



UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group



DAC NETWORK ON
DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION

Peer Review of the Evaluation Function at the World Food Programme

May 2021



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Executive Summary

Peer review features

1. This peer review of the evaluation function at WFP was carried out in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of United Nations organizations and the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. It is the third peer review of WFP's evaluation function and was conducted at the request of WFP.
2. The purpose of the peer review is to inform the strengthening of WFP's evaluation function so that it can more effectively contribute to WFP's organizational decision making, programme effectiveness, learning and accountability for results. The terms of reference and guiding questions for the review were structured in line with the UNEG framework and aimed to "provide an independent and professional assessment of the WFP evaluation function on the extent to which the UNEG Norms and Standards¹ have been adopted by WFP". The assessment focuses on the independence, credibility and utility of the WFP evaluation function and on how effectively evaluations were used and followed up on throughout WFP to promote accountability, learning and improvement.
3. The review covers both the centralized and decentralized components of WFP's evaluation function and assesses the role and strategic positioning of financial and human resourcing, evaluation planning, evaluation use and quality assurance mechanisms. It focuses on the period of the current evaluation policy, which covers 2016–2021, and builds on findings from prior assessments, the most recent of which is the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment covering the period from 2017 to 2018.²
4. The peer review panel was formed in March 2020 and reviewed and adopted terms of reference in May, when an external consultant was recruited. To prepare for the peer review the Office of Evaluation (OEV) produced a comprehensive self-assessment report against UNEG norms and standards. The review panel considers that OEV's self-assessment constitutes a very frank and constructive reflection on WFP's evaluation practice and endorses its judgments. Drawing on the self-assessment, interviews and an extensive literature review, the consultant produced a comprehensive preliminary assessment. Building on the observations in the preliminary assessment, the panel then held remote meetings between 12 and 26 October 2020. As well as OEV, the panel met a broad range of stakeholders including senior management from WFP departments, divisions and regional bureaux, members of the Executive Board, country directors and members of regional evaluation units. The present report presents evidence and analysis from these sources. Because of travel restrictions related to COVID-19, the entire assessment was conducted remotely. WFP's regional evaluation units were leading mid-term reviews of their regional evaluation strategies at the same time as the peer review was being conducted.
5. The peer review panel comprised six members:
 - Marco Segone, Peer Review Chair, Director, Evaluation Office of the United Nations Population Fund;
 - Sven Harten, Deputy Director, German Institute for Development Evaluation;
 - Maurya West Meiers, Senior Evaluation Officer, Methods Advisory Team, World Bank Independent Evaluation Group;
 - David Rider Smith, Senior Evaluation Coordinator, Evaluation Service, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
 - Silvia Salinas Mulder, President, International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation; and
 - Anu Saxén, Director, Development Evaluation Unit, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland.

¹ UNEG. 2016. [Norms and Standards for Evaluation \(2016\)](#).

² MOPAN. 2019. [MOPAN 2017-18 Assessments. World Food Programme](#).

Daniel Arghiros was the senior evaluation consultant for the panel.

6. The panel would like to thank the Director and Deputy Directors and staff of OEV for facilitating the review through a strongly collaborative approach. OEV's organization of the review was exemplary. The panel would also like to thank all the people to whom they spoke for their open and frank contributions.

The WFP evaluation function

7. The 2016–2021 evaluation policy³ sets out the vision, strategic direction and model of the evaluation function. The policy commits WFP to:
 - i) maintaining a high-quality centralized evaluation function while applying a phased approach to developing a decentralized function over the life of the policy, with OEV setting the framework of evaluation norms and standards, accountabilities and coverage;
 - ii) enhancing capacity to meet stakeholders' requirements for accountability throughout WFP; and
 - iii) strengthening WFP's culture of learning, along with that of its partners, and facilitating evidence-based decision making.
8. The evaluation policy sets out a clear vision and purpose in its theory of change (see Annex 6). Its purpose is to ensure that evaluation results are "consistently and comprehensively incorporated into WFP's policies, strategies and programmes". WFP's evaluation strategy⁴ sets out a phased implementation plan with a comprehensive set of indicators. Each of the six regional bureaux has a regional evaluation strategy that mirrors the structured approach of the corporate evaluation strategy but is attuned to regional conditions.
9. Successive annual evaluation reports show that WFP is achieving the evaluation targets it sets itself. It has increased the number of centralized and decentralized evaluations, achieving the coverage required by its current coverage norms. For example, 16 of WFP's 26 policies have been evaluated, and OEV is on track with the roll out of country strategic plan evaluations. In addition, 40 percent of country offices have conducted at least one decentralized evaluation in their current planning cycles, in line with WFP's current coverage norm. There has also been progress in evaluation quality, with independent post-hoc assessments of quality showing steady improvements.
10. Since the adoption of the policy the financial resources available for the evaluation function have almost tripled. In 2020 they totalled USD 26.02 million, or 0.31 percent of WFP's contribution income. WFP has also increased the number of evaluation professionals in OEV and the regional bureaux, enabling it to deliver its work programme to the required standard.

Summary assessment against the peer review criteria

11. The panel's assessment of the independence, credibility and utility of WFP's evaluation function is substantially positive. WFP's evaluation function operates in line with UNEG norms and standards for evaluation. Centralized and decentralized evaluations are useful for both learning and accountability purposes, and the evaluation function serves an increasingly important role in contributing to WFP's ability to be a learning organization. The panel fully endorses the MOPAN assessment's conclusion that in WFP "[a] highly strategic independent corporate evaluation function oversees the production of high-quality centralised and decentralised evaluations".
12. The panel considers that all aspects of WFP's evaluation architecture are well articulated and that the governance structure that frames WFP's evaluation function is effective. Much of that structure has been established in direct response to the 2014 peer review.⁵ The panel found that UNEG norms and standards have been embedded throughout WFP's evaluation function in all the systems established to support centralized and decentralized evaluations, and they have been updated to reflect recent changes. OEV's evaluations and other products are respected by staff throughout WFP and by the

³ [Evaluation Policy \(2016–2021\)](#) (WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1).

⁴ WFP. 2016. [Corporate Evaluation Strategy \(2016–2021\)](#).

⁵ [Summary report of the peer review of the evaluation function at the World Food Programme](#) (WFP/EB.A/2014/7-D).

Executive Board. OEV's mandate for evaluation is strong. The evaluation policy clearly describes the governance structure and approval and follow-up mechanisms. It covers all UNEG criteria and other recommended practices identified by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system. OEV has a strong and respected institutional identity. The evaluation function steering group, mandated by the current evaluation policy, has served as an effective champion for the evaluation function. Senior management appears to appreciate the role and added value of evaluation, and there is evidence of high levels of support for the function within the organization.

13. In the period reviewed, OEV adapted the evaluation function to keep it aligned with WFP's evolving priorities and organizational changes, ensuring that the function was relevant and added value. Mirroring the organization's emphasis on country-level action, since 2016 OEV has invested heavily in creating a support system to help country offices manage decentralized evaluations to UNEG standards.
14. There has been real progress towards the vision set out in the current evaluation policy that "by 2021 evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems are embedded in WFP's culture of accountability and learning". However, not surprisingly given WFP's size and operational scale, that culture is not yet fully established. This report provides suggestions and recommendations aimed at helping WFP to achieve its vision.
15. The panel finds that WFP's centralized evaluation function is mature and well-grounded. Decentralized evaluation has made great progress since 2016: the creation in 2017 and 2018 of regional evaluation units to support regional bureaux and country offices has made a huge difference. While the centralized evaluation system is mature, the demand-led decentralized evaluation system is still being established, and this is where WFP will need to focus most attention.
16. The panel notes that across WFP and its stakeholders there is also broad appreciation of the way in which the Director of Evaluation and her team have strengthened OEV's impact on the organization. There is high regard for the professionalism of OEV. It is also clear that OEV contributes actively at the international level to UNEG and other major specialized evaluation fora, helping to influence the international evaluation community with WFP's perspective and experience.

Independence

17. WFP's central evaluation function has a high degree of independence despite being an office within WFP. The Director of Evaluation plans, manages and delivers evaluations without the need for approval from WFP management, while consulting appropriately. Overall, the function meets UNEG's evaluation norms and standards and has a high degree of organizational independence. This attribute is not new. In a 2014 assessment of evaluation functions in the United Nations system, JIU judged WFP to be one of only two organizations with the "most comprehensive systems for addressing all five criteria of independence".
18. Conditions embedded in the evaluation policy and evaluation charter secure a sufficiently high degree of independence in the appointment of the Director of Evaluation. While the director is appointed by the Executive Director, the Executive Director must present the final selection to the Executive Board for approval – an arrangement that ensures sufficient independence. However, WFP may want to explore the possibility of further strengthening that independence by having the selection and appointment of the Director of Evaluation managed directly by the Executive Board.
19. The evaluation function also has a robust degree of financial independence. The centralized evaluation function is financed from separate resources that are largely stable and sustainable and that allow OEV to finance the evaluation coverage mandated by the evaluation policy. The budget for OEV's annual workplan is approved by the Board as part of WFP's management plan. The panel considers that the target approved by the Executive Board of committing 0.8 percent of WFP's contribution income to evaluation has helped to secure the financial independence of the evaluation function.

Credibility

20. OEV has put in place robust systems for securing the validity and reliability of both centralized and decentralized evaluations. This represents a real strength. OEV also consistently uses a set of carefully designed and mutually reinforcing controls and stakeholder involvement to support the credibility of evaluations. The panel considers these to be robust.
21. The evaluation function is supported by guidance on the various kinds of centralized evaluations that it undertakes and on decentralized evaluations. The Evaluation Quality Assurance System consists of a comprehensive centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System, a similarly comprehensive decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System and a body of technical notes that apply to all evaluations. These elements incorporate UNEG criteria.
22. OEV has a high degree of professional integrity. There is also a high degree of professionalism in evaluation at the regional bureau level. Both OEV and the evaluation units of the regional bureaux have in place robust professional and technical standards intended to uphold impartiality and balanced perspectives.
23. OEV invests well in the professional development of its staff. It is seeking to be more strategic in its planning of capacity development for evaluation throughout WFP with its recent evaluation capacity development strategy.⁶ The level of technical competence in evaluation among OEV staff is uneven as a consequence of WFP's human resources policy and OEV's adaptation to it. The current evaluation policy commits OEV to "continue to be staffed by a 50:50 mix" of externally recruited evaluation specialists and current WFP staff with the required competency for evaluation, appointed in line with WFP's reassignment policy.

Development of the decentralized evaluation function

24. The most strategically important change introduced by the current evaluation policy, and since the last peer review, is the creation of a demand-led decentralized evaluation function. OEV has defined the strategy and role of the decentralized evaluation function well and has also, in collaboration with the evaluation function steering group, adapted the function during the period of the current evaluation policy. With the introduction of regional evaluation officers and regional evaluation units, WFP has built a regional system that supports the decentralized evaluation capacity of country offices.
25. OEV's support for the decentralized evaluation function is an area of strength. OEV has established a comprehensive set of mechanisms that support country offices and help regional evaluation units to fulfil their roles. The panel considers that together these constitute an extremely strong system and serve as an example for other agencies seeking to build decentralized evaluation functions. WFP country directors interviewed for the peer review value highly the guidance, quality assurance systems and support from regional evaluation units. Despite being in place for only three years, the units have achieved real traction in all the regions. Inevitably it will take longer for regional evaluation units to ensure that all country offices are competent in planning and commissioning evaluations.
26. While the adequacy of financial and human resources for decentralized evaluations at the country level is uneven, by creating a targeted contingency evaluation fund WFP has taken steps to ensure that funding shortfalls do not stop country offices from undertaking decentralized evaluations. As stated in paragraph 34, further investment in strengthening the decentralized evaluation system is needed.

Utility – the added value of the evaluation function

27. The value that WFP's evaluation function adds is clear both in terms of helping to improve WFP's performance – by generating validated better practices – and in terms of accountability. WFP has a track record of producing centralized evaluations that are highly relevant and that add to learning. The extent to which evaluation is being institutionalized is therefore increasing.
28. Evaluative thinking is strongest at the headquarters level; at the decentralized level it is weaker, but it started from a lower baseline and is heading in the right direction. The panel heard of strong buy-in from the small sample of country offices interviewed but a significant proportion of staff and country

⁶ WFP. 2020. [WFP Evaluation Capacity Development Strategy \(2020–2024\)](#).

offices see evaluation as a bureaucratic exercise. The panel therefore feels that there is room for OEV and regional evaluation units to enhance utility even further, and many of its comments relate to this.

29. There has been a shift in internal perceptions of the evaluation function, resulting in much increased appreciation of evaluation as a contributor to learning. This is a very positive development. However, the panel noted an institutional tendency towards treating evaluation primarily as an accountability tool. To balance this institutional tendency, the panel considers that WFP will need to ensure that more value is attached to learning from evaluation. Such a message will need to come from the Executive Board and senior management as well as OEV.
30. The panel considers that OEV can enhance the responsiveness of the evaluation function by deploying a broader range of evaluation types and methodologies. OEV's piloting of a new, more strategic approach to impact evaluations is an important step in this direction, but there is still room for more innovation, including the piloting of developmental or formative evaluations.⁷ The panel heard of demand for more timely production of evidence for informing programmes with short cycles, such as humanitarian interventions, and for real-time and interactive feedback loops that quickly provide management with emerging evaluative evidence.
31. The panel invites OEV and regional evaluation units to consider whether they can enhance value by seeking to more systematically contribute targeted evaluative evidence to decision makers when it is most needed and therefore likely to have the greatest potential impact. OEV and the regional evaluation units already do this in several ways – and coverage norms have been designed with learning needs in mind – but the panel considers that a more systematic approach could yield dividends. Over time this could enhance the value attached to evaluative learning and promote increased lesson learning at WFP more broadly. In practice, it means OEV and regional evaluation staff attending – as observers and without taking part in any decisions – key decision making events and providing targeted real-time evidence while maintaining independence and preventing the development of any real or perceived conflict of interest.
32. There are weaknesses in WFP's knowledge management system and a culture of using evaluation evidence in planning and programming has yet to be embedded. The lack of a solid and functioning knowledge management system inhibits the systematic use of findings from evaluations. OEV has had to work with policy and programme units to identify knowledge needs and contribute evaluative knowledge. Without functioning organization-wide systems, OEV itself will need to develop a systematic approach to the management of knowledge generated by evaluations.
33. There is demand from outside OEV for better communication, and OEV is developing a new communication and knowledge management strategy that will help to meet this need. The panel endorses this effort and encourages the adoption of cutting-edge methodologies for the evaluation function. The panel also feels that OEV could contribute more to learning beyond WFP by enhancing stakeholder access to evaluative evidence.

Strengthening the integrated evaluation function

34. Centralized and decentralized evaluations together constitute WFP's evaluation function. The systems and procedures OEV has put in place establish the same expectations and standards for both. Largely because country offices have less evaluation management capacity than OEV, however, the panel considers that more investment is needed in the evaluation capacity of country offices, particularly to minimize the potential for qualitative differences.
35. The panel also invites WFP to give learning needs even more explicit attention in the evaluation planning process. In collaboration with the evaluation function steering group and the Executive Board, OEV could seek to anticipate future learning needs and ensure that its planned coverage addresses them. OEV could develop an evaluation learning plan and use it to inform the evaluation plans in addition to addressing accountability purposes.

⁷ A formative evaluation is one that looks at design and relevance issues rather than assessing results achieved. The distinguishing characteristic of a developmental evaluation is that it contributes to something that is being developed.

36. This approach may lead WFP to review the current coverage norm for country strategic plan evaluations. The panel appreciates that country offices are among the primary users of these evaluations, which generate learning on how to improve impact. Notwithstanding their potential value for country offices, the utility of universal coverage of country strategic plans could be less than expected for two reasons. First, it is likely that many of the 80-plus country strategic plan evaluations will generate similar findings and recommendations with regard to issues that they have in common. Second, apart from the country offices themselves there is limited absorptive capacity in WFP to learn from such a high number of evaluations, within both management and the Executive Board. WFP could therefore consider a differentiated approach to country strategic plan evaluations, proceeding with them in strategically important countries but undertaking lighter processes or engaging in joint or system-wide evaluations in others. The panel recognizes that the commitment to full evaluation coverage was made only recently and that an immediate change would be unhelpful. WFP could therefore continue with full evaluation coverage of the “first-generation” country strategic plans and then review the utility of such coverage for “second-generation” plans.
37. The panel also considers that there is scope to try to increase the strategic contribution that decentralized evaluations make to learning. Country offices could be encouraged to select topics that better contribute to meeting WFP’s strategic learning needs once they have been identified (as described in the previous paragraph). Currently, most decentralized evaluations focus on a handful of themes or programmes. OEV could encourage country offices and regional bureaux by providing incentives such as enhanced support for units that choose to evaluate designated topics. OEV and regional evaluation units could also encourage regional bureaux to commission multi-country decentralized evaluations on priority themes.

Recommendations from the peer review

38. The following paragraphs focus on the panel’s other findings and related recommendations. These are aimed at strengthening the independence, credibility and utility of WFP’s evaluation function. The panel recommends that the evaluation policy be updated to incorporate changes in the external and internal environments and to take into consideration the six overarching recommendations that are presented below with action points for each. Some of the action points are relatively specific in terms of the measures that the panel recommends; others are phrased more generally, leaving WFP to reflect and decide on the best way forward. The text in parentheses at the end of each action point identifies the WFP entity that should implement the action point.

Independence

39. To safeguard the future independence of the Director of Evaluation position it is important that all conditions underpinning that independence be approved by the Executive Board. The Executive Board approves the evaluation policy and therefore the conditions should be set out in the policy document itself as opposed to in the evaluation charter or strategy. The conditions should include conditions for the dismissal of the Director of Evaluation.

Recommendation 1: To support the independence of the evaluation function the panel recommends that all conditions relating to that independence be explicitly stated in the next evaluation policy, which should:

- a) state explicitly that the Director of Evaluation reports to the Executive Board on functional issues and the Executive Director on administrative issues; and **(OEV)**
 - b) include procedures for the dismissal of the Director of Evaluation, which should require consultation with the Executive Board. (OEV)
40. The future independence and credibility of the evaluation function would be enhanced by three actions related to financing. The inclusion of a target percentage of WFP’s contribution income to be invested in evaluation in the current policy contributes to the function’s independence. To protect the future financial independence of the function, this practice should be repeated in the next evaluation policy. The target figure should be based on a projection of the cost of a fully-fledged integrated evaluation function and of WFP’s contribution income, ensuring that it is appropriate given the scale of WFP’s resources.

41. A range of instruments fund different kinds of evaluations. If this complexity continues or is extended, it will be increasingly difficult to manage financing for WFP's evaluation function. WFP could consider reviewing and seeking to harmonize funding for evaluation. The contingency evaluation fund has been a useful tool and, if a new consolidated funding approach does not make it redundant, should be extended and perhaps expanded to enhance the capacity of the smallest country offices to commission and manage evaluations.

Recommendation 2: To support the independence and credibility of the evaluation function the panel recommends:

- a) that the next evaluation policy **again set a target for a percentage of WFP's contribution income to be dedicated to evaluation, which should be** based on an updated financial analysis that takes into consideration the cost of a fully-fledged evaluation function, including an enhanced decentralized evaluation function; **(OEV, Executive Board)**
- b) that WFP review, with a view to harmonizing, the various financial instruments used to support the various types of evaluations that constitute the evaluation function; and (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Corporate Planning and Performance Division)
- c) that if alternative financing arrangements are not created (recommendation 2 b)), WFP consider extending and perhaps modifying the contingency evaluation fund so that it can provide more flexible support to the smallest country offices and potentially support decentralized evaluations undertaken by regional bureaux. (OEV, evaluation function steering group)

Credibility

42. OEV has put in place robust principles, guidance and practices that support the credibility of both centralized and decentralized evaluations. The panel, however, makes a specific recommendation relating to human resources aimed at ensuring that OEV can recruit staff possessing the technical expertise required to manage the evaluation function effectively in the future. **The panel considers that the staffing of OEV should be guided by the skills required rather than the desire to recruit from a specific candidate pool (i.e., current WFP staff).**
43. Almost 90 percent of staff in OEV headquarters positions are from the global north; this is also true of head of regional evaluation unit positions. The panel recommends that OEV seek to improve the diversity of staff in evaluation officer posts throughout WFP.

Recommendation 3: To ensure that the evaluation function has staff with the requisite professional skills and diversity, the panel recommends:

- a) that WFP recognize evaluation as a specialist skill similar to auditing and exempt OEV from the WFP policy requiring that all positions be first advertised internally; this would allow OEV to advertise posts internally and externally simultaneously and make appointment decisions based solely on skills and competence; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Human Resources Division)
- b) that WFP continue to explore the establishment of an officially recognized cadre of evaluation professionals that provides evaluation staff with a stratified career route and – depending on the size of the cadre – allows staff to rotate among posts and locations; and (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Human Resources Division)
- c) that OEV enhance the geographical and cultural diversity of staff in OEV and regional evaluation units while maintaining professional entry standards. (OEV)

Utility – enhancing value addition

44. While the vision of embedding evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems throughout WFP by 2021 will not be achieved, it remains a realistic ambition. Given the scale of the challenge, however (WFP has approximately 18,000 staff in 83 locations), to achieve this WFP will need to be extremely focused on driving change. The rest of the panel's recommendations relate to increasing the value addition, and therefore utility, of WFP's evaluation function.

Recommendation 4: The panel recommends that WFP and OEV take steps to enhance the contribution that evaluation makes to organizational learning, in addition to accountability. The panel recommends:

- a) that the Executive Board provide incentives for WFP senior management to integrate evaluative lessons into the organization's practices and that WFP senior management drive this same approach downwards through all levels of the organization; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, regional evaluation committees, Executive Board)
- b) that OEV experiment with various evaluation approaches and methodologies and offer an expanded menu of evaluation tools, including formative and developmental evaluations and more syntheses and multi-country thematic studies; (OEV, regional evaluation units)
- c) that OEV enhance its added value by systematically providing targeted evidence to targeted decision makers for targeted decisions; this will be most effective if evaluation staff engage with programme and policy design processes, while maintaining their independence, in addition to organizing dedicated meetings for sharing evidence; and (OEV, regional bureaux, regional evaluation units)
- d) that OEV strengthen its knowledge management and communication practices and:
 - i) until corporate knowledge management systems are in place, take ownership of and responsibility for knowledge management relating to its own products, developing a strategy and procedures for ensuring that evaluation knowledge is accessible and proactively shared throughout WFP; (OEV)
 - ii) finalize the draft communication and knowledge management strategy, ensuring that it sets out a genuinely transformative approach to internal communication and specifies how OEV will systematically take ownership of knowledge management relating to evaluation products; (OEV)
 - iii) explore how to facilitate the use of its evaluative evidence in ways that contribute to learning beyond WFP; (OEV)
 - iv) engage with the Programme and Policy Development Department on the mainstreaming of learning from evaluations; and (OEV, Programme and Policy Development Department)
 - v) consider commissioning an evaluation of knowledge management at WFP. (OEV)

Recommendation 5: The panel recommends that WFP implement changes that will help strengthen the quality and utility of decentralized evaluations and contribute to a stronger integrated evaluation function. Specifically, the panel recommends:

- a) that OEV, together with the evaluation function steering group and the Executive Board, consider developing an evaluation learning plan and use it to inform the evaluation plans, in addition to meeting accountability needs. Such a learning plan could be incorporated into WFP's next evaluation strategy; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Executive Board)
- b) that WFP consider taking a differentiated approach rather than a universal one to evaluating country strategic plans; OEV could base its decision on a review of the strategic value of full coverage when the first-generation country strategic plan evaluations have been completed, which should include consultation with country directors; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Executive Board)
- c) that country offices and regional bureaux be encouraged and given the "space" to focus decentralized evaluations on issues that are strategically important to WFP, as identified in a potential learning plan (OEV, evaluation function steering group, regional evaluation committees), which would also require that OEV and the Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division engage with donors with a view to harmonizing their evaluation requirements and reducing the number of evaluations on the same subject, thereby giving country offices the "space" to select other topics for evaluation; and
- d) that WFP and OEV invest further in enhancing the credibility and utility of decentralized evaluations so that they add value to centralized evaluations and to evolving evaluation practices at the country level, to which end OEV and WFP could consider:

- i) further boosting the capacity of regional bureaux so that regional evaluation units can provide more intensive support to country offices; (OEV, evaluation function steering group)
- ii) ensuring that very small country offices have the capacity to manage evaluations by financing their monitoring and evaluation officers, possibly from WFP's programme support and administrative budget; (evaluation function steering group, regional bureaux)
- iii) inviting small country offices to pool resources to hire multi-country evaluation specialists; and (regional evaluation committees)
- iv) encouraging the sharing of peer-to-peer support by facilitating the provision of support from country offices with strong evaluation expertise to those with less, including through remote or in-person technical assistance. (regional evaluation units)

Contributing to cross-cutting agendas, humanitarian evaluation, joint evaluation and national evaluation capacity

- 45. OEV has a strong track record in its treatment of gender equality in centralized evaluations; in decentralized evaluations, however, it is more uneven and could be strengthened. OEV needs to define what integrating a human rights perspective means in practice, and disability and inclusion issues also need to be mainstreamed, reflecting new United Nations and UNEG standards.
- 46. The panel considers that the relative size and profile of WFP's evaluation function in the United Nations evaluation system gives it a responsibility to play a leading role in modelling best practices for other agencies and partners in the areas listed below.

Recommendation 6: Given the experience and status of WFP's evaluation function the panel considers that WFP should contribute in particular to humanitarian evaluation practice, cross-cutting agendas, joint evaluation and national evaluation capacity. Going forward, OEV and regional evaluation units should:

- a) be at the forefront of the development and sharing of evaluation approaches and methods and the co-management of joint and system-wide evaluations, particularly in complex humanitarian settings; (OEV)
- b) position WFP as a leader and contributor to United Nations reform, country-level harmonization initiatives, independent system-wide evaluations and joint evaluations; (OEV, regional evaluation units, evaluation function steering group, country directors)
- c) continue to work on mainstreaming into evaluation consideration of gender equality, human rights and inclusion – the United Nations' "leave no-one behind" agenda – given their centrality to the Sustainable Development Goals; and (regional evaluation units, OEV)
- d) develop and implement clear principles for national evaluation capacity development. (regional evaluation units, OEV)

1. Introduction

1.1 ABOUT THE PEER REVIEW

1. This Peer Review of the WFP evaluation function was carried out under the provisions contained in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Framework for Professional Peer Reviews of the Evaluation Function of United Nations organizations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). It is the third Peer Review of the WFP evaluation function and was conducted at the request of WFP. The Peer Review Panel (the Panel) comprised six members:
 - Marco Segone, Peer Review Chair, Director, Evaluation Office of United Nations Population Fund
 - Sven Harten, Deputy Director, German Institute for Development Evaluation (DeVAL)
 - Maurya West Meiers, Senior Evaluation Officer, World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group's "Methods Advisory Team"
 - David Rider Smith, Senior Evaluation Coordinator, Evaluation Service of United Nations High Commission for Refugees
 - Silvia Salinas, President of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation
 - Anu Saxen, Director, Development Evaluation Unit, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Daniel Arghiros was the Senior Evaluation Consultant to the Panel.

2. The Panel would like to thank the Director and Deputy Directors of Evaluation and the Office of Evaluation for facilitating the review in such a collaborative way. The Office of Evaluation's organization of the review was exemplary. The Panel would also like to thank all those to whom they spoke for their open and frank contributions.
3. The views expressed in this report are those of the members of the Peer Review Panel in their individual capacities.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

4. The purpose of this UNEG Peer Review is to strengthen the WFP evaluation function so it can more effectively contribute to WFP's organizational decision-making, programme effectiveness, learning, and accountability for results. The review was guided by the main purpose contained in the terms of reference (ToR), namely, to "provide an independent and professional assessment of the WFP evaluation function on the extent to which the UNEG Norms and Standards have been adopted by WFP" (See Annex 2 for terms of reference). In line with the terms of reference, the assessment focuses on: the independence, credibility, and utility of the WFP evaluation function; the quality of use and follow up of evaluations across WFP; and the contribution of evaluations to accountability, learning and improvement.
5. The Peer Review provides recommendations to the Executive Board, WFP senior management, the Division of Human Resources, the Evaluation Function Steering Group, the Office of Evaluation, regional bureaux and regional evaluation units (REU). The review covers both the centralized and decentralized components of the WFP evaluation function. Whilst recognizing that they are part of a single evaluation function, the report uses the terms "decentralized evaluation function" and "centralized evaluation function" in the same way that the Office of Evaluation does, simply to refer to the two components. The report also assesses the role and strategic positioning of financial and human resourcing, evaluation planning, evaluation use, and quality assurance mechanisms.
6. Focusing on the period of the current WFP Evaluation Policy (2016–2021) (the Evaluation Policy), the review covers 2016 to the third quarter of 2020. The Peer Review was anticipated in the current WFP Evaluation Policy and was requested to inform the development of the next WFP Evaluation Policy and associated material.

1.3 PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS OF THE WFP EVALUATION FUNCTION

7. This Peer Review builds on the findings of prior assessments of the WFP evaluation function. In 2014, the UNEG/OECD-DAC peer review and the wider Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) assessment of the evaluation functions of the United Nations system advised WFP to further develop its evaluation function to meet the rising demand for accountability and evidence. The most significant recommendation of the 2014 peer review was that WFP should decide “the most appropriate model for the evaluation function” and then operationalize this decision. Among the three models proposed in the peer review, WFP opted for the combination of a centralized and a demand-led decentralized evaluation function. Following the 2014 peer review, in November 2015 a new evaluation policy setting out how this was to be operationalized was adopted by the WFP Executive Board. Almost all other recommendations made by the 2014 peer review panel have been implemented since the review and there are no significant outstanding recommendations. Annex 3 provides a commentary on the implementation of agreed changes since the last peer review.
8. To prepare for this Peer Review, the Office of Evaluation produced a comprehensive self-assessment report against the UNEG Norms and Standards. The framework analyses the level of maturity of the evaluation function and was developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group in 2019. The Office of Evaluation adapted the tool - which is designed to assess the centralized evaluation function - to also include an analysis of the decentralized evaluation function. The six WFP regional evaluation units analysed the decentralized evaluation function in their regions and the Office of Evaluation consolidated their responses. It is thus a comprehensive self-analysis.
9. The Panel considers the Office of Evaluation’s self-assessment a very frank and constructive reflection on the organization’s evaluation practice. The self-assessment is clear on both strengths and challenges and on areas the Office of Evaluation considers it should focus upon to improve its performance. The Panel endorses the judgements made.
10. The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) reviewed the WFP evaluation function in 2017-2018 in the context of its WFP-wide assessment. The MOPAN assessment examined the status of the evaluation function and its contribution to WFP performance management systems — the extent to which WFP manages for results and applies evidence-based planning and programming to operations. The assessment highlights WFP evaluation services as one of the four organizational strengths of WFP, concluding that WFP has “robust oversight and evaluation structures and functions”.⁸ It judged that in WFP “a highly strategic independent corporate evaluation function oversees the production of high-quality centralised and decentralised evaluations and syntheses of findings that feed into planning processes.”⁹ As the body of this report makes clear, the Peer Review Panel endorses this judgement.

1.4 APPROACH, PROCESS AND LIMITATIONS

11. The review was guided by the three core criteria, defined in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, that need to be satisfied for evaluation functions and products to be considered of high quality: i) independence of evaluations and of the evaluation system, ii) the credibility of evaluations and iii) the utility of evaluations. The Panel used a peer exchange approach to support its assessment and discussed with WFP staff shared challenges facing evaluation in multilateral agencies.
12. The Peer Review Panel was formed in March 2020, reviewed and agreed terms of reference in May, and the external consultant was also recruited in May. The consultant conducted 41 remote interviews with WFP staff from July 2020. Based on interviews, an extensive literature review and the Office of Evaluation’s self-assessment, the consultant produced a comprehensive preliminary assessment document. This was first fact-checked by the Office of Evaluation and then shared with the Panel. Building on the observations in the preliminary assessment, the Panel then held remote meetings from 12 to 26 October 2020. Beyond the Office of Evaluation staff, the Panel met a broad range of stakeholders. This included WFP senior management from WFP departments, divisions and regional

⁸MOPAN 2017-18 Assessments: World Food Programme, 2019. p. 8.

⁹Ibid. p. 38.

bureaux, members of the Executive Board, Country Directors, and regional evaluation units (see Annex 4 for a full list of interlocutors). The present report represents evidence and analysis from all these inputs.

13. Whilst the preliminary assessment addressed the full range of questions presented in the Peer Review terms of reference the Panel chose to focus on the subset of these issues considered of the greatest future strategic importance for the evaluation function. The present report is therefore similarly focused. In line with the terms of reference, the consultant reviewed the current Post-Hoc Quality Assessment (PHQA) system. It was deemed robust such that it was not necessary to review independently the quality of centralized and decentralized evaluations.
14. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions the entire assessment was conducted remotely. The Panel and consultant tried to attain the same degree of engagement and understanding that is possible with a face-to-face mission. Some adaptation was necessary to try to achieve this. But inevitably it was difficult to replicate the quality of interaction achieved during a face-to-face mission.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

15. The report first outlines the main features of the WFP evaluation function. It next assesses the independence, credibility, and utility of the WFP evaluation function and then focuses on ways the Panel considers the evaluation function can be enhanced. The final section brings together key findings and recommendations that are made throughout the text.

Box 1: Overview of WFP

Mission and mandate: WFP is an autonomous, joint subsidiary programme of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). WFP is the food arm of the United Nations system charged with providing and coordinating food assistance. It has a dual humanitarian and development mandate. Its operational priorities are:

- a) To use food assistance to support economic and social development
- b) To meet refugee and other emergency and protracted relief food needs
- c) To promote world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations and FAO.

WFP provides logistical and transport expertise and services to ensure humanitarian aid is delivered rapidly and effectively. It also aims to put hunger at the centre of the international agenda by promoting policies and strategies that tackle hunger.

Governance: WFP is governed by an Executive Board consisting of 36 Member States. The Board provides intergovernmental support, direction, and supervision for all initiatives, including monitoring and approval of budgets, programmes, projects, activities, and reports submitted by the Executive Director. The Board meets in Rome three times a year.

Organizational structure: Headquartered in Rome, WFP currently employs approximately 18,000 people, 90 percent of whom are deployed in the field. It has six regional bureaux and operates in around 83 countries. The organization is headed by an Executive Director who is appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Director-General of the FAO. The Executive Director is responsible for the administration of the organization, as well as the implementation of its programmes, projects, and other activities.

Finances: WFP is a 100 percent voluntarily funded organization. Its principal donors are governments, but the organization also receives donations from the private sector and individuals. Contributions have risen in recent years. In 2020, WFP received a record contribution revenue of USD 8.4 billion.

2. The WFP Evaluation Function

16. The Panel considers that the Office of Evaluation's centralized evaluation function rates highly in terms of both independence and credibility and is well-established and mature. The decentralized evaluation function is still being established but from solid foundations. The Panel considers that the primary future challenges facing the evaluation function relate to increasing its utility (the value added) and ensuring its coherence. The challenge relating to utility is, to use a term deployed by the Office of Evaluation itself, in "making evaluation everyone's business". The challenges related to coherence are in terms of ensuring both centralized and decentralized evaluations produce high quality reports and, more broadly, ensuring there is an optimal balance in the contribution evaluation makes to accountability and to learning. The Panel has focused its attention on giving suggestions for ways in which further progress could be made on these issues.

2.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WFP EVALUATION FUNCTION AND THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

17. The current Evaluation Policy is the organization's third (with the first and second in 2003 and 2008 respectively). Following the 2014 peer review, a new WFP Evaluation Policy (2016-2021) was adopted by the WFP Executive Board in November 2015. The Evaluation Policy sets out the vision, strategic direction, and model of the evaluation function. Two other foundational documents, the Corporate Evaluation Strategy (2016) and the Evaluation Charter (2016), set the framework for the entire evaluation function. The Evaluation Strategy (2016) sets out a phased implementation plan, comprising all the elements and activities required for building the model of a combined centralized and demand-led decentralized evaluation function. The Evaluation Charter (2016), issued by the WFP Executive Director, details the mandate and governance of the evaluation function

Box 2: About the WFP evaluation function

Governance

The evaluation function in WFP was established in 2000.

The Director of Evaluation heads an independent evaluation function within the WFP Secretariat and is independent in terms of planning, selecting, managing and presenting centralized evaluations. The Director provides global leadership, standard-setting and oversight of the entire WFP evaluation function and is accountable for setting and enhancing the framework of norms and standards, and accountabilities, for both centralized and decentralized evaluations.

Resources

The Evaluation Policy sets a target for 0.8 percent of WFP contribution income to be dedicated to evaluation by 2021.

Percentage committed to evaluation: 2016: 0.16 percent. 2019: 0.28 percent. 2020: 0.31 percent.

Budget 2020:

USD 18.75m managed by the Office of Evaluation for the centralized function and country strategic plan evaluations

USD 7.27m for regional bureaux and country office decentralized evaluation function

Staffing in 2020:

- 37 fixed term staff (professional and general service category), including 6 regional evaluation officers and an additional 15 staff in regional evaluation units.
- 14 consultants, short-term and temporary assistance staff

Centralized evaluations

These are commissioned and managed by the Office of Evaluation. There are several types:

- Policy evaluations assess the quality, implementation and results of all formal policies
- Strategic evaluations assess global or corporate themes, programmes, and initiatives
- Country strategic plan evaluation assess WFP work in a country
- Humanitarian emergency response evaluations assess corporate emergency responses
- The Office of Evaluation also produces syntheses, which are also reported to the Executive Board
- Impact evaluations assess the intended or unintended changes in the lives of affected populations in receipt of WFP interventions.

Jointly managed evaluations

- Inter-agency humanitarian evaluations
- Joint evaluations – conducted with other agencies.

Decentralized evaluations

These are commissioned and managed by the country offices, regional bureaux and headquarter-based divisions. Country decentralized evaluations are primarily on specific interventions, often at a donor's request.

All evaluations are conducted by external contractors.

18. The Evaluation Policy commits WFP to:

- i) Maintaining a high quality of WFP centralized evaluation function while applying a phased approach to developing a decentralized function over the life of this policy, with the Office of Evaluation setting the framework of norms and standards, accountabilities and coverage
- ii) Enhancing capacity across WFP to meet stakeholders' requirements for accountability
- iii) Strengthening the WFP culture of learning, together with its partners, and facilitating evidence-based decision-making.

19. The Evaluation Policy sets out a clear vision in its theory of change: "...that by 2021 evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems are embedded in WFP's culture of accountability and learning, enhancing its contribution to ending global hunger." The theory of change's "purpose" is to ensure that evaluation results are "consistently and comprehensively integrated into WFP's policies, strategies and

programmes.” The theory of change will need to be updated when the Office of Evaluation revises its evaluation policy. The logic underpinning the current theory of change is well grounded. Whilst WFP has made progress in mainstreaming evaluation results into its operations, mainstreaming evaluative learning still probably represents the evaluation function’s and WFP’s greatest challenge. Therefore, the current purpose in the theory of change, cited above, is likely to remain appropriate for the next evaluation policy. One of the outcomes in the theory of change is to establish adequate evaluation management capacity across WFP. This too is likely to remain necessary for the next policy. Logically, building capacity could be seen as a contribution to an outcome rather than an outcome in itself. But given the primary need to continue to build the WFP evaluation capacity, it is appropriate that it retain the status of being an outcome in and of itself.

20. There has been significant progress towards the Evaluation Policy vision, cited above. But, not surprisingly, evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems are not yet fully embedded. In headquarters and regional bureaux it is clear that a culture of accountability and learning is taking root, and this is true of some country offices. But deepening and spreading this culture shift is a genuine challenge: WFP has operations in 83 countries and around 18,000 staff. This vision would therefore remain appropriate for the next evaluation policy. This report offers some suggestions for how the Office of Evaluation and WFP could accelerate progress toward embedding a culture of accountability and learning.
21. Successive annual reports show that WFP is achieving the evaluation targets it sets itself. It has increased the number of centralized and decentralized evaluations, achieving the coverage required by its current coverage norms. For example, 16 of the 26 WFP policies have been evaluated, and the Office of Evaluation is on track with the roll out of country strategic plan evaluations. Further, 40 percent of country offices have been conducting at least one decentralized evaluation in their current planning cycle, in line with WFP current coverage norm. There has also been progress in evaluation quality, with independent post-hoc assessments of quality showing steady improvements. Since the adoption of the Evaluation Policy the financial resources available to the evaluation function have almost tripled. In 2020 they comprised USD 26.02 million, 0.31 percent of WFP contribution income. WFP has also increased the size of the cadre of evaluation professionals, in both the Office of Evaluation and regional bureaux, to enable it to deliver its work programme to the required standard.

2.2 EVALUATION POLICY, STRATEGY AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

22. The Panel considers that all aspects of WFP evaluation architecture are well articulated and the governance structure that frames the WFP evaluation function is effective. Much of this has been established in direct response to the 2014 peer review. The Office of Evaluation has established a comprehensive set of mutually reinforcing controls and stakeholder involvement points. These have been put in place to ensure perspectives are balanced and impartial. There appears to be a strong “learning and development” culture within the Office of Evaluation and the regional evaluation units.
23. The evaluation function is supported by a comprehensive set of guidance for the different kinds of centralized evaluations it undertakes, and for decentralized evaluations (set out in detail in Section 2.3). The Office of Evaluation monitors the implementation of the Evaluation Policy on an ongoing basis and has adapted its practices to the changing environment of WFP and to UNEG Norms and Standards. The Office of Evaluation formally reviews the implementation of the Evaluation Policy every year through the submission of annual evaluation reports to the Executive Board. These report major developments and progress made against key performance indicators set out in the Evaluation Policy.
24. The Office of Evaluation’s mandate for evaluation is strong. The Evaluation Policy clearly describes the governance structure and approval and follow-up mechanisms. It covers all UNEG criteria as well as other recommended practices identified by the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System. The Office of Evaluation’s framing documents describe in detail the adaptation of UNEG Norms and Standards and the inclusion of other norms. These are made explicit in the WFP Evaluation Policy as well as other supporting documents that define evaluation processes.
25. The Office of Evaluation’s Corporate Evaluation Strategy operationalizes the Evaluation Policy effectively. It spells out the role of evaluation and states what will make the evaluation function effective and efficient. It also has a results framework with a comprehensive set of indicators for evaluation.

Each of the six regional bureaux also have a regional evaluation strategy - mirroring the structured approach of the Corporate Evaluation Strategy but attuned to regional contexts.

26. The Office of Evaluation has a strong and respected institutional identity. Senior management appears to appreciate the role and added value of evaluation; and there is evidence of high levels of support for the function within the organization. An Evaluation Function Steering Group was established by the current Evaluation Policy and has provided an important forum for the Office of Evaluation to raise and seek resolution of implementation issues requiring action or buy-in from outside the Office of Evaluation. It is an environment for the Office of Evaluation to engage with senior management from policy and programme units, as well as directors of regional bureaux, and has played a central role in helping make the evaluation function effective. For example, it has been instrumental in supporting the creation of the demand-led decentralized evaluation system. It provides high-level support to the creation of regional evaluation units and facilitated enhanced funding for both these and country offices through the Contingency Evaluation Fund, described below, which it oversees. The Office of Evaluation serves as the secretariat to the Steering Group. The Evaluation Policy also mandated the creation of regional evaluation committees in each of the regional offices. Their mandates mirror the Evaluation Function Steering Group at regional level. They are chaired by Regional Directors, all country office Directors are members, and they are facilitated by regional evaluation officers. Whilst they are an important forum, they are still relatively new, and need time to become fully institutionalized in all the regions.
27. Corporately, WFP is beginning to attach more weight to evaluation. This is reflected by the way in which, in 2019 and 2020, evaluation has been embedded in WFP corporate risk registers. These registers cite “sub-optimal use of evidence (including evaluations)” as a risk cause for the highest priority risk for WFP, namely: “failure to demonstrate WFP’s value proposition”. Evaluation did not have this visibility or priority in the 2017 risk register.
28. The Panel notes that the Office of Evaluation could, in line with UNEG practice, develop the next evaluation policy without a time duration. However, the policy and implementation should be reviewed after 4-6 years by a subsequent peer review. That peer review should, depending on progress made and considering the evolving internal and external context, recommend whether the Evaluation Policy should be revised and/or updated or not.

ALIGNING TO THE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION OF WFP

29. In the period reviewed, the Office of Evaluation has adapted the evaluation function to keep it aligned with the evolving priorities and organizational changes in WFP – ensuring that it is both relevant and adds value. Since 2015, WFP has made two strategic shifts in line with broader United Nations reforms. It has delegated increasing power and authority to field offices; and in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it focused on contributing to longer-term development, capacity building and partnership, in addition to its longstanding humanitarian interventions (contributing to SDG 17 as well as SDG 2).
30. WFP began to rebalance its centre of gravity in 2012 from headquarters to regional and field level as part of its “Fit for Purpose” initiative. This trend evolved through its “Integrated Road Map” initiative in 2016 - transforming the way the organization plans, organizes and finances programmatic activities at country level and heralding the introduction of country strategic plans in 2017. These now frame the entirety of WFP activities in each country. When country strategic plans were agreed, the Executive Board also requested the Office of Evaluation to evaluate them as centralized evaluations. The increased workload required a major uplift in the Office of Evaluation’s staffing, as well as other changes. The Panel comments on this recent coverage norm in Section 3.1. Mirroring the organization’s emphasis on country-level action, since 2016 the Office of Evaluation has invested heavily to create a support system to help country offices manage decentralized evaluations to the UNEG standards.
31. The second strategic shift is WFP prioritization of capacity building in partnerships to tackle hunger and malnutrition in its current strategic plan. The Office of Evaluation has also sought to adapt to this by ensuring it has the competences to evaluate WFP contribution to longer term development outcomes in addition to its traditional humanitarian interventions and policies.

32. The Office of Evaluation has also adapted its policies to unfolding United Nations reforms of the development system, and to changes in the humanitarian space. These have created new opportunities for joint and system-wide evaluation, which it has taken.
33. WFP is due to define a new strategic plan and a revised Corporate Result Framework (2022-2026) while the Office of Evaluation is revising its Evaluation Policy. The Office of Evaluation therefore can ensure that its renewed evaluation policy is well aligned with the new strategic plan. WFP is also conducting a corporate functional review that aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all headquarters functions in relation to regional bureaux. The Office of Evaluation is being included in the review and terms of reference approved by the Director of Evaluation that set out the role of headquarters and regional bureaux were seen by the Panel. These clearly establish the independence of the evaluation function.¹⁰

2.3 THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE WFP EVALUATION FUNCTION

34. The central WFP evaluation function has a high degree of independence even though it is an office within WFP. Overall, it meets the standards set in the 2016 revised UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation and has a high degree of organizational independence. This attribute is not new. In 2014, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) assessment of the evaluation functions of the United Nations system judged WFP to be one of only two organizations with the “most comprehensive systems for addressing all five criteria of independence”.¹¹
35. Conditions embedded in the Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Charter secure a sufficiently high degree of independence in the appointment of the Director of Evaluation. Whilst the Director of Evaluation is appointed by the Executive Director, the Executive Director must present the final selection to the Executive Board for approval – an arrangement that provides sufficient independence. However, WFP may want to explore the possibility to further strengthen its independence by mandating the Executive Board to directly manage the selection and appointment of the Director of Evaluation.
36. The Panel notes that composition of the Director of Evaluation appointment panel is only stipulated in the Evaluation Charter. The Charter is a document authorized by the Executive Director rather than the Executive Board and thus any governance arrangements contained in the Charter but not in the Evaluation Policy are subject to change by an Executive Director. To safeguard the future independence of the position of Director of Evaluation, the Panel therefore recommends that all conditions that relate to the independence of the evaluation function are explicitly included in the next evaluation policy. Relatedly, the Panel was unable to identify provisions for the dismissal of the Director of Evaluation. It is recommended that the procedures for this are added to the next evaluation policy and that, in line with other United Nations bodies, it also requires consultation with the Executive Board.¹²
37. The Office of Evaluation has a high degree of functional independence. The Director of Evaluation plans, manages, and delivers evaluations without the need for approval from WFP management, whilst consulting appropriately. The Office of Evaluation has full discretion in deciding the centralized evaluation programme: its policy states that the Office of Evaluation has the authority to select topics for evaluation and their timing, and it has sole responsibility for establishing a quadrennial corporate evaluation plan.
38. This arrangement is perfectly adequate, but it is not set out explicitly in the current Evaluation Policy. The Panel advises that the future policy should state that the Director of Evaluation reports to the Executive Board functionally and to the Executive Director administratively. The distinction is made in

¹⁰ HQ/Regional Bureaux Terms of Reference for Evaluation. No date. Shared 6 November 2020.

¹¹ Analysis of the Evaluation Function in the United Nations System Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Geneva 2014 p.32.

¹² This would be in keeping with the policies of several other United Nations agencies' evaluation functions – including that of the UNDP updated Evaluation Policy (2019). The latter states: “52. Dismissal of the Director due to poor performance, misconduct, or malfeasance, shall follow UNDP policies and procedures, after consultation with the Executive Board through its Bureau. The Director cannot be dismissed for public statements made in the conduct of his or her work, consistent with UNDP staff rules and regulations and the United Nations standards of conduct for the International Civil Service.”

the Evaluation Charter but as noted above, governance conditions need to be in the Executive Board-approved Evaluation Policy rather than the Executive Director-issued Charter.

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND FUTURE FINANCING

39. The centralized evaluation function is financed from separate resources that are largely stable and sustainable, and they allow the Office of Evaluation to finance the evaluation coverage its policy mandates. The budget for the Office of Evaluation's annual work plan is approved by the Executive Board as part of the WFP Management Plan. It includes costs for oversight and reporting for the entire evaluation function: i.e., centralized evaluations and managing the enabling framework for decentralized evaluations. Resources come primarily from the WFP programme support and administrative budget, which is used to fund WFP management and administration and is a 6.5 percent cost-recovery rate on contributions. These are complemented by extrabudgetary sources. All funds allocated for delivery of the work plan are managed by the Director of Evaluation. This financial independence applies equally to funds from the programme support and administrative budget and other sources.
40. The Evaluation Policy sets a target for 0.8 percent of WFP contribution income to be dedicated to evaluation by 2021. The Panel considers that this Executive Board-approved target has helped to secure the financial independence of the evaluation function – ensuring the evaluation function has been adequately resourced during the review period. WFP management refers to it openly in its overarching Management Plan, under the section on budget allocations for management priorities.¹³ In 2019, the actual percentage was 0.28, rising from 0.15 percent in 2016. The Office of Evaluation estimates that it will increase to 0.31 percent by the end of 2020 and to 0.39 percent in 2021. The steady increase demonstrates that it is making progress toward the target and reflects institutional support for the evaluation function generally. It also reflects an increase in absolute evaluation expenditure over the 2016-2019 period, as WFP total contributions rose significantly in this period. The increase in resources has enabled the Office of Evaluation to rapidly expand its cohort of professional staff in the review period. This was necessary primarily to ensure the Office of Evaluation had the capacity to manage the increase in the number of evaluations it was required to manage – primarily country strategic plan evaluations.
41. The Panel agrees with the Office of Evaluation's own view that financing for centralized evaluations is around where it needs to be for the next few years - with two potential exceptions: financing country strategic plan evaluations and financing impact evaluations (future needs for the latter depend on a review planned for 2021). However, if the decentralized evaluation function is to be deepened in line with a Peer Review recommendation it will need more resources than are currently available.
42. The Panel therefore considers that the next evaluation policy should once again set a target for a percentage of WFP contribution income to be dedicated to evaluation, as this contributes to the financial independence of the function. The Panel cannot comment on whether this target should be 0.8 percent again. Rather, it recommends that the Office of Evaluation establish the cost of a fully resourced evaluation function including the decentralized evaluation function and estimate this as a proportion of most likely future WFP resources.

¹³WFP Management Plan (2021-2023) 2020

2.4 CREDIBILITY

43. The Office of Evaluation has put in place robust systems to secure the validity and reliability of both centralized evaluations and decentralized evaluations alike. This represents a real strength of the WFP evaluation function. The Office of Evaluation consistently uses a set of carefully designed, mutually reinforcing controls and stakeholder involvement to support the credibility of evaluations. The Panel consider these to be robust. To support the technical quality of evaluations, the Office of Evaluation has a set of guidelines including technical notes that apply to both centralized and decentralized evaluations.
44. The evaluation function is supported by guidance for the various kinds of centralized evaluations it undertakes and, as noted below, for decentralized evaluations. The Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) is structured in: i) a Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (CEQAS) for each type of centralized evaluation, except impact evaluations; ii) a Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS); and iii) a common body of technical notes that apply to all evaluations. They incorporate and cover UNEG criteria that relate to the relevant type of evaluation.
45. The Evaluation Quality Assurance System is one of the building blocks for implementation of the WFP Evaluation Policy. It was first developed to support the 2008 Evaluation Policy but has been continually refined to reflect new developments. The Office of Evaluation considers it the primary means of safeguarding the UNEG principles of independence, credibility and utility.
46. There are provisions in place to ensure that decentralized evaluations are balanced and impartial but the risk of partiality for decentralized evaluations is greater than for centralized evaluations. This is simply because the organizational unit that commissions and manages the evaluation is the same unit that designed and implements the evaluation.
47. The Office of Evaluation has a high degree of professional integrity and within WFP has a strong and respected institutional identity. There is also a high degree of professionalism at regional bureau level. The Office of Evaluation has in place robust professional and technical standards intended to uphold impartiality and balanced perspectives. Contracted evaluators and evaluation managers are formally required to avoid bias in the design and conduct of all WFP evaluations. The Office of Evaluation uses UNEG-derived standards when it screens and admits companies to its long-term agreement roster.
48. Within the decentralized evaluation function there is a higher degree of dependence on the tone set by country office Directors to ensure that evaluation managers retain their independence and that contractors are not influenced by country office staff, partners, or donors. In terms of behavioural independence, the Office of Evaluation makes explicit the norms, standards and guidelines of professionalism, ethics, integrity, and cultural sensitivity that evaluation teams and managers must meet.
49. The Office of Evaluation's externally delivered Post-Hoc Quality Assessment process assesses the quality of every evaluation product and produces an overall analysis of quality in annual reports. The Post-Hoc Quality Assessment methodology is clear, transparent, and robust and the qualities it measures are based on UNEG Norms and Standards. The application of the Post-Hoc Quality Assessment system in the review period - by an externally contracted company - appears high quality and it generates lessons each year that the Office of Evaluation has sought to apply to strengthen its support systems.
50. In more detail, it assesses the extent to which WFP evaluation reports are based upon appropriate evaluation methods, present sound analysis and credible findings, and provide valid conclusions and useful recommendations. Quality is assessed against nine criteria that are themselves aligned with UNEG quality standards.¹⁴ As noted, the strength of the Office of Evaluation's own systems of quality assessments made it redundant for the Peer Review to conduct an independent assessment of the

¹⁴ Every Post-Hoc Quality Assessment assesses: the report summary; an overview of the evaluation subject; the evaluation context, purpose and scope; the methodology; findings and analysis; conclusions/lessons; gender and equity; recommendations; and accessibility and clarity. The assessment comprises over a hundred elements and includes a quantitative rating at criterion level and score at element level, as well as qualitative feedback for both levels.

quality of a sample of evaluations. The quality of most centralized and decentralized evaluations has consistently met or exceeded quality requirements between 2016 and 2019.

51. The Office of Evaluation adheres to a fully outsourced model for implementing evaluations. Both centralized and decentralized evaluations are undertaken by independent companies (or individuals) contracted through long-term agreements. Thus, its staff do not lead or participate in evaluations, as they do in some other agencies. This model has its strengths. Nevertheless, the Office of Evaluation may wish to consider experimenting with allowing staff engagement in key/strategic evaluations that require a high degree of insight into WFP – evaluations related to strategic or organization issues, for example. Engagement could include taking part in selected field missions and analysis. The Office of Evaluation could test whether staff engagement yielded more insightful strategic evaluations.
52. The Office of Evaluation applies a range of different methodologies and undertakes several types of evaluations (see Box 2) but in its self-assessment it commented that there is room for innovation and development. The Panel agrees and offers some suggestions in Section 3.1.

STAFFING THE OFFICE OF EVALUATION

53. The Office of Evaluation invests well in the professional development of its staff and is seeking to be more strategic in how it plans capacity development for evaluation throughout WFP with its recent Evaluation Capacity Development Strategy. The Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation unit staff have access to a range of opportunities to develop professional skills. The Office of Evaluation has a robust induction system which includes a peer support mechanism. Evaluation professional staff are encouraged to self-assess against the UNEG competency framework to inform their learning and development planning. The Office of Evaluation organizes global evaluation meetings every 18 months on topical issues for internal and external participants, which provide an opportunity to learn and exchange practice. Staff are also given opportunities to present at external conferences and participate in inter-agency activities/working groups. Staff also have access to external training (for example, the International Program for Development Evaluation Training).
54. The level of technical evaluation competence among the Office of Evaluation staff is uneven. This is a consequence of the WFP Human Resources Policy and the Office of Evaluation's adaptation of it. The current Evaluation Policy commits the Office of Evaluation to “continue to be staffed by a 50:50 mix of: i) externally recruited evaluation specialists with high levels of proven competency and experience; and ii) current WFP staff with the required competency for evaluation, appointed in line with WFP's reassignment policy and required to serve a minimum of four years when assigned to an evaluation position.” The latter are referred internally as “rotational” staff. The Office of Evaluation notes that this mix “ensures an appropriate combination of evaluation expertise and knowledge of WFP's operations and work environment” (Evaluation Policy para 39.ii). This policy has allowed the Office of Evaluation to gradually increase the number of fully skilled evaluation specialists - from only one in 2006 to around half its fixed contract staff. However, if the Office of Evaluation had the freedom to hire candidates with the technical skills required for evaluation specialist positions, the number of evaluation specialists in post may be higher.
55. The Panel considers the fact that the Office of Evaluation has managed to recruit evaluation specialists to form 50 percent of staffing to be a positive development. However, ideally the staffing balance in the Office of Evaluation should be guided solely by the skills needed. It is important that, in line with the UNEG competency framework, post-holders have the highly technical skills necessary to be a professional evaluator - irrespective of whether they are internal or external candidates.
56. The way to secure this objective would be for all vacancies to be open to both internal and external candidates simultaneously, and for candidates to be recruited based solely on their suitability against the job profile and skills in the job description. However, the Panel notes that the institution-wide human resources policies and procedures of WFP currently prevent this approach: WFP policy requires all positions to be first advertised internally. Furthermore, positions in evaluation are not treated as specialist, whereas positions in audit are.
57. To ensure the evaluation function has the professional evaluation skills it requires, the Panel recommends the Human Resources Division considers giving the evaluation function an exemption from the global human resources policy requiring all positions to be advertised internally first, based

on a recognition that evaluation is a specialist skill akin to audit: thereby allowing the Office of Evaluation to advertize internally and externally simultaneously, and allowing the Office of Evaluation the independence to recruit based on skills requirements.

58. The Panel notes that the Office of Evaluation has commissioned a study into the feasibility of establishing a stratified career route for evaluation staff ("Evaluation Professional Recognition Scheme") and encourages WFP to continue to explore the feasibility of establishing this.
59. On a separate issue, the Panel also suggests to the Office of Evaluation that it should seek to improve the diversity of staff in evaluation officer posts going forward, whilst maintaining professional standards of entry. Almost 90 percent of Office of Evaluation headquarters staff and heads of regional evaluation units are from the Global North.¹⁵

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION FUNCTION

60. The most strategically important change introduced by the current Evaluation Policy is the creation of a demand-led decentralized evaluation function. This section reflects on what the Office of Evaluation has done to build it and what progress has been made. The Evaluation Policy, Strategy and Charter provide a clear framework for the decentralized evaluation function and set out how it links to the centralized evaluation function. The Office of Evaluation has defined the strategy and role of the decentralized evaluation function well and has also, in collaboration with the Evaluation Function Steering Group, adapted it during the period of this Evaluation Policy in response to a thorough review it commissioned.¹⁶
61. WFP has built a regional system to support country offices' decentralized evaluation capacity and backs it up well. At regional level, the evaluation function is financed by dedicated programme support and administrative (core) funds that have been integrated into regional bureaux budgets. The cost of the six regional evaluation officer positions posted to each of the WFP regional bureaux has been embedded in the regional bureaux programme support and administrative budget since 2017, along with an operational budget.¹⁷ These funds have enabled the creation of a small regional evaluation unit in each region.
62. The way the Office of Evaluation supports the decentralized evaluation function is an area of strength. The Office of Evaluation provides comprehensive, mutually reinforcing support to the decentralized evaluation function. The country office Directors interviewed for the Peer Review value highly the guidance, quality assurance systems and support from regional evaluation units. Despite being in place for only three years, regional evaluation units have achieved real traction in all the regions. Inevitably it will take longer for regional evaluation units to ensure all country offices are competent at planning and commissioning evaluations. In Section 3 the Panel gives some suggestions for how capacity can be strengthened.
63. Except for donor-requested evaluations, decentralized evaluations are predominantly "demand-led". When country offices define their country strategic plans, they are supposed to consider their learning needs and specify what they will evaluate and when. They are also supposed to budget for them. Country offices therefore select the topics or interventions to be evaluated and, ideally, time the evaluations so that the results can be used to inform programming decisions. The Evaluation Policy states that learning needs and the aim to generate evidence and demonstrate results should determine the selection of topics and timing. However, country-level selection does not systematically take into consideration corporate-level learning needs, undermining the potential contribution to organizational learning.

¹⁵ In headquarters 6 of 54 staff members are from the Global South. In regional bureaux evaluation units, the balance is better, at 45 percent (9 of 20 staff).

¹⁶ Review of the Decentralized Evaluation Function, IOD PARC, 2018.

¹⁷ The 2018 OEV-commissioned review of the decentralized evaluation function recommended further investment in the capacity of regional evaluation officers to support country offices. OEV submitted an investment case on behalf of regional bureaux and regional bureaux received allocations in 2019 and 2020. From 2020 the allocations will be embedded in the regional bureaux programme support and administration budgets. These funds have allowed the six regional evaluation officers to build small teams/units to support their work (from one to four additional positions).

64. The WFP demand-led decentralized evaluation model means that a country office is expected to undertake no less than one evaluation every country strategic plan cycle – that is, every three to five years. In principle, country offices need to finance a decentralized evaluation from their own funds and, whilst they may budget for an evaluation, emergency needs can often take priority leaving inadequate funds for an evaluation.
65. Whilst the adequacy of financial and human resources for decentralized evaluations at country level are uneven, by creating a targeted fund, the Contingency Evaluation Fund, WFP has taken steps to ensure funding shortfalls do not stop them undertaking decentralized evaluations. With the support of the Evaluation Function Steering Group, the Office of Evaluation and the Corporate Planning and Performance Division (CPP) created the Contingency Evaluation Fund as a back-up mechanism to support country offices that planned and budgeted for decentralized evaluations but face genuine resource constraints. It is meant to cover the costs of conducting the evaluation but not the evaluation management costs (that is, not the salary of the WFP monitoring and evaluation specialist or focal point) – and is meant to incentivize country offices to undertake evaluations (it provides up to 70 percent of costs). Interviewees, including country office Directors, highlighted the value of the Contingency Evaluation Fund in enabling country offices to undertake evaluations. As the Panel notes in Section 3, more resources will be needed if the decentralized evaluation function is to be deepened.
66. In terms of human resources, reflecting the fact that they are unlikely to undertake more than one evaluation every five years, there are no dedicated evaluation officers based in country offices (except one). Staff in country offices rarely have prior experience of managing evaluations. Further, monitoring and evaluation staff, who country office Directors often designate as evaluation managers, are often on short-term contracts leading to high staff turnover rates. In practice monitoring and evaluation staff duties are almost entirely focused on monitoring, to the exclusion of evaluation (in other words, the “evaluation” in monitoring and evaluation is misleading). The Panel suggests some ways to address these challenges in Section 3.1.

QUALITY OF THE OFFICE OF EVALUATION’S SUPPORT TO THE DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION FUNCTION

67. The Office of Evaluation has established a comprehensive set of support mechanisms to support country offices and help regional evaluation units fulfil their roles. The Panel considers that together these comprise an extremely strong support system – and serve as an example to other agencies seeking to build decentralized evaluation functions. In addition to the Contingency Evaluation Fund, outlined above, these support mechanisms include:
 - a) A dedicated Office of Evaluation unit and functional lead to support the decentralized evaluation function
 - b) Guidance in the form of the Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS). This brings together all guidance material to support country offices in planning, commissioning, and undertaking evaluations
 - c) A Help Desk that provides technical advice and support to country offices, regional bureaux and headquarters divisions as they manage evaluations
 - d) The outsourced Decentralized Evaluation Quality Support Service (DEQSS): the Office of Evaluation requires all decentralized evaluation terms of references, and inception and evaluation reports to be reviewed by an external quality support service it has contracted, enhancing the quality of the decentralized evaluations
 - e) Access to pre-screened evaluation consulting firms that have long-term agreements with WFP to conduct evaluations, streamlining the procurement process with quality firms
 - f) An Evaluation Learning Programme (EvalPro) developed to strengthen the evaluation capacity of WFP staff in headquarters and country offices. It comprises four online courses staff can access on the WFP online portal and it supports staff who are managing, steering, or supporting a decentralized evaluation. EvalPro is structured primarily to help WFP staff in headquarters or country offices working on decentralized evaluations
 - g) The Post-Hoc Quality Assessment (PHQA) system outlined above also serves as a support and learning tool for decentralized evaluations. The Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units use findings from PHQA annual reports to identify areas for improvement and then develop better practice.

Together with the regional evaluation units, these support systems have helped rapidly build the capacity of country offices to manage decentralized evaluations.

2.5 UTILITY – EVALUATION USE

68. The value that the WFP evaluation function adds is clear both in terms of helping to improve WFP performance - by generating validated better practices - and in terms of accountability. It has a track record of producing centralized evaluations that are highly relevant and add to learning; and there are examples of its evaluations leading to action. The Office of Evaluation's centralized evaluations are planned in such a way that they have a high degree of relevance and are responsive to the organization's needs. The Panel saw evidence that WFP senior management use the Office of Evaluation's centralized evaluations to inform strategic decision-making. Centralized evaluations of programmatic areas (for example, on school feeding, nutrition) have also had an impact on programme-level strategic direction.
69. The extent to which evaluation is being institutionalized is therefore improving. Support is strongest at headquarters level. Documentary evidence and interviews with managers outside the Office of Evaluation suggests that ownership, understanding and the value staff attach to evaluation are increasing. However, whilst the extent to which evaluation is being institutionalized is improving, this is from a relatively low base and the size of WFP as an organization means that there is still much to do.
70. The decentralized evaluation function has started from a lower base but is heading in the right direction. The Panel heard of strong buy-in from a small sample of country offices. The evidence of impact is not yet available, however. Regional evaluation units invest in trying to get country offices to learn from evidence on an ongoing basis. The move to a fully demand-led system has helped country offices see decentralized evaluation as a learning as much as an accountability tool. However, both in the self-assessment and in interviews, regional evaluation officers noted that a significant proportion of staff and country offices see evaluation as a bureaucratic burden to be endured.
71. The Panel therefore feels there is room for the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units to enhance utility even further, and many of the Panel's comments relate to enhancing utility.

3. Areas for Further Reflection and Development: Value Addition to an Integrated Evaluation Function

72. As indicated above, the Panel considers that the Office of Evaluation has established a high quality and mature centralized evaluation function and is in the process of establishing a robust decentralized evaluation function. The Panel considers the course charted by the Office of Evaluation to be strategic and effective, and to have delivered real gains relatively quickly.
73. In considering how the Office of Evaluation can enhance the WFP evaluation function, the Panel is therefore not recommending any radical departures from the current course. The Panel offers a series of suggestions and recommendations that WFP may wish to consider as ways to enhance the value the evaluation function brings to the organization.
74. In terms of the governance of the evaluation function, the Evaluation Function Steering Group has served as a champion. Its value lies partly in the fact that it serves to institutionalize the status of evaluation in WFP. Whilst it is co-chaired by committed individuals, the Steering Group serves as an institutional champion for embedding evaluation. The Panel therefore affirms the value of the Evaluation Function Steering Group and considers it has a role for the foreseeable future. It is also clear that regional evaluation committees add value to institutionalizing decentralized evaluation. Whilst the value they add is more nascent, they too should be continued. Regional Directors, the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units could consider if there are ways in which they could encourage stronger engagement from country offices in regional evaluation committees.
75. It is clear that the WFP centralized and decentralized evaluation systems are integral parts of the same evaluation function rather than two different evaluation functions. As there is a single system, both centralized and decentralized evaluations need to be able to make equal contributions to WFP learning and accountability. Therefore, many of the Panel's comments relate in one way or another to enhancing the "value addition to an integrated evaluation function" and ensuring the decentralized evaluation "function" can make an equal contribution.

3.1 ENHANCING THE CONTRIBUTION EVALUATION MAKES TO WFP

ENHANCING THE BALANCE BETWEEN ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

76. Before the current Evaluation Policy period, evaluation was perceived foremost as a tool to promote accountability. Apparently, it was often perceived alongside audit as an accountability function. In the last five years there has been more appreciation in WFP that evaluation generates learning as well as contributing to accountability. This is true of both centralized and decentralized evaluations. The shift in how the evaluation function is perceived internally is very positive.
77. However, the Panel still noted an implicit corporate tendency towards treating evaluation as primarily an accountability tool - prioritizing questions relating to how the organization has performed against expected results. There will need to be a conscious effort to ensure this approach is better balanced going forward. Evaluation needs to help WFP to quickly learn to adapt to rapidly changing external and internal environments, including disruption caused by COVID-19.
78. This emphasis will need to be driven by the Executive Board and senior management as well as by the Office of Evaluation. For example, the Executive Board will need to create greater incentives for management to learn from evaluation and this "mindset" will need to be pushed downwards within the organization. The Executive Board could do this by routinely demanding information on how the organization has learned from evaluation, and how that learning has been instrumental in driving or contributing to changes in policies, strategies, and programmes. Senior management will also need to advocate for the learning value of evaluation. Given this, the Panel recommends that the Office of Evaluation and WFP, more broadly, take additional steps to ensure that the contribution evaluation makes to learning and accountability is balanced. To facilitate this, as discussed below, the evaluation function will need to enhance its communication and better facilitate the use of evaluation lessons.

79. The Panel notes that WFP has had weak systems to track the implementation of agreed evaluation recommendations but that a new system (the Risk and Recommendation Tracking Tool, or “R2” system) should enable more efficient tracking. The new system is a welcome enhancement. The former system was unable to capture recommendations from decentralized evaluations effectively, creating an unhelpful distinction between centralized and decentralized evaluations. The R2 system could aid learning in a specific area: it will add the capability to analyse recommendations by themes and programmatic and geographic areas allowing for the identification of systemic issues. There is a risk that the new system could lead users to perceive evaluation as an accountability tool – eclipsing its potential contribution to learning. Because recommendation follow-up and the R2 system are outside the Office of Evaluation’s responsibility, WFP may wish to monitor the use and impact of the R2 system - and develop a mitigating strategy if it risks overshadowing the learning function of evaluation and risks encouraging staff to take a “tick box” approach to evaluation follow-up.

ENHANCING THE FUTURE RESPONSIVENESS OF THE EVALUATION FUNCTION

80. Apart from impact evaluations, the Office of Evaluation has taken a relatively conservative approach to trialling different evaluation methodologies. Evaluations are largely “long form” evaluations with slow feedback loops. The Panel heard demand for more timely production of evidence for programmes that have shorter cycles - such as corporate emergency evaluations. The Panel encourages the Office of Evaluation to pilot methodologies that shorten the duration of evaluations to meet these needs. The Office of Evaluation already produces a growing set of evidence products. These currently include syntheses, summaries of evidence and lessons learned, and these are evidently valued. But the Panel also heard demand for real time and interactive feedback loops so that emerging evaluative evidence is provided to management in a timeframe that can inform decisions. The Office of Evaluation may want to trial developmental and/or formative evaluations to meet these needs.
81. With impact evaluations the Office of Evaluation is developing deep and long cycle evidence around impact and testing critical strategic assumptions. There is clearly demand for this within WFP. The Panel notes that the Office of Evaluation is still developing its long-term approach to impact evaluation and that a review scheduled for 2021 will help identify its future course.
82. The Panel recommends that the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units experiment with different evaluation approaches and methodologies and offer an expanded “menu” of evaluation tools. It could develop evaluations that are more responsive to different needs and demands.

PROVIDING TARGETED EVIDENCE TO TARGETED DECISION-MAKERS FOR TARGETED DECISIONS.

83. The Evaluation Policy anticipates that “by 2021 evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems are embedded in WFP’s culture of accountability and learning....”¹⁸ Whilst this will not be achieved by the end of the current Evaluation Policy period, it remains achievable. To really drive progress, the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units could more systematically provide timely, packaged evidence to policy makers and programmers, enhancing the value attached to evaluative learning and nudge lesson-learning in WFP more broadly. The Office of Evaluation has already tailored its coverage to support evaluative thinking by linking evaluation planning to key WFP programming cycles. For example: the Office of Evaluation provides evidence to inform new country strategic plans; it reviews policies to inform new policy cycles; and it seeks to inform the next WFP corporate strategic plan. Furthermore, both the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units already condense and present timely evaluative evidence to decision-makers in some forums. However, if progress is to be accelerated this approach will need to be implemented even more systematically and broadly.
84. The Panel therefore recommends that the evaluation function enhances its added value by systematically anticipating when evaluative lessons to decision-makers are needed – and by providing targeted messages, and at points in time when they are most needed and have the most potential to have an impact. The Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units will need to place greater emphasis on this. There will be a need to continue to “co-create” recommendations with operations,

¹⁸WFP Evaluation Policy, 2016, Paragraph 17.

while maintaining the full independence of the evaluation function. The latter point is important. If the Office of Evaluation chooses to place more emphasis on providing targeted evidence, it will need to do so whilst maintaining its separation from operational decisions - maintaining independence and preventing the development of any real or perceived conflict of interest. It will be important for the Office of Evaluation not to have implied ownership of operational decisions.

85. During the mission the Panel heard a specific learning need the Office of Evaluation could consider assisting with: to help management think through developing a theory of change for the next strategic plan. The Office of Evaluation could corral the evidence to help management test various formulations - to ensure that whatever guides WFP in future is robust and realistic.

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Taking charge of knowledge management for evaluation products

86. There appear to be major weaknesses in the WFP knowledge management system and a culture of using evaluation evidence in planning and programming has yet to be embedded across the organization. The MOPAN 2019 study noted that “despite pockets of valuable in-depth knowledge generation and use, such as in nutrition, WFP has not yet developed an effective, integrated organisation-wide system for making this available internally and externally.”¹⁹ The study noted that staff largely rely on informal networks, and on trawling for information. A new knowledge management strategy was introduced several years ago but was not funded and there is little confidence internally that knowledge management will improve soon. The lack of a solid and functioning knowledge management system prevents the systematic use of findings from evaluation.
87. It has therefore largely been up to the Office of Evaluation to promote the use of its reports and, in collaboration with relevant units, to identify strategic knowledge gaps. The Office of Evaluation has tended to work with individual policy and programmatic units to identify and agree needs. Without functioning organization-wide systems, the Office of Evaluation will need to develop a more systematic approach to knowledge management. The Panel considers that until corporate knowledge management systems are in place, the Office of Evaluation should take ownership and responsibility for knowledge management relating to its products. The gap is greatest with respect to trying to ensure that decentralized evaluations address the evidence and learning needs of the organization. The review addresses this in Section 4.2. The Office of Evaluation is producing a Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy, and it will be important that this helps the evaluation function meet its knowledge management needs but also meshes with corporate systems if they are developed soon.
88. Noting that ideally the WFP knowledge management system would ensure the optimal use of evaluative learning, the Panel considers that the Office of Evaluation has a role to play in supporting the development of these systems. To contribute to the development of the WFP knowledge management system the Office of Evaluation could consider initiating an evaluation of it. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank have evaluated their organizations’ knowledge management systems in the last couple of years. By evaluating the knowledge management practice at WFP, the Office of Evaluation would add to a growing evidence base of international agencies’ practice and could use these two evaluations as models.²⁰

¹⁹MOPAN 2019, p.9

²⁰ [See Knowledge Flow and Collaboration under the World Bank's New Operating Model](#) and [Knowledge Solutions for Development: An Evaluation of ADB's Readiness for Strategy 2030 Evaluation Document](#).

Enhancing the communication of evaluative evidence

89. The Office of Evaluation has itself noted that evaluation findings “have been disseminated narrowly with many lessons left unlearned, amounting to missed opportunities for WFP to improve its performance”.²¹ The Centralized and Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance packages set out what evaluation managers are required to do to deliver a communication and learning plan. Whilst these are comprehensive, they recommend relatively traditional methods and messaging. Some innovative new approaches are being used for both centralized and decentralized evaluations - including infographics and videos. Those that are produced are high quality and effective. But this is not yet a systematic practice.
90. The Panel heard that there is demand from outside the Office of Evaluation for better communication - communication that can reach over-stretched staff and counterparts working in difficult conditions, with messaging that condenses lessons into easily digestible information.
91. The Office of Evaluation is developing the new Communication and Knowledge Management Strategy, mentioned above, partly to address the need to be more innovative. It is also developing a technical note on the dissemination of evaluation findings. The new strategy aims to introduce more effective means of communication and it is part of the Office of Evaluation’s efforts to “make evaluation everyone’s business”. The Panel endorses this initiative and recommends that the Office of Evaluation seeks to adopt cutting edge methodologies as a way of adding value. For it to have impact the Office of Evaluation will need to develop a strong understanding of how to influence change. It will need to use the “language” of evaluation users and focus on their interests. The Office of Evaluation will need to tap into the communication channels used by those it is seeking to influence – rather than setting up parallel structures and communication channels. The Panel considers that the Office of Evaluation should review the draft Communication and Knowledge Management Strategy in the light of these comments to ensure that it sets out a genuinely transformative approach to communication, and to ensure it sets out how it will more systematically take ownership of knowledge management relating to evaluation products.
92. The Office of Evaluation may also wish to enhance communication capacity centrally and, potentially, in regional evaluation units. It could also revise the Centralized and Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance packages so that the “minimum communication package” includes, for example, a one-page summary, video and infographics, in addition to the traditional full report.

Contributing even more to learning beyond WFP

93. The Panel felt that the Office of Evaluation could do more to contribute to learning beyond WFP by enhancing accessibility of evaluative evidence to stakeholders. Currently, the primary way those interested in evaluative evidence from WFP can find information is through a relatively traditional document search portal. The Panel therefore recommends that the Office of Evaluation explore ways to facilitate use of its evaluative evidence to contribute to learning beyond WFP. The Office of Evaluation could identify how it can be improved by seeking to identify users and their needs. Some suggestions are made in Section 4.1.

Ensuring decentralized evaluations contribute to meeting corporate learning needs and inform strategic needs

94. The Panel considers the Office of Evaluation could invest further in improving the credibility and utility of decentralized evaluations. As stated above, centralized and decentralized evaluations together comprise the WFP evaluation function. As such, decentralized evaluations need to have the same credibility as centralized evaluations. They need to be able to contribute to the learning needs of WFP with the same degree of credibility as centralized evaluations - but whilst retaining the principle of being “demand-led” to maximize ownership, use and learning. This principle accords with WFP organizational emphasis on the prime importance of country offices - and on headquarters servicing the field system.

²¹WFP OEV Communications and Knowledge Management Strategy (2020-2024) Draft of February 2020

95. It is evident that the Office of Evaluation already intends there to be no quality difference between centralized and decentralized evaluations. As highlighted in Section 2.4, the Office of Evaluation has designed a class-leading support system to ensure the same norms and standards apply to both. But largely because country offices have weaker evaluation management capacity than the Office of Evaluation, the Panel considers even greater investment will be required. This should focus on ensuring there are no qualitative differences between centralized and decentralized evaluations in future.
96. The Panel therefore recommends WFP consider what more can be done to lift the quality of decentralized evaluations so there are minimal differences. The Panel offers some suggestions in Section 4.2.

Ensuring learning needs consistently drive evaluation coverage alongside accountability, and enhance the efficient use of evaluation resources

97. The Office of Evaluation's centralized evaluations are planned and prioritized according to clear and strategic selection criteria. These criteria allow for flexibility, ensure they add value, and help ensure coverage objectives are achieved. The Office of Evaluation is currently developing a three-year evaluation work plan – that benefitted from consultation with the Evaluation Function Steering Group and the Executive Board. The Office of Evaluation's work plans are attached to the WFP Management Plan and are reviewed annually. This is a robust and comprehensive approach. However, the Panel invites the Office of Evaluation to reflect on whether there would be benefits to giving learning needs even more explicit attention in this process. In collaboration with the Evaluation Function Steering Group and the Executive Board, the Office of Evaluation could go deeper in seeking to anticipate the future learning needs of the organization and ensure its planned coverage will deliberately address these needs.
98. To do this, the Office of Evaluation would need to establish principles that guide the selection of learning needs. The Office of Evaluation has already piloted a similar approach with respect to planning impact evaluations (for example, on cash programming and gender). But there are likely to be other areas of WFP operations with evidence gaps that WFP needs to address to deliver stronger interventions. These gaps could also relate to key strategic and operational changes in the organization, the size and risk of country programmes, opportunities for innovation, types of intervention, and the stage of development of an instrument (for example, if it is a pilot, an approach being rolled out, or an approach that is being phased out). It would require anticipating key issues over the life cycle of the current and next strategic plan and taking a strategic risk-based approach to selecting evaluation topics, in the same way that audit selects its targets. Coverage would therefore be defined by the principle of identifying the organization's global, regional, and country learning needs over the medium term. The Panel therefore recommends that the Office of Evaluation, together with the Evaluation Function Steering Group and the Executive Board, considers developing an evaluation learning plan and ensures future evaluation plans incorporate this collaborative analysis.
99. Logically, this approach may lead the Office of Evaluation to review the current coverage norm for country strategic plans – leading it to take a more differentiated approach. In 2016, when WFP required countries to develop country strategic plans, the Executive Board asked the Office of Evaluation to conduct country strategic plan evaluations for each of the (approximately) 83 WFP country programmes and the Office of Evaluation has planned accordingly. The Panel recognizes that country strategic plan evaluations should give WFP a strategic perspective on its country operations, helping WFP to tailor its response and actions to the country context. They are a marked improvement on previous practice. The Panel also recognizes that their value addition lies in their contribution to learning for each country office. But the utility of universal country strategic plan coverage could be weaker than anticipated for two reasons:
 - a) Repetition of findings and recommendations: inevitably, over time these 83 evaluations will generate much repetition and may yield limited strategic value at corporate level, especially when weighed against the investment. For example, evaluations will likely find in each country similar weaknesses that are the product of known WFP-wide corporate weaknesses. The recommendations to address these will then be identical.

- b) Limited absorptive capacity of users outside the target country programme: there is limited absorptive capacity in WFP to learn from so many evaluations – within both management and the Executive Board. (Indeed, this may already be an issue relating to its existing portfolio of centralized evaluations).
100. Keeping in mind that the value added by evaluations relates to their quality and strategic value, not universal coverage - the Panel recommends that WFP consider taking a selective approach rather than a universal one to evaluating country strategic plans. The Panel recognizes that the current commitment to full evaluation coverage was made only recently and that an immediate change would be unhelpful. Given this, the Office of Evaluation could review the strategic value of full coverage when the majority of all “first generation” country strategic plan evaluations have been completed and reconsider the approach for the “second generation” of country strategic plan evaluations.
101. It is therefore recommended that in the medium term the Office of Evaluation consider a more selective approach to country strategic plan evaluations. Country strategic plan evaluations will always have value in a priority subset of countries – those that have most strategic importance or that are most important to donors. In less strategically important countries WFP could consider a more tailored approach. It could undertake end-of-cycle reviews, evaluations for every second country strategic plan cycle, conduct joint evaluations with national and agency partners, or prioritize system-wide evaluations such as sustainable development cooperation framework evaluations. These will ensure that there is still a degree of formal reporting and reflection on WFP performance in every country – helping to build national ownership. If WFP decides to review this coverage norm, country office Directors should be consulted as they are primary users of country strategic plan evaluations.
102. The Panel also considers that there is scope to try to increase the strategic contribution decentralized evaluations make to learning. There is a need to encourage country offices to undertake evaluations that will better contribute to meeting WFP strategic learning needs once these are identified as well as generating learning for the specific country. Currently, most decentralized evaluations are focused on a handful of themes (school feeding and institutional capacity building being the prevalent programmatic areas). It is often the case that donors require programmes they finance to be the subject of a decentralized evaluation. This drives some of the concentration on just a few types of intervention (for example, school feeding). It also reduces the capacity of country offices to focus on other issues. To ensure that decentralized evaluations inform a broader range of learning needs, the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units could encourage country offices, regional bureaux, and programme units to select from among programme themes whose learning is a priority for the organization. These priorities could be identified when regional evaluation units develop regional evaluation strategies in collaboration with country offices, regional bureaux, the Office of Evaluation and policy units. The Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units could consider trying to incentivize the selection of priorities identified in the regional evaluation strategy by offering enhanced support for units that choose topics from this “menu”. For country offices to have the capacity to respond, donor demands for specific evaluations (that is, on “over-evaluated” intervention types) would need to be reduced or at least modified. The Office of Evaluation and the WFP Government Partnerships Division could engage with these donors and explore opportunities to modify their evaluation requirements, so capacity is released to increase the number of decentralized evaluations undertaken that add to organizational learning.
103. An additional way of meeting this need is to encourage the regional bureaux to commission multi-country decentralized evaluations on priority themes. In principle regional bureaux can commission decentralized evaluations but few are undertaken. The Office of Evaluation will be able to judge whether regional bureaux will need access to additional resources – for example from the Contingency Evaluation Fund. The Panel therefore recommends that country offices and regional bureaux are incentivized to focus decentralized evaluation functions on issues that are strategically important to WFP, as identified in a potential “learning strategy”.

3.2 POSITIONING AND PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

104. Here the Panel comments on how the evaluation function can position itself optimally in the coming years. These comments also relate to how the evaluation function integrates key cross-cutting agendas in evaluation, partnership work and the contribution WFP makes to national evaluation capacity

development (NECD). Common to all these comments is the Panel's view that, given the experience, relative scale, and profile of the WFP evaluation function within the United Nations evaluation community, it could play a leading role in modelling for other agencies and partners how these issues should be addressed.

MAINSTREAMING CROSS-CUTTING AGENDAS IN EVALUATIONS

105. The Office of Evaluation has a strong track record regarding its treatment of gender equality. Centralized evaluations treat gender in a systematic way throughout the evaluation process. The Office of Evaluation evaluations have also directly addressed gender and contributed to stronger WFP policies and implementation. However, gender responsiveness in decentralized evaluations is relatively weaker, as reflected in Post-Hoc Quality Assessment scores. This probably also reflects the fact that WFP has not yet mainstreamed gender equality perspectives effectively - which is itself a finding of the Office of Evaluation's recent centralized evaluation on gender policy in WFP. It is positive that all country strategic plans will have gender markers (on the insistence of the Executive Board) and this should drive gender mainstreaming in country strategic plans and therefore in their subsequent evaluations. All centralized and decentralized evaluations are assessed against the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) scorecard.
106. The Office of Evaluation needs to define what integrating a human rights perspective would mean in practice, but this itself needs to be informed by a WFP-wide approach, which is not yet available.
107. There is also room for the Office of Evaluation to integrate the new UNEG policy on ethics throughout the evaluation process (WFP was part of the working group on these guidelines) and for disability and inclusion to be mainstreamed, also reflecting new United Nations and UNEG standards. As noted above, the Panel considers WFP should play a leading role in modelling how these issues should be mainstreamed.
108. Given their centrality to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Panel therefore recommends that the Office of Evaluation continue to work on mainstreaming into evaluation gender equality, human rights, and inclusion - the United Nation's "no one left behind" agenda.

POSITIONING THE OFFICE OF EVALUATION AS A LEADER AND CONTRIBUTOR TO HUMANITARIAN EVALUATIONS, UNITED NATIONS REFORM, INDEPENDENT SYSTEM-WIDE EVALUATIONS, AND JOINT EVALUATIONS

109. Through the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units WFP is active in humanitarian evaluation groups, United Nations reform and harmonization initiatives. It is coordinating and collaborating in key areas and has conducted joint evaluations with other United Nations agencies.
110. WFP already engages with bodies such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on principles for humanitarian intervention evaluations and the conduct of joint evaluations; it is an active member of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) steering group and engages in inter-agency evaluations (it has undertaken three to date, with an additional two almost completed). It is also a member of UNEG Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group.
111. The Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units are also active in working groups focused on United Nations reform and harmonization. The Office of Evaluation participates in a working group on developing the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework guidelines and the development of the system-wide evaluation policy under the UNEG network.
112. The Panel considers WFP should continue to increase its engagement in joint and system-wide evaluations. The Panel also considers that WFP needs to continue to lead or join evaluation harmonization efforts at country level with key agency and national partners: these include joint programmes but also evaluating United Nations Cooperation Framework evaluations. In general, the Panel recommends WFP be active in supporting the Resident Coordinator's efforts in harmonization.
113. Where WFP has a large volume programme it is likely to need to be able to demonstrate attribution to donors and the Executive Board - so it is likely that WFP will want to conduct its own evaluations. However, these should be conducted in coordination with other United Nations agencies to avoid overburdening the same partners and to continue supporting evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable

Development Cooperation Framework. In smaller countries where WFP contributes to development outcomes, evaluations could be joint or sector-wide. Managers of both centralized and decentralized evaluations could adopt the principle that, unless there are extraneous reasons, joint programmes are jointly evaluated. In any case, WFP should actively engage in evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Therefore, the Panel recommends that WFP continue enhancing its positioning as a leader and contributor to United Nations coherence in evaluation, including in independent system-wide evaluations, and joint evaluations.

POSITIONING THE EVALUATION FUNCTION AS A KEY PLAYER IN NATIONAL EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHERS

114. The Office of Evaluation's Evaluation Policy has a commitment to support national evaluation capacity development (NECD) but, while it was building the decentralized evaluation function, the policy commitment was not developed into a strategy. The Panel appreciates that over the last three years the Office of Evaluation has been identifying good practice and what is feasible in terms of helping enhance national evaluation capacity. The Panel saw some good examples from regional evaluation units and the Office of Evaluation - for example with the "Latin American and Caribbean Network of Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization" (ReLAC) and the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval). The Panel recommends WFP now develop and implement clear principles for NECD, and perhaps develop regional approaches. NECD is a major commitment and WFP will need to work in partnership with other local/regional bodies.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

115. In line with peer reviews of other United Nations bodies, the terms of reference asked the Panel to focus on the independence, credibility, and utility of the WFP evaluation function, and on the quality, use and follow up of evaluations to promote accountability, learning and improvement. Specifically, the Panel were asked to assess the extent to which UNEG Norms and Standards have been adopted by WFP.
116. The Panel judges that the Office of Evaluation has established a strong and mature centralized evaluation function. The Panel considers that, as would be expected, the decentralized evaluation is less mature, but significant progress has been made during the period of the current Evaluation Policy. The Panel would like to congratulate WFP and the Office of Evaluation, but also its regional evaluation units, for what has been achieved in building the decentralized evaluation system to date. The Panel endorses fully the MOPAN assessment's conclusion that in WFP, "a highly strategic independent corporate evaluation function oversees the production of high-quality centralised and decentralised evaluations".
117. The Panel also concludes that UNEG Norms and Standards have been embedded throughout the WFP evaluation function – the consultant's preliminary assessment indicated they have been woven into all the systems established to support centralized and decentralized evaluations – and they have been updated to reflect recent changes. The Panel's interviews confirm this assessment.
118. The Office of Evaluation fulfils most of the aspirations it set itself in its policy, strategy, and its plans. Its evaluations and its reflections on WFP performance are respected by staff across WFP and by the Executive Board alike.
119. The Panel notes that across WFP and its stakeholders there is broad appreciation for the way the Director of Evaluation and her team have strengthened the Office of Evaluation's impact in the organization. There is high regard for the professionalism of the Office of Evaluation. It is also clear that internationally, the Office of Evaluation contributes actively to UNEG and to other key specialized evaluation forums – helping to influence the international evaluation community with the perspective and experience of WFP.
120. The paragraphs below draw together the Panel's recommendations made in the report – aimed at strengthening the independence, credibility, and utility of the WFP evaluation function. The Panel recommends that the Evaluation Policy is updated to incorporate changes in the external and internal environment and to take into consideration the six overarching recommendations, with action points under each of them, presented below. Some of the action points are relatively specific in terms of the measures the Panel recommends; others are phrased more generally, leaving it to WFP to reflect and decide on the best way forward. The text in parentheses at the end of each action point identifies to whom it is targeted.

4.1 INDEPENDENCE

Recommendation 1: To support the independence of the evaluation function the panel recommends that all conditions relating to that independence be explicitly stated in the next evaluation policy, which should:

- a) state explicitly that the Director of Evaluation reports to the Executive Board on functional issues and the Executive Director on administrative issues; and (OEV)
- b) include procedures for the dismissal of the Director of Evaluation, which should require consultation with the Executive Board. (OEV)

121. The future independence and credibility of the evaluation function would be enhanced by the three actions relating to financing set out in Recommendation 2 below. The inclusion of a target for a percentage of the WFP contribution income to be invested in evaluation in the current Policy contributes to the function's independence. The figure should be based on a projection of the cost of a fully-fledged integrated evaluation function and of the WFP contributions, ensuring it is appropriate given the scale of WFP resources. A range of instruments fund different kinds of evaluation. If this complexity continues or is extended, it will be increasingly difficult to manage financing for the totality

of the WFP evaluation function. WFP could consider reviewing and seeking to harmonize funding for evaluation. Having noted this, the Contingency Evaluation Fund has been a useful tool, and if a new consolidated funding approach does not make it redundant, it should be extended and perhaps expanded to enhance the capacity of the smallest country offices to manage evaluations.

Recommendation 2: To support the independence and credibility of the evaluation function the panel recommends:

- a) that the next evaluation policy again set a target for a percentage of WFP's contribution income to be dedicated to evaluation, which should be based on an updated financial analysis that takes into consideration the cost of a fully-fledged evaluation function, including an enhanced decentralized evaluation function; (OEV, Executive Board)
- b) that WFP review, with a view to harmonizing, the various financial instruments used to support the various types of evaluations that constitute the evaluation function; and (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Corporate Planning and Performance Division)
- c) that if alternative financing arrangements are not created (recommendation 2 b)), WFP consider extending and perhaps modifying the contingency evaluation fund so that it can provide more flexible support to the smallest country offices and potentially support decentralized evaluations undertaken by regional bureaux. (OEV, evaluation function steering group)

4.2 CREDIBILITY

122. The Office of Evaluation has put in place robust principles, guidance and practices that support the credibility of both centralized and decentralized evaluations. The Panel wishes to make a specific recommendation related to human resources – aimed at ensuring the Office of Evaluation can recruit the technical expertise it requires to manage the evaluation function effectively in future.

123. The current Evaluation Policy commits the Office of Evaluation to “continue to be staffed by a 50:50 mix” of externally recruited evaluation specialists and current WFP staff with the required competency for evaluation, appointed in line with the WFP reassignment policy. The Panel considers that the staffing balance in the Office of Evaluation should be guided by the skills required rather than the need to recruit from a specific candidate pool (that is, current WFP staff).

124. Almost 90 percent of staff in the Office of Evaluation headquarters positions are from the Global North; this is also true of heads of regional evaluation unit positions. The Panel recommends that the Office of Evaluation should seek to improve the diversity of staff in evaluation officer posts across the organization.

Recommendation 3: To ensure that the evaluation function has staff with the requisite professional skills and diversity, the panel recommends:

- a) that WFP recognize evaluation as a specialist skill similar to auditing and exempt the Office of Evaluation from the WFP policy requiring that all positions be first advertised internally; this would allow the Office of Evaluation to advertise posts internally and externally simultaneously and make appointment decisions based solely on skills and competence; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Human Resources Division)
- b) that WFP continue to explore the establishment of an officially recognized cadre of evaluation professionals that provides evaluation staff with a stratified career route and – depending on the size of the cadre – allows staff to rotate among posts and locations; and (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Human Resources Division)
- c) that the Office of Evaluation enhance the geographical and cultural diversity of staff in OEV and regional evaluation units while maintaining professional entry standards. (OEV)

4.3 UTILITY

125. The rest of the Panel's recommendations relate in one way or another to increasing the value addition, and therefore utility, of the WFP evaluation function.

ENHANCING VALUE ADDITION

126. There has been a positive shift in how the evaluation function is perceived internally: there is much more appreciation of the fact that evaluation contributes to learning. However, the Panel considers there is still an institutional tendency toward treating evaluation primarily as an accountability tool. To balance this tendency, the Panel considers that WFP will need to make an extra effort ensure more value is attached to learning from evaluation. This approach will need to come from the Executive Board and senior management as well as the Office of Evaluation.
127. The Panel considers that the Office of Evaluation can enhance the responsiveness of the evaluation function by deploying a broader range of evaluation types and methodologies. The Office of Evaluation's piloting of a new, more strategic approach to impact evaluations is an important step in this direction. But there is a room for more innovation – including trialling developmental and/or formative evaluations. The Panel heard demand for more timely production of evidence for programmes that have shorter cycles - such as humanitarian interventions. The Panel also heard demand for real time and interactive feedback loops so that emerging evaluative evidence is provided quickly to management.
128. The Panel invites the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units to consider whether, in future, they can further enhance the value that evaluation adds to the organization by seeking to contribute targeted evaluative evidence more systematically to decision-makers when it is most needed and therefore likely to have the greatest potential impact. The Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units already do this to some extent – and coverage norms have been designed with learning needs in mind. However, a strong focus on doing this systematically could yield dividends. Over time this could enhance the value attached to evaluative learning and promote increased lesson-learning in WFP more broadly. In practice, it means attending, as observer and without taking part to any decisions, key decisions-making events and providing targeted real-time evidence. This will need to be done whilst maintaining independence and preventing the development of any real or perceived conflict of interest.
129. There are weaknesses in WFP knowledge management system and a culture of using evaluation evidence in planning and programming has yet to be embedded. The lack of a solid and functioning knowledge management system weakens the systematic use of findings from evaluation. The Office of Evaluation has had to work with policy and programmatic units to identify knowledge needs and contribute evaluative knowledge. Without functioning organization-wide systems, the Office of Evaluation will need to develop a systematic approach to the management of knowledge generated by evaluations.
130. There is demand from outside the Office of Evaluation for better communication and the Office of Evaluation is developing a new Communication and Knowledge Management Strategy. The Panel endorses this and encourages the evaluation function to adopt cutting-edge methodologies. For example, by systematically implementing a “minimum communication package” that, in addition to the traditional full report, also produces a one-page summary, video, infographs, etc.
131. The Panel felt that the Office of Evaluation could do more to contribute to learning beyond WFP by enhancing the accessibility of evaluative evidence to stakeholders. Some suggestions include: enhancing the website overall and enhancing it with lessons from each evaluation, engaging in social media and blogs, creating a YouTube channel, and presenting results in public events. An embedded survey of users could be deployed to identify their interests and needs and how information could be tailored.

Recommendation 4: The panel recommends that WFP and the Office of Evaluation take steps to enhance the contribution that evaluation makes to organizational learning, in addition to accountability. The panel recommends:

- a) that the Executive Board provide incentives for WFP senior management to integrate evaluative lessons into the organization's practices and that WFP senior management drive this same approach downwards through all levels of the organization; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, regional evaluation committees, Executive Board)

- b) that the Office of Evaluation experiment with various evaluation approaches and methodologies and offer an expanded menu of evaluation tools, including formative and developmental evaluations and more syntheses and multi-country thematic studies; (OEV, regional evaluation units)
- c) that the Office of Evaluation enhance its added value by systematically providing targeted evidence to targeted decision makers for targeted decisions; this will be most effective if evaluation staff engage with programme and policy design processes, while maintaining their independence, in addition to organizing dedicated meetings for sharing evidence; and (OEV, regional bureaux, regional evaluation units)
- d) that OEV strengthen its knowledge management and communication practices and:
 - i) until corporate knowledge management systems are in place, take ownership of and responsibility for knowledge management relating to its own products, developing a strategy and procedures for ensuring that evaluation knowledge is accessible and proactively shared throughout WFP; (OEV)
 - ii) finalize the draft communication and knowledge management strategy, ensuring that it sets out a genuinely transformative approach to internal communication and specifies how the Office of Evaluation will systematically take ownership of knowledge management relating to evaluation products; (OEV)
 - iii) explore how to facilitate the use of its evaluative evidence in ways that contribute to learning beyond WFP; (OEV)
 - iv) engage with the Programme and Policy Development Department on the mainstreaming of learning from evaluations; and (OEV, Programme and Policy Development Department)
 - v) consider commissioning an evaluation of knowledge management at WFP. (OEV)

STRENGTHENING THE INTEGRATED EVALUATION FUNCTION

132. Centralized and decentralized evaluations together comprise the WFP evaluation function. To contribute to the organization's learning, decentralized evaluations need to have the same credibility as centralized evaluations. The systems and procedures the Office of Evaluation has put in place establish the same standards. But largely because country offices have weaker evaluation management capacity than the Office of Evaluation, the Panel considers there will need to be even more investment in the evaluation capacity of country offices to minimize the potential for quality to diverge.

133. The Panel invites WFP to give the organization's learning needs even more explicit attention when planning evaluation coverage. In collaboration with the Evaluation Function Steering Group and the Executive Board, the Office of Evaluation could seek to anticipate the future learning needs of the organization and ensure its planned coverage will deliberately address these. The Office of Evaluation could develop an evaluation learning plan and base evaluation plans on this collaborative analysis, as well as on the need to meet accountability demands.

134. This approach could lead WFP to review the current coverage norm for country strategic plan evaluations. The Panel appreciates that country offices are among the primary users of these evaluations – as they generate learning on how to improve impact. Notwithstanding their potential value for country offices, the utility of universal country strategic plan coverage could be weaker than anticipated for two reasons. First, it is likely that many of the eighty-plus country strategic plan evaluations will repeat similar findings and recommendations – where these relate to common corporate problems or issues. Second, outside the specific country office, there is limited absorptive capacity in WFP to learn from so many evaluations – within both management and the Executive Board. WFP could therefore consider a differentiated approach to country strategic plan evaluations: proceeding with country strategic plan evaluations in strategically important countries but undertaking lighter processes or engaging with joint or system-wide evaluations in others. The commitment to full evaluation coverage was made only recently and an immediate change would be unhelpful. WFP could continue with full coverage of the “first generation” of country strategic plans, and then review their utility for the “second generation”.

135. The Panel also considers that there is scope to try to increase the strategic contribution decentralized evaluations make to learning. Country offices could be encouraged to select topics that better contribute to meeting the strategic learning needs of WFP once these are identified (as above). Currently most decentralized evaluations focus on a handful of themes or programmes. The Office of Evaluation could encourage country offices – and regional bureaux – with incentives such as enhanced support for units that choose to evaluate from this “menu”.²² The Office of Evaluation could also encourage regional bureaux to commission multi-country decentralized evaluations on priority themes.

Recommendation 5: The panel recommends that WFP implement changes that will help strengthen the quality and utility of decentralized evaluations and contribute to a stronger integrated evaluation function. Specifically, the panel recommends:

- a) that the Office of Evaluation, together with the evaluation function steering group and the Executive Board, consider developing an evaluation learning plan and use it to inform the evaluation plans, in addition to meeting accountability needs. Such a learning plan could be incorporated into WFP’s next evaluation strategy; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Executive Board)
- b) that WFP consider taking a differentiated approach rather than a universal one to evaluating country strategic plans; the Office of Evaluation could base its decision on a review of the strategic value of full coverage when the first-generation country strategic plan evaluations have been completed, which should include consultation with country directors; (OEV, evaluation function steering group, Executive Board)
- c) that country offices and regional bureaux be encouraged and given the “space” to focus decentralized evaluations on issues that are strategically important to WFP, as identified in a potential learning plan (OEV, evaluation function steering group, regional evaluation committees), which would also require that OEV and the Public Partnerships and Resourcing Division engage with donors with a view to harmonizing their evaluation requirements and reducing the number of evaluations on the same subject, thereby giving country offices the “space” to select other topics for evaluation; and
- d) that WFP and the Office of Evaluation invest further in enhancing the credibility and utility of decentralized evaluations so that they add value to centralized evaluations and to evolving evaluation practices at the country level, to which end OEV and WFP could consider:
 - i) further boosting the capacity of regional bureaux so that regional evaluation units can provide more intensive support to country offices; (OEV, evaluation function steering group)
 - ii) ensuring that very small country offices have the capacity to manage evaluations by financing their monitoring and evaluation officers, possibly from WFP’s programme support and administrative budget; (evaluation function steering group, regional bureaux)
 - iii) inviting small country offices to pool resources to hire multi-country evaluation specialists; and (regional evaluation committees)
 - iv) encouraging the sharing of peer-to-peer support by facilitating the provision of support from country offices with strong evaluation expertise to those with less, including through remote or in-person technical assistance. (regional evaluation units)

²² One option would be to emulate the model used to encourage and support countries undertaking impact evaluations – i.e. by providing them with enhanced technical support and some cost-sharing.

CONTRIBUTING TO CROSS-CUTTING AGENDAS, HUMANITARIAN EVALUATION, JOINT EVALUATION, AND NATIONAL EVALUATION CAPACITY

136. The Office of Evaluation has a strong track record on its treatment of gender equality in centralized evaluations, but treatment in decentralized evaluations is more uneven and could be strengthened. The Office of Evaluation needs to define what integrating a human rights perspective means in practice and disability and inclusion issues also need to be mainstreamed, reflecting new United Nations and UNEG standards.

137. The Panel considers that, given the size and profile of the WFP evaluation function in the United Nations evaluation family, it has a responsibility to play a leading role in modelling best practice for other agencies and partners in several areas. Building on its experience, mandate and size, WFP could position itself at the forefront of developing evaluation approaches and methods for complex humanitarian contexts. It could also extend its engagement in joint and system-wide evaluations. The Panel also considers that WFP needs systematically to lead or join evaluation harmonization efforts at country level. It could also develop a tailored and realistic approach to national evaluation capacity development.

Recommendation 6: Given the experience and status of WFP's evaluation function the panel considers that WFP should contribute in particular to humanitarian evaluation practice, cross-cutting agendas, joint evaluation and national evaluation capacity. Going forward, the Office of Evaluation and regional evaluation units should:

- a) be at the forefront of the development and sharing of evaluation approaches and methods and the co-management of joint and system-wide evaluations, particularly in complex humanitarian settings; (OEV)
- b) position WFP as a leader and contributor to United Nations reform, country-level harmonization initiatives, independent system-wide evaluations and joint evaluations; (OEV, regional evaluation units, evaluation function steering group, country directors)
- c) continue to work on mainstreaming into evaluation consideration of gender equality, human rights and inclusion – the United Nations' "leave no-one behind" agenda – given their centrality to the Sustainable Development Goals; and (regional evaluation units, OEV)
- d) develop and implement clear principles for national evaluation capacity development. (regional evaluation units, OEV)

Annexes

Annex 1 Acronyms

CEQAS	Centralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
EFSG	Evaluation Function Steering Group
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HQ	Headquarters
IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System
LTA	Long-Term Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
NECD	National Evaluation Capacity Development
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OEV	Office of Evaluation
PHQA	Post Hoc Quality Assessment
R2	Risk and Recommendation Tracking Tool
REU	Regional Evaluation Unit
RMP	Performance Management and Monitoring Division
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WFP	World Food Programme

Annex 2 Panel Terms of Reference

2020 Peer Review of the Evaluation Function of WFP

Terms of Reference

31 May 2020

A. Introduction

1. The WFP Evaluation Policy (2016-2021)^[1] foresees a DAC / UNEG external peer review as the mechanism to be used to evaluate its Evaluation Policy and to inform the development of the following one. Two similar exercises were conducted prior to the development of the 2008 evaluation policy and the development of the current Evaluation Policy.
2. The Peer Review will provide an independent peer assessment of WFP's evaluation function, with the aim of ensuring that the evaluation function is fully fit for purpose and matched to WFP's evolving approach and organization. The Peer Review is to be conducted in line with the UNEG Peer Review framework. This framework emphasizes three of the five evaluation principles: the independence, credibility, and usefulness of the evaluation function. However, the framework is flexible enough to allow sufficient attention to two other key principles: impartiality and transparency.
3. The primary audiences for the Peer Review are Senior Management and the Executive Board, as well as the Office of Evaluation (OEV) itself and Regional Evaluation Units. The Peer Review report will be presented to the Executive Director and the Executive Board (EB). The Peer Review will be conducted by a Panel headed by Marco Segone, Director of Evaluation in UNFPA. This panel will include a representative from a donor agency, from the global south, from another UNEG entity and a specialist in impact evaluation (as it is a major new area of development of the evaluation function).
4. This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Peer Review of the evaluation function of WFP. It describes the background and rationale for the Peer Review, its purpose, scope, general approach, methods, time schedule, and funding arrangements.

B. Previous Reviews/ Assessments of the Evaluation Function

5. The 2014 Peer Review^[2] of the 2008 WFP evaluation policy mainly recommended^[3] the identification of a clear evaluation model for WFP to be developed in a new policy and operationalized in a strategy. The peer review also recommended vesting of the evaluation independence in OEV and ensuring appropriate oversight of the evaluation function.
6. WFP management agreed to all recommendations except two which were partially agreed on.^[4] The 2016-2021 Policy is supported by a charter which clarified the roles and responsibilities of all major stakeholder groups. Among the three models^[5] proposed in the peer review, the Policy opted for centralized evaluation plus demand-led decentralized evaluation function.
7. The performance of the evaluation function is presented in the annual evaluation report (AER) at the annual Executive Board session in June. The AER provides an overview of the centralized and decentralized evaluations conducted. It assesses the KPIs for measuring progress against the outcomes identified in the Evaluation Policy in the areas of the evaluation coverage, quality and use of evaluation reports, evaluation partnerships and joint evaluations and financial and human resources for the evaluation function. Finally, it presents the outlook for the evaluation function highlighting the key areas for attention in the future.
8. In 2018 OEV commissioned a Review of the Decentralized Evaluation Function to take stock of the progress made in strengthening the function since the adoption of the evaluation policy (2016-2021) which included the set-up of a decentralised evaluation function. The review identified the direction the organization needed to go to ensure the objectives of the Evaluation Policy are achieved and ensure the Corporate Evaluation Strategy is delivered.^[6]
9. The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of WFP in 2017-18 found that WFP has robust oversight and evaluation structures and functions and that a

highly strategic independent corporate evaluation function oversees the production of high quality centralized and decentralized evaluations and synthesis of findings that feed into planning process. WFP's evaluation function aims to ensure full coverage and quality of both corporate and decentralized evaluations and guarantees responses to evaluation. WFP reports annually to the Board on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. OEV demonstrated a strategic approach to planning corporate evaluations and developed a highly effective quality assurance system for centralized evaluations in addition to a system to ensure quality of decentralized evaluations^[7] WFP's Evaluation Policy (2016-21) provides minimum coverage norms which provide appropriate coverage of the organisation's interventions. It has comprehensive Evaluation Quality Assurance Systems and guidance in place to ensure the quality of evaluations, including through an independent post-hoc quality assessment process and has a comprehensive and detailed Management Response System^[8].

C. Purpose of the Peer Review

10. Overall in alignment with the draft UNEG guidelines for professional peer reviews^[9] the main purpose of this peer review is to provide an independent and professional assessment of the WFP evaluation function on the extent to which the UNEG Norms and Standards have been adopted by WFP.

11. After 4 years of implementation of its Evaluation Policy and the set-up of a demand-led decentralized evaluation function, the assessment will focus on the independence, credibility and utility of the WFP evaluation function and on the quality use and follow up of evaluations across WFP to promote accountability, learning and improvement.

12. The Peer Review will provide recommendations to the Executive Board, the Executive Director, the Evaluation Function Steering Group and the Director of Evaluation aimed at improving further the WFP evaluation function and informing the update of the Evaluation Policy.

D. Subject, Scope and Limitations

13. Following the 2014 peer review, a new Evaluation Policy was adopted by the WFP Executive Board in November 2015. The vision for the Evaluation Policy is that by 2021 evaluative thinking, behaviour and systems are embedded in WFP's culture of accountability and learning, enhancing its contribution to ending global hunger. Contributing to this vision, the purpose of the Policy is to ensure that evaluation results (findings and recommendations) are consistently and comprehensively integrated into WFP's policies, strategies and programmes. The expected outcomes of the policy are unpacked in the corporate evaluation strategy^[10] and key performance indicators (KPI) have been developed to monitor its implementation.

14. The 2016-2021 Evaluation Policy with the adoption of the centralized evaluations with demand-led decentralized evaluations model required a strategic shift in the positioning of the evaluation function in WFP. Its theory of change identified a clear vision, purpose, outcomes to be achieved and main assumptions for it to succeed. Activities and outputs for each of these outcomes were developed in a strategy as recommended by the 2014 Peer Review. Complementing the policy and strategy, the evaluation charter clarifies the roles and responsibilities of all. Additionally, each Regional Bureau has drafted a Regional Strategy, a guiding document aligned with the Evaluation Policy timeline.

15. The review will cover the period 2016 to early 2020. It will take into account: i) the evolution of the context, namely the implementation of the SDGs and of the UN reform; and ii) the internal organizational changes since the launch of the Evaluation Policy, namely the adoption of the strategic plan^[11] and the result of its mid-term review (ongoing), the phased development of the corporate results framework^[12] iii) the CSP policy^[13], and iv) the results of the 2018 DE Review.

16. The core assessment question of the peer review is: "are the WFP Evaluation Policy function and its products: independent, credible, useful and influential for learning and accountability purposes, as assessed by a panel of professional evaluation peers against the 2016 UNEG Norms and Standards?".

17. The review is expected to assess the extent to which the selected evaluation function theory of change has been operationalised, the assumptions realized, and the results achieved so far in order to inform the preparation of the next WFP evaluation policy in 2021, which EOVS will prepare. The review will also be a unique opportunity to learn from peers and strengthen the WFP evaluation function with lessons learned from past performance of WFP's evaluation function and from panel members' experiences with other evaluation functions.

E. Core Assessment Criteria

18. The Peer Review will apply three core criteria that need to be satisfied for evaluation functions and products to be considered of high quality:

A. Independence of evaluations and the evaluation system(s). "Independence of evaluation is necessary for credibility, influences the ways in which an evaluation is used and allows evaluators to be impartial and free from undue pressure throughout the evaluation process. The independence of the evaluation function comprises two key aspects – behavioural independence and organizational independence. Behavioural independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence by any party. Evaluators must have the full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development, and must be able to freely express their assessment. The independence of the evaluation function underpins the free access to information that evaluators should have on the evaluation subject.

Organizational independence requires that the central evaluation function is positioned independently from management functions, carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda and is provided with adequate resources to conduct its work. Organizational independence also necessitates that evaluation managers have full discretion to directly submit evaluation reports to the appropriate level of decision-making and that they should report directly to an organization's governing body and/or the executive head. Independence is vested in the Evaluation Head to directly commission, produce, publish, and disseminate duly quality-assured evaluation reports in the public domain without undue influence by any party."^[14]

B. Credibility of evaluations. "Evaluations must be credible. Credibility is grounded on independence, impartiality and a rigorous methodology. Key elements of credibility include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance systems. Evaluation results (or findings) and recommendations are derived from – or informed by – the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of the best available, objective, reliable and valid data and by accurate quantitative and qualitative analysis of evidence. Credibility requires that evaluations are ethically conducted and managed by evaluators that exhibit professional and cultural competencies."^[15] The ethical standards used are defined in 'UNEG Standard 3.2' on Ethics.^[14]

C. Utility of evaluations. "In commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions and/or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The utility of evaluation is manifest through its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making processes and accountability for results. Evaluations could also be used to contribute beyond the organization by generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders."^[16]

19. The core criteria of impartiality^[17] and transparency will also be considered, as they are strongly related to the criteria of independence, credibility and utility. Impartiality is enabled by independence and is a fundamental element of the credibility of evaluations. Transparency is another fundamental element of credibility and is an important basis for the utility of evaluations.

F. Key areas to be covered by the peer review

20. The Panel will take a two-stage approach to identifying the coverage and focus of the Review. The Panel will initially explore a broad range of areas (as below). As the Review progresses, the Panel will identify priority issues and focus on these. The initial broad scope has been identified in light of both UNEG norms and the characteristics of the WFP evaluation function, and is as follows:

A. The EVALUATION POLICY in particular:

A.1. The extent to which the Evaluation Policy conforms with UNEG Norms and Standards, internal and external contextual changes and requirements, such as delivering on Agenda 2030, and whether it needs to be updated in view of recent reforms, e.g. role of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in evaluation, and the System Wide Evaluation Policy under preparation;

A.2. The extent to which the Evaluation Policy is consistent with and is able to influence other WFP policies or frameworks relevant to the evaluation function (notably those concerning strategic planning and budgeting, oversight, results-based management and monitoring; research, data collection and analysis and knowledge management; enterprise risk management; and human resources);

A.3. The extent to which the theory of change developed in the policy is logical and comprehensive; is used to operationalise the Policy in the corporate evaluation strategy, and its assumptions are validated, and risks mitigated;

A.4. The extent to which the WFP Evaluation Policy integrates Gender, Human Rights, Humanitarian Principles, Equity, and Ethics and it adequately reflects the recent developments in the field of evaluation (technical skills and knowledge, approaches and methods, data).

B. GOVERNANCE arrangements, including the following:

B.1. The extent to which the roles & responsibilities, as defined in the Policy and Charter, are adequately operationalized, and how it has changed the organizational relationships of the Office of Evaluation with Management, the Executive Board of the WFP, the Audit Advisory Committee and the Evaluation Function Steering Group;

B.2. The extent to which the arrangements for oversight of the centralised evaluation function by the Executive Board and of the decentralized evaluation activities, including Regional Evaluation Committees are in line with the UNEG Norms and Standards and how they work in practice;

B.3. The extent to which the contractual arrangements for the post of Director of Evaluation, including recruitment, performance management and termination, provides the Director of Evaluation with adequate access and opportunities to contribute to key corporate processes and decisions, including the deliberations of WFP's Executive Board; and whether the institutional 'space' given to the role allows the post-holder to exert influence where necessary.

C. MANAGEMENT of the Evaluation Function, including the following:

C.1. How far management arrangements and working procedures of the evaluation function at centralised and decentralised levels support the fulfilment of Evaluation policy commitments and the achievement of the Evaluation policy's objectives;

C.2. The development, provision and use of guidance, methods and tools to support and strengthen management of evaluations at central and decentralized levels e.g. advancement in data collection and analysis methods, EQAS, DEQAS, Impact Evaluation Strategy, and ECD Strategy.

C.3. The overall systematic management of evaluation with a focus on how linkages between centralized and decentralized are managed.

C.4. Ability to respond effectively to crises (such as COVID-19).

- D. EVALUATION PLANNING, including consideration of the following:
- D.1. Relevance and appropriateness of the methods, process and criteria used for planning and prioritizing the selection of evaluation topics for both centralized and decentralized evaluations, while considering other exercises such as audits and reviews;
 - D.2. The extent to which topics selected for evaluation meet the strategic needs and demands of WFP's key stakeholders, balancing accountability and learning both at centralized and decentralized level;
 - D.3. The balance of effort between: i) WFP corporate evaluation work and joint and system-wide evaluation work; and ii) between undertaking new evaluations in order to generate new evidence and synthesising and disseminating existing evidence.
- E. EVALUATION QUALITY at each level of the organization, including attention to the following:
- E.1. The quality and credibility of the evaluations, from the planning process through the conduct of the evaluations to the appropriateness of evaluation methods, and of evidence-based findings, conclusions, and recommendations;
 - E.2. The extent to which WFP evaluations integrate Ethical considerations Gender, Human Rights, Equity, and Humanitarian principles;
 - E.3. The independence of evaluation teams and team leaders, systems to ensure the quality of the team, assessing the appropriateness of evaluation approach setup in the Policy (outsourcing of evaluation conduct to independent evaluation teams);
 - E.4. The adequacy of the evaluation quality assurance system for all evaluation types (centralized, decentralized) including the Post-Hoc Quality Assessment conducted on all final evaluation reports;
- F. EVALUATION FOLLOW UP AND USE - important aspects include the following:
- F.1. The type and level of engagement of internal and external stakeholders from the evaluation planning process onwards to their use of evaluation evidence to develop new policies, strategies, programmes, and country strategic plans and support learning, enhancing accountability and organizational improvement at the relevant levels;
 - F.2. Appropriateness of communication and dissemination approaches to support use internally and externally (affected population, member states, and cooperating partners).
 - F.3. Responsibilities for the follow-up of lessons and recommendations, including arrangements for preparation and implementation of a formal Management Response.
- G. PARTNERSHIPS AND POSITIONING of the Office of Evaluation:
- G.1. Extent to which partnerships in evaluation e.g. by building national evaluation capacities or collaborating in joint system-wide or country-led evaluation initiatives, have evolved effectively;
 - G.2. Extent to which collaborations with evaluation partners have been effective in facilitating global humanitarian effectiveness accountability as intended in the Evaluation Policy;
 - G.3. In effectively engaging with external entities e.g. the UN Evaluation Group, EvalPartners, ALNAP, DIME, or contributing to Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations and other joint evaluations in order to achieve partnership objectives.
- H. FINANCIAL RESOURCES of the Evaluation Function, including the following:
- H.1. Are the Office of Evaluation, Regional Bureaux and country offices adequately financed to allow for the commissioning of high-quality credible, useful, and timely evaluations;

H.2. Does WFP adequately invest the necessary financial resources to support the delivery of high-quality centralized and decentralized evaluations;

H.3. Is WFP equipped with suitable financing mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of its evaluation function at all levels.

I. Human resources for the Evaluation Function, including the following:

I.1. Have the Office of Evaluation, Regional Bureaux and country offices an adequate staffing in terms of gender and diversity and of rotational and non-rotational posts to allow for the conduct of the evaluation function at all levels and the commissioning of high-quality credible, useful, and timely evaluations;

I.2. Extent to which evaluation capacities are appropriate at all levels of the organizations and for various stakeholder groups to deliver the Evaluation Policy.

I.3. Extent to which evaluation teams are appropriately resourced (profiles, gender and diversity); and how do they relate to the rest of the organization.

G. Approach and Methods

The overall approach to the peer review will include the following main elements:

Ø Preparation: During this period, the focus will be on the finalization of the TOR for the peer review, the composition of the panel, the recruitment of the consultant and the collection of key documents relevant to the peer review.

Ø Self-Assessment: WFP will undertake a self-assessment of the evaluation function against UNEG norms and standards, using the framework for the analysis of the level of maturity of the central/corporate level evaluation function developed by the UNEG in 2019. This self-assessment will be conducted at centralized and regional levels by OEV and the 6 regional evaluation officers and consolidated by OEV. The consultant will also review the current Post-Hoc Quality Assessment (PHQA) System and assess the quality of a small set of centralized and decentralized evaluations (if deemed necessary after the review of the PHQA system).

Ø Initial written assessment: The consultant supporting the panel will conduct an extensive document review and, potentially, together with the Chair of the Panel, will undertake a mission (this may be organized in a virtual manner pending ability to travel) to WFP to consult with OEV and the documents prepared by REOs in June. These activities will provide the basis for a preliminary assessment of the evaluation function and of the evaluations which will be discussed with OEV staff by the Panel (video conference in May or June 2020).

Ø Mission of the panel to WFP: Equipped with the preliminary assessment, the Panel will conduct an initial visit in September 2020 to WFP. This will include a round of meetings, interviews and focus group discussions with staff, WFP senior management (at all levels of the organization) and members of the executive board and key external stakeholders. Structured conversations with members of the six regional evaluation committees will be set up with panel members.

Ø Reporting: Produce a final draft report and PowerPoint for discussion with senior management and representatives of the EB. It will be the opportunity for a peer exchange session with OEV and the evaluation function steering group (EFSG) in November 2020. An interaction with the Audit committee will also be planned.

Ø Dissemination: Presentation of the assessment by the Panel Chair at the EB1 (February 2021) alongside the WFP Management Response.

H. Panel Composition

22. Following consultations with the UNEG/DAC Joint Task Force as well as with the WFP Office of Evaluation, a Panel of professional evaluators has been assembled.

23. A number of important considerations were taken into account when composing the Panel membership: (i) relevant professional experience; (ii) independence: to avoid any potential or alleged conflict of interest or partiality, the Panel members do not have any close working relationship to WFP that might influence the Panel's position and deliberations; (iii) institutional affiliations: members to be drawn from a variety of multilateral and bilateral development agencies, as well as from institutions in the South and transition countries, and finally taking into consideration gender balance.

24. The combination of these criteria together with the voluntary nature of serving on the Panel resulted in the following composition:

Marco Segone, Director Evaluation, UNFPA (Chair)

Anu Saxen Director Evaluation of Development Cooperation, MOFA, Finland (OECD/DAC/Donor Representative)

Maurya West Meiers, Senior Evaluation Officer, IEG, World Bank (Representative of IFI)

Sven Harten, Deputy Director, DEval (German Development Evaluation Institute)

Silvia Salinas, Evaluation Expert (Representative of Global South)

David Rider Smith, Senior Evaluation Coordinator, UNHCR (UNEG Member)

25. The Panel will be assisted by a consultant responsible for (a) data collection and information gathering; and (b) preliminary assessment of the collected information, which is to form the basis for more detailed information gathering through structured and semi-structured interviews.

I. Roles and Responsibilities of:

WFP:

26. The WFP Office of Evaluation serves as the main contact point within WFP for the Panel and its advisors. The Office of Evaluation will provide requested information and data, including the following:

- Names and details of contact persons whom the Panel or its advisors wish to contact;
 - Complete list of WFP evaluations, centralized and decentralized (2016-present);
 - List of persons to meet in the WFP Management and in the Executive Board;
 - E-library of evaluation products accessible via internet;
 - Guidelines, templates, and other evaluation tools as published by the Office of Evaluation;
 - WFP organigram;
 - Documents outlining the leadership role that WFP plays in the UN system and in the broader development and evaluation fields;
 - WFP Evaluation Policy, Strategy, and Charter.

27. The Office will provide the Panel and consultant with a self-assessment at the start of the Peer Review. The Office will brief WFP Senior Management and its Executive Board about the Peer Review. The Office will also submit the Panel's report and recommendations to the Executive Director and to the Executive Board.

28. The office will set up meetings with internal stakeholders as advised by the panel and facilitate all consultant and panel missions.

The Consultant:

29. The consultant will conduct extensive review of key documents and WFP Self-Assessment prior to first mission to WFP HQ, produce an initial assessment to the Panel, provide overall support

throughout the course of the Peer Review, and produce the Peer Review Draft and Final Report. *Consultant TOR provides more detailed information.*

The Panel:

30. The Panel will assist the Chair in the review of the draft assessment by the consultant following the initial HQ visit, review the draft final document, and advise the Chair in the preparation of recommendations.

- J. Key Documents^[18] for Consultation (not exhaustive)
 - UNEG/DAC Peer Review (2013)
 - Evaluation Policy, Strategy, and Charter
 - Guidelines, templates, and other evaluation tools as published by the Office of Evaluation or other units
 - Other relevant WFP documents including documents concerning RBM, monitoring, operational procedures, and risk management
 - WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021
- K. Key Persons to meet (not exhaustive)
 - WFP Office of Evaluation Director, Deputy Director, and Staff;
 - The Executive Director or his representative, and senior staff in WFP, including Regional Directors.
 - WFP staff dealing with results-based management, knowledge systems, programme appraisal, management response on evaluations, good practices and portfolio quality improvement, as well as risk management and internal audit;
 - Former evaluation consultant team leaders;
 - Staff members of a selected number of WFP units, including technical departments;
 - Staff members in regional, sub-regional, and country offices to be interviewed through teleconference or skype;
 - Members of the WFP Executive Board;
 - Regional Evaluation Committee Members;
 - Regional Evaluation Officers.
- L. Review Process and Schedule

When	What	Main activities
Feb-May 2020	Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalization TOR - Composition of Panel - Recruitment of consultant - Preparation of the bibliography
Feb-June	Self-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OEV and REOs (during their retreat in Feb) self-assessment
April – July	Initial assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document review and analysis - Mission or Remote Interviews with WFP (consultant) - Interview key internal and external stakeholders - Draft assessment (consultant lead)
September	Panel visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultations with key evaluation policy stakeholders (internal and external)

September- November	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft report - Discussion of recommendations with WFP - Informal consultation with the EB - Presentation at the Nov EFSG - Submission of the final report to the EB secretariat
February 2021	Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the report at the EB by chair of the panel - Engagement with the internal audit committee

M. Reporting

31. The final report of the Peer Review will present an overview of the evaluation function at WFP and key findings relating to its independence, credibility and utility, leadership and vision. The report will present conclusions and recommendations for action. The report will be a maximum of 30 pages (15 000 words) in length, supplemented by an executive summary and annexes. The Executive Summary will be made available to key implementing partners and stakeholders, particularly to those consulted in the course of the peer review.

32. The Panel Chair will submit the report of the Panel to the Executive Board. It is expected that Management would submit a formal Management Response at the same session.

33. The final report will also be provided to the joint DAC-UNEG Task Force, for dissemination among its respective constituencies and to interested cooperating partners. The Peer Panel will report on the Review's progress to WFP Office of Evaluation and the joint DAC/UNEG Task Force and will provide the DAC-UNEG Task Force with feedback on the experience of the Peer Review to enable the members of UNEG and DAC evaluation network, to learn from experience at WFP and further strengthen the peer review mechanism.

11) Evaluation strategy – OEV should develop an evaluation strategy in line with the selected model for evaluation.

12) Role and designation of the Director of evaluation - To support the Board's governance function, the Board should request the Director of OEV to oversee and report on the evaluation function across WFP.

13) Decentralized evaluation standards and guidelines – OEV should develop appropriate and realistic standards for decentralized evaluations based on a simplified version of its EQAS.

14) Evaluation expertise – WFP should ensure that the WFP people strategy includes the development of a staff cadre for assessment, monitoring and evaluation in WFP.

15) Evaluation database – OEV should develop an online database for all centralized and decentralized evaluations into which COs and RBs can upload their reports.

ENDS

Endnotes

[1] Evaluation Policy (2016-2021) WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1

[2] OECD DAC-EVAL and UNEG, "Peer Review of the Evaluation Function of the UN WFP (2008-2013)".

[3] ibid

[4] WFP/EB.2/2014/6-D/Rev.1

- [5] Model 1 referred to a centralized evaluation function; model 2 to centralized evaluation plus demand-led decentralized evaluation function; and model 3 to centralized and decentralized evaluation function.
- [6] "Review of WFP Decentralized Evaluation Function Final Report (2018)" IOD PARC
- [7] MOPAN 2017-18 assessments, February 2019. Excerpts from pages 8&38
- [8] Ibid, excerpts from page 112
- [9] UNEG, 2016 "Revised UNEG guidelines for professional peer reviews". Draft.
- [10] "Corporate Evaluation Strategy (2016-2021)
- [11] "WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)" WFP/EB.2/2016/4-A/1/Rev.2*
- [12] "Revised Corporate Results Framework (2017-2021)" WFP/EB.2/2018/5-B/Rev.1
- [13] "Policy on Country Strategic Plans" WFP/EB.2/2016/4-C/1/Rev.1*
- [14] United Nations Evaluation Group (2016). Norms and Standards for Evaluation. New York: UNEG.
- [15] ibid
- [16] ibid
- [17] Ibid Norm 5 Impartiality definition: "The key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity and absence of bias. The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including planning an evaluation, formulating the mandate and scope, selecting the evaluation team, providing access to stakeholders, conducting the evaluation and formulating findings and recommendations. Evaluators need to be impartial, implying that evaluation team members must not have been (or expect to be in the near future) directly responsible for the policy setting, design or management of the evaluation subject."
- [18] An e-library has been set up by WFP to be made available to the Panel at the start of their assessment

Annex 3 Assessment of WFP Response to the 2014 Peer Review

The original management response to the 2014 Peer Review recommendations was presented to the WFP Executive Board in November 2014 (Document: WFP/EB.2/20014/6-D/Revenue.1). The table below comments on WFP's actions since the management response was issued. Target dates are omitted.

2014 Peer Review Panel Recommendation	2014 Management Response (first line) & 2020 Panel commentary on implementation (<i>italics</i>)
<p>Recommendation 1: Evaluation model for WFP.</p> <p>WFP management should take decisions concerning the most appropriate model for the evaluation function in WFP, using the three models set out in paragraph 15 and making sure that the necessary human and financial resources are made available to implement the preferred model. These decisions should be made when the results of the Business Process Review (BPR) assessment of decentralized evaluation capacity become available and before the management response to the peer review is submitted to EB.2/2014.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. WFP decided to introduce the demand-led decentralized evaluation model – as set out in its current Evaluation Policy.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 2: Evaluation policy.</p> <p>WFP should revise the 2008 evaluation policy in line with the selected evaluation model to ensure that financial resources for evaluation are protected; criteria for evaluation selection and coverage are clearly specified; the roles of the Board, OEV and management at different levels of the organization are clarified; evaluation terminology is revised; and the typology of evaluations is brought into line with current WFP practice. The policy should also specify WFP's role in developing national evaluation capacity, and the involvement and role of partners in country-level evaluation.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p><i>Implemented. WFP revised the Evaluation Policy in line with the recommendations. It did not, however, give specificity to "WFP's role in developing national evaluation capacity", although the policy does mention it.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Oversight of the evaluation function.</p> <p>The Board should request the development of a set of key performance indicators to support its oversight of evaluation across WFP, giving OEV adequate time to establish the necessary systems. The panel suggests the following as a possible set of indicators:</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p><i>Implemented. OEV has introduced indicators in line with the Peer Review Panel recommendations.</i></p> <p><i>Whilst the 2020 Peer Review Panel saw evidence of Executive Board interest in evaluation, there is</i></p>

<p>1) the numbers, types and coverage of evaluations taking place across WFP;</p> <p>2) the human and financial resources used for evaluation;</p> <p>3) progress in the development of WFP's capacity and competence in evaluation; and</p> <p>4) ratings of the quality of evaluations, including decentralized evaluations if model 2 or 3 is selected.</p> <p>The Board should ensure that WFP management has systems and processes in place to maximize the use of evaluation results in policy and strategy development, as well as in project and programme design. The strategic use of evaluation results should be the Board's main focus in its deliberations with WFP management, over and above discussion of individual evaluations.</p>	<p><i>limited evidence that the Board ensured WFP management has systems and processes in place to maximize the use of evaluation results in policy and strategy development, as well as in project and programme design.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Management response.</p> <p>WFP management should improve the quality and effectiveness of management responses to evaluations, in particular by giving due attention to the ownership of follow-up. This requires the active engagement of relevant senior managers and other stakeholders during the evaluation process and beyond. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEV should continue to improve the quality of evaluation recommendations by ensuring that they are clear, realistic and relevant to WFP's context and structures. OEV should also strengthen its dialogue with evaluation consultants and management at the draft report stage, including through its current good practice of holding workshops with major stakeholders so that, as far as possible, recommendations are agreed before the evaluation is complete – although OEV may retain recommendations with which management does not agree. • WFP management should nominate a member of the Executive Management Group to be responsible for engaging management in each OEV 	<p>Partially agreed</p> <p><i>Partially implemented – and in process of implementation.</i></p> <p><i>The Peer Review considered that “WFP management should improve the quality and effectiveness of management responses to evaluations, in particular by giving due attention to the ownership of follow-up.” Specific recommendations were for WFP to improve its tracking system and its reporting template. It recommended that “WFP should provide staff with online access to the RMP database for tracking progress in implementing the management responses to recommendations.” WFP rejected the recommendations, considering its system adequate.</i></p> <p><i>These systems are only now being improved – with the introduction of R2 – but not as a result of the Peer Review.</i></p> <p><i>The next Peer Review will be able to assess the impact of better tracking and follow up.</i></p>

<p>evaluation from its outset through to its presentation to the Board, with RMP in a supporting and advisory role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP should provide staff with online access to the RMP database for tracking progress in implementing the management responses to recommendations, so that the staff responsible can enter completed actions online, as they already do for audit recommendations. • WFP should replace the current management response template with a more detailed format for setting out action plans in which management can specify more clearly how it intends to act in response to each evaluation. • management may request OEV's informal comments on how well a draft management response corresponds to the findings, conclusions and recommendations of an evaluation. The management response will still be fully owned by management, and OEV will in no sense be approving or taking responsibility for its content. 	
<p>Recommendation 5: Vesting evaluation independence in OEV.</p> <p>For each evaluation it manages, OEV should take ownership of all aspects of the evaluation report, including the recommendations. Independence is vested in OEV, not in evaluation consultants.</p>	<p>Partially agreed</p> <p><i>Partially implemented. In its management response WFP noted that under the current model, OEV was already responsible for ensuring the quality of recommendations. Responsibility for follow up, however, rests outside OEV.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 6: Evaluation quality assurance.</p> <p>OEV should commission an external consultant to review the EQAS and identify evaluation steps and elements that can be simplified, reducing the time inputs of staff and consultants, the number of steps and the duration of evaluations. OEV should also take account of the panel's proposals on improving evaluation quality.</p>	<p>Response: Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. The EQAS was reviewed and revised during the Evaluation Policy period.</i></p>

<p>Recommendation 7: Utilization of evaluation.</p> <p>In redesigning its project and programme planning and approval process, WFP management should ensure that evaluation evidence is taken into account, not only from any evaluations of the project under consideration, but also from other relevant evaluations; management should request OEV's assistance in identifying such evaluations if necessary.</p> <p>OEV should strengthen its inputs to WFP's revision of project and programme planning, design and approval processes to encourage the use of evaluation evidence and improve arrangements for evaluation within projects, in particular by promoting the design of projects that can be evaluated effectively (evaluability); the use of prior evaluations of a project, and other relevant evaluations; and planning to facilitate evaluation from the outset.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p><i>Partially implemented. OEV has taken steps, particularly with the introduction of regional evaluation units, to ensure that prior evaluative learning feeds into new programmes. As the MOPAN report notes: "WFP has undertaken considerable effort to ensure that the evidence base is used, and while there are still gaps in the system, a culture of using evaluation evidence in planning and programming is emerging" (p.39).</i></p> <p><i>However, there is still not the systematic application of evaluation findings in planning and programming (see MOPAN, p.52).</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 8: Evaluation training.</p> <p>OEV should develop evaluation training in partnership with the Human Resources Division, including modules for evaluation planning and management in WFP management training; and WFP induction courses covering the essential elements of evaluation concepts and purposes, and the Evaluation Policy.</p> <p>Response: Agreed.</p> <p>Implementation timeframe: 2015 for initial inputs; evaluation strategy to set out more comprehensive and phased approach in line with the monitoring strategy, "People Strategy" and other corporate initiatives.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. As detailed in the current Peer Review report, OEV has developed a comprehensive evaluation training programme.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 9: Roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>WFP management should ensure that regional monitoring and evaluation advisers have a reporting line to OEV for technical oversight and support on evaluation, and review of their performance with regard to evaluation.</p> <p>WFP management should clearly delineate the roles of OEV and RMP, giving OEV the lead responsibility for evaluation standards and guidance at all levels of WFP, with RMP taking the lead on monitoring and all forms of project/programme review by management.</p>	<p>Partially agreed.</p> <p><i>Some subrecommendations were fully implemented, some are in process.</i></p> <p><i>Roles and responsibilities are now set out explicitly in the Evaluation Charter.</i></p> <p><i>The new R2 system for reviewing management responses will require sign off from Regional Directors.</i></p>

<p>WFP management should request Regional Directors to take responsibility for receiving and reviewing management responses to the single operation evaluations and decentralized evaluations in their regions.</p> <p>Internal Audit and OEV should agree how to identify audit risks regarding compliance with the WFP Evaluation Policy, and should develop standard questions for testing the compliance of individual country offices, regional bureaux or Headquarters divisions where risks of non-compliance are identified.</p>	<p><i>The WFP risk matrix reflects the importance of evaluation. The WFP management response noted that it would not seek to integrate evaluation into audit frameworks at a lower level.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 10: Monitoring and evaluation guidance.</p> <p>OEV should work with RMP to make sure that WFP guidance on evaluations and, separately, on monitoring and review are distinct but mutually compatible and understood by country offices; that any regional and global training of M&E officers is coordinated; and that management reviews are used as key inputs to operation evaluations, country portfolio evaluations and other types of evaluation.</p> <p>Response: Agreed.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. Guidance and training have been disaggregated and provided.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 11: Evaluation strategy.</p> <p>OEV should develop an evaluation strategy in line with the selected model for evaluation. The evaluation strategy, separate from the monitoring and review strategy, should set out how WFP will develop evaluation capacity, resourcing, selection, coverage, and utilization across the Organization.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. The strategy meets the requirements identified by the 2014 Peer Review.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 12: Role and designation of the Director of Evaluation.</p> <p>To support the Board's governance of the function, the Board should request the Director of OEV to oversee and report on the evaluation function across WFP. In its annual report, OEV should include an assessment of the quality of decentralized evaluations and the salient issues emerging from these evaluations. In line with this change in role, the Board should request WFP management to redesignate the Director of OEV as the Director of Evaluation.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. All of these recommendations have been enacted without exception.</i></p>

<p>To avoid any possible conflicts of interest, the Board should limit the Director's term to a single period of six years, non-renewable, and without the right of return to WFP. This would replace the current arrangements – a term of four years renewable once, with the possibility of re-employment in WFP.</p> <p>The Executive Director should redesignate the Director of OEV as the Director of Evaluation. The Director should retain direct responsibility for OEV-managed evaluation and should also be responsible for standard-setting, oversight and support of evaluation across WFP.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 13: Decentralized evaluation standards and guidelines.</p> <p>OEV should develop appropriate and realistic standards for decentralized evaluations based on a simplified version of its EQAS and reflecting the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group. Once these standards are agreed, OEV should issue guidelines to country offices on the management of decentralized evaluations.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. These recommendations have all been implemented – in an exemplary way.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 14: Evaluation expertise.</p> <p>WFP management should ensure that the WFP People Strategy includes the development of a staff cadre for assessment, monitoring and evaluation in WFP, so that regional bureaux and country offices have the human resource capacity and expertise to implement the evaluation strategy.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Ongoing, partially implemented. Although this was "agreed" the management comment did not fully commit to this. To date there is not a meaningful single staff cadre. OEV is exploring establishing a professional cadre and the current Peer Review supports this.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 15: Evaluation database.</p> <p>OEV should develop an online database for all centralized and decentralized evaluations into which country offices and regional bureaux can upload their evaluation reports. OEV can use this database to make an annual assessment of the quality of evaluation reports, with a summary included in the Annual Evaluation Report. WFP may be able learn from the database solutions developed for this purpose by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p><i>Implemented. OEV has established a public database of evaluations on WFP's website. OEV has established a Post-Hoc Quality Assessment system to assess the quality of all evaluation reports.</i></p>

Annex 4 Persons Met

Peer Review Persons Met			
First name	Last name	Functional title	Division/Unit
Executive Board Bureau			
Gianina	Müller Pozzebon	First Secretary and Alternate Permanent Representative of Brazil, and representing on behalf of List C (Brazil)	
Bommakanti	Rajender	Minister and Alternate Permanent Representative, and Representative of List B (India)	
Terri	Sarch	Ambassador and Permanent Representative, and Representative of List D (United Kingdom)	
Chiara	Segrado	First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative, supporting List D representative (United Kingdom)	
Leloko	Tsita	First Secretary, Representative of List A (Lesotho)	
Headquarters – Rome			
Amir	Abdulla	Deputy Executive Director	
Richard	Allen	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation, Communication and Knowledge Management
Gresham	Barrett	Chief of Staff and Head of Operations Management Department	Operations Management Department
Kathryn	Bell-Greco	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation Admin Unit
Carmen	Burbano	Director	School-Based Programmes (SBP)
Michael	Carbon	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation Region 3 (RBD RBN)
Andrea	Cook	Director	Office of Evaluation
Pilar	Cortes	Chief	Talent Deployment and Career Management (HRMOF)
Kenn	Crossley	Director/ Global Coordinator of Cash Transfers	Cash-Based Transfers (CBT)
Claudio	Delicato	Budget and Programming Officer	Budget and Programming Division (CPPF-RMB)
Gaby	Duffy	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation, Unit 1
Catherine	Feeney	Deputy Director/ Senior Executive Manager	Partnerships and Advocacy Department (PA)

Jacqueline	Flentge	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation Analytics and Research Unit
Mark	Gordon	Chief	Asset Creation and Livelihoods (PROR)
Dawit	Habtemariam	Evaluation Officer	Office of Evaluation Region 1 (RBB RBC)
Dominik	Heinrich	Director	Innovation and Knowledge Management Division (INK)
Jonas	Heirman	Evaluation Officer	Office of Evaluation Region 3/ Impact Evaluation
Arif	Husain	Chief Economist and Director	Research Assessments and Monitoring Division
Manoj	Juneja	Assistant Executive Director	Resource Management Department
Betty	Ka	Deputy Director and OIC	Budget and Programming Division (CPPF-RMB)
David	Kaatrud	Director	Programme - Humanitarian and Development Division (PRO)
Patricia	Kiko Harvey	Inspector General and Head	Inspector General and Oversight Office
Ute	Klamert	Assistant Executive Director	Partnerships and Advocacy Department (PA)
Sarah	Longford	Deputy Director (management)	Office of Evaluation
Sarah	Laughton	Chief	Safety Nets and Social Protection Unit (PROS)
Sergio	Lenci	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation Region 2 (RBJ RBP)
Joyce	Luma	Director	Human Resources Management Division
Anne-Claire	Luzot	Deputy Director (centralized evaluations)	Office of Evaluation
Deborah	Mcwhinney	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation Global and Synthesis Unit
Kawinzi	Muiu	Director	Gender (GEN)
Natasha	Nadazdin	Chief	Monitoring Unit (RMPPM)
Niamh	Ogrady	Evaluation Officer	School-Based Programmes (SBP)
Giulia	Pappalepore	Evaluation Officer	Office of Evaluation CAPQUAL
Jane	Pearce	Director	Performance Management and Reporting Division (RMP)
Jennifer	Rosenzweig	Chief	Knowledge Management – Nutrition (NUT)
Mona	Selim	Evaluation Officer	Office of Evaluation CAPQUAL

Rica	Terbeck-Soine	Evaluation Officer	Office of Evaluation CAPQUAL
Julie	Thoulouzan	Head of Unit	Office of Evaluation CAPQUAL
Ronald	Tranbahuy	Deputy Director	Research, Assessment and Monitoring (RAM)
Margot	Van Der Velden	Director	Emergency Operations Division (EME)
Deborah	Yohendran	Programme Policy Officer	Programme - Humanitarian and Development Division (PRO)
Regional bureaux			
Michala	Assankpon	Regional Evaluation Officer	Regional Bureau Panama (RBP)
Miguel	Barreto	Regional Director	Regional Bureau Panama
Roberto	Borlini	Regional Evaluation Officer	Regional Bureau Nairobi (RBN)
Lola	Castro	Regional Director	Regional Bureau Johannesburg (RBJ)
Gordon	Craig	Regional Director	Regional Bureau Cairo (RBC)
Gabrielle	Gabrielle Tremblay	Regional Evaluation Officer (ad interim)	Regional Bureau Nairobi
Grace	Igweta	Regional Evaluation Officer	Regional Bureau Johannesburg
Yumiko	Kanemitsu	Regional Evaluation Officer	Regional Bureau Bangkok (RBB)
Luca	Molinas	Regional Evaluation Officer	Regional Bureau Cairo
Aude	Mommetja	Regional Evaluation Officer (ad interim)	Regional Bureau Nairobi
Kyungnan	Park	Country Director	Regional Bureau Panama
Filippo	Pompili	Regional Evaluation Officer	Regional Bureau Dakar (RBD)
Ivan	Touza	Regional Evaluation Officer	Regional Bureau Panama
Country offices			
Adeyinka	Badejo	Country Director	Côte d'Ivoire
Johanna	Constanza	M&E Officer	El Salvador
Edith	Heines	Country Director	Rwanda
Jelena	Milosevic	Country Director	Armenia
Daison	Ngirazi	Head of Programmes	Eswatini
Christa	Rader	Country Director	Indonesia
Jaakko	Valli	Country Director	El Salvador

Annex 5 Documents Reviewed

This Peer Review draws on a comprehensive set of documents relating to the WFP evaluation function assembled by the Office of Evaluation. This set comprised more than 200 external and internal documents covering all aspects of the evaluation function and its organizational context. The full list of documents is available from the Office of Evaluation in an excel spreadsheet. Instead of listing these documents here, the list below cites only those documents referred to in the final report and other documents considered key to understanding the WFP evaluation function:

- 'Corporate Evaluation Strategy (2016-2021)'. Office of Evaluation, WFP, May 2016.
- 'Country Strategic Plan Evaluations: Guidance for Process and Content', June 2020.
- 'Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) Process Guide (Updated March 2018)'. WFP Office of Evaluation, March 2018.
- 'Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS): Policy Evaluations I. Guidance for Process & Content'. WFP Office of Evaluation, May 2014.
- 'Impact Evaluation Strategy (2019-2026)'. WFP Office of Evaluation, 2019.
- 'Implementation Status of Evaluation Recommendations'. Office of Evaluation, WFP, June 2020.
- 'In Brief: WFP's Evaluation Function'. Office of Evaluation, WFP, June 2016.
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Annex 6 Evaluation Policy Theory of Change (2016-2021)

