaches.

Inter-agency contributions and coherence

Finding 20: WFP capacity for common service provision (including clusters, aviation, and UNHRD) has made a significant contribution to the wider humanitarian response, enabling efficiency and coverage. New developments in the sector highlight the importance of continued investment in systems, guidance on new ways of working and clarity regarding the evolving role of WFP in inter-agency approaches.

186. WFP provides leadership to the logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters, co-leads the food security cluster with FAO and provides common services to the sector via the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)/WFP Aviation and the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD). Data shows high levels of usage by the sector for these services enabling the large-scale movement of people and goods (see Annex 6, Figures 9 and 10). Participation rates in clusters and usage rates for UNHAS and UNHRD facilities point to the value that agencies derive from them.

187. A review by the evaluation team of the logistics and the emergency telecommunications cluster partners' satisfaction surveys found consistently high ratings, though some evidence suggests regional variations. The generally high value placed on WFP service provision was reinforced in evaluation case study documentation such as logistics lessons-learned documents and in interviews with external stakeholders.

188. WFP has consistently applied learning and innovative approaches to logistics and emergency telecommunications cluster service provision through cluster roles and direct bilateral partnerships within the sector. Notable examples are: cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) including in the West Africa 2014-2015 Ebola response[152]; innovative partnerships with mountain guides and other groups in a remote access operation to reach mountain areas in the Nepal 2015 earthquake response; and partnerships with other agencies including UNICEF and FAO in which WFP provides the logistics support as well as food assistance in the integrated response mechanisms, for example, in South Sudan.

189. A number of key factors have enhanced WFP contribution to the sector and are listed in Box 2. They provide lessons for sustaining capacity in this area. Key factors seem to be having dedicated funds to support roles (such as the special accounts for cluster early activation and for aviation) and having specialist partners (such as the logistics private-sector partners). Finally, the importance accorded to efficiency and coverage as well as a culture of innovation have supported the developments.

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[152] WFP, 2017. An Evaluation of WFP's Response to the Ebola Virus Disease crisis in West Africa.

Box 2: Factors supporting WFP sector-wide contributions to emergency response

- **Special accounts:** WFP has invested into a special account for the logistics cluster that holds resources for rapid mobilization after cluster activation and for the first months of an emergency operation. Similar accounts exist for ETC and FSC but without the same level of investment

- **External partnerships:** External partnerships began in 2005 with the logistics emergency teams (LET) programme and bring together global private sector players in the logistics and transport sector[153]

- **Fast IT and the telecommunications emergency and support team (FITTEST):** The ETC has access to this WFP-owned mechanism[154]

- **Dedicated funding:** WFP has allocated funding for aviation so that it can be responsive to emergencies

- **UNHAS flexibility:** UNHAS has the use of a continuous and systematic evaluation process to identify commercial air operators with readily available aircraft in regions of operation, which has enabled its readiness to respond. This has addressed past identified weaknesses[155]

- **Specialist tools:** WFP has developed tools to maximize efficiency, notably in WFP Aviation, which introduced the performance management tool in 2015

- **WFP adaptability**: WFP is willing to adapt and apply its logistics and other capacities to support sector approaches in a range of ways. Examples of this include: engineering support to camp management in the Rohingya response (Bangladesh); providing logistics support, including for medical items in the Ebola response; and through integrated response mechanisms, including those in South Sudan

190. Partnership agreements can support inter-agency collaboration. However, the food security cluster has suffered in terms of investment by both lead agencies due to a lack of a signed agreement between the two co-lead organizations that clearly defines the roles of each organization and the administrative arrangements. A draft agreement from 2011 remains unsigned at the time of evaluation team data collection due to changes in staff, with those championing it originally in both WFP and FAO moving on.

191. However, a 2014 joint WFP/FAO evaluation[156] did find that in half the cases examined by the evaluation (Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan and the Philippines), coordination mechanisms provided standards and guidance (often drawing on materials from the global food security cluster) and achieved positive effects on the quality, consistency and coverage of the collective food security response. Noted limitations of the guidance included its lack of attention to gender, age, disability or the environment.

192. In relation to the UNHRD, an audit in 2014[157] highlighted areas for improvement, including the need for improved system-based reporting functionality to enable better analysis of the quality of its services, provide improvements in the management of stocks, and allow greater consultation with partners in order to understand their needs and concerns. The following are measures taken by WFP as a result of the audit since 2014: a) the Human Resource Division has moved its reporting to the corporate WFP servers, revamped the stock report and introduced the new partner activity report; b) the management of stocks has been improved, in that the policies for WFP corporate response stocks have been revisited and a series of standard operating procedures has been issued to staff; c) there has been a greater consultation with partners, in that the global partner meetings are now happening every year instead of every two years as was the case previously.

193. New ways of deploying WFP capacities, such as in cooperation with the health sector (in the Ebola crisis) and engineering projects (in Bangladesh, as part of the site maintenance and engineering project together with IOM and UNHCR) highlighted the need to adapt WFP tools and systems, including systems for cost recovery and

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[153] Recently, since evaluation team data collection in WFP has been undertaken, an additional mechanism has been set up that mirrors the standby partners' but is adapted to the private sector, academia, NGOs etc. This aims to allow enhanced and faster access to resources and technical expertise from a wide variety of partners, without hampering and misusing the existing standby partners' mechanism meant for long term civil protection and emergency response government agencies.

[154] https://www1.wfp.org/FITTEST, accessed June 2019.

[155] WFP, 2015. WFP Aviation in 2015.

[156] FAO/WFP, 2014. Joint Evaluation of Food Security Cluster Coordination in Humanitarian Action.

[157] WFP, 2014. Report of the External Auditor on United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot

(in the case of health sector cooperation) tracking medical items.[158] In response to the health sector developments, WFP has continued to develop the conceptualization of its potential role in the health supply chain and is currently negotiating a memorandum of understanding with WHO, which will provide the framework for expansion of potential collaboration.[159]

194. Beyond service provision, key informant interviewees consistently reported that the WFP role is valued for its funding advocacy and for promoting global attention to low profile and emerging emergencies. External stakeholders in both regional bureaux in Johannesburg and Dakar, as well as lesson-learning documentation, credit the significant role WFP played in alerting the sector to forthcoming droughts in the Sahel (2017-2018) and to 2016 El Nino in Southern Africa and in galvanizing collective action.[160] Key informant interviews with external stakeholders also consistently highlighted the value of WFP presence, providing services and partnering effectively in inter-agency responses.

195. Furthermore, interviewees noted the positive roles WFP plays in the inter-agency emergency directors group and at country level in the humanitarian country teams, both of which contributed to collective approaches in emergency response. However, some data suggested that at times a more consultative approach would be appreciated (for example, in logistics cluster strategy development).

196. The evaluation team found that WFP has cooperated with other agencies in working methods, notably in West Africa, to use shared methods for assessment and community-based targeting to identify beneficiaries – including in the Sahel and Northern Nigeria responses. The lesson to be drawn from this experience is the benefit gained from preparedness and years of inter-agency cooperation in advance of the actual response, in this case at the regional level. Significantly, it is an example where efficiency (speed) has not over-ridden another quality factor of response, namely a coherent, cross-sector approach.

197. A notable influence on inter-agency cooperation is the expansion of cash-based transfers and moves towards single platform cash-based transfer initiatives as well as multi-purpose cash-based transfer interventions. WFP participates in an inter-agency initiative, formalized in December 2018, involving UNICEF, UNHCR and OCHA to cooperate in the evolution of cash-based transfer. However, key informant interviews revealed that there is a range of views internally and externally about the potential wisdom of such a role for WFP as the provider of the single platform for cash-based transfer through SCOPE. Evaluation team interviewees (internal and external) raised questions about WFP expertise to manage some of the complex data management and protection issues. Key informant interviewees also noted the point that cash-based transfer approaches are raising questions regarding the inter-relationship with, or the overlap between, agency roles and approaches and these deserve sector attention.

198. Evidence suggests the need for more explicit discussion, both within WFP about its proposed strategy going forward, as well as through sustained dialogue in the sector generally, about cash-based transfer as a basis for cross-vulnerability approaches to emergency assistance and the implications for agency roles and coordination structures. These discussions are important, given the potential of closer inter-agency cooperation supporting the sector to provide more relevant responses to affected people. Recent sector discussions on relevance have highlighted this more generally.[161]

Accountability to affected populations

Finding 21: WFP has developed a practical approach to enable more engagement with, and accountability to, affected populations, but significant delays between commitments and the development of guidance and support have hindered the pace of scale-up, resulting in regular shortcomings in consultation with affected populations.

199. Engaging with affected populations is important for accountability and can provide valuable channels to enable affected people to influence the design of responses. While accountability to affected population commitments were first endorsed by WFP in 2011, the accountability to affected population strategy and guidance material[162] were only developed in 2016/2017, leaving a five-year vacuum. It is difficult to understand

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[158] WFP, 2016. Annual Performance Report; WFP, 2018, Pandemic Supply Chain Network Brief; WFP, 2018, Bangladesh Response 2018: Emergency Lessons Learned Exercise.

[159] WFP/WHO. undated. Draft Memorandum of Understanding concerning a framework for enhanced Cooperation.

[160] WFP, RBJ Operations Evaluations Regional Synthesis.

[161] ALNAP, 2019. More Relevant? 10 ways to approach what people really need.

[162] WFP's Strategy for AAP, and AAP Guidance Manual.

the gap, but lack of continuity or momentum seems to be linked with changes in staff and the absence of someone to drive the agenda forward at that point. The practical approach of WFP to accountability to affected population, now formalized in its strategy and guidance, comprises three components: information provision, consultations, and complaints and feedback mechanisms. Feedback from evaluation team interviews and its document review found WFP has been successful in guiding people's understanding of accountability and how it fits into its work, particularly in relation to the complaints and feedback mechanisms.

200. The most tangible evidence of efforts on accountability to affected population is the establishment of the complaints and feedback mechanism at community level to collect comments, questions or claims related to cash or food distribution. Other signs of accountability to affected population integration in the way WFP operates, include the overall attention to respecting beneficiaries' dignity in programme design, which is now included as an indicator in the Corporate Results Framework, and the fact that it bases programme design (in terms of modality options) on tools that consider beneficiaries' preferences.[163] Evidence from evaluations and learning documents indicate that hotlines and other complaints and feedback mechanisms are effective means of accountability. Based on examples seen by the evaluation team, they are also gender responsive and when there are multiple mechanisms in place, they are accessible to different population groups.[164]

201. Some use has been made of a range of communication technologies, including use of radio and mobile phones (for SMS text messages), but these have had mixed levels of success. A shortcoming of the recently developed guidance is that it does not make specific reference to how to use different communication technologies for engagement. Plans for improvements in guidance include the intention to consider disability more thoroughly in order to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the complaints and feedback mechanism in future responses.

202. Good approaches to engagement have been put in place when there was significant investment and expertise available to operations. For example, in Iraq – which had one of the few WFP-dedicated accountability to affected population personnel – interventions were designed with good mechanisms and processes for engagement with affected populations. Evaluation case study data, particularly for Nepal, Philippines and Mauritania, indicated similar trends of positive developments in responses when expertise was included in the response team. However, resourcing of these initiatives is often limited and not found consistently across operations.

203. WFP monitoring shows positive trends towards greater establishment of complaints and feedback mechanisms; the 2018 annual performance report stated that 86 percent of reporting offices have complaints and feedback mechanisms in place but only 27 offices reported on this indicator.

204. Furthermore, WFP monitoring data and evaluations have regularly shown that significant numbers of assisted people have inadequate information on programmes (for instance, nearly 50 percent of assisted women reported this to be the case). Evaluations have regularly found limitations in the extent of consultation with affected people.[165, 166] These findings indicate that, while progress is positive, there is still some way to go to achieve the standards set by the accountability to affected population commitments made in 2011.

205. In terms of protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) there has been some recent attention to the area through the establishment of the PSEA advisory position in the WFP Ethics Office in 2018. However, this is very late considering the first Secretary General's bulletin on this is dated 2004 and was followed in WFP by three Executive Director circulars. The most recent Executive Director circular was issued in 2014, but it took until 2018 for dedicated capacity to be created, and efforts are largely limited to the training of focal points. WFP has developed an online course and guidance pack, targeted specifically to focal points, to conduct their own awareness-raising sessions. This was rolled out in June 2019. An example of good practice was found in Mozambique, where WFP has built awareness and understanding of PSEA at country office and regional bureau levels through training on PSEA – and has acted on assessments. However, evaluation key informant interviewees

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[163] Evaluation of the Ebola Crisis Response, 2016; Syria Crisis Corporate Response – Lessons Learned, 2014; CAR Crisis 2013-2015 Lessons Learned, 2015; and, Yemen Conflict – Lessons Learned, 2015.

[164] WFP, 2017. Sri Lanka Country Portfolio Evaluation 2011-2015; WFP, 2014 Zimbabwe PRRO Evaluation; WFP, 2017. Southern Africa Emergency Lessons Learned; and, WFP, 2017. Evaluation of WFP's Emergency Response in NE Nigeria.

[165] WFP, 2014. Evaluation of the Food Security Cluster; WFP, 2016. Evaluation of WFP's Response to the Ebola Crisis; WFP, 2018. Turkey EFSN Decentralized Evaluation; WFP, 2016. Ethiopia PRRO OpEv; WFP, OpEv Ukraine EMOP; WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the Humanitarian Principles and Access Policy; WFP.

[166] See for example the OpEV Regional Synthesis – RBC, though similar considerations were also highlighted for other regions.

reported that resources limit the feasibility to carry out this approach systematically across the whole region. The late action in this area was a significant gap and would appear to be linked to fluctuating prioritization of the subject by leadership.

206. Based on these findings, the evaluation team identified a number of strengths and areas for development in WFP capacity at the organizational framework level, which are summarized below.

Box 3: WFP emergency response capacity at the organizational framework level

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent did WFP put in place the appropriate organizational framework for a high-quality response to emergencies?
In summary: WFP developments to improve its capacity for efficiency and coverage of responses have contributed to the quality of responses. However, the quality of responses has been constrained by limitations in tools and technical guidance, as well as by weaknesses in contextualizing the design and monitoring the effectiveness of responses.
Strengths are: • Developments put in place that respond to the increased scale and number of emergency contexts and that do so more efficiently • The contribution WFP has made to sector responses and the coherence of its contribution with other agencies' inputs. These have been enabled through cluster and common service roles as well as through new forms of inter-agency cooperation • That some progress has been made in people-centred approaches to increase accountability to affected people's priorities, to be more gender responsive and to promote safety of assisted people • Growth in number of cooperating partners expanding coverage • Use of technology to enhance early warning, data management and operational access in insecure areas • Systematization of decision making and efforts to better connect preparedness and activation in order to clarify roles and respond quickly **Areas for development are:** • Limited support for contextualizing approaches. This increases reliance on individual skills and expertise to adapt response design and make it relevant to local priorities • Lack of clarity regarding criteria and the process for when to waive certain decision-making procedures to enable rapid response • Delays in the production of guidance to support the application of policy commitments in protection and accountabilities • Limitations in terms of quality, analysis and use of data in the design and to monitor the effectiveness of responses across all aspects of programme quality • Limited range of programming options used, as well as the limited mechanisms and guidance available to enhance the connectedness of responses in order to marry immediate-needs responses with longer-term resilience approaches

2.3. INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY

To what extent did WFP employees have the right skills, knowledge, experiences and incentives to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?

207. This section considers WFP access to individual capacity, including skills, knowledge and experience required for a high-quality emergency response. These are made available through recruitment and retention processes, including deployment mechanisms for rapid access (for example, the emergency rosters, and standby and other partnerships) and capacity development through training, motivation and incentive systems. As noted in Section 1, the humanitarian context has changed significantly during the evaluation period (2011-2018) - most importantly through the growth in the number, complexity and duration of humanitarian crises - which will be taken into account in the following assessment.

208. The section considers the evidence from 2011 to 2018 of the access WFP had to the necessary individual skills and expertise, its investment in the development of those skills and expertise, their contribution to the quality of WFP responses and WFP responsiveness to external trends. It considers the WFP approach and results in relation to duty of care, which includes wellness (including mental health), security and the working environment. The evaluation is aware of other relevant parallel evaluations and reviews, including the evaluation of the People Strategy, the functional review and various alignment processes and aims to complement these.

2.3.1 Access to skills, knowledge and experience for WFP responses

Finding 22: WFP has been able to scale up and allocate its workforce to support emergency responses in all the major emergencies from 2011 to 2018, sustaining its reputation as having a timely and responsive field presence in emergencies.

209. WFP has responded to all emergencies declared as an L2 and L3 since 2011. Given the scale of the increase in number and duration of emergencies, this is an impressive response. There is no global-level data for L1 emergency responses, but the evaluation did not hear of any significant unmet requests for assistance at L1 level. WFP access to, and provision of, skilled and experienced people has been an essential part of its emergency responses. WFP has provided people to its own directly implemented responses, seconded people to governments to support their responses, provided people to coordinate emergency telecommunications, logistics and food security clusters, and to common services provided to the wider sector through UNHAS and UNHRD. A vital part of any emergency response has been the role national staff take in the response, with staff providing skills, expertise, continuity and local knowledge.

210. The ability of WFP to provide people to respond to emergencies has been facilitated by a range of formal and informal mechanisms. Country office and regional bureau staff in the first instance respond to emergencies. They are supplemented in largescale emergencies by a range of mechanisms. These include: the re-established emergency response roster (ERR) managed corporately, which has provided nearly 25 percent of personnel needs in recent years;[167] regional rosters; country offices' own lists of in-country surge human resources (for example, former staff); functional units' own core emergency response capacity (for example, from logistics) and a newly growing resource for emergency nutrition. Key informant interviewees repeatedly cited the prevalence of informal systems in identifying personnel for responses, matching findings of previous reviews and evaluations and reflecting a preference by WFP senior personnel for more control over who is deployed and for a team made up of people known, tried and trusted in their response function.[168]

211. Standby partners (SBP) play an important role, with the development of a group of currently 25 partners grown from the original 9 and managed by OSC through the Augmented Logistics Intervention Team for Emergencies (ALITE) mechanism. ALITE partners have provided between 170-230 personnel each year since 2016. The logistics cluster also has its own partners through the logistics emergencies team. Standby partners have played a notable role in major L3 emergencies particularly, very often in logistics and emergency telecommunications cluster roles. In addition, they have been called on for a wider range of roles in recent years, including knowledge management, gender and protection, although there is in-house debate regarding the appropriateness of standby partners to fill some roles (for example, gender analysis - which some view as a capacity that should be internal).

212. Other initiatives that have played a role in emergency response include the WFP Future International Talent (FIT) Pool. This recruits experts externally into a roster, such as for nutrition and cash-based transfers and, under development at the time of data collection, monitoring and evaluation. Some areas are not included in the FIT Pool such as gender. The set of FIT Pools lends itself to sector experts who may choose to prioritize deploying for WFP instead of to other agencies looking to recruit in response to an emergency and to more junior profiles looking for six-month deployments to gain more experience. It is less well suited to the many support services required for emergency response, as knowledge of internal WFP systems and processes is key to these functions. That said, the FIT Pool, while not designed to fulfil emergency response needs, has been a successful mechanism for sourcing skills for the South Sudan and Nigeria responses, where recruitment has been a recurring issue.

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[167] In 2018, 24 percent of staff members deployed to emergencies were selected from the internal emergency response roster, a slight increase from 21.8 percent in 2017 and 19 percent during the 2013-2016 period" (source: Excel file on ERR and non-ERR Deployments 2014-2017 and 2018 provided by Human Resource Division field support).
[168] For example, C.R. Bosch and G. Shaver. 2017. Rapid Response Workforce Planning report. (Strengthening Surge Support Mechanisms and Processes for Emergencies).

213. Evaluation team group discussions and key informant interviews at both regional bureau and country office levels identified the fact that the regional bureau role in emergency response is essential. Regional bureau personnel fulfil a significant surge and gap-filling role in emergencies. Surge capacity for response has relied on regional surge capacity, which brings contextual knowledge and proximity to the response while other surge mechanisms are tapped. The role of regional bureau staff was identified as key to providing immediate capacity and identifying the human-resource priorities required to sustain a response

Finding 23: There has been success in providing skilled personnel in the first stages of large-scale L3 emergencies, which most of WFP systems are designed to do, but there have been skills gaps in a range of skillsets and particularly beyond the initial wave of deployments, as well as in smaller-scale emergencies. A range of internal and external factors influence gaps beyond the availability of the skills and expertise accessible to WFP.

214. WFP successfully gets people on the ground to start up a response to emergencies and is often cited by external actors as having good field presence from the start. This is the case for the first phase of L3 emergencies in particular, as the systems are set up for channelling resources to use existing employees, consultants who have worked with WFP in the past and standby personnel for immediate response. These systems have worked relatively well for large-scale sudden-onset emergencies and also played significant roles in the 2018 slow-onset drought response in the Sahel. However, examples like Northern Nigeria in 2016 and the Syria crisis, where it was difficult to fill roles, have shown that even when L3s are prioritized, there are gaps.

215. WFP does not track gaps in emergency response skills or wider human-resource needs, only details of deployments and staffing lists. However, in all regional bureau visits and emergency case studies the evaluation team found there had been challenges to recruiting key personnel and in particular that there were regular gaps in terms of vacant positions not being filled. Numerous evaluations, audits and lessons learned have identified significant shortcomings in the ability of WFP to swiftly and predictably deploy suitably qualified and experienced individuals to emergency responses.[169] Continuing areas of concern have repeatedly been revealed, including: high turnover rates of qualified staff; inadequate capacity to fill senior and expert roles; and gaps in the availability of qualified staff for specific technical profiles.[170] The human resource procedures for scaling up, including recruitment to replace immediate deployments with longer-term staff, were often cited as being too slow and not responsive enough.

216. Evaluation key informant interview findings and operation evaluations identified gaps in technical areas core to the WFP mandate for nutrition, cash-based transfer skills for food assistance, social protection and areas related to resilience in response to climate change.[171] In addition to these core programming skills, there have been challenges in accessing other specialist technical skills like engineering, information management and protection. Related to programme cycle and analytical skills, vulnerability, analysis and mapping often has been regarded as the strongest and monitoring as the weakest skillsets in WFP.

217. Key informant interviews revealed the fact that smaller-scale emergencies being covered by country offices were stretched including for their L1 role if the emergencies were extended or unusual in the region. This was particularly the case when a country office has reduced its staffing and/or reoriented toward a focus on longer-term resilience programming, as this means that staff emergency response skills diminish, particularly when combined with high turnover rates.

218. Evaluation key informant interviews revealed that availability of people with technical areas of expertise is only one factor affecting the staffing of emergency responses: the length of deployments, employees' availability and willingness to deploy were equally significant factors, and were often linked to contractual status. Other challenges cited include governments' limitations through visa processes, which can impede access for standby partners (who do not have the United Nations *laissez-passer*) and government directives regarding the nationality and/or types of expertise allowed in the response, as seen in the 2018 response in Sulawesi, Indonesia, where the Government severely restricted non-Indonesian nationals' participation.[172]

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[169] WFP, 2016. Office of Internal Audit Report No. AR/16/15; WFP, 2016. Annual Evaluation Report; WFP, 2017. Report of the External Auditor on Changes in Human Resources and successive audits, lessons learned, and emergency evaluations.
[170] Synthesis series on WFP´s Emergency Preparedness and Response.
[171] WFP, 2017. Operations Evaluations Synthesis (cross region).
[172] WFP, 2019. After Action Review of the WFP Emergency Response Operation to the Natural Disaster in Palu and Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia- September to December 2019. Summary Report of Findings and Recommendations.

219. In addition, interviews consistently reported that Country Directors were increasingly unwilling to release staff for temporary duty assignments on responses. Factors influencing Country Directors' decisions were considered to be: a) limited capacity in country offices during the development of country strategic plans, which absorbed resources; and b) offices that have reduced emergency response skills because they have reduced in size or oriented their focus to longer-term solutions following alignment processes that took place after the development of country strategic plans. Perhaps the regular extensions of temporary duty assignments to fill gaps also reduces Country Director support for their release.

220. Capacity to respond is also affected by language barriers – notably French, Portuguese and Spanish, as well as local languages. WFP global surge capacity systems currently favour contexts where English is the working language. The evaluation team consistently heard that filling emergency posts in francophone countries was a challenge, that people were pulled out of operations, such as happened in Central African Republic, to meet human-resource gaps elsewhere in French-speaking countries. The Mozambique response lacked Portuguese speakers and in key informant interviews a few people interviewed admitted they could only work in one official United Nations language, although their job profile specified the need for two languages.

221. A clear gap identified in-house is the capacity to develop emergency coordinators who can be sent to manage an emergency response. There are examples of gaps in accessing senior management skills; for example, the crucial role of emergency coordinator was not recruited for the Iraq response from 2014 and, in Burkina Faso, has been filled through a rapid rotation of short-term deployments in 2019. WFP relies on a small pool of senior managers to take on these roles in L3 responses but developing the skills of middle managers to achieve the same level of interest and performance has proved to be one of the most pressing capacity challenges.

Finding 24: Delays and gaps in the provision of appropriate staffing of emergency responses have a serious impact on the relevance of WFP emergency responses.

222. The evaluation's systematic analysis of evaluations and learning documentation and other evaluation data consistently found the availability of skills - and the timing of the arrival of key skills - for a response had a significant impact on the quality of a response. This is both in terms of the momentum of a response and also its relevance, specifically in terms of how responses can be customized for specific operations. For example, evaluation data shows that the availability of vulnerability, analysis and mapping expertise in Tanzania and the inclusion of a gender and protection adviser in Mauritania as part of the Sahel shock response and the Rohingya 2018 response in Bangladesh led to good inclusion of evidence and programme factors that influenced the relevance of the design of the response. Evaluation data on the Nigeria and Syria regional responses showed a shift in quality wherein people with experience and skills arrived through the temporary duty assignment system with, for example, cash-based transfer and gender guidance.

223. Lack of skills in urban environments, concerns around capacity to deal with resilience issues, regular gaps in nutrition skills, and the ability to sustain these skills across protracted crises are all issues that have been raised in key informant interviews, evaluations and learning exercises. These issues have been included in the Central African Republic (2016), Ukraine (2016) Bangladesh (2018), and the PREP evaluations. For example, the late arrival of nutrition specialists and the lack of a multi-functional cash-based transfer team from the beginning meant that nutrition and cash-based transfer options were not considered and had to be built in later in the Rohingya response. These gaps affect the relevance of responses, as programme options are not considered from the outset. They also affect efficiency because it is more difficult to build in some programme components later, such as a complaints and feedback mechanism, meaning that valuable feedback from affected people is not collected.

224. There is limited internal capacity for some cross-cutting areas. The evaluation team found that dedicated capacity on gender, either in the form of a specialized gender officer, or focal point with expertise, is not yet a reality across the board. In Latin American and the Caribbean for example, only 4 of 12 offices have someone working on gender. However, overloading staff further reduces effectiveness and coverage. Of the 19 country offices that fall under the regional bureau in Dakar, only 4 have dedicated gender officer positions: Cameroon, Niger, Senegal, and Mauritania. The regional bureau in Nairobi does not have a gender advisor. Lack of specialized attention hinders the regional bureau's ability to deepen the conceptual and operational aspects of response design. Quite uniquely, the evaluation team found that in Iraq there is no specialized capacity on gender or protection, but there is dedicated capacity on accountability to affected populations. Where capacity does exist, the approach to gender can be very ad-hoc, with demands resting on one person only, with little or no involvement of other functions. Given the evidence (reported in Section 2.2) of limited use of guidance and increased reliance on the availability of expertise for high-quality responses, these gaps and delays are significant.

225. There is awareness in WFP of the need to address many of these gaps. The evaluation team found a number of initiatives to grow skills across all parts of the organization, for example, in emergency nutrition through the internal roster in headquarters. Country offices and regional bureaux are also developing their own innovative approaches to address some skills gaps, for example in El Salvador by forming a contract with the university to provide monitoring skills for responses; and the regional bureau in Bangkok is exploring potential networks that can be established at national level, which include recruitment agencies, to enable faster scale-up with national staff. Some regional bureaux have developed their own rosters as have some country offices. Functional units have also worked to build up their emergency response roster of deployable people with appropriate skills. However, these initiatives are currently not linked up. The interview findings show that there is interest among the human-resources staff at regional bureau level to work together to find solutions to the issues, suggesting they have experienced that there is a rather headquarters-led process to find solutions.

Finding 25: Operational solutions for gaps and challenges are often addressed by finding immediate solutions, which do not necessarily address the longer-term causes of the challenges.

226. The evaluation team found that gaps are often filled through employees "double-hatting" (that is, taking on additional responsibilities, sometimes beyond their grade), using short-term gap-filling solutions (for example, regional bureau additional deployments and recruitment of short-term consultants). There has been extended use of the temporary duty assignment system, set up originally to provide an experienced, first wave surge, and which works well in those circumstances. However, now there are repeated extensions of temporary duty assignment deployments, which is contributing to burn-out of deployed employees as well as having a knock-on effect on the original response from which they were sent.

227. Evaluation key informant interview findings show that country offices are reluctant to recruit full-time staff due to their cost and slow recruitment processes, so instead they draw on temporary duty assignment options or consultants. Recruitment tools are described as cumbersome and the overuse of short-term contracts for extended periods of time, the use of consultants and temporary duty assignments are ways for a country office to mitigate against costly and slow recruitment processes. Interviews revealed recruitment can take 70-140 days for a new WFP employee, although there has been a reduction for some roles in which skills can be accessed via FIT Pools.

228. The effects of deployments from one part of the organization to another are not tracked for their impact on the sending unit. Key informant interview findings described the system as one that "robs Peter to pay Paul". Key informant interviewees reported that in 2018 OSC and OSE deployed members of the headquarters team for emergency responses for a total of 4870 person days. While this is part of those team members' terms of reference, the extent of these deployments illustrates the gaps in other parts of the system, particularly when used for later stages of responses. Transfers from country offices to responses is particularly difficult for smaller country offices but also impacts on regional bureau team members' strategic and other roles for the large regions they cover. The impact of gaps in headquarters, regional bureaux and other response roles that these deployments cause is not known. Regional bureau teams regularly fill gaps in addition to providing the initial surge capacity and this challenges their other strategic, advisory and longer-term roles across the region. Furthermore, the high turnover of short-term consultancy contracts also results in long-term costs for the organization.

229. The knock-on costs of these temporary duty assignment deployments, a system set up for first wave surge and not ongoing gap filling, and inefficiencies caused by turnover of consultants, do not appear to be sufficiently considered in decision making. The short-term efficiency of the choice is matched by a long-term inefficiency: WFP has wider costs to bear, does not build up its expertise (as consultants leave) and so does not gain from a long-term growth of skills in emergency response. Further, there is a loss of institutional memory and learning.

230. There are efficiency challenges in the working of the emergency response roster. The evaluation team found numerous views on how the emergency response roster could be improved and an overall consensus that it is not working the way it should. Some interviewees claimed the emergency response roster lacked the necessary transparency to be credible and the available data suggests the system is understood by few and that other factors are at play in deployment decisions. Most notable is the fact that the most experienced WFP emergency response employees and the highest-ranking employees at D1/D2 level do not apply to be on the emergency response roster. This means that the roster is not able to be truly representative of WFP capacity, nor can this capacity be accessed through this mechanism. The voluntary nature of joining the emergency response roster reduces its ability to be the mechanism to provide senior managers. Key informant interview findings show that this was the case with other areas of expertise. It was also where specialists were more likely to be drawn on

from within their departments' formal or informal mechanisms. The next most common flaw cited was the fact that the emergency response roster does not identify the employees with the necessary managerial and soft skills required for emergency deployments. These factors contribute to the high use of informal processes to identify and fill staff positions, an issue highlighted in interviews across the regions.

231. Ongoing concerns for emergency response staffing catalysed the commissioning of a rapid response workforce planning review. This review highlighted the inefficiencies that were caused by the lack of connectedness between the multiple systems used to provide skills and expertise in emergency response.[173] Based on its key recommendations, OSE has established a surge coordination unit with the corresponding staff.[174] In addition key informant interviewees reported improvements in planning for specific responses through human resource's involvement at different levels in operational task forces. However, interviewees also pointed to the need for cooperation to be further strengthened between human resources and EPRP at all levels for emergency response workforce planning. The surge coordination unit is a positive development, but the evidence points to constraints that lie with the wider human-resource systems beyond the functioning of the emergency response roster and initial surge mechanisms.

Finding 26: The range of skills, expertise, knowledge and competencies required for high-quality emergency responses has become more varied and complex as the scope of the WFP response grows. Contexts are challenging in more diverse ways, which increases the complexity of ensuring access to relevant skills and expertise across phases of a response.

232. The evaluation team found that emergency responses are looking for an increased range of specialist skills: analytical expertise, information technology, knowledge management, engineering, climate-change adaptation, and cash-based transfer approaches linking to social protection programmes. Recently greater emphasis on thematic areas, such as protection and resilience, are also demanding types of expertise that WFP was originally not set up to attract. Further issues demanding unanticipated types of expertise is the scale of protracted crises and other changes in context, such as the growth in emergencies in middle-income countries. An extended response and its closer consideration of resilience and integration into long-term resilience and development work as part of the nexus, have increased demands for a workforce that can cooperate with development actors and governments in a different way. At the same time conflict areas call for increasingly sophisticated negotiation skills, including with armed non-state actors. WFP has also acknowledged and put into place an action plan to achieve a gender parity that considers the importance of workforce diversity as a necessity to achieving Zero Hunger.

233. The increased number of specialist skills required for an emergency response has led to an awareness that WFP needs to be able to ensure its workforce has a broader set of competencies and skills with more strategic thinkers, more people who can build relations, more people who can partner with different actors and more people who are willing to deploy to emergency contexts. The evaluation team found a consistent message from country offices of the value of the soft skills required for a successful emergency response. A 2017 report on rapid response workforce planning identified a list of emergency competencies that can be incorporated into surge employee identification, training and performance.[175] These include competencies in managing stress, making decisions in information-poor environments, building teams, communication and negotiation.

234. Complex environments are placing heavy demands on negotiation skills. In South Sudan the evaluation team found that negotiation skills were essential to enable WFP access to Unity State in 2016-2017. However, at that stage the country office had to develop standard operating procedures independently (in the absence of any corporate guidelines beyond the 2006 Humanitarian Access note) and key informant interviewees indicated that learning on the job was crucial. Since then, training has increased for negotiation skills through cooperation with the Geneva-based Centre for Competence in Humanitarian Negotiation, which is a positive development.[176]

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[173] C.R. Bosch and G. Shaver. 2017. Rapid Response Workforce Planning (Strengthening Surge Support Mechanisms and Processes for Emergencies).

[174] External Audit Scale up and down preparatory questionnaire.

[175] C.R. Bosch and G. Shaver. 2017. Rapid Response Workforce Planning (Strengthening Surge Support Mechanisms and Processes for Emergencies).

[176] https://frontline-negotiations.org/portfolio/whoweare/ In October 2016, five leading humanitarian organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF- Switzerland) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), launched the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN).

235. WFP operations have also requested a broader range of skills from standby partners, but these cannot always be filled. While traditionally logistics and emergency telecommunications cluster capacity requests were the bulk of the standby partnership deployments, requests for programme staff with specialist skills such as climate change and disaster risk reduction have increased yearly. Information management experts have been the most difficult to find, as more than 40 percent of these requests were not met.[177]

Finding 27: Investment to enhance WFP access to skills and expertise has focused on surge mechanisms. Surge mechanisms have had some positive results but have proven insufficient to meet all emergency response needs across the stages and types of emergency responses that are influenced by wider human-resource strategies and systems.

236. Human-resource challenges in emergency response are well known in WFP, prompting action to address them. The most significant investment in WFP emergency response skills was through the donor-grant funded PREP initiative, which re-established the emergency response roster and invested in the development of emergency response training (FASTER). There has also been investment from WFP budgets to augment skills at regional bureau level - particularly in nutrition and monitoring and evaluation (not only emergency response). There have also been investments to enhance overall human-resource systems and access to skills for WFP overall programming though these have not been focused on emergency response (particularly in the USD 14.5 million investment into the Fit for the Future initiative – which included training programmes in programme cycle, cash-based transfer and leadership for women - and the development of the People Strategy (being evaluated in parallel to this evaluation).

237. However, the emergency response-focused investments were not sustained. PREP investment was part of an externally funded grant, which ended in 2015. More recently, OSE worked with human resources to develop a proposal totalling USD 16 million (while this still stands as the required budget, an adapted proposal was later presented with reduced scope and a budget of USD 8 million) to address the surge challenges for emergency response, but this has received only seed funding of USD 1.2 million so far. Key informant interviewees were not able to ascertain the reason for the initiative not being supported.

238. During the evaluation period WFP has grown the scope and scale of its work and its workforce. However, the significant growth has been among staff on short-term contracts. The most significant increases in the 4000-person increase from 2013 to 2019 has been in consultants, United Nations volunteers and interns.[178] This trend, which reduces and influences the composition of the pool from which WFP can draw its future emergency response capacity, is not being addressed by a focus on only surge initiatives.

239. At the same time there are high levels of turnover in staff. An internal audit[179] found that WFP personnel and managers identify the short nature and uncertainty associated with temporary contracts as one of the main contributing factors for employees leaving the organization. The global staff survey results for questions relating to career progression continue to show that staff view WFP as failing at career development. Women responders rate career development lower than men responders (29 percent and 42 percent satisfaction levels respectively in 2018). Key informant interviewees reported also that there is some evidence that retention is also limited by bullying and harassment in the organization and by the working conditions at sub-offices.[180] Retention practices in WFP are sub-optimal, with experienced employees leaving due to issues with pay scale, training and reassignments. Employees look for better working conditions elsewhere. Interviewees repeatedly referred to the brain drain and described WFP as "a good training school".

240. WFP management and staff are fully cognizant of this limitation to employee retention and in interviews attributed it to funding constraints and paygrades perceived as systematically lower than those of other United Nations agencies. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation team to investigate this, but other factors outlined above are clearly important too.

241. The overall trend of high turnover is a constraint to systematic plans to grow the internal emergency response skills required for the wide range of response needs across all phases and types of emergencies.

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[177] Annex 6 Table 7 has details of filled and unfilled SBP requests.
[178] Details of 2019 employee composition are in Annex 6 Figure 5 and Table 1.
[179] WFP, 2016. Internal Audit of Human Resources Management in Country Offices. Office of Internal Audit   Report No. AR/16/15.
[180] This is an issue being further explored in 2018-2019 as part of a WFP-commissioned consultancy into WFP workplace culture.

242. Furthermore, the evaluation team found that there is no overall system to identify the human-resource needs for emergency response at the global level. Numerous documents highlight capacity gaps,[181] but very few provide an overview of what the overall skillset required looks like for a specific emergency response.

243. Furthermore, the lack of a shared planning framework across the organization meant that it is not possible to identify the implications for the corporate annual (or longer-term) scale and composition of emergency response skills and expertise needs and to plan together accordingly. Section 2.2 reported on the lack of an updated emergency response model and set of assumptions to guide organization-wide investment into the development of capacity at all levels.

244. This is a serious limitation for planning the development of, and access to, emergency response skills and expertise. The emphasis has been on surge for first wave through various mechanisms. This is important but is not sufficient to address the skills gaps across emergency response in all phases and contexts.

Finding 28: There has been significant investment in training and initiatives to build skills, but mixed evidence regarding its effectiveness in improving emergency response capacity. Constraints include: (a) the difficulties in navigating learning platforms, with current workloads meaning that these platforms are underutilized, and (b) poor linkage between online or classroom-based learning and the application of training in the field, which receives limited systematic support and so limits access to the new skills required in the field.

245. There has been considerable investment in training over the evaluation period, including on-line training, classroom training, practical training (simulations and drill exercises), and a few training programmes aimed at leaders and managers. WFP follows a 70-20-10 learning approach wherein 70 percent of learning takes place in practice, 20 percent is social through supported learning (such as exchange with co-workers or mentors) and only 10 percent is formal or classroom-based (be that online or in workshops or similar). In 2014 there were 165 on-line courses listed in WeLearn of which 3 appear to be related to emergencies; 70 completions were recorded.[182] In 2018 there were 16 courses to choose from related to emergencies, including specific programme cycle and humanitarian principles modules from non-WFP sources. The evaluation confirmed that WFP staff, especially national staff, are generally enthusiastic and eager to learn, gain experience and progress in the agency.[183]

246. Specific functions have developed their own training and development approaches in areas such as gender, nutrition and cash-based transfer programming. More concerted efforts to strengthen team management skills for those with leadership roles were identified under the leadership programme set up in 2015 targeting high profile staff. A middle-management eight-week interactive training course has recently been introduced. New foundation courses are being developed that are aimed at providing a solid base in specific functional areas from the WFP perspective. The first programme, a human resource foundation, was launched in early 2019. Other foundation programmes such as on nutrition, gender, risk management and the supply chain will be launched very soon. There is a specific foundation programme on emergency management being developed as well.

247. A well-regarded initiative developed as part of PREP was the Functional and Support Training for Emergency Response (FASTER), although participation figures show this has not been a consistently available course (further details on this can be found in Annex 6, Figure 18).[184] Regional bureau key informant interviewees indicated the high value placed on the regional FASTER courses held in 2018 being held in the regions, rather than only in Brindisi, Italy, which had previously been the case. (This approach seems not to be sustained in 2019 for funding reasons.) Recent developments have seen more cooperation with other agencies in training. An example of this is a one-day session on negotiation in 2018 that was delivered jointly by the WFP Security Division and UNICEF.[185] Such cooperation also indicates the need for an ever-growing number of skills that need to be included in these types of training. Another example of cooperation in training is the role WFP plays in the Geneva-based Centre for Competence in Humanitarian Negotiation.[186]

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[181] Ibid.

[182] ERP FASTER, Humanitarianism - Applying the Principles Part 1 and Part 2.

[183] A finding also of Napoli, A. 2019. Learning Needs Analysis. El Salvador Country Office. HRM Capacity Development Branch (HRMTC). WFP.

[184] Annex 6 Figure 18 includes details of participants by year.

[185] WFP, 2018. RMQ Annual Security Report 2018.

[186] https://frontline-negotiations.org/portfolio/whoweare/ In October 2016, five leading humanitarian organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World

248. However, the evaluation team failed to find how these trainings combine over time to build a cadre of national and international emergency response-ready employees. The overriding finding is that the many training initiatives are disjointed in terms of cumulative learning and in terms of career development paths for WFP employees who wish to pursue emergency response capacity as a career choice. Much of what the evaluation team found during the evaluation is that training is truncated into initiatives for groups of individuals by function or expertise or geographical region and is often supported by different funding pots or linked to new headquarters-led initiatives that need rolling out. None of this appears bound together by an overall framework that shows the skills-development progression required for an emergency response.

249. In addition, the impact of training initiatives is limited. Key informant interview findings and data analysis showed that over the evaluation period (2011-2018) online training, including mandatory trainings for employees,[187] has low completion rates.[188] This is despite the finding that employees valued the opportunity to access these, but they often did not find the time to finish due to workloads.

250. Interview findings reflected the difficulties experienced in navigating the WeLearn platform to identify what courses may be most relevant for emergency response (a redesign of the platform underway at the time of data collection could help to address this). This was a challenge highlighted in group discussions at both regional bureau and country office levels. In addition, on-line training is perceived as a luxury and not often embedded into the WFP performance and competency enhancement system (PACE) as part of a performance and learning plan, although trainings completed are noted in it. A new version of PACE (PACE 2.0) is intended to integrate more closely personal evaluation and personal development, which will be a positive development.

251. Furthermore, while awareness raising of new themes and technical-skills development for experts lend themselves to on-line training options, interview findings and group discussions across the regions and case study countries confirmed that they are rarely sufficient on their own. An important component for capacity development is face-to-face follow up of some sort, whether by coaching, on-the-job learning with a mentor or simulation/practical-based trainings. Evaluations such as the protection policy and humanitarian principles also found limited evidence of training being translated into practice.[189] The provision of training has been inconsistent and not always linked to whether people selected were able to deploy and/or deployed in the areas needed, with regional bureaux commenting on their limited involvement in selection of FASTER participants for instance, which limited their ability to build up regional resources for their rosters.

252. The evaluation team found that informal learning is the overriding learning culture at WFP, with numerous key informants describing a WFP culture that "learns by doing"; this resonates with the action-oriented approach of WFP but is not systematically tracked, measured or understood. In particular, the evaluation team found that experienced emergency response employees advocated for on-the-job learning and coaching as the only way to build the necessary experience.[190] Most interviewees and analyses point to the importance of hands-on, face-to-face, in-field learning, simulations and the need to promote and facilitate this, in accordance with the WFP 70-20-10 approach. Key informant interviewees and focal group discussion participants repeatedly advised systems where staff can start with easier missions and work towards L3 type situations. These need a long-term approach to employee development and a relatively stable workforce.

Finding 29: Tools that support organizational learning in emergency response often have limited value to support the building of individual capacity in emergency response-related skills. Individual capacity building in WFP relies more on process and practice.

253. The evaluation team noted that organizational learning tools, such as evaluations, are recognized as being a key learning tool for the organization in highlighting lessons and potentially driving development and improvement for some areas such as the scale-up of cash-based transfers and advance financing mechanisms.

Food Programme (WFP), Médecins sans Frontières (MSF- Switzerland) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD), launched the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN).
[187] Current mandatory on-line trainings for all employees include: Basic Security in The Field II; United Nations Course on Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority; and Prevention of Fraud, Corruption and Ethics. WFP office of Ethics Annual Ethics Report 2018.
[188] Data for 2019 indicates a more positive picture for mandatory training courses in 2019.
[189] WFP, 2018. Evaluation of the WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy; WFP, 2018. Evaluation of WFP Policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access.
[190] Napoli, 2018. El Salvador Learning Needs Assessment and also reflection in group discussions and key informant interviews across regional bureaux.

254. But these organizational products have limited value for the building of individuals' learning. Their formal nature and length limit their use by individuals, with many admitting they had no time to read them. This, along with some elements of review and evaluation fatigue, suggest there may be a need to focus on and prioritize these processes more closely to make best use of people's time and of the emergency response-related products produced.

255. In contrast to feedback on documentation, the interviewees did find that learning processes were valuable. In particular the lesson-learning exercise processes, mandatory in the activation protocols for all L2 and L3 responses, have allowed WFP personnel to reflect on recent emergency responses and, through an external facilitator, discuss the operation as a whole. the evaluation team found that for WFP personnel the process of discussing learning is extremely valuable, and perhaps more so than the written product, which may not even be looked at by those involved and instead serve a different audience. These after-action review-style exercises are also appreciated by WFP partners. A useful initiative was the including of a follow-up phase after the evaluation of WFP's Policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access in order to support learning.

2.3.2 Duty of care

Finding 30: WFP has made considerable investments into, and progress in, demonstrating duty of care for its employees in emergency response, in line with evolving trends in humanitarian operational contexts.

256. The evaluation considered the extent to which the WFP approach to emergency response demonstrates duty of care towards its employees (that is: "WFP prepares, supports and treats employees in a way that enables them to do their job effectively and ensures their security and well-being"). The importance of being mindful of staff well-being was highlighted in the responses to the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the Pakistan floods and again in the Ebola response. WFP duty of care is guided by the sector discussions triggered in 2014 by United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) – shifting from an approach of identifying when to leave to an approach of how to stay and deliver. In October 2015, WFP issued quality standards for living conditions in the field and completed the quality assessment of the guesthouse network. As a result, upgrade plans for 16 country offices were developed providing guidance on what needed to be improved, at what cost and when. The projects catalysed USD 16 million in total upgrade investments to boost major improvements. Investment included the use of a separate security funding pot held at headquarters to ensure security compliance. The evaluation team found several examples demonstrating an awareness of gender differences in relation to aspects of duty of care: security concerns differing for people depending on their sex, age or culture, and efforts to make duty stations more attractive to women employees.

257. As described in Section 2.1, WFP has built a strong enabling environment making clear its commitment to duty of care of its employees in various policy statements. At the organizational level WFP has invested in promoting duty of care (though not always under this title) with, for example, investment as part of the Fit for Purpose initiative. The clearest investment is the creation of the Wellness Division in 2015. This was followed by the recruitment of medical officers and staff counsellors for all regional bureaux and in some country offices, such as South Sudan. While it is recognized by all that this is insufficient to cover needs, it has allowed a system to be set up and ways of working to be established to increase awareness and uptake. A second key area of financial investment has been in improving accommodation. WFP sub-offices in many operational contexts required considerable upgrading and were often cited to the evaluation team as a key example of how WFP is taking better care of its staff at field level.

258. WFP has delivered on United Nations security policies and guidance by, for instance, providing increased security in the field in countries with high levels of insecurity and is in compliance with UNDSS requirements and minimum operating security standards.[191] WFP also has a mental health strategy, recognizing the importance of psycho-social health. Uptake of wellness and psycho-social support services has increased since 2015, indicating increased awareness of issues and a supportive culture. However, the duty of care approach could benefit from some gender markers, to which the Gender Office would be well-placed to contribute.

Finding 31: WFP operations face rising insecurity in complex operational contexts. WFP has kept abreast of these developments and remained compliant with United Nations security policies and guidance as part of its duty of care commitments on security. An example of this is the creation of a wellness unit in 2015 that looks at employee health and working conditions more thoroughly. Trends in the scale and

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[191] WFP. 2016. Evaluation of Regional Response, West Africa; WFP, 2016. Central Africa Republic Crisis Corporate Response Lesson Learned Exercise.

complexity of emergencies suggest the ongoing need for capacity in wellness and security, including in security analysis as part of risk analysis.

259. As Figure 6 shows, the number of security incidents involving or affecting WFP personnel and assets, partners or contractors has increased significantly in the evaluation period. The upward trend was marked in 2011-2013 and again in 2014-2018 (following a drop for one year 2013-2014). This trend is in all WFP regions, except in the regional bureau in Bangkok, with significant increases in the number of incidents registered by the regional bureaux in Cairo, Johannesburg and Nairobi.[192] The global staff survey has found a decline in respondents feeling safe in their work environment from 83 percent in 2015 and 2012 to 70 percent in 2018.[193] Regions differ in the factors affecting their security. The regional bureaux in Panama and Dakar contexts stand out as requiring considerably different approaches from conflict and war but are more a result of urban contexts and the growing role of insecurity associated with civil unrest, forced migrations and gang-related insecurity, which in some countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, is now expanding from urban to rural areas.

Figure 6: Security incidents involving WFP personnel and assets, partners or contractors, 2010-2018
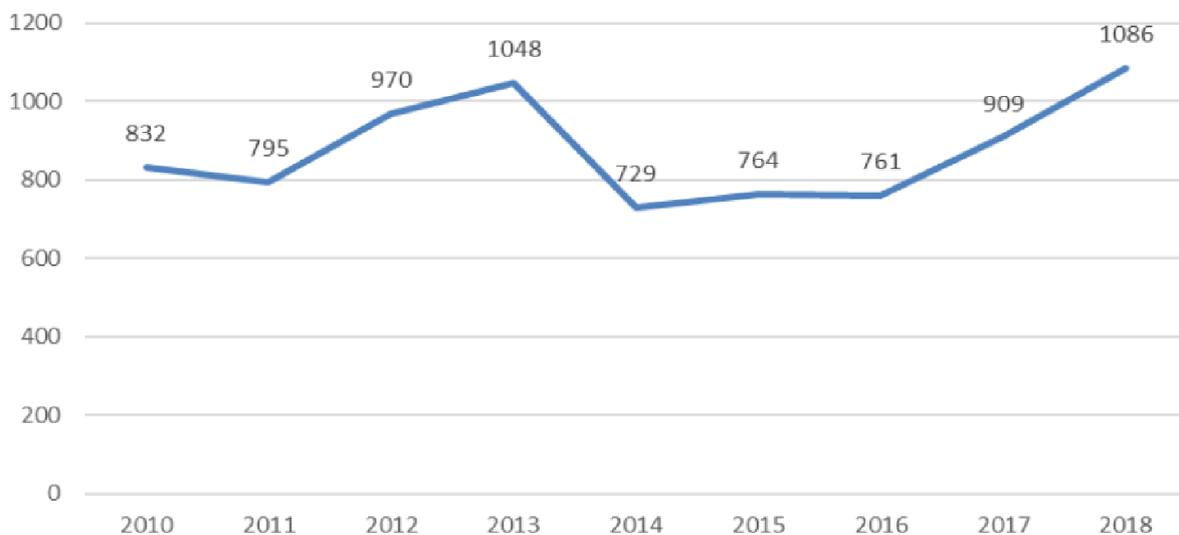
Source: WFP Security Information Management and Security Analysis Support System

260. WFP shared its security analysis with the evaluation team citing that main factors and influences include: the increased size and duration of operations, particularly in conflict or post-conflict settings; rising criminality resulting from deterioration of public security and limited capacity of local authorities; an increase in extremist tactics; sharp increases in food and fuel prices leading to violent protests; and a climate of impunity for violent acts against United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

261. WFP investment in numbers of security personnel to undertake security analysis and assistance have increased since 2011 but they have not kept pace with the increased number and complexity of emergency responses. The ratio of security personnel has been held relatively constant to overall workforce between 2011-2018 at around 1 security employee to every 200 employees.[194] However, the majority of this increase is made up of additional consultants (increasing from 13 to 25) while full-time staff numbers have actually decreased in number from 56 to 50.

262. Key informant interview findings across the regions and headquarters identified the importance of good context analysis to ensure the security of employees and operations. This requires specific skills and the personnel conducting the analysis being close to operations in order to ensure strategic oversight of the context. WFP capacity for this is limited by its reliance on predominantly consultants to fill this core role. Consultants have high levels of turnover representing institutional and contextual memory loss, as well as lost resources in skills development. Furthermore, key informant interviewees noted the high level of turnover of those on short-term contracts and reported increased challenges for them to secure senior managers' attention and respect.

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[192] WFP Security Division 2014-2018 data analysis on security incidents.
[193] 2018 Global Staff Survey (GSS) Summary of WFP, GSS 2012, GSS 2015, GSS 2018.
[194] Workforce has increased from 14,058 to 17,043 over 2011-2018 while security personnel have increased from 69 to 85.

Finding 32: The application of overall duty of care responsibilities is visible across the organization, but there are inconsistencies, with security awareness more embedded across organizational processes and culture than staff wellness.

263. The findings from the key informant interviews and analysis confirms that WFP has a solid security culture, albeit one that is challenged in terms of the scale of human resources, and that WFP managers globally tend to take on security advice and value it compared to other United Nations agencies. The United Nations High Level Committee on Management Task Force tracks United Nations organizations' duty of care implementation using a shared definition that covers health, security and wellness, as well as aspects related to ethics, grievances, and human resources. It found that WFP performs well.

264. In WFP, the importance of well-being is slowly being recognized by managers; but, unlike security, it is not tracked in the PACE and it is often therefore misinterpreted as not being as important as security. The evaluation team also notes the distinct lack of a mention of duty of care in WFP evaluations and lessons-learned documents, as this does not systematically feature as an area for investigation. However, the global staff surveys that found satisfaction with resources to help staff manage their stress has been under 50 percent in all three surveys during the period of the evaluation team, indicating there is still considerable work to be done.[195] Only 48 percent of staff in 2018 felt safe to report misconduct.

265. The evaluation evidence suggests that regional bureau awareness and buy-in is more systematic than country office level buy-in, with some regional bureaux having cross functional teams looking at duty of care aspects. The regional bureaux in Bangkok and Johannesburg developed a risk outlook inter-unit effort to identify key risks that affect the region; this has provided an opportunity to maintain visibility of different risks affecting the region. But at country office level, evaluation key informant interview findings revealed that both security and well-being are inconsistently applied, with challenges cited including a lack of understanding of WFP processes and/or funding constraints. For example, the Corporate Wellness Policy was noted to be missing in a number of the country strategic plans and many country offices do not have a staff wellness committee, as the policy intends.

266. While headquarters is driving this, regional bureaux have highlighted that there are a number of cultural-related issues around duty of care that need more work, in particular that duty of care is a collective responsibility including all leaders at different levels. Key informant interview findings suggest the concept of duty of care requires much more socializing in the workplace at all levels and this takes time, investment and engagement.

267. A challenge to fulfilling duty of care responsibilities is the tension it creates between enabling access to affected populations and the coverage of WFP responses. For example, the 2017 famine response in Unity State (South Sudan) required WFP to scale up a response in areas where NGO partners had withdrawn their presence because of insecurity[196] – using a hands-on approach through the Integrated Response Mechanism. This came along with the risks associated with exposing staff to deep field work.[197] In other situations where WFP does not implement directly through its own employees, risk is transferred to partners who are not protected under WFP duty of care mechanisms at present, with access and coverage overriding security concerns at times, a related issue that is highlighted in Section 2.2.

268. The evaluation team came across a number of examples of ethical tensions experienced by WFP in terms of responding to need versus duty of care obligations for its personnel. These mostly relate to limitations of contracting practices that expose some categories of WFP personnel without the appropriate security and health cover. Some practices, such as exposing WFP personnel to hardship duty stations for very long periods of time, have been acknowledged as being in need of revision. Other practices, for example, uninformed risk-taking when agreeing to deployments, require specific attention, because such practices lack the necessary checks and balances to ensure personnel who deploy to complex operation contexts are appropriately covered. The emergency response culture of the organization is strong, and for the most part an asset, but the evaluation team uncovered some practices that require more rigorous vetting through human resource systems.

269. The evaluation did find promising signs: increased interest in duty of care is evident in WFP, WFP is reviewing its People Strategy, and there is a supportive policy environment across the United Nations. But the absence of

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[195] 2018 GSS Summary of WFP, GSS 2012, GSS 2015, GSS 2018.
[196] WFP, South Sudan Country Portfolio Evaluation (2011-2016).
[197] WFP, 2018. Internal Audit of WFP Operations in South Sudan, p. 31.

a framework to support the development of capacity for duty of care in emergency response hampers its progress.

270. Based on these findings, the evaluation team identified a number of strengths and areas for development in WFP emergency capacity at individual level, which are summarized in Box 4.

Box 4: WFP emergency response capacity at the individual level

> **Evaluation Question 4: To what extent did WFP employees have the right skills, knowledge, experiences and incentives to ensure a high-quality response to emergencies?**
>
> **In summary:** WFP capacity to mobilize people for an initial response phase, particularly in large-scale crises, has enabled its immediate response to emergencies. However, fragmented capacity-development initiatives, inconsistent investment and the lack of a coherent framework to ensure a sustainable provision of the wide range of skills required for operations both from within and without WFP, have all resulted in recurrent gaps and have threatened the quality of responses.

Strengths are:

- The ability of WFP to mobilize people for responses, particularly in the initial stage of large-scale responses. This includes through internal deployments from headquarters, regional bureau and country office as well as through its standby partners
- The flexibility and commitment of WFP staff to cover capacity needs
- The commitment and investment WFP has put into duty of care, including in both security and wellness.
- The awareness of many of the issues in individual departments and at different levels of the organization (HQ, RB, CO) and their efforts to address challenges and gaps through training initiatives, developing their own surge networks and developing their teams to become multi-functional

Areas for development are:

- The capacity challenges to meeting the sustained demands for a wider range of skills and expertise for the growing complexity of emergency responses
- Inconsistent investment into emergency response-related human-resource initiatives
- The limited attention given to address any underlying challenges, including the decreasing size of the permanent pool of WFP human resources relative to scale of emergency response
- The lack of a joined-up, coherent framework linking emergency trends, emergency responses and individual capacity needs to drive planning and initiatives to provide solutions
- The lack of a detailed capacity-development strategy to develop the "expertise pipeline", including the more generic skills required as employees are increasingly working in protracted emergency contexts, specialist skills and the wide range of skills required for senior positions.

2.4. ANALYSIS BY CHARACTERISTIC OF A HIGH-QUALITY RESPONSE

271. This section presents the evaluation team's analysis of the key developments, strengths and areas for development in relation to each of the characteristics of a high-quality emergency response as used in this evaluation. It therefore brings together findings from across the three capacity levels discussed and acts as a bridge between the findings and the conclusions set out in Section 3.1.

Relevance

Definition: WFP responds to humanitarian needs in line with recipients' requirements and preferences, tailored to local capacity and priorities; it displays flexibility and adaptability. WFP responds to humanitarian needs of particular contexts and quickly adapts to changes in needs and opportunities.

272. Developments in the WFP enabling environment, through the evolution of WFP corporate strategic plans and the recent introduction of the Integrated Road Map and related policies, have supported the potential relevance of emergency responses by encouraging a more integrated approach to addressing food insecurity.

This links short- and long-term aims. In terms of the organizational framework, key developments to increase the relevance of WFP emergency responses have included the expansion of available modalities (notably cash-based transfers) and the development of tools to support the design of responses that meet affected populations' preferences. In addition, new guidance and tools give more emphasis to the importance of contextually customizing responses and (over the evaluation period) increasing attention has been given to complex and slow-onset emergencies in these materials.

273. These foundations for relevance are constrained by limited support, both for the application of policies and guidance and for the design of responses that are customized for different contexts. This in turn increases the reliance on the availability of skills and expertise to each response and the negative effects of recurrent gaps and delays in positions being filled. Skills gaps and shortages affect cross-cutting issues (such as designing programmes to be gender responsive and the setting up of accountability to affected population systems) and preparedness, context and data analysis, thus impacting on the relevance of programme design for all groups. WFP has been challenged to ensure the provision of sustained, experienced leadership in-country and to access the range of specialist skills that emergency responses now require (for example, multi-sector cash-based transfer teams). Skills shortages also constrain the implementation of a nexus approach. This is further hampered by uncertainty about the implications of how to maximize the potential of the nexus through the WFP emergency response (which policy statements promote) as well as limitations in the range and nature of WFP partnerships and lack of donor funding support to WFP for this.

Efficiency

Definition: WFP designs and delivers emergency interventions in a timely manner (including emergency preparedness), makes best use of available resources (cost-effective use of resources – financial, expertise, partnerships) and learns from experience.

274. The main development at the enabling environment level impacting on efficiency of responses in the evaluation period has been the introduction of the Integrated Road Map and the new planning, budgeting and revision procedures associated with it. These have initially delayed agility in responses, but a flexible approach to decision making (seen also in emergency activation procedures at times) has enabled timely responses. At the organizational level, the development of advance finance mechanisms has enabled significant improvement in timeliness and – in the case of in-kind assistance – costs of responses. WFP has made good use of technological developments to improve its efficiency in data management and as part of early warning systems. Preparedness measures, such as pre-positioning and cash-based transfer preparedness, have enabled efficient responses when linked to swift decision making (enabled by improvements in advance financing mechanisms – for example, raised ceilings of facilities). Finally, the ongoing ability of WFP to mobilize people (at least for initial responses) through a range of formal and informal mechanisms has enabled their timely start-up.

275. However, efficiency gains from advance financing mechanisms can be constrained by liquidity issues. Also important is the preparedness work for rapid scale up of cash-based transfer and other programme options in response, which is also an ongoing requirement at country level. Most significantly, the wide range of disconnected systems and methods used to identify personnel to staff responses is inefficient – a point already highlighted in the recent Shaver report on this subject.[198] Further efficiency implications are currently not visible, since no system currently tracks gaps and delays in filling response positions. Similarly, costs to duty stations of deploying employees to support responses are not built into calculations of response costs.

Effectiveness

Definition: Effectiveness in WFP is measured by the degree to which WFP emergency responses achieve their stated objectives.

276. The WFP record of having responded to all major emergencies in the evaluation period (along with the growth in beneficiary numbers and scale of assistance) indicates the significant achievement by WFP in responding to immediate food insecurity. Evaluations have consistently found that WFP emergency responses reach affected populations – particularly in the early stages.

277. Funding constraints regularly prompt revision of objectives – usually in the form of reducing rations, size of beneficiary population or focusing on the more immediate emergency assistance rather than longer-term

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[198] C.R. Bosch and G. Shaver. 2017. Rapid Response Workforce Planning (Strengthening Surge Support Mechanisms and Processes for Emergencies).

resilience building. This approach provides more effective immediate assistance but limits the sustainability of results. Limitations in monitoring data constrain the evidence base for this and the opportunity to understand the long-term effects of these decisions.

278. Four key constraints limit planning to build WFP emergency response effectiveness:

- Limited information on effectiveness – WFP monitoring systems do not support a comprehensive picture of response effectiveness due to poor data quality, a focus on efficiency, and limited investment in corporate monitoring systems to benefit country office level adaptive management of responses on the ground. This reduces evidence of the results of targeting approaches
- Limiting financial risk by containing the WFP core budget and its staff size results in short-term measures to address skills shortages and gaps (for example, the use of consultants) and limits the internal pool of staff from which to grow and develop future emergency response skills
- The lack of an updated, organization-wide framework detailing the expected scale of emergency responses to guide cross-organizational planning for capacity for emergency response.
- Poor knowledge management at the organizational level constrains organizational learning and application of lessons across departments.

Coherence and connectedness

Definition: WFP inputs at different levels (global, regional, country) are complementary, joined-up and consistent with each other, with national priorities, with humanitarian principles and are harmonized with other sector approaches.

279. WFP policy framework and leadership has encouraged a proactive engagement in inter-agency collaboration. This has supported active participation at country, regional and global levels in IASC mechanisms and collaboration on inter-agency platforms. WFP has kept abreast of, and engaged in, sector dialogue on trends and development including in United Nations reform and also global policy developments. In some cases, the implications of these trends are not yet clear for WFP (for example, the reform process); in others, the practical application at country level of commitments made by WFP is not clear to WFP employees (for example, to maximize the potential of the nexus).

280. At the national level, WFP commitment to work in line with government priorities has been strengthened by the country strategic plan processes, which involve governments and expand programme options (such as engagement with social protection mechanisms connected to emergency response). Close relationships with governments can nevertheless present dilemmas for WFP: for instance, implementing emergency responses coherent with government priorities while maintaining independence and thus adhering to humanitarian principles. WFP staff are well aware of this challenge.

281. Some new forms of partnership and cooperation are raising issues that fall outside current policy guidance and systems (including cost-recovery mechanisms for some service provision). Closer cooperation across the sector in cash-based transfer as well as in nexus approaches are sparking discussions in the sector around organizations' roles, mandates and activity level duplication. Finally, the United Nations reform, now underway, shows signs of having implications for humanitarian assistance – which may require changes to WFP ways of working because development and peace-building agendas may dominate due to the changing role of the resident coordinator in humanitarian response.

282. WFP provision of common services to the sector has enabled a highly valued contribution coherent with inter-agency responses – enabling their efficiency and coverage. WFP has further expanded its range of partnerships and services – including health-related partnerships (during the Ebola response), the provision of engineering services and – at an earlier stage – the provision of a common platform for cash-based transfers.

283. Internally, the pace of change, growth in headquarters' departments and range of initiatives in recent years (most of which place demands on the regional bureaux and country offices), along with the growing diversity in ways of working being forged at field level (in response to their specific contexts), has led to some frustration in the field and a sense of distance from headquarters, thus increasing the importance of good communication and connectivity between parts of WFP. There is some evidence that small country offices in particular find that the headquarters focus on large-scale emergency response means their needs (for example, in terms of tools, access to skills and practical support to identify response options to smaller-scale emergencies) are not supported.

Gender responsiveness, accountability to affected populations, protection

Definition: WFP systematically designs and delivers emergency interventions that are gender responsive, that contribute to the safety, dignity and integrity of vulnerable people and that are based on inclusive two-way communication with the participation of, and feedback from, all within the affected populations.

284. Over time, a strong policy framework has been put in place to support emergency responses that are gender responsive, accountable to affected populations and contribute to affected populations' protection - although the pace of each component's evolution varied during the evaluation period. Of note is the mandatory inclusion of the gender and age marker in decision making, raising the focus and visibility of gender and age considerations in initial response plans and now also in the implementation phase. WFP developed guidance and tools to support the application of these policies – although in some cases with significant delay from the time of policy agreement or statement (as was the case for protection and accountability to affected population). However, country offices have found guidance difficult to apply in their specific contexts, notably in relation to protection.

285. The key to responses displaying these people-centred considerations has been when WFP provides skilled personnel with specific expertise (for example, in the use of relevant data and analysis to develop context-specific solutions to build gender responsiveness, accountability and protection).

286. Delays in providing these skills at the start of a response, challenges in using standby partners in some locations and stretched in-country resources (for example, focal points with multiple responsibilities combined with variable resource allocations) have all constrained the pace of progress in this aspect of response quality. These reflect inconsistent prioritization from WFP leadership and fluctuating investment in these areas over the years.

Coverage

Definition: WFP meets humanitarian needs and leaves no-one behind in a wide range of humanitarian scenarios – including contexts with limited access and using a people-centred approach.

287. Conclusions on coverage are limited by data quality and availability. Data tends to report numbers of people reached, rather than impact, scale and continuity of assistance. In insecure response environments, it is clear that WFP investments generated positive results in terms of reaching affected people with assistance. These included working through cooperating partners for implementation and monitoring, technological developments such as mVAM, cooperation with other agencies and a willingness to deploy logistics capacity innovatively to ensure access. WFP commitment (and organizational culture) to reach affected people supports this trend, at times over-riding some risk-management concerns for employees as well as partner security. More focus on negotiation skills in recent times has been a positive development. A concern raised by WFP employees is that in insecure environments, risk is often transferred to partners to enable coverage.

288. Initial assistance, particularly in sudden-onset disasters, is often distributed through blanket distributions. This ensures that vulnerable people are not excluded, but it is expensive and then poses challenges in terms of targeting in protracted crises. WFP experience with community-based targeting has been positive in terms of reaching vulnerable people, but is time-consuming. There is also evidence that some WFP systems (for example short-term field level agreements) hinder the ability of targeting mechanisms to identify the most vulnerable.

289. Faced with funding constraints, coverage is often achieved through reduced rations, thus trading coverage – in terms of numbers reached – with effectiveness of assistance for short-term and longer-term food security. The results of these collective decisions on well-being in the short- and longer-term are not systematically tracked.

Duty of care

Definition: WFP prepares, supports and treats employees in a way that enables them to do their job effectively and ensures their security and well-being.

290. WFP investments have significantly enhanced its capacity to fulfil duty of care responsibilities for its employees deployed on emergency responses in all areas of security, wellbeing and mental health, including psycho-social support. Policy commitments have been strengthened by organizational framework developments: establishment of the Wellness division and investments in regional well-being and security roles, including the use of a separate security funding pot held at headquarters to ensure security compliance. Regional structures supporting cross-departmental cooperation on duty of care have helped to support the understanding of duty of care as a collective responsibility, but there is still some way to go to embed this understanding across the organization in order to ensure sustained and consistent good practice across all elements of duty of care.

291. Reliance on consultants to provide the needed expertise in security and risk analysis needs to be addressed. Concerns include the associated high levels of turnover, institutional memory loss and more limited influence with senior decision-makers in operations. Another gap noted by the evaluation is the absence of a framework to support the development of capacity for duty of care in emergency response. This absence hampers progress. A framework could benefit from the inclusion of gender markers to track the effectiveness of duty of care approaches.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

293. The humanitarian context has changed significantly from 2011 to 2018, characterized by the growth in the number, scale, duration and increased complexity of crises. These trends have been accompanied by emerging opportunities for ways in which to respond. WFP made significant investments in its capacity for emergency response over the evaluation period and expanded its scale of work. Within this context, this section presents the overall conclusions of the evaluation team and recommendations for further action.

3.1. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS OF THE EVALUATION

294. The conclusions are drawn from the findings and analysis set out in Section 2 and represent interpretations of the evidence found. Although based on the assessment of WFP during the period 2011–2018, the conclusions are framed around the changing external environment and future trends. Conclusions cut across the three core evaluation questions that have structured the section on findings.[199] They should be seen as mutually reinforcing, conveying an overall sense of WFP strengths and challenges in ensuring capacity for contributing to a high-quality emergency response.

Conclusion 1: WFP has increased its capacity to respond to the increased number and scale of emergency responses over the past decade. Significant investments, organizational culture and employee commitment to reach and assist affected people have supported the increased scale of WFP responses. However, capacities, notably at the individual level, are over-stretched, which poses urgent challenges for WFP's future responses in terms of its ability to respond with high quality, relevant and effective programmes, including in relation to small-scale and protracted crises.

295. WFP has developed its capacity across all three levels in a number of areas and has been able to respond to some extent to all major emergencies in the 2011-2018 period. WFP investments to improve the efficiency of its responses in particular have helped WFP maintain its reputation of being able to reach people quickly and at scale with assistance (notably, in large-scale emergencies) and to enable the sector's access to affected populations. Investment into the use of technology and the expansion of programming options (with scaled-up cash-based transfers as a modality), and the organizational attitude to innovate and act, have all supported these developments.

296. WFP has continued to focus its corporate investments on mechanisms and systems for responses to large-scale emergencies, but with less attention and support to country level (and to some extent regional) roles and capacity needs in responding to smaller-scale emergencies. There are gaps: (i) in supporting the requirements of smaller country offices in particular, in their response to small-scale emergencies, such as in beneficiary data-management systems and (ii) in supporting staff development through the experience of emergency responses.

297.   The means to meet the scale and scope of the current level of humanitarian crises, particularly due to their duration and complexity, is stretching WFP capacity, notably in relation to filling positions at field level in specialist and senior level positions.

Conclusion 2: WFP has invested in surge mechanisms, training and duty of care for employees as part of capacity development with some success. But constraints to developing and sustaining access to needed skills and expertise across emergency contexts and phases of responses risk undermining the quality of emergency responses. Needs in relation to duty of care also remain high. The complexity of emergency contexts and the broadening range of approaches and roles being undertaken by WFP in emergency responses also demand a wider range of skills than those typically possessed by traditionally recruited employees. This requires a sustained and long-term approach to building capacity within WFP and access to skills externally.

298. There is a clear commitment across WFP to "get the job done" and to support people affected by crisis. However, despite investment in training, the human-resource capacity of WFP to meet current needs is constrained. There are recurrent gaps and delays in filling positions and these gaps are often covered through short-term measures. Significant trends include high levels of turnover, the growing range of skills needed in emergencies and the limited availability of some of these skills.

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[199] A summary assessment of each core question is found at the end of the three relevant subsections of section 2.

299. In addition, the recurring use of a small group of personnel to fill key response management roles presents risks to the WFP emergency response capacity. These trends indicate a potentially significant shortage of emergency response skills and essential expertise from within WFP for the future, as well as more immediate shortfalls in the emergency response standards set in policies, strategies and technical guidance. Other challenges include a lack of access to skills already within WFP due to employees not being released by country offices for deployments or individuals not applying to be part of the emergency response roster.

300. Investment has focused on surge mechanisms, which has had some impact, although gaps continue. Skills development has been fragmented with a scattering of initiatives across WFP, but not brought together into an integrated approach. The Global Surge Coordination Unit has been created to provide an integrated approach, but there is a need for the organization to commit to make this happen, with adequate investment and cooperation across departments and levels of WFP.

301. Early deployment of specialized employees to responses achieves positive results in relation to quality. But a systematic early deployment of skilled personnel has not yet been created to enable gender responsiveness, accountability to affected populations and safety of assisted people. There are significant skills gaps in these areas that hamper the extent to which these cross-cutting issues are addressed and the pace of scaling up approaches both within responses and across the collective range of responses.

302. An underlying constraint on the development and sustained availability of skills across phases and types of emergency response is the limitation on growing the pool of long-term employees at the corporate level as part of budgetary prudence. This is reflected also at country office level where there is a reluctance to recruit full-time positions out of a sense of caution against the risk of future financial burdens, thus country offices are opting for short-term solutions. The approach to limit financial risk at the corporate level, by containing WFP core budget and staff size, results in the use of short-term measures to address skills shortages and gaps (for example, the use of consultants) and limits the internal pool of staff from which to grow and develop future emergency response skills.

303. There is momentum in building duty of care for WFP employees in both wellness and also in relation to security, which is in line with sector trends. This provides a strong platform to take forward the WFP duty of care in order to embed it further across the organization and scale up approaches needed in complex environments (for example, security analysis) as well as to embed a gendered approach to duty of care. The scale of response required for protracted crises in complex environments results in many WFP emergency response employees being exposed to heightened risk. This, together with the actual increase in security incidents, means that duty of care needs – wellness and security measures – will remain acute and likely intensify. A gap observed by the evaluation team is that WFP has no current duty of care framework in place for complex emergency contexts. Given the predominance of these contexts for WFP operations and employees, this should cause concern. There is also some imbalance in the extent to which both security and wellness are embedded in the organization's culture as well as the extent to which it is seen as a cross-organizational individual responsibility.

Conclusion 3: WFP has developed capacity to deal with the growing complexity of emergency responses and to respond to external trends. The organization has laid a strong foundation to support a more integrated approach to food insecurity that more closely links immediate response and long-term approaches in humanitarian and development programming. However, the lack of an organization-wide emergency response framework based on WFP policies, analysis of trends and assumptions about the intended scale and scope of WFP responses constrain linked-up organization-wide planning for the development of WFP capacities. Importantly, the broadening range of roles that WFP is undertaking, and the complexity of the emergencies to which it responds, means that WFP requires staff with a broad range of capacities; enabling WFP to find such staff in a timely manner will require significant investment. If this is not possible then a clear and strategic prioritization of WFP's roles and approaches will be necessary.

304. WFP responded well to some significant trends in the external environment and thereby enhanced the quality of responses. Of note has been: its scaling up of cash-based transfers, its use of technology, its commitment to respond to climate-related emergencies such as slow-onset and recurring drought-related emergencies, and the fact that WFP is paying more attention to people-focused elements such as gender, protection and accountability.

305. However, the WFP agenda (as highlighted in its current strategy and various policy statements) points to a more ambitious approach to emergency response in the future. The strategy maintains WFP current capacity for

emergency response (and current approaches) but broadens the approach in order to be more responsive to long-term food insecurity. WFP policy statements point to responses that will sensitively respond and be relevant to different communities' dynamics and priorities of affected populations – linking to longer-term resilience early on in the response as part of the nexus approach. At the same time, WFP is expanding the range of roles it plays in the sector (for example, in health, engineering and cash-based responses). Finally, developments in emergency contexts are making the emergencies more diverse; they range from highly insecure environments, where negotiating access and reaching the most vulnerable is a significant challenge, to those where responses are led by strong governments and inter-governmental regional bodies directing international organizations in their contribution to emergency response. These all present considerable demands on the range of capacities WFP needs at all capacity levels. To meet these demands will need significant investment or else a prioritization of the WFP role and approach.

306. Substantial foundations have been put in place to support a more flexible approach linking development and emergency response programmes in the current Strategic Plan (2017-2021) and the new country strategic plan approach. But there are key capacity constraints: access to skills (as detailed above); the nature of WFP partnerships, which are often governed by short-term agreements and also tend to limit partner involvement in the design of programmes; and funding sources, which tend to focus on WFP immediate response services.

307. In addition, a recurrent theme in the evaluation team findings is the need for more support for the practical application of policies, strategies, tools and guidance in different contexts; this suggests that the importance of consolidation and contextualization of what has been created already is a priority.

308. In terms of trends in national leadership of emergency response, WFP is forging new approaches at the regional level to work with and through increased government or regional leadership of responses. There is limited policy or strategy guidance to support the regional bureaux in developing these approaches. Such contexts can also present pressures on humanitarian principles, as do conflict-affected contexts, which means that the need for close attention to the principles and the need to maintain a capacity to negotiate access and independence both remain high.

Conclusion 4: When confronting competing priorities, WFP consistently prioritizes efficiency – in terms of speed and cost – and coverage – in terms of numbers reached. Investment, notably in advance financing mechanisms and logistics preparation, has improved the efficiency of responses but there is a need for more attention to other aspects of preparedness to ensure that responses are relevant. Areas for capacity development include strengthened contextual and trend analysis and relationship development with partners, governments and others, including in countries without a WFP presence; these depend on capacity at the regional bureau and country office levels.

309. The prioritization of efficiency has enabled WFP to achieve good results in terms of reaching affected people with first wave assistance and in setting up systems to enable the sector's access to affected areas. The prioritization is not an explicit policy but rather one influenced by organizational culture and capacity.

310. WFP investments in organizational preparedness for response through advance financing mechanisms, pre-positioning of in-kind assistance and equipment, development of national logistical capacity such as warehousing and transport systems and, to some extent, development of skills among WFP employees (for example, in SCOPE) have achieved significant results in response timeliness. These areas work well and need to be sustained. Other developments have been more informal, for example, making adaptations to decision-making processes to enable rapid responses.

311. There is a need for a broader and more in-depth approach to preparedness. One that incorporates contextual analysis to: inform customized approaches; understand national systems through which an emergency response would work; develop relationships (for example, with financial providers) and be effective in countries without WFP presence, with governments and potential partners. These preparedness activities need an investment of time at field level. However current trends in staffing, which show a disproportionate growth at headquarters level, do not support this need for an investment at field level and in fact add to a perceived disconnect with headquarters, which is felt by many in the field.

312. WFP has invested in the development of a larger number and more diverse range of partnerships to support coverage of assistance, particularly in insecure locations. The development of partners with specialist focus areas (for example, in work with women or with disabled people) has enabled WFP to reach these groups more effectively, but the relationships are not always established from the beginning of a response. Furthermore, in insecure areas, risk is often transferred to partners and this is not done through a systematic process. Finally, a

lack of partners from certain geographic areas or with access to particular vulnerable groups can constrain WFP coverage.

Conclusion 5: WFP's contribution to sector-wide responses is highly valued and contributes to inter-agency efficiency and the enhanced coverage of responses. WFP capacity to fill roles for the common services it provides (including in cluster coordination, aviation and through the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot) effectively has been made possible by the allocation of dedicated funds for support roles, specialist partners and a focus on learning and improvement within a culture of innovation. Evolving roles, such as in health emergencies and integrated responses to vulnerability, along with the United Nations reform process, mean that new guidance and clarification are and will be needed. WFP can also play a strong role in the humanitarian sector and the United Nations system to ensure that humanitarian space and principles are safeguarded.

313. The role of WFP beyond service provision is also highly valued, notably in terms of advocacy, promoting global attention to low profile and emerging emergencies and working in line with shared approaches in implementation such as community-based targeting methods in responses. Experience shows the benefits of preparedness and years of inter-agency cooperation within a region to support shared approaches. Significantly, successful inter-agency cooperation for example, in working through common targeting approaches, is an area where efficiency (speed) has not always overridden other quality factors of response.

314. A notable influence on inter-agency cooperation is the expansion of the cash-based transfer programme and moves towards single platform cash-based transfer initiatives, as well as multi-purpose cash-based transfer interventions. WFP has evolved its systems to support this area of work but there are still some limitations in capacity, some gaps in tools appropriate for smaller-scale emergencies and some gaps in guidance to ensure the safety of vulnerable people in relation to data sharing, management, privacy and protection when working on shared approaches with other organizations.

315. Ways of working in the sector are evolving rapidly due in part to cash-based approaches, to a focus on nexus approaches and to the United Nations reform. All these contribute to each agency working on a broader portfolio and working together more often: this may be to support resilience as part of an emergency response or to address vulnerability through multi-factor or multi-purpose approaches (for example, unconditional cash transfers). The trends raise both practical issues (for example, ensuring WFP costs are covered when supporting sector responses) as well as questions about roles when agency approaches start to overlap. It also points to the need and potential for WFP, along with other agencies, to profile and advocate for the humanitarian imperative, leading to good, coordinated and timely emergency response with new coordination structures emerging at country level.

Conclusion 6: WFP invested in its results frameworks, notably introducing some indicators to facilitate greater focus on the performance of emergency responses. However, limitations in WFP corporate monitoring frameworks and systems constrain oversight of the effectiveness of its responses over time, across responses and across all quality criteria. Learning platforms that allow access and greater use of information and knowledge are also lacking.

316. WFP has invested in the development of its corporate results framework but there are gaps in its ability to assess the effectiveness of emergency responses at the corporate level. Tracking emergency response effectiveness has been constrained by WFP monitoring systems, which include limitations in data quality and the range of indicators used to monitor response effectiveness.

317. Planning for capacity development is hindered by the lack of an organization-wide planning framework for emergency response that details assumptions about the level of capacity required based on emergency trends and WFP emergency response ambitions. Improvements in response effectiveness have been constrained by the limited application of lessons learned. There are recurrent challenges of knowledge management, which is recognized in WFP but not yet addressed. Progress to date has focused on documenting lessons, with the application of such lessons to improve emergency response effectiveness occurring usually when change is within the remit of a single department or unit of WFP. Application of lessons that require organization-wide change has seen less progress.

3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

318. The recommendations below aim to support decision making for WFP future investment into capacity development across all three types of capacity. They are based on the evidence identified in the evaluation and are mindful of current trends in emergencies and responses. They reflect the cross-organizational input required to achieve high-quality responses. Each strategic recommendation includes more detailed actions to achieve it, with details of responsibilities for it within WFP and the deadline for its completion. The evaluation team recognizes that many of the areas addressed by recommendations will be ongoing areas of work, so the deadline recommended is for significant progress to be evident.

PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE: INDIVIDUAL LEVEL (CONCLUSIONS 1 AND 2)

Recommendation 1: Significantly increase and maintain investment in the scale and pace of the development of long-term, sustainable human-resources systems to ensure sustained access to skills needed in emergency responses across emergency contexts, roles and response phases.
Responsibility: Director of Emergencies and Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Resource Management Department, Human Resources Division and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 30 June 2021

a) Develop a detailed capacity development plan and strategy for employee skills and expertise that is designed to meet the operational needs for emergency response (based on the current and intended range of WFP response options) and skills identified as key for emergency response. Include:
 	
    o Leadership skills (e.g. for emergency coordinators) as well as specialist and generalist emergency response skills needed in multi-functional teams (i.e. staff who are expected to have emergency response and capacity development or other skills for long-term roles).
 	
    o National and international staff in the plan.
 	
    o Create a coherent framework to bring together the range of training initiatives and in particular ensure links between classroom/online training and practical support in the field for the application of new skills. Provide guidance to staff on training and development opportunities that will allow them to progress in emergency response.
 	
    o Bring together the wide range of formal and informal systems for the deployment of personnel for emergency responses (as recommended in the "Rapid Response Workforce Planning" report[200]) to operate a comprehensive deployment system supported by greater investment from the programme support and administrative budget.
 	
b) Invest in building a WFP pool of emergency response skilled staff, including through systems to enable country offices to recruit long-term staff.
 	
c) Establish an evidence base of the true costs and benefits of the effects of long-term transfer of WFP personnel (e.g. through temporary duty assignments longer than one month) from their duty stations to support emergency responses (include a focus on small country offices) to support evidence-based decisions on human resource options for emergency response.

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[200] C.R. Bosch and G. Shaver. 2017. Rapid Response Workforce Planning report.

Recommendation 2: Build on current momentum and invest in strengthening measures to meet the duty of care across the organization, including with regard to the wellness, safety and security of employees, and to build awareness and understanding of relevant cross-organizational responsibilities.
Responsibility: Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Human Resources Division, Staff Wellness Division, Security Division and Gender Office.
Deadline: 30 June 2021
a) Develop a duty of care framework for emergency response contexts, including gender markers for tracking progress and any differential experiences of the duty of care. Promote duty of care as a shared responsibility across teams. b) Ensure more investment to increase the proportion of WFP security employees on staff contracts to facilitate continuity and the internal development of crucial skills. c) Ensure that both security and wellness competencies are included in senior managers' job descriptions and undertake assessments using the Performance and Competency Enhancement tool.

PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL (CONCLUSIONS 3 AND 4)

Recommendation 3: Significantly strengthen WFP emergency preparedness through context-specific preparation and sustained liquidity of advance financing and commodity management mechanisms, including for pre-emptive responses.
Responsibility: Director of Emergencies and Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Budget and Programming Division, Finance and Treasury Division, country offices and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 30 September 2020
a) Better define the institutional preparedness framework for WFP, governments and partners. b) Task regional bureaux and country offices with developing a plan for WFP's own preparedness for response as part of CSP processes in countries identified as potential hotspots (i.e., with potential emergencies in the next three years – including those with and without a WFP regional presence). Ensure corporate support for the process with relevant tools and quality assurance. c) Develop the plans through in-country consultations to build response strategies based on context analysis, consultation with the government, regional emergency response bodies, civil society and potential partners for implementation across all potential programme components and modalities. d) Ensure that institutional systems and arrangements, e.g. with service providers, are updated. e) Put in place a system to safeguard the liquidity of advance financing mechanisms to enable the swift release of funds, including from the Immediate Response Account and the Global Commodity Management Facility, including for pre-emptive action and action on early warning triggers.

THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE (CONCLUSION 3)

Recommendation 4: Develop a consolidated framework for emergency response to support planning for capacity development and the implementation of WFP responses across contexts reflecting the organization's level of ambition for the quality of responses and the range of WFP roles.
Responsibility: Senior Director Operations, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Security Division, Supply Chain Operations Division, Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Human Resources Division and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 30 September 2020
a) Bring together the existing emergency-related policies into a coherent framework and link them to implementation guidance that includes clarification of terminology for emergency, crisis and humanitarian response and supports planning for contextualized responses. b) Use the framework to develop business plans for investment in WFP emergency response capacity at the corporate, regional bureau and country office levels. c) Include updated assumptions regarding the scale and types of emergencies that WFP will respond to and capacities needed for each type and stage of response, based on trends in emergencies and WFP's ambitions in response, maintaining the prioritization of flexibility for a customized approach to different contexts. d) Make explicit the criteria for waivers of any decision-making procedures, including in activation protocols and CSP revision, and actively disseminate lessons so that CSPs enable relevant and flexible responses.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESPONSES (CONCLUSIONS 3 AND 4)

Recommendation 5: Pursue more equitable approaches to partnerships to include improved and consistent risk management of partners in insecure contexts as well as partner participation in response design and capacity building.
Responsibility: NGO Partnerships Unit, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Logistics Cluster, Food Security Cluster, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, country offices and regional bureaux.
Deadline: 30 September 2020
a) Identify partners in high-risk countries and establish agreements for cooperation during responses. Ensure that partner selection enables WFP to reach at-risk geographic areas and marginalized vulnerable groups. b) Establish a clear process to be used systematically across country offices on risk management in respect of partners' security, including guidance on what risks should and should not be transferred to partners, acceptable levels of risk and a process for determining them. c) Put in place systems to increase partner participation in the design and adaptation of emergency responses. Simplify field level agreements for emergencies.

Recommendation 6: Intensify investment in organizational and staff capacity strengthening to ensure that WFP can operate through a broad range of roles in increasingly complex settings and profoundly changing environments.

Responsibility: Director of Emergencies, in collaboration with Emergencies Operations Division, Budget and Programming Division and regional bureaux.

Deadline: 31 December 2020

a) Develop policy-level guidance to support country office and regional bureau emergency response preparation and implementation in contexts with strong government leadership to guide the development of WFP strategy, roles and capacity development.

b) Increase practical support for country offices in applying WFP approaches and guidance in various contexts and stages of response, such as through the development of an online tool for application of guidance in various contexts linked to expertise (e.g. expert adviser from within WFP, community of practice). Provide support for its use through focused webinars and on-the-spot mentoring (in-country or through training and development secondments) and ensure that guidance is simplified and accessible.

c) Consult with country offices, with special focus on small country offices, regarding the utility of corporate tools including SCOPE and data analysis and mapping to inform revisions and any new tools (if required) to support small-scale emergency responses (usually L1).

d) Develop dedicated internal expertise to deal with increasing field requests for advice on data protection, management and privacy, particularly in relation to close work with other agencies and governments.

e) Establish targets and track satisfaction levels regarding communication between headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices to identify trends or needs with regard to improving communication (e.g. questions in the global staff survey). Ensure any corporate initiatives include the full participation or potentially leadership of regional bureaux and country offices and involve headquarters.

Recommendation 7: Significantly strengthen support for the practical application and mainstreaming of a principled approach and for the centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations and gender responsiveness in emergency response.

Responsibility: Director of Programme – Humanitarian Development Division, in collaboration with regional bureaux, Human Resources Division, Emergencies Operations Division and Gender Office.

Deadline: 30 September 2020

a) Ensure that senior managers and staff at other levels are supported through accessible guidance, training and on-the-spot advice and demonstrate capacity to navigate tensions related to humanitarian principles if experiencing political interference in humanitarian assistance. Invest in hands-on and easy-to-use protection-related guidance and other tools for achieving consistency across emergency responses and contexts. Increase the emergency response focus in gender-related guidance. Ensure that gender, protection and accountability expertise are present from the outset of a response by building gender, protection and AAP profiles into emergency response rosters and including them in the first wave deployments as well as measures to ensure that these issues are seen as cross-cutting responsibilities of the team.

b) Ensure that capacity and understanding in respect of protection, AAP and humanitarian principles are included in field-level agreements alongside gender, with explicit related principles and clear processes that WFP expects its partners to implement. Scale-up the establishment of complaint and feedback mechanisms across all operations through the provision of appropriately skilled employees, use of practical guidance and investment to enable operations to reach minimum standards. Increase expertise and the use of communication technology for accountability to affected populations through the production and promotion of practical guidance on complaint and feedback mechanisms and the broader use of communication tools such as social media, mass media (radio, television), text messages and other emerging methods as part of accountability systems.

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION (CONCLUSION 5)

Recommendation 8: Continue WFP's meaningful engagement with United Nations development system reform to ensure that humanitarian space is safeguarded and clarify WFP roles in inter-agency collaboration within new and evolving shared approaches in humanitarian response. Develop WFP internal systems for sustaining support for new forms of partnership in inter-agency cooperation.

Responsibility: Deputy Executive Director with collaboration of Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, Senior Director Operations, Supply Chain Operations Division, Emergencies Operations Division, Rome-Based Agency and Committee on World Food Security Division, Budget and Programming Division, Logistics Cluster, Food Security Cluster and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster.

Deadline: 30 September 2020

a) Take an active role in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee regarding the clarity of individual agency mandates in all phases of emergency responses and the implications for cooperation of:

  o single platform and multi-purpose cash approaches

  o the operationalization of nexus ways of working in emergency response to enable cross-organization guidance to country offices and operations.

b) Establish systematic cost recovery approaches for the expanding range of common services provided by WFP, including through partnerships with health-focused organizations, provision of engineering as well as ongoing logistics and emergency telecommunications cluster support.

c) Ensure adequate resourcing (financial and HR) for effective WFP-led and co-led cluster and partnership roles, including in new forms of cooperation such as with regard to health.

MONITORING OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE (CONCLUSION 6)

Recommendation 9: Strengthen the monitoring of emergency response performance by tracking results over time. Specifically, enable the comparison of responses by adapting WFP's monitoring framework, regularly analysing results and linking findings to planning for capacity needs.

Responsibility: Director of Performance Management and Reporting Division, in consultation with Budget and Programming Division, Emergencies Operations Division and Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division.

Deadline: 30 June 2020

a) Define success in emergency response and establish monitoring and evaluation processes and guidance to track success across emergencies. Include qualitative data questions to facilitate assessment of issues like relevance and responsiveness of operations to various needs of populations. Report on the assessment of these issues annually to enable the tracking of trends over time and comparison across responses. Monitor and report coverage of WFP assistance more systematically and in more detail through the establishment of operational monitoring systems at response and corporate levels in order to track:

- o proportion of those in need of WFP assistance reached;

- o proportion of planned assistance actually provided per beneficiary;

- o regularity of assistance provided;

- o effects of reductions in assistance in the short-term and medium-term;

- o gender responsiveness of operations.

The resulting reporting ability will enable a more complete picture of emergency response coverage and effectiveness.

b) Ensure that monitoring is owned and focused on support to country offices to support response adaptation and corporate oversight.

LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (CONCLUSION 6)

Recommendation 10: Increase organization-wide access to, and use of, emergency response lessons learned by strengthening knowledge platforms and providing incentivizes for the use of lessons.

Responsibility: Director of Emergencies, in collaboration with Programme and Policy Development Department, Supply Chain Operations Division, Budget and Programming Division, Innovation and Change Management Division.

Deadline: 30 September 2020

a) Create a user-friendly knowledge platform that combines access to customized products for specific responses that communicate relevant lessons for decision makers and access to people with expertise and experience. Ensure broad access to the knowledge platform, provide incentives for its use and link it to capacity development programmes and frameworks.

b) Implement and regularly report on progress in the implementation of the knowledge management strategy and on the application of lessons.

Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
APR	Annual Performance Reports
CARI	Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators
CBT	Cash-based transfers
CEQAS	Centralised Evaluation Quality Assurance System
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
COMET	Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CPB	Country Portfolio Budget
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CRF	Corporate Results Framework
CSP/ICSP	Country Strategic Plan / Interim Country Strategic Plan
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECS	Emergency Case Study
EMOP	Emergency Operation
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Package
ER	Emergency Response
ERR	Emergency Response Roster
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator (WFP)
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FASTER	Function and Support Training for Emergency Response
FIT	Future International Talent (Pool)
FLA	Field Level Agreement
FSA	Food Supply Agreements
FSC	Food Security Cluster
GCMF	Global Commodity Management Facility
GaM	Gender and Age Marker
GEN	Gender Office (WFP HQ)
GenCap	Gender Standby Capacity Project (IASC)
GIS	Geographic Information System
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources (WFP HQ)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICM	Integrated Corridor Management
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPL	Internal Project Lending
IR-PREP	Immediate Response – Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme
IRA	Immediate Response Account
IRG	Internal Reference Group
IRM	Integrated Road Map
IPL	Internal Project Lending
LEO	Limited Emergency Operation
LESS	Logistics Execution Support System
LICs	Low-Income Countries
MAF	Macro Advance Financing
MICs	Middle-Income Countries
L3	Level 3 Emergency Response
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LEO	Limited Emergency Operation

LORA	List of Registered Air Operators
MRF	Management Results Framework
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network
MPA	Minimum Preparedness Actions
mVAM	mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PREP	Preparedness and Response Enhancement Programme
PSEA	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD-DAC	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OSE	Emergency Preparedness and Support Response (WFP HQ)
OSZ	Policy and Programmes (WFP HQ)
OTF	Operational Task Force
PACE	Performance and Competency Enhancement System
PSEA	Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
RBB	Regional Bureau in Bangkok
RBC	Regional Bureau in Cairo
RBD	Regional Bureau in Dakar
RBJ	Regional Bureau in Johannesburg
RBN	Regional Bureau in Nairobi
RBP	Regional Bureau in Panama
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHRD	United Nations Humanitarian Response Depots
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
WINGS	WFP Information Network and Global system

Photo Credit

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