



WFP EVALUATION



SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Technical Note

Leveraging Evaluation Evidence. Products and Engagement Approaches

1. Purpose of the Technical Note

The WFP Strategic Plan 2022-2025¹ articulates a commitment to being “evidence-driven” and recognizes evidence as one of the six enablers that will increase WFP’s ability to achieve results in the eradication of food insecurity and malnutrition. This commitment prompts WFP to leverage evidence generated by evaluations to inform and enhance its policies, strategies, and programmes.

The evaluation function delivers diverse evidence products, and the 2022 Evaluation Strategy² enshrines a renewed commitment to enhancing evaluation responsiveness to user demands and maximizing evidence use, supported by dedicated capacity.

This Technical Note revises and replaces a former one focusing on WFP Evaluative Products and presents an updated vision of WFP’s new evaluation offerings that draw on existing evaluative evidence to increase its accessibility and usefulness to WFP staff and decision-makers. These offerings are the following: **Summary of Evaluation Evidence (SEE)**³, **Evaluation Evidence Blink**, **Interactive session for evaluation evidence sharing (I-SEE)**, and **Literature Reviews**.

Evaluation Syntheses also constitute an evaluation offering that distills evidence from completed evaluations and are defined by the Office of Evaluation (OE) as “a combination and integration of findings from quality-assessed evaluations to develop higher-level or more comprehensive knowledge and inform policy and strategic decisions”.⁴ This technical note does not comprise syntheses, as these products are exclusively commissioned under OE’s annual work plan and presented to the Executive Board as part of the WFP Management Plan, rather than being demand-driven as other offerings presented in this note.

The note outlines: i) concepts, definitions, and uses of each offering; ii) differences and distinctions; iii) minimum conditions required for their implementation; iv) methodological approaches; v) the minimum quality standards; and vi) anticipated resource requirements.

This note is primarily intended for WFP staff, including those, in functional and Country teams, who will commission or deliver evaluation offerings in WFP. Users of these offerings may also find it a useful clarifying reference.

¹ WFP Strategic Plan (2022–2025) (WFP/EB.2/2021/4-A/1/Rev.2)

² WFP Corporate Evaluation Strategy 2022

³ Further details on Summaries of Evaluation Evidence can be found in the [Summary of Evaluation Evidence Guidance](#), which provides a step-by-step process, templates, quality parameters, and other relevant resources for developing and reviewing SEE reports.

⁴ WFP. 2021. Evaluation Synthesis, Guidance for Process and Content, WFP Office of Evaluation

2. Evaluation offerings: definitions and key characteristics

WFP offers four different types of **evaluation evidence offerings** that draw on existing evaluative evidence to increase its accessibility and usefulness to WFP staff and decision-makers. They are defined as follows and their key features are detailed in Table 1, and examples of the different evaluation offerings are presented in **Annex 1**.

SEE

Summary of evaluation evidence

A document that presents, concisely and clearly, an overview of evidence from a defined set of evaluations on a particular topic.

Evaluation Evidence Blink

Blink

A succinct, internal document that consolidates key insights from a defined set of evaluations on a particular topic, designed to time-sensitive evidence needs within a short turnaround time.

I-SEE

Interactive Session for Evaluation Evidence Sharing

A gathering of relevant stakeholders (in person or virtual) around a recently available body of evidence, to expanding the reach of evaluation findings and foster dialogue, cross-fertilization, and organizational learning.

Literature review

An assessment of a body of evidence against a pre-defined research question, which identifies what is already known about an area of study; may identify questions a body of research does not answer; and makes a case for why further study of research questions is important to a field.

Table 1: Key characteristics of evaluation offerings

<p>SEE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derives its purpose from the evidence needs as identified by potential users. As such, a SEE should have a clear intended use from the start • Brings evidence together in summary form, and does not generate new evidence or create recommendations • Needs a sound evidence base, meaning that it draws from evaluations⁵ whose quality was externally rated as at least “satisfactory”⁶ • Records the source of its findings, with clear and systematic referencing to the evidence cited • Presents existing evidence in a concise and easily readable form • It is publicly shared, meant for internal and external audiences 	<p>Blink</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to meet time-sensitive evidence needs • It is not publicly shared, meant solely for internal audience • Presents evidence in a brief product of approximate five pages • For each finding, evidence base is reported in a high-level format, rather than documenting evidence sources for all individual findings as done for SEEs, allowing for faster preparation
<p>I-SEE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed with a clear intent to maximize the use of a newly available body of evidence by increasing awareness and engagement around it • Open to all potentially interested stakeholders • Presents focused insights that address specific stakeholder needs and opens-up for exchange • Encourages active discussion and interaction around evaluation evidence • Shares evidence that directly informs policy or programme decision-making • Can take various forms, such as webinars, town halls, or brown-bag lunches, tailored to internal and external audience and contexts • To ensure a diverse and engaging format, it is delivered by evidence providers, and users at minimum, and foresees the participation of a wide audience 	<p>Literature review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a largely thematic scope • Geared to assessing the available evidence in each area • Brings together information from a wide range of sources (research, evaluations, studies, reviews etc.) • Often assesses relatively broad questions (though can also be practically focused, e.g. ‘evidence-focused’ literature reviews⁷) • Geared largely to defining the parameters for future research, so not usually intended as fully standalone exercise in itself

⁵ If the summary of evaluation evidence plans to use evaluations commissioned and conducted outside WFP, a minimum condition for their inclusion is that they have undergone a form of quality assessment through which they obtained at least a ‘satisfactory’ (or equivalent) quality rating.

⁶ In WFP, centralized and decentralized evaluations undergo an external quality assessment process respectively referred to as Post-Hoc Quality Assessment / Support Systems (PHQA / QSS). Independent assessors rate the quality of final evaluation reports against set evaluation quality standards. Provided the evaluation is rated as either ‘satisfactory’ or ‘highly satisfactory’ (60% - 100%), the evidence is validated for use in a summary of evaluation evidence

⁷ Hagen-Zanker and Mallett (ODI, 2013) <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8572.pdf>

3. Purpose, use and commissioners of the main evaluation offerings in WFP

The four evaluation offerings all support learning and decision-making but have different purpose and uses for WFP's evidence building and they are commissioned by different entities. Below (Table 2) is a list of the offerings, along with their respective purposes and uses.

The **commissioners** are the following: Country Offices; Regional Office; HQ divisions; Office of Evaluation.

Table 2: Purpose and use of evaluation offerings

SEE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inform programme or policy decision-making and choices through swift access to summarized findings from a defined set of evaluation evidence in specific areas or against specific questions When management seeks evidence to inform decision-making on policy, strategy, or programming, or when a Country Office or Regional Office is developing its Annual Performance Plan When regional or global policies or strategies, or Country Strategic Plans are being formulated—particularly if no other evaluation exercise will be available in time, or when the scope of an evaluation would not adequately cover the required evidence needs Ahead of a moment of reflection on a programmatic activity, thematic area, or WFP's positioning, approaches, or dialogue with partners 	Blink <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support internal decision-making and management needs by providing swift access to evaluation findings on specific topics, policies, strategies, or programming To contribute to informed discussions and events with internal and external stakeholders, including donors and partners, by offering concise, timely evidence insights Ahead of a strategic reflection on an emerging priority, programmatic activity, or thematic area, when quick insights are needed to guide discussions Before donor meetings or events, where evaluation evidence can be leveraged for advocacy and external engagement
I-SEE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide organizational learning and stimulate discussions where evaluation findings, programmatic experience, and summarized evidence support decision-making and enrich one another To equip WFP staff with knowledge and accessible findings in specific programme/strategic result areas, and to share WFP's evidence on specific themes, modalities, or programmatic areas with non-WFP stakeholders such as donors, partners, and academia Ahead of a Global, Regional, or Country Office event/webinar that discusses WFP programmatic areas or themes, or before the completion of a Summary of Evaluation Evidence or an Evaluation Evidence Blink, ensuring timely dissemination of results 	Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To expand WFP's knowledge of the available evidence in relation to a given question To help identify any further questions on which WFP should conduct further study In anticipation of, or as part of, a WFP Impact Evaluation Window, other evaluations, studies or analyses being conducted in specific programmatic areas

4. How to choose an evaluation offering according to need

As reflected in their different purposes, the four evaluation offerings respond to different needs across WFP. Table 3 aims to help staff select the most appropriate evaluation offering based on their specific need.

Table 3: Selecting products according to need

SEE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate evidence on a specific theme, programmatic area or Country Strategic Plan (CSP) issue • Identify consistent areas of good performance, underperformance and explanations/reasons for this in a theme, programmatic area, country or region • Learn what evidence is available in specific areas to enhance the knowledge base, and what gaps exist, so that more work can be done to address these • Support on-going and future advocacy efforts 	Blink <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate evidence within a short turn-around on a specific theme/s, or area of intervention to feed the preparation of an event / strategy / policy / meeting
I-SEE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the dissemination of evidence generated by an evaluation offering and create entry-points for dialogue across evidence providers and users • Increase opportunities to improve future interventions by systematically applying lessons from past evaluations, highlighting both successful and ineffective practices • Raise awareness on the utility of evaluation, showcasing evaluation insights on programmes / policies for corporate learning 	Literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the state of available evidence against a specific question, and identify areas where further study may be needed

5. What are the minimum conditions for selecting and producing evaluation offerings?

All evaluation offerings require a set of minimum conditions to be feasible (Table 4). Ensuring their presence is essential before starting work on the product.

Table 4: Minimum conditions for selecting evaluation offerings

SEE	Blink
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly stated demand and reason for the SEE, and how it is intended to be used• Availability of a body of evaluation evidence which respond to the question(s) of study (depending on the SEE, there may be need to focus on more recently completed reports, or to include longer time spans)• Intended for public sharing, requiring clear communication for both internal and external audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly stated demand and reason for the Blink, and how it is intended to be used• Availability of a body of evaluation evidence which respond to the question (s) of study (depending on the Blink, there may be need to focus on more recently completed reports, or to include longer time spans)• Intended for internal-use only
I-SEE	Literature review
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing evidence, or a completed evaluation offering to provide sufficient depth and quality to support the session topic• The session must respond to a specific need, whether proactive proposed by the Evaluation Function because there is evidence or responds to an expressed demand to showcase evidence• Identification of key stakeholders and intended users to tailor the session format and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defined research question(s) against which literature will be collected and analyzed• Defined criteria/associated search terms for identifying relevant literature

6. What are the timeframes required for the production of the different evaluation offerings?

For maximum utility, evaluation offerings should be scheduled to inform key WFP processes at the country, regional, or headquarters levels. As highlighted in Table 6, the time required to produce these offerings varies significantly, from two weeks to several months, depending on the type. Therefore, planning and development should begin well in advance to ensure the offering is ready when needed.

Table 5 summarises examples the typical production time required for each.

Table 5: Scheduling and timeframes

SEE	Blink
4 months maximum	1.5 months maximum
I-SEE	Literature review
2 weeks	Varies depending on scope - minimum 3 months

7. What methodological approaches and minimum quality standards are needed?

Four of the three evaluation offerings require different methodological approaches; and for each product, methods can be applied in varying combinations. The core methodological approaches of the three offerings, are listed in Table 6. I-SEEs are not covered as part of this section, as these do not foresee the application of methodological approaches.

Table 6: Methodological approaches

	SEE	Blink	Literature review
Ex-ante development of search terms to identify sources			✓
Use of a structured analytical framework (see below)	✓	✓	✓
Systematic analysis of evidence sources against analytical fields	✓	✓	✓
Higher level analysis to respond to corporate, strategic or policy level questions	✓		
Fully desk based. Does not include interviews or other types of data collection activities	✓	✓	✓

Analytical framework: For products where the primary output is a narrative report (such as summaries of evaluation evidence, evaluation evidence briefs, or literature reviews), an analytical framework is required. The framework:

- Is structured around the key questions the evaluation seeks to answer.
- Consists of distinct analytical fields aligned with these key questions.
- Varies in detail depending on the nature of the product (e.g., for an evaluation evidence brief, it is generally less detailed, with fewer lines of inquiry and analytical fields).

Using an analytical framework ensures a fully systematic approach to evidence collection by establishing where different pieces of evidence should be placed. A sample framework for a Summary of Evaluation Evidence can be found in **Annex 2**.

Extracting and coding data: To populate the analytical framework, data from the relevant evidence sources will need to be extracted and (usually) coded. This can be done either manually, or through the use of software packages explicitly designed for qualitative content analysis.

Ensuring that the resulting product meets minimum standards is important for the quality and credibility of WFP evaluation products – even where these are used primarily for internal learning. There are some minimum common standards across the three ‘narrative’ products (Summary of evaluative evidence, Evaluation Evidence Blink and Literature Review). All standards are listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Minimum quality standards for evaluation offerings

SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Key descriptive features that serve to understand the subject of the report
APPROACH AND METHODS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear description of the evidence base ('universe') including number and types of evaluations; time-frame and geographic coverage, and listed in full in an Annex• The key lines of enquiry and analytical framework applied against which the evidence was extracted• The approach to analysis<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Limitations encountered and their effect on the evidence base and findings◦ Well-substantiated findings, which respond to the questions asked
FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transparent reporting of evidence sources (the reporting of sources depends on the type of offering: either as footnotes linked to individual findings or as a high-level summary, rather than citing sources for each finding separately)• All findings traceable to the evidence and presented objectively• Examples of good practice to help highlight and illustrate findings
ANNEXES	List of evidence sources consulted

8. What resources, skills and expertise do different evaluation offerings require?

All four evaluation offerings can be generated internally, where sufficient capacity and technical expertise exists. If required, Summaries of Evaluation Evidence and Literature Reviews can be outsourced to an external provider.

Based on experience, when outsourced, a SEE can be budgeted at approximately USD 25,000 on average. However, budgets can vary depending on the number of evaluations in the universe, the complexity of the SEE subject matter; and the fees of the SEE lead. The commissioning unit (HQ Division/ CO/ RB) is responsible for ensuring available funding for planned SEEs. The Evaluation Function, will consider the possibility of funding SEEs (budget permitting), should the HQ Division (beyond OEV)/ CO/ RB not be able to secure funds.

Different evaluation offerings require different skills and expertise, which may vary depending on the specific nature of the product being developed. However, the key required skills are outlined are provided in Table 8.

I-SEEs are not covered as part of this section, as these do not foresee the application of specific skills and expertise.

E = Essential | *D = Desirable*

Table 8: Skills and expertise required

	SEE	Blink	Literature review
Qualitative research skills	E	E	E
Quantitative research skills	D (if required)		D (if required)
Strong analytical skills/experience	E	E	E
Evaluation knowledge	E		
Sound writing skills and ability to express key messages concisely			D
Thematic expertise	E	D	D
Experience with online literature searches	D		E
Experience with qualitative software analysis packages	D	D (if required)	D (if required)

For summaries of evaluation evidence, OEV plays a role in **coordination and oversight** to ensure that WFP summaries of evaluation evidence commissioned outside of OEV are consistent in their respective approaches, methodology and quality standards. Until SEE practice is well owned within the evaluation function, the OEV Use Unit will be available to support Quality Assurance and support SEE managers at each step of the SEE preparation process, shadowing them in providing guidance and advice to SEE leads, as appropriate.

In addition, OEV keeps a repository and publishes summaries of evaluation evidence ([Summaries of evaluation evidence | WFPgo](#)), to facilitate access and ensure optimal use and learning from these products. OEV should therefore be notified of any summaries of evidence being planned at HQ or regional level at an early stage.

Annex 1: Examples of Evaluation Offerings

[Summary of evaluation evidence - Home-Grown School Feeding](#)

[Summary of evaluation evidence - Targeting in Emergencies](#)

[Summary of evaluation evidence - School feeding in Cambodia](#)

[Summary of evaluation evidence - Self-Reliance for Refugees in the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe region](#)

[Summary of evaluation evidence - Community Engagement in West and Central Africa](#)

[Pathways to Impact: WFP's evaluation evidence on social protection](#)

[Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment from Evaluations in RBD-RBP](#)

[Evaluation Lessons on School Feeding in RBD](#)

[Maternal nutrition interventions in low- and middle-income countries: A review](#)

[School feeding programmes in low- and lower-middle-income countries: A focused review of recent evidence from impact evaluations](#)

Evaluation Evidence Blink - Localization

Evaluation Evidence Blink - Disability Inclusion

Evaluation Evidence Blink - Post-Harvest Losses, Local Production, Youth: Evidence for the UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking

Annex 2: Example of analytical framework

Analytical fields	Evaluation 1	Evaluation 2	Evaluation 3
Q1: How appropriate was the intervention?			
Analytical basis applied? (in-depth, broad, shallow?)			
Needs assessments conducted - food security?			
Needs assessments conducted - capacity development?			
Evidence of evaluations/other reports informing design?			
Country Strategy informing design?			
Assumptions identified and tested?			
Objectives geared to the needs of the food insecure population, including the distinct needs of women, men, boys and girls from different groups?			
Design coherent with WFP strategies, policies and normative guidance?			
Objectives aimed for complementarity with the interventions of relevant humanitarian and development partners?			
Intent appropriate for the context overall? Did it respond to the priority needs identified for the context?			
Evidence of the application of WFP's perceived comparative advantages in the context? (as per the Strategic Plan?)			
Design sought coherence with relevant stated national policies, including sector policies and strategies?			
Design geared to help implement national government programmes?			
Operation sought partnerships at design stage?			
Internal synergies built in at design stage?			
Coverage intentions appropriate and realistic for the context?			
Targeting modalities as intended at design stage appropriate for needs, including for excluded groups?			
Targeting modalities as intended at design aligned with national protocols or guidelines?			
Choice of individual activities appropriate to the needs of the food insecure population, including the distinct needs of women, men, boys and girls from different (and excluded) groups?			
Capacity development intentions built into design?			
Choice of activities aligned with national priorities?			
Choice of activities complement the interventions of relevant humanitarian and development partners?			

Analytical fields	Evaluation 1	Evaluation 2	Evaluation 3
Analysis to identify the differentiated needs of women and men who would be the beneficiaries?			
Operation's components designed to respond to these needs?			
Operation's design coherent with the WFP Gender Policy and other normative guidelines?			
Question 2: What were the results of the intervention?			
Data availability (output/outcome)			
Data reliability			
Comments on data management and analysis			
Rationales for target setting			
Level of attainment of planned outputs?			
Extent to which the outputs led to the realisation of the operation outcomes?			
Actual coverage compared to intentions?			
Variability in caseloads/ revisiting of targeting/targeting of specific intended groups?			
Delivery of rations compared to intentions?			
Unintended effects			
External synergies in practice - WFP partnerships with government			
External synergies in practice - WFP partnerships with UN agencies			
External synergies in practice - WFP partnerships with Co-operating partners / NGOs			
Protection			
AAP			
Cost-efficiency of operation activities?			
How timely were the deliveries (food/cash/vouchers/ TA)?			
How agile/adaptive was the implementation? -			
Any unintended effects			
Any experiences of loss/corruption			
Use of cash and vouchers			
Local purchase			
Quality of commodities supplied			
Quality of assets created?			
Acceptability of food?			
Sustainability - What is the likelihood that the benefits will continue after the end of the operation?			

Analytical fields	Evaluation 1	Evaluation 2	Evaluation 3
Question 3: Why and how did the intervention deliver the realized results?			
Monitoring/evaluation and reporting?			
Design factors (positive or negative)			
Implementation factors (positive or negative) e.g. targeting			
Communication - internal			
Institutional arrangements (including issues related to staffing, capacity)?			
Requisite technical backstopping from RB/HQ?			
Evidence of learning or innovation			
National policy and governance environment			
National capacity limitations			
Funding climate over the lifetime of the operation			
Degree of gender sensitivity of design			
CONCLUSIONS AGAINST KEY CRITERIA			
Relevance			
Efficiency			
Effectiveness,			
Impact			
Sustainability			
Gender			

Bibliography

Bond (2013) *Principles and checklist for assessing the quality of evidence*. London: Bond

Christoplos, I, Knox-Clarke P, Cosgrave, J, Bonino, F and Alexander, A (2017) *Strengthening the quality of evidence in humanitarian evaluations* London: ODI/ALNAP

Cochrane Training organisation: *Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions* Available at <https://training.cochrane.org/handbook>

Dillon, N (2020) *Learning from What We Know: How to Improve Evaluation Synthesis for Humanitarian Evaluations*

Hagen-Zanker and Mallett (ODI, 2013) <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8572.pdf>

Khangura, S, Konnyu, K, Cushman, R, Grimshaw J & Moher, D (2012) *Evidence summaries: the evolution of a rapid review approach* Systematic Reviews volume 1, Article number: 10 (2012)

Krystalli, R. and Emerson, L. (2015) *Synthesizing practices of evidence appraisal in the humanitarian field*. Oxford/Massachusetts: Oxfam/Tufts University

University of Harvard (2020) *The Literature Review: A Research Journey* Available at <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/literaturereview>

Wyburn et al (2018) *Understanding the Impacts of Research Synthesis* Environmental Science and Policy Journal, Volume 86, August 2018, pp 72-84