

**Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS)**

**Management Response from WFP Rwanda to the recommendations of the decentralized evaluation of Endline Evaluation of USDA’s Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program in Rwanda from 2017 to 2019**

*This template provides a suggested structure and guidance on content for the management response to decentralized evaluation recommendations*

<b>Rec. #</b>	<b>Recommendation</b> [as per evaluation report]	<b>Management Response</b> [Is recommendation <i>Accepted</i> , <i>partially accepted</i> or <i>not accepted</i> ? If partially accepted or not accepted, provide a brief response]	<b>Actions to be taken</b> [Briefly state what actions will be taken to address the recommendation]	<b>Action By</b> [WFP Country Office, WFP Regional Bureau, WFP Headquarters, External Stakeholders (UN Agency, Government body, Donor)]	<b>Implementation timeframe</b> [Month, Year]	<b>Status</b> [Not started/In progress/On hold/ Complete]
1	P. 52: Recommendation 1 (related to conclusion 1): In the coming six months, WFP should work with	<i>Accepted</i>	Coordination with government is an ongoing process, especially with the HGSF focal point at the Ministry of Agriculture. A brief			

<p>the GoR to prepare a short lesson learning document of the LRP implementation and its results for dissemination and learning. LRP and FTMA constitute an innovative way of working with cooperatives that deserves a study covering more cooperatives than the 16 LRPs ones. The evaluation has highlighted that there are lessons to be learned for agriculture and value chain development in Rwanda and on a broader scale from the LRP project. The FTMA program in Rwanda probably has very interesting results which are of importance not</p>		<p>knowledge product will be developed in the coming six months with a focus on lessons learned that will inform the upcoming McGovern Dole proposal. Special attention will be given to the gender sensitivity of the interventions, with potential recommendations for onward implementation or scale-up.</p>			
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	<p>only for WFP but also for other development partners. In light of the gender specific findings presented above, a short reader-friendly learning document could be drafted which draws on this report. The lesson learning document should bring out the specific benefits and continued constraints for female SHF, including with respect to their participation in cooperative activity.</p>					
2	<p><b>P. 52: Recommendation 2 (related to conclusion 2 and 4): For the remaining time of the project and for the next phase, WFP should work with</b></p>		<p>Strengthening the governance and financial management capacity of the cooperative is an</p>			

	<p><b>RWARRI to prioritize cooperative capacity building activities in the areas of governance, work organization, business management, and financial accountability.</b> This should be the main focus at cooperative level for at least three more years to ensure that cooperatives can handle the new activities and opportunities in a sustainable way. We recommend that the next phase of the project considers hiring a cooperative capacity building specialist as part of the implementation team, to design a curriculum and adapted material. Training sessions should be organized in all the cooperatives on a regular basis. Field officers should be trained and monitored</p>		<p>ongoing activity beyond the end of the project, as LRP-supported cooperatives are incorporated into the ongoing McGovern Dole Home grown school feeding programme and Farm to Market Alliance, which will ensure sustained capacity building interventions in this regard. WFP Rwanda has developed a cooperative governance and financial management support package based on a series of direct training intervention, coupled with an</p>			
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<p>so that they can provide day-to day coaching to the cooperatives. All the elements concerning 'ability to be' and 'ability to do' should be included and the following specific elements should be included: record keeping, contract management, capacity strengthening targeted at women, economic calculation to verify profitability of an activity, and negotiation skills. In addition, WFP's hired cooperative capacity building specialist as recommended above can ensure supervision and support and coach the field officers.</p> <p><i>From USDA: We understand that some work with cooperatives is continuing under the current MGD award. Please expand</i></p>		<p>intensive, tailored coaching track on governance and financial management in collaboration with Rabo Partnership foundation and the International Finance Cooperation (WB group). We are currently assessing the possibility for gradual inclusion of the LRP cooperatives in this programme for sustained capacity building under the supervision of an expert mentor (trainer and coach).</p>			
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	<i>on this work and how it relates to LRP goals.</i>					
3	<p><b>P. 52: Recommendation 3 (related to conclusion 3 and 4): For the remaining time of the project, WFP should continue working with ICCO Terrafina to strengthen the access to finance component of the project.</b> In order to improve farmer and cooperative access to credit, the savings and credit groups that were established emerge as a good option to build up cooperative capital (whether or not it is to access formal loans). For a second phase of the project, this approach should be experimented in more cooperatives with regular monitoring and further training on financial management and loan management.</p>		<p>The partnership with ICCO Terrafina microfinance has been ongoing with support being extended to cooperatives to initiate and sustain saving groups under the solidarity model. Access to finance, including savings, is an important intervention to ensure business growth. We are currently piloting the development of a specific post-harvest equipment loan for smallholder farmers via micro-</p>			

	<p>At the same time, work should continue with banks and microfinance institutions to develop specific products for agriculture. This should include attention to a crop insurance system. Another potential option is to have built-in credit from the maize buyers. The situation is now more favourable for this kind of system as the trust in cooperatives has increased and buyers are looking for options to secure their supply. It could be tried on a pilot approach with only well-performing cooperatives and with a close monitoring to develop good practices before upscaling such a scheme.</p>		<p>finance institutions. Loan application will be actively linked to the existing saving groups, leveraging collateral and will enable farmers to engage in improved post-harvest practices which will reduce losses and improve food safety.</p> <p>WFP is actively supporting the development of the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme operated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources. Under the crop insurance leg, cooperatives are</p>			
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			encouraged to take-up hybrid or area yield insurance packages will de-risk operations.			
4	<p><b>P. 53: Recommendation 4 (related to conclusion 2 and 3): In the next six months, WFP Rwanda should work with the WFP Regional Bureau and the GoR, to develop a project proposal and raise funding for a second phase of the LRP. As part of this, WFP should conduct a study to assess the place and roles of women in the maize value chain to ensure that women are not getting excluded now that maize is becoming profitable. Capacity building and behaviour changes are a long process. The</b></p>		<p>We are actively fundraising to continue supporting the LRP cooperatives. Any new phase will include a holistic support package for sustained cooperative development focusing on production increases, market access, access to finance, governance and financial management.</p>			



<p>evaluation has highlighted that the interventions have brought about important changes, but cooperatives remain fragile and adoption of good practices is not yet anchored in farmers activities. At least one round of refresher training on GAP and PHHS should be organized for cooperatives and coaching should continue for three years minimum with the objective of progressively switching to demand-based advice and extension services (which should progressively support cooperatives for specific requests). Support should be more specific to the situation, capacities and needs of each cooperative. An</p>		<p>Recently, a joint WFP and FAO commissioned study on the position of women in the maize value chain has been concluded by NMP, a Dutch micro-finance platform. This study has laid out the foundation for programmatic triggers for improved participation of women in light of the commercialization of the maize value chain in Rwanda.</p>			
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	<p>analysis of the situation of the cooperatives should be done. If needed, cooperatives with very low ownership and strong governance problems, and those that are collapsing, should be excluded. The implementation design could remain very similar but with a better inclusion of district/sector level agriculture staff in the activities to build their capacity and improve appropriation of the results of the project by the local authorities.</p>					
5	<p><b>P. 53: Recommendation 5 (related to conclusion 5 and 6): In the coming year, WFP should liaise with relevant stakeholders (MINAGRI and development partners</b></p>		<p>WFP Rwanda is involved in ongoing discussions at various levels to include climate-SMART, agro-ecological practices in the GAP training</p>			

	<p>working on these issues) to integrate a climate smart approach in the cropping model promoted and review the training curriculum and materials. So far, the LRP has focused only on maize and improving the yield. In order to increase sustainability of the intervention a more comprehensive approach of environmental issues is critically important. Improving resilience of cropping system to climatic hazards is key not only for farmer income and food security, but also to ensure that cooperatives can supply products on a regular basis. Specific expertise is needed to identify the main actions that should be</p>		<p>curriculum as a measure to stimulate sustainable agricultural practices at individual farmer level.</p> <p>These discussions are championed in the crop cluster at the level of MINAGRI and interlinked with our efforts to promote nutrition sensitive agriculture. Furthermore, Conservation Agriculture approaches are currently being discussed with MINAGRI for potential inclusion going forward.</p>			
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	<p>integrated. This could cover issues such as: better integration of animals raised in cropping systems, crop-diversification, introduction of trees in cropping systems, fertility management, among other areas. There is a need for sensitization at farmer level but also at government level in order to review GoR recommendations for agriculture in the marshlands.</p>					
6	<p><b>P. 53: Recommendation 6 (related to conclusion 4 and 5): In the coming three months, WFP should conduct a precise assessment of the different marketing options for SHFs.</b> There is growing interest in the cob model, but the</p>		<p>WFP has been actively sensitizing farmers on the operations, benefits and risks of trading cobs. Cob off-takers have been invited to introduce their model to farmers during all-buyer</p>			

	<p>conditions are not in favour of farmers in terms of added value and access to the empty cob. At a minimum there should be sensitization on those aspects (including economic aspects) in all the cooperatives before the end of the project so that farmers can make a balanced choice. We also suggest conducting specific economic studies on the different models (for farmers but also for buyers) and if needed to lobby for an improvement of the conditions offered to farmers.</p>		<p>meetings and field technicians have been appraised on the ratios and calculation methods for Cob prices. WFP supported initial studies on the economic/financial benefits of the cob model, and will continue to analyze developments as market dynamics change.</p> <p>The fact that maize is dried on the cob in the field significantly reduced the risk of aflatoxin contamination and overall post-harvest losses which makes this</p>			
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			<p>model specifically interesting to cooperatives with low post-harvest capacity to manage aggregation processes. WFP continues to engage with innovative private sector partners on alternative models for purchasing from smallholder farmers, extending to other commodities such as beans.</p>			
7	<p><b>P. 53: Recommendation 7 (related to conclusion 4 and 6): In the coming three years, WFP should continue to liaise with value chain actors and the relevant ministries to continue to</b></p>		<p>The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, under its new plan for agriculture transformation (PSTA4), is setting-up national value</p>			

	<p><b>strengthen and further formalize the maize value chain dialogue platform.</b> The context is very favourable at the moment to strengthen value chain dialogue with the different stakeholders in order to find win-win solutions for an inclusive development of the value chain. Discussion on marketing models (cobs vs grains), access to finance or post-harvest equipment are typical examples of issues that could be tackled jointly because finding sustainable solutions could have a positive impact across the whole chain. Discussions on those issues should continue. In order to do that, there is a link to be made between cooperatives (either through existing</p>		<p>chain platforms (VCP) for key value chains. WFP Rwanda has recently been endorsed by MINAGRI to be the co-lead in the development of the national maize VCP. An initial maize value chain mapping exercise is ongoing as the basis for the establishment of the VCP and to plot key priorities and stakeholder engagement for improved value chain coordination and performance.</p>			
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	Unions like Unicoopagri or, if needed, through support to the emergence of an association of maize cooperatives) in order to ensure that farmers voices are heard and that they can collectively discuss with buyers.					
8	<b>P. 54: Recommendation 8 (related to conclusions 3 and 4): In the coming year, WFP should develop a market-oriented approach for the supply of post-harvest equipment to farmers with interested companies and relevant ministries (commerce and agriculture).</b> The system in place, where everything is imported and distributed by WFP raised farmers interest		MINAGRI has recently issued a new private sector leveraging strategy to catalyze private sector engagement in the agriculture sector. WFP Rwanda has been actively lobbying for the development of the post-harvest industry under this strategy but also via the aflatoxin			



	<p>and engagement, but it is not sustainable. Contacts have been made with several companies and they should be supported to build a business plan either to manufacture in Rwanda or to import the required equipment and distribute this to farmers through agro-dealers. If that turns out not to be possible, then priority should be on working with what is already available locally.</p>		<p>technical working group.</p> <p>In order to facilitate the crowding-in of private sector in the post-harvest industry in Rwanda, WFP has recently commissioned a market assessment for PH equipment which will map out existing demand and supply in the country.</p>			
9	<p><b>P. 54: Recommendation 9 (related to conclusion 4, 5 and 6) : In the coming year, WFP should conduct a study of the types of crops grown by SHFs on cooperative land and on individual plots to identify potential</b></p>		<p>WFP Rwanda is conscious of need for crop diversification for school feeding, especially in support of the national decentralized</p>			

	<p><b>opportunities for small holder farmer to supply a diversity of products for a school feeding programme (including vegetables).</b></p> <p>For a second phase of LRP, WFP should define priority actions to improve cropping systems (not through mono-cropping) towards more productivity but also towards improved food security and risk management. This should focus first on crops grown on cooperative land because organizing aggregation and sales will probably be easier and there is already a diversity of products that can be taken into account (including Irish potatoes, beans, maize, vegetables).</p>		<p>school feeding model, under development by GoR.</p> <p>WFP Rwanda has been engaging with other DP's (JICA mainly) and MINAGRI to intensify and prioritize nutrition sensitive agriculture as the leading strategy for national diversification. This work will be continued in support of a national nutritious school feeding programme.</p>			
10	<b>P.54: Recommendation 10:</b>		In order to maximize the			

	<p>Capacity and time constitute major constraints on the participation of women in cooperative decision making. Moving forward WFP should tailor its intervention strategies with women and cooperatives to take into account these constraints for women and seek to proactively address them.</p>		<p>participation of women in key value chain activities, WFP commissioned two gender-related studies; a gender analysis of the beans value chain, as well as a study on the position of women in value chain financing. The results of these studies are guiding new programme design.</p> <p>Furthermore, WFP is in close partnership with IFC, who have developed a 'gender in agribusiness leadership' training approach which is</p>			
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			currently being championed and scaled up to cooperatives. A cadre of cooperating partner and government staff have been trained in the approach to apply to a wide range of farmers' cooperatives, including former LRP cooperatives.			
	<i>From USDA: The report seems to indicate that cooperatives don't sell beans, but also that WFP did purchase beans from cooperatives in July 2019 (or planned to?). We've asked the evaluator to please clarify, and we'd like to ask WFP as well: Will you please further</i>		At the time of the review, beans were not directly purchased for the HGSF programme. However, in August 2019, 81 MT of beans were purchased from 3 LRP-supported cooperatives,			

	<i>explain the status of beans related to this project – are cooperatives now selling them, and are they being incorporated into school meals?</i>		generating more than RWF 42 million (USD 46,000) in revenue that will be used for feeding activities in the 2019/20 school year.			
	<i>From USDA: Based on our understanding that WFP continues to work with the LRP-targeted cooperatives as part of the ongoing MGD project, we recommend incorporating some follow-up with these cooperatives into the final evaluation of the MGD project. Ideally that section can build on what this evaluation established about the varying levels of capacity the cooperatives</i>		We concur that the inclusion of the LRP cooperatives under the final evaluation of the MGD project will provide additional information on the status and progress of these cooperatives and will look into the possibility of extending the scope of the MGD evaluation.			

	<i>have. Response from WFP?</i>					
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