**Quality Checklist for Baseline Report OF   
McGovern-Dole Decentralized Evaluation Version November 2021**

**[title of the McGovern-Dole decentralized evaluation]**

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| **Overall** | | | |
| **General** | | **Comments/status** | |
| **Length**   * Report does not exceed 30,000 words, excluding executive summary, and annexes do not exceed 40,000 words.   **Accessibility**   * The report is written in a clear and accessible manner. * The structure of the findings allows readers to understand the baseline findings. * Key messages are summarized and highlighted. * The report presents a good balance between descriptive and analytical information. * Terminology is used correctly. For McGovern-Dole evaluation products, the program name should not be referred to MGD. Use the full program name “USDA McGovern-Dole international Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program” or the abbreviation, “McGovern-Dole.” * The report is free from grammar, spelling or punctuation errors. * Visuals, diagrams, charts and tables are used in a clear and accessible way, adhering to the formatting guidelines and the accessibility requirements of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). * The language used in the report is simple and clear, without jargon and excessively complex sentences. Programme components are referred to by the same name throughout. If a term or expression may have multiple meanings, additional clarification is added. Acronyms are used only where essential. * The report passes a Microsoft Word Accessibility check. See additional guidance on 508 accessibility [here](https://www.ssa.gov/accessibility/checklists/word2013/Word2016.html). * Reports are free of Personally Identifiable Information (PII).   **Credibility**   * The tone of the report is constructive, balanced and politically sensitive. * The report is objective and presents successes and failures, and positive and negative aspects in a balanced way. * The language used is precise and professional, appropriate for an official document and without room for interpretation. * The report raises critical issues when necessary and does not avoid or hide problems. * The report’s findings and conclusions are fully evidence-based. * The report does not draw conclusions unless evidence clearly points to the conclusion. * Exact figures are stated whenever possible in place of subjective terms such as “many” or “some.” Numbers are consistent throughout the report. | |  | |
| **Editing** | |  | |
| * WFP format and templates are applied, and specific requirements relating to USDA are followed (e.g. annex on people interviewed is included, with PII removed). * Acronyms are spelled out the first time they are used. * Paragraphs and pages are numbered electronically. * Sources are provided for all data and quotes. * Table of contents is included and lists tables, graphs, figures and annexes. * Tables and diagrams are used as relevant and are numbered. * Annexes are numbered and cross-referenced in the main document. * USDA is referenced in the disclaimer statement everywhere that WFP is referenced. * The report is a stand-alone document. Rather than referencing the Inception report or the Terms of Reference for additional information, all information needed to understand the baseline study is included in the body of the baseline report or in an annex. | |  | |
| **Cover page** | |  | |
| * The cover page uses the WFP DEQAS report template/layout and includes the USDA logo. * The title is identical to that in the Terms of Reference (unless agreed otherwise). * The date and status of the report (draft/final) is indicated on the cover page. | |  | |
| **Executive Summary** | | | |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | | **Comments/status** |
| The executive summary provides a complete and balanced synthesis of baseline findings, conclusions and lessons:   * An introduction, which details the main features of the McGovern-Dole evaluation including evaluation type, period being evaluated and commissioning office. * Purpose and objectives, main users/intended audience. * Context. * The scope and subject of the baseline, including geographical coverage and beneficiaries. * Main features of the baseline methodology, indicators and evaluation questions, limitations. * Key findings of the baseline data collection and analysis. * Overall summarized conclusions and lessons (if any), with clear links to the findings presented. | * The executive summary is coherent, self-explanatory and self-contained. It can be used as a stand-alone aid to decision making. * The key findings form the largest part of the summary. * Length does not exceed 2,000 words. | |  |
| 1. **Introduction** | | | |
| **1.1 Evaluation features** | | | |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | | **Comments/status** |
| This section provides a succinct overview of the evaluation and features, providing clarity on why and how the baseline was carried out.   * Purpose and rationale for the evaluation and baseline data collection, including why it was needed at that point in time. * Specific objectives (e.g. accountability and/or learning), indicating whether more weight is on accountability or learning and if so why. The objectives of the baseline study should align with the Evaluation Plan. These objectives may include (1) defining baseline values for indicators (2) advising the refinement of targets (3) informing changes to evaluation questions at midterm and endline, among others. * Subject and scope of the baseline, including any exclusions and reasons for the exclusions. * Main stakeholders in the evaluation. * Intended users and how they will use the baseline findings. * Short presentation of the evaluation team. * Approach to the overall McGovern-Dole evaluation (if baseline contracted together with midline and endline). * Approach to baseline data collection (including how it supports mid and endline evaluations). | * Expected content is included and sets the scene for the McGovern-Dole evaluation. * Information is succinct and focused. * It is clear how the baseline supports and is used as part of the full evaluation. * Sufficient to explain to readers how the evaluation was undertaken and generate trust in the impartiality and credibility of the evaluation. * Relevant annexes are cross-referenced. * Baseline objectives align with the Evaluation Plan. | |  |
| **1.2 Context** | | | |
| This section provides a succinct overview of the surrounding context directly relevant to the McGovern-Dole evaluation and the baseline (this should be a summary from the Inception Report, with any refinements included from information and observation during the baseline phase) including:   * Poverty, food and nutrition security. * Contextual aspects relevant to, and necessary to inform, an understanding of the subject of the evaluation: geography; demography, including refugees and internally displaced persons where applicable; and disasters and humanitarian protection where applicable. * Government strategy, institutional capacities, policies and priorities, including normative instruments related to human rights, gender equality and equity and wider inclusion considerations. * National indicators (education, health, nutrition, agriculture, gender inequality index) relevant to the evaluation subject, disaggregated by sex. * Key data and trends related to SDG 2/SDG 17 in the context (region, country subnational/local level). * Humanitarian issues, including migration patterns and host community/social tensions. * Gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions of the context, including an intersectional analysis of specific social groups. * Key external events which led to significant changes in WFP’s work. * Features of international assistance in the area. * Other WFP work in the area. * Related work of other key humanitarian/development actors. | * Information is sufficient to understand the implications of the context for the evaluation subject. * Relevant indicators and latest information have been identified and latest trend data used. * Information draws from and is consistent with the Inception Report, updated where appropriate. * Information is explicitly geared to the evaluation subject, rather than being generically presented. * There is a good balance between the amount of detail and synthesis. * Authoritative or reliable sources are used. | |  |
| 1. **Subject of the baseline, Theory of Change and baseline questions** | | | |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | | **Comments/status** |
| **2.1. Subject of the baseline, theory of change, activities and intended outputs and outcomes** | | | |
| This section provides a succinct overview of the evaluation subject, including factual information such as:   * Type of evaluation (activity) and subject. * Geographic scope of the baseline subject. * Relevant dates: approval date, start date and end date. * Planned outcomes, outputs and activities: What was the unit of intervention, and at what level are the outputs and outcomes expected to occur (household/individual/school/farming cooperative)? * Beneficiary numbers (planned and actual) disaggregated by sex/age/activity. How were the project/programme beneficiaries selected and targeted? * Amount of planned and actual transfers (tonnage/cash/ vouchers), disaggregated by year and activity (if multiple activities). For Decentralized Evaluations that focus on an activity, transfer modality or pilot project, the modalities of the intervention are presented and discussed (e.g. capacity strengthening, service delivery, etc.). * Main partners (government, Non-Governmental Organizations, bilateral, multilateral, private sector partners). * Resources (overtime, resources allocated to each activity, percentage funded of total requirements). * Other relevant preceding/concurrent activities/interventions. * Analytical basis of the subject (needs assessment, past evaluations/reviews, gender/social inclusion studies that informed the design of the subject). Any amendments to the initial design and rationale. Includes a summary of findings from previous related evaluations. * Project implementation strategy, the phase (new/continuation). * Maps/graphs for illustration. * Referring to the Inception Report: clearly articulate the Theory of Change, outlining how the intervention/s is expected to bring about changes including key activities undertaken by the programme/project (what is provided to whom and how?). This should follow logically from the information provided in the context and subject of evaluation sections. * Outline what aspects of the Theory of Change are not included in the evaluation and baseline phase. Describe critical assumptions. * Any changes or refinements observed during the baseline phase should be clearly described. | * Expected content is included and information is relevant and important to understand the subject of the evaluation: * What it is. * When was it designed? * What are the key inputs (USD value)? * What are the planned outputs? (beneficiaries, MT, Cash & Voucher USD) * What is the target/scope? * What are the planned outcomes? * Who is involved in its implementation? * Highlights relevant evidence from past needs assessments, evaluations and reviews that are relevant to the evaluation. * Gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions of the subject of the evaluation are explained. * Differences between original design and implementation are explained if appropriate. * The section is descriptive, not analytical: it does not pre-empt the analysis of the findings section. * The section provides a starting point for further quantitative and qualitative analysis to be reported in the findings section. * A Theory of Change or results framework is clearly articulated, noting which aspects are under the scope of the evaluation and baseline phase. * The critical assumptions are clearly described. * It sets out how the project intends to result in the expected impacts/outcomes. * Changes or refinements to the inception period are outlined. | |  |
| **2.2. Evaluation questions and evaluation criteria** | | | |
| * The evaluation criteria applied to the evaluation are listed and justified (any changes from the inception phase must be clearly described). * The evaluation questions are clearly articulated as set out in the Inception Report – any changes from the Terms of Reference or Inception Report must be clearly set out. If there are no evaluation questions, this must be explained. * Gender, equity and wider inclusion considerations for the data collection methods are explained. * Full details of the methodology and the evaluation matrix are included in the annexes. * At baseline stage, the report should not attempt to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, or impact of the programme as the programme has not yet begun. Evaluation questions to be answered at this stage may focus on describing baseline values or contextual factors which may impact the evaluation criteria at midterm and endline. The baseline report may also share questions which will be answered at midterm and/or endline for which the baseline will set the foundation. * Baseline questions should **not** assess the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, or impact of previous awards. | * Are evaluation questions and hypothesis as set out in the Inception Report? If they have changed or there have been any additions since the Inception Report or the Terms of Reference, these should be highlighted. * Are gender, equity and inclusion dimensions well integrated through the evaluation questions? * Do questions focus only on the current award and avoid assessing previous McGovern-Dole programmes? | |  |
| 1. **Evaluation approach and methodology for baseline data collection** | | | |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | | **Comments/status** |
| **3.1. Evaluation approach and methodology** | | | |
| * Describe overall intended methodological approach for the whole McGovern-Dole evaluation at a higher level, setting out how the baseline is used as part of the evaluation and the anticipated use of its results. * Describe the evaluation and baseline methodology as clearly as possible. * Summary of analytical methods for the evaluation as described in the Inception Report. More detailed information from the Inception Report necessary for understanding the methodology should be included in an annex. * Set out how different methods are combined or mixed, or how (if any) triangulation is conducted as part of the evaluation/baseline. * Set out how women, girls, men and boys from different stakeholder groups were included and able to participate in the baseline, and how their different voices were heard and used in the evaluation. * Full details are included in annexes. | * The information allows the reader to understand how the evaluation is conducted and how the baseline links to the overall evaluation. * The methodological approach is coherent, logical and in line with the Terms of Reference and Inception Report. If there are changes, these should be clearly described (this will be at a higher level as the focus of the methodology within this report must be on the baseline data collection and analysis itself). * Mixed methods and their rationale are explained. * The methodological approach is comprehensive and presents a systematic approach that generates trust in the credibility of the evaluation and baseline. * Gender equality and women’s empowerment, equity and wider inclusion dimensions are mainstreamed (women, girls, men and boys from different groups are included). * The evaluation questions help in assessing if the intervention has contributed to promoting equity for any relevant disadvantaged groups. | |  |
| **3.2. Baseline data collection methods and tools** | | | |
| * Description of indicators for each evaluation question, and how they are measured as part of the baseline. * Set out primary and secondary data collection methods and mechanisms in detail (tools must be in the annexes). * Description of sampling strategy/selection approach for the baseline for both quantitative and qualitative data. * Explanation of how data was checked, cleaned and stored. * Description of the validity, quality, reliability and usability of the baseline data, and the equality of the baseline data. * Gender, equity and wider inclusion considerations for the data collection methods. * Full details are included in the annexes, including the evaluation matrix. | * Baseline data collection methods to collect and analyse the baseline data, and sampling applied are relevant and appropriate. * Primary and secondary data collection methods are appropriate and implemented well. * Data quality is explicitly discussed, providing confidence in the quality and credibility of the data. * Methods demonstrate consideration of gender equality and women’s empowerment, equity and wider inclusion issues. * Methods are ethical. * Full baseline data collection methodology is provided in the annexes (updated from the Inception Report in relation to its actual implementation). * Data has been appropriately cleaned and stored. | |  |
| **3.3 Limitations** | | | |
| * Limitations of methods or data availability and quality encountered in the baseline phase and mitigation strategies applied. * Any risks or limitations that could affect the evaluation and future survey rounds are discussed and mitigation strategies applied. * Any contextual risks are explained and how the team has/proposes to overcome them. | * Limitations and their effects on the evidence base are included, including how they were addressed. | |  |
| **3.4 Quality assurance of baseline data collection** | | | |
| * Describe the quality assurance process applied to the baseline data collection and report, including DEQAS. | * Quality assurance mechanisms are discussed, giving confidence in the quality and credibility of the baseline phase. | |  |
| **3.5 Ethical considerations** | | | |
| * Describe how ethical considerations were ensured in the design and implementation of the baseline data collection and any ethical issues identified. * Set out how the baseline data collection methodology was ethically sound and conformed to both WFP and UNEG ethical norms and standards. * Identify any remaining risks to ethics, and safeguards proposed. * Describe the mechanisms for managing and safeguarding ethics throughout the evaluation. * If the Terms of Reference/Inception Report identified or anticipated any ethical issues, these should also be explicitly addressed. | * The following should be described: informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities. | |  |
| 1. **Baseline findings and discussion** | | | |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | | **Comments/status** |
| * Summarize all McGovern-Dole programme activities and project objectives and present baseline values and validation of yearly programme targets. * Analyse each indicator individually, extracting it from the Performance Measurement Plan. The indicators and data collection will support future evaluations, as well as the specific USDA Learning Agenda research questions. * Findings are substantiated by credible evidence that has been checked for accuracy, consistency and reliability. * Information sources are provided and accurately quoted. * Limitations or gaps in evidence are presented. * Indicate where evidence is inconclusive. | * The relevance of evaluation questions to the project are explicitly assessed. * Data collection and analysis are undertaken as part of the baseline as well as on the population characteristics. * Findings are transparently generated on the basis of triangulated evidence. Evidence has been checked for accuracy, consistency and reliability; and is identified and referenced (sources are provided for data/quotes). No findings are based on unsubstantiated opinions. * Findings take into consideration perspectives from different stakeholder groups, and carefully consider gender, equity and wider inclusion dimensions, including through the analysis of data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, etc. * Findings are presented in a culturally sensitive manner which respects the confidentiality, protection of sources and dignity of those interviewed. * Any limitation or gaps in the evidence base are clearly explained, and any places where the evidence is inconclusive are also explained. * The findings balance detail and synthesis. | |  |
| 1. **Conclusions and lessons** | | | |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | | **Comments/status** |
| **5.1 Conclusions** | | | |
| * Provide a balanced assessment of both positive and negative study findings. They may be organized by evaluation question, evaluation criteria or theme. * Bring the findings up to a higher level, connecting findings across different evaluation criteria and responding to the ‘so what’ question (rather than simply summarizing the evidence). * Consider gender equality and the empowerment of women, equity and wider inclusion dimensions. * Carefully consider the quality of the baseline data. * Consider the analytical methods used and how successfully they were implemented. * Consider if any changes to the design or future data collection rounds need to be made to ensure that the evaluation questions related to the impact criterion can be answered. | * Conclusions are substantiated by and follow logically from the findings, with clear and explicit linkages. * Conclusions are succinct and present a conclusive picture. * No new evidence is introduced that has not been presented in the findings. * Conclusions are impartial and free of bias. * Conclusions reflect both strengths and areas for improvement. * Conclusions include recognition of different stakeholder groups, gender and equity aspects. | |  |
| **5.2 Lessons (optional, if any at baseline stage)** | | | |
| * Include short paragraphs describing any interesting lessons from baseline data collection, or from a light analysis. * These may include lessons from data collection, measurement of difficult concepts, or any useful correlations. * Describe what is necessary for the successful monitoring and evaluation of the project. * Based on learning from the baseline, comment on the design of the evaluation(s), the feasibility of the evaluation(s) and the relevance of questions. | * Lessons are relevant and well aligned to the evaluation purpose and objectives. * They are objective and constructive. * Lessons are sufficiently specific to be actionable and provide a clear direction of intended change, while at the same time leaving room for implementers and users to fine-tune their implementation approach. | |  |
| **Annexes** | | | |
| **Expected content** | **Assessment criteria** | | **Comments/status** |
| Annexes support and expand on text in the main report. Mandatory annexes include:   * Summary Terms of Reference. * Baseline and evaluation timeline. * Methodology, including detailed baseline data collection methodology such as sampling and selection details. * Evaluation matrix. * Data collection tools. * Table of project indicators that includes both targets and actuals. * WFP Confidentiality agreement and UNEG Ethical Pledge signed by team members. * List of people interviewed (positions only, no names included). * Bibliography. * Acronyms. | * Annexes do not exceed 40,000 words. * All mandatory annexes are included. * Additional technical annexes are relevant and necessary to supplement the main text. * All annexes are listed, numbered and referenced where appropriate in the main report. * Sufficient information is included in the annexes for the report to read as a “stand-alone” document, without the need to reference the Terms of Reference or Inception Report. | |  |