



World Food Programme

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# School-based programmes: Impact Evaluation Window

School-based programmes are one of the most extensive social safety nets worldwide, with an estimated 388 million children worldwide currently benefiting from school feeding. Such interventions are intended to promote health, nutrition, learning, and the creation of human capital, while at the same time, stimulate local economies when school meals are procured locally. There is a growing need for more evidence to inform the trade-offs in school-based programmes' designs and implementations. For example finding the optimal balance between cost, size, frequency, and meals' composition; whether meals should be provided on-site, as a take-home ration, or via voucher/cash transfer; whether the benefits of locally procuring food is greater relative to direct import. There is also a growing need to better understand how different school-based programme designs can play an important role as a social safety net protecting boys and girls during shocks. To generate evidence that can help country offices to make informed policy decisions, WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) has developed this impact evaluation window in collaboration with the School-Based Programmes (SBP) division and Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) unit at the World Bank. We are seeking country offices that are interested in having their programme evaluated as part of this initiative.

## WHAT IS A WINDOW?

Windows are OEV led initiatives to coordinate a portfolio of impact evaluations on WFP programmes in priority areas. They allow country offices to learn what works in a way that informs their own programming and also contributes to a global evidence base.

*Participation in the window means you will receive expert advice and support from OEV and a dedicated technical specialist in your country. OEV will co-fund your impact evaluation.*

## WHAT IS AN IMPACT EVALUATION?

Impact evaluations measure positive and negative, short- or long-term changes in development outcomes that can be attributed to a specific programme or a policy. This is achieved by using a credible counterfactual.

Impact evaluations rely on data collected primarily at the individual or household level to measure expected or unexpected programme outcomes.

For WFP, most impact evaluations will be conducted ex-ante. This means that, the impact evaluation design is built into the programme planning and involves at least baseline and end-line data collections.

## WHAT TYPES OF QUESTIONS CAN WE ANSWER?

While specific evaluation questions for each impact evaluation largely depend on country office priorities, some possible questions for the window are:

- *To what extent do different programme's interventions, including modalities (in-school, take-home rations, or cash/ voucher) or complementary activities, contribute to children's outcomes? How do these effects vary by age and gender?*
- *To what extent different programme's interventions (modalities or complementarity activities) contribute to greater girls' wellbeing?*
- *To what extent do different procurement systems (e.g. imported food versus locally grown school meals) increase effectiveness of programmes at improving food security and nutrition in supported communities?*
- *To what extent do different programme's characteristics support households' consumption and food security in the presence of shocks?*

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# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE WINDOW?

- Effective, efficient, equitable and empowering programming that supports transformative change
- Timely production of **rigorous evidence** around key questions of country programming
- Increased support to strengthen the programme's **results-based monitoring** system
- Opportunity for **national capacity building** in impact evaluation

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any WFP country office with upcoming programmes which have a school health and nutrition component are invited to express interest.

The window is best suited for programmes **designed in 2021** or later, though programmes with earlier design and implementation dates may also be considered. The window is also best suited for programmes that have the scope for creating comparison groups.

## TIMING

Selection of programmes will happen every six months, until reaching completion of the window. Country offices have until **30 April 2021** to express interest in the first selection wave. It is important to note that expressions of interest do not imply commitment — OEV is happy to receive any questions and discuss your programme to decide if the window is a good opportunity for your office and assess feasibility.

Starting in **May 2021**, OEV will organise a series of virtual trainings and engagements designed to develop skills and understand impact evaluation practices. The training series will be open to all interested staff. Programmes expressing interest in the window are particularly encouraged to participate. OEV will also use virtual engagements to develop the impact evaluation designs. The first wave of programmes selection will be reviewed and approved by **end of June 2021**.

The impact evaluation's timing depends on the timing of programme implementation. Preparation and contracting for data collection will take place as soon as possible after selection into the window. The baseline data collection will then take place in the months leading up to the **programme start date**.

The duration of your involvement in the window then depends largely on the programme and outcomes of interest. For many programmes, a mid-line data collection will occur in the first or second year of implementation, with an end-line data collection in the second or final year of the programme. Finally, OEV and DIME aim to analyse the data and produce results when most useful for informing programme and policy decisions. Timely analysis will accompany key data collection cycles, and the final analysis will occur after end-line data collection.

## FUNDING

Country offices participating in the window commit to funding the data collection activities of their impact evaluation. While the most likely source of this funding is the programme M&E budget, OEV encourages and supports country offices to leverage any donor interest to garner additional funding. The remaining costs will be funded by OEV, including the analysis

and technical support.

OEV encourages and will support programmes that intend to include an impact evaluation component in their programme proposals to raise donors' interest.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**For Country Offices:** Upon approval and selection into the window, OEV will begin discussions with the country office to solidify the design and the tools for data collection. Country office and cooperating partner feedback is crucial at this stage in order to ensure the impact evaluation is both feasible and useful for programme teams.

Before and during implementation of the programme, country teams will work closely with OEV to collect data that complements existing M&E needs, and to ensure adherence to the impact evaluation design throughout the programme. This involves ensuring that the programme is targeted to the pre-specified beneficiary group and the comparison group appropriately.

Country teams will also be responsible for liaising with data collection firms and supervising the baseline, mid-line and end-line data collection.

**For SBP:** The School-based Programmes division will guide the identification and selection of programmes into the window and support fundraising.

**For OEV:** OEV, in partnership with DIME, will provide the additional capacity needed, including managing the impact evaluations and providing technical guidance throughout the lifecycle of the window. OEV and DIME will manage the data analysis and production of window outputs, as well as their dissemination.

## OVERSIGHT

A Steering Committee will oversee the window's work with representatives from OEV, SBP and DIME. The Steering Committee will be supported by a Reference Group and a Technical Advisory Group to draw on global expertise and capacities.

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

To express interest, please send an email filling in to the [attached form](#). OEV strongly recommends that you initially discuss these points with your **Regional Evaluation Officer**. The closing dates for expressions of interest is **30 April 2021**. Please send your email to **Simone Lombardini** ([simone.lombardini@wfp.org](mailto:simone.lombardini@wfp.org)) with CC to **Jonas Heirman** ([jonas.heirman@wfp.org](mailto:jonas.heirman@wfp.org)) and to your Regional Evaluation Officer.