Thematic Evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region 2016 - 2020

Decentralized Evaluation Report

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INTRODUCTION AND EVALUATION FEATURES

This evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region was commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa in Nairobi (RBN) and covers the period from January 2016 to December 2020.

The evaluation focuses on WFP's relationships with its cooperating partners (CPs), which include international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations and Red Cross/Crescent Societies. The evaluation's geographic scope encompasses nine WFP country offices (COs) supported by RBN: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

The objectives of the evaluation include both accountability and learning, with an emphasis on learning. Specifically, the evaluation will inform WFP's regional cooperating partnership strategy to meet its localization and Grand Bargain commitments; develop a better understanding of cooperating partnerships across the region; enable RBN to initiate a strategic dialogue around cooperating partnerships with COs during second-generation Country Strategic Plan (CSP) design; and inform RBN's gender-transformative approach to cooperating partnerships.

This evaluation addresses three main questions:

- How relevant are WFP cooperating partners and partnership management practices in countries supported by RBN?

- To what extent have (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance been strengthened?

- What internal and external factors have influenced (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance?

The evaluation team conducted in-depth reviews of Burundi, Kenya and Somalia and desk reviews for the other six countries. Data collection methods included: database mining, document and literature review (268 documents reviewed); 86 stakeholder interviews, and an online survey of WFP's CPs (213 survey respondents).

The main limitations of the evaluation were: limited availability of stakeholders and/or documentation in some countries; discrepancies in information on number and length of field-level agreements (FLAs) among COs; insufficient data on partnership performance and CP capacity; inconsistent use of terminology referring to GEWE-mandated organizations across data sources.

The main users and intended audience of the evaluation are the RBN and its COs, international and local CPs, host country governments and donors.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The WFP RBN oversees 10 developing, low- and middle-income countries in the Eastern Africa region. With some of WFP's largest and most complex operations, RBN assists over 20 million people. In 2020, RBN received a budget of USD 2.9 billion and accounted for 38 per cent of WFP's global nutrition-specific beneficiaries. Most of this aid is implemented by its CPs. Between 2016-and 2020, WFP contracted more than 500 CPs in the Eastern Africa Region; most of these were local NGOs.

The Eastern Africa region is one of the most food-insecure regions of the world. Conflict, insecurity, displacement, climate-induced shocks and gender inequality have been key drivers of food insecurity. The countries in which RBN operates have diverse institutional contexts with governance structures that entail different levels and strategic orientations of WFP engagement, ranging from full deployment of emergency operations to strengthening government Emergency Preparedness and Response policy and institutional frameworks at national and sub-national levels.

In 2016, WFP embarked on a process of institutional reform to reorient the programmatic and administrative mechanisms for CPs in response to strategic shifts introduced as part of the WFP Integrated Road Map.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance of WFP partners and partnership management practices

The shifts in partnership management practices have largely responded to corporate directions to streamline and standardize CP management processes. All COs introduced standard operating procedures (SOPs) for FLA management, established Cooperating Partner Committees, and committed to increased digitization and automation of due diligence processes by beginning their use of the UN Partner Portal (UNPP).

WFP CP management practices and standards in the region have been aligned with principles of 'good' partnership; they have fostered collaboration guided by joint goals and characterized by transparency, accountability, and communication. Fewer efforts have focused on increasing strategic partnerships with CPs, capacity strengthening of CPs, and ensuring a greater focus on GEWE.

Gender and protection accountabilities in FLAs and other CP management tools represent a systematic effort to support gender-sensitive approaches to programming. WFP's integration of GEWE is most visibly operationalized through requirements about gender parity in partner organizations (staffing) and in the implementation of programme activities (among beneficiaries).

Overall, the mix of WFP CPs in the region is aligned with priorities outlined in CSPs and responds to evolving country contexts but does not yet reflect an intentional approach to engage more with local NGOs or with women's, women-led or GEWE-mandated organizations. WFP partnered with more local NGOs than international NGOs throughout 2016-2020, but channelled more funding to international NGOs. Although most COs have begun transitioning to multi-year FLAs, the continued use of short-term FLAs is not aligned with corporate directives or the needs of CPs, particularly local NGOs.

Strengthening of partnership management approaches and partner capacities and performance

WFP's practices in CP selection have improved since 2016 and are seen as transparent, timely, and communicative. The introduction of the UNPP enhanced the clarity and efficiency of WFP's CP selection process. In other stages of the partnership management cycle, there have not yet been clear signs of improvements across all COs. Many WFP COs have partnered with the same CPs over a long period and have placed less emphasis on scoping prospective partners. Working with the same partners over time has allowed some COs to respond rapidly to emergency situations.

CPs in the region have mixed views on WFP's contracting processes. Although there is good communication during the negotiation process, efficiency has not improved, as seen in the continued prevalence of short-term FLAs and FLAs that fund specific project components. The content of FLAs is seen as rigid and not adapted to the specific needs of CPs and COs. COs have increased regular monitoring and feedback and have documented CP performance through the Partner Performance Evaluation (PPE) tool and CP evaluation reports, but the frequency with which WFP shares feedback varies across COs. Common challenges for CPs during project implementation include delays in financial processes, payment disbursements, and commodity deliveries.

CO efforts to strengthen CP management resulted in more standardized processes for CP selection, implementation and performance management, with less evidence of enhanced strategic engagement with CPs. Capacity strengthening activities were largely focused on strengthening CPs programmatic and operational capacity. WFP's contributions to capacity strengthening are not well documented and there is insufficient data to determine if there have been significant improvements in CP capacity or performance. Where introduced, Partnership Action Plans (PAPs) have not provided strategic guidance nor been regularly updated to orient CP management. There was no evidence that the shifts in CP management practices led to any unintended results on gender, equity and human rights.

Factors that influenced country office partnership management and partner capacities

CP management practices are influenced by several external factors at the country level related to external funding, country governance, number of NGOs in the partnership landscape, and evolving operational contexts. Apart from the launch of the UNPP, a positive step towards harmonizing due diligence processes for CP selection and contracting among UN agencies at the CO-level, there were few other initiatives to improve collaboration across UN agencies in CP management practices. More opportunities for collaboration will be forthcoming in 2022.

The establishment of CP management teams and the commitment of senior personnel allowed many COs to better address the transactional and strategic aspects of managing partnerships, although striking the right balance between these aspects remains a challenge. Data management, digitization and NGO contracting tools and procedures represent key limitations for CP management. The absence of CO gender-related capacity, tools and guidance have limited how cooperating partnerships are used to support more gender-transformative programming.

The RBN has provided technical support and oversight of COs as well as guidance, learning opportunities and information sharing. The establishment of a dedicated CP management team at the RBN allowed the bureau to increase its focus on strategic aspects of CP management. WFP HQ has developed tools, templates and guidelines, and has provided support on their implementation.

Available data does not suggest a difference in the performance of international and local NGOs as CPs in terms of programme delivery. Nevertheless, interviewed stakeholders perceive that international NGOs are more likely to perform better than local NGOs.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation found that by increasing standardization and placing greater emphasis on efficiency, WFP has improved some elements of CP management, especially related to risk management. WFP COs in the region made the most progress in introducing tools, templates and guidelines related to increased streamlining of business processes and standardization.

WFP has begun to shift away from seeing CPs as delivery agents/contractors towards seeing them as partners in country-level strategic planning to achieve Zero Hunger. However, CP management practices and tools still lag behind the strategic thinking about cooperating partnerships.

WFP has not had a clear approach to strengthening the capacity of CPs. The new generation of CSPs provides an opportunity to clarify this approach and its linkages to country capacity strengthening efforts.

WFP has made progress on Grand Bargain commitments overall, but has not yet clarified the implications of the localization agenda for cooperating partnerships and CP management in each country office.

There is still unmet potential to link CP management with WFP's more gender-transformative agenda, and current partnership management practices and tools do not encourage CPs to go beyond a focus on "numeric" gender equality towards more gender-transformative programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic recommendations

1. WFP should develop a strategy that contains an intentional approach to how WFP will meet its commitments to the localization agenda in the Eastern Africa region. The strategy should:

1.1 Outline goals or targets towards partnering with more local NGOs and highlight the pathways for COs to achieve such goals even in contexts of emergency response

1.2 Include objectives that increase emphasis on capacity strengthening of CPs

1.3 Stress WFP commitment to transition to multi-year FLAs and include a related indicator to monitor progress

2. WFP should articulate a more intentional approach to drawing on CP management as a strategy for increasing capacity for gender-transformative programming. This would include:

2.1 Assessing gender capacities of NGOs in countries, and identifying opportunities for international NGOs to lead capacity strengthening for local NGOs

2.2 Defining what WFP means by women-led organizations and organizations advancing gender equality and clarifying related expectations for partnership selection

2.3 Integrating the guidance from HQ and/or RBN on application of partnership-related components of the Gender Toolkit, budgeting for gender activity cost categories and gender capacity strengthening for CPs within FLAs

2.4 Revising budget templates for FLAs to clearly identify the resource requirements for gender capacity strengthening

2.5 Including illustrations, targets or requirements within FLA provisions, PPE tools or capacity assessments that move beyond gender-sensitive programming and focus on transformative change

2.6 Ensure that the approach articulated reflects human rights and inclusion, and takes into account the intersection of gender issues and other social dimensions

3. WFP should continue to harmonize partnership management processes with other UN agencies and pursue strategic collaboration with other organizations aimed at capacity strengthening of CPs.

3.1 WFP should establish agreements with HQs or regional bureaux of international NGOs aimed at increasing strategic engagement with these NGOs and facilitating increased capacity strengthening for local NGOs at country-level.

Operational Recommendations

4. WFP COs should operationalize their intent to foster more strategic engagement of CPs through: Increasing engagement of CPs in discussions that are not centred on project implementation; Increasing involvement of local NGOs in events or platforms; Developing guidance on strategic engagement of CPs for COs.

5. WFP should institutionalize partnership management, including CP management, as a field of technical expertise that encompasses oversight on transactions of cooperating partnerships and strategic aspects of CP management by: Developing a framework for country-level organizational arrangements; Providing predictable funding and resources at RB and CO levels; Including a strategy for engaging all units in COs in improving CP management.

6. WFP should continue ongoing efforts to increase the digitization and automation of CP management processes at COs and Field Offices in the region. WFP should revisit the FLA template. WFP should further digitize CP management processes and explore possibilities of digitizing implementation processes.

1. Introduction

1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

Evaluation rationale, scope, and objectives

1.   This evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region was commissioned by the World Food Programme's (WFP) Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa in Nairobi (RBN) and covers the period from January 2016 to December 2020. The evaluation is relevant given the importance of partnerships with civil society organizations for WFP Country Offices in their work to achieve WFP's strategic objectives. It is also relevant to the achievement of WFP's Corporate Partnerships Strategy (2014-2017), subsequent guidance documents (NGO Partnership Manual, NGO Partnership Guidance) and to the organization's commitments under the 2016 Grand Bargain agreement (see section 1.2.2). The evaluation is envisaged to inform the development of the second generation of Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) starting in 2022. The WFP's RBN prepared the Terms of Reference (ToR) in consultation with key stakeholders, oversaw the evaluation's design and quality assured its implementation and products. See Annex I for Summary ToR.

2.   The evaluation focuses only on WFP's relationships with international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and Red Cross/Crescent Societies. The evaluation refers to these as Cooperating Partners (CPs), the term used by WFP in the Eastern Africa Region (see definition in text box). The evaluation's geographic scope encompasses nine WFP Country Offices (COs) supported by RBN: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. Although the evaluation focuses on the period 2016-2020, the evaluation team also considered more recent

> **Terminology**
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> For the purpose of this evaluation, cooperating partners are defined as the CBOs (including women's organizations and gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)-mandated organizations), national NGOs, international NGOs and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies that WFP engages/works with to design and implement programmes and operations under each CSP in the region.
>
> This report uses the terms women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations to refer to CPs that have gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in their mandate. This report also refers to women-led organizations when examining available data on CPs, as this was the terminology used in the ToR, and will also be used in WFP's new Gender Policy (2022-2026), currently under development.[1]

and relevant developments, in order to better contextualize findings to the current context. The evaluation considers the operational and strategic shifts in the approach to cooperating partnerships that WFP began in 2016, in the context of the Eastern Africa region. This process of institutional reform emphasizes: enhanced and more strategic engagement of NGOs; the development of standardized and streamlined business processes for cooperating partnership management; increased focus on capacity strengthening of CPs; and increased prioritization of women's and GEWE-mandated organizations and focus on GEWE minimum capacity standards for all partnerships.

3.   The objectives of the evaluation include both accountability and learning, with an emphasis on learning.[2] The outbreak of COVID-19 did not have an effect on the evaluation's objectives. Specifically, the evaluation will:

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[1] WFP's new Gender Policy (2022-2026) was being finalized at the time of writing, and the policy was not available to the evaluation team. The information regarding the policy's use of the term "women-led organizations" was provided by a WFP interviewee.

[2] The commissioning unit in RBN requested an emphasis on learning given that this was the first evaluation focused on partnerships in the region. While the emphasis of the evaluation is on learning, accountability is explored through questions that assess the extent to which WFP is adhering to its Grand Bargain commitments and different policies and guidelines. More specifically, within Evaluation Questions 2.1 and 2.2, the evaluation examined the extent to which COs adhered to WFP guidelines and procedures related to CP management (i.e. are COs implementing procedures as they should be).

- Inform WFP's regional cooperating partnership strategy, thus ensuring that WFP can meet its current and long-term objectives

- Inform the WFP RBN regional strategy to meet its localization and Grand Bargain commitments

- Develop a better understanding of current cooperating partnerships across the region, especially partnerships with local organizations, and how WFP can strengthen the enabling environment for these partnerships from contracting, operational management and capacity strengthening perspectives

- Enable WFP RBN to initiate a strategic dialogue around cooperating partnerships with COs during upcoming second-generation CSP design phases

- Inform ongoing work by the RBN to better engage in a gender-transformative approach to cooperating partnerships, and to engage in more strategic targeting of, and partnerships with, women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations

4. The primary intended internal stakeholders and users of the evaluation are the RBN and its Country Offices. Key external stakeholders and users of the evaluation, some of whom provided information relevant to the evaluation, include international and local cooperating partners, as well as host country governments in countries of RBN COs and donors.

1.2   CONTEXT

WFP in the Eastern Africa Region

5. The WFP RBN oversees 10 developing, low- and middle-income countries in the Eastern Africa region. With some of WFP's largest and most complex operations, RBN is assisting over 20 million people. The countries supported by RBN are Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. In 2020, RBN received a total budget of USD 2.9 billion and the region accounted for 38 per cent of WFP's global nutrition-specific beneficiaries. Most of this aid is implemented by its cooperating partners.

6. The Eastern Africa region is one of the most food-insecure regions of the world. As per the Global Food Crisis Report of 2020, three of the world's eight largest food crises were from this region – Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan. Eastern Africa contains 20 per cent of the global population facing acute hunger, with an estimated 41.5 million people across the region food insecure in 2020. Acute malnutrition levels have increased by 25 per cent as a result of COVID-19, which has been a particular concern for the urban poor.[3] Conflict, insecurity, displacement and climate-induced shocks were the key drivers of food insecurity in the region in 2020 and 2021:

- Climate-induced shocks have a significant effect on food security in the Eastern Africa region. Somalia, northern and eastern Kenya, and southern and south-eastern Ethiopia experienced drought between March and May 2021, leading to poor crop and livestock production and loss of livestock and crops. Climate forecasts which had indicated an increased likelihood of a three-season drought in the Horn of Africa this year are currently coming to fruition as the rain season is delayed by at least 10-20 days; this is expected to have serious negative impacts on food availability and access.[4] Desert locust outbreaks in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Kenya affected an estimated 2.5 million people in 2020 and 1 million in early 2021, while the number continues to grow.[5]

- Conflict is a key driver of food insecurity in the region, causing loss of life, displacement of populations and prevention of household access to income and food sources. In Ethiopia, the situation in the Tigray region has become increasingly volatile and alarming since it started in November 2020 and through 2021. The UN reports that the conflict has driven about 400,000 people into famine-like conditions with a total of 8 million people in northern Ethiopia in need of humanitarian assistance[6]and 60,000 refugees

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[3] WFP. 2020. *East Africa Regional Overview*.

[4] USAID. 2021. Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

[5] FAO. 2021. *Desert Locust Upsurge: Progress report on the response in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen (May-August 2021)*.

[6] OCHA. 2021. *Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update: Situation Report.*

fleeing into Sudan. In June 2021 the UN Security Council called for all parties to grant immediate access to humanitarian aid and place attention on responding to the needs of the approximately 1.7 million people who have been displaced as a result of the conflict.[7] The security situation in South Sudan remains precarious, contributing to the more than 7.24 million people facing acute food insecurity as of September 2021.[8]

- Macroeconomic challenges remain key factors in driving food insecurity in the region, seen in terms of inflation, rising costs of fuel, and restrictions in movement brought about by the outbreak of COVID-19. Economic activity in the region is lower than normal overall, with high prices for staple foods and lowered household purchasing power, especially in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan.[9]

- Globally, gender inequality is a significant factor in the gap in access to food; research indicates that food insecurity is higher among women than men.[10] Research has also found that lower levels of agricultural productivity among women, and associated implications for levels of income among women, result in lowered levels of food consumption. Factors that drive this include greater barriers for women to access agricultural inputs, and the additional amount of time women spend fulfilling traditional roles in household chores and caring for children.[11]

7.   The countries in which the RBN operates have diverse institutional contexts with different governance structures that entail different levels and strategic orientations of WFP engagement. Table 1.1 outlines RBN countries/regions according to WFP's typology of governance structures, the nature of WFP engagement for each typology, as well as the Needs-Based Plan (NBP) amounts for each country. See also Annex II for detailed information on countries included in the evaluation.

Table 1.1 Governance Typologies in RBN Countries of Operation[12]

	Governance Typologies		
	Typology 1: Fractured governance at national level	**Typology 2: Weak governance structure**	**Typology 3: Unified governance structure**
Description of governance structure	Active conflict and/or persistent ethnic tension; inadequate policies or institutional frameworks and capacities for Emergency Preparedness & Response (EPR)	Emerging strong central government. However, government has weak institutional capacity to address EPR and food insecurity	Higher levels of GDP, generally peaceful country context. Government is able to play its EPR role
WFP engagement	**Application of full emergency capacities,** with a strong focus on risk analysis, security, protection and conflict sensitivity. Focus is also on working with the UN humanitarian coordination structure.	**Seizing opportunities to support EPR capacities,** especially in supporting institutions and policies	**Diminishing WFP's role** to focus on strengthening the capacity of EPR policy and institutional frameworks at both national and sub-national levels

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[7] UN – Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, Consequences of not Acting Now to End Violence in Ethiopia's Tigray Region Could Be 'Disastrous', Warns Under-Secretary-General, Briefing Security Council, 2 July 2021, https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14572.doc.htm (retrieved 6 July 2021)

[8] WFP. 2021. *South Sudan Situation Report #295*.

[9] USAID. 2021. Famine Early Warning Systems Network.

[10] In 2020, women were 13 per cent more likely than men to be food insecure at a moderate or severe level and 27 per cent more likely than men to be food insecure at a severe level (FAO, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2020, p. 205).

[11] FAO. 2019. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*.

[12] This typology of governance structures in RBN countries of operation was provided to the evaluation team by the RBN.

	Governance Typologies		
	Typology 1: Fractured governance at national level	Typology 2: Weak governance structure	Typology 3: Unified governance structure
Countries/ Areas and their NBP amounts[13]	**South Sudan**: USD 3,885,285,798 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 – USD 1,679,332,818) **Sudan**: USD 2,697,382,765 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 – USD 737,612,833) **Somalia**: USD 1,883,907,029 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 – USD 642,775,311)	**Burundi**: USD 268,163,976 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 - USD 114,454,837) **South-eastern Ethiopia**: No data available on NBP amount for the region[14] **Eritrea**: No CSP in 2020	**Kenya:** USD 1,093,320,922 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 – USD 330,402,629) **Uganda**: USD 1,265,814,889 **Rwanda**: USD 250,589,594 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 – USD 59,721,890) **Djibouti**: USD 83,270,926 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 – USD 15,748,148) **Ethiopia**: USD 3,291,797,717 (expenditure as at Dec 2020 – USD 314,910,860)
	Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan are classified as fragile and conflict-affected settings, and their governments face significant capacity challenges in EPR	Burundi continues to face challenges related to institutional and social fragility, and government capacity to address EPR and food insecurity	Kenya, Djibouti, Rwanda and Uganda have stable governance contexts, where the government is able to play their EPR role. They are not fragile or conflict-affected With the exception of its southeastern region, Ethiopia also represents a stable governance context

WFP and Partnerships: Strategies and Frameworks

8.   Cooperating partnerships are a crucial aspect of WFP's work. Approximately 75 per cent of WFP interventions globally are implemented by its more than 1,000 cooperating partners.[15] In 2014, national NGOs were WFP's largest partners for delivery of in-kind food assistance, representing approximately 45 per cent of the food tonnage value delivered, compared to international NGOs (36 per cent) and host governments (18 per cent).[16] WFP is committed to working increasingly in partnership with national actors, and its objectives for cooperating partnerships are articulated through the strategies and frameworks described in the following paragraphs. As part of its efforts to accelerate gender-transformative programming, WFP is committed to engaging in partnerships with more women's organizations and GEWE-mandated CPs, as noted in WFP's Gender Policy and NGO Partnerships Manual.

9.   Under the 2016 Grand Bargain (GB) agreement**,** WFP along with 16 multilateral donor agencies and 18 bilateral donors committed to working towards increased use of local and national actors on the frontlines of humanitarian response. Donors and aid organizations committed to providing 25 per cent of global funds for humanitarian action to local and national organizations by 2020, as well as non-earmarked funds and more multi-year funding for enhanced continuity in humanitarian responses. WFP took co-leadership of the cash-based programming workstream of the GB and remained on track in 2018-2019 to meet the commitment of transferring 25 per cent of its resources to local and national humanitarian responders. WFP

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[13] All NBP amounts are based on information retrieved from WFP country webpages in April 2021. All expenditure figures were obtained from 2020 Annual Country Reports.

[14] Neither Ethiopia's CSP nor the country's CSP Resource Situation specified amounts of NBP allocations by region.

[15] WFP. 2017. *Guidance on Capacity Strengthening of Civil Society,* December 2017, p.2.
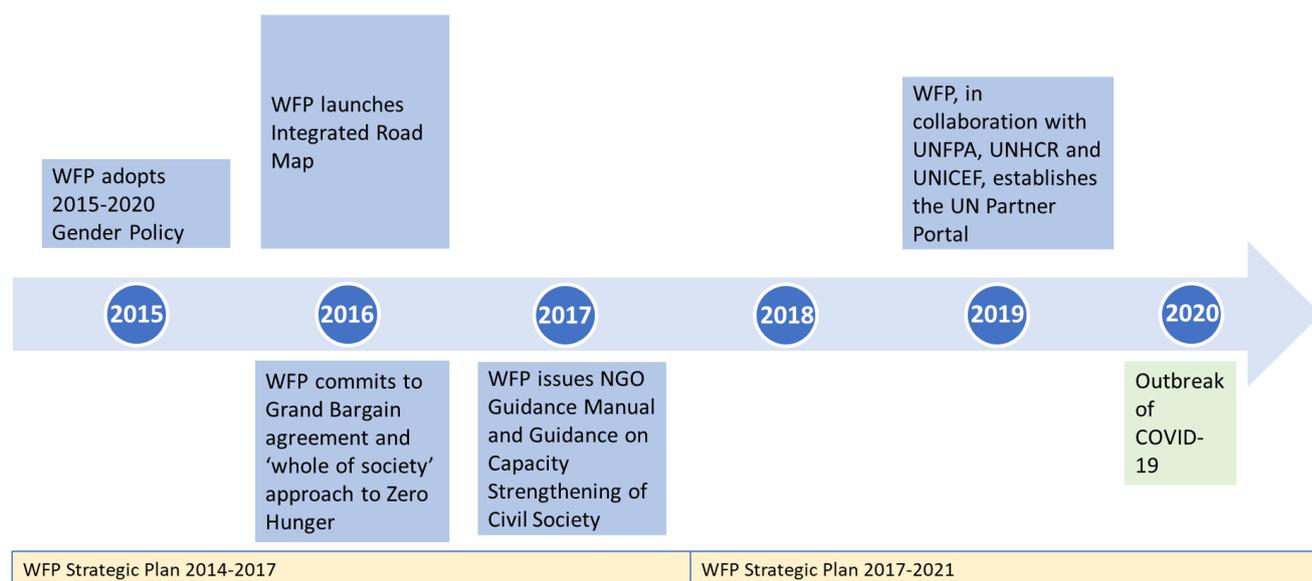
[16] Humanitarian Policy Group. 2016. *Capacity strengthening of national and local non-governmental organizations: opportunities and challenges for WFP*, March 2016, p. 16.

has taken a 'whole of society' approach towards achieving zero hunger (i.e. including all levels of government, national disaster management agencies (NDMAs), civil society, national NGOs, the private sector, the Red Cross and Red Crescent as well as other institutions). An independent review of the GB conducted in 2021 emphasized the need for better tracking of funding to GEWE, and for increased institutional capacity support for local actors that are focused on GEWE, not only those labelled as women-led or women's rights organizations.[17]

10.   The WFP Integrated Road Map (IRM), launched in November 2016, had four components: (i) the WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021, (ii) the Policy on CSPs, (iii) the Financial Framework Review, and (iv) the Corporate Results Framework. The IRM put increased emphasis on longer-term agreements, collaborative and complementary partnerships with NGOs, and increased involvement of civil society and NGOs in country strategic planning processes.

11.   The WFP Strategic Plan for 2017-2021 is guided by the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development). In relation to gender equality and inclusion, the WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021 notes the importance of integrating GEWE, humanitarian protection concerns and accountability to affected populations in all its activities, paying particular attention to the equitable participation of women and men in design, implementation and monitoring of gender-transformative programmes and policies, and to the vulnerabilities of different groups, including women, men, girls, boys, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and others. The Strategic Plan also reiterates WFP's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and acknowledges "the interlinkages between risks to people's fundamental human rights and hunger and the potential for food assistance to support people's safety and maintain their dignity."[18] The Strategic Plan emphasizes CSPs as the key instrument for WFP to outline its strategic and programmatic objectives in each country. The CSPs bring a multi-year planning framework that specifies strategic outcomes, national results, and SDG targets to which WFP will contribute. CSPs aim to identify the key capacity-strengthening investments needed from WFP for its national partners.

Figure 1.1 WFP Partnership Milestones

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[17] Humanitarian Policy Group. 2021. *The Grand Bargain at five years: An Independent Review*, June 2021.

[18] WFP. 2016a. "Strategic Plan (2017–2021)".

1.3 SUBJECT BEING EVALUATED

Shifts in WFP's Partnership Approach

12.   Starting in 2016, WFP embarked on a process of institutional reform to reorient the organization's strategic objectives and programmatic and administrative mechanisms for cooperating partnerships in response to the strategic re-orientation (the Grand Bargain localization commitments; the shift towards country-level and multi-year strategic planning; and the IRM's increased focus on long-term engagement with national partners). The new partnership approach was also informed by a 2016 study on strengthening the capacity of national and local NGOs that analysed how WFP contributes to local capacity strengthening of national NGOs through its partnerships and which offered concrete recommendations as to how the organization could invest more tangibly and strategically in local capacity across different operational contexts.[19] Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the key operational and strategic shifts in WFP's partnership approach from 2016-2020.

Figure 1.2 Operational and strategic shifts in WFP's partnership approach from 2016-2020
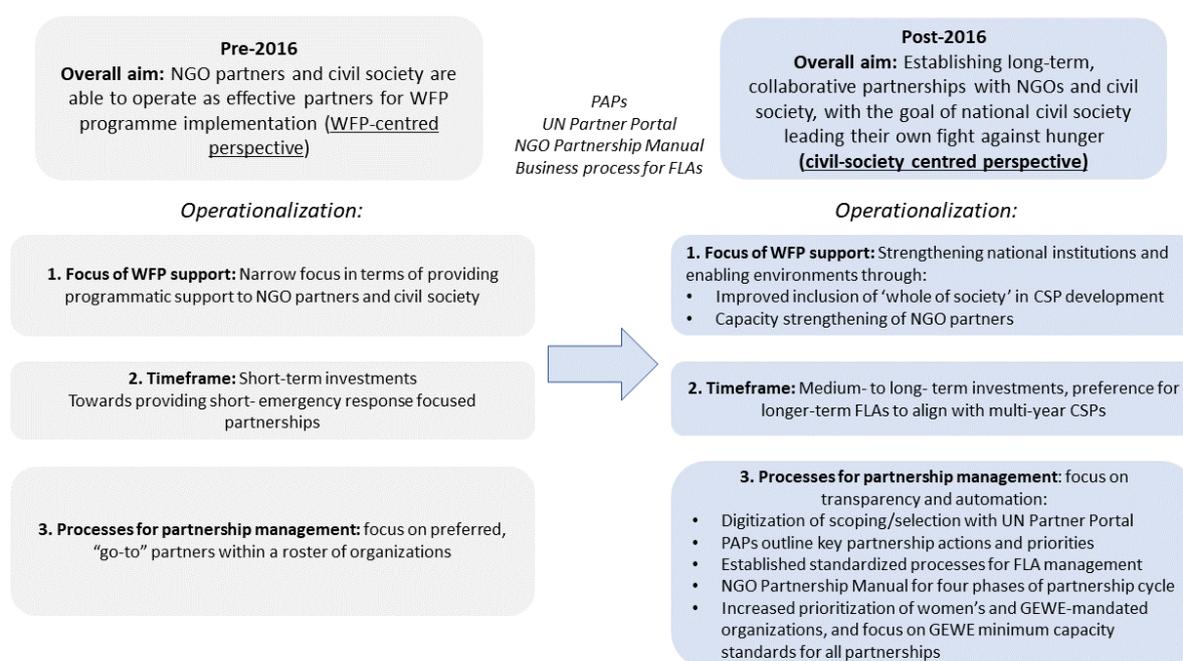
13.   The new partnership approach focuses on:

- **Enhanced and more strategic engagement of NGOs.** Engaging cooperating partners early is intended to enable WFP to better define its role, position and contributions based on the needs, priorities and interest of both WFP and partners in a given country. Partners are engaged through face-to-face consultations with COs, regular electronic updates and opportunities to comment on a draft CSP. Overall, the strategic outcomes defined in the CSPs are envisaged as collective outcomes, agreed upon between the CO, government and NGO partners.

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[19] The study found that capacity building benefitted both WFP and its partners. For WFP, strengthening partners' capacity stands to "improve WFP's operations and outcomes for beneficiaries, particularly in complex activities such as nutrition, or long-term projects such as those pertaining to livelihoods and resilience, and enable WFP to better serve beneficiaries." For partners, "the most obvious and oft-cited benefit is access to increased and ideally predictable levels of funding to enable NNGOs to scale up programming, hire staff and purchase equipment." Humanitarian Policy Group. 2016. *Capacity strengthening of national and local non-governmental organizations: opportunities and challenges for WFP.*

- **Development of standardized and streamlined business processes for cooperating partnership management.** In 2016, WFP created a business process for the management of field-level agreements (FLAs) with NGO partners.[20] It outlined a standard process of partnership engagement and management that defines practices related to partner selection, partnership formalization, partner capacity development, conflict resolution, as well as monitoring and evaluation of partnerships. As part of this, a complementary NGO Partnership Manual was developed to provide guidelines for CO partnership engagement across four phases of a partnership lifecycle,[21] and the UN Partner Portal (UNPP) was jointly launched by WFP UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as a platform to harmonize due diligence for civil society organizations to engage with the UN on partnership opportunities.

- **Increased focus on capacity strengthening of cooperating partners**. In line with its Grand Bargain localization commitments and its policy on CSPs, WFP is moving away from a narrow focus on providing programmatic support to national partners, and towards a broader focus on strengthening national institutions through capacity development throughout its partnership management processes.[22] The CSP is also noted as a vehicle through which WFP will operationalize its approach to capacity strengthening of a wide range of national actors, including NGOs.[23]

- Increased prioritization of women's and GEWE-mandated organizations and focus on GEWE minimum capacity standards for all partnerships. Partnerships are noted as a key driver of organizational change in WFP's Gender Policy 2015-2020. One of the intended aims of the policy is that GEWE is systematically considered in FLAs through inclusion in tracking, monitoring and reporting on compliance.

14.   Partnership management tools noted above (FLAs, NGO Partnership Manual, and the UNPP) did not provide guidance on application in different types of country contexts (according to typology of governance in countries outlined in Table 1.1). The NGO Partnership Manual does note, however, that in the event of a need for emergency response, an Emergency FLA can accommodate for short-term arrangements of a maximum of three months, after which these must converted to regular FLAs. In relation to WFP's collaboration with other UN agencies in cooperating partnerships, a template for WFP-UNHCR-NGO FLAs was introduced in 2016 and is included in the NGO Partnership Manual. The template is focused on providing a standard framework for tripartite agreements between WFP, UNHCR and CPs in refugee response operations.

15.   The NGO Partnership Manual addresses inclusion primarily through its reiteration of the importance of WFP's 'whole of society' approach to achieving Zero Hunger and the localization agenda. The inclusion of all levels of government, local NGOs, National Red Cross/ Crescent Societies, civil society, the private sector and other institutions and the emphasis on putting local humanitarian actors at the centre, is noted by the Manual as key to the transformative potential of WFP's CSPs. The importance of inclusion within WFP's partnerships is also highlighted in WFP's Gender Toolkit, which underlines the importance of strategic and inclusive partnerships for WFP to understand and address the diverse needs and priorities of women, men, girls, and boys.[24] WFP's Gender Policy 2015-2020 also underlines the need to examine the intersection of gender issues and other social dimensions, such as age, sexual orientation, disability status, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, among several others, and its effect on creating and reinforcing inequalities between women and men, as well as among women and among men.[25]

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[20] The principal manner in which partnerships are made official between WFP and its CPs are through the signing of FLAs. Further to this, however, other types of agreements include: tripartite agreements; technical agreements; exchanges of letters; and memoranda of understanding (WFP, Gender toolkit - Gender & Partnerships, p. 5).

[21] Phase I: Scoping the Landscape; Phase II: Negotiating FLAs; Phase III: Implementation; Phase IV: Evaluating the Partnership.

[22] Notably, the phase IV (evaluation) of the partnership management life cycle includes several provisions for reviewing the partner's performance and developing and, subsequently, implementing Improvement and Capacity Strengthening Plans to address identified capacity shortcomings.

[23] WFP. 2017. *WFP Corporate Approach to Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS)*.

[24] WFPe. Undated. *Gender & Partnerships*. WFP Gender Office.

[25] WFP. "WFP Gender Policy 2015-2020."

16.   While the institutional reform does not include an implementation plan, the evaluation team identified the following intended objectives of the institutional reform: (i) improved transparency, standardization and digitization throughout partnership management; (ii) strengthened organizational and financial capacities of cooperating partners, such as more human resources, improved skills/knowledge (i.e. logistical, financial management, GEWE), or better equipment; (iii) increased use of long-term FLAs that lead to improved cost-efficiency of partnerships;[26] (iv) increased selection and use of women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations as cooperating partners.

17.   The institutional reform process for partnerships does not have one (main) policy owner within WFP. The policy for cooperating partner (CP) management sits at HQ and is led by the NGO Unit. However, CP management is implemented differently in different COs, and there are no requirements with regard to the organizational arrangement for CP management and implementation at the CO level or regional level (e.g., in the form of a dedicated CP management unit). The RBN is the only regional bureau (RB) with a dedicated CP management team.

18.   To date, the RBN has not conducted a comprehensive, region-wide analysis or study of its CP management practices and processes to inform its approach to engaging cooperating partnerships (e.g., RBN-specific assessments, research or past evaluations on cooperating partnerships). However, a lessons learned exercise undertaken in 2018-2019 on the implementation of Partnership Action Plans (PAPs) involved all regional bureaux, including the RBN. The exercise identified challenges in the implementation of PAPs, took stock of the country-level rollout of the use of the PAPs across the regional bureaux, and outlined lessons learned and recommendations. Key lessons learned from the exercise included the need for PAPs to include measures of expected change over time to ensure they are not only a 'paper exercise' and the need for clarity on what types of information are relevant for inclusion in PAPs, and how such information will be collected and analysed. The exercise recommended a clearer articulation of the purpose of PAPs, a consistent yet flexible PAP format, and the inclusion of Country Directors, Deputy Country Directors and Programme staff at COs, as well as Government Partnerships Officers, in the development of PAPs. In 2019, a revised PAP template was developed to replace the template developed in 2016.

19.   This evaluation, therefore, focuses on the change in WFP's partnership approach between 2016 and 2020 among countries in the region. The evaluation also considers the extent to which changes have reflected WFP's localization and Grand Bargain commitments. Furthermore, the evaluation examines the extent to which the specific objectives of changes in partnership management practices for countries supported by the RBN have been achieved, namely: (a) the adoption of the UNPP by all COs, (b) the improvement of FLA management, including end-to-end oversight of budgets and payment, ensuring policies are adhered to, (c) improved assessments and evaluations of partners, and (d) contributing to capacity strengthening for partners. The evaluation explores internal and external contextual factors that influence the type of cooperating partnerships in place and the capacity of partners. The evaluation also identified factors that facilitate or hinder WFP engagement of women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations and strategy for strengthening CPs' capacities to integrate GEWE into their own organizational structure and programme implementation. It considered the extent to which the sampled FLAs, CP performance evaluations, and capacity assessments are integrating the expectations outlined in the WFP Gender Policy 2015 -2020 and the NGO Partnership Manual.

20.   Based on information from WFP Information Network and Global System (WINGS) database and the DOTS platform, the evaluation team estimates that 541 individual cooperating partners were contracted by WFP across nine countries in the region between January 2016 and December 2020. Table 1.2 provides an overview of data extracted from these databases on numbers of CPs across international and local NGOs. Based on feedback from COs and a proxy measure to count women's organizations in the dataset, 9.4 per

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[26] The NGO Partnership Manual recommends that longer duration FLAs should be established where possible, especially when a given CSP covers 5 years. The manual states that "WFP's short-term funding model often dictates the shorter-than-ideal length of many FLAs, but such contracts are frequently cost-inefficient and transactional in nature." While longer-term FLAs require capacity assessments and regular communication with the NGO partner "as there is likely to be greater uncertainty during its implementation", it also provides significant benefits in terms of the possibility for strengthened capacities.

cent of CPs were identified as either women-led organizations or women's organizations.[27] Among COs in the region, CP selection criteria did not include criteria related to whether organizations are women's organizations, GEWE-mandated, or women-led organizations. Information on the profile of these organizations, beyond their classification as international NGOs or local NGOs, was not available. The majority of CPs (66.7 per cent) contracted by WFP in the region during the 2016-2020 period were local NGOs and 33.2 per cent were international NGOs.

Table 1.2 Overview of cooperating partners in the Eastern Africa region from 2016 to 2020

Country	All CPs[28]		International NGOs		# of Local NGOs	
	# of CPs	Net purchase orders	# of International NGOs	Net purchase orders	# of Local NGOs	Net purchase orders
Burundi	20 (1 women-led/women's org)	$9,857,850.37	9 (1 women-led/women's org)	$7,439,015.21	11 (0 women-led/women's org)	$2,418,835.16
Djibouti	7 (1 women-led/women's org)	$984,465.67	2 (0 women-led/women's org)	$82,418.64	5 (1 women-led/women's org)	$902,047.03
Ethiopia	33 (5 women-led/women's org)	$19,895,095.08	19 (4 women-led/women's org)	$14,350,162.53	14 (1 women-led/women's org)	$5,544,932.55
Kenya	39 (4 women-led/women's org)	$52,622,638.31	20 (3 women-led/women's org)	$27,335,267.79	19 (1 women-led/women's org)	$25,287,370.52
Rwanda	12 (5 women-led/women's org)	$23,982,028.32	7 (4 women-led/women's org)	$21,761,639.14	5 (1 women-led/women's org)	$2,220,389.18
Somalia	188 (11 women-led/women's org)	$87,304,509.10	29 (0 women-led/women's org)	$39,213,244.01	159 (11 women-led/women's org)	$48,091,265.09
South Sudan	106 (6 women-led/women's org)	$248,378,338.78	48 (1 women-led/women's org)	$215,825,125.28	58 (5 women-led/women's org)	$32,553,213.50
Sudan	100	$58,679,931.97	26	$30,479,858.05	74	$28,200,073.92

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[27] This classification is not available in WINGS and DOTS databases and lists of women-led organizations were provided by COs during the inception phase. In addition to this, the evaluation also counted organization's with the words, "women," "woman," and "femme" in their organization names, as a proxy measure for women's organizations. It is likely that this still misses women's rights or GEWE-mandated organizations included in the datasets, and this is noted in Section 1.4 under limitations.

[28] The dataset from WINGS differentiated between INGOs and Local NGOs, but did not further differentiate local NGOs as CBOs or Red Cross/Crescent Societies. The dataset counts CBOs and Red Cross/Crescent Societies as local NGOs, and as such they continue to be included in the table above. The dataset does not include government counterparts, international financial institutions, other UN agencies, or the private sector.
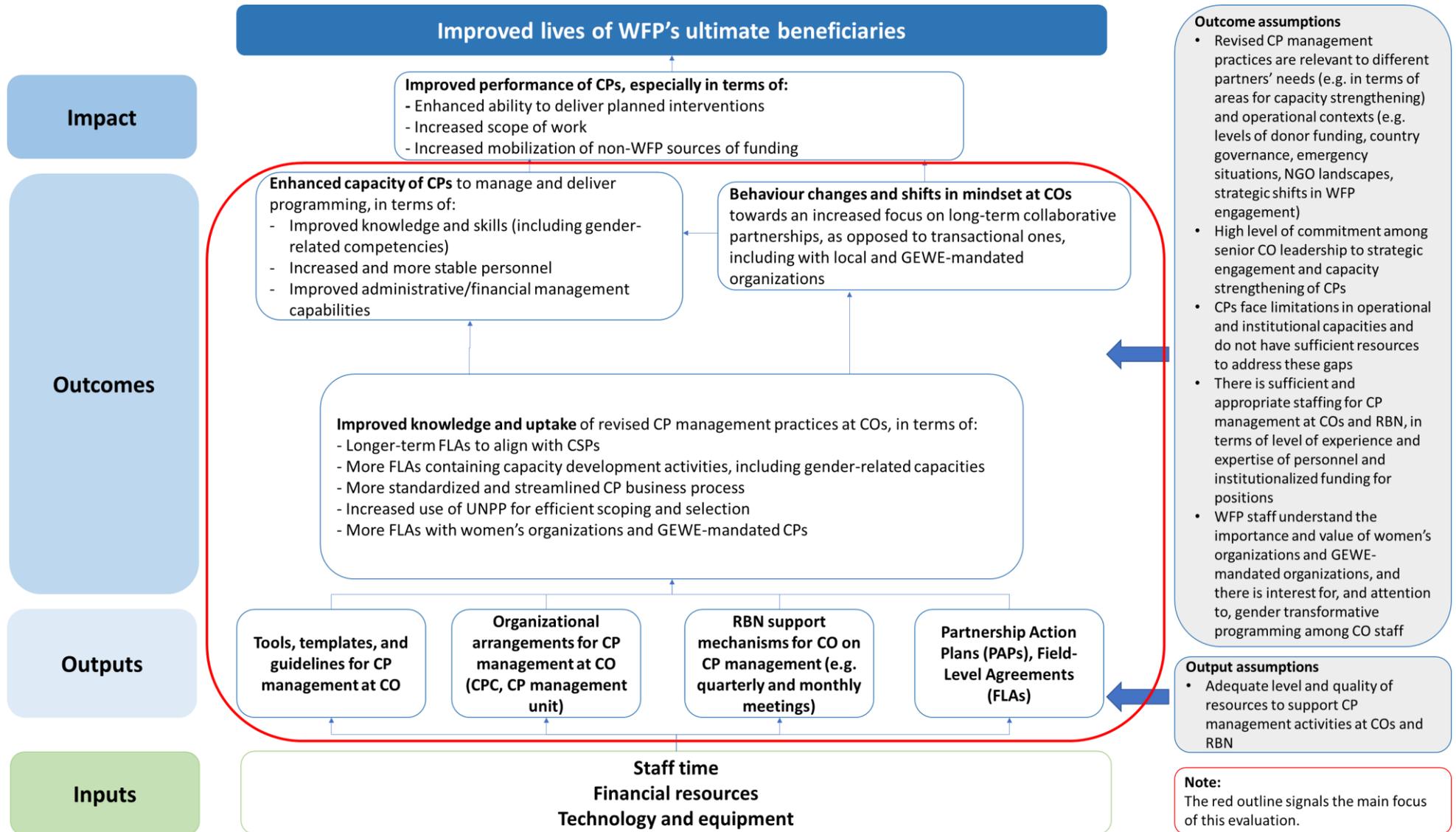
Country	All CPs[28]		International NGOs		# of Local NGOs	
	# of CPs	Net purchase orders	# of International NGOs	Net purchase orders	# of Local NGOs	Net purchase orders
	(9 women-led/women's org)		(2 women-led/women's org)		(7 women-led/women's org)	
Uganda	36 (9 women-led/women's org)	$65,993,164.57	20 (6 women-led/women's org)	$49,937,672.99	16 (3 women-led/women's org)	$16,055,491.58
Total	**541 (51 women-led, 9.4 per cent of total CPs)**	**$567,698,022.17**	**180 (21 women-led, 11.7 per cent of INGOs)**	**$406,424,403.64**	**361 (30 women-led, 8.3 per cent of local NGOs)**	**$161,273,618.53**

Reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC)

21.   As highlighted in the ToR, one limitation to the evaluation is the lack of a logical framework or Theory of Change (ToC) for cooperating partnerships at the RBN that the evaluation team could use to inform analysis of partnership performance. To mitigate this challenge and help conceptualize the pathway between WFP's institutional reform process for CP partnering and the intended changes, the evaluation team has reconstructed a simplified ToC based on available documentation (Figure 1.2). The ToC reflects the premise that effectively managed and capable partners will eventually deliver better results for WFP's ultimate beneficiaries. This reconstructed ToC was developed during the inception phase of the evaluation, and subsequently updated while drafting the evaluation report, with attention placed especially on updating its underlying assumptions. The ToC illustrates two related pathways of change for advancing towards the intended impact on cooperating partner performance: one that focuses on CO capacity to partner through the adoption of new partnership management processes and one that relates to the strengthened capacity of WFP's partners. The ToC is underpinned by the following hypotheses:

- **If there is improved knowledge and uptake of revised CP management practices at COs, there will be behaviour changes and shifts in mindset at COs** towards increased focus on long-term collaborative partnerships, including with local and GEWE-mandated organizations. This is because the CP management guidelines and tools include requirements for COs to put good partnership principles and strategic engagement of CPs into practice, are adapted to different contexts, and will lead to the following internal 'results': (i) increased levels of commitment and expertise in strategic CP management among CO staff; (ii) increased levels of dedicated resources (financial, human and otherwise) for COs to emphasize capacity strengthening of CPs.

- **If there is improved knowledge and uptake of revised CP management practices at COs, there will be enhanced capacity of CPs to manage and deliver programming.** The increased focus on longer-term FLAs and increased inclusion of capacity strengthening for CPs within FLAs will serve to address CPs' operational capacity needs (e.g. improved programmatic knowledge and skills, competencies in gender programming), and organizational/institutional capacity needs. An underlying assumption is that CPs do not have sufficient resources to address their capacity gaps, and that the areas and modalities of WFP's capacity strengthening are relevant to the needs of CPs.

Figure 1.3 Reconstructed Theory of Change of WFP institutional reform process for CPs

Improved lives of WFP's ultimate beneficiaries

Impact

Improved performance of CPs, especially in terms of:
- Enhanced ability to deliver planned interventions
- Increased scope of work
- Increased mobilization of non-WFP sources of funding

Outcomes

Enhanced capacity of CPs to manage and deliver programming, in terms of:
- Improved knowledge and skills (including gender-related competencies)
- Increased and more stable personnel
- Improved administrative/financial management capabilities

Behaviour changes and shifts in mindset at COs towards an increased focus on long-term collaborative partnerships, as opposed to transactional ones, including with local and GEWE-mandated organizations

Improved knowledge and uptake of revised CP management practices at COs, in terms of:
- Longer-term FLAs to align with CSPs
- More FLAs containing capacity development activities, including gender-related capacities
- More standardized and streamlined CP business process
- Increased use of UNPP for efficient scoping and selection
- More FLAs with women's organizations and GEWE-mandated CPs

Outputs

Tools, templates, and guidelines for CP management at CO

Organizational arrangements for CP management at CO (CPC, CP management unit)

RBN support mechanisms for CO on CP management (e.g. quarterly and monthly meetings)

Partnership Action Plans (PAPs), Field-Level Agreements (FLAs)

Inputs

Staff time
Financial resources
Technology and equipment

Outcome assumptions
- Revised CP management practices are relevant to different partners' needs (e.g. in terms of areas for capacity strengthening) and operational contexts (e.g. levels of donor funding, country governance, emergency situations, NGO landscapes, strategic shifts in WFP engagement)
- High level of commitment among senior CO leadership to strategic engagement and capacity strengthening of CPs
- CPs face limitations in operational and institutional capacities and do not have sufficient resources to address these gaps
- There is sufficient and appropriate staffing for CP management at COs and RBN, in terms of level of experience and expertise of personnel and institutionalized funding for positions
- WFP staff understand the importance and value of women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, and there is interest for, and attention to, gender transformative programming among CO staff

Output assumptions
- Adequate level and quality of resources to support CP management activities at COs and RBN

Note:
The red outline signals the main focus of this evaluation.

1.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Methodology

22. The evaluation was conducted between March and November 2021 by an independent team of three evaluators. Annex III shows the revised evaluation timeline.

23. A full methodology for the evaluation was set out in the Inception Report (August 2021) and is summarized in Annex IV. This evaluation addresses three main evaluation questions (EQs), which also provide the structure of Section 2 of this report (see Annex V for the full evaluation matrix):

- EQ1: How relevant are WFP cooperating partners and partnership management practices in countries supported by RBN?

- EQ2: To what extent have (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance been strengthened?

- EQ3: What internal and external factors have influenced (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance?

24. The evaluation employed a two-tiered approach in the degree of depth of review among the nine countries, with three countries selected for in-depth reviews (Burundi, Kenya and Somalia) and the remaining six countries constituting desk reviews 'plus.' For details on the country selection criteria and data collection methods used across tiers, see the section 'Country Selection and Sampling' in Annex IV). Table 1.3 provides a summary of the approach, focus and stakeholders/documents consulted for each data collection method.

25. Selected revised Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria, as indicated in the ToR were applied as follows:

- The *relevance* criterion was applied in relation to Evaluation Question 1 to assess the extent to which WFP's CPs and partnership management practices are relevant to the countries supported by the RBN.

- The *effectiveness* criterion was applied in relation to Evaluation Questions 2 and 3 that address the results of WFP's cooperating partnerships and partnership management practices, and factors that have contributed to results achievement.

- The criterion of *sustainability* is considered when assessing the results of WFP's cooperating partnerships and partnership management practices and their ongoing support for CSP in the targeted countries. In other words, to what extent partnership management practices and capacity strengthening are creating the conditions for eventual handover to national governments and partners.

- The *impact* criterion was applied in relation to Evaluation Question 2 which addresses the extent to which WFP partners' performance has been strengthened in terms of level of funding, scope of work, and ability to deliver on interventions, especially those focused on GEWE.

26. Although the criterion of *coherence* was not included, questions or indicators related to coherence under EQs 2.2 and 3.1 are included in the evaluation matrix in order to support reflections on the other criteria. In this way, the evaluation helped identify initiatives such as the UNPP, requirements for joint reporting, or joint investments in capacity strengthening that have benefits in terms of coherence. Similarly, in data collection tools such as the survey, questions were asked about partner engagement with other funders. In relation to the *efficiency* criterion, under EQ2.2 the evaluation explores the extent to which COs have improved efficiency of contracting through increased use of fit-for-purpose FLAs (short-term and multi-year FLAs). This follows from the ToR's initial evaluation question related to efficiency.

27. The main features of the evaluation methodology were: (i) database mining, (ii) document and literature review; (iii) stakeholder interviews', and (iv) an online survey administered and distributed to representatives of WFP's cooperating partners in the nine RBN countries included in the evaluation. Data collection tools (i.e., interview protocols and the survey questionnaire) are shown in Annex VI. Survey results are presented in Annex IX. See also Annex VII for the fieldwork agendas for data collection in Tier 1 and Tier 2 country offices.

Table 1.3 Summary of approach, focus and stakeholders/documents consulted for each data collection method

Data collection method	Approach and method
Database mining and document review (268 documents reviewed in total)	
Database mining	Review of available databases to analyse country- and regional-level trends in terms of (a) changes in the number and proportion of CPs, (b) changes in the length of FLA agreements and (c) performance of CPs in terms of commodity distribution (metric tons distributed/received)
Document and literature review	CP-specific documentation such as FLAs, CP evaluations, and Improvement Plans: Total of 153 FLAs, 47 CP evaluations, and 4 capacity assessments were reviewed by the evaluation team Other documents reviewed include (64 documents reviewed): • Country-specific documentation such as CSPs and Interim CSPs (ICSPs), Annual Country Reports (ACRs) and PAPs • Regional and corporate-level documentation • Other partnership-related documents such as evaluations and research See Annex VIII Bibliography for the list of documents consulted
Interviews, a total of 86 stakeholders interviewed (37 women, 49 men)	
HQ and global level	3 individuals (2 women, 1 man) interviewed including: • Individuals at WFP HQ (i.e. NGO Partnership Unit) • Representatives of bilateral donors and other organizations
RBN	8 individuals (7 women, 1 man) interviewed: • Deputy Regional Director • Officers responsible for Partnerships; Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting; Emergency Programming; Gender • Officers representing thematic units that rely on cooperating partnerships with different NGOs
Tier 1 Country Offices (In-depth review): Kenya, Somalia and Burundi	56 individuals (22 women, 34 men) interviewed: • CO managers and staff (including Country Director, CP management team members or Focal Point, field-level staff involved in CP management, and staff from thematic units) • Representatives of different types of cooperating partners (5-6 organizations each country) • Government representatives • Representatives of UN agencies
Tier 2 Country Offices (Desk reviews 'plus'): Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda	19 individuals (7 women, 12 men) interviewed: • CP management team members or focal point at CO • Representatives of different types of cooperating partners (2 organizations for each country, comprised of 1 international NGO and 1 local NGO)
Online survey of CP representatives - 213 survey respondents (37 women, 157 men, 3 prefer not to say)	
All 9 countries	An online survey was sent to all international NGOs, local NGOs or CBOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies that partnered with WFP between 2016 and 2020 213 CP representatives responded to the survey out of the 420 individuals to whom the survey was sent (response rate of 50.7 per cent)

28.   Stakeholder interviews were conducted remotely (with individuals or, in some cases, pairs or small groups) using web-based platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. See Annex X for a list of the 86 stakeholders consulted (37 women and 49 men), as well as a breakdown according to stakeholder categories.

29.   The evaluation was able to draw upon complementary lines of evidence for all three evaluation questions. Given the nature of the evaluation subject and the availability of data, the evaluation team relied primarily on qualitative information. See discussion of limitations below.

30.   The evaluation was guided by principles of gender equality and equity in alignment with the Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) Technical Note on Gender and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines. Gender equality and equity-related questions and indicators were included in the evaluation matrix and in data collection tools.

31.   The evaluation team systematically applied WFP's EQAS quality criteria, templates and checklists, which was developed based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) and the DAC. It also used the services of a Quality Assurance Reviewer who was not involved in data collection or analysis but focused on providing autonomous quality assurance. Ms. Anette Wenderoth assumed the function of an External Quality Assurance Reviewer. She did not contribute to data collection, analysis or report writing, but focused exclusively on independent quality assurance of key evaluation deliverables and directly advised and reported to the evaluation team leader. Ms. Wenderoth provided quality assurance on the Inception Report, as well as this draft Evaluation Report.

Limitations

32.   Overall, the evaluation's methodological approach did not change from what was set out in the Inception Report. COVID-19 did not affect the evaluation's methodology and there was no need to adjust data collection methods in response to COVID-19. The main limitations of the evaluation and related mitigation strategies are noted below:

- Due to evolving contexts in countries, certain stakeholders were less able to participate in the evaluation, or were delayed in their participation. In Sudan, no CP-specific documents such as FLAs or performance evaluations were gathered from the CO and no interviews were conducted, but 28 CP representatives participated in the online survey and are considered in the overall analysis. The evaluation's findings do not include any country-specific insights about Sudan. In Ethiopia and South Sudan, CPs participated late in the data collection process and their COs were not able to provide the evaluation team with CP-specific documents. However, the evaluation was able to draw upon interview data and other country-specific documents (e.g., WFP CSPs and annual country reports).

- Consulted CO stakeholders noted likely discrepancies and shortcomings in Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool (COMET) data, which was the primary dataset used by the evaluation team to obtain data on numbers and duration of FLAs among COs. The reasons for this are likely rooted in: (i) an overall lack of digitization of entering FLA data into COMET (paper FLAs are scanned, and data is entered manually by field offices); and (ii) counts of multi-year FLAs as single-year or less FLAs in cases where an FLA period goes across more than one CSP period. The evaluation team aimed to mitigate this through the use of complementary sources of data: (i) dataset from WINGS database and DOTS platform to inform data points on number of CPs and by type; (ii) data on FLAs gleaned from the evaluation's review of a sample of FLAs (see point below); and (iii) survey data which prompted CPs for their recollections of the length of their longest FLA, as well as their most recent FLA.

- CP-specific documents such FLAs, CP evaluations, and capacity assessments are not centrally stored at the RBN, but instead found at COs; the extent to which COs provided such documents to the evaluation varied across countries: some COs were not able to provide such documents (e.g., Ethiopia and South Sudan), and some COs were not able to provide all documents across all years of the 2016-2020 period. The evaluation team reviewed documents of the CPs selected for interviews, and prioritized requesting documents from more recent years in order to avoid putting an excessive burden on COs. Capacity assessments were not sent by all COs, and only Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda COs sent such documents to the evaluation team.

- There was insufficient data available for metrics relating to partnership performance and CP capacity, stemming from the lack of a logical framework or ToC for cooperating partnerships at the RBN. The extent to which CP Partnership Evaluation Reports provided information on partnership performance varied across countries. FLAs, Partnership Action Plans (PAPs), and evaluations that covered countries in the Eastern Africa region did not provide substantial information on any changes in the performance or

capacity of CPs. To mitigate this, the evaluation drew upon primary data collected through stakeholder consultations and survey questions on WFP contributions to CP performance and capacity. RBN provided information on changes in CP performance over the course of the evaluation period for a sample of CPs (those selected for interviews).

- Inconsistent use of terminology referring to organizations with GEWE in their mandate across data sources. The evaluation employs the terms "women-led organizations," "women's organizations" and "GEWE-mandated organizations" in its data collection tools and the evaluation report. The evaluation also refers to women's rights organizations, a term which has been clearly defined by the OECD.[29] This classification is not available in the WINGS database or on the DOTS platform, and lists of women-led organizations were provided by COs during the inception phase. The evaluation counted organization's with the words, "women," "woman," and "femme" in their organization names, as a proxy measure for women's organizations. It is likely that this still misses some women's rights or GEWE-mandated organizations included in the datasets.

33.   Despite mitigation measures undertaken for the limitations listed above, there was still the residual risk that data/information was not fully accurate. E.g. mitigation measures for shortcomings in COMET data are likely to provide proxies on numbers and duration of FLAs at COs, though they are unlikely to be fully accurate.

Ethical Considerations

34.   WFP decentralized evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms. The contractors undertaking the evaluations are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities. Team members ensured that interactions with stakeholders were appropriate to the socio-cultural contexts and in relation to gender and other social roles of the respondents. Confidentiality of stakeholder contributions was ensured by avoiding direct attribution of views to specific individuals. There was no indication that power imbalances among consulted stakeholders affected stakeholder responses to the evaluation questions.

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[29] Defined as: "organizations with an overt women's or girls' rights, gender equality or feminist purpose, women's rights organizations play a central role in spearheading change in support of gender equality" (OECD, Donor support to southern women's rights organizations, November 2016).

2. Evaluation Findings

Introduction

35.   This section presents the evaluation's findings and is organized by the main evaluation questions. The findings draw upon evidence from database mining, document review, interviews and the survey of CP representatives. Overall, the evidence base deriving from available data allowed for adequate triangulation of data sources. Where this was not the case, the report indicates this. Unless otherwise noted, there was no variation in feedback from stakeholder groups on the basis of gender of individuals consulted either through interviews or the online survey. When referencing interview data within findings, the evaluation refers to interviewees according to their stakeholder category (e.g. CP representatives, CO staff, RBN staff), where possible. If there were differences in perspectives among and within these categories, these have been reported.

2.1. EQ1: How relevant are WFP partners and partnership management practices in countries supported by RBN?

> **Summary of evaluation findings for EQ 1**
>
> The shifts in partnership management practices have largely responded to corporate directions to streamline and standardize CP management processes. WFP CP management practices and standards in the region have been aligned with principles of 'good' partnership; they have fostered collaborations guided by joint goals and characterized by transparency, accountability, and communication. However, fewer efforts have focused on increasing strategic partnerships with CPs, capacity strengthening of CPs, and ensuring a greater focus on GEWE. Gender and protection accountabilities in partnership FLAs and other CP management tools represent a systematic effort to support gender-sensitive approaches to programming. Overall, the mix of WFP CPs in the region is aligned with country-level priorities outlined in Country Strategic Plans and responds to evolving country contexts but does not yet reflect an intentional approach to engage more with local NGOs or with women's organizations, women-led organizations or GEWE-mandated organizations. Although most COs have begun transitioning to multi-year FLAs, the continued use of short-term FLAs remains a practice that is not aligned with corporate directives or the needs of CPs, particularly local NGOs.

Shifts in partnership management practices and alignment with corporate priorities

Finding 1   Since 2016, WFP has introduced new corporate tools, templates and guidelines for CP management in support of streamlined and standardized CP management processes. Fewer efforts have focused on increasing strategic partnerships with CPs, capacity strengthening of CPs, and ensuring a focus on GEWE in CP management. (EQ1.1[30])

36.   COs in the region have focused on increased standardization and streamlining of cooperating partnership management; all COs have introduced standard operating procedures (SOPs) for FLA management, established Cooperating Partner Committees (CPCs), and committed to increased digitization and automation of due diligence processes by beginning their use of the UNPP.

37.   These changes have introduced or reinforced standards for partnership, focused on administrative procedures and organizational and financial capacities as illustrated below:

- **Standards for administrative procedures**: The Business Process for FLA management and the country office SOPs for FLA management outline standards for key procedures in the partnership management lifecycle, including CP selection (and the use of rosters), review of proposals, FLA negotiation and finalization, responsibilities for FLA management and CP capacity strengthening, and performance

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[30] EQ1.1: What shifts in (a) partnership management practices, (b) partner standards, and (c) types of partners have occurred in countries support by RBN over time?

evaluation of CPs. CO staff interviewed across Tier 1 and 2 COs were well aware of the Business Process for FLA management, which they noted as a change that has enhanced clarity on administrative procedures for CP management.

- **Standards on organizational and financial capacities of partners**: The NGO Guidance Manual sets forth minimum Core Corporate Standards for COs to vet prospective CPs before contracting and several of these are related to capacities of CPs: (i) the programmatic experience of an organization to implement activities; (ii) sufficient capacity in project and financial management in compliance with WFP's reporting requirements; and (iii) sufficient capacity to manage, store and distribute commodities (or cash in the case of cash-based transfer (CBT) interventions) to intended beneficiaries.[31] Capacity-oriented standards are also reflected in the Partner Performance Evaluation (PPE) tool and corporate-issued template for capacity assessments which contain indicators aimed at ascertaining an organization's performance and level of capacity in operational management, protection, gender, accountability to beneficiaries, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, monitoring & evaluation, risk management, financial reporting and logistics. The capacity assessment tool contains indicators related to the vision and strategy and the governance and organizational structure of a given organization.

38.   The uptake of other tools/approaches aimed at enhanced strategic partnerships with CPs (such as PAPs and multi-year FLAs) and increased focus on capacity strengthening of CPs varied among COs. Corporate tools and guidance related to GEWE in cooperating partnerships have had more limited traction among COs in the region and stakeholder consultations suggest that the visibility/awareness of tools that are not solely focused on ensuring consideration of gender within FLAs is low among CO staff. Table 2.1 below presents a mapping of various tools, templates and guidelines according to each element of the new partnership approach and the extent to which they have been taken up among COs in the region.

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[31] WFP. 2016. *NGO Partnership Guidance Manual*. P. 11.

Table 2.1 Observations on CP management at country level

Elements of WFP reforms to partnership approach	Tools, templates and guidelines issued at corporate level	Changes at country level in the Eastern Africa region
Enhanced and more strategic engagement of NGOs	Introduction of PAPs in 2016, and revision of PAP template in 2019 following a PAP lessons-learned exercise in 2018 Shift towards longer-term FLAs aligned with CSPs	**Varied extent to which tools/ guidelines for strategic engagement of CPs have been applied among COs** Four of the nine COs finalized PAPs[32] during the review period (Burundi and Kenya in 2018, and Rwanda and Ethiopia from 2019 onwards). PAPs were not introduced in Djibouti, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. Five COs have introduced FLAs of more than 12 months (Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda), although some are in early stages.[33] The remaining four COs have not begun the process of transitioning to longer-term FLAs. Available data suggests that there has not been a significant change in the duration of FLAs across the region over the course of the 2016-2020 period (see Finding 6), with the majority of FLAs covering periods of 12 months or less.
Development of standardized and streamlined business processes for cooperating partnership management	NGO Guidance Manual issued in 2017 Business Process for FLA management introduced in 2016 CPC ToR issued in 2013, including best practice templates/guidelines for CPC workflow and Notes for the Record (NFRs) Introduction of UNPP in 2019 (jointly by WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA)	**Almost all COs applied and used tools, templates, guidelines aimed at standardizing and streamlining CP management.** CO staff interviewed were aware of the NGO Guidance Manual and Business Process for FLA management, and used these guidelines in their CP management work. SOPs for FLA management have been introduced in all COs that the evaluation was able to consult.[34] CPCs have been established in Burundi (2017), Kenya (2021), Rwanda, Djibouti, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. Due to a lack of documentation, it was not clear if CPCs were established in Ethiopia. Six of the nine COs have begun to use the UNPP: South Sudan in 2019, Uganda and Somalia in 2020 and Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia in 2021. Rwanda is preparing to use the UNPP in late 2021. Djibouti has not begun to use UNPP. As the evaluation was not able to conduct interviews with stakeholders in Sudan, it is not clear if the UNPP has been used in the country.

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[32] PAPs are intended as tools to support COs' strategic engagement of partners through the introduction of an inclusive process in which COs outline WFP's unique value proposition in a country, as well as clear partnership engagement goals articulated in terms of prioritized actions to achieve targets. The process of formulating a PAP is intended to include: (i) partner mapping (through engaging with stakeholders, the CO maps current and potential partners relevant to its CSP, across several categories such as country government, donors, private sector and civil society, NGOs, academia and research institutions); (ii) drafting and finalizing the PAP; and (iii) use of the PAP as an active plan that is updated and reviewed over the course of implementation of the CSP. (Source: WFP. 2019. Partnership Action Plans – Guidance Note.)

[33] COs try to align FLAs with the ICSP/CSP period and/or with project funding. Emergency FLAs, which are shorter by nature, represent the largest proportion of FLAs.

[34] As noted in Section 2, the evaluation was not able to interview CO staff for Sudan.

Elements of WFP reforms to partnership approach	Tools, templates and guidelines issued at corporate level	Changes at country level in the Eastern Africa region
Increased focus on capacity strengthening of cooperating partners	NGO Guidance Manual issued in 2017 compiles templates for CP capacity assessments, PPE, NGO Evaluation of WFP performance and Improvement Plans WFP Guidance on Capacity Strengthening of Civil Society, issued in 2017	**Templates for capacity assessments and PPEs have been applied in almost all COs; templates/approaches for improvement plans have not been used consistently across countries in the region.** Templates for capacity assessments and PPEs were utilized in all COs except Djibouti. Furthermore, Kenya and Uganda began developing CP evaluation reports from 2018 containing findings and recommendations for both WFP and the CP. The practice of developing Improvement Plans varies across countries and the regularity with which COs develop improvement plans is not clear. Some COs noted that corrective measures implemented as a result of regular monitoring visits make formal Improvement Plans less important. Kenya CO staff especially noted the development of an Improvement Plan for one of its local NGO CPs as a key practice introduced by the CO aimed at strengthening the CP's ability to deliver on planned interventions. RBN and CO staff interviewed did not mention WFP's Guidance on Capacity Strengthening of Civil Society when reflecting on improvements made to CP management practices and processes. The Somalia CO adopted an NGO Capacity Strengthening Strategy in 2021.
Increased prioritization of women's and GEWE-mandated organizations and focus on GEWE minimum capacity standards for all partnerships	Annex 6 on Gender, Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations added to FLA template in 2017 NGO Partnership Manual's benchmarks for FLAs35 Partnership-related tools included in WFP's Gender toolkit36	**Application of tools and guidelines related to GEWE has not been consistent.** While all CO staff were aware of Annex 6 and noted that all FLAs have included Annex 6 since 2017, the evaluation's review of a sample of FLAs found that only 46.1% of FLAs included Annex 6.[37] The proportion of these FLAs that included specific budget lines for GEWE interventions or gender capacity strengthening was low.[38] Fewer additional changes were noted as a result of the WFP Gender toolkit introduced in 2015. In addition to using HQ-issued tools and guidelines, the Kenya CO is developing a Gender Protection and Disability Framework for CP evaluations.

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[35] These were to include: (i) gender equality clauses to address minimum standards, activities, and performance indicators; and (ii) specific budget lines for GEWE interventions and gender capacity strengthening.

[36] Under 'Programming' sub-category of tools: 6A, Gender & Partnerships – Quick Guide; 6B, Gender & Partnerships Guidance; 6C, Cooperating Partner Assessment form.

[37] This figure does not count FLAs that were extensions or addenda to previous FLAs between WFP and the CP, which generally did not include any Annexes.

[38] Only 15% of FLAs reviewed contained a budget line for GEWE interventions or gender capacity, and the proportion of FLAs that actually included a budget allocation in that budget line was even lower (3.9%).

Finding 2   Partnership management practices in the region are aligned with certain partnership principles in that the partnerships are driven by shared goals, transparency, accountability and clear communication between WFP and its CPs. (EQ1.2 and 1.3)[39]

39.   Through a range of corporate guidance such as the Corporate Partnership Strategy, NGO Guidance Manual, Guidance on Capacity Strengthening of Civil Society, Gender Policy, and the Partnership-related tools included in WFP's Gender toolkit, WFP has emphasized features or principles of 'good' partnerships. These have not been further defined/prioritized/refined at the regional or country level. This evaluation, therefore analyses partnership management in the Eastern Africa region from the perspective of the principles articulated in in the WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017) and findings from the literature reviewed as part of the 2017 Evaluation of the Corporate Partnership Strategy.[40] The data illustrates that WFP CP management practices and standards in the region have been aligned with principles of 'good' partnerships in that the collaborations they have fostered are guided by the establishment of joint goals and characterized by transparency, accountability, and communication. Partnership management was less consistently aligned with principles of internal capacity strengthening and strategically directed attention to gender equality, which varied across countries and phases of the partnership management lifecycle. Table 2.2 presents the evaluation's assessments and observations of the alignment of partnership management practices and processes in the region with these principles.

Table 2.2 Alignment of partnership management practices and standards in the region with principles of 'good' partnerships[41]

Principle	Brief description of principle in practice	Assessment	Observations/Comments
Guided by joint goals	Partnerships should be driven by agreed upon goals that are compatible with available resources from all parties, and that complement each other's comparative advantages		FLAs outline objectives that are agreed upon by both WFP and CPs, and 87.3% of CP survey respondents indicated that their FLA objectives were jointly discussed and established by their own organizations and WFP. In interviews and responses to open-ended survey questions, CPs noted good working relationships with WFP CO staff, characterized by consultative, collaborative approaches to finding solutions.
Transparency, accountability, and communication	Partnerships should be characterized by mutual respect and trust, in which there are clear procedures for dialogue and information exchange, and there is demonstrated consistency in adhering to these procedures		Partnership management reflects a set of standardized procedures for CP management. CPs interviewed and surveyed refer to WFP as a transparent organization in its partnership management practices, particularly noting WFP's emphasis on regular meetings and on procedures related to on-site monitoring and continuous reporting during the implementation of projects. The large majority of survey respondents noted that WFP is communicative across phases of the partnership lifecycle (selection, contracting, and

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[39] EQ1.2: To what extent are RBN's partnership management practices, and partner standards aligned with partnership good practices principles?

EQ1.3: To what extent are CO partnership management practices, and partner standards, relevant to: (i) the needs of partner organizations (ii) the needs of affected populations?

[40] WFP. 2014. *Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)* and WFP. 2017. *Evaluation of Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)*. See especially p.22 of the evaluation, where 'good' partnership principles include partnerships that are driven by agreed upon goals, characterized by transparency, accountability, and communication; encompassing internal capacity building of participating actors; and including explicit and strategically directed attention to gender equality.

[41] WFP. 2014. *Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)* and WFP. 2017. *Evaluation of Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)*.

Principle	Brief description of principle in practice	Assessment	Observations/Comments
			implementation).[42] Regular and open lines of communication were the most commonly mentioned strength of WFP in the survey (60 respondents).[43] However, the timeliness of communication was raised as a weakness by CP representatives and respondents to open-ended survey questions (24 respondents).[44] A key change across all COs has been the establishment of CPCs during the 2016-2020 period. Standards for transparency are set forth in the ToR for CPCs which outline the composition of CPCs and procedures for CPC meetings tasked with decision-making on CP selection. CPCs are intended to be an oversight mechanism to support informed, consensus-based CO decisions on the signing of FLAs. The CPC ToR include a template for developing Notes for the Record and include stipulations on systematic storage and archiving of CPC documentation for the purpose of transparency and accountability.
Encompassing internal capacity strengthening of participating actors	Local capacity is a key asset for partnerships, and strengthening this capacity through continuous learning should be an integral part of emergency response, where possible		Changes to WFP's partnership management practices have not had a deliberate (or intentional) focus on internal capacity strengthening of CPs, particularly local NGOs. Apart from the WFP guidance on capacity strengthening of civil society, tools introduced at corporate-level do not provide practical guidelines for COs in CP capacity strengthening.[45] The NGO Guidance Manual notes that capacity assessment of CPs is intended as a risk management process, particularly in informing partner scoping and selection, as well as to inform the development of partner improvement plans.[46] While capacity assessments are intended to identify areas of improvement for CPs, this is not the primary focus of capacity assessments conducted by COs in the region which are more focused on risk assessment and mitigation. See Finding 13 for further discussion on CO emphasis on capacity strengthening of CPs. Most tools and templates introduced since 2016 did not especially set forth standards for

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[42] In survey responses, 89.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that WFP was communicative during the CP selection process; 90.2% agreed or strongly agreed that WFP was communicative in FLA negotiations, and 92.3% agreed or strongly agreed that WFP maintained regular communication with their organization throughout implementation of FLA.

[43] In response to the open-ended question: "What are 1-3 strengths of how WFP has managed its cooperating partnerships?"

[44] In response to the open-ended question: "What are 1-3 weaknesses of how WFP has managed its cooperating partnerships?"

[45] Other tools or guidelines for CP capacity strengthening were the Improvement Plan template, which maps areas of CP improvement against 'corrective actions,' and emphasis contained within the NGO Guidance Manual (p. 31) on the potential benefits of umbrella-style arrangements for international NGOs to provide capacity strengthening to smaller, local NGOs.

[46] WFP, NGO Guidance Manual, p. 14-15.

Principle	Brief description of principle in practice	Assessment	Observations/Comments
			capacity strengthening.[47] One exception is the country office SOP for FLA management, which notes that heads of units in COs are responsible for ensuring CPs have the necessary capacity to implement projects, and that initial training following the signing of an FLA should be organized for CP staff. Spot checks and oversight missions are included in the SOPs as activities aimed at capacity strengthening, through identifying and addressing capacity gaps that should be conducted at least once a year for all CPs.[48]
Including explicit and strategically directed attention to gender equality	Partnership goals explicitly acknowledge and aim to close gender gaps and promote GEWE. Partnerships should also be guided by the principle of equity, which entails mutual respect regardless of the size and power of participating actors.		As noted in Finding 3, several corporate tools, templates and guidelines have been introduced with the aim of ensuring partnerships include a more explicit focus on gender equality. These have enabled greater engagement with CPs on certain aspects (such as gender parity). See Finding 13 for further discussion.

Legend for colour shading: Green = the principle was consistently reflected across reviewed countries and the four phases of the partnership management lifecycle (selection, contracting, implementation and performance management); Yellow = the principle was reflected, but with variation among countries, and/or between phases of the partnership management lifecycle

Finding 3   WFP introduced gender and protection accountabilities in partnership field level agreements and other CP management tools. On the whole, these provisions represent a systematic effort to support gender-sensitive approaches in programming. (EQ 1.4[49])

40.   WFP's Gender Policy (2015-2020), the Gender Toolkit, and the NGO Partnership Guidance Manual provide tools and guidelines aimed at enhancing COs' ability to incorporate GEWE in their partnership management practices and processes and bring greater attention to GEWE in the work of cooperating partners. This includes the adoption of Annex 6 in FLAs, and standards/requirements for gender capacity as part of overall CP assessment (gender policy and experience of the organization in conducting gender analysis or gender-specific programming) and sufficient awareness among beneficiaries of the organization's Complaints Feedback Mechanisms (CFM).

41.   CO staff interviewed in both Tier 1 and 2 countries noted the inclusion of Annex 6, which ensures formal commitment to Gender Equality, Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) by the CP and WFP, as the principal manner in which GEWE is systematically considered in FLAs. However, in the evaluation team's review of FLAs, a large proportion did not include Annex 6.[50] Other sections of the FLA have additional requirements, such as Annex 1A on Special Conditions for Food Distribution and Related Activities, on the need for sex- and age- disaggregated data and Section 9 on prevention of sexual exploitation and

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[47] The capacity assessment tool is not focused on capacity strengthening per se, though it could be used to this end, in terms of providing information on capacity strengthening needs of the CP. The PPE tool includes one indicator related to capacity strengthening, aimed at ascertaining the extent to which CPs participated in WFP training ("NGO participated in WFP organized trainings/capacity development activities to strengthen required technical skills").

[48] WFP. *Country Office Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Field Level Agreements (FLAs) Management*.

[49] EQ1.4: To what extent are WFP partners in countries supported by RBN relevant to: (i) WFP's corporate partnership priorities; (ii) CSP objectives?

[50] More specifically, 46.1% of FLAs that were the full, initial FLAs, and not the amendments/extensions. FLA extensions/amendments generally did not include Annex 6, and this may reflect challenges of digitization/data management, rather than omission of the Annex.

abuse (PSEA).[51] As a whole, the FLAs, including Annex 6, provide little project-specific gender-related guidance or measures that are relevant to the different organizational needs of the CP, or the gender-differentiated needs of intended beneficiaries.

42.   WFP's integration of GEWE is most visibly operationalized through requirements about gender parity in the partner organizations (staffing) and in the implementation of programme activities (among beneficiaries). This is typically seen through: (i) CP selection criteria for gender-balanced representation among an organization's leadership and management, expressed as a percentage requirement; and (ii) FLA provisions on gender equality and assessment criteria in the PPE tool for gender-balanced representation in food management committees. This was also evident in feedback provided by partners, who stressed the importance of gender parity at all levels. A review of the requirements in FLAs, CP Evaluations, and capacity assessments (Annex XI) illustrates that most of the CP management tools include elements that support gender-sensitive programming. The more specific requirements are focused on "including women and men" rather than aspects of transformative change such as increasing women's participation in decision making and resource management or ensuring leadership. Nonetheless, while the FLA explicitly commits WFP and CP to ensuring that there is sufficient understanding and competency in gender-transformative programming in all WFP projects, it does not provide any further indication of what this means for the project and include budget resources to help meet that requirement (see Finding 13).[52]

43.   The myriad of tools that have been issued may not be fully integrated. For example, the Gender Toolkit comprises a CP capacity assessment tool as part of its guidance on gender and partnerships, but this does not appear to be integrated with the NGO capacity assessment tool that has been used by some COs in the region.[53] Furthermore, different weights are given to gender equality, protection and AAP (20 per cent) in the capacity assessment tool used before deciding to partner with an organization and 10 per cent in the Partnership Performance Evaluation, used primarily to inform renewal of the partnership agreement.

Partner relevance to WFP's priorities

Finding 4   Cooperating partnerships in COs in the region have been aligned with country-level priorities outlined in CSPs and respond to evolving country contexts. (EQ 1.4)

44.   Overall, the composition of WFP's partners in the region has been aligned with country-level priorities outlined in CSPs. Based on the in-depth reviews of the three Tier 1 countries, these priorities varied from country to country in the 2016-2020 period.

- **In Kenya, there has been a shift away from partnering with NGOs since 2018.** WFP has made strategic shifts in its engagement in Kenya due to the country's designation as a lower middle-income country in 2015, increased central government capacity, and devolution of responsibilities to regional and county governments. Kenya's CSP (2018-2023) outlines a shift in emphasis from service delivery to strengthening capacities of national actors and systems (particularly for strengthening food systems, the institutional capacity of government and providing unrestricted cash transfers for refugees) and a decreased emphasis on direct provision of relief assistance. The Kenya CO has increased partnering with county governments and reduced partnering with NGOs, largely intending to engage with a limited number of CPs for activities related to refugee operations (Strategic Outcome 1 of CSP).

- **In Burundi, CPs remained key for WFP's engagement across a diverse portfolio of activities.** Food insecurity and chronic malnutrition are acute in Burundi, and the country's Interim CSP (ICSP) (2018-2020) focused on providing food and cash assistance to persons affected by protracted emergencies,[54]

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[51] Although all FLAs reviewed were issued after 2015, some still referred to the 2009 Gender Policy (in Section 2.1 C)

[52] FLAs explicitly mention the commitment of WFP and CP to gender-transformative approaches in Section 2.1C (where the Gender Policy is noted as aiming towards gender-transformative approaches) and within Annex 6 (where employees are committed to having an understanding and competency in implementing gender-transformative programmes and projects).

[53] The evaluation team was not able to collect and review capacity assessments from all COs; only Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda COs provided capacity assessments to the evaluation team. This observation was triangulated with other sources.

[54] Burundi is faced with three ongoing situations: (i) influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo which has been ongoing since the 2000s; (ii) repatriation of Burundi refugees from neighbouring countries since 2017, following

expanding home-grown school feeding, providing specialized nutrition foods and smallholder support, particularly in post-harvest management. Burundi's ICSP underlined the importance of the CO's partnerships with NGOs; the number of CPs, though relatively small, did not fluctuate over the period, and the partners were involved in implementing activities across all strategic outcomes of the ICSP.

- **In Somalia, NGO partners remain crucial for WFP's response to protracted humanitarian crises in the country.** Somalia is faced with persistent crises driven by political instability, conflict, climate-induced disasters, and continued fragility of government institutions. WFP engaged cross six strategic outcomes in the country's ICSP (2019-2021) aimed at emergency response, safety nets for building resilience, malnutrition prevention and treatment, rehabilitation of food systems infrastructure, and capacity building of national institutions. NGO partners remain crucial in the implementation of WFP operations across all six strategic outcomes, and the ICSP notes the large number of NGOs that WFP partners with, and the need for the CO's continued close engagement with its CPs.[55]

Finding 5   The mix of WFP CPs is aligned with the needs of different programmes and operational contexts but does not yet reflect an intentional approach to engage more with local NGOs (aligned with WFP commitments to the localization agenda of the Grand Bargain) or with women's organizations, women-led organizations or GEWE-mandated organizations. (EQ1.1 and 1.4)

45.   Overall, CO staff consultations across Tier 1 and 2 countries indicate that WFP's partners have been aligned with the programmatic and operational needs of their country contexts. Such needs were expressed in ongoing shifts in national development priorities and accompanying strategic shifts in WFP engagement in the country (as discussed in Finding 4), as well as in responding to emergency situations. COs in the region increased emphasis on CBTs and remote methods of monitoring CBTs in the context of COVID-19. COs engaged in practices to ensure that CP selection was aligned with required technical expertise and staffing to fulfil requirements for CBT interventions, and with existing capacity of CPs to deliver such interventions.

46.   The mix of local and international NGOs did not change significantly over the 2016-2020 period (see Annex XII for breakdown of CP types across countries). As shown in Figure 2.1,[56] throughout the period and across all nine countries covered by this evaluation, WFP partnered with a higher proportion of local NGOs than international NGOs. However, there is variation among COs, with more local NGOs than INGOs in Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan; an approximate 50-50 split between local and INGOs in Burundi and South Sudan; and more international than local NGOs in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. The mix of organizations is driven primarily by context and operating requirements (see text box). In Uganda, although only 3 of the 16 CPs are local NGOs, since 2020 there has been an intentional effort to require Lead Partners (INGOs) to engage with a local organization as part of the refugee response.

Figure 2.1 Proportion of CPs by type (INGO and local NGO)

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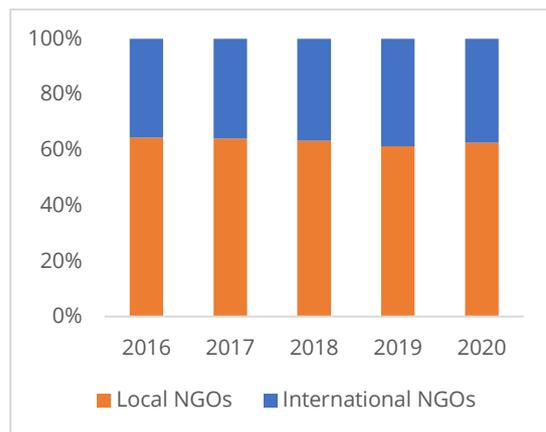
political crisis in 2015; and (iii) vulnerability to extreme climate shocks such as droughts, landslides, flooding, which in turn results in internal displacement of populations.

[55] WFP. *Somalia Interim Country Strategic Plan (2019-2021)*, p. 24.

[56] Source: a dataset on purchase orders provided by RBN, drawing from DOTS and WINGS database.

Country contexts where local NGOs outnumber international NGOs as CPs of WFP COs

In Djibouti and Somalia, where local NGOs outnumber international NGOs, the lean towards partnering with more local NGOs reflects the social-cultural context and partnership landscape in the country, rather than an intentional approach towards localization.

In Djibouti, the number of active NGOs is very low in general, and interviewees noted that INGOs left the country in recent years due to political reasons. During the period reviewed, the Djibouti CO partnered with only two INGOs in 2017. In Somalia, the large number of local NGOs that the CO has partnered with is a reflection of the clan-based structure of Somalia's community and society, in which a myriad of local NGOs are required to access specific districts or regions.

In Kenya, the number of international NGOs that the CO partnered with decreased from 12 in 2018 to 3 in 2020, while the number of local NGOs that the CO partnered with remained the same (11 in 2018-2020). The key shift in partnership engagement has been the CO's decreased emphasis on partnering with NGOs overall, and an increased emphasis on county-level government and the private sector as per its CSP (see Finding 4).

47. While WFP partnered with more local NGOs than international NGOs throughout the 2016-2020 period, more funds were channelled from WFP to international NGOs than local NGOs, as shown in Figure 2.2.[57] Nevertheless, these figures confirm that WFP's engagement with CPs in the Eastern Africa region is in line with its Grand Bargain commitment to allocate 25 per cent of funds to local and national actors.[58] However, RBN and CO staff indicated that there has not been an intentional effort among COs in the region to increasingly contract or allocate funds to local NGOs; therefore, any changes in the funds channelled to local NGOs during the review period cannot be linked to a deliberate strategy.

48. The WFP Gender Toolkit and more recent corporate discussions leading to the new Gender Policy 2022-2026 stressed the importance of partnerships with women's organizations, women-led organizations, and organizations advancing gender equality. RBN data on WFP partners in the region do not allow for classification by such organizational types.

Figure 2.2 Proportion of net purchase orders by CP type (int'l and local)

49. Based on CO self-reported data and the evaluation's review of COMET data, very few CPs in the region can be classified as women-led organizations or women's organizations, and this has not changed during the period. Some countries, such as Somalia, have a larger number of women's organizations as CPs, but also have a larger proportion of national NGOs as partners in general. The absence of greater numbers of women's organizations or women-led organizations stems from a number of factors including the NGO landscape in each country, the number of women's organizations and whether or not they focus on WFP programming areas, the lack of guidance given to COs (indicating if they are supposed to prioritize certain types of organizations in the selection process), unclear definitions about what constitutes a women-led organization, and the fact that existing data systems have not been set up to capture such information. The UNPP will soon add a tag to help identify women-led organizations.

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[57] Source: dataset on purchase orders provided by RBN, drawing from WINGS database

[58] In 2020, WFP was one of the 13 out of 53 Grand Bargain signatories to have met or exceeded the target for allocating 25 per cent of funds as directly as possible to local and national actors. Other organizations included, Action Aid, Christian Aid, the International Federation of the Red Cross, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA among others (Source: Humanitarian Policy Group, The Grand Bargain at five years: An independent review, June 2021).

50.   On the other hand, in almost all countries in the region, interviews with CO staff and CPs point to the existence of long-time partners (mostly INGOs) who have strong track records in mainstreaming GEWE in different programming areas, and most CPs who responded to the survey self-identify as "organizations that have GEWE integrated into their mandate." WFP's limitations in this area are also evident throughout the humanitarian system. The systemic paucity of resources for women's organizations flowing through the humanitarian system was noted in the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) report,[59] and as such it is likely that WFP is not the only organization faced with this challenge.

Finding 6   Although most COs have begun transitioning to multi-year field level agreements, the continued use of short-term FLAs among COs in the region remains a practice that is not aligned with corporate directives or the needs of its CPs, particularly local NGOs. (EQ1.1. and 1.3)

51.   WFP global and regional NGO consultations raised the importance of having longer-term, predictable funding as an important part of the partnership between WFP and NGOs.[60] Interviewed staff from five COs noted their efforts to move towards multi-year FLAs that are aligned with the periods covered by their respective CSPs (Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda); these efforts largely began in 2018. At the remaining four COs (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan) the prevailing practice is to engage in FLAs of 12 months or less, and FLAs are extended if a performance evaluation indicates the need for ongoing engagement, and/or if a project or an emergency response extend beyond the initial FLA period.

52.   As shown in Figure 2.3,[61] while the distribution of FLAs may have shifted towards increased numbers of 12-month FLAs, the proportion of FLAs that are 13 months or more remained low, as was the number of FLAs that were 19 months or more.[62] This data may not capture all of the longer-term FLAs due to the nature of COMET data, but after checking multiple sources (including FLAs provided by COs), it is clear that the transition to longer-term agreements is still in early stages (see Section 1.4).[63]

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[59] IAHE. 2020. *Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls*.

[60] Longer-term FLAs are "recommended wherever possible" in the WFP NGO Partnership Guidance Manual (p. 23). Furthermore, existing research notes that the imperative for longer-term FLAs is linked to the Grand Bargain's aims for institutional capacity strengthening of local actors, in that (i) strengthening CPs' capacity to manage larger amounts of funding is critical for localization; and (ii) doing so in itself requires more, and longer-term funding. (Source: Humanitarian Policy Group. 2021. *The Grand Bargain at five years: An independent review*")

[61] COMET dataset for FLAs finalized nine COs included in the evaluation's scope, for the period 2016-2020.

[62] Based on COMET data, only five FLAs across all countries in the region, and throughout the 2016-2020 period, were 19 months and longer. However, interviews and debriefs with Tier 1 COs suggest that there are more longer-term FLAs that are not captured in COMET because they go beyond the period of the current CSP, and as such are entered into COMET as separate data points, rather than as a single one.

[63] Among FLAs reviewed by the evaluation, 12 of the 153 FLAs reviewed were longer than 12 months; these were in Burundi (two FLAs for 16 months), Kenya (eight FLAs ranging from 15 to 45 months) and Uganda (two FLAs for 24 months and 36 months respectively).

Figure 2.3 Duration of FLAs by start year, all countries (2016-2020)
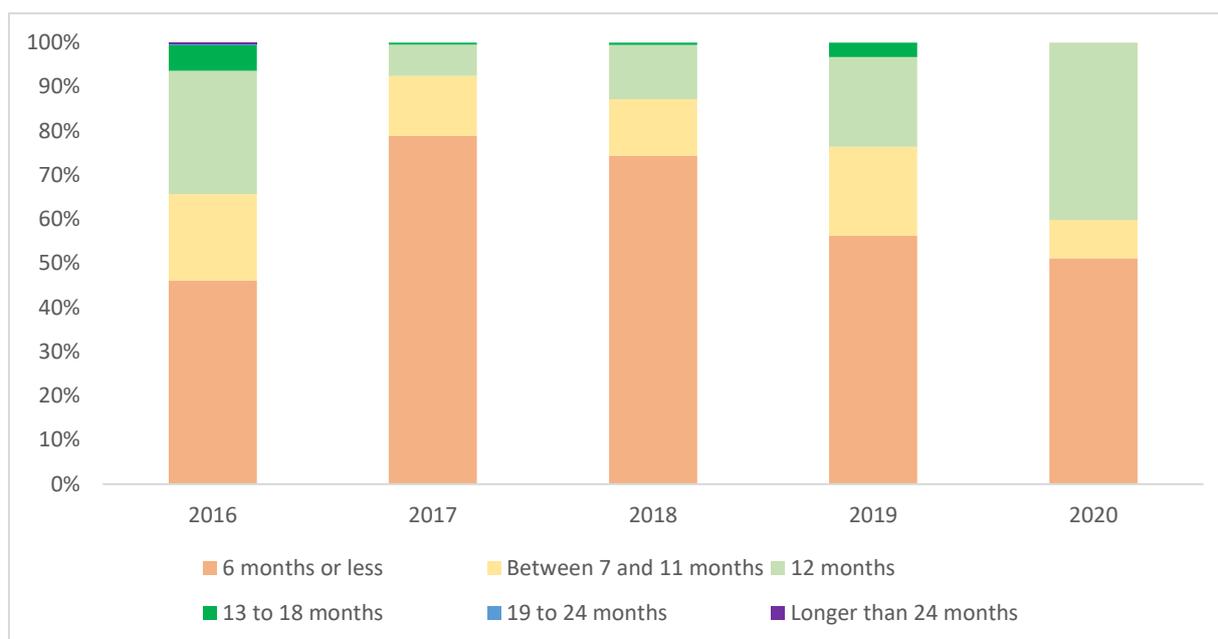
53.   The duration of FLAs is seen as a common point of weakness among CPs that have partnered with WFP. Almost all CP interviews noted the importance of longer-term agreements. While the majority of survey respondents indicated that the length of FLAs are relevant to the needs of their organization (68.4 percent), in open-ended responses the short duration of FLAs was highlighted as a significant weakness of WFP by 24 respondents,[64] and the need to shift to longer-term FLAs (between 2 and 5 years) was highlighted as an area of improvement for WFP in the future by 19 respondents. FLA duration may have a greater effect on local NGOs, as noted in CP interviews, because short-term agreements pose challenges in retaining staff and in budgeting for future additional staff positions that will be required to implement projects. International NGOs have more diverse sources of funding that can help bridge any gaps in funding between one FLA and another.

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[64] This was out of a total of 144 respondents that answered the question, "What are 1-3 weaknesses of how WFP has managed its cooperating partnerships?" The duration of FLAs was the third most recurrent response to this question.

2.2 EQ2: to what extent have (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance been strengthened?

Improvement or deterioration in CO partnership management practices

> **Summary of evaluation findings for EQ2**
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> WFP's practices in CP selection have improved since 2016 and are seen as transparent, timely, and communicative and focused on selecting organizations based on criteria to ensure quality of delivery of interventions. The introduction of the UNPP enhanced the clarity and efficiency of WFP's CP selection process. In other stages of the partnership management cycle, there have not yet been clear signs of improvements across all COs. Many WFP COs have partnered with the same CPs over a long period and have placed less emphasis on scoping prospective partners. CPs in the region have mixed views on WFP's contracting processes. Although there is good communication during the negotiation process, efficiency has not improved, as seen in the continued prevalence of short-term FLAs and FLAs that fund specific project components. COs have increased regular monitoring and feedback processes and have documented CP performance through the PPE tool and CP evaluation reports, but the frequency with which WFP shares feedback on CP performance varies across COs. Common challenges for CPs during project implementation include delays in financial processes, disbursement of payments and delivery of commodities.
>
> CO efforts to strengthen CP management resulted in more standardized processes for CP selection, implementation and performance management, with less evidence of enhanced strategic engagement with CPs. Capacity strengthening activities were largely focused on strengthening CPs' immediate programmatic and operational capacity. WFP's contributions to capacity strengthening are not well documented and there is insufficient data to determine if there have been significant improvements in the capacity or performance of CPs. Where introduced, Partnership Action Plans (PAPs) have not provided strategic guidance for engaging in cooperating partnerships and have not been regularly updated to orient CP management. There was no evidence that the shifts in CP management practices led to any unintended results on gender, equity and human rights.

Finding 7   WFP's practices in CP selection have improved since 2016, and are seen as transparent, timely, and communicative and focused on selecting organizations based on criteria to ensure quality of delivery of planned interventions. The recent introduction of the UN Partner Portal enhanced the clarity and efficiency of WFP's CP selection process. (EQ 2.1 and 2.2)[65]

54.   Overall, data suggest that WFP's practices in selecting CPs are timely, based on transparent processes, and focused on selecting potential partners based on criteria and considerations for quality of delivery of operations. A large majority of CP representatives that responded to the survey indicated that WFP's process of CP selection is completed in a timely manner, based on clear criteria for selection, and that WFP is communicative during the process.[66]

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[65] EQ2.1: To what extent have CO partnership management practices improved or deteriorated over time?

EQ2.2: What are the key results of the changes in management practices that have been introduced? In particular, in terms of: Increased use of automated and strategic processes throughout partner management, including effective use of the UN Partner Portal and Partnership Action Plans (PAPs); More partners that are women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, or with good GEWE capacities; Improved efficiency through the use of fit-for-purpose contracting modalities (short-term vs. multi-year FLAs); Improved CO ability to review partner performance and provide guidance for improvements; Increased CO emphasis on developing organizational and financial capacities of partners.

[66] Among CP representatives that responded to the survey, 89.7% agreed or strongly agreed that WFP's process of selecting their organization was done in a timely manner; 89.6% saw WFP as communicative during the selection process; 90.8% agreed/strongly agreed that WFP's criteria for CP selection was clear; and 97.1% believed that their organization was selected by WFP for an FLA because it met criteria and/or eligibility requirements.

55.   The introduction of institutionalized processes for partner selection at COs has been a key area of improvement. Interview data indicate that in both Tier 1 and 2 COs, WFP places a strong emphasis on ascertaining the capacity of potential partners to implement projects. The establishment of CPCs has been a key mechanism that has standardized approach to selection; they draw on a breadth of technical expertise because they involve CO strategic outcomes teams as well as support teams in the process to ensure accountability and inclusion of several sets of expertise in the process.

> **The UN Partner Portal**
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> The UNPP aims to simplify partnership processes between civil society and participating UN agencies through providing a one-stop website where prospective CPs can be informed of partnership opportunities, access information resources for due diligence processes, and access learning courses on partnerships. The portal allows for the digitization of due diligence processes such as CP submission of proposals and CO review of proposals, and the sharing of decisions on CP selection. A key objective of the UNPP is increased harmonization of such processes across UN agencies.

56.   As noted in Finding 1, the UNPP was being used in all COs at the time of writing, with the exception of Rwanda (whose CO is planning to launch its first call for proposals via the portal in late 2021) and Djibouti.[67] The launch of the UNPP is recent in all COs (the earliest launch was in South Sudan in 2019; other COs launched the portal in 2020 and 2021). The extent to which COs use all features of the UNPP varies, and this may largely be due to the ongoing roll-out of its use in several COs.[68] While it is too early to tell if the UNPP has led to observable improvements in WFP's CP selection processes, available interview and survey data suggest that:

- **Awareness and use of the UNPP is high among CPs**: Almost all CPs interviewed in Tier 1 and 2 countries where the portal has been launched have used it. A large proportion of survey respondents (from both local and international NGOs) have used the UNPP before (84.2 per cent) and 80.8 per cent have used the portal as the principal way to be informed of partnership opportunities with WFP.

- The UNPP is seen by COs as beginning to improve the efficiency of selection processes for COs and CPs through its digitization and automation of due diligence processes. The portal is a 'one-stop shop' for CPs for materials related to a selection application; the centralized storage of information on the portal reduces the need for COs to correspond internally and with CPs through emails or in-person on matters related to the submission of documents as part of CP selection application. The majority of CP representatives surveyed indicated that the UNPP made submitting proposals or concept notes for WFP partnership opportunities easier (76.6 per cent) and made WFP's selection of CPs more timely (69.1 per cent).

- **Consulted CPs see the UNPP as enhancing the transparency and clarity of WFP's selection processes:** The UNPP is seen to enhance the clarity of various aspects of the partner selection process among CPs in the region. CPs interviewed noted the increased clarity on criteria for CP selection presented on the portal, as well as the benefits of the introduction of question and answer processes via the portal, which provides a formal, transparent process through which CPs can gain insights to inform the preparation of proposals. The majority of CP survey respondents indicated that the UNPP allows for the provision of clear explanations for decisions made on CP selection by WFP (69.2 per cent), and that it made WFP's partner selection more transparent (76.1 per cent)

- **The UNPP increases access to a wider range of information for both COs and CPs:** For CO staff, an emerging benefit of the portal is that it increases their awareness of NGOs in a given country, as it allows COs to view partners of other UN agencies in the country. It allows UN agencies to upload capacity assessments of prospective CPs. The evaluation was unable to confirm the extent to which all the participating agencies are doing this; WFP COs are not yet sharing these on the portal. In countries where other UN agencies have begun uploading their capacity assessments of prospective CPs (e.g., Ethiopia), the UNPP contributes to CO vetting of CPs by providing baseline information on prospective CPs and is beginning to facilitate harmonization of partnership selection processes across the UN agencies involved.

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[67] Neither documents nor interviews indicated that there are plans for the UNPP to be launched in Djibouti.

[68] Some COs may use the UNPP only to announce the call for proposals, while the submission of proposals and proposal review processes remain completely offline, and done manually.

57.   Interviewed stakeholders underlined the need for the roll-out of the UNPP to be accompanied by training and ongoing technical support for CPs to ensure utilization of the portal. Several CO staff indicated that training on the use of the UNPP was an important activity undertaken by their CO in its roll-out. Some CP representatives interviewed noted that the use of the UNPP may come more naturally to organizations that are used to working with online portals; other organizations, especially those that face connectivity issues, may be less used to such an approach, and require ongoing support from UN agencies. A few CPs noted that the UNPP on-line Q&A limits the possibility for discussion to clarify issues prior to submission of the proposal; they underlined the importance of having an established line of communication between WFP and their organization, and felt that the UNPP should not completely replace this. The importance of training and orientation of CPs on the use of UNPP, and recognition that level of connectivity affects CPs' ability to use the portal, were also noted in a study conducted by the South Sudan CO.[69]

58.   Because UNPP has put some aspects of the partnership lifecycle online, especially in relation to CP selection, some CPs interviewed mentioned their emerging expectation for the portal to also include other aspects of the full life cycle, such as tracking of processes related to invoicing and disbursement of payments. However, the UNPP is not currently designed for this purpose, and does not contain this function.

Finding 8   Many WFP COs have partnered with the same CPs over a long period and have placed less emphasis on scoping prospective partners. Working with the same partners over time in some contexts has allowed COs to respond rapidly to emergency situations. (EQ 2.1 and 2.2)

59.   Available data sources indicate that WFP COs in the region have partnered with the same CPs over a significant period of time. Among CPs interviewed, 16 of the 35 organizations consulted noted that they have worked with WFP for more than five years, with 8 of the 16 have had active FLAs with WFP for ten years or more. In the survey responses, 85.6 per cent of CP representatives indicated that they have been a partner of the WFP for more than two years.

60.   COs in the region have put less emphasis on scoping of prospective CPs. Among Tier 1 countries, the Burundi CO has worked with a relatively small set of CPs over the period reviewed and the composition of these CPs has not changed significantly. CO staff interviewed highlighted, however, an intention to expand their relationships with local NGOs in alignment with an emphasis on strengthening food systems in their upcoming ICSP (still under development at time of writing). In Kenya, as noted in Finding 4, CO staff indicated that they are limiting the number of CPs with which they engage, in alignment with their CSP, but are also scoping a variety of partners (other than NGOs) from academia, the private sector and research institutions.

61.   In Somalia, the CO has been reducing the number of CPs that it engages with, in order to consolidate the number of partners across activities and minimize risks related to corruption and fraud.

62.   Tier 2 COs also did not place significant emphasis on scoping new partners, with the exception of Uganda (see text box). The formulation of PAPs entails providing an overview of the partnerships in a given country, and WFP corporate guidance intends for this process to include a scanning for new partners. Where introduced, however, PAPs in the region did not indicate aims to identify new partners or suggest that a scoping of new partners was done as part of the preparation of the plan. As noted in Finding 12, the utilization of PAPs among COs was found to be low overall, and there was no evidence that CP rosters have been updated at COs as a result of the PAP formulation process. CO staff interviewed indicated that the UNPP plays a role in increasing CO awareness of NGOs that they may not have known but that have worked with other UN agencies. While the portal may be poised to contribute to this, there is no indication from data sources that this has led to an expansion of CP rosters at COs.

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[69] WFP. 2020. *WFP NGO Partnership & Lessons Learnt – Feedback from WFP CPs & Field Offices (South Sudan).*

> **Uganda's annual scoping exercise**
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> Since 2017, the Uganda CO has engaged in annual scoping exercises that are aimed at expanding and diversifying the CO roster of CPs each year. The exercise begins with the CO soliciting expressions of interest (EoI) from NGOs. This is followed by an analysis and honing down of applicants by the CO's CPC. Subsequently, capacity assessments of prospective CPs are conducted with the involvement of CO staff from several units, encompassing Programme, Finance, M&E, Logistics among others, as well as area and field offices.
>
> Interviewed CO staff indicated that the scoping exercise has led to 70-80 NGOs being added to the roster over the three years it has been conducted. Following the launch of the UNPP in Uganda, approximately 80 per cent of the NGOs on the CO's expanded roster have been entered into the UNPP platform, and the CO is planning to upload the capacity assessments onto the portal in the near future.
>
> Interviewed CPs observed that one effect of the exercise has been that a wider set of organizations are increasingly entering into partnership with WFP. They also indicated that while this allows WFP to be better able to engage CPs that have access to a geographic region where the need is, it does not necessarily reduce WFP's exposure to risks in partnering with organizations with varying programme capacity.

63. Maintaining the same partners over time does provide benefits for COs in the region, particularly in emergency contexts. For example, for the South Sudan CO, working with a consistent group of CPs has allowed WFP to respond rapidly to the changing context of a Level 3 emergency and build on the investments in CP capacity and existing relationships with beneficiaries (e.g., some NGOs have established new field offices).

Finding 9   CPs in the region have mixed views on WFP's contracting processes. The efficiency of contracting modalities has not improved, as seen in the continued prevalence of short-term FLAs, as well as FLAs that fund specific components within broader projects. The content of FLAs is seen as rigid and not adapted to the specific needs of CPs and COs. (EQ2.1 and 2.2)

64. Consulted CP representatives suggest that WFP COs in the region have been responsive in communications in the process of negotiating FLAs and in jointly discussing FLA objectives with CPs. Despite good communication during this stage, there are mixed views from CPs on the contracting requirements and the extent to which the contracting process is finalized in a timely way. On the whole, the survey provides positive feedback from CPs.[70] Interviewed CP representatives had a wide range of opinions and experiences on contracting processes with WFP across the region; CPs in different countries indicated either quick and timely processing of FLAs by WFP, or delays in the finalization of contracts. Responses to open-ended questions on WFP's strengths and weaknesses were similarly mixed: while half of the responses considered timely FLA finalization as a strength of WFP's management practices, half highlighted lengthy FLA signing processes and delays in FLA amendment as key weaknesses of WFP's partnership management.[71]

65. As noted in Finding 6, the majority of FLAs for CPs in the region are for 12 months or less. Several CPs have multiple FLAs covering a set of actions undertaken in different geographic regions within a broader project, programme or set of operations. For example, a CP may engage with WFP on a specific set of activities (e.g. in relation to school feeding), but may have several ongoing FLAs for the different geographic areas in which these interventions take place.

66. FLA amendments create a burden for both CPs and COs, due to the processes required by WFP in adjusting budgets and planned activities to fit evolving operational contexts. Several CPs interviewed noted the process of amending FLAs often leads to delays due to the amount of time and communications required to adjust budgets, and limited flexibility in the design of projects.[72] While interviewed CO and RBN staff

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[70] A large proportion of survey respondents (80.2%) either agreed or strongly agreed that "The contract(s) for my organization was finalized in a timely manner."

[71] Based on a review of a sample of FLAs, while the majority of FLAs are signed in advance of their intended start date or between one and two weeks after, 9.8% of FLAs reviewed were signed substantially later, ranging from two months to five months after their intended start date.

[72] CO staff also noted that FLA amendments often need to be finalized quickly, particularly in emergency situations, and a given situation may call for several amendments in a short period of time. This is compounded by internal processes that

acknowledged that processes to finalize contracts and amend FLAs may lead to delays, they also highlighted challenges related to CPs submitting incomplete documentation and/or delays in submission, which also contribute to slowdowns in these processes.[73] Overall, WFP has not yet taken advantage of the efficiency gains that could be introduced by adopting longer-term, multi-year FLAs.

67.   The content of FLAs is seen by both CO staff and CPs as rigid and not adjusted to the needs of either CPs or COs. Interviewed CO staff noted that they are obliged to follow the corporate-issued template, and that there is a need for templates to better take into account a wider range of "cooperating partnerships" beyond NGOs, including with the government, private sector and research institutions.[74] CPs and CO staff consulted saw FLAs as not easy to understand,[75] and CO staff noted difficulties in understanding how to use parts of the template (particularly the budget), and the need for more oversight or guidance from RBN or HQ to ensure that CO staff are provided with adequate support on use of the template. At the time of this evaluation, the FLA template is currently being revised by WFP.

Finding 10   WFP has played an increasingly active role in monitoring the implementation of CP's planned interventions. Common challenges in project implementation include delays in financial processes, disbursement of payments and delivery of commodities. (EQ2.1 and 2.2)

68.   Several CPs interviewed valued WFP on-site monitoring, regular coordination meetings to discuss project implementation, and expanded presence/role of field offices. In the survey, a significant proportion of respondents highlighted regular follow-up with partners, field visits, on-site monitoring and reporting as a key strength of WFP's partnership management practices.[76]

69.   Some issues with financial processes and supply chain management continue to pose challenges to the implementation of planned CP interventions. A key challenge mentioned by stakeholders consulted were delays in the disbursement of funding from WFP: interviewed CPs indicated that this applies to several of their ongoing FLAs with WFP, with delays in disbursement ranging from one month to between six and eight months.[77] The delayed processing of invoices for payment was also indicated by CP survey respondents, and was the most commonly cited weakness of WFP's partnership management (69 respondents). One international NGO representative highlighted that such delays are likely to have more significant implications for local NGOs.[78]

70.   Interviewed CPs noted challenges in supply chain management, primarily delays in the delivery of commodities for food distribution or of materials and equipment for other types of interventions (e.g., supplies for post-harvest management). These challenges, which can limit a CPs' ability to meet the needs of intended beneficiaries, were also mentioned by a significant proportion of CP survey respondents.[79]

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require the approval of a given amendment from several key personnel within the CO, each with their own set of competing priorities.

[73] RBN and HQ staff interviewed estimated that on average the process to finalize approval of an FLA takes 45-60 days, and that the process for FLA extensions typically takes 22-35 days.

[74] The regional debrief clarified that while government is within the remit of the CP management team, the private sector is not. Nonetheless, these types of partners were identified as "cooperating partners" among the Tier 1 COs consulted.

[75] For example, an emerging point that was raised among CPs interviewed across countries was their lack of clarity on how the 7 per cent management fee, stipulated by WFP as to be included within all FLAs, was established, and whether it is applied across both international and local NGOs. The evaluation notes that this 7 per cent fee is aimed at covering overhead costs for the CP, is applied by WFP to all CP types, and is in line with international standards. This lack of clarity on the part of CPs may suggest both a lack of understanding of the FLA template, as well as a lack of communication with WFP COs or FOs on this point. (Source: Humanitarian Policy Group. 2021. "The Grand Bargain at five years: An independent review." P. 51).

[76] In response to an open-ended question on the strengths of WFP's management practices, communication was mentioned most frequently (60 respondents) and monitoring, in-field presence, and reporting was second (approximately 44 respondents).

[77] At the regional debrief it was noted that delays are often due to the incomplete documentation submitted by CPs.

[78] A significantly larger share of local NGO survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree (44 per cent, or 48 out of 108 respondents), with the statement, "WFP disburses FLA payments to my organization in a timely manner (as stipulated in the FLA)," compared to international NGO survey respondents (7 per cent, or 3 out of 42 respondents).

[79] Delays in delivery of supplies to distribution points was the second most common response to the open-ended survey question on WFP's weaknesses in partnership management (27 respondents).

71.   Overall, there is insufficient evidence of substantial changes (improvements or deterioration) in WFP's practices in facilitating CP project implementation in the 2016-2020 period. Representatives from only two CP organizations in different Tier 1 countries noted that while they faced delays in disbursement of payment, these delays have been reduced in recent years (e.g., from four months to one month). However, interviewees were not able to provide any information on the reasons for reductions in delays.

Finding 11   COs have increased their engagement in regular monitoring and feedback processes and have documented CP performance through the PPE tool and CP evaluation reports. However, the frequency with which WFP shares feedback on CP performance varies across COs. (EQ2.1 and 2.2)

72.   With the exception of Djibouti, all COs in the region have conducted regular performance evaluations of their CPs, principally through the use of the PPE tool, to inform decisions around renewal of FLAs. The PPE tool follows a corporate-issued template, which is adapted by the CO and used to document CP performance across a range of performance criteria across categories such as programme (with sub-categories of operational management, protection, gender accountability to beneficiaries and PSEA), reporting, risk management, finance and logistics.

73.   Since 2018, COs in Kenya and Uganda have enhanced documentation of CP performance through evaluation reports that provide performance ratings in a matrix and a narrative outlining the scope

> **CP evaluation reports from Kenya and Uganda COs**
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> The COs in Kenya, and to a lesser extent in Uganda, have enhanced their approach to CP evaluations by providing feedback to CPs through annual reports.[80] While the reports varied in structure and content, all included findings in narrative form that covered all themes in the PPE tool, but that provided more detailed documentation of partner performance.
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> The reports also include a Methodology section that explains how the evaluators came to their conclusions, as well as a Recommendations Tracking Matrix that provides recommendations for both the CP and WFP. In several examples, the matrices have a 'by when' deadline that is then followed up on by the evaluators in the next evaluation period/report.
>
> These reports also included findings and recommendations on gender and capacity strengthening, with more narrative detail than PPE tools. While gender and capacity strengthening are limited to their own sections in the PPE, in several CP evaluation reports, they have been mainstreamed throughout.

and methodology of the evaluation, key findings, and recommendations for the CP and WFP (see textbox).

74.   There are mixed opinions on the extent to which COs have improved in providing regular feedback on CP performance. While 88 per cent of CP survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that WFP provides regular feedback on their organization's performance, stakeholder consultations suggest that the practice varies among COs:

- **In Kenya**, in addition to annual performance review meetings with CPs, since 2019 the Kenya CO has been conducting quarterly reviews of progress on recommendations of CP evaluations. Interviewed CO staff indicated that these reviews have helped to jointly identify gaps in CP performance, challenges that CPs face in the implementation of interventions, identify training needs, and make decisions on to whether an improvement plan should be developed for a CP.

- **In Somalia,** CP evaluations are undertaken two months prior to the end of an FLA to identify performance issues and ascertain the need for performance improvement plans. The CO has introduced new practices to enhance performance management processes: (i) the introduction of a digital performance evaluation tool to allow CO staff to rate the performance of CPs and for CPs to rate the performance of WFP,[81] which contributes to informing decisions on FLA extension; and (ii) introduction of a spot check tool in 2021, to be used by area offices for regular, systematic monitoring of CP performance to address any risks or performance issues encountered over the course of implementation of interventions.

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[80] All CP evaluations received from Kenya CO (26 reports) were in report form. For Uganda, the evaluation team received two CP evaluation reports, and three CP evaluations that utilized the PPE tool, but that were not in report form. While all reports had explicit review periods, they did not indicate that they were conducted at the end of a given FLA; the majority covered a period of 12 months, but some covered periods of less than 12 months or more than 12 months.

[81] This did not entail the use of the NGO Evaluation of WFP performance template, however.

- **In Burundi,** the CO attempted to introduce regular meetings to discuss and coordinate project implementation with CPs, but this was discontinued in 2020 due to the onset of COVID-19. Interviewed CP representatives indicated that feedback from WFP is generally provided only at the end of an FLA period, and that this presents a lost opportunity to adjust project implementation along the way and poses a challenge to establishing a common understanding between CPs and WFP on the performance of the partnership over the course of an FLA period.

75. Among Tier 2 COs, interviews indicated that COs have well-established processes for CP performance evaluation and that these are undertaken through the use of the PPE tool near the end of an FLA (typically two months prior to the end date). A decision on FLA renewal is made by the CO through the CPC, and a partner improvement plan is developed if needed, based on any challenges or areas of improvement for the CP identified by the partnership evaluation (see Finding 13 for discussion on improvement plans). Overall, COs reported few cases in which their CPC decided to drop a partner based on performance (Uganda reported two).

76. The majority of CPs surveyed indicated that WFP provided them an opportunity to give feedback on WFP's performance as a partner.[82] Other sources of data, however, do not provide a clear picture of when and how this is done, and it is not clearly documented. COs did not appear to utilize the NGO Evaluation of WFP performance template, with the exception of Uganda, where the template was used by three CPs in 2020. In Kenya, several CP evaluation reports reviewed contained sections on CP feedback on WFP's performance, but CP evaluation reports from other COs did not. It may be that this feedback is given during meetings with WFP COs or field offices (FOs) to discuss project implementation, but this was not mentioned by either CO staff or CPs interviewed.

Effects of the changes in partnership management practices

Finding 12   Where introduced, Partnership Action Plans (PAPs) have not provided strategic guidance for engaging in cooperating partnerships and have not been regularly updated to orient CP management. As such, they have not brought about significant changes to improve CP management practices among COs in the region. (EQ 2.2)

77. PAPs were introduced by WFP HQ in 2016 and are intended to support COs' strategic engagement of partners through an inclusive process in which COs outline WFP's unique value proposition in a country, as well as clear partnership engagement goals articulated in terms of prioritized actions to achieve targets. As noted in Finding 1, four of the nine country offices included in the evaluation introduced PAPs to help COs establish clear objectives for partner engagement for the implementation of the CSP. Interviewed CO staff in Kenya and Burundi highlighted the significance of the PAPs in bringing a rigorous, participatory process of strategic planning for the CO's approach to engaging partners, noting the importance of identifying key actions and priorities for each type of partner in relation to each strategic outcome. While the PAPs in the region followed the corporate-issued template and guidance, their content varied in several ways (see text box below).

78. CO staff from both Tier 1 and 2 countries where PAPs were introduced indicated that there is still a gap in utilizing the PAP for CP management, and neither documents reviewed nor interviews with CO staff suggest that PAPs have been updated, as was intended by WFP.[83] Reasons for this include:

- **PAPs are more useful for orienting engagement of country governments and donors**. CO staff from Kenya noted that the PAP serves more as a living document for the CO's donor relations and its focus on partnering with country governments. Donor and government relations teams have greater visibility than CP management, and have a mandate that is more strategic by nature.

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[82] Among survey respondents, 84.5% either agreed or strongly agreed that their organization is given the opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of the WFP CO or field office.

[83] As noted in the guidance note for PAPs, "the PAP is developed to be a living tool for COs, it is recommended to be re-visited and updated quarterly or as frequently as per CO needs and developments" (Source: WFP. 2019. *Partnership Action Plans – Guidance Note*, p. 1).

- **PAPs do not contain measures to track progress made towards fulfilling actions over time.** CO staff from Burundi noted that the manner in which the PAPs are currently formulated and structured does not allow for COs to track progress made for specific actions beyond a "Yes/No" measure. This makes it difficult for staff to regularly update the Key Actions and Prioritization annex. The absence of performance metrics to measure progress over time within PAPs was also noted in the lessons learned exercise undertaken by WFP globally.[84]

- **PAPs have provided a snapshot of partnership landscapes at certain points in time. However, they have not consistently articulated a strategy or specific key actions for the future.** As noted in the textbox, action-oriented planning varies across PAPs in the region (e.g. whether specific NGOs are identified as key partners for the CSP period, the extent to which these are linked to specific strategic outcomes in CSPs, and the extent to which PAPs include annexes with key actions and funding forecasts). Interviewed RBN staff commented that while PAPs have captured the partnership context of a given country at the time of PAP formulation and scoping of partners, there has been less emphasis on how the PAP could be relevant for CP management over time.[85] As noted by one respondent in a CO, "the key stakeholder [for the PAP] is the Programme team, they have to have the buy in and own it." As a result, although the templates are not useful, the process of developing the PAP with that team is critical.[86]

Partnership Action Plans (PAPs) in the region

The PAPs of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Rwanda followed the PAP template issued by WFP HQ, and their respective narrative sections (Section I) contained similar sub-sections that: (i) introduces the PAP and its alignment with the CSP; and (ii) provides an overview of the partnership context of the country according to different partner categories, including government, donors, international finance institutions, other UN agencies, the private sector. CPs are included in this overview under a section entitled "Civil society, NGOs, academia and South-South cooperation."

The PAPs reviewed were similar in terms of providing background information on the role of CPs in the country, overall goals for engaging in cooperating partnerships for the country, and key actions for the CO to take in relation to engaging CPs. However, there were some points of variation in the content of the plans across countries:

- *Linkage to specific strategic outcomes*: PAPs for Burundi and Rwanda mention CPs as intended partners for specific strategic outcomes. While Kenya's PAP did not mention intended CP involvement to specific strategic outcomes, it maps specific organizations to 'contribution type' and activity numbers. Ethiopia's PAP did not link CPs with strategic outcomes.

- *Mention of specific NGOs:* PAPs for Kenya and Rwanda mention specific NGOs as intended partners. Burundi's PAP mentions specific NGOs as intended partners for some strategic outcomes but not for others. Ethiopia's PAP mentions two INGOs as having been significant partners for the CO but no other intended partners.

- *Inclusion of annexes for Key Actions and Prioritization and Funding Forecasts*: Kenya's PAP included both annexes. PAPs for Burundi and Rwanda included an annex for funding forecasts (or resource outlook), but not for key actions and prioritization. The PAP for Ethiopia included an annex for key actions and prioritization, but not for funding forecasts.

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[84] WFP. 2019. *Partnership Action Plan – Lessons Learned Exercise*.

[85] This was also mentioned in the lessons learned exercise undertaken by WFP on PAPs globally (WFP. 2019. *Partnership Action Plan – Lessons Learned Exercise*.).

[86] Ownership of the process of developing the PAP across multiple units and actors within a given CO was noted as a challenge in the lessons learned exercise by WFP HQ, and Government Partnerships Officers at COs were found by the study to have been the primary actors in developing PAPs across countries. (WFP. 2019. *Partnership Action Plan – Lessons Learned Exercise*.)

Finding 13 During the 2016-2020 period, CO efforts to strengthen CP management have resulted in improved standardized processes for CP selection, implementation and performance management. COs have put less emphasis on enhancing strategic engagement with CPs. Capacity strengthening activities have been largely focused on strengthening CPs' immediate programmatic and operational capacity to deliver on WFP commitments. While WFP engages in discussions on gender equality with CPs, resourcing for strengthening CPs' gender capacities within FLAs is rare. (EQ2.2 and 2.3[87])

79.   The main results of the shifts in partnership management practices and processes since 2016 have been in relation to enhancing certain aspects of the partnership management lifecycle, notably for CP selection, implementation and performance management. This is seen in the improvements brought about by the establishment of CPCs, the roll-out of the UNPP (Finding 7), and regular performance review meetings and documentation of CP performance (Finding 11).

80.   Fewer practices have been adopted that contribute to enhancing strategic engagement with CPs, as seen in the mixed extent to which COs have transitioned to longer-term FLAs and developed PAPs that serve as living tools for partnership engagement. Other efforts to engage more strategically with partners include consultations with CPs in the development of new CSPs, and lessons learned workshops in some COs (e.g. South Sudan). [88] As noted in previous evaluations, in 2016 the Somalia CO formed strategic partnerships with three international NGOs in order to broaden its scope of collaboration beyond FLAs.[89] In the first years, the partners created a forum for discussing programmes and solving operational issues through monthly planning meetings and mid-term reviews, and also facilitated partner contributions to WFP strategic planning. WFP was able to draw on their expertise for strengthening capacity of other CPs, for example through the Danish Refugee Council training on gender and protection.[90] Feedback received during this evaluation suggests that this level and type of engagement has not been sustained and is currently under review. Interviewees from Somalia did not provide possible explanations for why this type of engagement has not been sustained.

81.   During the period evaluated, most WFP COs in the region did not increase their emphasis on strengthening capacities of CPs. Documents reviewed, CO and CP staff interviews, and survey data indicate that capacity assessments conducted by COs in the region helped inform decisions on CP selection but did little to help NGOs identify areas for improvement of sustainability.[91] A sample of capacity assessments reviewed by the evaluation indicates that they consistently identified strengths and weaknesses of CPs in terms of their organization structure (vision, governance structure), programmatic capacity, and sustainability, but did not provide recommendations for improvement in cases where substantial risk in partnering with a given CP was identified. [92]

82.   In addition, the development of CP improvement plans is not a common practice. While CO staff interviewed across Tier 1 and 2 countries identify improvement plans as part of performance management processes, these are rarely required or they identify only minor programme implementation issues. This may be due in part to the practice of ensuring that corrective actions are taken throughout the year as problems are identified in regular monitoring visits. When they do exist, improvement plans may not always be

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[87] EQ 2.3: To what extent have partners' operational and administrative capacities (more human resources, improved skills and knowledge, better equipment, improved administrative practices) been strengthened?

[88] The evaluation, however, was not able to fully ascertain whether all CPs have been involved in the process of CSP development in their respective countries, or the nature of their involvement (e.g. in what phases of the CSP process), as few CP representatives interviewed mentioned this theme.

[89] Letters of intent were signed with three INGOS: Save the Children, World Vision and Danish Refugee Council. WFP. 2017. *Policy Evaluation WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)* and WFP. 2018. *Somalia: An evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2017-2017)*.

[90] WFP. 2018. *Somalia: An evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2017-2017)*, p. 23.

[91] As per the *NGO Guidance Manual*, "Capacity assessments should provide a tool for NGOs to identify important areas of necessary improvement for sustainability with or without WFP engagement" (p. 15).

[92] The section on the sustainability of the CP in capacity assessments contains two questions: (i) "What are local opportunities for the organization and the threats facing it?" and (ii) "Does the organization have plans for its own continuity without WFP support? Please Describe." The template requires only qualitative comments, and not a risk rating. As such the section does not count towards the overall risk rating score of a given organization.

accessible and inform COs' ongoing work with CPs.[93] CO staff interviewed across Tier 1 and 2 countries did not provide explanations for why improvement plans have not been more systematically required and made more accessible.

Efforts to strengthen CP capacity in Uganda and Somalia

In 2020, the Uganda CO introduced the concept of a Lead Partner in which INGO CPs with longer-term FLAs in the refugee response, build the capacity of local partner organizations in the context of a three-year plan that foresees completely handing over certain aspects programming to the local partner in the third year. The WFP capacity assessment is also applied to the co-partners and the assessment identifies the capacity areas that the INGO will cover and those that WFP will cover. The CO has organized visits to project sites among CPs that foster peer-to-peer learning. Trainings are organized with more experienced and less experienced organizations so that there is cross-fertilization of ideas.

In 2021, the Somalia, CO introduced an NGO capacity strengthening strategy that aims to build on existing skills, knowledge, systems and institutions throughout the project cycle. One of the strategy's objectives is to ensure that international NGOs work with and develop the capacity of local NGOs. The strategy will identify capacity strengthening gaps and develop improvement plans for CPs. It will also consider capacity strengthening across different domains: enabling environment, organizations, and individuals. A database of NGO capacity strengthening processes is foreseen in order to facilitate monitoring and reporting of CO NGO capacity strengthening efforts across the new CSP.

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83. Capacity strengthening interventions delivered by WFP were largely focused on strengthening immediate programmatic and operational capacities of CPs, and less on improving organizational and institutional capacities. WFP has not had a regional or country-level strategic framework that outlines a holistic approach or 'package' of capacity strengthening interventions that WFP provides for CPs. The evaluation identified only a few structured capacity strengthening initiatives: the joint WFP-International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) capacity initiative aimed at strengthening the capacity of National Red Cross/Crescent Societies of Burundi and Sudan (see Finding 14); Somalia's NGO Capacity Strengthening Strategy introduced in 2021; and the Uganda CO requirement for INGOs to provide capacity strengthening to CPs (see textbox above).

84. The majority of CP representatives interviewed in Tier 1 and 2 countries did not perceive WFP as a major provider of capacity strengthening opportunities. Available documents such as FLAs, CP evaluations and annual country reports did not provide substantive information on WFP capacity strengthening activities. Furthermore, WFP does not have a meaningful way to track the scope of investments being made in the capacity strengthening of local actors, or of CP capacity gaps.[94] Several CPs mentioned examples of capacity strengthening activities supported by WFP during the 2016-2020 period (see text box) but several indicated they had not received any capacity strengthening from WFP during the review period. A review of FLAs found that WFP has not consistently provided capacity strengthening opportunities for CPs through these agreements: only 28.8 per cent of FLAs reviewed contained allocations

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Modes and areas of CP capacity strengthening delivered by WFP in the region

Modes of capacity strengthening: CPs cited training, direct funding for recruitment of qualified staff, equipment for operations, vehicles, and on-the-job technical support.

Areas of capacity strengthening activities: use of the UNPP; information sessions on proposal best practices; and training on financial reporting to meet WFP requirements on PSEA and AAP and on operational methodologies related to food distribution and CBTs.

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[93] One interviewed CO staff noted that improvement plans are developed at the CO, but where these are stored is not clear to them, and the plans have not served as documents to inform the CO's planning of capacity strengthening for CPs. The evaluation team received only one Improvement plan for a local NGO developed by the Kenya CO, although the practice was mentioned during interviews in other COs.

[94] Capacity assessments may serve as means for WFP to systematically document capacity gaps of CPs. However, as noted in section 1.4, the evaluation received very few capacity assessments, and as such was not able to draw upon them as document evidence for common areas of capacity gaps among CPs. Nevertheless, stakeholder interviews mentioned several areas of capacity strengthening among NGOs that were also noted by an HPG study in 2016, such as financial accounting, data management, issues related to reporting, cross-cutting issues (such as gender equality), food disbursement, and monitoring & evaluation.

for capacity strengthening in their budgets.[95] Available data on purchase orders indicates that a low proportion of funds channelled to CPs during the review period were dedicated to capacity strengthening (0.95 per cent of net purchase orders across the 2016-2020 period) and that there was no trend towards increased funding for capacity strengthening over the 2016-2020 period.

85.   In relation to CPs' gender capacity, as in the 2019 evaluation of WFP's Gender Policy 2015-2020[96], the interviews for this evaluation confirm that GEWE provisions in FLAs do help WFP to engage partners on gender equality at the operational level. CPs interviewed often highlighted the FLA provisions and noted discussions with WFP on topics such as their gender policy and their efforts to achieve gender parity in their organization.

86.   Resourcing for gender capacity of CPs, however, is less evident. In response to the WFP Gender Policy 2015-2020, WFP developed a budget template that calls for a breakdown of gender activity cost categories, which was to be a part of FLAs. Similarly, the NGO Partnership Guidance Manual notes that FLA budgets should include specific budget lines for GEWE and gender capacity strengthening. The evaluation's review of FLAs indicates that budget lines for gender components and, especially for gender capacity strengthening are rare. Interviews with staff at several COs suggest that the template was issued by HQ, but subsequently not used in country offices due to lack of further HQ guidance on how to use it. The review of documents and interviews suggest that there is more emphasis on GEWE in the first stages of the partnership life cycle (selection and contracting) and less during implementation and performance management, and in the reporting from CPs (except for the requirement for gender-disaggregated data from beneficiaries).

Effects on partners and partner performance

Finding 14   WFP's contributions to capacity strengthening have not been well documented and there is insufficient data to determine if there have been significant improvements in the capacity or performance of CPs across the region. (EQ2.3 and 2.4[97])

87.   Available documents reviewed (such as CP evaluations, capacity assessments, and improvement plans) did not provide substantive information to indicate if CPs' capacity has improved or deteriorated over time and did not provide systematic evidence to demonstrate possible WFP contributions to changes in CPs' capacity. An existing study in 2016[98] found that capacity strengthening outcomes are not systematically documented in WFP reports and that WFP's guidelines on food assistance programmes do not require reporting on capacity strengthening activities for CPs. Overall, it is difficult to determine the extent to which WFP is contributing to any outcomes in capacity strengthening of CPs.

88.   In survey responses related to WFP's contribution to improvements in CP capacities, 63.4 per cent of respondents indicated that WFP made strong or very strong contributions to improved levels of staffing/human resources and 66 per cent indicated that WFP contributions improved their operational knowledge and skills.[99] The majority of interviewed CPs noted that they had participated in or received capacity strengthening inputs from WFP such as training, vehicles or equipment, financial resources for staffing, but few CPs reported further outcomes of these activities in terms of increased awareness, level of skill or behaviour changes within their organization. Two exceptions, which emerged in interviews and document review, are discussed in the text box.

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[95] Budget allocations for capacity strengthening were included in 44 out of a total 153 FLAs reviewed. These FLAs were made to 15 CPs, consisting of six international NGOs, seven local NGOs, and two National Red Cross/Crescent Societies. The majority of these FLAs do not provide further details on specific activities or modes of capacity strengthening. In cases where budget lines provided further specification, they are expressed as 'Staff salary, staff related costs, equipment, transport, and related costs,' 'equipment and training,' 'trainings, meetings, workshops,' and 'staff related costs.'

[96] WFP. 2019. *Evaluation of the Gender Policy 2015-2020*, p. v.

[97] EQ2.4: To what extent has partners' performance been strengthened, in terms of ability to deliver on interventions, including GEWE interventions; expanded scope of work; improved level of funding?

[98] Humanitarian Policy Group. 2016. *Capacity strengthening of national and local non-governmental organisations: opportunities and challenges for WFP*.

[99] Survey respondents also indicated WFP's contributions to better equipment (51%), improved levels of administrative knowledge and skills (52.3%) and improved knowledge and skills in financial management and reporting (55.6%).

Examples of CP capacity strengthening in Burundi and Uganda

The joint IFRC-WFP capacity strengthening initiative for National Red Cross/Crescent Societies was a flagship initiative oriented to the Grand Bargain and localization, and entailed the roll-out of pilot programmes across several countries in 2016, including in Burundi and Sudan.[100] The initiative was rooted in an ongoing MoU between WFP and the IFRC that was signed in 2005 and a long-term strategic partnership between the two organizations that was introduced in 2017. The initiative is aimed at strengthening National Red Cross/Crescent Societies as holistic institutions, and strengthening their programmatic capacities through pilot investments. Available documents and interviews with CO staff, CPs and regional stakeholders indicate that the initiative has improved the operational capacity of the Burundi Red Cross (in cash-based transfers, early warning systems and forecast-based financing) but there is no evidence that the institutional capacity of the Burundi Red Cross increased as a result of the initiative. However, the initiative has a distinct focus on strengthening the organization, and the IFRC completed an Organizational Capacities and Certification process in 2017[101] to help the Burundi Red Cross a become a leader in the implementation of CBTs in the country and receive direct funding from donors.[102]

Hunger Fighters Uganda (HFU) is a local NGO founded in 2009 by a group of individuals trained by WFP and Makerere University. WFP has partnered with HFU since 2010 as part of refugee response. The organization began with small, targeted activities (food basket monitoring) and expanded into general food assistance. HFU recently began implementing a multi-year FLA and was able to expand programming to an additional settlement, which reflected the organization's improved technical capabilities, human resources, and financial management. HFU resources more than tripled when it moved into general food assistance. WFP is still its main source of funding, but it is in discussions with two other potential funding agencies.

89.   There are no clear measures of changes in CP performance, which the changes in partnership approaches also intend to influence. During the inception phase of this evaluation, one suggested measure of CP performance was commodity distribution (metric tons distributed/received). However, data on this measure that was provided by the RBN for a sample of CPs did not indicate any significant or generalizable trends across CPs and countries over time (see Annex XIII for the full data on CP performance metrics).

90.   In relation to WFP's contributions to CPs' ability to expand their scope of work and improve their level of funding, several interviewed CPs indicated that their scope of work has expanded, and a significant proportion of CPs (both local and international NGOs) had non-WFP sources of funding during the review period.[103] However, WFP contributions were not cited as a significant reason for these outcomes across the majority of CPs. WFP was sometimes recognized for : (i) providing increased financial contributions to a given programme for the purpose of expanding the programme's scope (e.g. in increased geographic coverage, or increased number of beneficiaries targeted); and (ii) increasing an organization's credibility because it partners with them, and as such indirectly aids their efforts to mobilize resources from non-WFP sources.

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[100] As the evaluation did not interview CO staff or CP representatives from Sudan, nor were any documents on the implementation of the initiative in Sudan available, the evaluation did not have any information on any possible effects or results of the initiative in the country.

[101] The Organizational Capacities and Certification is a peer-review process conducted by the IFRC of National Societies aimed at: (i) enabling National Red Cross/Crescent Societies to self-assess organizational capacity and to self-identify opportunities for self-development; and (ii) ensuring National Red Cross/Crescent Societies are compliant with minimal organizational standards of the overall IFRC network. (Source: IFRC. 2019. *Organizational Capacity Assessment & Certification Process Evaluation*.) This process was used by the Burundi Red Cross to redesign the pilot investment with the aim of prioritizing organizational capacity strengthening activities, as opposed to its initial focus on programmatic capacity strengthening. (Source: WFP and IFRC. 2018. *IFRC-WFP-National Society Capacity Strengthening Initiative - Summary Report Global Learning Workshop*).

[102] As noted by one interviewee and in WFP and IFRC. 2017. Meeting on the National Society-IFRC-WFP-Capacity Strengthening Initiative.

[103] There was no CP-specific data to indicate whether this type of funding increased over time. Interviewed CPs had different levels of funding from various sources (i.e. some increased, some remained the same, and some decreased). A large share of CPs received funding from non-WFP sources and this was corroborated by survey data, in which 92% of respondents noted that their organization entered into a partnership with other organizations during the 2016-2020 period, and 66.3% reported receiving less than 50% of funding from WFP during the same period.

Unintended results of shifts in partnership management practices

Finding 15   There was no evidence that the shifts in CP management practices led to any unintended results on gender, equity and human rights. Stakeholder consultations suggest that the increased efforts to digitize processes may be more favourable to CPs with adequate levels of connectivity. (EQ 2.5)[104]

91.   Overall, there was no evidence from available data to indicate that shifts in CP management processes and practices had any unintended positive or negative effects on gender, equity and human rights dimensions, at either the regional or country level.

92.   Stakeholder consultations with CPs and CO staff indicated that the ongoing move to increased digitization of CP management processes (e.g. through the launch of UNPP) is likely to favour CPs that have adequate connectivity. All CPs consulted had good levels of connectivity and were selected by both the evaluation team and CO staff on the basis that remote interviews could be conducted. Yet, some CO staff and CPs interviewed noted that for certain CPs, particularly those located outside of capital cities, the ability to access UNPP on a regular basis is limited due to connectivity challenges Their ability to participate in selection processes with short windows of time for submitting proposals is, therefore, limited.

2.3 EQ3: What internal and external factors have influenced (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance?

Summary of evaluation findings for EQ3

CP management practices are influenced by several external factors at the country level related to external funding, country governance, the number of NGOs in the partnership landscape, and the evolving operational contexts. In addition, apart from the launch of the UNPP, there were few other initiatives to improve collaboration across UN agencies in CP management practices. However, more opportunities for inter-agency collaboration on increased digitization of CP management are forthcoming in 2022.

The establishment of CP management teams and the commitment of senior personnel allowed many COs to better address the transactional and strategic aspects of managing partnerships, although striking the right balance between these aspects remains a challenge. Data management, digitization and NGO contracting tools and procedures represent key limitations for CP management. The absence of CO gender capacity and clear tools and guidance have limited how cooperating partnerships are used to support more gender-transformative programming. The RBN has provided technical support and oversight of COs and has engaged with COs in providing guidance, learning opportunities and information sharing. The establishment of a dedicated CP management team at the RBN allowed the bureau to increase its focus on strategic aspects of CP management. WFP HQ has developed tools, templates and guidelines, and has provided support on their implementation; COs take the lead role in the uptake of changes in CP management practices and processes.

Available data does not suggest a difference in the performance of international and local NGOs as CPs in terms of programme delivery. Nevertheless, interviewed stakeholders perceive that international NGOs are more likely to perform better than local NGOs.

93.   Of note, the evaluation did not find any issues related to positive or negative unanticipated effects on human rights and gender equality as it relates to EQ3.

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[104] EQ 2.5: Have there been any other intended or unintended results of improved CO management practices?

Finding 16   CP management practices are influenced by several external factors at the country level related to external funding, country governance, the number of NGOs in the partnership landscape, and the evolving operational contexts. (EQ3.1)[105]

94.   CP management practices at the country level are influenced by several external factors such as:

- **Donor funding to WFP COs:** CO staff, CP representatives, RBN staff, and donor respondents recognize that the shift to longer-term FLAs is influenced primarily by the nature of financing secured by a CO from its donors. A WFP global evaluation found that donor funding to WFP was largely earmarked and mostly in the form of short-term contributions, which continually limits the extent to which WFP COs can engage in multi-year funding of its CPs. The study noted that donors are not leveraging their funding to incentivize increased localization.[106]

- **Country governance:** In countries with fractured or weak governance setting, and in the absence of a coherent, coordinated working relationship between the CO and the country government, COs focus largely on ensuring basic collaboration and risk mitigation. For example, in Somalia, with a fractured governance setting and extensive concerns about fraud and corruption, the CO's partnership management was oriented primarily towards mitigating risks associated with these issues in partnering with both government and NGOs.

- **Emergency situations:** Emergency situations may limit CO efforts towards longer-term outcomes such as enhanced strategic partnerships with CPs or CP capacity strengthening. The CP selection process must be rapid and timely, while also ensuring prospective CPs have the technical expertise and experience in emergency-specific programming (e.g. conflict analysis and mitigation, engaging in conflict-sensitive programming). Interviewed stakeholders suggest that COs tend to prefer international NGOs as partners in emergency response, as they have the existing capacity to deliver necessary operations. Interviewed CO staff indicated that in emergency situations, short-term FLAs of three to six months are better suited to their operations, as they allow for rapid adjustments and entail fewer financial obligations and less exposure to risk on the part of WFP.

- **NGO landscape in countries:** The number of NGOs was seen as significant to CP management in countries, with stakeholders in Burundi and Djibouti indicating that the small number of active NGOs affects the extent to which WFP operations are able to cover all areas of the country and limits the pool of prospective CPs. On the other hand, when there is a large number of NGOs active in a country, as well as a relatively high level of operational capacity and experience among NGOs, this can be an enabling factor for COs to select optimal CPs that meet the requirements of the interventions, and this was especially noted by interviewed CO staff and CP representatives in Kenya. Furthermore, NGO coordination and dialogue mechanisms in countries enables information sharing on project implementation, NGO joint advocacy on key issues (such as funding for security), and enhances CP ability to deliver on interventions. Examples of this were seen in South Sudan's NGO Forum and in Somalia's thematic clusters, which involve the participation of NGOs.

- **Evolving operational contexts and strategic shifts in WFP engagement:** Given the shifts towards CBTs in countries, the introduction of digitized processes for cash transfers, and the need for remote methods to monitor implementation in the context of COVID-19, CPs are required to have certain skillsets and technical knowledge. The extent to which CPs have these skills and knowledge, however, varies. CPs in conflict-affected situations face more acute challenges in terms of staffing and equipment. Other strategic

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[105] EQ 3.1: To what extent and how have external contextual factors influenced partnership management practices and partners' capacities and performance?

[106] In 2019, 45% of donor contributions to WFP globally were of durations of less than one year, 30% were between one and two years, and 15% were two years or more. The share of donor contributions to WFP that were for one year or more decreased overall between 2016 and 2019, and the average duration of contributions also decreased, with higher proportions of contributions of durations of less than one year. (Source: WFP. 2020. *Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP's Work – Evaluation Report: Volume I*.)

shifts that affect CP management include the increased emphasis on strengthening food systems (in Kenya and planned for Burundi in its next ICSP) and the expansion of school feeding (in Burundi). These have implications on the types of CPs and relevant capacity needed for the implementation of planned interventions.[107]

95.   Apart from the launch of the UNPP, which is a positive first step towards harmonizing due diligence processes for CP selection and contracting among UN agencies at the CO-level, there were few other initiatives to improve collaboration across UN agencies in CP management practices. However, with enhancements to the UNPP and work on the end-to-end digital roadmap for CP management, more opportunities will be forthcoming in 2022 that need to be institutionalized at the CO level. Several CPs interviewed in Tier 1 and 2 countries noted that they are involved in joint programmes between WFP and other UN agencies, but that the partner selection and contracting processes remained separate (i.e. separate FLAs or equivalent agreements for the same CP for each UN agency), with lines of reporting and monitoring also distinct for each UN agency. In Burundi, WFP collaborated with UNHCR in refugee response operations, and some CPs interviewed noted having been part of such initiatives. Nevertheless, CPs indicated that despite such joint initiatives being agreed upon through a tripartite FLA,[108] WFP and UNHCR still maintain separate lines of reporting, each with their own reporting timelines, document formats and requirements. CO staff indicated that there is an overall lack of guidance from WFP on CP management in joint programming that involves CPs and other UN agencies. Sharing of micro-assessments and other information, or the development of complementary strategies to strengthen CP capacity, sometimes occurs organically in the context of specific types of programming (e.g. WFP and UNICEF collaboration in nutrition programming). There was no evidence that any joint initiatives between WFP and other UN agencies had effects (positive or negative) on CP capacities or performance.

Factors related to WFP

Finding 17   The establishment of CP management teams and the commitment of senior personnel have allowed many COs to better address the transactional and strategic aspects of cooperating partnerships. Some challenges remain in data management and NGO contracting. (EQ 3.3)[109]

96.   Interviewed CO staff indicated that having a team or unit dedicated to CP management at the CO level serves to improve CO partnership management capacity. With the exception of Burundi and Djibouti, all COs covered by the evaluation introduced a CP management unit or team during the 2016-2020 period. Such dedicated teams typically consist of personnel who are tasked with providing technical oversight of CP management processes and practices. CO staff across countries indicated that the additional staffing and financial resources for these teams removes CP management responsibilities from programmatic or activity teams, as was the practice prior to the establishment of these units, and is still the practice in Burundi and Djibouti.[110] These dedicated units or teams help COs meet deadlines related to CP management processes and engage more intentionally in establishing processes aimed at streamlining CP management.

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[107] For example, Burundi CO staff noted that the planned shift towards strengthening food systems entails increased emphasis on partnering with local NGOs and line ministries, rather than with international NGOs. On the other hand, the ongoing expansion of the country's home-grown school feeding programme entails both larger partners (expressed as international NGOs) to ensure the programme can be delivered to scale, and also local NGOs that are able to provide the community-level reach, particularly in the delivery of community sensitization activities.

[108] The template for the WFP-UNHCR-NGO FLA template was introduced in 2016 and is included in WFP's *NGO Partnership Guidance Manual*.

[109] EQ 3.3 To what extent and how have CO support led to improved partners' capacities and performance?

[110] Of note, Rwanda CO has a Partnership Management Committee that was established in 2019, and is comprised of staff from different units within the CO. These staff are responsible for CP management on a part-time basis, and have other responsibilities in their respective units.

97. The experience and technical expertise of personnel on CP management teams affects a team's ability to serve its technical oversight role. CP management staff with knowledge of legal, financial and procedural issues can increase the unit's ability to improve CP

> **The concept of "Value-added CP management"**
>
> A key theme that emerged from interviews was the notion of partnerships, and especially CP management, as a workstream or field of technical expertise in itself, which comprises not only oversight on *transactions* within CP management, but also on *strategic* aspects of CP management (increasing emphasis on capacity strengthening of CPs, facilitating uptake among CO staff on digitization of business processes, and enhancing strategic engagement of CPs).

management practices at the CO. Interviewed stakeholders noted that the level of experience of staff, along the lines of UN grading of staff positions (e.g. G4, NOA), was a significant factor in fulfilling this oversight role. The technical expertise of CP management personnel was also a factor in CO capacity to engage in "value-added CP management" – i.e. that is not squarely focused on technical oversight responsibilities and that requires coordination and influence/convening power with regard to programme/activity managers who manage the relationship with partners (see text box).

98. CO, RBN and HQ staff noted that where the CP management unit/team is placed within a CO has an effect on the roles attributed to the CP management unit/team in terms of operational or strategic aspects of CP management. The majority of existing CP management units have been placed under Programming, with the exception of Ethiopia and Uganda, where these teams/units are placed under a Partnerships team that may also encompass donor relations, government relations, and/or other functions (e.g. communications). CO staff did not indicate any clear benefits or drawbacks of either approach, but noted some implications of their organizational arrangement for their daily work. For example, in cases where CP management units/teams are under Partnerships, personnel tasked with the management of COMET are often under a separate team (such as Programme) which adds a degree of separation of communication between CP management and the management data in COMET, which can in turn affect the efficiency of certain processes.

99. In relation to data, consulted RBN and CO staff noted ongoing challenges in the digitization of processes and collecting data related to CP management in COMET. FOs and COs must enter FLA information manually into COMET. Some FLAs may be multi-year but are inputted into COMET as single-year FLAs, due in part to the overall lack of digitization of data entry and collection, and also to the practice of inputting FLAs that cut across CSP periods as separate entries in the database. The lack of digitization of FLAs may therefore lead to a disconnect between the data in COMET and what a given FLA actually contains.

100. In some countries, the introduction of CP management teams and units was accompanied by CO efforts to increasingly decentralize CP management responsibilities to Field Offices (FOs), especially in relation to conducting performance evaluations, monitoring, and engaging CPs in discussions. The increased role of FOs in CP management processes is aimed at placing the cooperating partnership closer to where the CP and its projects are situated, and is seen to provide WFP increased visibility in the field. While CO staff and CP representatives generally see this as a positive development, in Kenya the increased role of FOs led to perceived fragmentation of lines of communication between CPs and WFP in terms of interactions with FO staff, in addition to continued communications with staff from activity teams and the CO's partnership management unit.

101. The commitment or will of senior CO leadership to increase strategic engagement with CPs and to CP capacity strengthening can play a significant role in effecting reforms that are oriented towards these ends. For example, interviewed RBN staff and CO staff from Burundi indicated that the Country Director plays a strong role in the CO's drive to increased usage of multi-year FLAs, and Burundi CO staff highlighted that the changes in CD, DCD and Head of Programme in recent years have brought a renewed focus on shifting to longer-term FLAs and capacity strengthening of CPs in the country's next ICSP, which as of writing is still in development.[111] Other COs, such as Uganda, have had similar commitments from senior leadership.

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[111] Burundi CO staff that were interviewed and that participated in the country debrief noted that as part of the country's next ICSP, the CO will aim to shift towards multi-year FLAs that are aligned with the ICSP, dedicate an activity within the plan towards a flagship capacity strengthening initiative for CPs, and allocate financial resources for the establishment of a partnership management unit.

102.   In relation to partnering with local NGOs, CO staff highlighted some barriers to increasingly partnering with local NGOs: the lack of a systematic requirement across all COs for INGOs to partner with local NGOs for the purpose of capacity strengthening, and the ways in which calls for proposals are communicated and structured, requiring a certain level of technical competency and connectivity that can disadvantage local NGOs. One WFP stakeholder noted, however, that based on available evidence, connectivity has not been a factor that excluded CPs from using the UNPP, and as noted in Finding 7, the levels of awareness and use of the UNPP among CP representatives consulted by the evaluation are high overall.

Finding 18   The absence of CO gender capacity and clear tools and guidance have limited how cooperating partnerships are used to support more gender-transformative programming.

103.   The WFP Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 expressed WFP commitment to integrating GEWE in all work activities and to "ensuring that women and men equitably participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-transformative programmes and policies, and that its work promotes decision-making by women and girls."[112]

104.   However, in the case of partnerships, progress has been hampered by: concepts that have not yet been clearly defined (e.g. women-led organizations);[113] lack of clear guidance and incentives for identifying/selecting and expanding the universe of CPs to include these types of organizations. Despite strong INGO capacity in GEWE, these capabilities have not always been tapped into as part of more strategic partnerships. In some cases, the external context has also limited progress in this area. In Somalia, both CO and CP respondents noted the challenges of even meeting expectations for gender parity in their respective organizations and spoke about efforts to use "internships" to draw in additional women into CO and CP operations.

105.   WFP COs in the region were also limited in their gender and protection capacity during the period under review. Several have recently added Gender and Protection officers, who can help to develop strategies for strengthening CP capabilities for gender analysis, for example. Gender Results Network members are primarily involved during the proposal stage, reviewing how gender and protection are integrated into the proposed project (reported in Uganda, Somalia) but have limited capacity to participate in other stages of the partnership life cycle.

106.   Stakeholders note that in the region there is a greater interest in, and attention paid to gender-transformative programming (e.g. the reported interest expressed by COs to participate in the WFP, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and UN-Women Joint Programme on Rural Women and Economic Empowerment). However, the tools used for CP management have given more emphasis to gender parity and quantifying the participation of women and men without fomenting greater analysis of power structures or changes in gender-based roles, thereby failing to fully capture transformative change. While the Gender Toolkit provides guidelines for the integration of GEWE in partnerships, CO staff interviewed did not mention the toolkit as a resource they referred to for guidance on cooperating partnerships, suggesting that there is a need for more sensitization on the existence of the toolkit among COs.

107.   In several countries, there may be untapped potential to strengthen CP capacity jointly in this area with others in the UN system. Only one CO (Somalia) emphasized a partnership with UN Women and role on the Gender Theme Group as critical for strengthening WFP and CP capacity in GEWE.

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[112] WFP. 2016. *WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021)*.

[113] WFP stakeholders consulted noted, however, that the definition of women-led organizations, and increased partnering with women-led organizations is included in the new WFP Gender Policy 2022-2026. This falls outside of the scope of the evaluation.

Finding 19   The RBN has played an active role in providing technical support and oversight for COs, and has regularly engaged with COs in providing guidance, learning opportunities and information sharing. The establishment of a dedicated CP management team at the RBN has allowed the bureau to increase its focus on strategic aspects of CP management while fulfilling its technical oversight role. (EQ 3.2)[114]

108.   Since 2019, the RBN has been the only WFP regional bureau to have staff dedicated to CP management within its organizational structure. This practice differs from other regional bureaux where there are designated focal points for CP management among staff who have tasks pertaining to CP management in addition to their principal responsibilities. In such situations, the CP management workstream is not necessarily passed on to other staff if the focal points leave their position. The establishment of the CP management team has entailed the funding of a staff position as well as a definition of CP management responsibilities. This definition encompasses not only the technical oversight role that was fulfilled by the RBN focal persons prior to the establishment of the team, but also roles related to the management of ongoing initiatives related to increased digitization, facilitation of exchange and dialogue among COs, and in providing guidance to COs aimed at enhancing their strategic engagement with CPs. Of note, however, no institutionalized or long-term funding is allocated to CP management at the RBN (e.g. through an allocation within RBN's annual budget), and as such while the CP management staff position is included in the RBN organizational structure, the funding for the position has been from ad-hoc, temporary funding.

109.   The establishment of the CP management team allows the RBN to engage in the strategic aspects of CP management, in addition to its role in providing and oversight and guidance on management processes, and to place an increased emphasis on the need CO ownership of the new WFP approach to CP management. All interviewed CO staff reported that they have engaged regularly with RBN on issues related to CP management, and that the RBN's CP management team has provided technical oversight as well as guidance on application of tools and templates related to streamlining processes, such as the NGO Partnership Guidance Manual, the Business Process for FLA management and SOPs. The RBN has organized monthly calls among CO personnel tasked with CP management to share information, and interviewed CO staff noted that RBN has provided learning opportunities for various thematic issues within CP management.

Finding 20   The role of HQ in changes in partnership management practices and processes has largely been in the formulation and development of tools, templates and guidelines, though it has recently been more involved in providing support on implementation. WFP's emphasis on being a field-focused organization has meant that COs take the lead in adapting tools in order to facilitate uptake of CP management practices and processes. (EQ3.2)

110.   The role of WFP's HQ has been principally in leading the formulation and development of tools, template and guidelines for various aspects of CP management practices and processes related to WFP's new approach to cooperating partnerships. Consulted HQ staff and RBN staff indicated that HQ's limited role is part of an intentional approach in which flexibility is given to COs to determine the application of tools, templates and guidelines according to their country-level needs and to take the lead role in uptake of CP management processes and practices.

111.   Interviewed RBN staff noted that this HQ approach has resulted in the introduction of a plethora of tools, templates, and guidelines, but with no clearly defined processes or structures from HQ to facilitate the utilization of these outputs, and no resources dedicated (or guidelines for the allocation of resources) to the operationalization of new partnership management practices at the CO level. An example of this cited by interviewees was the roll-out of UNPP, an HQ-led initiative with other UN agencies for which no further resources were put forward by HQ to ensure country-level uptake and utilization by COs and CPs. In recent years, however, HQ staff consulted noted the increased role of HQ in providing support for the implementation of tools, templates and guidelines among RB and CO CP management teams. HQ has conducted training on the use of the UNPP for COs. Recently, HQ has developed a set of ToR aimed at establishing clearer roles and responsibilities of HQ, RBN and COs in relation to CP management.

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[114] EQ 3.2: To what extent and how have RBN and HQ support influenced CO partnership management practices?

Factors related to CP organizations

Finding 21 Available data does not suggest a clear difference in level of performance between international and local NGOs as cooperating partners. Nevertheless, interviewed stakeholders indicated an ongoing perception that international NGOs are more likely to perform better than local NGOs. (EQ3.4)[115]

112.   As noted in Finding 14, there are no clear measures of CP performance. Available data on CP performance in terms of commodity distribution did not indicate any significant improvements or deterioration during the 2018-2020 period. Furthermore, there was no evident difference between the performance of international and local NGOs. (i.e., no discernible pattern to suggest either type of organization performed better or improved).

113.   Interviews with RBN, CO staff and CP representatives nevertheless indicate a persistent perception that international NGOs are better capacitated, and as such more likely to perform better than local NGOs. Consulted stakeholders indicated that international NGOs generally possess greater technical and programmatic expertise for project implementation, longer track records of partnering with WFP and other UN agencies, and better equipment (including vehicles), while local NGOs face more acute challenges in these areas and in staffing and connectivity.

114.   As noted above, consulted COs view international NGOs as go-to partners for response to emergency situations. One exception was national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, which interviewed stakeholders highlighted as organizations that can offer a level of geographic coverage that is rarely matched by international NGOs.

115.   International NGOs across all countries in the region were also seen to have higher levels of gender capacity, such as experience or expertise in conducting gender analysis and implementing gender-responsive programming, than local NGOs.

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[115] EQ3.4: To what extent and how have factors internal to the partners (organizational and financial capacities, administrative practices) influenced their performance?

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

116.   This section presents the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations, which draw upon the findings of the evaluation. See Annex XIV for a mapping of findings – conclusions – recommendations.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

117.   The conclusions are organized by the following themes of CP management: business processes, strategic engagement, capacity strengthening, and Grand Bargain commitments. These themes illustrate the main elements of WFP's new partnership approach that were identified by the evaluation team, as outlined in Section 1.3.1.

Business processes

Conclusion 1   **By increasing standardization and placing greater emphasis on efficiency in partnership management, WFP has improved some key elements of Cooperating Partnership management, especially related to risk management.**

118.   The introduction of the new partnership approach in 2016 responded to an ongoing concern/need for WFP to enhance business processes used in managing cooperating partnerships, in terms of their efficiency and corporate risk management. The NGO guidance manual issued at the time had the dual purpose of bringing WFP up to speed in good risk management practice and taking into consideration the organization's evolving thinking on NGO partnerships. The evaluation found that WFP COs in the region made the most progress in introducing tools, template and guidelines related to increased streamlining of businesses processes and standardization, and as such COs have also made the most progress in improving the transparency and effectiveness, and to a lesser extent, the efficiency, of these processes. Room for improvement remains in contracting, implementation (invoicing issues, supply chain), and performance management practices.

Strategic engagement

Conclusion 2   **WFP has begun a shift away from seeing Cooperating Partners solely as delivery agents/contractors towards seeing them as partners in country-level strategic planning to achieve Zero Hunger. However, Cooperating Partnership management practices and tools still lag behind some of the strategic thinking about cooperating partnerships.**

119.   The evaluation found that a shift in culture has begun in COs in the region towards seeing NGOs as key strategic partners rather than simply as project implementers. This is in line with the 'Whole of Society' approach to Zero Hunger and the 2017 civil society strengthening guidance. WFP's approach to CP consultations as part of the new generation of CSPs is a step in the right direction and is aligned with the interest/demands from partner organizations to engage at this level. In practice, the inclusivity and consistency of these consultations varies across countries in the region.

120.   RBN has begun to articulate areas of "value-added" CP management to emphasize the breadth of technical expertise required within WFP for this function, not only for oversight of *transactions*, but also for *strategic* aspects of CP management (increasing emphasis on CP capacity strengthening, facilitating CO uptake of digitization of business processes, and enhancing strategic engagement of CPs). Yet the current level of transactions in CP management, and lack of digitization, continues to take up the time and resources of staff tasked with CP management in most COs in the region, and as such does not yet allow for greater emphasis on these more strategic aspects. As a result, the move to more strategic engagement of CPs has not been consistent across COs.

121.   HQ and RBN have provided few examples or guidance on what a more strategic approach to cooperating partnerships would look like. PAPs have been developed in four of the five COs in the region, but they have not yet led to improved CP management practices. Another challenge in introducing more strategic approaches is that responsibilities for CP management and for strategic partner management (or relationship management) are distributed across a CO – with Field Offices, Activity Managers, and CP Management. This will require a more strategic, 'whole-of-CO' approach that is driven by the strategic direction of senior leadership at the CO.

Capacity strengthening

Conclusion 3   **WFP has not had a clear approach to strengthening the capacity of Cooperating Partners. The new generation of CSPs provides an opportunity to clarify this approach, including how it is linked to broader WFP support to country capacity strengthening.**

122.   Despite individual examples of contributions to national NGO capacity strengthening over time (e.g. Hunger Fighters Uganda), WFP has not yet developed a consistent definition of or approach to CP capacity strengthening. There has not been more systematic investment in national NGO capacity building (beyond the specific FLA requirements) and there is also broad recognition of the limited resources available for doing so. Furthermore, the emphasis on tonnage of food delivered as a performance metric (reflecting "old way of working" focused on food distribution), habits of short-term agreements, and very real demands of complex emergencies, means that it is more difficult to raise and commit resources to strengthen national NGOs over time. Donor expectations also tend to emphasize a short-term and delivery/logistics orientation that limits potential for capacity strengthening.

123.   Despite corporate guidance on capacity strengthening of NGOs, COs are not sure how to go about this – what are the approaches and tools that they can use to strengthen capacities of national NGOs. At the CO-level, there is also a lack of strategic frameworks, targets or benchmarks to provide direction and measurable objectives for an increased focus on capacity strengthening of CPs and long-term engagement with CPs. In some COs, such as Somalia and Burundi, this is now being addressed more explicitly as part of the new CSP.

124.   The NGO Guidance Manual outlines a partnership life cycle that encompasses four dimensions: Phase I: Scoping the Landscape; Phase II: Negotiating FLAs; Phase III: Implementation; Phase IV: Evaluating the Partnership. However, this does not help to visualize the CP role in sustaining outcomes, which is critical for WFP's commitment to country capacity strengthening. RBN has begun to develop a partnering cycle that may make the CP role within country capacity strengthening more visible and that reflects the partnership cycle presented in WFP's Gender Toolkit, as illustrated in the figure below. This approach, especially through its 'sustaining outcomes' quadrant, could help to articulate the expected role of CPs even after they are no longer WFP CPs, in that they still have a role in country capacity strengthening (e.g. in Kenya where the CO is moving away from NGOs as CPs, and where NGOs can still be helpful through their participation in the strategic dialogue on the new CSP.

Figure 3.1 WFP's Partnering Cycle[116]
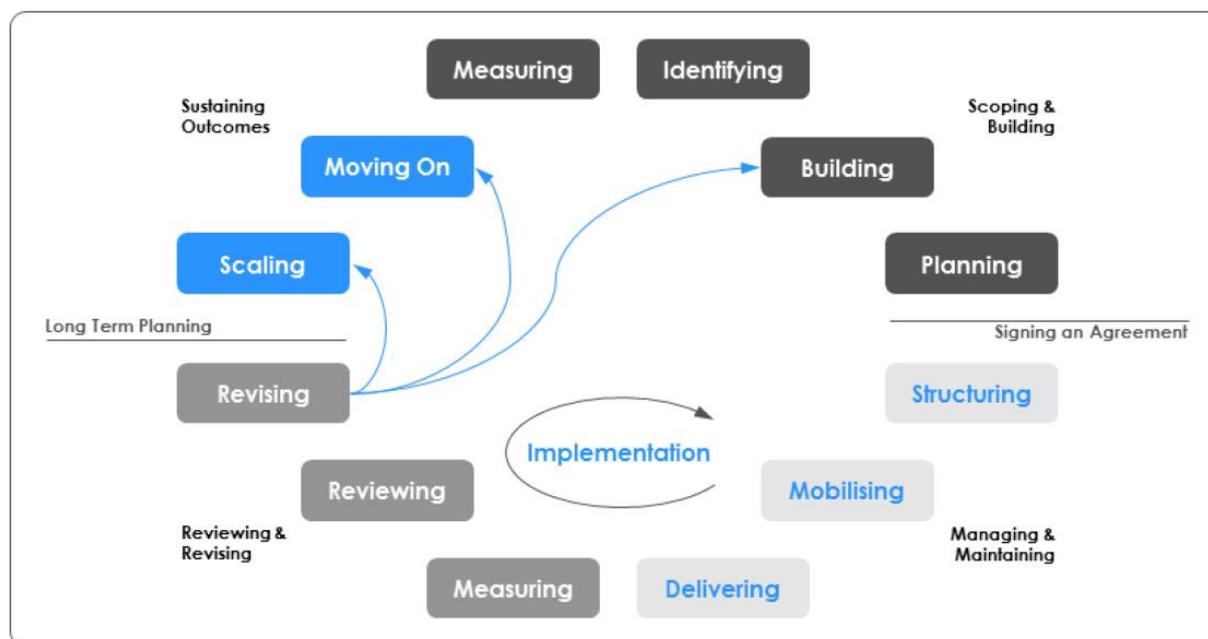
Grand Bargain commitments

Conclusion 4   WFP has made progress on Grand Bargain commitments overall, but has not yet clarified the implications of the localization agenda for Cooperating Partnerships and CP management.

125.   WFP reports progress across the Grand Bargain Core Commitments. This evaluation focused on the commitment to localization. Evaluation findings provide positive overall figures about the numbers of local CPs and funds flowing through them over the period, with variations by country. This has been accompanied by a shift in discourse in RBN and COs that puts greater emphasis on localization in emerging strategic documents. Yet localization and other Grand Bargain commitments do not appear to be key drivers of change in CPs or in CP management practices. In part, this may be due the lack of clear expectations for each country office (with very different operational contexts) and how it should shift its engagement with local NGOs. Other gaps in progress include the limited uptake of multi-year FLAs and limited investment in institutional capacities in line with Grand Bargain core commitment to ensure multi-year investments in the institutional capacities of local actors.

126.   At the time of writing, WFP was working on a corporate position paper to define the different aspects of localization agenda for the organization, which may help to address gaps noted in this evaluation.

Conclusion 5   There is still unmet potential to link CP management with WFP's more gender-transformative agenda.

127.   WFP integrated gender perspectives into CP management to some extent, as seen in the clauses added to FLAs that provide a platform for discussion with CPs on key issues (e.g. gender parity and PSEA). However, the practices and tools do not encourage CPs to go beyond a focus on "numeric" gender equality towards more gender-transformative programming. A more gender-transformative approach would require COs to pay greater attention to CPs in a number of ways, including the types of organizations selected (e.g. more women-led organizations and/or organizations with a clear GEWE mandate) and their organizational capacities to position their work more deliberately to address power relations and gender norms in ways that are relevant for different types of programming activities and contexts. Underutilization of INGO capacity for GEWE and limited budget allocations for gender capacity strengthening are other limitations that need to be addressed.

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[116] WFP. Undated. *Gender & Partnerships*. WFP Gender Office

128.   Furthermore, human rights and inclusion are important considerations in WFP's Strategic Plan 2017-2021, and WFP's partnerships have the potential to enhance the organization's ability to meet its commitments to integrating GEWE, accountability to affected populations, and addressing the vulnerabilities of different stakeholder groups in all its activities. By paying greater attention to the types of organizations selected and their existing organizational capacities, as mentioned above, WFP's CP management processes can enhance the extent to which local human rights and women's rights issues are covered by WFP's engagement in cooperating partnerships.

129.   WFP's new Gender Policy and implementation plan may address some of these areas.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

130.   The evaluation's recommendations address the overall objectives of the evaluation, and as such aim to: (i) inform WFP's regional cooperating partnership strategy, thus ensuring that WFP can meet its current and long-term objectives; (ii) inform the WFP RBN regional strategy to meet its localization and Grand Bargain commitments; (iii) develop a better understanding of current cooperating partnerships across the region, especially partnerships with local organizations, and how WFP can strengthen the enabling environment for these partnerships from contracting, operational management and capacity strengthening perspectives; (iv) enable WFP RBN to initiate a strategic dialogue around cooperating partnerships with COs during upcoming second-generation CSP design phases; and (v) inform ongoing work by the RBN to better engage in a gender-transformative approach to cooperating partnerships, and to engage in more strategic targeting of, and partnerships with, women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations.

131.   The evaluation's recommendations presented below in Table 3.1 are prioritized based on the evaluation team's assessment of their urgency and relevance, and are presented in two groups: (i) strategic recommendations that focus on informing the overall direction of WFP's CP management in the region; and (ii) operational recommendations that relate to elements for operationalizing WFP's direction for CP management in the region. Several changes to WFP's CP management practices and processes that are underway at corporate, regional and country levels at the time of writing may not be fully reflected in the recommendations.

Table 3.1 Recommendations

#	Recommendation	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when
Strategic Recommendations					
1.	**WFP should develop a strategy that contains an intentional approach to how WFP will meet its commitments to the localization agenda in the Eastern Africa region.**	RBN	CO	High	Q2 2022
1.1	The strategy should outline goals or targets towards partnering with more local NGOs (e.g., a specific proportion of CPs among COs in the region that are local NGOs), and highlight the pathways for COs to achieve such goals even in contexts of emergency response.	RBN	CO	High	Q2 2022
1.2	The strategy should include objectives that increase emphasis on capacity strengthening of CPs, and in this regard should also: • Articulate specific goals and targets for the allocation of resources towards capacity strengthening of CPs such as proportions of FLAs with budget allocations for CP capacity strengthening, and/or proportions of FLAs that have international NGOs as lead organizations that strengthen the capacity of local NGOs • Include both immediate programmatic capacities, as well as institutional capacities, as areas of capacity strengthening of CPs • Clearly outline possible modalities for capacity strengthening of CPs, including those which WFP has engaged in, such as training, funding for recruitment, provision of equipment, on-the-job technical assistance. The strategy should also include other modalities that are not yet commonly practiced in capacity strengthening of CPs, such as facilitating learning exchange among CPs through South-South Cooperation (e.g., via study visits, in-field demonstrations or workshops) • Consider establishing a pilot approach in certain countries, aimed at introducing a more systematic effort to strengthen capacities and monitor progress in results. Such an approach could first be applied to a sample of CPs, especially for COs with a large number of CPs (e.g., Somalia, South Sudan) • Establish the link with WFP's corporate to country capacity strengthening, ensuring that capacity strengthening of NGOs and National Red Cross/Crescent Societies are included in the same holistic effort to strengthening capacities of national actors in the region	RBN	CO and HQ (Country Capacity Strengthening Unit)	High	Q2 2022
1.3	The strategy should stress WFP commitment to transition to multi-year FLAs and include a related indicator to monitor progress. RBN should provide continued support for COs, including through advocacy with donors so that they increase multi-year funding for COs.	RBN	CO	High	Q2 2022

#	Recommendation	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when
2.	**WFP should articulate a more intentional approach to drawing on CP management as a strategy for increasing capacity for gender-transformative programming.**	HQ	RBN	High	Q2 2022
2.1	Assess existing gender capacities of NGOs in countries, and identify opportunities for INGOs to lead capacity strengthening for local NGOs and to support WFP in this area as part of a more strategic cooperating partnership.	HQ	RBN	High	Q2 2022
2.2	Define what it means by women-led organizations and organizations advancing gender equality (as per new draft Gender Policy) and clarify related expectations for partnership selection.	HQ	RBN	High	Q2 2022
2.3	Integrate the guidance from HQ and/or RBN on application of partnership-related components of the Gender Toolkit, budgeting for gender activity cost categories and gender capacity strengthening for CPs within FLAs.	RBN	HQ	High	Q2 2022
2.4	Revise budget templates for FLAs that clearly identify the resource requirements for gender capacity strengthening.	HQ	RBN and COs	High	Q3 2022
2.5	Include illustrations, targets or requirements within FLA provisions, PPE tools or capacity assessments that move beyond gender-sensitive programming and focus on transformative change, such as women's participation in decision-making and resource management.	HQ		Medium	Q3 2022
2.6	Ensure that the approach articulated also reflects human rights and inclusion, and takes into account the intersection of gender issues and other social dimensions in reinforcing inequalities among men and women, in line with WFP's commitments in the Gender Policy 2015-2020, and the new Gender Policy when completed.	HQ	RBN	High	Q2 2022
3.	**WFP should continue to harmonize partnership management processes with other UN agencies, and pursue strategic collaboration with other organizations aimed at capacity strengthening of CPs:** • Building on the launch of the UNPP, WFP should continue exploring ways in which it can further harmonize capacity assessments, contracting, monitoring and reporting tools and timelines with other UN agencies that are active in the region, beginning with CPs already engaged in a joint project/programme between WFP and other UN agencies in the region	RBN		Medium	Ongoing

#	Recommendation	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when
	• WFP should pursue high-level collaboration with other UN agencies in relation to capacity strengthening of CPs in the region, such as through joint programmes, the establishment of pooled funding mechanism aimed at capacity strengthening, or identifying resources that can support capacity strengthening. Such an approach could aim at leveraging the mutual complementarity of the agencies involved, to provide a holistic package of capacity strengthening for CPs, including a focus on operational as well as institutional capacities.				
3.1	WFP should establish agreements and partnerships with HQs or regional bureaux of international NGOs aimed at increasing strategic engagement with these NGOs, as well as facilitating increased capacity strengthening for local NGOs at the country level. The application of these strategic agreements at country-level should not, however, bypass existing selection and proposal review competitive processes at WFP COs, and should continue to take into account any potential risks in engaging with local NGOs.	HQ	RBN	Medium	Ongoing
Operational Recommendations					
4.	**WFP COs should operationalize their intent to foster more strategic engagement of CPs through a focus on:** • Increasing engagement of CPs in discussions that are not centred on project implementation, but that are also related to broader issues at country level and other partnership issues • Facilitating regular meetings (half yearly, annual) to ensure information exchange, present changes in requirements, and ensure on-going discussions between WFP and its CPs • Increasing involvement of local NGOs in national- or regional- level events or platforms that can serve as both learning for, and knowledge sharing by, local NGOs • RBN can support COs by developing guidance on options for strategic engagement that builds on lessons learned from COs in the region that have experience engaging in more strategic partnership (e.g. Somalia and Uganda) • RBN should provide technical assistance to CP management and Programme teams at COs that have developed PAPs in order to update CP-related sections in Key Actions and Prioritization annexes, e.g. in establishing performance metrics to measure progress over time. RBN should also facilitate a learning exchange among CO staff in the region to inform CO-led decisions on whether PAPs should be developed in alignment with upcoming CSPs	CO	RBN	High	Ongoing

#	Recommendation	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when
5.	**WFP should institutionalize partnership management, including CP management, as a field of technical expertise that encompasses oversight on transactions of cooperating partnerships and strategic aspects of CP management. This should include:** • Developing a framework outlining the key elements of organizational arrangements for CP management at the country level. Such a framework could include a definition of the role and responsibilities of units in relation to CP management, description of the technical expertise in CP management, levels of expertise and experience, and good practices in situating CP management partnership teams in country offices • Committing to providing predictable funding and resources for CP management within the RB and CO level structures • Providing longer-term, institutionalized funding for staff positions in CP management at the RBN • Including a strategy for engaging all units in COs including programme, activity teams, logistics and supply chain among others as part of a 'whole of office' approach to improving CP management practices and processes (e.g. through establishing roles and responsibilities of various teams/units)	HQ and RBN	CO	Medium	Q4 2022
6.	**WFP should continue ongoing efforts to increase the digitization and automation of CP management processes at COs and FOs in the region.** • WFP should continue to invest in revisiting the FLA template, towards increasing its use and documentation as a digital document (as opposed to a manual one), towards more streamlined collection of data on cooperating partnerships in the region • WFP should further its efforts in digitization of CP management processes beyond partner selection and contracting, and further explore possibilities of digitizing processes related to implementation (e.g. invoicing, payments)	HQ and RBN	CO	High	Ongoing

Annex I Summary Terms of Reference

Thematic Evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region, 2016 – 2020

Summary Terms of Reference

Thematic evaluations cover a theme across the entire Country Strategic Plan (CSP) portfolio or selected activities. They cover one or more countries, and, in some cases, have a global scope. They provide a "big-picture" perspective on how WFP is performing; how the organization could further improve in a given thematic area; and identify good practices in a given thematic area and within a range of operational contexts.

Subject and Focus of the Evaluation

World Food Programme (WFP)'s Bureau for Eastern Africa in Nairobi (RBN) oversees 10 developing, low- and middle-income countries in the Eastern Africa region. With some of WFP's largest and most complex operations, RBN is assisting over 20 million people. The countries supported by RBN are Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. Most of region's assistance is implemented through cooperating partners (CP).

Starting in 2016, WFP embarked on a process of institutional reform to reorient the organization's strategic objectives, programmatic and administrative mechanisms for cooperating partnerships in response to the strategic re-orientation (the Grand Bargain localization commitments; the shift towards country-level and multi-year strategic planning; and the IRM's increased focus on long-term engagement with national partners).

The evaluation will adopt standard UNEG and OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, namely: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

Objectives and Stakeholders of the Evaluation

WFP evaluations serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning.

The evaluation will seek the views of, and be useful to, a range of internal and external stakeholders. The key internal stakeholders will be the RBN, the country offices (Cos) and the Field/Area Offices across the region. The RBN has a core role in relation to CP management in providing oversight, strategic guidance and programme support for COs, while the COs are responsible for partnership engagement across the partnership lifecycle. Other internal stakeholders have interests in the results of the evaluation and will be consulted. At the corporate level, WFP headquarters (HQ) technical units are responsible for issuing and overseeing the rollout of normative guidance on corporate programme themes, activities, and modalities, as well as of overarching corporate policies and strategies. Government counterparts and civil society representatives will be important external stakeholders for the evaluation. In addition, bilateral donors will be consulted to inform an understanding of partnership and localization approaches across different contexts. Finally, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA jointly developed the UN Partner Portal as a harmonized and efficient platform for civil society organizations to engage with the UN on partnership opportunities, indicating that select representatives of other UN agencies should be consulted as well.

Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will address the following three overarching questions:

Question 1: How relevant are WFP cooperating partners and partnership management practices in countries supported by RBN? The sub-questions will address the relevance of cooperating partnerships; and the alignment of WFP's approaches with good partnership practice including in relation to reflecting a commitment to and addressing GEWE.

Question 2: To what extent have (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance been strengthened? This will address results in terms of capacity and performance of COs in managing cooperating partnerships, and in relation to the capacity and performance of CPs. The sub-questions also allow for probing further on how GEWE is taken into account in the current partnership practices (e.g. through the field level agreements (FLAs).

Question 3: What internal and external factors have influenced (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance? The sub-questions will address internal factors, such as the staffing and structures for CP management in COs, WFP systems and processes for partnership management, monitoring and reporting; as well as external factors deriving from regional, country, or local contexts and the overall partnership landscape.

Scope, Methodology and Ethical Considerations

The evaluation will target organizations that were engaged by WFP to implement its activities in the Eastern Africa region during the period 2016 to 2020. The primary focus will be on national NGOs and CBOs, including women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations. International NGOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent societies who have implemented WFP activities will also be targeted. The focus of the evaluation will be on WFP partner management practices (in terms of the business processes for scoping, selecting, contracting, performance monitoring and review) and on partner capacities.

This evaluation will be summative in nature and will use a mixed method approach that will incorporate qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis tools to ensure

triangulation and credibility of findings and conclusions. This will include: - (i)Desk Review and Context Analysis: A careful documentation analysis of existing data and information from primary and secondary sources including (policy documents, programme documents, partners assessment, procedures; (ii) Mix-methods primary data collection: Key informative interviews, such as with CO management and other WFP stakeholders, including international and local partners, as well as a well-designed survey would be relevant to complete the analysis. The design of the survey will be further discussed during the inception phase with the evaluation team and; (iii) Case Study (or similar alternative approach): to more deeply explore and illustrate common trends, challenges, opportunities, or other specifics for select cooperating partners based on context.

In view of recent developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation will be conducted remotely. The evaluation team will ensure necessary mitigation measures are put in to place to guard against any challenges occasioned by undertaking the evaluation remotely.

The evaluation will conform to the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines. Accordingly, the evaluation team is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities. All evaluation team members will be required to sign an ethics pledge and confidentiality agreement.

Roles and responsibilities

Evaluation Team: The evaluation will be conducted by a team of independent consultants with a mix of relevant expertise related to partnerships management.

Evaluation Management: The evaluation will be managed by Ruth Musili, Evaluation Officer in WFP RBN Regional Evaluation Unit. She will be the main interlocutor between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader, and WFP counterparts, to ensure a smooth implementation process and compliance with WFP evaluation

quality standards for process and content. The RBN Deputy Regional Director will approve the final versions of all evaluation products.

Internal Evaluation Committee (EC): This has been formed as part of ensuring the independence and impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluation committee will be consulted and will approve the products from all the process.

Evaluation Reference Group (ERG): The ERG members will review and comment on the draft evaluation products and act as key informants in order to further safeguard against bias and influence. External stakeholders will be involved in the ERG- including partner agencies, government, and implementing partners.

Stakeholders: WFP stakeholders at country, regional and HQ level are expected to engage throughout the evaluation process to ensure a high degree of utility and transparency. External stakeholders, such as affected populations, government, donors, implementing partners and other UN agencies will be consulted during the evaluation process.

Communication

To ensure a smooth and efficient process and enhance the learning from this evaluation, the Evaluation Manager will develop a specific communication plan, aligned with the Evaluation Communication Strategy, that will be developed and shared with the evaluation team during the inception phase. It will include and details specific communication methods as well as roles and responsibilities among the EC and ERG members, as well as for the COs and RBN colleagues. Evaluation findings will be actively disseminated, and the final evaluation report will be publicly available on WFP's website.

Timing and key milestones

Inception Phase: March- July 2021
Data collection: August – September 2021
Reporting: November – December 2021

Annex II   Detailed Country Information

#	Country	Governance Typology[117]	Income classification[118]	Fragile or conflict-affected?[119]	Needs Based Plan (NBP)	Number of CPs (2016-2020)		
						International NGOs	Local NGOs	Total
1	Burundi	Weak governance structure	L	High institutional and social fragility	268,163,976	9 (1 women-led/women's org)	11 (0 women-led/women's org	20 (1 women-led/women's org)
2	Kenya	Unified governance structure	LM	No	1,093,320,922	20 (3 women-led/women's org)	19 (1 women-led/women's org)	39 (4 women-led/women's org)
3	Somalia	Fractured governance at national level	L	High-Intensity conflict	1,883,907,029	29 (0 women-led/women's org)	159 (11 women-led/women's org)	188 (11 women-led/women's org)
4	Ethiopia	Weak governance structure in South-eastern Ethiopia Unified governance structure for rest of country	L	No[120]	3,291,797,717	19 (4 women-led/women's org)	14 (1 women-led/women's org)	33 (5 women-led/women's org)
5	Djibouti	Unified governance structure	LM	No	83,270,926	2 (0 women-led/women's org)	5 (1 women-led/women's org)	7 (1 women-led/women's org)
6	Rwanda	Unified governance structure	L	No	250,589,594	7 (4 women-led/women's org)	5 (1 women-led/women's org)	12 (5 women-led/women's org)

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[117] Based on WFP's governance typologies in RBN countries of operations: Typology 1 - Fractured governance at national level; Typology 2 - Weak governance structure; Typology 3 - Unified governance structure.

[118] L= Low, LM = Lower Middle, UM = Upper Middle, H = High

[119] As per World Bank classification. See: http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/888211594267968803/FCSList-FY21.pdf

[120] While Ethiopia is not classified as an FCAC for FY21, it is currently embroiled in an armed conflict which began in November 2020 in the Tigray region of the country.

#	Country	Governance Typology[117]	Income classification[118]	Fragile or conflict-affected?[119]	Needs Based Plan (NBP)	Number of CPs (2016-2020)		
						International NGOs	Local NGOs	Total
7	South Sudan	Fractured governance at national level	L	Medium-intensity conflict	3,885,285,798	48 (1 women-led/women's org)	58 (5 women-led/women's org)	106 (6 women-led/women's org)
8	Sudan	Fractured governance at national level	L	High institutional and social fragility	2,697,382,765	26 (2 women-led/women's org)	74 (7 women-led/women's org)	100 (9 women-led/women's org)
9	Uganda	Unified governance structure	L	No	1,265,814,889	20 (6 women-led/women's org)	16 (3 women-led/women's org)	36 (9 women-led/women's org)

Annex III   Evaluation Timeline

Steps	By whom	Key dates
Inception		
Briefing core team	EM	April
Interviews with RBN and CO stakeholders	TL	April-May
Desk review of key documents by evaluation team	TL	April-May
Submit Draft Inception Report (D1)	TL	May 26
Address RBN's comments on D1	ET	June 4
Submit Revised Inception Report (D2) to DEQAS	TL	June 17
Address DEQAS' comments on D2	ET	July 9
Submit Revised Inception Report (D2)	TL	July 9
WFP RBN circulates revised IR to key stakeholders	EM	July 12
Data collection and analysis		
Remote field missions to 3 COs	ET	August 9 – September 15
Interviews Tier II countries	ET	August 9 – September 20
Survey Launch date	ET with RBN	September 8
Survey close date	ET	September 27
Regional and HQ interviews	ET with RBN introductions	By September 27
Debriefing with CO staff (slide presentation) – Kenya, Burundi, and Somalia. Set time so that Ruth can also participate	TL & EM	Late-September – first 2 weeks October
Gather any additional info from data systems/other documents	ET	First 2 weeks October
Regional-level debrief before Zero Draft and maybe this Learning Workshop comes later)	ET & EM	Week of October 25
Triangulation of collected data (evidence tables)	TL	October
Reporting		
Drafting of Zero Draft of the Evaluation Report	TL	October 25 – November 22
Submit Zero Draft of the Evaluation Report (D3) to RM and AB	TL	November 24
Respond to Comments from RM and AB	TL	November 29[121]
Submit Draft 1 of the Evaluation Report to DEQS and External Reference Group (D4)	TL	November 29
Comments received from DEQS and ERG and shared with ET	EM	December 10
Dissemination and follow up		
Prepare management response	EM	TBD
Share final evaluation report and management response with the Office of Evaluation for publication	EM	TBD
Final presentation of Evaluation Report to relevant RBN-stakeholders	EM	TBD

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[121] Assuming comments received by November 26

Annex IV   Methodology

1. Methodological approach

132.   This evaluation was summative in nature and used a mixed method approach that incorporated qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis tools to ensure triangulation and credibility of findings and conclusions.

133.   The evaluation was guided by principles of gender equality, equity and inclusion. It analyzed the way GEWE is addressed throughout the partnership cycle (scoping and selection, contracting, implementation, evaluation) and in the sampled partner organizations, paying particular attention to partners' staffing, policies, procedures. It specifically targeted women-owned or led organizations, as well as the partners with a particular gender-related focus (see section 3.3 for more details on sampling). The evaluation team's overall approach was participatory in that it engaged with stakeholders at RBN, especially the commissioning unit, reference groups, and other groups of stakeholders (e.g., partnership officers/focal points in the COs, Gender Results Network members) at critical moments in the evaluation process. Similarly, debrief sessions in the three countries selected for in-depth review (Burundi, Kenya, Somalia) were used to elicit different points of view/engage in discussions.

2. Evaluation Matrix

134.   The guiding framework for the evaluation was the evaluation matrix, which builds on the evaluation questions identified in the ToR and was further refined by the evaluation team in consultation with the RBN. The full evaluation matrix in Annex V outlines how the various lines of inquiry with their data collection methods and tools were used and triangulated to respond to the evaluation questions and sub-questions. See Table iv.1 below for the main evaluation questions and their related sub-questions.

135.   Selected revised Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria, as indicated in the ToR will be applied as follows:

- The *relevance* criterion was applied in relation to Evaluation Question 1 to assess the extent to which WFP's cooperating partners and partnership management practices are relevant to the countries supported by the RBN.

- The *effectiveness* criterion was applied in relation to Evaluation Questions 2 and 3 that address the results of WFP's cooperating partnerships and partnership management practices, and factors that have contributed to results achievement.

- The criterion of *sustainability* is considered when assessing the results of WFP's cooperating partnerships and partnership management practices and their ongoing support for CSP in the targeted countries. In other words, to what extent partnership management practices and capacity strengthening are creating the conditions for eventual handover to national governments and partners.

- The *impact* criterion was applied in relation to Evaluation Question 2 which addresses the extent to which WFP partners' performance has been strengthened in terms of level of funding, scope of work, and ability to deliver on interventions, especially those focused on GEWE.

136.   Although the criterion of coherence was not included, questions or indicators related to coherence under EQs 2.2 and 3.1 are included in the evaluation matrix in order to support reflections on the other criteria. In this way, the evaluation helped identify initiatives such as the UNPP, requirements for joint reporting, or joint investments in capacity strengthening that have benefits in terms of coherence. Similarly, in data collection tools such as the survey, questions were asked about partner engagement with other funders. In relation to the efficiency criterion, under EQ2.2 the evaluation explores the extent to which COs have improved efficiency of contracting through increased use of fit-for-purpose FLAs (short-term and multi-year FLAs). This follows from the ToR's initial evaluation question related to efficiency.

Table iv.1 Main Evaluation Questions and Sub-Questions

OECD-DAC Criteria	Main Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Sub-Questions
1. Relevance	1. How relevant are WFP cooperating partners and partnership management practices in countries supported by RBN?	1.1. What shifts in (a) partnership management practices, (b) partner standards, and (c) types of partners have occurred in countries support by RBN over time? 1.2. To what extent are RBN's partnership management practices and partner standards aligned with partnership good practices principles?[122] 1.3. To what extent are CO partnership management practices, and partner standards, relevant to: (i) the needs of partner organizations, (ii) the needs of affected populations? 1.4. To what extent are WFP partners in countries supported by RBN relevant to: (i) WFP's corporate partnership priorities; (ii) CSP objectives?
2. Effectiveness, Sustainability, Impact	2. To what extent have (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance been strengthened?	2.1. To what extent have CO partnership management practices improved or deteriorated over time? 2.2. What are the key results of the changes in management practices that have been introduced? In particular, in terms of: • Increased use of automated and strategic processes throughout partner management, including effective use of the UN Partner Portal and Partnership Action Plans (PAPs) • More partners that are women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, or with good GEWE capacities • Improved efficiency through the use of fit-for-purpose contracting modalities (short-term vs. multi-year FLAs) • Improved CO ability to review partner performance and provide guidance for improvements • Increased CO emphasis on developing organizational and financial capacities of partners 2.3. To what extent have partners' operational and administrative capacities (more human resources, improved skills and knowledge, better equipment, improved administrative practices) been strengthened? 2.4. To what extent has partners' performance been strengthened, in terms of: • Ability to deliver on interventions, including GEWE interventions • Expanded scope of work • Improved level of funding 2.5. Have there been any other intended or unintended results of improved CO management practices?
3. Effectiveness	3. What internal and external factors have influenced (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance?	3.1. To what extent and how have external contextual factors influenced partnership management practices and partners' capacities and performance? 3.2. To what extent and how have RBN and HQ support influenced CO partnership management practices? 3.3. To what extent and how has CO support led to improved partners' capacities and performance? 3.4. To what extent and how have factors internal to the partners (organizational and financial capacities, administrative practices) influenced their performance?

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[122] Drawing upon the 2017 Evaluation of WFP's Partnership Strategy (p.22), good practice principles include partnerships being driven by agreed upon goals, being characterized by transparency, accountability, and communication; encompassing internal capacity building of participating actors; and including explicit and strategically directed attention to gender equality.

3. Data collection methods

137.   The evaluation used the following methods of data collection: (a) database mining, (b) document and literature review; (b) stakeholder interviews; and (c) an online survey administered and distributed to representatives of WFP's cooperating partners in the nine RBN countries included in the evaluation. The evaluation employed a two-tiered approach in the degree of depth of review among the nine countries, with three countries selected for in-depth reviews (Burundi, Kenya and Somalia) and the remaining six countries constituting desk reviews 'plus.' For details on the country selection criteria and data collection methods used across tiers, see the section 'Country Selection and Sampling.' Table iv.2 provides a summary of the approach, method, focus and stakeholders for each geographic level of analysis.

Table iv.2 Summary of approach, method, focus and stakeholders for each geographic level of analysis

Level	Approach and method	Evaluation Focus	Consulted stakeholders
HQ and global level	Individual interviews with • Individuals at WFP HQ (i.e., NGO Partnership Unit) • Representatives of bilateral donors and other international organizations.	• Provide a global view on how WFP's partnering has evolved and lessons and good practice on addressing GEWE in and through partnerships. • Provide a global view on other donors' approach to partnering with national organizations, on progress in meeting the Grand Bargain and localization agenda, and on key considerations and challenges in partnership management.	3 individuals (2 women, 1 man)
RBN	Individual interviews and focus group discussions with • Regional Director or Deputy Director • Officers responsible for Partnerships; Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting; Emergency Programming; Gender • Officers representing thematic units that rely on cooperating partnerships with different NGOs.	• Provide an overview of (a) changes in partnership management practices and partners in the region, (b) strengths and weaknesses of WFP's partnership model, (c) overall progress in meeting WFP's Grand Bargain and localization commitments, and (d) external and internal supporting and limiting factors.	8 individuals (7 women, 1 man)
Tier 1 Country Offices (In-depth review): Kenya, Somalia and Burundi	Interviews and focus group discussions with: • CO managers and staff (including Country Director, CP management Focal Point, field-level staff involved in CP management, and staff from thematic units) • Representatives of different types of cooperating partners • Government representatives • Representatives of UN agencies	Focus on country-specific insights on (a) improvements in partnership management practices and partners' capacities and performance (b) strengths and weaknesses of WFP's partnership model, (c) strengths and weaknesses of RBN's support to COs, and (d) external and internal factors	56 individuals (22 women, 34 men)

Level	Approach and method	Evaluation Focus	Consulted stakeholders
Tier 2 Country Offices (Desk reviews 'plus'): Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda	Interviews with: • Select WFP CO staff • Select representatives of different types of cooperating partners	• Focus on exploring key themes/issues that emerge during data collection (such as the use of UN Partner Portal and PAPs, ability to identify and partner with women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, etc.)	19 individuals (7 women, 12 men) individuals
All 9 countries	An online survey was sent to all international NGOs, national NGOs or CBOs, and Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies that partnered with WFP between 2016 and 2020.	Focus on exploring partners' perceptions on (a) CO management practices, (b) partners own capacities (financing, scope of work, ability to deliver) and (c) internal and external enabling factors.	213 CP representatives responded to the survey out of a total of 420 individuals to whom the survey was sent (response rate of 50.7 percent)

3.1 Document review and database mining

138.   A preliminary review of relevant documents and literature was conducted as part of the Inception Phase and documents were systematically analyzed to address the questions and sub-questions in the evaluation matrix during the Data Collection and Analysis phases. The document and literature reviews complement the detailed work of the in-depth reviews and, as described below, constitute an element of the desk reviews 'plus.' The documents and data reviewed included the following:

• WFP documentation specific to individual CPs: such as FLAs, CP Evaluations, Capacity Assessments and Improvement plans

• Country-specific documentation such as CSPs and Interim CSPs (ICSPs), Partnership Action Plans (PAPs), documents from the CP committees, and SOPs on FLA management

• Regional and corporate-level documentation, such as tools, templates and guidelines for CPs, Grand Bargain progress reports, corporate evaluations and relevant policies and strategies.

139.   The evaluation also reviewed data from WFP's COMET and WINGS databases to analyse country- and regional-level trends in terms of (a) changes in the number and proportion of CP partners, (b) changes in the length of FLA agreements, and (c) performance of CPs in terms of CP performance was commodity distribution (metric tons distributed/received.

140.   As noted in Section 3.1, the number and types of sources and frequency of reporting on partnership performance varied across countries, due largely to the lack of a logical framework or ToC for cooperating partnerships at the RBN. As such, the review of the performance of WFP partnerships did not focus substantially on results of partnerships in effecting change among beneficiaries. However, the team reviewed data on commodities distributed during the 2018-2020 period for a sample of 22 CP organizations that WFP has partnered with in the region.[123] This performance metric was identified as relevant for the evaluation by RBN and a dataset containing this data, drawn from COMET, was sent to the evaluation team.

141.   The document review was also forward-looking, as it included documents relevant to the future strategic orientation and internal organization of WFP and RBN (e.g., the second generation CSPs beginning in 2022). The review process was guided by a document review framework based on the questions and indicators in the evaluation matrix.

142.   WFP was able to support the compilation of documents throughout the evaluation process.

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[123] These organizations were the same organizations that were consulted through interviews.

3.2 Interviews

143.   Interviews were conducted remotely by telephone or through a web-based platform such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, or Skype, depending on the preference of individual interviewees. Interviews were semi structured and were conducted individually and in groups. All interviews were guided by interview protocols developed during the Inception Phase of the evaluation (see Annex VI).

144.   The evaluation team engaged a regional consultant who conducted remote interviews as part of the Kenya and Somalia in-depth reviews (see section on In-Depth Reviews below). Interviews for the Burundi in-depth review were conducted remotely by the Montreal-based team, as most interviews were conducted in English or French. Given the timeframe and budget available for this evaluation, and the evaluation's focus on exploring the extent to which WFP has been able to create an environment conducive for effective cooperating partnerships, we did not conduct interviews with community-level beneficiaries. A detailed list of stakeholders consulted is included in Annex X.

Interviews with RBN stakeholders

145.   In addition to consultations conducted for in-depth reviews and desk reviews 'plus,' the evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders at the RBN, including the Regional Deputy Director, and with officers responsible for cooperating partnerships; Emergency Programming; and Gender; as well as other officers representing thematic units that rely on cooperating partnerships with different NGOs. Interviews with Global and HQ stakeholders

146.   The evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews with WFP HQ staff and regional representatives of other organizations who provided perspectives on the Grand Bargain and localization agenda, and on key considerations and challenges in partnership management. a global view on how WFP's partnering has evolved during.

Interviews with Cooperating Partners

147.   As there are a large number of CPs across the nine countries, the evaluation's interviews focused on a subset of CPs based on a set of purposive sampling criteria. Selection of CPs to be included in this subset took into account:[124]

- A mix of international and local NGOs; Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies were included in Tier 1 countries
- The duration of the partnership (organizations with the most contracts over the period will be selected).
- Ensuring that women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations are included for each country.

148.   The evaluation team interviewed representatives of women-led organizations using the list provided by the RBN (see section 3.1) as a basis for selecting partners for interviews that were later discussed with the CO. It also consulted with COs to identify women's rights organizations or GEWE-mandated organizations that may not have been identified as women-led organizations in this initial list.

149.   Furthermore, other variables, such as location of the partner (in the capital, outside the capital) were considered as possible criteria for selecting organizations for interviews. However, COMET and other sources do not provide such information. The evaluation took these variables into account in the selection of partners by developing a shortlist of CPs for each country, drawing on available information from COMET on partner type, number of contracts, and duration of partnerships, as well the list of women-led organizations provided to the evaluation team by the RBN. CO feedback and input on this shortlist in turn informed and validated the selection of organizations.

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[124] Other variables, such as location of the partner (in the capital, outside the capital), were also considered, but COMET and other sources do not provide information on partners with that level of granularity.

Interviews with WFP CO staff and other in-country stakeholders

150.   In each country, the evaluation team also conducted interviews with WFP CO managers and staff, including with the Country Director or Deputy (in Tier 1 countries), Partnership Officer, and staff/managers from different thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships). Gender Officers in each Tier 1 CO were consulted to offer perspectives on WFP's CP management practices as it relates to GEWE, the partnership landscape (women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations) and GEWE capabilities of different WFP partner organizations.

151.   In each of the Tier 1 countries, the evaluation conducted one interview with a national government representative.

3.3 Survey of Cooperating Partners

152.   The evaluation conducted an online survey with questions addressed to WFP CPs in all nine countries (including those selected for in-depth reviews, thereby allowing for reaching out to partners beyond those who can be interviewed) to collect information on their experience in partnering with WFP. The survey focused primarily on collecting quantitative data (i.e. through Likert Scales) but also allowed respondents to provide qualitative data through open-ended responses. The survey addressed the following themes:

- Descriptive information about the partner (country, partner category type – INGO, NNGO, etc., duration of partnership with WFP, types of contracts implemented, whether or not the NGO is currently a partner of WFP, whether the organization is a women's organization and GEWE-mandated organization, proportion of funding received from other sources, funding contributed by partners themselves, etc.)
- Partners' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of WFP partnership management practices
- Partners' perceptions of the role played by WFP in contributing to improvements in their capacity and performance

153.   The survey was primarily web-based, and an overview of the results of the survey is provided in Annex IX.

154.   The evaluation team sent out the survey to all cooperating partners that entered into a partnership with WFP during the period 2016 to 2020. The rationale for this approach was to maximize the number of responses. Based on the number of responses to the survey per partner type and country, the evaluation team conducted further analysis of the data (e.g., generating averages for each country for quantitative responses and clustering emerging themes from the qualitative responses by country and partner type). This helped to reflect on data across countries that have a large variation in numbers of local NGO or CBO partners (e.g., two organizations in Rwanda versus 140 organizations in Somalia). See Table iv.3 below.

4. Country Selection and Sampling

155.   The countries identified for the in-depth reviews were selected through consultations between the evaluation team and the RBN during the inception phase. The selection aimed at including countries with a mix of characteristics: diversity of the portfolio in terms of types of partnerships, including not only international and local NGO partnerships, but also Red Cross/Crescent Societies; amounts budgeted for their needs-based plans (NBPs); ensuring that countries selected had a thematic focus on climate and emergency response, and GEWE, within WFP CO operations; and a mix of countries in terms of income classification and whether or not they are fragile or conflict-affected. Table iv.3 provides an overview of how different criteria apply to countries. See also Annex II for detailed information on each country across all criteria considered.

Table iv.3 Number and types of partners to be consulted in each country (all data collection methods)[125]

Country	Income classification and fragile and conflict-affected country (FCAC) status[126]	Number of Partnerships[127]		
		International NGOs	Local NGOs	Total
Burundi	Low High institutional and social fragility	9 (1 women-led/women's org)	11 (0 women-led/women's org	20 (1 women-led/women's org)
Kenya	Lower middle Not FCAC	20 (3 women-led/women's org)	19 (1 women-led/women's org)	39 (4 women-led/women's org)
Somalia	Low High-intensity conflict	29 (0 women-led/women's org)	159 (11 women-led/women's org)	188 (11 women-led/women's org)
Ethiopia	Low Not FCAC[128]	19 (4 women-led/women's org)	14 (1 women-led/women's org)	33 (5 women-led/women's org)
Djibouti	Lower middle Not FCAC	2 (0 women-led/women's org)	5 (1 women-led/women's org)	7 (1 women-led/women's org)
Rwanda	Low Not FCAC	7 (4 women-led/women's org)	5 (1 women-led/women's org)	12 (5 women-led/women's org)
South Sudan	Low Medium-intensity conflict	48 (1 women-led/women's org)	58 (5 women-led/women's org)	106 (6 women-led/women's org)
Sudan	Low High institutional and social fragility	26 (2 women-led/women's org)	74 (7 women-led/women's org)	100 (9 women-led/women's org)
Uganda	Low Not FCAC	20 (6 women-led/women's org)	16 (3 women-led/women's org)	36 (9 women-led/women's org)

In-depth Reviews (Tier 1)

156.   During the data collection phase of the evaluation (August to October 2021), the state and trajectory of the global pandemic prevented the Montreal-based evaluation team from conducting in-country field missions. Our proposed approach was therefore based on the assumption country-based data collection had to be conducted remotely. In-depth reviews were conducted for Burundi, Kenya and Somalia, and data collection for these countries combined document review and primary data collection through stakeholder

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[125] Women-led organizations were identified by COs. Further clarification will be needed during the data collection phase in order to identify the full number of women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations.

[126] As per World Bank classifications for FY21. For income-levels see: https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups; for FCAC status see: http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/888211594267968803/FCSList-FY21.pdf

[127] From ToR, Annex 7: Number and type of partnership for each of RBN COs in 2019.

[128] While Ethiopia is not classified as an FCAC for FY21, it has recently been embroiled in armed conflict since November 2000 in the Tigray region of the country.

interviews, as well as data from the survey of cooperating partners in the countries. To the extent possible, the evaluation disaggregated data by country and factor that into the in-depth review.

157.   As noted in Table iv.2, the evaluation team consulted with a wide range of stakeholders that are both internal and external to WFP. They covered the full range of issues/themes related to WFP cooperating partnerships and partnership practices in the country, as far as possible, and gained country-specific insights that later inform the development of in-depth country reviews.

158.   As noted above, the evaluation team engaged a national consultant who conducted remote interviews with Kenya CO, Somalia CO, government, and cooperating partner personnel who are based in Nairobi. Members of the Montreal-based evaluation team continued to participate in interviews remotely with key high-level WFP and regional/national stakeholders (e.g., government officials), with the facilitation of the national consultant, where possible. However, the national consultant led in-person interviews with other WFP CO staff/managers, as well as with CP representatives.

159.   The field mission for Burundi was conducted remotely by a Montreal-based team, and interviews were conducted in English or French, based on the preference of the interviewee.

160.   Once data collection in the country was completed, the evaluation team conducted remote debriefs with the respective WFP CO (Country Director, Deputy and/or other assigned staff) to share and receive feedback on emerging findings, clarify remaining questions, correct any factual errors and to jointly discuss broader implications, questions or recommendations emerging from the case.

Desk Reviews 'Plus' (Tier 2)

161.   Desk-reviews 'plus' is an approach that falls in between a desk-based review and an in-depth review. The desk reviews 'plus' was based on a review of relevant documents pertaining to WFP's engagement in/support for cooperating partnerships in the country. This document review was complemented by the survey of cooperating partners in the countries. The evaluation team conducted desk reviews 'plus' for the six countries not selected for in-depth reviews.

162.   As noted in Table iv.2, the evaluation team conducted up to three interviews per country, ideally including at least one WFP CO staff and up to two CP representatives in each country). The CPs consulted in each country consisted of one INGO and one NNGO, and at least one was a women's organization and/or GEWE-mandated organization. As such, the desk reviews 'plus' was informed by a smaller set of stakeholders per country than the in-depth reviews. The aim of the interviews was more on exploring key themes/issues related to WFP cooperating partnerships in the Eastern Africa region, and less on gaining country-specific insights. The RBN and the CO identified individuals to be interviewed who are particularly knowledgeable in various issues/themes related to WFP's partnership practices in the region. Themes were selected based on information that emerged during data collection, and also included the use of the UN Partner Portal in countries where it has been implemented, the use of PAPs, the ability to identify and partner with women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, partners' focus on GEWE-related interventions, WFP's shift to a multi-year approach to partnership, etc.

5. Data analysis

163.   To maximize the quality of data and mitigate the risks and constraints inherent in each individual data collection tool, the evaluation team used several processes to check and clean the data. These included: (i) during interviews, the evaluator could record the interview (provided the interviewee gave permission to do so) and review written interview notes immediately after the conversation to identify areas requiring clarification or follow up; (ii) document/desk study data was excerpted directly from the sources as much as possible to ensure accuracy; (iii) data aggregation was guided by clear questions and criteria and was quality controlled by senior team members.

164.   The evaluation team gathered at regular intervals for analysis meetings (via videoconference and/or email) to discuss and cross-reference the results of each line of inquiry, identify patterns and outliers, and start drafting emerging summary findings in response to the evaluation questions and sub-questions.

165.   To analyze data, the evaluation team employed descriptive, qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques.

166.   Descriptive analysis was used as a first step, to understand the contexts in which WFP and its staff and managers work and operate, before moving on to more interpretative approaches.

167.   Qualitative analysis included the following approaches:

- Systematic content analysis, which will be used across the different lines of inquiry, of documents and interview data to analyze and identify common trends, themes and patterns in relation to the evaluation questions. Content analysis was used to flag diverging views or evidence on certain issues. Emerging issues and trends derived from this analysis constituted the raw material for crafting preliminary observations that were then refined to feed into the draft evaluation report.

- Comparative analysis was used to understand and explain differences in findings and trends emerging from different perspectives, time periods and so forth.

168.   Quantitative analysis was used to analyze any relevant quantitative data from documents (e.g. financial information on partnerships, WFP resource allocations) and from the survey. It identified common trends, themes and patterns in relation to the evaluation questions. Quantitative analysis was also used to produce visual representations of data to be presented in the evaluation report.

169.   Triangulation: to ensure the reliability of information and to increase the quality, integrity and credibility of the evaluation findings and conclusions, the evaluation team attempted – to the greatest extent possible– to base individual findings on several lines of inquiry and data sources. The evaluation report explicitly indicates cases where triangulation has not been possible.

170.   The evaluation also aimed to triangulate the voices of different stakeholder groups and report on gender, equity and inclusion dimensions, where applicable. Specific analysis was undertaken to uncover any themes or patterns that emerged from different stakeholder groups, such as men and women, in interview and survey data.

171.   Draft findings, conclusions and emerging themes were presented in a remote, regional debrief that included participation of the Deputy Regional Director, and staff involved in CP management at RBN and COs. During the workshop, participants discussed and validated the findings and provided their perspectives on potential recommendations. This workshop was one of the two types of participatory approaches used in the evaluation. Remote debriefs with CO Directors and teams also provided an opportunity for stakeholder engagement at the end of data collection for each of the in-depth country reviews (see section on Country Selection and Sampling).

6. Ethical considerations

172.   Evaluations must conform to the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines. Accordingly, Universalia is responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation cycle, and ensuring that all stakeholder groups are treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality (UNSWAP Criterion 2e). This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities. Our team members have signed an ethics pledge and confidentiality agreement.

173.   The evaluation team ensured that the stakeholders consulted during the evaluation represent diverse perspectives based on gender, ethnicity, geographic locations, and roles or organizational affiliations, to the extent that disaggregated data was available. During all evaluation data collection activities, evaluation team members stated to all participants that their individual responses are confidential and that reporting of stakeholder consultations will only be done in aggregated form. To the extent possible, the evaluation team consulted stakeholders in a modality most accessible and comfortable for them (e.g. for remote consultations, choice of video call, phone conversation or email consultation). During the evaluation, as part of the data analysis and reporting stage, to the extent possible, information on individuals involved in partnership management processes was recorded in a disaggregated manner (e.g. by gender and other drivers of diversity as relevant) to derive any relevant gender-related insights.

174.   Evaluation team members strove to conduct data collection in ways that are informed by an overall do-no-harm orientation and that are sensitive to and appropriate in light of the geographic and cultural backgrounds and gender of different respondents.

175.   Furthermore, all data (data provided by the WFP and data collected by the evaluation) is archived on Universalia's in-house secure server. Our server has been granted secret security status by the Government of Canada. Its access is restricted to a limited number of staff within the firm. The server has a double back-up system so that information can always be retrieved if lost or deleted accidentally. Only the Montreal-based members of the evaluation team were granted access to the complete set of data of the evaluation. Data collected was stored directly on the secure server, and not on any 'cloud' service or repository.

176.   During the inception phase, the main ethical issue identified was a power asymmetry between WFP and (some of) its partners if those partners strongly rely on WFP to fund their work. The related risk is that they may not be forthcoming about any challenges that they experience with WFP partnership management due to fear of repercussions. Related safeguards included clearly explaining the nature of the evaluation, the fact that the team is external and independent, that all interviews/survey data will be confidential and that no one will be quoted in the report in a way that would allow tracing a statement back to them.

177.   Another possible ethical issue in terms of reporting is that different stakeholders have different levels of familiarity with evaluation reports and commonly used language in evaluations. This poses a potential risk that evaluation findings and recommendations are not fully accessible or relevant to all users, especially secondary users. A safeguard is to ensure that the report uses clear and understandable language. Furthermore, this is also mitigated through the approach utilized in disseminating the report, e.g. the Evaluation Manager and Commissioning Unit could consider producing stand-alone executive summaries of the report, translated into local languages for community-level actors, such as CBOs.

7. Limitations

178.   Overall, the evaluation's methodological approach did not change from what was set out in the Inception Report. COVID-19 did not affect the evaluation's methodology and there was no need to adjust data collection methods in response to COVID-19. The main limitations of the evaluation and related mitigation strategies are noted below:

- Due to evolving contexts in countries, certain stakeholders were less able to participate in the evaluation, or were delayed in their participation. In Sudan, no CP-specific documents such as FLAs or performance evaluations were gathered from the CO and no interviews were conducted, but 28 CP representatives participated in the online survey and are considered in the overall analysis. The evaluation's findings do not include any country-specific insights about Sudan. In Ethiopia and South Sudan, CPs participated late in the data collection process and their COs were not able to provide the evaluation team with CP-specific documents. However, the evaluation was able to draw upon interview data and other country-specific documents (e.g., WFP CSPs and annual country reports.

- Consulted CO stakeholders noted likely discrepancies and shortcomings in COMET data, which was the primary dataset used by the evaluation team to obtain data on numbers and duration of FLAs among COs. The reasons for this are likely rooted in: (i) an overall lack of digitization of entering FLA data into COMET (paper FLAs are scanned, and data is entered manually by field offices); and (ii) counts of multi-year FLAs as single-year or less FLAs in cases where an FLA period goes across more than one CSP period. The evaluation team aimed to mitigate this through the use of complementary sources of data: (i) dataset from WINGS database and DOTS platform to inform data points on number of CPs and by type; (ii) data on FLAs gleaned from the evaluation's review of a sample of FLAs (see point below); and (iii) survey data which prompted CPs for their recollections of the length of their longest FLA, as well as their most recent FLA.

- CP-specific documents such FLAs, CP evaluations, and capacity assessments are not centrally stored at the RBN, but instead found at COs; the extent to which COs provided such documents to the evaluation varied across countries: some COs were not able to provide such documents (e.g., Ethiopia and South Sudan), and some COs were not able to provide all documents across all years of the 2016-2020 period. The evaluation team reviewed documents of the CPs selected for interviews, and prioritized requesting documents from more recent years in order to avoid putting an excessive burden on COs. Capacity assessments were not sent by all COs, and only Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda COs sent such documents to the evaluation team.

- There was insufficient data available for metrics relating to partnership performance and CP capacity, stemming from the lack of a logical framework or ToC for cooperating partnerships at the RBN. The extent to which CP Partnership Evaluation Reports provided information on partnership performance varied across countries. FLAs, Partnership Action Plans (PAPs), and evaluations that covered countries in the Eastern Africa region did not provide substantial information on any changes in the performance or capacity of CPs. To mitigate this, the evaluation drew upon primary data collected through stakeholder consultations and survey questions on WFP contributions to CP performance and capacity. RBN provided information on changes in CP performance over the course of the evaluation period for a sample of CPs (those selected for interviews).

- Inconsistent use of terminology referring to organizations with GEWE in their mandate across data sources. The evaluation employs the terms "women-led organizations," "women's organizations" and "GEWE-mandated organizations" in its data collection tools and the evaluation report. The evaluation also refers to women's rights organizations, a term which has been clearly defined by the OECD.[129] This classification is not available in the WINGS database or on the DOTS platform, and lists of women-led organizations were provided by COs during the inception phase. The evaluation counted organization's with the words, "women," "woman," and "femme" in their organization names, as a proxy measure for women's organizations. It is likely that this still misses some women's rights or GEWE-mandated organizations included in the datasets.

179.   Despite mitigation measures undertaken for the limitations listed above, there was still the residual risk that data/information was not fully accurate. E.g. mitigation measures for shortcomings in COMET data are likely to provide proxies on numbers and duration of FLAs at COs, though they are likely to not be fully accurate.

8. Quality assurance

180.   WFP has developed a Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System (DEQAS) based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) and the Development Assistance Commission (DAC)). It sets out process maps with in-built steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products. It also includes checklists for feedback on quality for each of the evaluation products. DEQAS was systematically applied during this evaluation and relevant documents have been provided to the evaluation team.

181.   While internal measures are essential to assure quality, an external review is also necessary to provide outside expert quality assurance. Ms. Anette Wenderoth assumed the function of an External Quality Assurance Reviewer. She did not contribute to data collection, analysis or report writing, but focused exclusively on independent quality assurance of key evaluation deliverables and directly advised and reported to the evaluation team leader. Ms. Wenderoth provided quality assurance on the Inception Report, as well as this draft Evaluation Report.

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[129] Defined as: "organizations with an overt women's or girls' rights, gender equality or feminist purpose, women's rights organizations play a central role in spearheading change in support of gender equality" (OECD, Donor support to southern women's rights organizations, November 2016).

Annex V Evaluation Matrix

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
1. Evaluation question 1: How relevant are WFP partners[130] and partnership management practices in countries supported by RBN? (Capturing sub-questions about partnership relevance, and alignment of WFP's approaches with good partnership practice including in relation to reflecting a commitment to, and addressing gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE))					
1.1 What shifts in (a) partnership management practices, (b) partner standards, and (c) types of partners have occurred in countries support by RBN over time?	Nature and evidence of changes in **partnership management practices** in countries supported by RBN, in particular in relation to Grand Bargain commitments, GEWE and the COVID-19 pandemic, in terms of: a. partner scoping and selection b. contracting c. management and communication d. performance monitoring and review e. capacity development and support Nature and evidence of changes for **standards for partners** in countries supported by RBN, in particular in relation to GEWE and the COVID-19 pandemics, in terms of: a. organizational type (including women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations) b. organizational capacities c. financial capacities	Documents: • Regional and corporate-level documentation on partnering with CPs (NGO Manual, NGO Partnership Guidance) • WFP Grand Bargain progress reports • WFP Corporate evaluations and reviews • Other WFP Corporate and regional guidance and policies/strategies (e.g., WFP Gender Policy) • Lists of partners and FLAs for each country engaged by RBN People: • WFP HQ staff/managers, especially NGO Partnerships unit • Regional Bureau Senior leadership and officers representing thematic units that rely on cooperating partnerships with NGOs	Document Review COMET database review Individual and (small) group interviews	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews and documents	Strong

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[130] Cooperating partners are defined as the community-based organizations, national NGOs, international NGOs and national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, including women-led organizations, that WFP works with to design and implement programmes and operations under each Country Strategic Plan in the region.

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
	d. administrative procedures Evidence of changes in the **types of cooperating partners (including women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations**) in countries supported by RBN	• CO staff – Country Director or Deputy Country Director, Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships			
1.2 To what extent are RBN's partnership management practices, and partner standards aligned with partnership good practices principles?[131]	Degree to which RBN's partnership management practices and partner standards are aligned with good practices principles in terms of: • guided by joint goals • transparency, accountability, and communication • encompassing internal capacity development of participating actors • including explicit and strategically directed attention to gender equality Stakeholder perceptions on the strengths and weaknesses of RBN's partnership management practices and partner standards in terms of clarity, comprehensiveness, coherence, effectiveness and relevance	Documents: • Regional and corporate-level documentation on partnering with CPs (NGO Manual, NGO Partnership Guidance) • WFP Grand Bargain progress reports • WFP Corporate evaluations and reviews People: • WFP HQ staff/managers, especially NGO Partnerships unit • Regional Bureau Senior leadership and officers representing thematic units that rely on cooperating partnerships with NGOs • CO staff – Country Director or Deputy Country Director, Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews and documents	Strong

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[131] Drawing upon the 2017 Evaluation of WFP's Partnership Strategy (p.22), good practice principles include partnerships being driven by agreed upon goals, being characterized by transparency, accountability, and communication; encompassing internal capacity building of participating actors; and including explicit and strategically directed attention to gender equality.

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
		• Representatives of bilateral donor agencies at their respective HQs (providing global perspectives on CP management practices)			
1.3 To what extent are CO partnership management practices, and partner standards, relevant to: (i) the needs of partner organizations (ii) the needs of affected populations	Stakeholder perceptions regarding the extent to which CO partnership management practices, and partner standard, are aligned with: • The needs of partner organizations in the region • The needs of women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations for affected populations Stakeholder perceptions regarding the extent to which RBN's partnership management practices and partner standards respond to gender-differentiated needs of affected populations	Documents: • Partnership Action Plans • WFP Grand Bargain progress reports • WFP Corporate evaluations and reviews • Annual reports from cooperating partners People: • CO staff – Country Director or Deputy Country Director, Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships • cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews, documents and survey data Analysis of quantitative data from survey	Strong
1.4 To what extent are WFP partners in countries supported by RBN relevant to: (i) WFP's corporate partnership priorities? (ii) CSP objectives?	Degree of alignment between partners and WFP corporate priorities in terms of: • Evolving WFP organizational priorities since 2016 (i.e., in the 2014-2017 WFP Strategic Plan; the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan; localization commitments under the Grand Bargain) • Thematic/programmatic WFP policies and strategies including on GEWE and food systems • WFP's emergency response related to COVID-19	Documents: • RBN Performance Plan • CSPs and Annual Country Reports (ACRs) for countries in the region • Sample of FLAs • Partnership Action Plans (PAPs) • WFP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 • WFP Strategic Plan 2018-2021	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews and documents	Strong

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
	Degree of alignment between partners and RBN CO priorities in terms of: • Country-level strategic priorities (CSP Strategic Outcomes) • Cross-cutting thematic priorities related to GEWE and food systems Proportion of sampled FLA that meet expectations for GEWE (Gender Policy, NGO Partnership Manual and Annex 6 of FLA contract template) Stakeholder perceptions on the relevance of partners and on the alignment with corporate and country-level priorities.	• WFP Grand Bargain progress reports • Guidance materials for partnerships People: • WFP HQ staff/managers, especially NGO Partnerships Unit • Regional Bureau Senior leadership and officers representing thematic units that rely on partnerships with NGOs • CO staff – Country Director or Deputy Country Director, Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships			
2. Evaluation question 2: To what extent have (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance been strengthened? (Capturing results in relation to the capacity and performance of NGOs that WFP works with, and in terms of capacity and performance of COs in managing cooperating partnerships.)					
2.1 To what extent have CO partnership management practices improved or deteriorated over time?	Degree of improvement in CO management practices in terms of: (a) **Scoping and selection**: Relevant, effective and efficient scoping and selection practices (b) **Contracting**: Effective and efficient use of appropriate contracting modalities (c) **Implementation**: Effective day-to-day management, including establishing clear goals and strategies through Partnership Action Plans (PAP) and conducting effective and transparent communication, (d) **Performance management**: Effective use of review mechanisms to evaluate, provide	Documents: • CO Partnership assessment/ evaluation/review reports • COMET database – lists of partners and FLAs according to country, partner type, length of contract People: • CO staff – Country Director or Deputy Country Director, Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships	Document Review COMET database review Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews, documents and survey data Analysis of quantitative data from survey	Strong

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
	feedback, modify and/or change partners if and as needed Stakeholder perceptions on extent to which COs management practices been strengthened across the partnership life cycle[132] Stakeholder perceptions of strengths and weaknesses in COs partnership management practices Stakeholder perceptions on extent to which CP management practices differ among COs	• Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP			
2.2 What are the key results of the changes in management practices that have been introduced? In particular, in terms of: • Increased use of automated and strategic processes throughout partner management, including effective use of the UN Partner Portal and Partnership Action Plans (PAPs). • More partners that are women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, or with good GEWE capacities	Degree to which improvements in CO management practices have increased the use of automated processes and mechanisms for WFP cooperating partnerships (e.g., UN Partner Portal). Degree to which improvements in CO management practices have increased the contracting of qualified women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations Proportion of FLAs reviewed that incorporate standards on GEWE as per the 2015-2020 Gender Policy and NGO Partnership Manual Degree to which improvements in CO management practices have improved the efficiency of contracting modalities (short-term and multi-year FLA agreements). Degree to which improvements in CO management practices have resulted in increased focus on strengthening partners' financial and organizational capacities	Documents: • CO Partnership assessment/ evaluation/review reports • Available documents from cooperating partners, such as annual reporting People: • CO staff – Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships • Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews, documents and survey data Analysis of quantitative data from survey	Strong

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[132] The partnership life cycle includes (a) scoping and selection of partners; (b) negotiating and contracting of partners, (c) implementation the partnership, and (d) evaluating the partnership.

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
• Improved efficiency through the use of fit-for-purpose contracting modalities (short-term vs. multi-year FLAs) • Improved CO ability to review partner performance and provide guidance for improvements • Increased CO emphasis on developing organizational and financial capacities of partners	Stakeholder perceptions on key results of improved CO partnership management practices	• Representatives of other UN agencies at country-level (may be able to provide non-WFP view of use of the UN Partner Portal in country-level CP management processes).			
2.3 To what extent have partners' operational and administrative capacities (more human resources, improved skills and knowledge, better equipment, improved administrative practices) been strengthened?	• Evidence of changes in terms of operational capacities • Evidence of changes in terms of administrative capacities • Stakeholder perceptions on extent to which partners' operational and administrative capacities have been strengthened	Documents: • CO Partnership assessment/evaluation/review reports • Available documents from cooperating partners, such as annual reporting People: • CO staff – Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships • Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews, documents and survey data Analysis of quantitative data from survey	Medium
2.4 To what extent has partners' performance been strengthened, in terms of	• Evidence of changes on select performance metrics for delivery (funding executed, tonnage)	Documents:	Document Review	Triangulation: Comparison between	Medium

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
• Ability to deliver on interventions, including GEWE interventions • Expanded scope of work • Improved level of funding	• Evidence of changes in terms of strengthened ability to deliver on interventions, including GEWE interventions • Evidence of changes in terms of expanded scope of work • Evidence of changes in terms of improved level of funding, including from non-WFP sources • Stakeholder perceptions on extent to which partners' performance has been strengthened	• CO Partnership assessment/evaluation/review reports • Available documents from cooperating partners, such as annual reporting • COMET database information on performance metrics (and other relevant databases or datasets, if feasible) People: • CO staff – Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships • Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP	Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	interviews, documents and survey data Analysis of quantitative data from survey	
2.5 Have there been any other intended or unintended results of improved CO management practices?	• Types of unplanned negative consequences of COs management practices • Types of unplanned positive consequences of COs management practices	Documents: • Documents related to partnership performance assessment/reviews • Available documents from cooperating partners, such as annual reporting People: • CO staff – Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews and documents (if available)	Weak (as unplanned results often not well documented, thus limited to perception data)

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
		• Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP			
3. Evaluation question 3: What internal and external factors have influenced (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance? (**Capturing internal factors, such as WFP systems and processes for partnership management, monitoring and reporting; as well as external factors deriving from regional, country, or local contexts and the overall partnership landscape).**					
3.1 To what extent and how have **external contextual factors** influenced partnership management practices and partners' capacities and performance?	• Evidence of external contextual factors affecting partnership management practices and partners' performance and capacities • Stakeholder perceptions on the extent to which external contextual factors have influenced partnership management practices and partners' performance and capacities • Evidence of joint initiatives or reporting between WFP and other UN agencies or donors for CP capacity strengthening, and their influence on CP capacities	Documents: • Available documents from cooperating partners, such as annual reporting • Selected existing research or literature on CP management at global-level, region-level and country-level People: • WFP HQ, RBN and CO staff/managers • Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP • Representatives of bilateral donor agencies at their respective HQs • Representatives of UN agencies at country-level • Host country governments (if available)	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews, documents and survey data	Medium
3.2 To what extent and how have **RBN and HQ support** influenced CO partnership management practices?	• Evidence of RBN and HQ support, strategic direction and guidance, influencing CO partnership management practices • Stakeholder perceptions on the extent to which RBN and HQ support have influenced CO partnership management practices	Documents: • Regional and corporate-level documentation on partnering with CPs (NGO Manual, NGO Partnership Guidance)	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews and documents	Medium

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
	• Stakeholder perceptions on the strength and weaknesses of RBN and HQ support to COs	• Partnership Action Plans • WFP Grand Bargain progress reports • WFP Corporate evaluations and reviews People: • WFP HQ technical units, especially the NGO Partnerships Unit • Regional Bureau Senior leadership and officers representing thematic units that rely on partnerships with NGOs • CO staff – Country Director or Deputy Country Director, Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships			
3.3 To what extent and how have **CO support** led to improved partners' capacities and performance?	• Evidence of CO support influencing partners' capacities and performance • Evidence of structure/staffing at CO to support CP management • Stakeholder perceptions on the extent to which CO support has influenced partners' capacities and performance • Stakeholder perceptions on the strength and weaknesses of COs support to partners	Documents: • CO Partnership assessment/evaluation/review reports • Partnership Action Plans • Available documents from cooperating partners, such as annual reporting • Documents related to CO human resources (e.g., organigram, CO staffing, organizational realignment, if applicable)	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews, documents and survey data	Medium

Sub-Questions	Indicators of progress	Main sources of data	Data Collection Methods	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Expected evidence availability and reliability
		People: • CO staff – Country Director or Deputy Country Director, Country Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships • Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP			
3.4 To what extent and how have factors **internal to the partners** (organizational and financial capacities, administrative practices) influenced their performance?	• Degree to which partners' organizational and financial capacities and administrative practices influence their ability to effectively deliver on CSP interventions • Evidence of gaps or weaknesses in partners' organizational and financial capacities and administrative practices, in particular in relation to GEWE • Stakeholder perceptions on strengths and weaknesses of partners' organizational and financial capacities and administrative practices • Evidence of how partner type (i.e. INGO, NNGO, CBO or Red Cross/Crescent Societies, including women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations), partner size, and location influences partners' performance and their experience with WFP's partnership management practices	Documents: • CO Partnership assessment/evaluation/review reports • Available documents from cooperating partners, such as annual reporting People: • CO staff – Country Partnerships Officer, NGO Partnerships focal point (if appointed), staff/managers of thematic units that employ cooperating partnerships • Cooperating partners that have entered into partnership agreements with the WFP	Document Review Individual and (small) group interviews Survey of CPs	Triangulation: Comparison between interviews, documents and survey data	Medium

Annex VI   Data collection tools

This annex includes interview protocols for various categories of stakeholders to be consulted by the evaluation, as well as the survey questionnaire.

Thematic Evaluation of Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region from 2016 to 2020– Interview protocol – WFP HQ stakeholders

BACKGROUND

Thank you for agreeing to this interview with Universalia (www.universalia.com). The interview should take 45-60 minutes and will be facilitated by [*name of evaluation team member*]. The interview will remain entirely confidential and only aggregated data will inform the evaluation report.

EVOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES IN COUNTRIES SUPPORT BY RBN SINCE 2016

1. At the **HQ**, how is responsibility for the management of NGO/Cooperating Partners distributed? What has been your role or involvement in relation to the management of cooperating partnerships?
2. How relevant are WFP's CPs and partnership management practices in countries supported by the RBN? In terms of:
    a. Responding to needs of different categories of country contexts: Fragile and conflict affected; Non-FCAC, but weak governance; Non-FCAC, unified governance
    b. Responding to needs of the East African Region compared to other regions
    c. Alignment with WFP's support to COVID-19 response in countries
3. To what extent has there been progress in WFP's commitments to the Grand Bargain and the localization agenda? What are some of the key successes or challenges faced by WFP in fulfilling its commitment?
    a. To what extent is WFP partnering with local NGOs?
    b. To what extent are WFP's partnerships with NGOs primarily transactional or strategic?
    c. How aligned are the CPs selected to WFP's other cross-cutting thematic priorities, such as food systems?
4. How have **gender dimensions** been considered in the management of cooperating partnerships since 2016?
    a. To what extent are the CPs selected aligned with WFP's priorities[133] on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)? Has there been an increased prioritization of women's and GEWE-mandated organizations?
    b. To what extent are CP's gender-related capacities taken into account in selection, contracting and implementation of partnerships? To what extent are GEWE minimum capacity standards for partnerships taken into account?
5. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of WFP's approach to partnering with cooperating partners, in terms of:
    a. The role played by **RBN and HQ** in supporting COs
    b. Templates, tools, guidance notes, etc.
    c. Business process.
6. What **other internal and external factors** have positively or negatively affected the management of cooperating partnerships among COs?
    a. What are the reasons why partnership management practices vary among COs?
7. Is there any other information that you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

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[133] From WFP's Gender Policy and NGO Partnership Manual, priorities include: (i) GEWE are systematically considered within FLAs through inclusion in tracking, monitoring and reporting on compliance; (ii) COs conduct capacity assessments to ascertain a partner organization's gender equality commitment and competence, and to identify opportunities for developing gender-related capacities; (iii) FLAs include specific budget lines for GEWE interventions and gender capacity strengthening.

Thematic Evaluation of Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region from 2016 to 2020– Interview protocol – WFP RBN stakeholders

BACKGROUND

Thank you for agreeing to this interview with Universalia (www.universalia.com). The interview should take 45-60 minutes and will be facilitated by [*name of evaluation team member*]. The interview will remain entirely confidential and only aggregated data will inform the evaluation report.

EVOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES IN COUNTRIES SUPPORTED BY RBN SINCE 2016

1. At the **Regional Bureau**, how is responsibility for the management of NGO/Cooperating Partners distributed? What has been your role or involvement in relation to the management of cooperating partnerships?
2. How relevant are WFP's CPs and partnership management practices in countries supported by the RBN? In terms of:
   a. Responding to needs of different categories of country contexts in the region: Fragile and conflict affected; Non-FCAC, but weak governance; Non-FCAC, unified governance
   b. Alignment with WFP's support to COVID-19 response in countries
3. To what extent has there been progress in WFP's commitments to the Grand Bargain and the localization agenda? What are some of the key successes or challenges faced by WFP in fulfilling its commitment?
   a. To what extent is WFP partnering with local NGOs at this time? Are COs working more with women's organizations? Why? Why not?
   b. To what extent are WFP's cooperating partnerships with NGOs primarily transactional or strategic?
   c. To what extent are CPs able to implement WFP priorities? Is WFP focused on developing local NGO capacities?
   d. How aligned are the CPs selected to WFP's other cross-cutting thematic priorities, such as food systems?
4. How have **gender dimensions** been in the management of cooperating partnerships since 2016?
   a. To what extent are the CPs selected aligned with WFP's priorities on gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)?[134] Has there been an increased prioritization of women's and GEWE-mandated organizations?
   b. To what extent are CPs' gender-related capacities taken into account in selection, contracting and implementation of partnerships? To what extent are GEWE minimum capacity standards for partnerships taken into account?
5. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of WFP's approach to partnering with cooperating partners, in terms of:
   a. The role played by **RBN and HQ** in supporting COs
   b. Templates, tools, guidance notes, etc.
   c. Business process.
6. What **other internal and external factors** have positively or negatively affected the management of NGO partnerships among COs?
   a. What are the reasons for which partnerships management practices vary among COs?

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[134] From WFP's Gender Policy and NGO Partnership Manual, priorities include: (i) GEWE are systematically considered within FLAs through inclusion in tracking, monitoring and reporting on compliance; (ii) COs conduct capacity assessments to ascertain a partner organization's gender equality commitment and competence, and to identify opportunities for developing gender-related capacities; (iii) FLAs include specific budget lines for GEWE interventions and gender capacity strengthening.

7. How could WFP further strengthen its cooperating partnerships?
    a. In relation to guidance provided to COs from HQ/RBs
    b. In relation to practices along the partnership lifecycle: scoping and selection; business processes; performance management
    c. In relation to its commitment to the localization agenda, through its focus on capacity developing of cooperating partners
8. Is there any other information that you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

BACKGROUND

Thank you for agreeing to this interview with Universalia (www.universalia.com). The interview should take 45-60 minutes and will be facilitated by [*name of evaluation team member*]. The interview will remain entirely confidential and only aggregated data will inform the evaluation report.

EVOLUTION OF WFP PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES SINCE 2016

1. Within the **Country Office**,
   a. How is responsibility for the management of CPs distributed?
   b. What have been the main thematic/programmatic areas in which CPs have been engaged?
   c. Who are the significant NGO partners you work with, and what type of partner do they represent?
2. At the CO, have there been any **changes in the types of organizations** which WFP has partnered with since 2016? I.e., in terms of type of local versus international organizations (NGO/INGO), women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, different levels of operational/organizational capacities?
3. Has there been a **change in CP management practices** at the CO since 2016? If so, in what ways? (e.g., scoping and selection, business process of NGO partnerships, performance monitoring of partners)
   a. Is the CO able to identify the right partners to fulfil its objectives?
   b. Is the CO able to monitor partnership performance?
4. Have there been changes in the ways **gender dimensions** are considered in the management of cooperating partnerships since 2016?
   a. To what extent are CPs selected aligned with WFP's priorities in gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)?
   b. To what extent is **GEWE systematically considered within FLAs?** For example, through: inclusion of gender equality clauses; specific budget lines for GE interventions or capacity strengthening; or in provisions for monitoring and reporting on compliance?
   a. **Gender-related capacities:** To what extent are CP's gender-related capacities taken into account in selection, contracting and implementation of partnerships? To what extent are GEWE minimum capacity standards for partnerships outlined in the NGO Partnership Manual taken into account?[135]
   b. **Trends in partnering with women's and GEWE-mandated organizations:** To what extent has your CO prioritized partnering with women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations?
5. What have been the main efforts since 2016 in **developing the capacities of CPs** by the CO? To what extent has these efforts improved the internal capacities among CPs?
   a. Any specific examples of this?
   b. What are the key challenges in strengthening capacities of CPs?
6. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of WFP's approach, for NGO partnering, in terms of:
   a. The role played by **RBN and HQ** in supporting COs
   b. Templates, tools, guidance notes, etc.
   c. Business processes and standard operating procedures.
7. What **other internal and external factors** have positively or negatively affected the management of NGO partnerships at the CO?

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[135] NGO Partnership Manual: Capacity assessments aim to identify gender-related capacities in CPs in terms of: (i) gender policy at the organization; (ii) experience at the organization in conducting gender analysis or gender-specific programming (especially in terms of whether organization has appointed of a gender focal point); and (iii) sufficient awareness among beneficiaries of the organization's Complaints Feedback Mechanisms (CFM).

8. How could WFP further strengthen its cooperating partnerships with NGOs?
    a. In relation to guidance provided to COs from HQ/RBs
    b. In relation to practices along the partnership lifecycle: scoping and selection; business processes; performance management
    c. In relation to its commitment to the localization agenda, through its focus on capacity development of NGO partners
    d. In relation to engaging women's organizations and/or GEWE-mandated organizations as CPs?
9. Is there any other information that you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

BACKGROUND

Thank you for agreeing to this interview with Universalia (www.universalia.com). The interview should take 45-60 minutes and will be facilitated by [name of evaluation team member]. The interview will remain entirely confidential and only aggregated data will inform the evaluation report.

EVOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES

2. What is your current position? How long have been in this position? How long have you been at WFP?
   a. What has been your role or involvement in relation to the management of cooperating partnerships?
3. Who are the main cooperating partners you / your unit works with? What **types of organizations** do these NGO partners represent? I.e., in terms of type of local versus international organizations (NGO/INGO), women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, different levels of operational/organizational capacities?
   a. Have the types of NGO partners you have worked with changed in the last 5 years? If so, how?
4. Since 2016, has there been **improvements at the CO** in the way in which the CO manages NGO partnerships?
   a. <u>Scoping and selection</u>: Is the CO better able to identify the right partners? What has been the role of the UN Partner Portal in due diligence processes?
   b. <u>Business process for NGO (SOPs, FLAs, contracting processes)</u>: How have processes for contracting and implementation of partnerships change since 2016? To what extent is the business process able to address challenges in partnership implementation (e.g., delays in payment, exchange of data)?
5. Has there been a shift towards use of **longer-term FLAs** at the CO in the last 5 years? Why or why not?
6. **Performance management**<u>:</u> Are you able to effectively monitor the performance of partners? To what extent does partner performance inform CO decisions around contracting? Are improvement plans developed and implemented?
7. How are **gender dimensions** considered in the management of cooperating partnerships at the CO? (e.g., gender capacity assessments, focus on women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations or gender equality-focused organizations)
   a. To what extent is **GEWE systematically considered within FLAs?** For example, through: inclusion of gender equality clauses; specific budget lines for GE interventions or capacity strengthening; or in provisions for monitoring and reporting on compliance?
   b. **Gender-related capacities:** To what extent are CP's gender-related capacities taken into account in selection, contracting and implementation of partnerships? To what extent are GEWE minimum capacity standards for partnerships outlined in the NGO Partnership Manual taken into account?[136]
   c. **Trends in partnering with women's and GEWE-mandated organizations:** To what extent has your CO prioritized partnering with women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations?
8. What efforts does the CO make to **develop the capacities of local NGO partners**? Please provide specific examples.
   a. Does the **Partnership Action Plan** (PAP) play a role in strengthening partner capacities?

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[136] NGO Partnership Manual: Capacity assessments aim to identify gender-related capacities in CPs in terms of: (i) gender policy at the organization; (ii) experience at the organization in conducting gender analysis or gender-specific programming (especially in terms of whether organization has appointed of a gender focal point); and (iii) sufficient awareness among beneficiaries of the organization's Complaints Feedback Mechanisms (CFM).

9. Has there been an improvement in the **internal capacities of cooperating partners** to deliver on interventions? E.g., more human resources, improved skills/knowledge, better equipment. If so, in what way? What led to these improvements?

10. Has there been any improvements in the **performance of partners** in relation to **operational ability to deliver on interventions,** in terms of:
    a. Ability to deliver **GEWE interventions**? Capacity for gender analysis or gender-specific programming?
    b. Expansion of **scope of work**?
    c. Improved **level of funding from non-WFP sources**?

11. What **key internal and external factors** have influenced the performance and capacities of cooperating partners?

12. In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of WFP's approach to partnering with CPs, in terms of:
    a. **CO** management practices and business processes for cooperating partnerships
    b. The role played by **RBN and HQ** in supporting the CO
    c. Templates, tools, guidance notes, etc.

OTHERS

13. How could WFP further strengthen its cooperating partnerships with CPs?
14. Is there any other information that you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Thematic Evaluation of Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region from 2016 to 2020– Interview protocol – Representatives of Cooperating Partner Organizations

BACKGROUND

Thank you for agreeing to this interview with Universalia (www.universalia.com). The interview should take 45-60 minutes and will be facilitated by [*name of evaluation team member*]. The interview will remain entirely confidential and only aggregated data will inform the evaluation report.

INTRODUCTION

1. What is your role in the organization, and how long have you been in this role?
2. Please describe briefly the mandate of your organization. In what instances in the past 5 years has your organization partnered with WFP? (Please provide examples of projects / initiatives undertaken with WFP, for which you entered into an FLA)
3. How long have the durations of your organization's FLAs with WFP been during the period 2016-2020? (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, multi-year)
   a. Has there been an increase in the length of the FLAs between your organization and WFP in the last 5 years?
   b. Has your organization had separate FLAs with WFP for different communities/locations, or for different initiatives?
4. Is your organization a women-led organization, women's rights organization, or a GEWE-mandated organization?
   a. What are the gender dimensions of your organization's work, if any? To what extent has your partnership with WFP focused on this?

WFP PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES

5. Does your organization partner with agencies other than WFP? Please provide examples. Last year, how many agencies were providing funding?
6. How does WFP compare to other organizations as a partner? (equity, transparency, complementarity, etc.)
7. Overall, would you describe the partnerships of your organization with WFP as primarily transactional or as strategic?
   a. To what extent is the WFP focused on ensuring your organization is able fulfil WFP needs, and fulfil FLA requirements?
   b. To what extent is the WFP focused on enabling your organization to contribute to country-led responses to challenges faced in the future?
8. Thinking about the instances in which you partnered with WFP, what were the strengths and weaknesses of WFP's <u>partner selection, contracting, and performance management</u>?
   a. Did you use the UN Partner Portal? If so, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this?
   b. What were some of the challenges your organization faced, if any, in engaging with the processes on the portal?
9. Has WFP provided support to **develop capacities** at your organization? In what ways? E.g., conducting a capacity assessment and improvement plan, more human resources, improved skills/knowledge, better equipment.
   a. To what extent has the WFP identified and provided opportunities for developing **gender-related capacities** at your organization? E.g., in relation to: developing a gender policy at your organization; increased ability in in conducting gender analysis or gender-specific programming (or in appointment of gender focal point); awareness among beneficiaries of the organization's Complaints Feedback Mechanisms (CFM)?

10. Has WFP provided training or feedback related to the delivery of interventions on **gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE)** or integration of GEWE in your activities (including gender analysis)? If so, in which ways?
    a. What have been the results of this, if any? (e.g., increased capacities or performance, increased focus on GEWE in your work)
    b. To what extent has WFP's support and partnership management practices enabled your organization to respond to gender-differentiated needs of beneficiaries?
11. Has the **scope of your organization's work expanded** in the last 5 years? If so, in what ways? To what extent has your partnership with WFP played a role in this?
12. Has your organization had **increased levels of funding from non-WFP sources** in the last 5 years? To what extent has your partnership with WFP played a role in this? Have these sources begun to harmonize their requirements (e.g., for reporting, or through tools like the UN partner portal)?
    a. Has there been any joint initiatives between WFP and other donors or UN agencies with your organization, or that was aimed at strengthening your organization's capacity?
13. What **other factors** have influenced any changes in your organization's capacities in the last 5 years? (e.g. size or location of organization, internal capacity of organization, context and complexity of a crisis, the mandate of your organization – for example if your organization is a women's organization or GEWE-mandated organization)

OTHER

14. Do you have any recommendations to WFP with regards to its approach to partnering?
15. Is there any other information that you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Thematic Evaluation of Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region from 2016 to 2020– Interview protocol – Representatives or donor agencies <u>based at their respective global HQs</u>

BACKGROUND

Thank you for agreeing to this interview with Universalia (www.universalia.com). The interview should take 45-60 minutes and will be facilitated by [*name of evaluation team member*]. The interview will remain entirely confidential and only aggregated data will inform the evaluation report.

EVOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES IN COUNTRIES SUPPORT BY RBN SINCE 2016

1. What is your role in your organization, and how long have you been in this role?
    a. What has been your role or involvement in relation to the management of NGO partnerships?
2. Overall, how would you describe your organization's approach to partnering with NGOs? Has your organization made significant changes to its partnership management practices or processes in the last 5 years? Please briefly describe this.
    a. Does your organization use the UN Partner Portal? If so, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this? To what has this improved management of due diligence processes? To what extent has this enabled increased alignment or harmonization of practices among the participating UN agencies?
3. To what extent has there been progress in your organization's commitments to the Grand Bargain and the localization agenda? What are some of the key successes or challenges faced by donors in fulfilling their commitments?
4. To what extent does their funding of multilaterals, like WFP, take into account partnership approaches? What are the expectations of WFP with regards to Grand Bargain commitments/localization?
5. In your view, what are the main considerations or issues in CP management, in relation to:
    a. Responding to needs of different categories of country contexts: Fragile and conflict affected; Non-FCAC, but weak governance; non-FCAC, unified governance
    b. Responding to needs of the East African Region compared to other regions
    c. Alignment with responses to COVID-19 in countries
6. How has your organization considered **gender dimensions** in its approach to partnering with NGOs?
    a. To what extent is **GEWE systematically considered within FLAs or contracts with CPs at your organization?** For example, through: inclusion of gender equality clauses; specific budget lines for GE interventions or capacity strengthening; or in provisions for monitoring and reporting on compliance?
    b. **Gender-related capacities:** To what extent are CP's gender-related capacities taken into account in selection, contracting and implementation of partnerships at your organization? How does your organization aim to strengthen gender-related capacities among CPs?
    c. **Trends in partnering with women's and GEWE-mandated organizations:** To what extent has your CO prioritized partnering with women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations?
    d. What is your view of WFP's
7. Has your organization had a joint initiative with WFP that has entailed engaging in cooperating partnerships with NGOs (or Red Cross/Crescent Societies)? If so, please describe any such initiatives.
    a. To what extent have such joint initiatives with WFP contributed to results in terms of capacity strengthening of CPs, or increased performance of CPs (i.e. ability to delivery interventions, increased scope of work)
8. In relation to CP management, how does your organization compare to WFP? What are similarities, what are differences? What are respective strengths of the two agencies?
9. Is there any other information that you would like to share?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Thematic Evaluation of WFP's Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region – Survey of Cooperating Partners

Introduction/Cover email

The Regional Bureau of Nairobi (RBN) of the World Food Programme (WFP) has recently commissioned a Thematic Evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the East Africa Region. As part of the evaluation, this survey aims to collect feedback from the WFP's cooperating partners (CPs) in all nine countries in the Eastern Africa Region (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda) on their experience in partnering with the WFP. This survey focuses on the time period 2016-2020.

Thank you for agreeing to contribute to this survey. Please note that all responses will remain confidential.

Should you have any technical difficulties or questions regarding the survey, or questions about the evaluation, please contact Zachariah Su at szachariah@universalia.com.

Page 1 – Country of Operations

1. In which country do you work?
   - Choices - Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, None of these countries) [allow for choosing multiple countries]
   [If respondent chooses 'None of these countries', survey would skip to last page]

Page 2 – Respondent Information

2. Please select one of the following categories which best describes your organization
   - Choices:
     o Local NGO; Community-based organization; International NGO, Red Cross/Red Crescent Organization, Other (e.g. Private Sector, Academia/Research Organization)
   - If respondent chooses 'Other', survey prompt for 'Please specify'
3. Is your organization a women-led organization?
   - Choices:
     a. Yes; No; Don't Know
4. Is your organization a women's rights organization?[137]
   - Choices:
     a. Yes; No; Don't Know
5. Does your organization have a significant focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE) within its mandate?
   - Choices:
     a. Yes; No; Don't Know
6. Are you the focal point for your organization's partnership with WFP?
   - Choices:
     a. Yes; No;
7. Please indicate your gender:
   - Choices:
     a. Male; Female; Other [if selected, provide option for open-ended response]; Prefer not to say

Page 3 – Partnership Agreement/Contract

8. Is your organization currently in a Field-Level Agreement contract with WFP?
   - Choices:
     o Yes; No;

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[137] Defined as "organisations with an overt women's or girls' rights, gender equality or feminist purpose, women's rights organisations play a central role in spearheading change in support of gender equality" (https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organisations.pdf)

9. What time period was covered by your **most recent** Field Level Agreement (FLA)?
    -   Choices:
        a. Less than 3 months; 3-6 months; 7-12 months; 13-18 months; 19-24 months; more than 24 months
10. Is your **most recent** FLA a renewal or extension of a previous FLA?
    -   Choices:
        a. Yes; No; Don't Know
11. What time period is covered by your **longest** FLA?
    -   Choices:
        a. Less than 3 months; 3-6 months; 7-12 months; 13-18 months; 19-24 months; more than 24 months
12. Is WFP a new partner for you?
    - Choices:
        a. Yes, we have been a partner with WFP for less than 2 years
        b. No, we have been a partner with WFP for more than 2 years
13. During the 2016-2020 period, has your organization entered into a partnership agreement/contract with any organizations other than the WFP? [Yes/No/Don't know] [if yes go to next question, if no or don't know, skip to Q14]

Page 4 – Proportion of Funding from WFP

14. Please indicate the approximate proportion of funding for your organization's operations during the period 2016-2020 from WFP, and other sources:
    [Choices: Less than 25%; Between 25% and 50%; Between 50% and 75%; Between 75% and 100%; 100%; + None or not applicable option]
        a. WFP
        b. Other UN agencies
        c. International NGOs
        d. Bilateral donors
        e. National/Regional government
        f. My organization's own financial contributions
        g. Foundations
        h. Private sector
        i. Others [include open-ended response, please specify]

Page 5 – WFP's Selection of Cooperating Partners

15. We would like your feedback on how WFP **selects** its cooperating partners, **based on your most recent FLA**. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements [(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree + not applicable option]
        a. WFP's process of selecting my organization was done in a timely manner
        b. WFP was communicative during the selection process (e.g. engaging in discussions to facilitate the process, clarifying issues/concerns, presenting strategies or plans)
        c. WFP's criteria for selecting CPs for an FLA opportunity was clear
        d. My organization was selected by WFP for an FLA because it meets criteria and/or eligibility requirements
16. We would like your feedback on how WFP **contracts** its cooperating partners, **based on your most recent FLA**. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements [(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree + not applicable option]
        a. WFP was communicative in the negotiations for my organization's FLA
        b. WFP FLA objectives are jointly discussed and established by my organization and WFP
        c. The contract(s) for my organization was finalized in a timely manner
        d. The length of time covered by my organization's FLA with WFP (e.g., 3 months, 6 months, 12 months FLA etc.) was appropriate to the needs of my organization

17. Has your organization used the UN Partner Portal? [Yes/No/Don't Know] [if 'Yes' go to next question; if 'No' or 'Don't Know' skip to next page]

18. We would like feedback on your experience in using the **UN Partner Portal** (https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/) for your engagement in partnerships with the WFP. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: [(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree + not applicable option]
    a. My organization has used the UN Partner Portal as the main way to be informed of partnership opportunities with WFP
    b. Since the launch of the UN Partner Portal, my organization is more aware of opportunities to partner with WFP
    c. The UN Partner Portal has made submitting proposals or concept notes for partnership opportunities with WFP easier
    d. WFP responds to questions posted by my organization on the UN Partner Portal's Q&A for partnership opportunities
    e. Through the use of the UN Partner Portal, WFP's selection of cooperating partners is more timely
    f. UN Partner Portal provides a clear explanation of the reasons WFP selected an organization for a partnership opportunity
    g. The UN Partner Portal makes WFP's partner selection process more transparent

Page 6 – WFP Practices in Implementation and Review of Partnerships

19. **Based on your most recent FLA,** we would like your feedback on the way WFP manages the **implementation** of FLAs. Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements: [(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree + not applicable option]
    a. WFP maintains regular communication with my organization throughout the implementation of the FLA
    b. WFP disburses FLA payments to my organization in a timely manner (as stipulated in the FLA)
    c. WFP is responsive to challenges faced by my organization in the implementation of the FLA

20. **Based on your most recent FLA,** we would like your feedback on the way WFP **reviews performance** of partnerships. Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements: [(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree + not applicable option]
    a. WFP provides regular feedback on my organization's performance (e.g. through quarterly review meetings, discussing findings of performance evaluations)
    b. WFP provides useful recommendations aimed at improving my organization's performance
    c. My organization is given the opportunity to provide feedback on the performance of the WFP country office or field office, e.g. through a survey, the partnership performance evaluation or during meetings with WFP

Page 6 – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

21. We would like your feedback on how partnership processes support gender equality and women's empowerment. Please rate your level of agreement for the following statements: [(1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree + Don't Know option]
    a. In the process of selecting my organization for **our most recent FLA**, the WFP conducted a capacity assessment that included an assessment of my organization's gender-related capacities
    b. My organization's **most recent FLA** with WFP has a specific budget line for gender equality and women's empowerment
    c. WFP provided opportunities for my organization to develop my organization's gender-related knowledge, skills and experiences
    d. My organization's partnership with WFP has enabled my organization to better integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in my organization's activities.
    e. My organization's partnership with WFP has enabled my organization to better serve the gender-specific needs of beneficiaries

Page 8 – Capacity Strengthening

22. Please indicate the level of frequency of each of the following, based on your experience with WFP. [(1) Never; (2) Rarely; (3) Very Often; (4) Always + not applicable option]
    a. WFP's process of selecting my organization for FLA(s) included a capacity assessment that identified specific areas of improvement for my organization
    b. My organization's FLA(s) with WFP includes planned capacity strengthening activities, e.g., provision of training, peer-to-peer support, mentoring
    c. WFP and my organization regularly discuss areas of improvement for my organization
    d. Within our FLA(s) with WFP, my organization delivered capacity strengthening activities for other organizations (e.g., local NGOs or CBOs)
    e. Has WFP supported capacity strengthening for your organization, in ways not mentioned above? If so, please specify. [open-ended response option for more specification]

23. To what extent has your partnership with WFP contributed to bringing about improvements in your organization's capacities? [(1) No contribution at all --------- (4) Very strong contribution, + not applicable option]
    a. Improved level of staffing/human resources
    b. Better equipment
    c. Improved levels of administrative knowledge and skills among relevant staff
    d. Improved levels of knowledge and skills in financial management/reporting among relevant staff
    e. Improved levels of operational knowledge and skills among relevant staff
    f. Others (if selected, open-ended prompt for specification)

24. Based on your experience, which of the following has been the primary focus of WFP's capacity strengthening support for your organization? Please rank the following choices from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important focus, and 5 being the least important.
    a. Ensuring my organization is able to fulfil the requirements of FLAs
    b. Ensuring my organization can meet the needs of the WFP
    c. Consolidating my organization's systems, programmes, and administration
    d. Fulfilling needs related to staffing and/or equipment
    e. Enabling expansion of our work so that my organization can address the challenges faced in my country

Page 9 – Open-ended Responses

25. What are 1-3 **strengths** of how WFP has managed its cooperating partnerships?
26. What are 1-3 **weaknesses** of how WFP has managed its cooperating partnerships?

Page 10 -- Recommendations

27. How can the WFP improve the way it manages its cooperating partnerships? Please provide any recommendations for improvement.

[Survey ends here for all respondents who did not choose 'None of these countries' to Q1. Skips next page and goes to page 11]

Page 11 – Thank you

[Respondents who chose 'None of these countries' for Q1 go straight to this page. They skip the rest of the survey.]

This survey targets WFP cooperating partners operating in nine countries covered by the Regional Bureau in Nairobi (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda), as per the scope of the evaluation.

If your organization is active in any of the nine countries mentioned above and has entered into a partnership with WFP in those countries during the 2016-2020 period, please feel free to forward this survey link to the relevant representative at your organization who will be able to provide their feedback on their experience in partnering with WFP.

Page 12 – Thank you

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

Should you have any questions, please contact Zachariah Su, consultant for the evaluation, at szachariah@universalia.com

Annex VII Fieldwork agenda

182.   In lieu of an evaluation fieldwork agenda, this annex contains a preliminary information and guidance note that was sent to Country Offices participating in the evaluation at the beginning of the data collection phase. It provides an overview of the evaluation, expectations for assistance from COs to facilitate data collection, as well as tentative sequencing of specific steps in the data collection phase. Separate notes have been prepared for COs in Tier 1 and Tier 2 countries, with the information contained therein reflecting different steps in data collection and different expectations for assistance from COs.

Key information on Evaluation for Tier 1 Country Offices (Burundi, Kenya, and Somalia)

183.   The World Food Program (WFP) Regional Bureau of Nairobi (RBN) has contracted Universalia Management Group (https://www.universalia.com/en), a Montreal-based consulting company, to conduct a Thematic Evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region. The evaluation team is about to begin the data collection phase of the evaluation. **As part of this, the evaluation team is seeking your assistance in**:

- (i) Providing available documents on cooperating partnerships at the CO;

- (ii) Identifying key stakeholders for interviews;

- (iii) Identifying representatives of cooperating partners to whom a short on-line survey can be distributed.

184.   **Scope of the evaluation:** The evaluation will cover the period 2016-2020. Its geographic scope will encompass nine WFP Country Offices supported by RBN (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda).[138] For more details on the purpose of the evaluation, see the outline of the evaluation included in the final page of this document.

185.   **Overview of evaluation methodology:** The evaluation will utilize the following methods of data collection: (i) document review and database mining; (ii) stakeholder interviews (in-person and remote); and (iii) an online survey of representatives of cooperating partners. Overall, data collection will be conducted between July and September 2021. An overview of the timeline is provided in the table below.

186.   **The evaluation will undertake in-depth reviews of WFP's cooperating partnerships in Burundi, Kenya, and Somalia.** The evaluation will employ a two-tiered approach, with three countries selected for in-depth reviews (Tier 1 – Burundi, Kenya and Somalia) and the remaining six countries constituting desk reviews 'plus' (Tier 2 - Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda).

Data collection method/approach	Steps	Key dates
Document review	Collection of documents on cooperating partnerships from COs	Between July 25 and August 9 The evaluation team will liaise with RBN and COs to obtain relevant documents.
Interviews and mission debrief	Identifying cooperating partners for interviews for Tier 1 In-Depth Reviews (Burundi, Kenya and Somalia)	Between July 25 and August 9
	Kick-off call with partnerships focal point in COs Burundi, Kenya and Somalia	Between July 25 and August 9
	Conducting key informant interviews	Tier 1 In-Depth Reviews (Burundi, Kenya and Somalia): Approximately 12 stakeholders to be consulted per country during the period August 9 – September 24

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[138] Eritrea is not included in the scope of the evaluation because it has very few cooperating partnerships.

Data collection method/approach	Steps	Key dates
	Debrief with CO staff (slide presentation)	Only for Tier 1 In-Depth Reviews (Burundi, Kenya and Somalia) Mid-September
Survey of **cooperating** partners	Compiling lists of contact information of representatives of partners organizations for survey	By late August
	Distribution of survey to cooperating partners at all COs	Early-September Evaluation team to send weekly follow-up emails to cooperating partners on survey in August
	Close of survey	Mid-September

Collection of documents on partnerships with NGOs and Red Cross/Crescent Societies from COs

187.   The evaluation will review documents on partnerships with NGOs and Red Cross/Crescent Societies from all nine COs. More specifically, we would like to request from COs to share the following categories of documents:

- WFP documentation specific to individual CPs, such as Annual reports from cooperating partners, Partner Evaluation reports, documents on capacity strengthening activities and Partner Improvement plans. Please note the evaluation will not require documents for all CPs in each CO. Instead, we will prioritize the CPs that will be selected for interview, based on discussion with the CO during the kick-off call (see section on Key Informant Interviews below).

- Country-specific documentation such as Partnership Action Plans (PAPs), documents from CP committees, Country Operational Management Plans (COMPs).

- Documents related to the structure of CP management such as the CO organigramme.

- Any other documents that may be relevant to the evaluation. The evaluation team may request CO staff for assistance on obtaining further documents on a needs basis.

188.   The evaluation team will liaise with the RBN and CO staff in obtaining document.

Key Informant Interviews

As noted in the timeline, the evaluation aims to consult a variety of stakeholders through interviews. If possible, we would like to seek assistance from COs in introducing us to key stakeholders to set up interviews beginning in July.

For Burundi, Kenya and Somalia, we would like to consult approximately 12 individuals per country, including CO managers and staff (including CD or DCD), representatives of 5 partners (NGO, INGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies), and 1 interview with a national government representative. The evaluation team and manager will forward a short list of organizations we have tentatively selected in each of three countries for your validation and feedback.

During the kick-off call with each of the COs, the evaluation team will discuss the parameters for selecting cooperating partner representatives, prioritizing women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations and ensuring a mix in terms of number of contracts with WFP, size and location of the organizations. Any assistance from COs Burundi, Kenya and Somalia especially in identifying the key cooperating partners the evaluation team should interview would be greatly appreciated.

Interviews will be conducted remotely via MS Teams, Zoom, Skype or WhatsApp. However, we anticipate that some in-person interviews will be conducted in Nairobi for stakeholders for the Kenya and Somalia in-depth reviews by our national consultant, Mr. Marko Lesukat.

Survey of cooperating partners

The evaluation will administer a survey with questions addressed to cooperating partners in all nine countries to collect information on their experience in partnering with WFP. The survey will primarily be web-based, though the evaluation will provide the option for a Microsoft Word document to be emailed and/or physical copies of the survey questionnaire to be distributed to and filled by partner representatives.

The survey will be sent to all international and national NGOs or CBOs, as well as Red Cross/Red Crescent societies (where applicable), that have cooperating partnerships with WFP at all nine COs. A full list of organizations by country will be provided by the evaluation team. Your assistance in providing the contact information for 1 representative of each organization would be most appreciated.

Contact information of evaluation team

The team leader of the evaluation team is Ms. Katrina Rojas. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch with Mr. Zachariah Su, Evaluation Consultant and coordinator of the evaluation, at szachariah@universalia.com.

Thank you for your collaboration!

Key information on Evaluation for Tier 2 Country Offices (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda)

The World Food Program (WFP) Regional Bureau of Nairobi (RBN) has contracted Universalia Management Group (https://www.universalia.com/en), a Montreal-based consulting company, to conduct a Thematic Evaluation of Cooperating partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region. The evaluation team is about to begin the data collection phase of the evaluation. **As part of this, the evaluation team is seeking your assistance in**:

- (i) Providing available documents on cooperating partnerships at the CO;
- (ii) Identifying up to 3 key stakeholders for interviews;
- (iii) Identifying representatives of cooperating partners to whom a short on-line survey can be distributed.

Scope of the evaluation: The evaluation will cover the period 2016-2020. Its geographic scope will encompass nine WFP Country Offices supported by RBN (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda).[139] For more details on the purpose of the evaluation, see the outline of the evaluation included in the final page of this document.

Overview of evaluation methodology: The evaluation will utilize the following methods of data collection: (i) document review and database mining; (ii) stakeholder interviews (in-person and remote); and (iii) an online survey of representatives of cooperating partners. <u>Overall, data collection will be conducted between July and September 2021</u>. An overview of the timeline is provided in the table below.

The evaluation will employ a two-tiered approach, with three countries selected for in-depth reviews (Tier 1 – Burundi, Kenya and Somalia) and the remaining six countries constituting desk reviews 'plus' (Tier 2 - Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda).

Data collection method/approach	Steps	Key dates
Document review	Collection of documents on cooperating partnerships from COs	Completed by July 9 The evaluation team will liaise with RBN and COs to obtain relevant documents.
Interviews	Initial contact via email between evaluation team and CO focal point	Between August 9 and 13
	Conducting key informant interviews	Tier 2 Desk reviews 'plus' (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda): Up to 3 stakeholders to be consulted per country during the period <u>August 13 – September 24</u>
Survey of cooperating partners	Compiling lists of contact information of representatives of partners organizations for survey	By late August
	Distribution of survey to cooperating partners at all COs	Early-September Evaluation team to send weekly follow-up emails to cooperating partners on survey in August
	Close of survey	Mid-September

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[139] Eritrea is not included in the scope of the evaluation because it has very few cooperating partnerships.

Collection of documents on partnerships with NGOs and Red Cross/Crescent Societies from COs

The evaluation will review documents on partnerships with NGOs and Red Cross/Crescent Societies from all nine COs. More specifically, we would like to request from COs to share the following categories of documents:

- WFP documentation specific to individual CPs, such as Annual reports from cooperating partners, Partner Evaluation reports, documents on capacity strengthening activities and Partner Improvement plans. Please note the evaluation will not require documents for all CPs in each CO. Instead, we will prioritize the CPs that will be selected for interview, based on discussion during our initial contact with the CO (see section on Key Informant Interviews below).

- Country-specific documentation such as Partnership Action Plans (PAPs), documents from CP committees, Country Operational Management Plans (COMPs).

- Documents related to the structure of CP management such as the CO organigramme.

- Any other documents that may be relevant to the evaluation.

- The evaluation team will liaise with the RBN and CO staff in obtaining documents.

- Key Informant Interviews

As noted in the timeline, the evaluation aims to consult a variety of stakeholders through interviews. If possible, we would like to seek assistance from COs in introducing us to key stakeholders to set up interviews beginning in July.

For Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, the evaluation aims to consult up to 3 stakeholders per country, with at least one WFP CO staff and one partner organization representative to be consulted.

The evaluation team will initiate contact with a designated focal point at your CO via email in July to discuss the selection of stakeholders to be interviewed. With regards to selecting the CP to be interviewed, we will aim to prioritize women's organizations and GEWE-mandated organizations, though input from the CO would also be appreciated.

Interviews will be conducted remotely via MS Teams, Zoom, Skype or WhatsApp.

Survey of cooperating partners

The evaluation will administer a survey with questions addressed to cooperating partners in all nine countries to collect information on their experience in partnering with WFP. The survey will primarily be web-based, though the evaluation will provide the option for a Microsoft Word document to be emailed and/or physical copies of the survey questionnaire to be distributed to and filled by partner representatives.

The survey will be sent to all international and national NGOs or CBOs, as well as Red Cross/Red Crescent societies (where applicable), that have cooperating partnerships with WFP at all nine COs. A full list of organizations by country will be provided by the evaluation team. Your assistance in providing the contact information for 1 representative of each organization would be most appreciated.

Contact information of evaluation team

The team leader of the evaluation team is Ms. Katrina Rojas. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch with Mr. Zachariah Su, Evaluation Consultant and coordinator of the evaluation, at szachariah@universalia.com.

Thank you for your collaboration!

Annex: Outline of the Evaluation

The evaluation is being commissioned to inform and strengthen WFP's regional cooperating partnership strategy, including partnership mechanisms, tools and management practices, as well as to inform an understanding of the extent to which there has been progress in WFP's commitments to the Grand Bargain and localization agenda in the East Africa region.

The evaluation will cover the period 2016-2020. Its geographic scope will encompass nine WFP Country Offices supported by RBN (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda).

Purpose of the evaluation: The evaluation will focus on answering the following three themes

- How relevant are WFP cooperating partners[140] and partnership management practices in countries supported by RBN?

- To what extent have (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance been strengthened?

- What internal and external factors have influenced (a) CO partnership management practices and (b) partners' capacities and performance?

The evaluation intends to inform (i) WFP's regional cooperating partnership strategy; (ii) the RBN's regional strategy to meeting its localization and Grand Bargain commitments; (iii) a better understanding of current partnership across the region, especially local partnerships, and how WFP can strengthen its enabling environment for these, and (iv) how WFP RBN can initiate a strategic dialogue around partnerships with Country Offices during upcoming second-generation CSP design phases.

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[140] The use of "cooperating partners" indicates national and local non-governmental organization and community-based organizations.

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WFPc	WFPc. Undated. *Partnership Action Plan. WFP Burundi*
WFPd	WFPd. Undated. *Partnership Action Plan. Kenya Country Office*
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WFPg	WFPg. Undated. *NGO Partnership Guidance*.

Short Reference	Reference
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WFPk	WFPk. Undated. *Cooperating Partner Assessment*.
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WFP 2018c	WFP. 2018c. "Burundi interim country strategic plan (2018–2020)". 26-28 February 2018
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Short Reference	Reference
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WFP 2021a	WFP. 2021a. *NGO Capacity Strengthening Strategy*. WFP Somalia Country Office. September 2021
WFP 2021b	WFP. 2021b. "South Sudan Situation Report #295".

Breakdown of numbers of CP-specific documents reviewed

		Kenya	Rwanda	Djibouti	Uganda	Burundi	Somalia	Total
Total numbers of organizations for which FLAs and CP evaluations were provided		6	2	2	2	6	5	**23**
FLAs	**Total number of FLAs reviewed**	41	22	14	10	61	5	**153**
	Number of FLAs reviewed that were extensions or addenda	34	15	3	3	33	0	**88**
CP evaluations	**Total number of CP evaluations reviewed**	29	2	0	5	8	3	**47**
Capacity assessments	**Total number of capacity assessments reviewed**	0	1	0	2	1	0	**4**

Annex IX   Overview of Survey Results

213 total survey respondents (37 women, 157 men, 3 preferred not to say), out of 420 individuals to whom the survey was sent (50.7 percent response rate)

- In which country do you work?
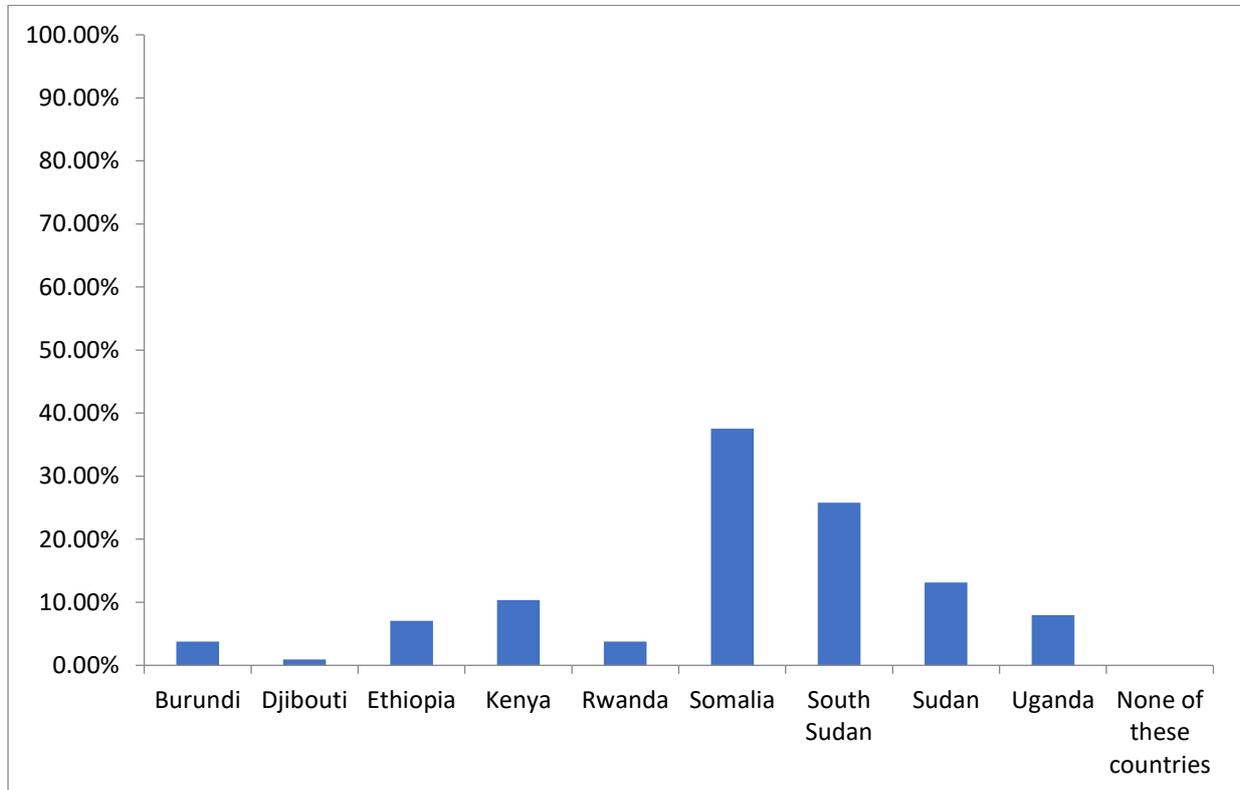
- Please select one of the following categories which best describes your organization: Local NGO, Community-Based Organization, International NGO, Red Cross/Red Crescent Organization, Other (e.g., private sector, academia/research organization, etc.)
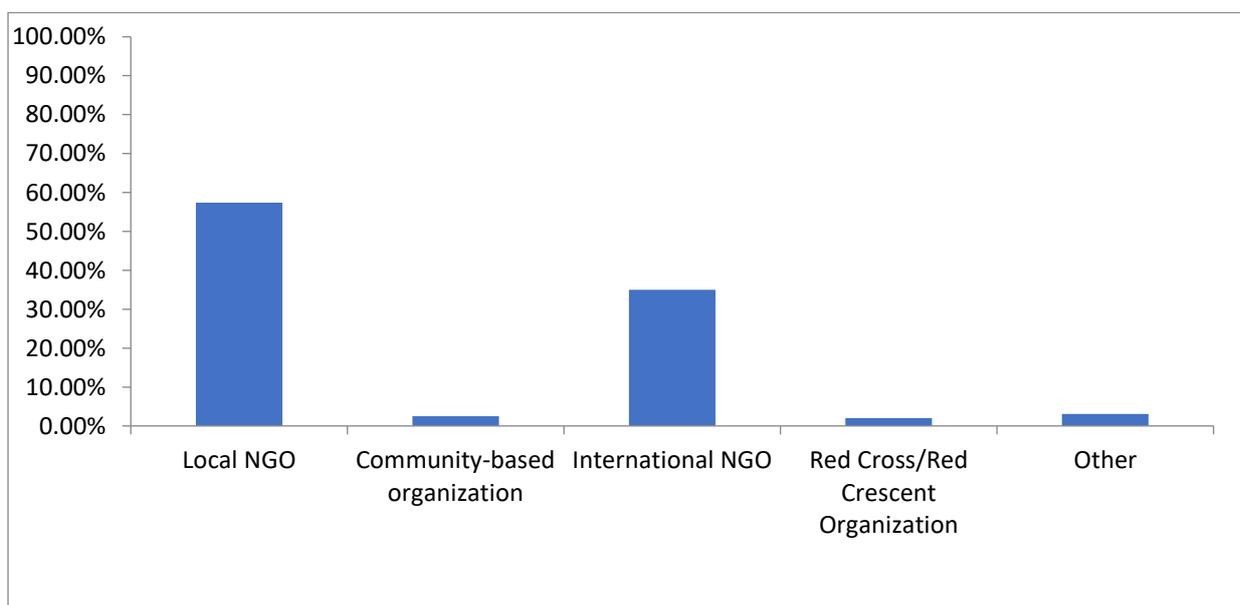
- Is your organization a women-led organization?
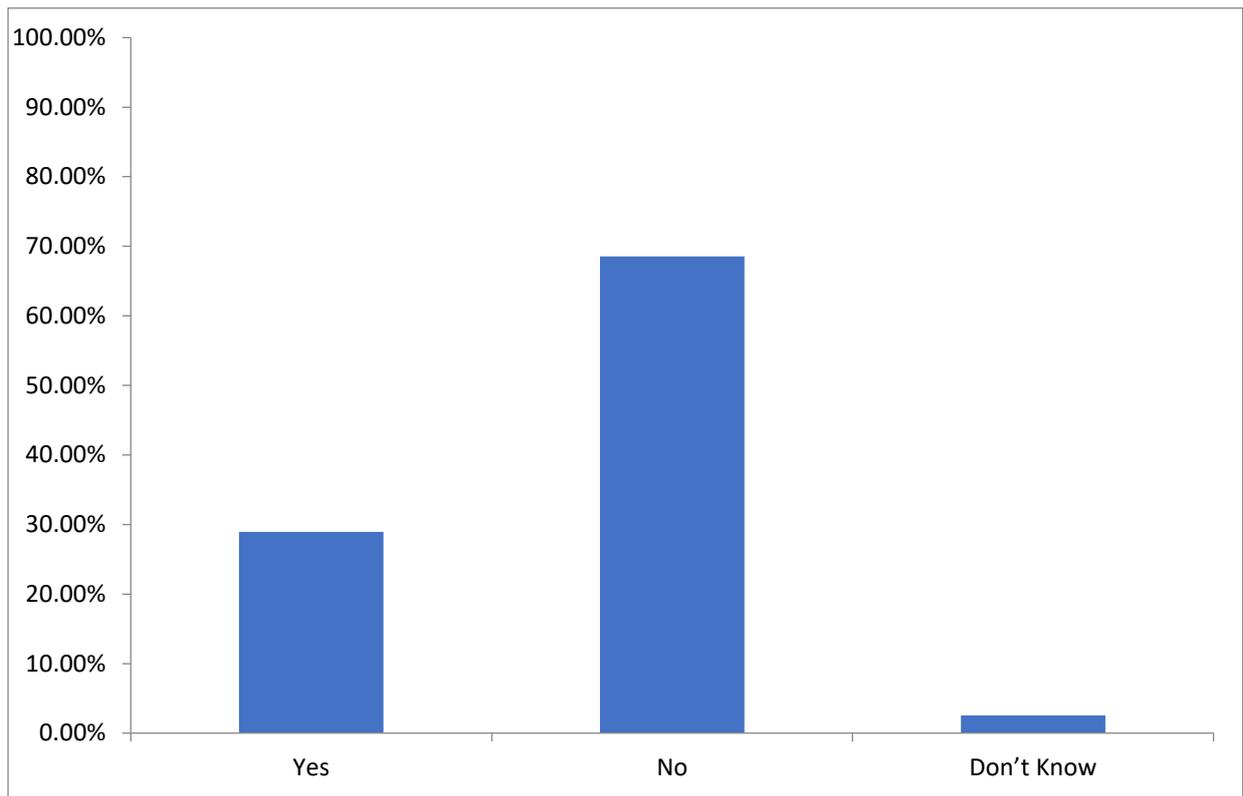
- Is your organization a women's rights organization?
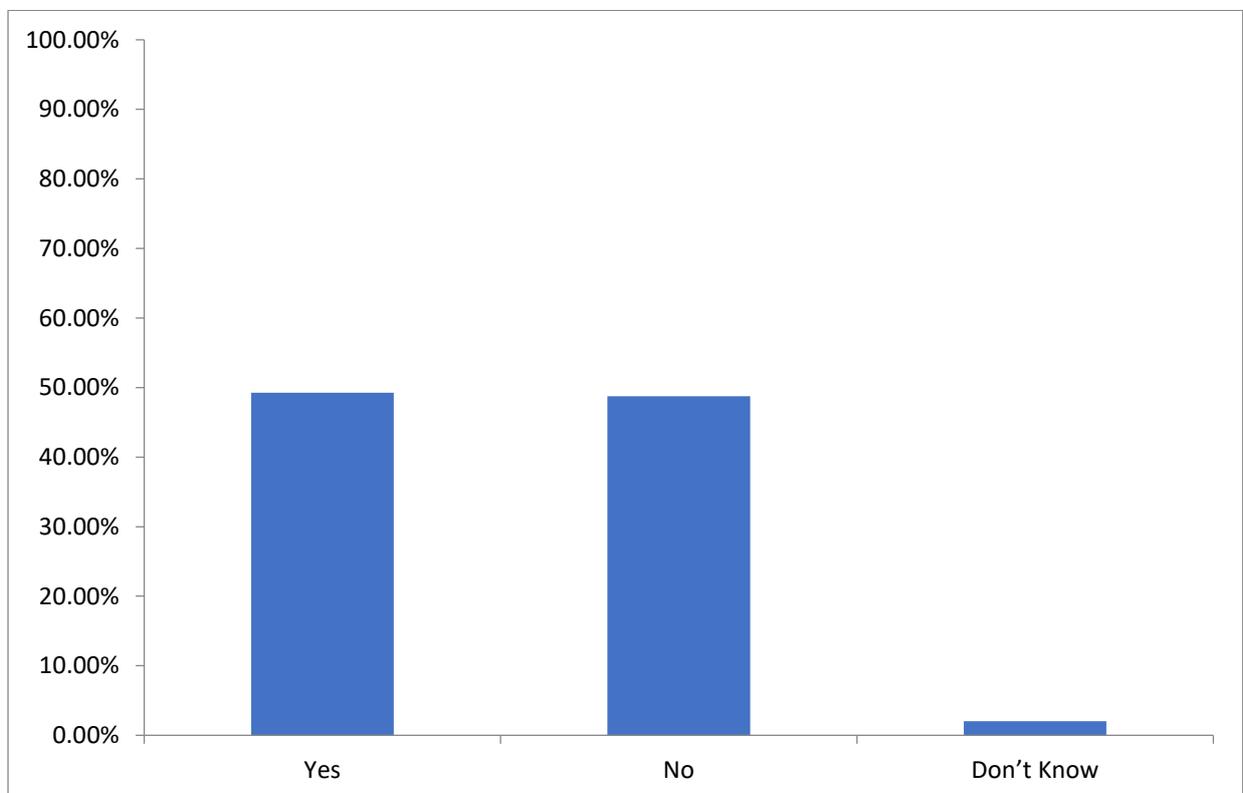
- Does your organization have a significant focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE) within its mandate?
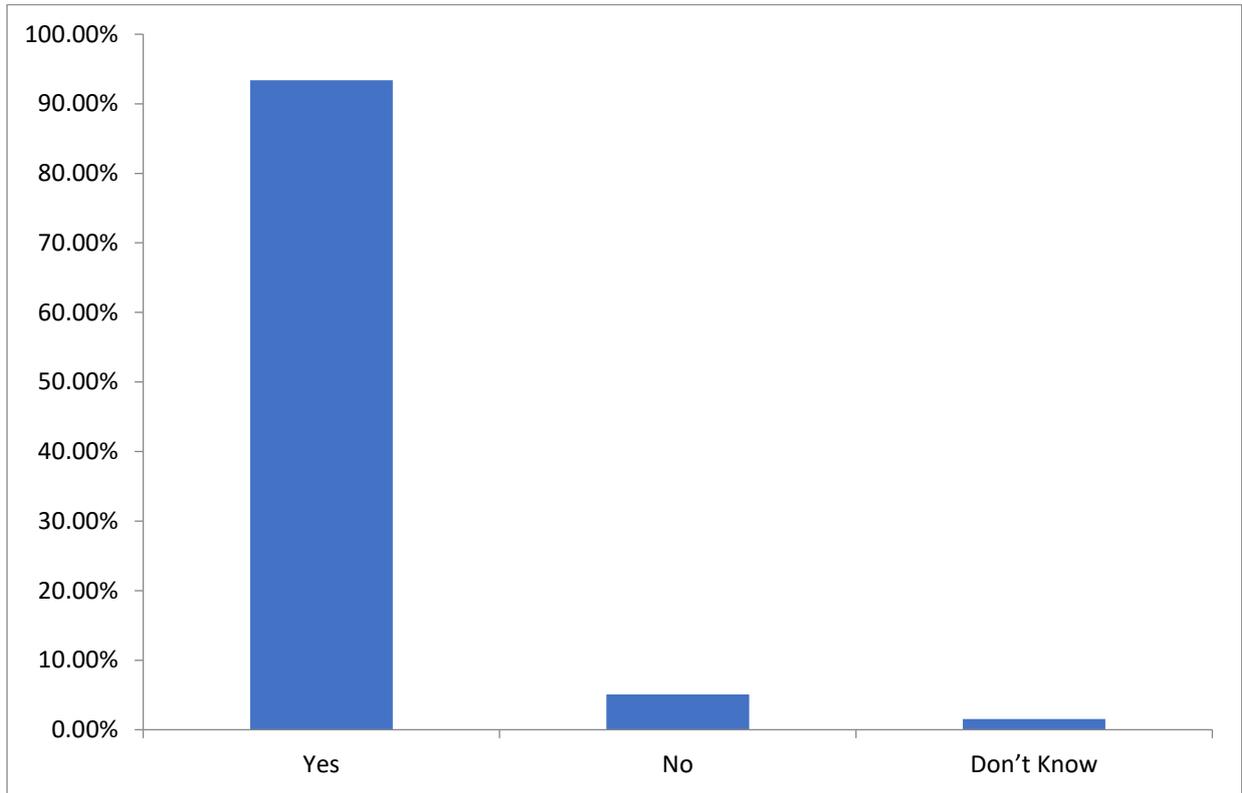
- Are you the focal point for your organization's partnership with WFP?
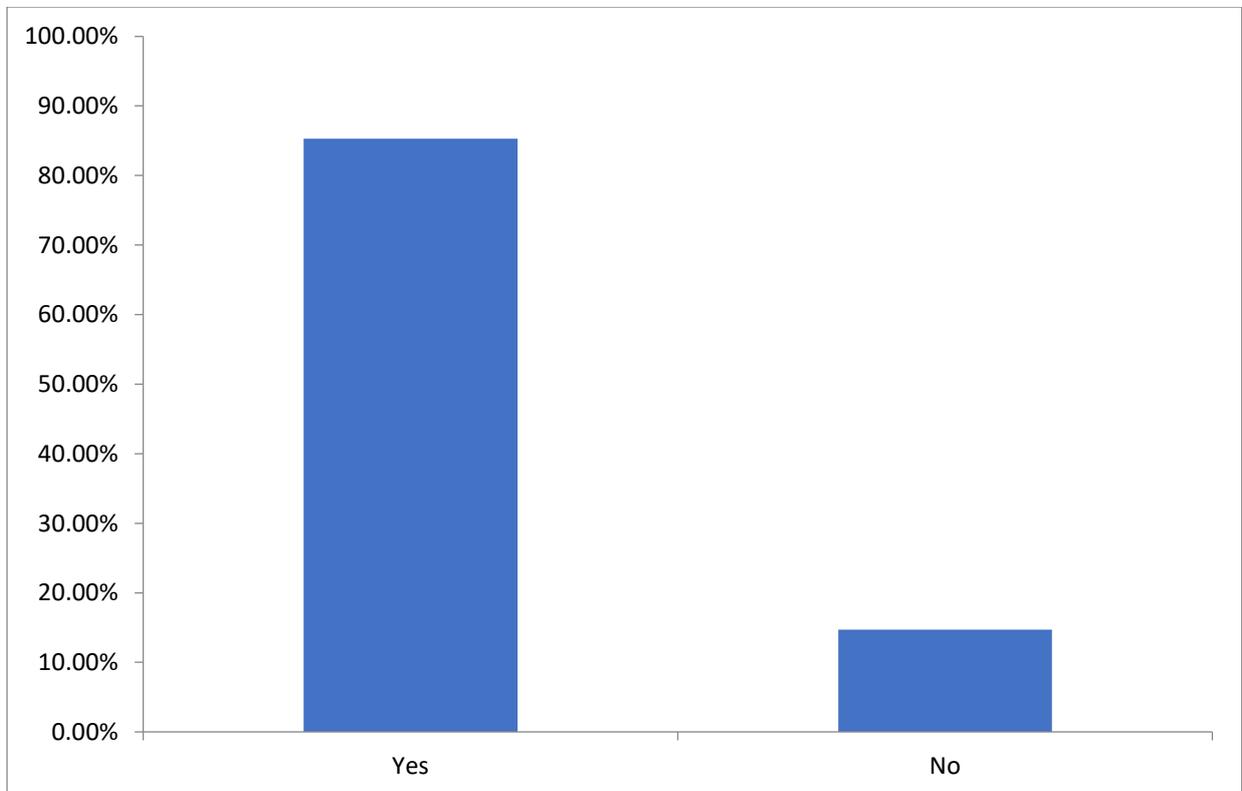
- Please indicate your gender:
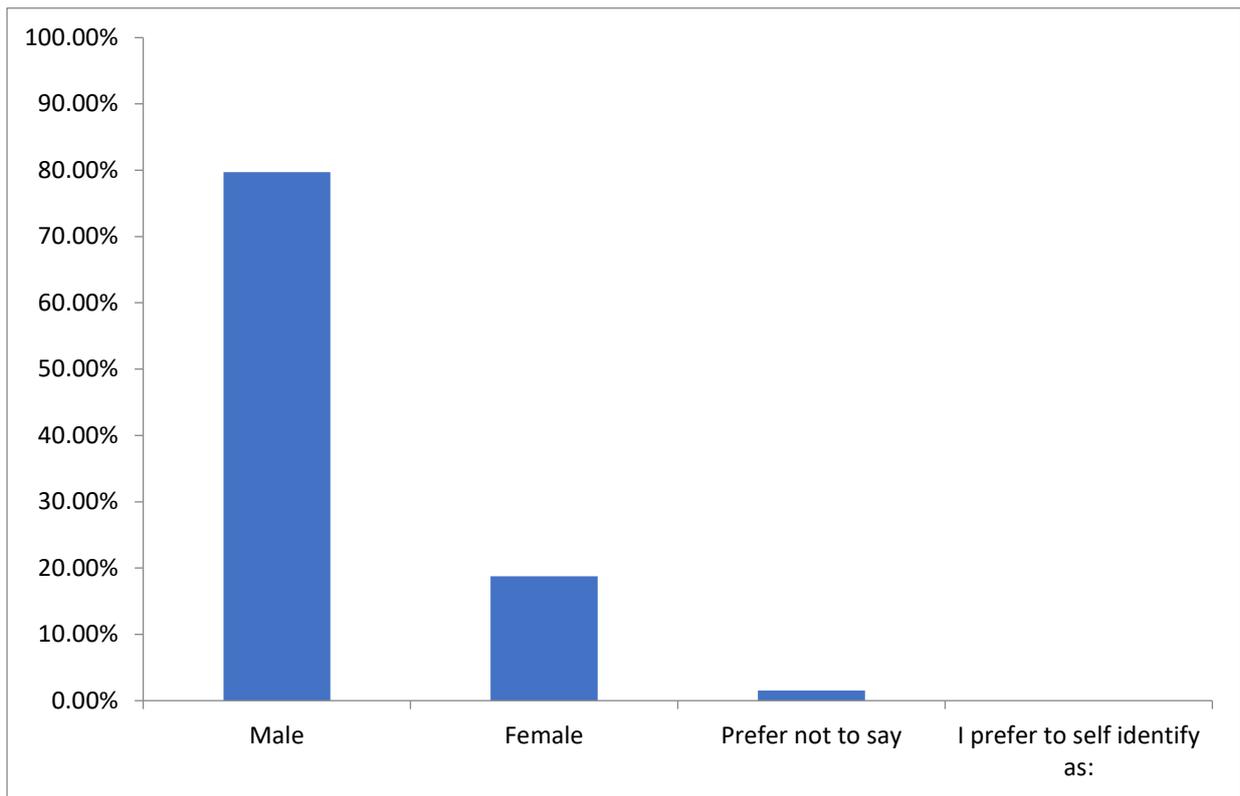
- Is your organization currently in a Field Level Agreement contract with WFP?
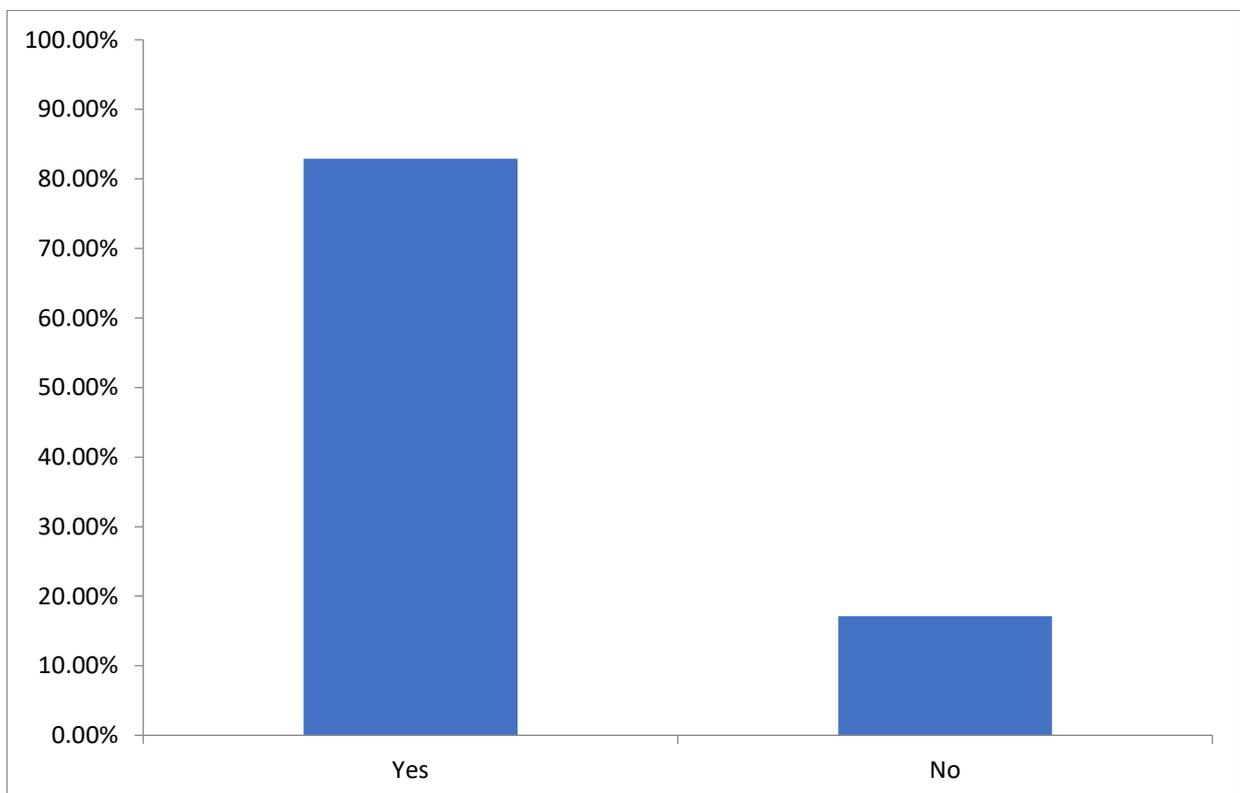
- What time period was covered by your most recent Field Level Agreement (FLA)?
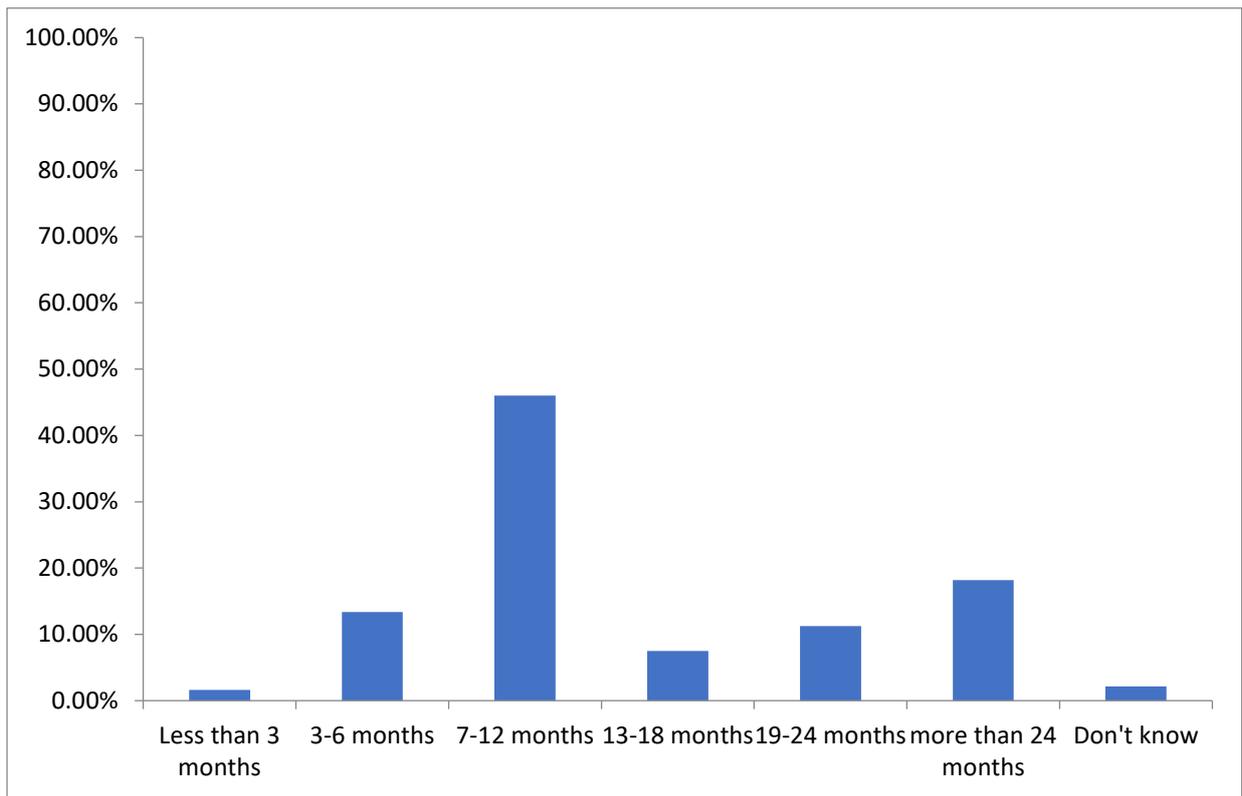
- Is your most recent FLA a renewal or extension of a previous FLA?
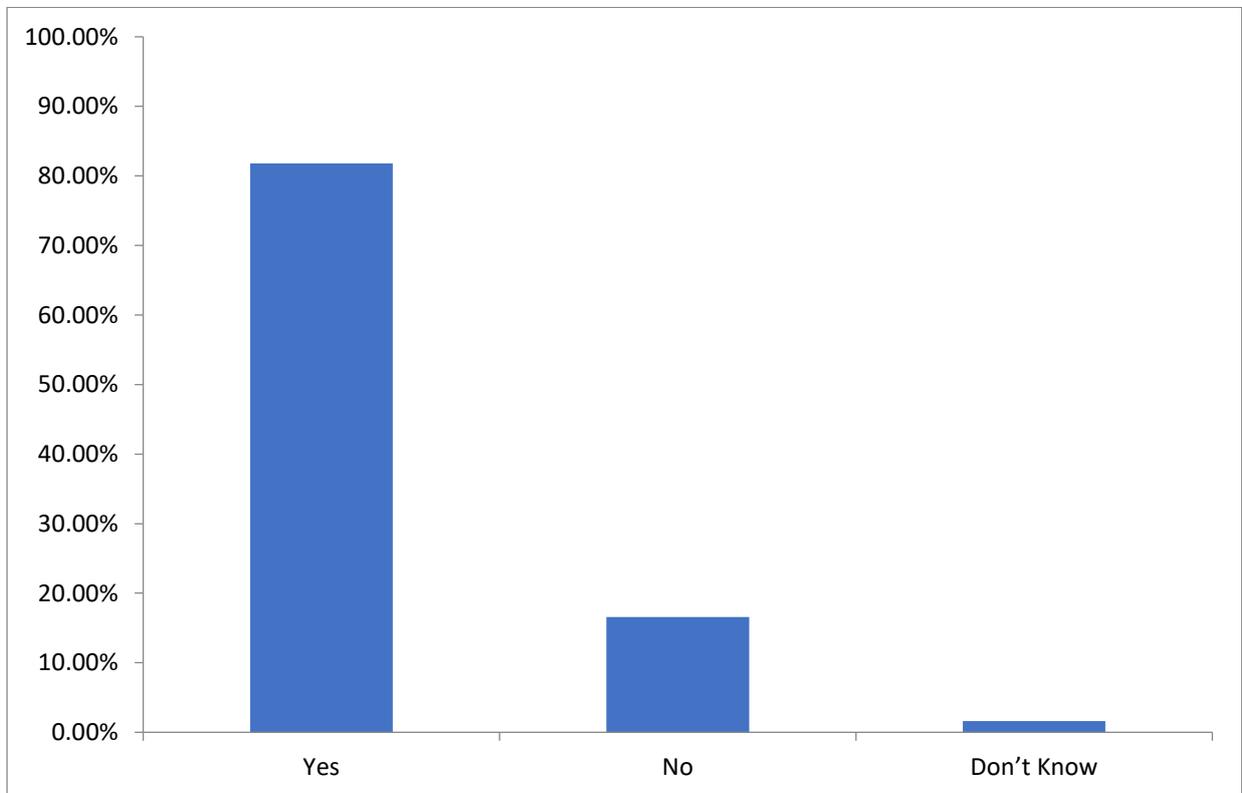
- What time period is covered by your longest FLA?
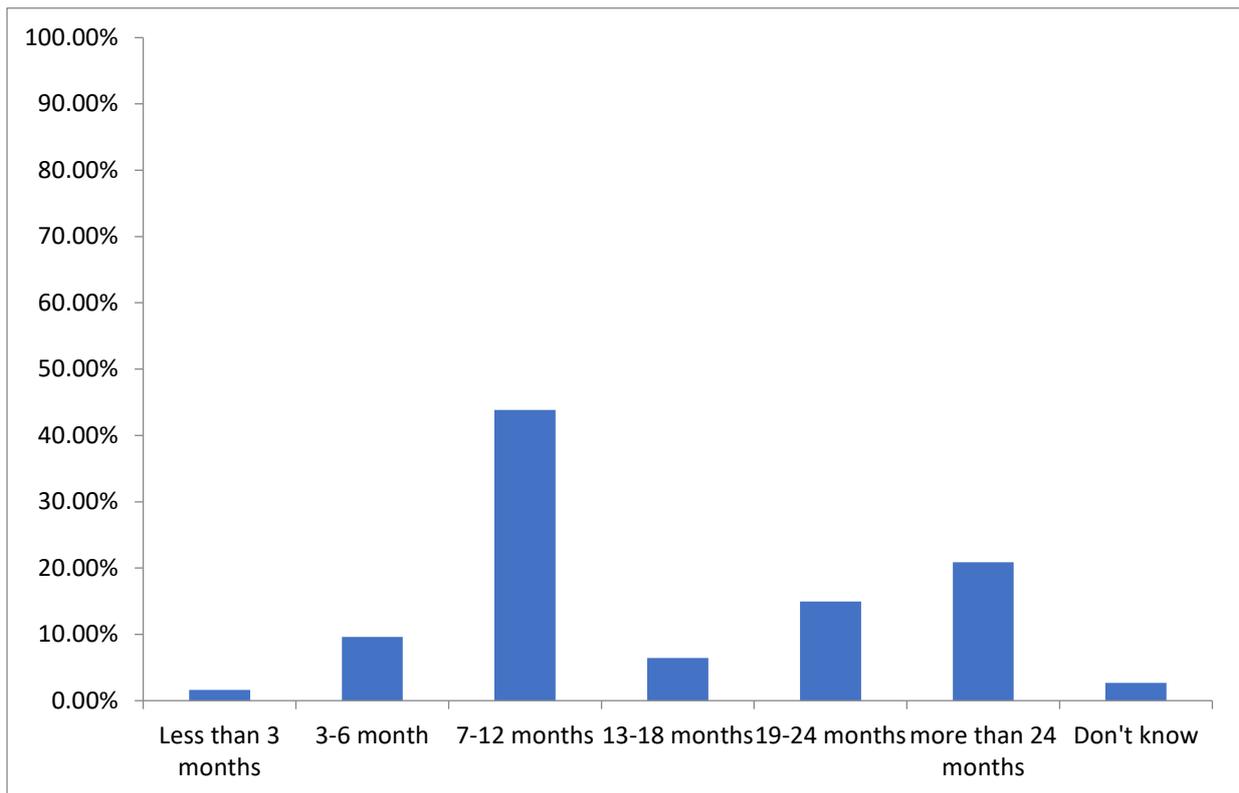
- Is WFP a new partner for you?
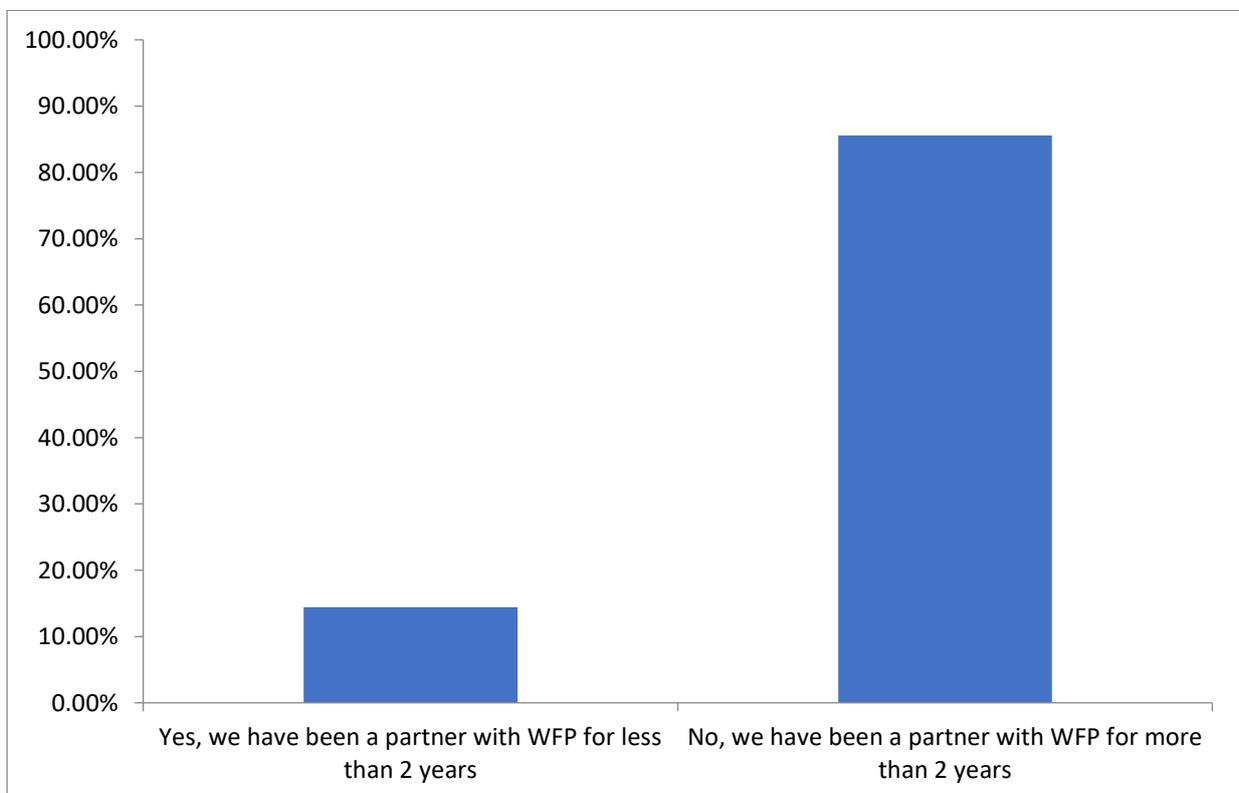
- During the 2016-2020 period, has your organization entered into a partnership agreement/contract with any organizations other than the WFP?
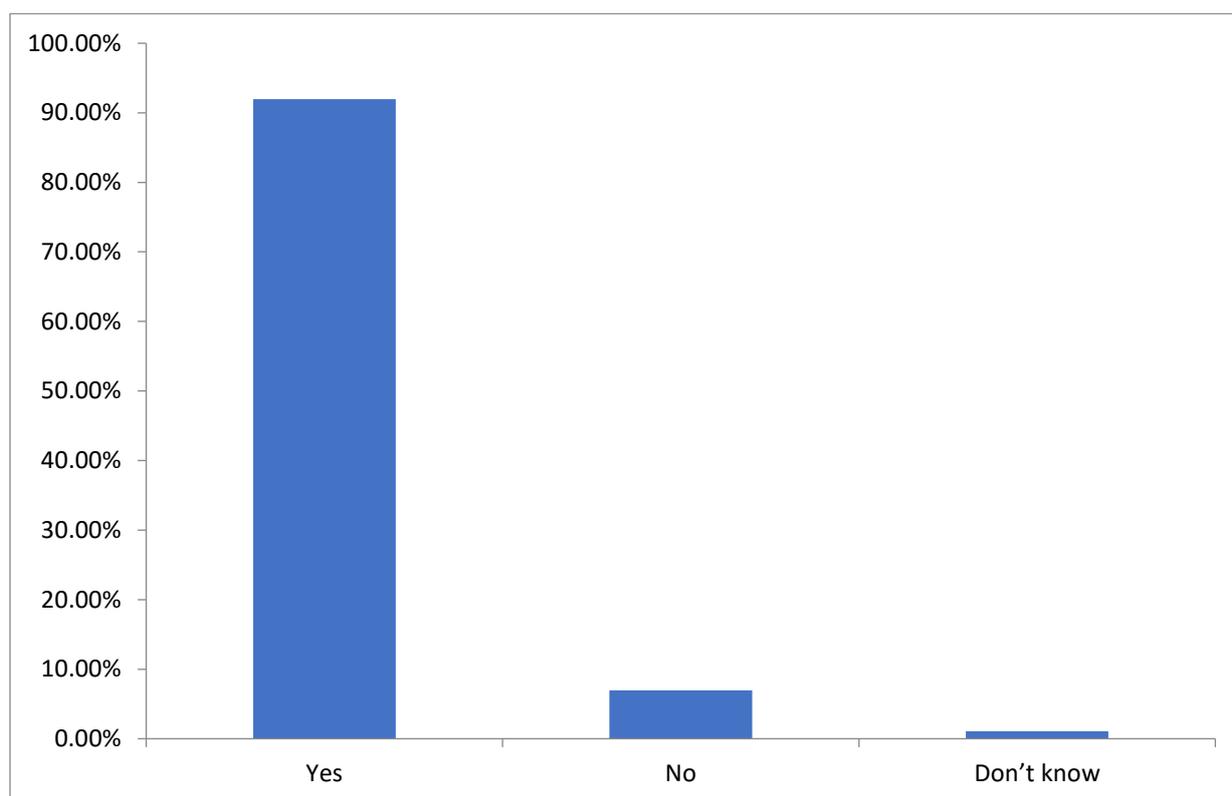
- Please indicate the approximate proportion of funding for your organization's operations during the period 2016-2020 from WFP, and other sources. The options are: Less than 25% of funding, Between 25% and 50% of funding, etc....

	Less than 25%	Between 25% and 50%	Between 50% and 75%	Between 75% and 100%	100%	Not Applicable
WFP	37.50%	28.75%	15.00%	10.00%	3.13%	5.63%
Other UN agencies	37.59%	31.21%	15.60%	4.96%	2.13%	8.51%
International NGOs	40.50%	19.83%	5.79%	6.61%	3.31%	23.97%
Bilateral donors	22.92%	15.63%	19.79%	9.38%	1.04%	31.25%
National/Regional government	22.34%	6.38%	4.26%	3.19%	1.06%	62.77%
My organization's own financial contributions	58.09%	20.59%	7.35%	3.68%	2.21%	8.09%
Foundations	38.38%	9.09%	3.03%	2.02%	3.03%	44.44%
Private sector	35.87%	5.43%	4.35%	0.00%	1.09%	53.26%

- We would like your feedback on how WFP selects its cooperating partners, based on your most recent FLA. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:
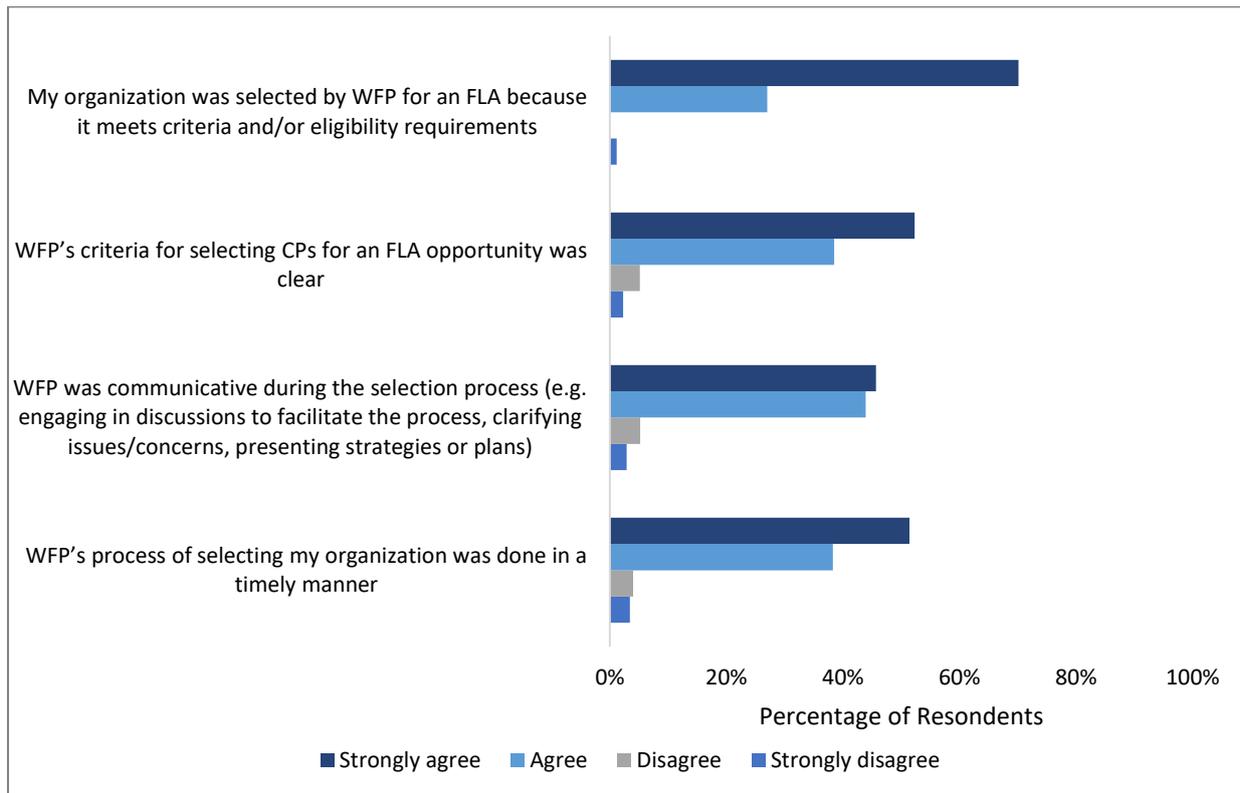
- We would like your feedback on how WFP contracts its cooperating partners, based on your most recent FLA. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:
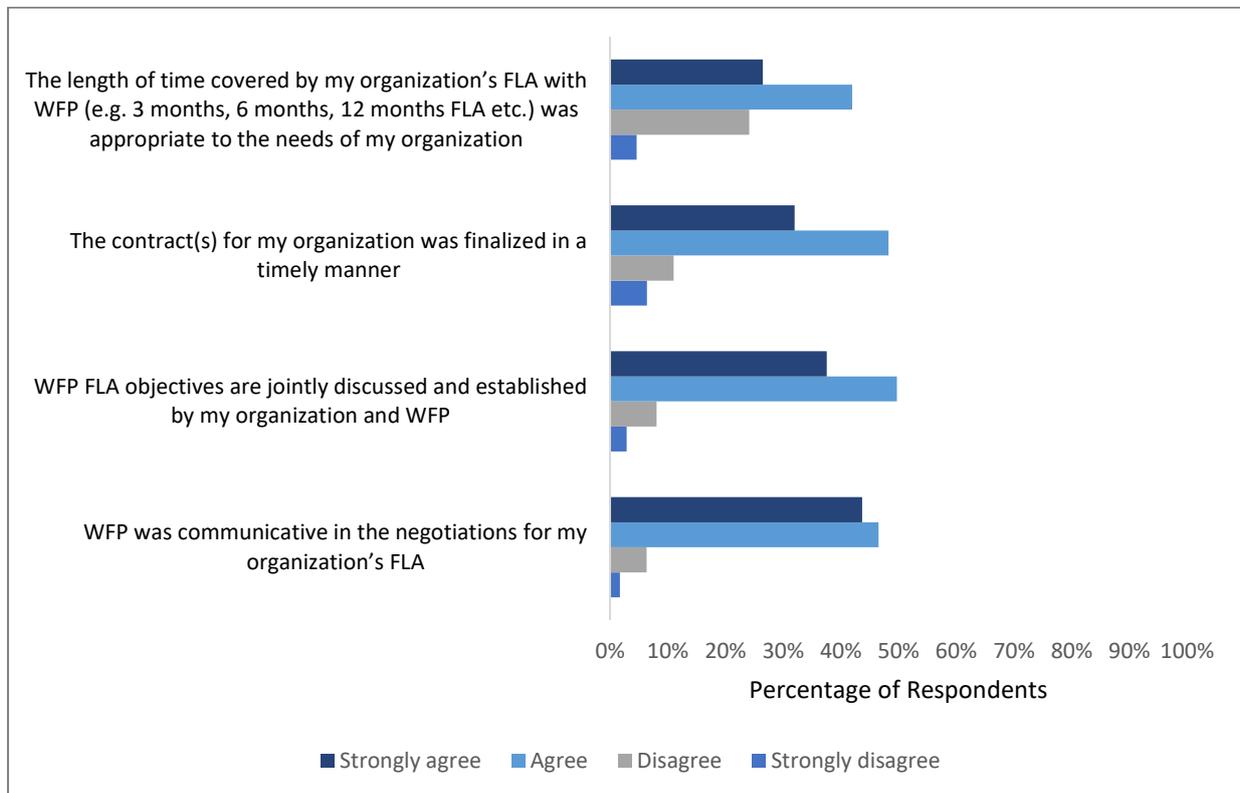
- Has your organization used the UN Partner Portal?
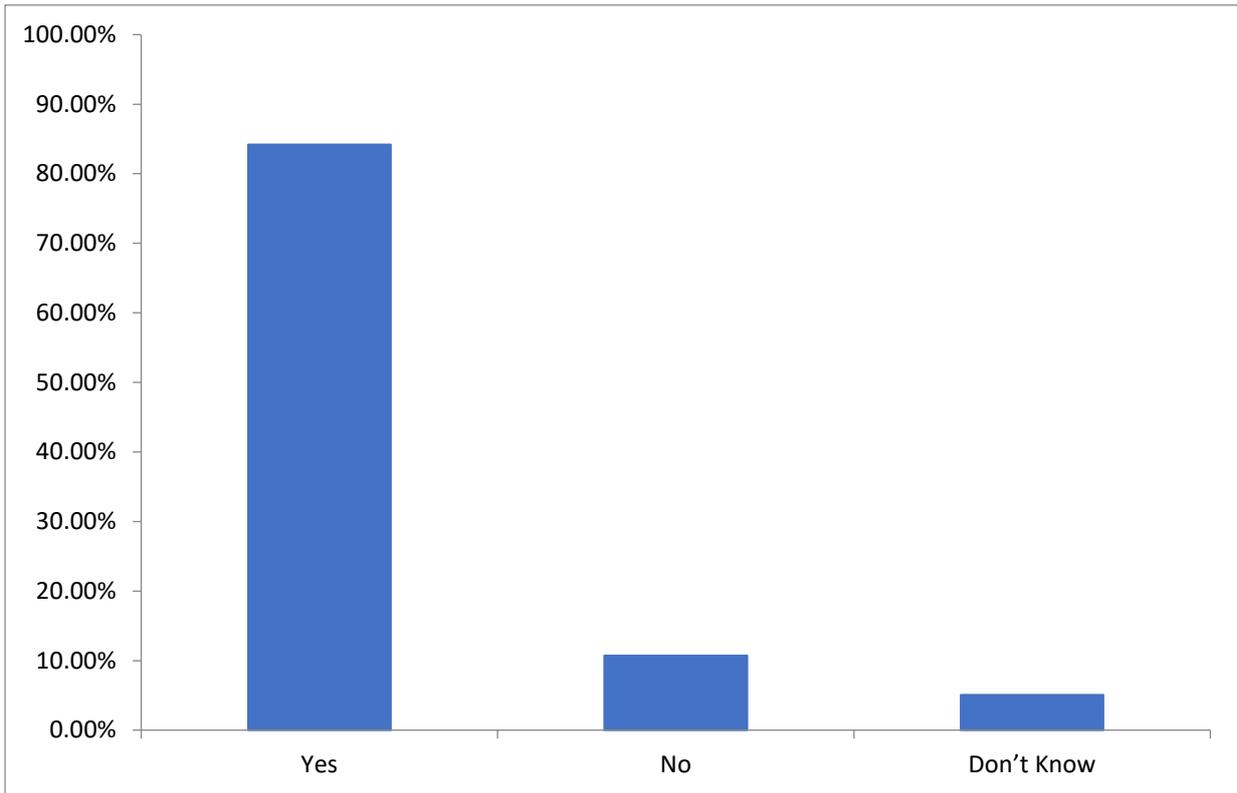
- We would like your feedback in using the UN Partner Portal (https://www.unpartnerportal.org/landing/) for your engagement with the WFP. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
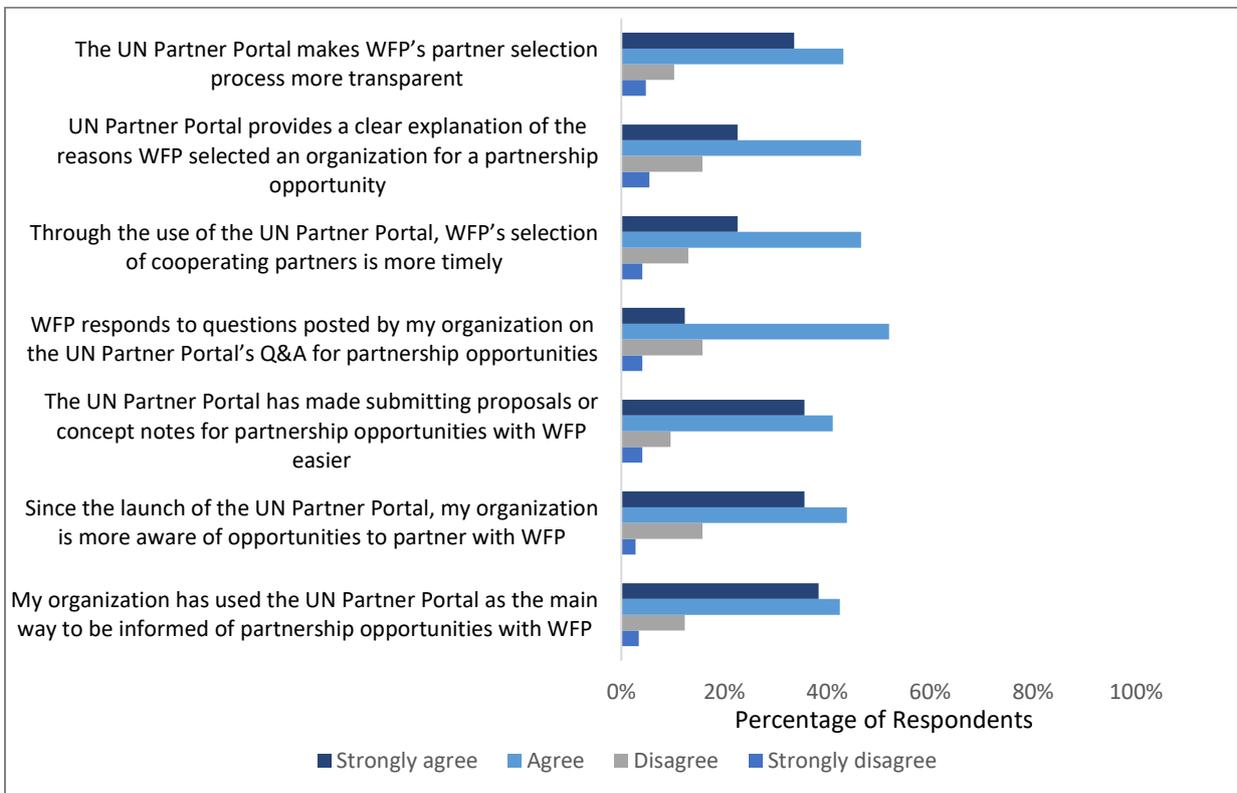
- Based on your most recent FLA, we would like your feedback on the way WFP manages the implementation of FLAs. Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:
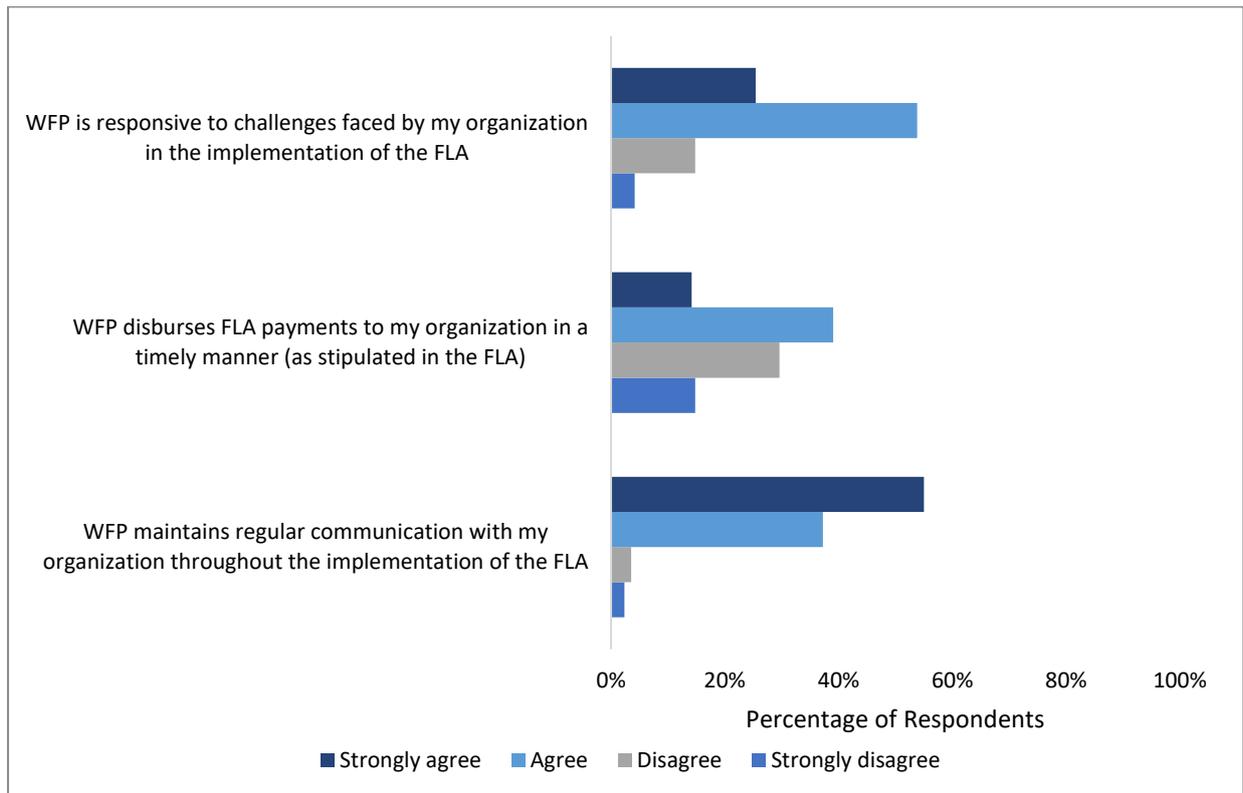
- Based on your most recent FLA, we would like your feedback on the way WFP reviews performance of partnerships. Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements:

- We would like your feedback on how partnership processes support gender equality and women's empowerment. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- Please indicate the level of frequency of each of the following, based on your experience with WFP:

- To what extent has your partnership with WFP contributed to bringing about improvements in your organization's capacities?

Legend: Very Strong Contribution | Strong contribution | Some contribution | No contribution at all
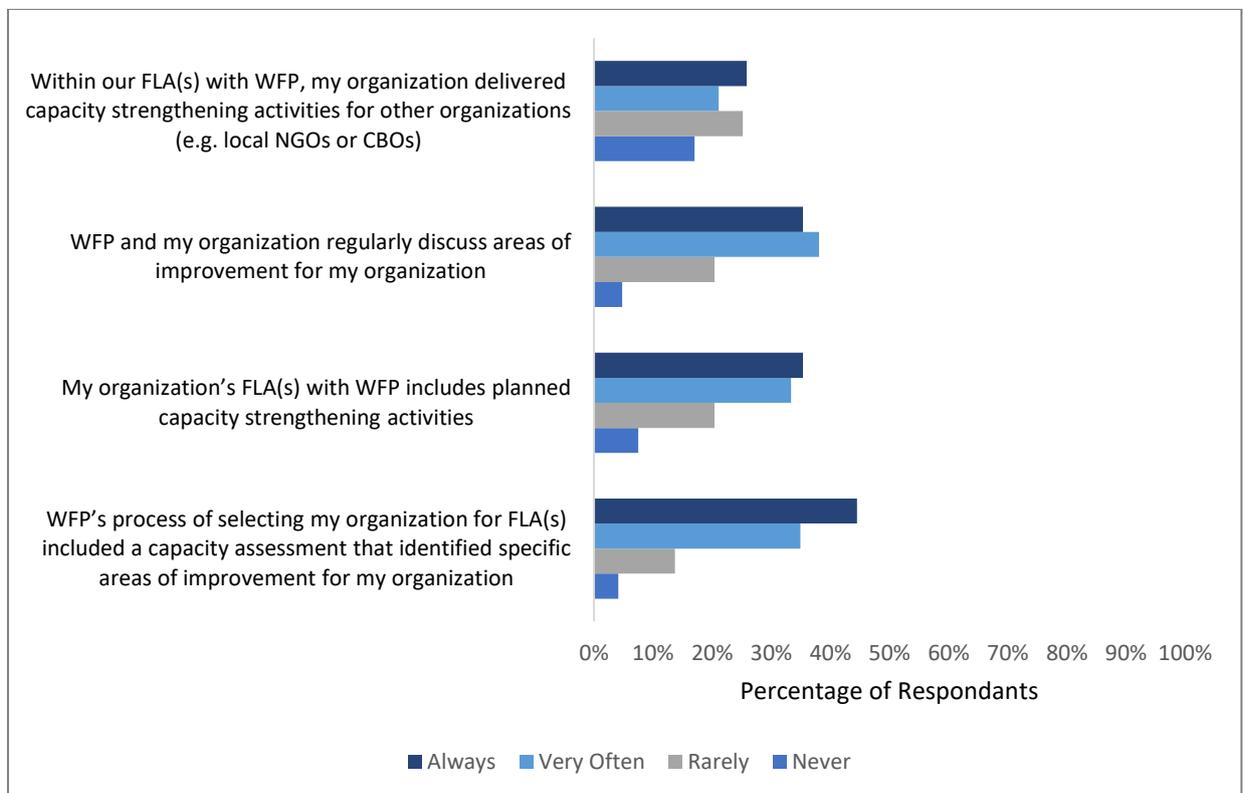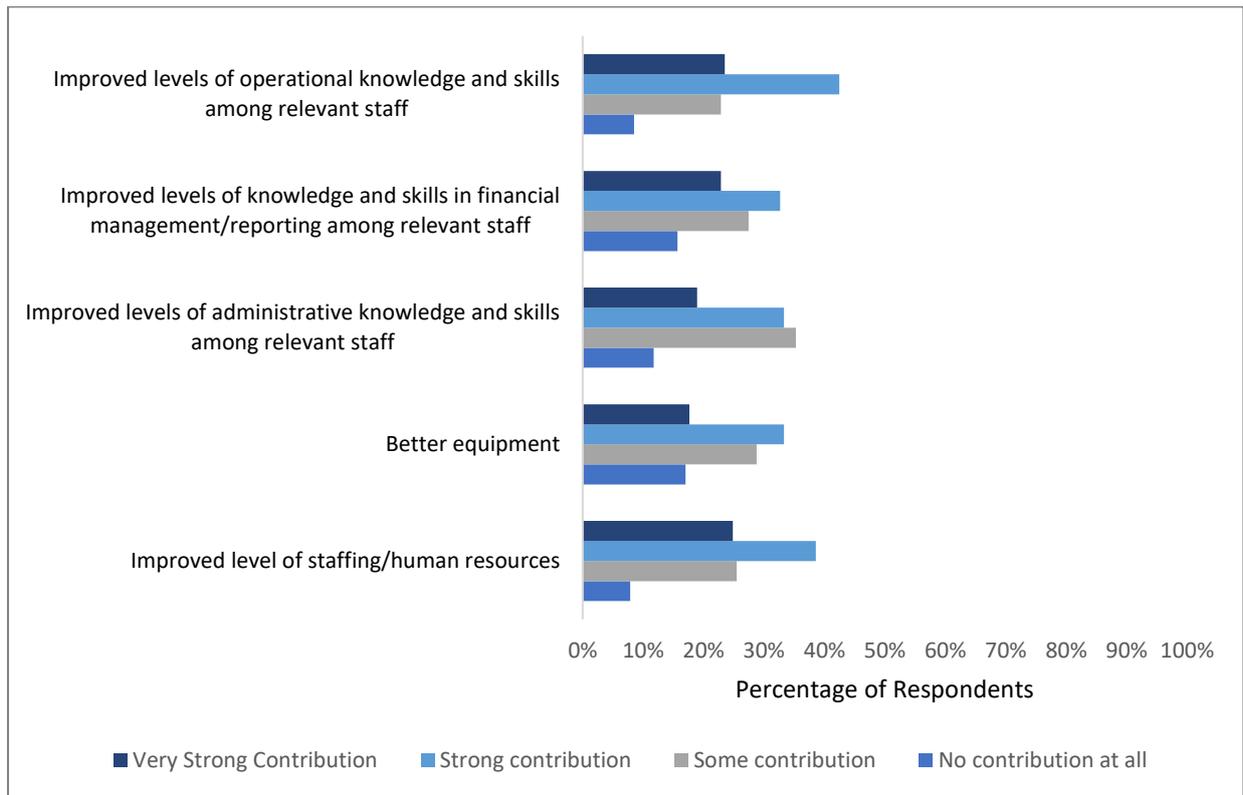
- Based on your experience, which of the following has been the primary focus of WFP's capacity strengthening support for your organization? Please rank the following choices from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important focus and 5 being the least important.
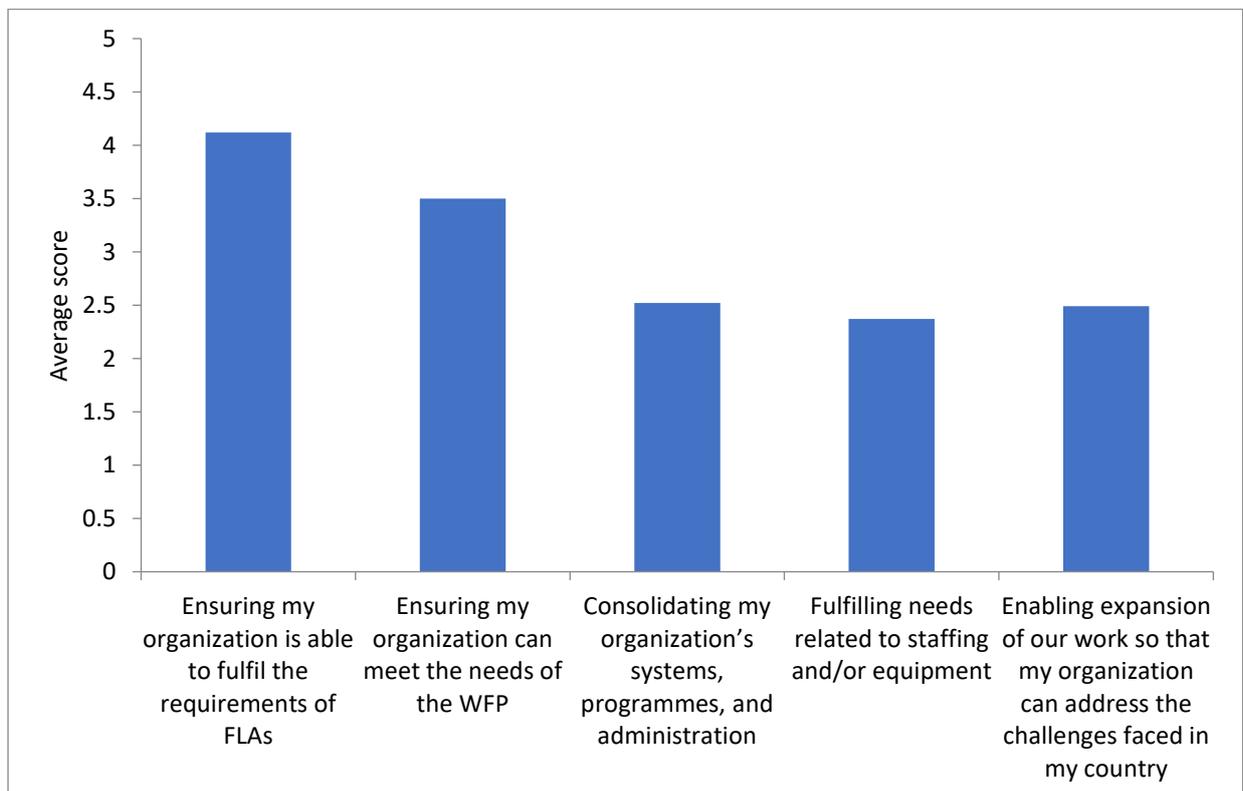
- What are 1-3 strengths of how WFP has managed its cooperating partnerships?

Total responses: 141 (cleaned data). Note that there are also a number of issues mentioned by single or small number (less than 10) of respondents, which are not included in this table.

Key topics	Number of respondents	Comments
Communication	60	- Effective, regular, clear, open, timely communication - Close, regular follow-up with partners, including via meetings and field/location visits by WFP - Responsiveness and accessibility - Providing regular, timely feedback - Good communication skills
Monitoring	44	- Effective, regular, close, joint, monitoring and supervision, including in the field/on-site - Timely, continuous reporting - Few respondents also mention evaluation, but large majority focus on monitoring and reporting
Coordination, cooperation, collaboration, partnership management	38	- Transparent, equitable collaboration; collaborative approach to solutions - Consultations/consultative process/partner involvement - Effective, close coordination with partners, strong partnerships - Good partnership selection - Strong partnership management - Sharing risks, accountability, responsibilities (1 respondent) - Combining, leveraging complementary resources (2 respondents)
Funding, FLAs	35	- Financial capacity, providing follow-up funding, timely funding - Programmatic coverage of FLAs, including focus on vulnerable groups; needs-based programming - Allocation of overheads or 7% of management fees to NNGOs in contrast to other UN agencies (1 respondent)
Capacity building	34	- Capacity building of partners, including in terms of finance and logistics, systems, goal achievement - Capacity building via workshops, trainings - Capacity building drawing on capacity assessments - Capacity building prior to project start and during implementation - Ability to strengthen capacity through local purchase of good and services. WFP recognize the potential of local purchase to be cost efficient and to have positive impact the economies recipient countries. (1 respondent)
Support	23	- Technical support to partners - Support to implementation, including in hard-to-reach areas (one respondent) - Support for proposal development
Staff capacity	15	- Staff knowledge of local context, good understanding of communities served - Staff expertise (multisectoral), experienced/qualified staff - Accessible staff
Timeliness of WFP activities	10	Timely FLA processing and approvals

- What are 1-3 weaknesses of how WFP has managed its cooperating partnerships?

Total Responses: 126 (cleaned data). Note that there are also a number of issues mentioned by single or small number (less than 10) respondents, which are not included in this table.

Key topics	Number of respondents	Comments
Funding	69	- Delayed reimbursement/processing of invoices (50+ respondents) - Limited funding and budget flexibility, especially for operational expenses, limited option for scale-up - Pre-financing requirement (at least 4 respondents highlighted that NGOs need to bring in/rely on other primary sources of funding to secure WFP support) - Limited admin capacity at WFP for financial support (1 respondent) - Irregular sharing of payment advice with partners (1 respondent) - Developing a cash-based system (1 respondent) - Timely completion of budget reviews (1 respondent) - Financial assessment of the organization (1 respondent)
Supply chain issues	27	- Delays in food supply and delivery - Poor quality of food supplies, inadequate seeds (2 respondents) - Problems with the pipeline (3 respondent) - Inconsistent delivery of food ratios (1 respondent) - Too much emphasis on WFP needs and targets in supply chain, pressure for partners to take on responsibility for delays (2 respondents) - Technical issues: processing chain of SCOPE system; SCOPE kits delayed; issuing of SCOPE cards (4 respondents)
Communication	24	- Timely feedback, responsiveness - Constructive communication (1 respondent) - Delays in sharing resources (e.g., reports) (1 respondent) - Field visits (1 respondent) - Reduced interactions with partners since onset of COVID-19 (1 respondent)
FLA cycles, programming	24	- FLAs/partnership agreements are short-term/have short duration - Limited areas of focus (e.g., too much focus on emergency and relief activities (mentioned by 3 respondents); lesser focus on gender equality, development activities (mentioned by 2 respondents) - Limited flexibility of FLAs to allow for adjustments to program; Inflexibility around the design, which often doesn't accommodate learning from implementing partners (1 respondent) - No programme growth and innovation (1 respondent)
Capacity building of partners	13	Limited support for capacity building (e.g., trainings on program management, warehouse management)
FLA application process	12	- Lengthy FLA signing process, delays in FLA amendment - Bureaucratic nature of FLAs (2 respondents) - Letters of recommendations and experience of the organization are given less attention during the selection process (1 respondent) - Lack of consistency in application of rules and regulations at contracting and invoicing stage (1 respondent)

- How can WFP improve the way it manages its cooperating partnerships? Please provide any recommendations for improvement.

Total responses: 143 (cleaned data). Note that there are also a number of issues mentioned by single or small number (less than 10) respondents, which are not included in this table.

Key topics	Number of respondents	Comments

Funding	48	- Timely processing of invoices and reimbursements; regular payment of instalments instead of reimbursement to avoid delay in the implementation
		- Increase financial support to operational costs, including for human resources, for equipment and purchase of motor vehicles
		- Accept reasonable budgets from partners without significantly reducing or setting budget ceilings that affect effective implementation (3 respondent)
		- WFP should transfer at least 30% of the approved budget at time of signing of the FLA (1 respondent)
		- Simplify payment mechanisms, paperwork/requirements for documentation (3 respondents)
		  – "Effective, efficient and rapid invoice or payment processing system, WFP tend to request detailed documentation including receipts and transactions papers for almost every transaction under WFP FLA, this is very cumbersome and time consuming, it would be good if WFP consider more effective and efficient way of verifying documents for example having annual audits to make sure that the expenses are eligible instead of requesting CPs to present every piece of paper to support claims of expenditure."
		  – "Continue to improve the invoice review process and timely reimbursement of funds through creating a portal other than hard copy use. WFP could also think of pre-financing partners in future."

Cooperation	29	- More regular consultations with partners at design and implementation stages; improving the feedback system - Create a partnership unit within WFP (3 respondents) - "Create forum for partners to exchange"; "WFP could improve managing its partners just to continue such websites that were designed to control and synchronize partnership and related aspects with unique of all UN requirements like UNPP bringing 4 UN Organizations with same control of partnership" (2 respondents)
Capacity building	26	- Continuous capacity building of partners, including training on FLA issues, project management, women-oriented trainings, training on SCOPE, LESS and MEAL systems
Communication	21	- Effective communication and timely information sharing - More regular field visits and discussions with beneficiaries - Increase responsiveness to partners (7 respondents) - Streamline communication between country office and field office (2 respondents)
Programming	21	- Timely prepositioning of commodities (7 respondents) - Review retailer selection; improve quality of commodities (2 respondents) - Focus on more development approaches, programming that cover diverse community needs, feeding of school children (3 respondents) - Increase space for local community participation in planning (1 respondent) - Review food voucher programme (1 respondent) - move from GFD to more resilience type of activities (1 respondent) - move from food supply to livelihood (1 respondent)

Key topics	Number of respondents	Comments
FLA cycle	19	• Support long-term/multi-year FLAs (between 2-5 years) • Allow for mid-project negotiations/adjustments of FLAs (1 respondent) • Process pending FLAs in timely manner (3 respondents)

Monitoring	14	• Less bureaucracy, paperwork and documents to be submitted, with simplified formatting.
		  – "For example, reduce the number of reports so that partners have time to implement and report impact."
		  – "Streamline reporting templates with the other UN agencies registered on UNPP (in our specific case we work with all of them, so a streamlined reporting process would enhance efficiency)"
		• Improve the review process
		  – "Involve CP management in regular reviews. Most program and financial review meetings are currently held at the field level with direct project staff, mainly focusing on administrative issues."
		  – "Periodic Project financial review"
		  – "Ensure mid-year reviews of cooperation partnerships."
		  – "Regular review of strategies"
		  – "Improve on the organizing of well-planned quarterly and annual program review with CP and key stakeholders"
		  – "Ensure timely delivery of ...M&E tools to the field level"
		  – "Sending audit especially at the end of the project for accountability and transparency"

Annex X   List of people interviewed

No.	Name	Gender	Organization	Position/Role
WFP HQ and REGIONAL representatives of other organizations				
1	Ellen Wielesynzki	F	WFP HQ	Global Technical Advisor, NGO Partnerships
2	Emily Dakin	F	BHA, USAID	Regional Director
3	Adesh Tripathee	M	IFRC	Head, Disaster and Climate Crisis (Prevention, Response & Recovery), Africa Region
WFP RBN				
1	Analee Pepper	F	WFP RBN	Gender advisor
2	Anoushka Boteju	F	WFP RBN	NGO Unit Nairobi
3	Agnes Ogada	F	WFP RBN	NGO Unit Nairobi
4	Rukia Yacoub	F	WFP RBN	Deputy Regional Director
5	Francis Opiyo	M	WFP RBN	Regional Programme Policy Specialist, EPR
6	Caroline Bird	F	WFP RBN	Business Engagement Manager
7	Hiba Aoudswaid	F	WFP RBN	Cash Based Transfers Team
8	Mahithi Bharathesh	F	WFP RBN	Cash Based Transfers Team
BURUNDI				
1	Housainou Taal	M	WFP	Country Director
2	Claude Kakule	M	WFP	Deputy Country Director
3	Grace Kwizera	F	WFP	CP management assistant
4	Severine Giroud	F	WFP	Head of Programme
5	Eric Barikanga	M	WFP	Programme Associate- Refugee and Emergency Response
6	Moise Konate	M	WFP	Programme Office - Emergency response Unit
7	Sophie Keres	F	WFP	Protection Policy Officer / Member of Gender Results network
8	Ernest Sendazirasa	M	Caritas	Caritas
9	Phanuel Ndekezi	M	Bureau Diocésain de Développement de Bubanza	Programme Officer
10	Flory Amundala	M	Concern Worldwide	Health and Nutrition Advisor
11	Isidore Hatungimana	M	Welthungerhilfe	Project Lead
12	Katja Jose	F	Welthungerhilfe	Interim Country Director
13	Claudine Murerwa	F	World Vision	Project Manager - Food Assistance Unit
14	Venerand Nzigamasabo	M	Red Cross Burundi	Country Programmes Director
15	Liboire Birigimana	M	Direction Nationale des Cantines scolaires	Director
16	Serge Tchelibe	M	UNHCR	Project Manager

No.	Name	Gender	Organization	Position/Role
KENYA				
1	Emmanuel Bigenimana	M	WFP	Deputy Country Director
2	Evaline Dianga	F	WFP	Head-Programme Support Services
3	Felix Okech	M	WFP	Head-Refugee and Relief Operations
4	Samuel Ndeti	M	WFP	Partnerships Team
5	Prisca Owato	F	WFP	Partnerships Team
6	Florence Lanyero	F	WFP	Partnerships Team
7	Judith Otieno	F	WFP	Gender Officer
8	Simon Denhere	M	WFP	Head of Dadaab Field Office
9	Lilian Dodza	F	World Vision	Country Director
10	Maina Kingori	M	World Vision	Senior Management - Disaster Management
11	Viddah Owino	F	IRC	Nutrition Coordinator
12	Jackline Chebichi Koech	F	IRC	Grants Manager
13	Anthony Kioko	M	Cereal Growers Association	Team Lead
14	Augustine Kail Lopie	M	LOKADO	Executive Director
15	Mathew Bartilol	M	RRDO	Project Coordinator, Sustainable Food Systems Programme (SFSP)
16	Charles Jow Otieno	M	Kenya Red Cross	Programme Manager
17	Doyo Godana	M	National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)	National Government Official
18	Philip Ebei	M	Turkana	CECM Agriculture Pastroal Economies & Fisheries
19	Evelyn Koech	F	UNDP	Team Leader - Environment and Resilience
20	Ivana Unluova	F	UNHCR	Assistant Representative (Programme)
SOMALIA				
1	Haimanot Kebede	F	WFP	Partnerships Unit
2	Sarah Waithaka	F	WFP	Partnerships Unit
3	Delphine Dechaux	F	WFP	Head of Programme
4	Muriel Calo	F	WFP	Deputy Head of Programme
5	Cesar Arroyo	M	WFP	Country Director
6	Baimankay Sankoh	M	WFP	Deputy Country Director
7	Lilian Osongo	F	WFP	Gender and protection
8	Paul Gol	M	WFP	Accountability to Affected populations
9	Mohamed Nuredaiem	M	WFP	HoP Area Office
10	Mary Kissinga	F	UNICEF	Partnership Specialist
11	Joshua Kakaire	M	UNICEF	Chief PME
12	Fardosa Abdullahi	F	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Director
13	Hussein Moalim	M	Wardi Relief and Development Initiatives	Livelihoods Manager
14	Ahmed Mohamed Afi	M	Gedo Women Development Organization	Programme Manager, CO founder

No.	Name	Gender	Organization	Position/Role
15	Maryan Mohamed Omar	F	Somali Women Association	Executive Director
16	Suleiman Ahmed	M	DRC - Danish Refugee Council	Deputy country director
17	Abdulkadir Hussein	M	Mercy USA for Aid and Development	Country manager
18	Abdirizak Mohamed Farah	M	ActionAid International	Programme Manager
19	George William Ebulu	M	Norwegian Church Aid	Head of program for Somalia
20	Ahmed Abdi Bekal	M	Red Crescent Society Somaliland	Executive Director
DIJIBOUTI				
1	Olivia Hantz	F	WFP	Deputy Country Director
2	Dirieh Farah Souldan	M	L'agence Djiboutienne de Developpement Social (ADDS)	Director of Social Development
ETHIOPIA				
1	Ahmad Aldwairi	M	WFP	Head of CP Management
2	Fiseha Mezgebu	M	Mothers and Children Multisectoral Development Organization (MCMDO)	Director of Programmes
3	Barbara White	F	Concern Worldwide	Country Director
RWANDA				
1	Ai Namiki	F	WFP	Head of CP Management
2	Patrice Nzeyimana	M	WFP	Programme Policy Officer
3	Laurent Ulimubenshi	M	WFP	CP Management Officer
4	Diane Mukamwezi	F	WFP	Partnership Management team
5	Geoffrey S.N. Kayonde	M	ADRA	Country Director
6	Eugene Rwibasira	M	Rwanda Development Organization	Executive Secretary
SOUTH SUDAN				
1	Aziz Ahmed	F	WFP	CP Management Officer
2	Mesfin Loha	M	World Vision	Country Director
3	Achel Gugi	F	MADA Women Development	Executive Director
4	Moli Isaac	M	MADA Women Development	Programme Manager
UGANDA				
1	Clare Graham	F	WFP	Head of CP Management
2	Andrew Okello	M	WFP	CP Management Officer
3	Emmanuel Aturinde	M	Hunger Fighters Uganda	Executive Director
4	Paul Mwirichia	M	World Vision International	Team Leader for food and cash projects

Annex XI   Overview of Gender-Related Requirements in Partnership Management Tools

Document type	Gender Transformative	Gender Sensitive	Gender Blind
FLAs	Section 2.1C of the General Conditions ensures that the CP carries out its tasks in accordance with the WFP Gender Policy, which aims towards a gender-transformative approach. Annex 6 on Gender Equality, Protection, and Accountability to Affected Populations is a consistent and integral part of Field Level Agreements. It encompasses key humanitarian principles, the integration of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), protection, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), and WFP Technical Support and Capacity Strengthening. Following the WFP Gender Policy, it commits employees to understanding and being competent in gender-transformative programmes and projects. In the Annexes pertaining to certain activities of the agreement, such as 'Food Distribution and Related Activities' or 'Cash Distribution Activities' there are 'Special Conditions/Provisions on Reporting'. Annexes also stress that all employees understand gender equality commitments and are competent to implement gender-transformative programmes and projects. Annex 6 also commits WFP to support gender transformative programming: "WFP provides technical guidance to, and supports the capacity strengthening of, Cooperating Partners in gender transformative programming, protection and AAP; such that gender equality, protection and AAP are integrated across all stages of the implementation of programmes and projects by Cooperating Partners."	Section 9 of the General Conditions commits the Cooperating Partner to adhering to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by entering a FLA. In the Annexes pertaining to certain activities of the agreement, such as 'Food Distribution and Related Activities' or 'Cash Distribution Activities' there are 'Special Conditions/Provisions on Reporting'. These conditions commit the Cooperating Partner to, whenever possible, collecting sex and age-disaggregated data on issues such as: the percentage share of resources allocated to women/men, composition (by gender) of local Food Assistance Committees specifying positions held by women, and share of benefits by category of activities.	Section 2.1E of the General Conditions obligates the partner to implement programmes and provide assistance to all beneficiaries with complete impartiality regardless of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, sex, or gender.

Document type	Gender Transformative	Gender Sensitive	Gender Blind
CP Evaluations	The way that the tools are applied also make a difference in how gender equality issues are addressed. The report-style CP Evaluations (used in Kenya and occasionally in Uganda) vary in structure and contents. Most often, they include a section dedicated to Protection, Gender, and Accountability to Beneficiaries. When included in the report, this section provides an in-depth description of the CP's performance regarding gender compared to evaluations that follow the PPE tool; sometimes this description is also coupled with sex-disaggregated data on project/programme practices and includes key actions to be taken. Notably, even when there is no dedicated section, the reports nevertheless often integrate discussions pertaining to gender throughout, although there is a risk that some key gender considerations may fail to be addressed due to absence of dedicated section.	For CP Evaluations that follow the PPE tool, there is always a section dedicated to Protection, Gender, and Accountability to Beneficiaries. The sub-criteria that fall under this section vary depending on the nature of the project, but often cover issues such as: the proportion of beneficiaries that... experience safety issues, receive messages on Gender and Protection, and have knowledge of and are satisfied with existing complaints mechanisms. In some cases, the evaluation also assesses women's empowerment through their involvement in management committees or other leadership positions. This section consistently makes up 10% of the total score attributed to the CP.	
Capacity Assessments		A small sample of Capacity Assessments reviewed consistently have a section dedicated to gender, which include key components such as Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). For example, Capacity Assessments may assess whether the CP has a clear gender and protection policy, the percentage of female staff occupying senior positions, whether beneficiaries receive messages on gender and if they have access to complaints and feedback mechanisms, etc. According to the Gender and Monitoring Guidance of the WFP Gender Equality toolkit, their purpose is for gender-responsive monitoring, so that WFP can assess changes in these key areas throughout the partnership. It is also an important means for WFP to ensure that it continues to partner strategically, strengthen the capacity of its partners, and learn from its partners. In the Capacity assessments reviewed, this section was weighted 20% in estimating the overall level of risk associated with partnering with that NGO.	

Annex XII CP Types by Country and Year

Country	CP type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Burundi	International NGOs	6	8	6	4	4
	Local NGOs	7	9	7	3	3
Djibouti	International NGOs	0	2	0	0	0
	Local NGOs	3	2	1	1	3
Ethiopia	International NGOs	6	7	11	11	14
	Local NGOs	7	5	7	6	5
Kenya	International NGOs	14	12	12	7	3
	Local NGOs	13	8	11	10	11
Rwanda	International NGOs	5	6	7	6	6
	Local NGOs	3	2	2	3	3
Somalia	International NGOs	16	16	23	25	25
	Local NGOs	101	90	102	102	112
South Sudan	International NGOs	37	34	36	35	37
	Local NGOs	35	42	41	39	39
Sudan	International NGOs	19	19	20	19	18
	Local NGOs	52	46	49	21	15
Uganda	International NGOs	14	15	17	14	13
	Local NGOs	8	8	7	7	10
Total	**International NGOs**	**117**	**119**	**132**	**121**	**120**
	Local NGOs	**212**	**212**	**227**	**192**	**201**

Annex XIII CP Commodity Distribution (2018-2020)

Country	Organization name	Year	Opening stock (MT)	Quantity Received from WFP (MT)	Quantity Distributed (MT)	Quantity Returned to WFP (MT)	Lost Quantity (MT)	Closing Balance (MT)
Burundi	Bureau Diocésain de Développement de Bubanza (BDDB)	Total	3,870.33	4,253.20	4,350.89	31.10	2.46	3,737.16
		2018	1.50	0.70	1.74	-	-	0.47
		2019	1,338.48	1,815.05	1,875.80	30.80	2.39	1,244.28
		2020	2,530.35	2,437.45	2,473.35	0.30	0.07	2,492.41
	Caritas - Burundi	Total	21,205.35	27,833.98	26,786.01	611.49	19.57	21,591.73
		2018	6,133.96	6,652.52	6,854.04	142.95	13.60	5,814.69
		2019	6,202.64	9,367.90	9,087.35	331.97	4.15	6,171.80
		2020	8,868.76	11,813.56	10,844.61	136.58	1.82	9,605.25
	WHH - Welthungerhilfe	Total	5,937.43	1,851.29	7,136.28	-	5.23	5,997.32
		2018	2,903.37	1,851.29	1,803.40	-	0.68	2,950.58
		2019	1,716.49	-	3,357.40	-	3.06	1,758.76
		2020	1,317.57	-	1,975.49	-	1.49	1,287.98
	WVI - World Vision International	Total	3,311.62	5,073.35	5,230.38	0.93	1.85	3,150.49
		2018	703.51	1,372.06	1,375.10	0.66	0.04	702.47
		2019	1,758.28	2,235.99	2,341.73	0.27	1.81	1,646.95
		2020	849.83	1,465.30	1,513.56	-	-	801.06
Djibouti	ADDS (Agence Djiboutienne De Développement Social)	Total	38.76	430.46	419.81	-	0.91	48.53
		2018	13.76	250.86	239.48	-	-	25.14
		2019	25.01	179.60	180.33	-	0.91	23.39
Ethiopia	Concern Worldwide	Total	3,784.75	5,034.14	5,064.40	17.51	0.97	3,768.36
		2018	2,067.10	2,722.86	2,628.70	-	0.33	2,195.66

Country	Year	Organizati on name	Opening stock (MT)	Quantity Received from WFP (MT)	Quantity Distributed (MT)	Quantity Returned to WFP (MT)	Lost Quantity (MT)	Closing Balance (MT)
		2019	887.79	1,120.66	1,348.83	17.51	0.05	634.41
		2020	829.87	1,190.63	1,086.88	-	0.59	938.29
	Mother and Child Development Organization	Total	3.54	324.05	316.84	-		10.75
		2018	-	278.80	278.80	-	-	-
		2019	3.54	38.63	32.16	-	-	10.01
		2020	-	6.62	5.87	-	-	0.74
Kenya	International Rescue Committee	Total	657.63	2,248.83	2,233.11	6.68	0.89	666.14
		2018	145.92	478.08	483.05	6.25	0.46	134.25
		2019	134.17	766.31	760.30	0.44	-	139.79
		2020	377.55	1,004.44	989.76	-	0.43	392.10
	Lotus Kenya Action For Development Organization (LOKADO)	Total	7,771.85	11,788.78	11,619.38	169.19	0.21	7,771.85
		2018	606.89	1938.953	1,550.03	20.73	0.05	975.03
		2019	4,044.13	5032.361	5,303.54	96.89	0.07	3,675.99
		2020	3,120.83	4817.467	4,765.80	51.57	0.09	3,120.83
	Red Cross - Kenya	Total	39,264.71	16,552.055	15,623.42	2,131.74	0.61	38,057.57
		2018	13,102.04	9194.177	7,881.40	280.69	0.60	14,130.11
		2019	12,455.93	3503.769	4,056.79	1,807.71	-	10,095.20
		2020	13,706.74	3854.109	3,685.23	43.35	0.01	13,832.26
	Relief Reconstruction and Development Organisation (RRDO)	Total	47,215.31	14570.913	13,827.98	468.26	-	47,489.98
		2018	3,596.23	2476.985	1,682.37	385.37	-	4,005.48
		2019	18,494.08	6296.346	6,288.14	25.02	-	18,477.27
		2020	25,124.99	5797.582	5,857.48	57.86	-	25,007.24
	WVI - World Vision International	Total	57,648.43	88745.268	89,246.71	2,275.61	7.16	54,913.25
		2018	22,911.93	28181.086	28,188.08	542.28	1.79	22,409.90

Country	Year	Organization name	Opening stock (MT)	Quantity Received from WFP (MT)	Quantity Distributed (MT)	Quantity Returned to WFP (MT)	Lost Quantity (MT)	Closing Balance (MT)
		2019	18,331.83	31986.364	32,121.85	1,408.92	5.21	16,782.23
		2020	16,404.66	28577.818	28,936.79	324.41	0.16	15,721.12
Rwanda	**ADRA - Adventist Development and Relief Agency**	**Total**	**1,385.75**	**1,443.46**	**1,228.13**	**22.00**	**0.01**	**1,381.29**
		2018	571.37	518.00	496.53	-	-	579.49
		2019	433.87	510.59	519.20	10.09	0.00	385.39
		2020	380.52	414.87	212.40	11.90	0.01	416.40
Somalia	**ActionAid International**	**Total**	**173.70**	**12,528.92**	**12,528.92**			**173.70**
		2018	-	128.17	128.17	-	-	-
		2019	-	1,312.73	1,312.73	-	-	-
		2020	173.70	11,088.02	11,088.02	-	-	173.70
	Gedo Women Development Organization	**Total**	**1,531.39**	**691.76**	**677.76**			**1,517.09**
		2018	409.42	184.09	184.18	-	-	409.33
		2019	746.35	366.80	291.54	-	-	821.61
		2020	375.62	140.87	202.04	-	-	286.15
	Mercy USA for Aid and Development	**Total**	**2,730.24**	**7,810.83**	**7,827.94**	**48.10**	**0.06**	**2,697.37**
		2018	355.64	2,652.71	2,661.56	37.77	0.05	326.65
		2019	1,252.28	2,456.89	2,366.39	-	0.00	1,353.84
		2020	1,122.32	2,701.24	2,799.99	10.32	-	1,016.88
	Norwegian Church Aid	**Total**	**164.76**	**303.45**	**293.33**	**2.34**	**-**	**172.54**
		2018	149.08	174.24	174.24	-	-	149.08
		2019	15.68	129.21	119.09	2.34	-	23.46
	Wardi Relief and Development Initiatives	**Total**	**909.59**	**4,585.17**	**4,686.50**	**1.83**		**806.43**
		2018	673.94	2,169.12	2,282.77	-	-	560.29

Country	Year	Organization name	Opening stock (MT)	Quantity Received from WFP (MT)	Quantity Distributed (MT)	Quantity Returned to WFP (MT)	Lost Quantity (MT)	Closing Balance (MT)
	2019		185.36	1,104.91	1,092.03	1.83	-	196.41
	2020		50.29	1,311.14	1,311.70	-	-	49.73
South Sudan	**Women Development Association (MADA)**	**Total**	**3,371.41**	**2,416.37**	**2,110.06**	**30.92**	**-**	**3,173.70**
	2018		3,359.34	1,334.70	1,027.85	20.52	-	3,173.70
	2019		12.06	838.19	838.72	10.40	-	-
	2020		-	243.48	243.48	-	-	-
	WVI - World Vision International	**Total**	**147,903.74**	**143,248.06**	**127,648.57**	**14,230.69**	**69.32**	**144,775.83**
	2018		65,018.47	49,477.10	43,062.36	2,743.66	12.18	64,342.52
	2019		74,521.00	50,417.68	41,819.84	10,882.60	40.55	72,085.79
	2020		8,364.27	43,353.28	42,766.36	604.43	16.59	8,347.52
Uganda	**Hunger Fighters Uganda**	**Total**	**334.22**	**37,882.99**	**34,234.34**	**3,635.48**	**13.17**	**334.22**
	2018		79.86	10,524.58	9,336.35	1,180.14	8.09	79.86
	2019		-	17,759.63	16,521.03	1,234.54	4.06	-
	2020		254.36	9,598.78	8,376.96	1,220.79	1.02	254.36
	WVI - World Vision International	**Total**	**50,369.49**	**222,917.49**	**208,451.65**	**15,122.03**	**53.79**	**47,696.91**
	2018		35,708.75	107,738.44	100,298.29	9,512.79	21.89	31,651.62
	2019		5,943.22	77,130.59	72,548.54	4,878.55	12.19	5,634.53
	2020		8,717.53	38,048.45	35,604.81	730.69	19.72	10,410.77

Annex XIV Mapping of recommendations, conclusions and findings

Table xiv.1 Mapping of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations

Recommendation	Related conclusions	Related findings
Strategic recommendations		
Recommendation 1: WFP should develop a strategy that contains an intentional approach to how WFP will meet its commitments to the localization agenda in the Eastern Africa region.	Conclusions 2, 3, and 4	Finding 1 Findings 4 – 9 Findings 12 – 16 Finding 18, 19
Recommendation 2: WFP should articulate a more intentional approach to drawing on CP management as a strategy for increasing capacity for gender transformative programming.	Conclusion 5	Findings 1 – 3 Findings 6, 13, 17, 18, 20
Recommendation 3: WFP should continue to harmonize partnership management processes with other UN agencies, and pursue strategic collaboration with other organizations aimed at capacity strengthening of CPs	Conclusion 3	Finding 7, Findings 14 – 17
Operational recommendations		
Recommendation 4: WFP COs should operationalize their intent to foster more strategic engagement of CPs.	Conclusion 2	Findings 10, 11, 16, 19
Recommendation 5: WFP should institutionalize partnership management, including CP management, as a field of technical expertise that encompasses oversight on transactions of cooperating partnerships and strategic aspects of CP management	Conclusions 2 and 3	Findings 17 and 19
Recommendation 6: WFP should continue ongoing efforts to increase the digitization and automation of CP management processes at COs and at FOs in the region.	Conclusions 1 and 2	Findings 7, 9, 10 and 17

Annex XV Acronyms

AAP   Accountability to Affected Populations

ACR   Annual Country Report

ALNAP   Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance

CBO   Community-Based Organizations

CO   Country Office

COMET   Country Office Tool for Managing (Programme Operations) Effectively

COMP   Country Operational Management Plan

CP   Cooperating Partner

CSP   Country Strategic Plan

DEQAS   Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System

EAG   External Advisory Group

EM   Evaluation Manager

EPR   Emergency Preparedness & Response

EQ   Evaluation Question

ER   Evaluation Report

ERG   Evaluation Reference Group

ET   Evaluation Team

FAO   Food and Agriculture Organization

FCAC   Fragile and Conflict-Affected Country

FLA   Field-Level Agreement

FO   Field Office

GB   Grand Bargain

GEWE   Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

HQ   Headquarters

IAHE   Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation

ICSP   Interim Country Strategic Plan

IFAD   International Fund for Agricultural Development

IFI   International Financial Institution

IFRC   International Federation of Red Cross

INGO   International Non-Government Organization

IR   Inception Report

IRG   Internal Reference Group

IRM   Integrated Road Map

NBP   Needs Based Plan

NDMA   National Disaster Management Agency

NFR   Note for the Record

NGO	Non-Government Organization	
NNGO	National Non-Government Organization	
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee	
PAP	Partnership Action Plan	
QA	Quality Assurance	
QS	Quality Support	
RBN	Regional Bureau of Nairobi	
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal	
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure	
TBD	To Be Determined	
TL	Team Leader	
ToC	Theory of Change	
ToR	Terms of Reference	
UN	United Nations	
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group	
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund	
UNPP	United Nations Partner Portal	
USD	United States Dollar	
WFP	World Food Programme	
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit	

Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa (RBN)

World Food Programme

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