



WFP EVALUATION



World Food Programme

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Technical Note

Evaluative products

1. Purpose of the Technical Note

1. The Strategic Plan 2017-2021 states that 'WFP believes in a culture of learning that enables evidence-based interventions to deliver results in a cost-efficient manner.'¹ Products which make use of existing evaluative and other forms of evidence – 'evaluative products' – play an important role in informing WFP policy, strategic and programming decisions, as reflected in the Evaluation Policy 2016-2021.
2. This Technical Note addresses how five specific evaluative products - evidence map, summary of evaluative evidence, literature review, evaluation synthesis and systematic review – i) draw on existing evaluative evidence to make it accessible and useful to WFP staff and decision-makers and ii) contribute to WFP's evidence-building agenda. It sets out the concepts, definitions and uses of these five products; their differences and distinctions; the minimum conditions which they require; and their anticipated resource requirements.

Audience

3. This note is aimed primarily at WFP staff, including those at headquarters, Regional Bureaux and in Country Offices who will be commissioning evaluative products in WFP, as well as companies and teams responsible for developing these products. Users of the five products may also find it useful. After reading it, WFP staff will be able to:
 - Understand the contribution that these five evaluative products make to WFP evidence-building.
 - Have a clear idea on which product should be developed; when; and why.
 - Know the minimum conditions needed for different products.
 - Know the resources requires for different products.

Contents

- What are the main evaluative products covered in this Technical Note? – concepts, definitions and key characteristics
- What are the purposes uses and commissioners of the different evaluative products in WFP?
- How to choose an evaluative product according to need
- What are the minimum conditions for selecting and producing evaluative products?
- When should different evaluative products be planned and used in WFP?
- What methodological approaches are needed?
- What are the minimum quality standard for each evaluative product?

¹ WFP (2017) Strategic Plan 2017-2021

- What resources do different evaluative products require?
- What skills and expertise do different evaluative products require?
- Sources of support

2. What are the main evaluative products covered by this Technical Note? Concepts, definitions and key characteristics

4. This Technical Note provides information on five specific evaluative products commonly used by WFP. Table 1 provides the definitions and key characteristics of these products, namely:
- Evidence map
 - Summary of evaluative evidence
 - Literature review
 - Evaluation synthesis
 - Systematic review

Table 1: Definitions and key characteristics

Evidence Product	Definition	Key characteristics
Evidence map	A description of evidence availability in defined areas, usually by activity type/thematic area/WFP strategic result. Identifies evidence availability on specific subjects/topics (e.g. school feeding, country capacity strengthening etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is usually country- or regional level in scope, occasionally global ✓ Identifies evidence availability in specific topics as high/medium/low density ✓ Clearly signals evidence gaps ✓ Can include WFP-generated evaluative and other evidence and other sources if desired ✓ Incorporates links to relevant studies ✓ Often developed in the form of an online repository)
Summary of evaluative evidence	An overview of findings/ recommendations from a defined set of evidence sources, geared to help answer a specific question or set of questions related to a single topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Combines and summarizes evidence from a range of evaluative sources² to provide an overview of evidence on a single topic, often focusing on programmatic aspects ✓ Can be country- or regional level in scope, also global ✓ Primarily offers a descriptive summary of the evidence ✓ Can use a sole set of evidence e.g. decentralized evaluations ✓ Commonly produced within a short timeframe (linked to 'rapid review' methodology)³
Literature review	An assessment of a body of research against a pre-defined research question, which identifies what is already known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Has a largely thematic scope ✓ Geared to assessing the state of research in each area

² Summaries of evidence can also include non-evaluative sources, (research, evaluations, studies, reviews etc.), but these types of summaries are not part of the scope of this technical note.

³ 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)

Evidence Product	Definition	Key characteristics
	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. ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 reviews⁵) ✓ Geared largely to defining the parameters for future research – so not usually intended as fully standalone exercise in itself
Evaluation synthesis	A combination and integration of findings from quality-assessed evaluations to develop higher-level or more comprehensive knowledge and inform policy and strategic decisions. ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Distils/communicates evidence from multiple evaluations (centralized or decentralized) to generate new findings/insights from a higher-level/comprehensive perspective ✓ Applies clear inclusion/exclusion criteria for component evaluations, including quality ✓ Applies a structured analytical framework and a high degree of interrogation and analysis ✓ Identifies structural/common factors of success/failure, to show the 'big picture' ✓ Is pitched at the corporate/strategic level ✓ For WFP, requires recommendations and a management response ✓ OEV-commissioned synthesis are presented to the Executive Board ✓ HQ Divisions and Regional Bureau-commissioned syntheses are submitted to the relevant approval entity, but not presented to the EB.
Systematic review	A collation of all available research evidence that fits clearly-defined and pre-specified eligibility criteria in order to answer a specific research question. ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is commonly global in scope, bringing together a very wide range of evidence sources (usually academic research studies), so not limited to one organization ✓ Usually applies sources adopting a common methodological approach, such as evidence from impact evaluations ✓ Develops strict protocols for the identification and selection of component studies, which in turn assess the methodological robustness of the component studies ✓ Has high level of rigor and depth, meaning has strong credibility

⁴ Adapted from: <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/literaturereview>

⁵ Hagen-Zanker and Mallett (ODI, 2013) <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8572.pdf>

⁶ Adapted from: Wyburn et al (2018) Understanding the Impacts of Research Synthesis: Environmental Science and Policy Journal, Volume 86, August 2018, pp 72-84

⁷ <https://training.cochrane.org/handbook>; <https://campbellcollaboration.org/>

3. Purpose, use and commissioners of the main evaluative products in WFP

5. The five evaluative products have different purpose for WFP's evidence building and are commissioned by different entities. Table 2 lists these and sets out the different balance of emphasis between learning and accountability for each product.

Table 2: Purpose, uses and commissioners of evaluative products

Evidence Product	Purpose and use	Emphasis on accountability/ learning	Commissioners
Evidence map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To equip WFP with knowledge of evidence availability in specific programme/strategic result areas ✓ To inform WFP decisions on further evidence collection/use ✓ To facilitate later summary of evidence/literature review/evaluation synthesis/systematic review, below. 	Learning	OEV; Regional evaluation units; HQ divisions
Summary of evaluative evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To inform programmatic decision-making and choices through swift access to summarized findings from a defined set of evaluative evidence in specific areas/against specific questions ✓ To inform WFP decisions on further evidence collection/use 	Learning	Country Offices; HQ divisions; OEV; Regional evaluation units;
Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To expand WFP's knowledge of the body of research in relation to a given question ✓ To help identify any further questions on which WFP should conduct further study 	Learning	OEV; HQ divisions; Regional evaluation units; Country offices
Evaluation synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To inform corporate/policy/strategic decisions by providing access to concise evaluative evidence which meets defined quality standards 	Learning and accountability	OEV; HQ divisions; Regional evaluation units;
Systematic review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To inform WFP programmatic/strategic decisions in specific areas by comprehensively answering a specific research question, through the collation and analysis of all eligible data 	Learning	OEV; HQ divisions; Regional evaluation units;

6. Examples of different evaluative products are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Evaluative product examples

Evaluative Product	Sample Text
Evidence map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ WFP RBN Evidence Map ✓ Improving and sustaining livelihoods through group-based interventions: mapping the evidence, 3ie Evidence Gap Map Report
Summary of evaluative evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evidence Summary on Covid-19 and Food Security ✓ WFP Evidence Summary on Cash-based transfers: lessons from evaluations ✓ WFP RBD Summary of evidence from Decentralized Evaluations in West and Central Africa (2020) ✓ WFP Lesotho Summary of Evidence ✓ WFP Malawi Summary of Evaluation Evidence
Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Making Operational Decisions in Humanitarian Response: A Literature Review
Evaluation synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ WFP Synthesis of evidence and lessons from Policy Evaluations (2011-2019) ✓ WFP Synthesis of Country Portfolio Evaluations in Africa (2016-2018) ✓ Annual Synthesis of Operations Evaluations (2014-2015) ✓ WFP - Four Evaluations of the Impact of WFP Programmes on Nutrition in Humanitarian Contexts in the Sahel: A Synthesis (2018) ✓ Making Evaluation work for the Achievement of SDG 4 Target 5: Equality and Inclusion in Education
Systematic review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ WFP Systematic review of the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition using food products ✓ Cash-Based Approaches In Humanitarian Emergencies: A Systematic Review ✓ The effects of training, innovation and new technology on African smallholder farmers' economic outcomes and food security

4. How to choose an evaluative product according to need

7. As reflected in their different purposes, the five evaluative products respond to different needs in WFP. Table 4 aims to help staff select an evidence product according to identified needs.

Table 4: Selecting products according to need

Do you need to...	...Then choose:
- Assess the status of the evidence base: What evidence exists; to what extent; and where are gaps?	Evidence map
- Gather and summarise evidence quickly in a specific programme or CSP-related area to inform design? - (And/or) Identify consistent areas of good performance or underperformance over time in a given programme area, country or region, to help inform programmatic decisions?	Summary of evaluative evidence
- Assess the state of available research against a specific question, and identify areas where further study may be needed?	Literature review
- Provide decision-makers with easy access to credible evaluative evidence, to help inform policy/strategic/corporate decisions?	Evaluation synthesis

Do you need to...	...Then choose:
- (And/or) Provide strategic, policy of corporate-level learning that goes beyond the sum of individual evaluations?	
- Inform programmatic or strategic choices through a rigorous and credible analysis of all available evidence against a defined question/set of questions?	Systematic review

Example: Selecting an evaluative product according to need

Regional Bureau Dakar commissioned a summary of evaluative evidence from a series of decentralized evaluations conducted in the region in 2016-2019. The Summary's specific aims were to:

- Enhance the learning and knowledge base arising from WFP interventions;
- Identify consistent findings useful for replication in the region and elsewhere;
- Identify key priorities that would require the RBD's attention/ actions;
- Better inform WFP's programming and implementation of Country Strategic Plans (CSPs); including through the identification of existing evidence gaps and recommendations of future decentralized evaluation topics.

OEV commissioned a synthesis on evidence and lessons from WFP's Policy Evaluations (2011 – 2019)

The objectives were to:

- identify common themes and systemic issues relating to policy formulation and implementation;
- analyze factors that have supported and constrained effective policymaking and implementation;
- reflect on how effectively WFP has responded to and used policy evaluations to improve results;
- assess to what extent WFP has applied the learning generated through policy evaluations.

8. Two additional considerations when selecting the evidence product are:

- **Will the product be published externally?** Some products should be externally published/disseminated, while others usually remain internal to WFP. Evidence maps and literature reviews usually remain internal, Summaries of evaluative evidence and Systematic reviews may be externally disseminated, while Evaluation Synthesis are externally published.
- **Is a management response envisaged?** Evaluation syntheses require a formal management response.

5. What are the minimum conditions for selecting and producing evaluative products?

9. All evaluative products require a set of minimum conditions to be feasible (Table 5). Ensuring their presence is essential before starting work on the product.

Table 5: Minimum conditions for selecting evaluative products

Evidence map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A database or structured mechanism for recording the presence/absence of available evidence ✓ A set of criteria/associated search terms for identifying the relevant evidence
Summary of evaluative evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Defined topic and often with specific questions ✓ Availability of a body of evaluative evidence (WFP and/or non-WFP evaluations) that are relatively recent in nature and which respond to the question(s) of study ✓ An analytical framework (depth and detailed dependent on the nature of the Summary)
Literature review	<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
Evaluation synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A clear set of questions, usually strategic, policy or corporate in nature ✓ Defined inclusion/exclusion criteria for component evaluations ✓ Availability of a body of component evaluations, which explore a common evaluand and/or common areas/questions, preferably through a common (or similar) methodology ✓ Component evaluations which have been critically appraised i.e. have been subject to a full quality assurance processes ✓ A detailed and structured analytical framework
Systematic review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A detailed and specific research question ✓ Strict protocols for the inclusion/exclusion of component sources, including the assessment of methodological rigor. See for example https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/about-cdsr ✓ Component research studies which address a single area/question and have applied a similar methodological approach (often drawn from impact evaluations including randomized controlled trials) ✓ A detailed and specific analytical framework

6. When should different evaluative products be planned and used in WFP?

10. For maximum utility, evaluative products should be produced to feed into key WFP processes, whether at country, regional or headquarter levels. This may mean planning and developing the product well in advance, since some can take several months to design, produce and finalise.
11. Table 6 summarises the optimal scheduling for different evaluative products in relation to the WFP corporate cycles. It also provides the amount of time normally needed for their production.
12. Evidence maps and summaries of evaluative evidence can be produced within relatively short periods of time, but evaluation syntheses and systematic reviews take longer to generate. Evidence maps can be generated internally, while summaries of evaluative evidence and literature reviews can

be generated either internally or externally. Evaluation syntheses and systematic reviews require specialist skills and are often generated externally.

Table 6: Scheduling and timeframes

	Scheduling	Minimum timeframe for production following scoping/ preparation
Evidence map	As needed, particularly as part of an evidence-building strategy for Country Offices/Regional Bureaux	2-3 months
Summary of evaluative evidence	To inform programme development/in anticipation of CSP formulation stage and mid-term review/ key WFP corporate processes for annual planning and reporting such as Country/Regional Office Management Plan; also to support the preparation of e.g. a regional or global policy or strategy	1-2 months
Literature review	In anticipation of studies or analysis being conducted in specific programmatic areas	Varies depending on scope but minimum 3 months
Evaluation synthesis	To contribute to with key strategic or policy decision-making processes within WFP e.g. Strategic Plan development, Executive Board or other key corporate/regional events	8-10 months
Systematic review	For thematic purposes, such as to support medium-term investment in a specific programmatic area	9-12 months

13. Evaluation synthesis are optimally – but not necessarily – planned well in advance. Such planning ahead means that, where a series of evaluations is yet to be carried out, they can be planned and designed in advance to support later synthesis.

Options: Planning for evaluation synthesis

Option 1: Planning ahead: OEV has designed and implemented several series of evaluations over time to fulfil the conditions for later synthesis. These include: the [Operations Evaluations series \(2014-2017\)](#); [Series of Impact evaluations of WFP nutrition interventions in four countries of the Sahel, \(2017-2018\)](#); and [Series of Impact evaluations of Food-for-assets \(FFA\) programming on livelihoods resilience \(2014-2016\)](#).

OEV has adopted a structured approach to CSPEs, with a core set of questions and high level of coverage, which will facilitate future syntheses.

Option 2: Conducting synthesis post-hoc: A synthesis of existing evaluations brought together findings from 147 evaluations from 13 multi- and bilateral organizations, highlighting evidence gaps and summarizing ‘what works’ (for whom and in what contexts) for advancing gender equality and equity for vulnerable groups (SDG 4.5). See: [Making Evaluation work for the Achievement of SDG 4 Target 5: Equality and Inclusion in Education](#)

7. What methodological approaches are needed?

14. All five evaluative products require different methodological approaches; and for each product, methods can be applied in varying combinations. The **core** methodological approaches for each of the five products, and some **optional** additional methods – particularly for summaries of evaluative evidence and evaluation syntheses – are listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Methodological approaches

	Evidence mapping	Literature review	Summary of evaluative evidence	Evaluation synthesis	Systematic review
Core methods					
Ex-ante development of search terms to identify sources	✓	✓		Optional (if including evaluations outside WFP)	✓
Detailed protocols for the selection/inclusion of component evidence/evaluations, including quality				✓	✓
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				✓	
Optional additional methods					
Interviews with key stakeholders, to verify and deepen data from component evidence sources			✓	✓	
Structured analysis of secondary documentation linked to the key questions such as WFP Strategic Plans, Annual Evaluation Reports, Annual Performance Reports, etc.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Quantitative data analysis; e.g. of WFP monitoring and operational data, such as beneficiaries, funding and outputs/outcomes			✓	✓	

15. **Analytical framework:** For products whose output is mostly a narrative report (literature reviews, evaluation synthesis; summaries of evaluative evidence; systematic reviews), an analytical framework will be required. This:
 - Is structured around the main questions the evidence product is asking
 - Contains a set of discrete analytical fields, geared to the main questions of the product
 - May be more or less detailed, depending on the nature of the product
16. Using an analytical framework keeps the gathering of data focused on the main questions being asked and ensures that data collection is systematic. An example analytical framework for an Evaluation Synthesis is at **Annex 1**.
17. **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.
18. **Annex 2** compares the minimum steps to be taken in planning and implementing a Summary of evidence and an Evaluation Synthesis, including methodology development.

Example: Electronic approaches to data coding/extraction

OEV's Synthesis of Country Portfolio Evaluations in Africa WFP (2019) piloted the use of Atlas-ti software to help understand its use in evaluation syntheses. This was based on a code book using Atlas-ti which included more than 400 individual codes.

8. What are the minimum quality standard for each evaluative product?

19. Despite their different methodological approaches, ensuring that the resulting product meets minimum standards is important for the quality and credibility of WFP evaluative products – even where these are used primarily for internal learning. There are some common standards across the four 'narrative' products (Summary of evaluative evidence, Literature Review, Evaluation Synthesis⁸ and Systematic Review); and some have in addition their own specific standards. For example, an Evaluation Synthesis, as a product set out in the WFP Evaluation Policy, is subject to OEV's central Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS). All standards are listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Minimum quality standards for evaluative products

Common quality standards	Additional quality standards per evidence product
Methodology	
A short methodological statement, describing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Features of the 'universe' of sources consulted (total number; type – evaluations/reviews/research/other); ✓ Selection parameters (dates, online search terms etc) ✓ The analytical framework applied ✓ The approach to analysis (should be systematic) ✓ Any limitations and how they were mitigated 	Systematic review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Description of protocols for inclusion/exclusion of evidence sources ✓ Clear statement on avoidance of bias Evaluation synthesis/systematic review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Details of standards/process used to assess the quality of evidence Evaluation synthesis

⁸ See the Synthesis EQAS for the specific standards for evaluation synthesis, which are summarized here.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear statement on impartiality and the avoidance of bias
Report content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear definition/explanation of the report's subject ✓ Well-substantiated findings, which respond to the questions asked ✓ Transparent reporting of evidence sources, e.g. using footnotes, including any gaps ✓ All findings traceable to the evidence and presented objectively and without bias ✓ Examples of good practice to help highlight and illustrate findings ✓ Where feasible - Disaggregation for contextual diversity/trends over time 	<p>Evaluation Synthesis/Systematic Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear thread from findings through to conclusions/recommendations and action points, so that logical derivation is present throughout ✓ Transparent reporting of the density of evidence (citing specific evaluation reports or evidence sources through footnotes) <p>Evaluation synthesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Narrative of the report tells a 'bigger story' than the individual component evaluations ✓ Lessons learned are appropriate and generalisable ✓ Conclusions fully summarise the findings and lift them to a higher level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recommendations are feasible and prioritised; and will demonstrably (if implemented) lead to improvements in WFP planning and activity
Annexes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Full bibliography ✓ List of any interviews conducted 	<p>Evaluation synthesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ List of component evaluations and their quality assessment scores <p>Literature review/Systematic Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ List of search terms for evidence source identification <p>Systematic review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Full list of detailed protocols for inclusion/exclusion of sources

9. What resources do different evaluative products require?

20. Some evaluative products can be generated internally, while others almost always require external expertise. Those which can be internally generated, where sufficient capacity and technical expertise exists, are:
 - Evidence map
 - Literature review
 - Summary of evaluative evidence
21. Evaluation Syntheses and Systematic Reviews almost always require external specialist expertise. In this case, the resource volumes required will vary according to the evidence product selected, as well as to the specific conditions of the product. Such variables include:
 - The number of component evidence sources involved
 - Whether additional methods such as interviews with key stakeholders or quantitative analysis are to be conducted
22. Examples of resources applied to externally developed Summaries of evaluative evidence and Evaluation syntheses in WFP are (Table 9):

Table 9: Resource allocations

Summary of evaluative evidence	Methodology	Total amount of resources (days)
WFP RBD Summary of evidence from Decentralized Evaluations in West and Central Africa 2016-2019 (January 2020)	Manual data extraction from a total of 14 evaluations Phone interviews with key stakeholders in Country Offices Learning workshop with CO Heads of Programme and RBD technical units	40 days
WFP Evidence Summary on Cash-based transfers: lessons from evaluations	Manual data extraction from a total of 23 independent evaluations	20 days
Evaluation synthesis	Methodology	Total amount of resources (days)
WFP Annual Operations Evaluation Synthesis (2017)	Manual data extraction from a total of 15 evaluations In-person and phone interviews with key stakeholders in Rome Preparation of quantitative data (outputs and outcomes)	55 days
WFP Operation Evaluations Series, Regional Syntheses 2013-2017 (2017)	Manual data extraction from a total of 58 evaluations across 6 WFP regions Telephone interviews with key stakeholders	115 days for 6 syntheses
WFP Synthesis of Country Portfolio Evaluations in Africa (2018)	Use of Atlas-ti to analyse 8 evaluations Telephone interviews with key stakeholders Preparation of quantitative data (outputs and outcomes)	37 days
WFP Synthesis of Policy Evaluations (2020)	Manual analysis of 9 policy evaluations, management responses, and associated documents including WFP policies and Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Reports, Audits, Annual Evaluation Reports In-person and telephone interviews with key stakeholders Stakeholder workshop	85 days

10. What skills and expertise do different evaluative products require?

23. Different evaluative products also require different skills and expertise. These can vary according to the specific nature of the product being developed, but the main skills required are provided in Table 10.

- E = Essential
- D = Desirable

Table 10: Skills and expertise required

	Evidence map	Literature review	Summary of evaluative evidence	Evaluation synthesis	Systematic review
Qualitative research skills/experience	E	E	E	E	E
Quantitative research skills/experience			D (if required)	D (if required)	E
Strong analytical skills/experience		E	E	E	E
Evaluation expertise				E	
Strong writing skills and ability to express key messages concisely		D	D	E	E
Experience with online literature searches	E	E	D	D (if required)	E
Experience with building databases	E			D (if required)	D (if required)
Experience with qualitative software analysis packages			D (if required)	D (if required)	E

24. Management of systematic reviews and evaluation syntheses should be managed by evaluation officer, in recognition of the high level of technical skill required. Advice should therefore be sought from OEV if these products are to be commissioned.

11. Sources of Support

25. For summaries of evaluative evidence and evaluation syntheses specifically, the Office of Evaluation (OEV) plays a role in co-ordination and oversight.

- Co-ordination and oversight:** OEV plays this role to ensure that WFP summaries of evaluation evidence and evaluation syntheses commissioned outside of OEV are consistent in their respective approaches, methodology and quality standards. In addition, OEV keeps a repository and publishes summaries of evaluation evidence ([Summaries of evaluation evidence | WFPgo](#)) and evaluation synthesis ([Evaluation Syntheses | WFPgo](#)), to facilitate access and ensure optimal use and learning from these products. OEV should therefore be notified of any summaries of evidence or evaluation syntheses being planned at HQ or regional at an early stage. Guidance may also be sought on the production of systematic reviews, should these be commissioned.

26. In addition, OEV plays a quality assurance role for evaluation syntheses.

- Quality assurance:** [TBC] OEV should quality assure the Terms of Reference, Inception Report and draft Synthesis reports for all syntheses commissioned outside OEV. The commissioning office is therefore responsible for informing OEV at the planning stage of the process and to factor in sufficient time for the provision of quality assurance.

Annex 1: Example of analytical framework

From: WFP Operations Evaluation Synthesis 2016-2017

Analytical fields	Evaluation 1	Evaluation 2	Evaluation 3
Q1: How appropriate was the operation?			
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?			
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 operation?			
Data availability (output/outcome)			
Data reliability			
Comments on data management and analysis			

Analytical fields	Evaluation 1	Evaluation 2	Evaluation 3
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?			
Question 3: Why and how did the operation deliver the realised 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			

Annex 2: Minimum steps for a Summary of evaluative evidence and Evaluation Synthesis

Table 10 below provides the minimum steps to be taken in planning and implementing a Summary of evaluative evidence/ Evaluation Synthesis. Each exercise (and accordingly, the steps required) will vary according to its specific conditions, but the minimum steps provide a broad outline.

Table 2: Minimum steps for Summary of evidence & evaluation synthesis

Summary of evaluative evidence	Evaluation Synthesis
<p>Step 1 (Optional): Form an Internal Reference Group for the Summary of evaluative evidence, comprising key internal WFP stakeholders with an interest in the summary</p>	<p>Step 1: Form the governance mechanisms for the synthesis. These may comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) An Internal Reference Group, comprising key internal WFP stakeholders with an interest in the synthesis (ii) An External Advisory Group, where relevant/appropriate
<p>Step 2: Prepare the Terms of Reference, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Identify the summary scope and questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with key stakeholders to ensure that the Summary is addressing key areas of interest e.g. for CSP preparation (ii) Define the universe of evidence for inclusion. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP and non-WFP evaluations which are publicly available • A sub-set of these (e.g. WFP decentralized evaluations over a given period) (iii) Where evidence is to be sought from outside of WFP – prepare a plan to identify other sources of evaluative evidence 	<p>Step 2: Prepare the Terms of Reference, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Identify the synthesis scope and questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with key stakeholders to ensure the relevance/strategic priority of the synthesis questions (ii) Define the universe of evaluations for inclusion <p><i>Where the synthesis is planned in advance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-design the ‘universe’ of component evaluations which will contribute to the synthesis to respond to a common set of evaluation questions, all geared to the overarching questions for the synthesis • Ensure that the component evaluations follow a broadly similar methodological approach <p><i>Where the synthesis is <u>not</u> planned in advance</i></p> <p>Identify component reports and screen to check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether they qualify as evaluations, rather than reviews, appraisals, research or other types of product • Whether the individual evaluations questions asked are related to those planned for the synthesis; • Whether the evidence presented in the findings relates to the questions planned for the synthesis (iii) Confirm the quality of evaluations for inclusion <p><i>WFP evaluations</i></p>

Summary of evaluative evidence	Evaluation Synthesis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm that each evaluation has been a) assessed by the independent Post Hoc Quality Assessment system and b) either 'meets' or 'exceeds' requirements <p><i>Non-WFP evaluations</i></p> <p><i>Where the concerned agency has a quality assurance/ assessment system in place:</i> Confirm that all evaluations to be included in the synthesis have met the relevant quality threshold equivalent to 'satisfactory' or above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Where no quality assurance/assessment system is in place:</i> Assess using a simplified version of the PHQA system <p>(iv) Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broad outline of envisaged methodology (see Step 4); required skills and experience (see Technical Note section 9); anticipated resources (see Technical Note section 8); Communication and Dissemination Plan <p>(v) Quality assure the Terms of Reference through first and second level review within OEV.</p>
<p>Step 3: Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint external summary team, according to the list of skills and experience required (see Technical Note section 9) <p>Or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint internal summary team 	<p>Step 3: Appoint the external synthesis team, according to the list of skills and experience required (see Technical Note section 9)</p>
<p>Step 4: Summary team prepares an analytical framework and methodology</p> <p>1. Analytical framework: Create an overarching analytical framework, structured around the key questions of the summary. This could be more or less detailed, depending on the nature of the Summary</p> <p>2. Methodology: Prepare the summary methodology. This may include approaches to data extraction and coding; but may also include other methods. Examples of approaches may include:</p>	<p>Step 4: Synthesis team designs the analytical framework and methodology</p> <p>1. Analytical framework: Create and validate the overarching analytical framework, through engagement between the synthesis team and manager, structured around the key questions of the synthesis and presenting analytical fields to which data from evaluations will be aligned</p> <p>2. Methodology: Design the synthesis methodology, including approaches to data extraction⁹ and coding;¹⁰ and any additional methods to be applied.</p>

⁹ See definition in footnote 10

¹⁰ See definition in footnote 11

Summary of evaluative evidence	Evaluation Synthesis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual or electronic data coding against structured analytical fields (see Evaluation Synthesis approaches) • Qualitative data extraction against defined analytical fields • Collation of quantitative data against defined data codes • Interviews with key stakeholders 	<p>Data extraction: select from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Deductive approach:</i> Develop a full set of analytical fields, against which evidence within evaluations will be coded and subsequently extracted; ii. <i>Inductive approach:</i> Allow analytical fields to emerge as data is reviewed, with codes developed on an ongoing basis, and data subsequently extracted; iii. <i>Combined inductive/deductive approach:</i> Develop an initial set of analytical fields and begin data coding and extraction; but allow new fields to be added and categories re-organized as findings emerge. <p>Data coding: select from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Manual data coding</i> (suited for deductive, inductive or combined extraction approaches). Suitable for a limited number of evaluations (e.g. up to 30), this extracts data from component evaluations and inserts it into the analytical framework by hand ii. <i>Electronic data coding</i> (depending on the software selected, suited for deductive, inductive or combined approaches to extraction). This applies Qualitative Analysis software tools, of different types, and can be useful where the number of evaluations is high. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlas.ti, which deductively applies pre-developed codes • Dedoose and NVIVO, which support analyst coding of evaluation reports, but codes can be amended as analysis proceeds <p>Additional methods: Where appropriate, consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Primary data gathering:</i> e.g. interviews with key stakeholders, such as evaluation managers or concerned WFP management/staff, to verify and deepen data from component evaluations ii. <i>Secondary data gathering:</i> Structured analysis of documentation linked to the synthesis questions such as WFP Strategic Plans, Annual Evaluation Reports, Annual Performance Reports, etc. iii. Quantitative data analysis; e.g. of WFP monitoring and operational data, such as beneficiaries, funding and outputs/outcomes may also be relevant.

Annex 3: Bibliography

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