

Evaluation

Summary Terms of Reference



Lao People's Democratic Republic: An Evaluation of WFP's Country Strategic Plan (2017 – August 2020)

Country Strategic Plan Evaluations (CSPEs) encompass the entirety of WFP activities during a specific period. Their purpose is twofold: 1) to provide evaluation evidence and learning on WFP's performance for country-level strategic decisions, specifically for developing the next Country Strategic Plan and 2) to provide accountability for results to WFP stakeholders.

Subject and Focus of the Evaluation

The evaluation will cover all WFP activities (including cross-cutting results) from January 2017 to August 2020. The evaluation will also look at how the CSP builds on or departs from previous activities and assess to what extent the envisaged strategic shift has taken place.

The evaluation will assess WFP contributions to CSP strategic outcomes, establishing plausible causal relations between the outputs of WFP activities, the implementation process, the operational environment and changes observed at the outcome level, including any unintended consequences.

The evaluation will also focus on assessing protection and gender issues and accountability to affected populations.

The evaluation will adopt the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC), namely: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability as well as connectedness, and coverage as applicable.

Objectives and Users of the Evaluation

WFP evaluations serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning.

The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a broad range of WFP's internal and external stakeholders and presents an opportunity for national, regional and corporate learning. The primary user of the evaluation findings and recommendations will be the WFP Country Office and its stakeholders. It presents an opportunity for the Country Office to benefit from an independent assessment of its operations and to use the evaluation evidence to inform the design of the new Country Strategic Plan. The evaluation report will be presented at the Executive Board session in November 2021.

Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will address the following four key questions.

Question 1: To what extent is WFP's strategic position, role and specific contribution based on country priorities

and people's needs as well as WFP's strengths? The evaluation team will reflect on the extent to which: the CSP is relevant to national policies, plans, strategies and goals, including achievement of the national Sustainable Development Goals; the CSP addresses the needs of the most vulnerable people in the country to ensure that no one is left behind; WFP's strategic positioning has remained relevant throughout the implementation of the CSP in light of changing context, national capacities and needs; and the CSP is coherent and aligned with the wider UN and includes appropriate strategic partnerships based on the comparative advantage of WFP in the country.

Question 2: What is the extent and quality of WFP's specific contribution to CSP strategic outcomes in Lao PDR? The evaluation team will reflect on the extent to which: WFP delivers expected outputs and contributes to the expected CSP strategic outcomes; WFP contributes to achievement of cross-cutting aims (gender equality, humanitarian principles, protection and accountability to affected populations); the achievements of the CSP are likely to be sustainable; and the CSP facilitated more strategic linkages between humanitarian and development.

Question 3: To what extent has WFP's used its resources efficiently in contributing to CSP outputs and strategic outcomes? The evaluation team will reflect on: whether outputs were delivered within the intended timeframe; the appropriateness of coverage and targeting of interventions; cost-efficient delivery of assistance; and whether alternative, more cost-effective measures were considered.

Question 4: What are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP? The evaluation team will reflect on the extent to which: WFP analyzes or use existing evidence on hunger challenges, food security and nutrition issues in the country to develop the CSP; WFP has been able to mobilize adequate, predictable and flexible resources; the CSP leads to partnerships and collaborations with other actors that positively influenced performance and results; the CSP provides greater flexibility in dynamic operational contexts and how did it affect results; and other factors influencing WFP performance and the strategic shift expected by the CSP.

Scope and Methodology

The unit of analysis is the Country Strategic Plan understood as the set of strategic outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were included in the CSP document approved by the WFP Executive Board, as well as any subsequent approved budget revisions.

The evaluation will adopt a mixed methods approach; this implies a methodological design in which data collection and analysis is informed by a feedback loop combining a deductive approach, which starts from predefined analytical categories, with an inductive approach that leaves space for unforeseen issues or lines of inquiry that had not been identified at the inception stage.

In line with this approach, data may be collected through a mix of primary and secondary sources with different techniques including: desk review, semistructured or open-ended interviews, closed answer questionnaires, focus groups and direct observation. Systematic data triangulation across different sources and methods should be carried out to validate findings and avoid bias in the evaluative judgement.

This evaluation will be carried out in a gender responsive manner and ethical consideration shall be taken into the methodology.

The COVID-19 preventive measures may cause travel restrictions and consequently affect mission plans. Considering evaluability challenges, the evaluation team will identify alternative approaches for data collection as applicable.

The evaluation is expected to be coordinated with other events and evaluations planned in-country, including the United Nations Partnership Framework evaluation and decentralized evaluation, as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluation Team: The evaluation will be conducted by a team of independent consultants with relevant expertise for the Lao PDR CSP.

OE Evaluation Manager: The evaluation will be managed by Ms. Mari Honjo, Evaluation Officer in the WFP Office of Evaluation. She will be the main interlocutor between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader, and WFP counterparts, to ensure a smooth implementation process. Second level quality assurance will be provided by Ms. Gabrielle Duffy, Senior Evaluation Officer.

Stakeholders: WFP stakeholders at country, regional and Headquarters level are expected to engage throughout the evaluation process to ensure a high degree of utility and transparency. External stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, government, donors, implementing partners and other UN agencies will be consulted during the evaluation process.

Communications

An internal reference group composed of key WFP staff from the Lao PDR Country Office, the Regional Bureau Bangkok and Headquarters, plays an advisory role, and will review and provide feedback on evaluation products.

Preliminary findings will be shared with WFP stakeholders in the Country Office, the Regional Bureau and Headquarters during a debriefing session at the end of the fieldwork. A country learning workshop will be held to ensure a transparent evaluation process and promote ownership of the findings and preliminary recommendations by country stakeholders.

While all evaluation products will be produced in English, arrangements for local translators during fieldwork may be required.

Timing and Key Milestones

Inception Phase: July - mid-September 2020

Fieldwork Dates: mid-September -early October 2020

Fieldwork Debrief: October 2020

Reports: November 2020 – March 2021

Learning Workshop: January 2021 (to be determined in consultation with the Country Office)

Executive Board: November 2021

Findings will be actively disseminated and the final evaluation report will be publicly available on WFP's website.

Full Terms of Reference are available at <http://newgo.wfp.org/topics/evaluation>

For more information please contact the WFP Office of Evaluation at: WFP.evaluation@wfp.org