



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP EVALUATION

COUNTRY CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Lessons from WFP evaluation initiatives

MAPPING EVALUATION CAPACITIES

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO GOVERNMENTS

SUPPORTING JOINT- AND COUNTRY-LED EVALUATIONS

COLLABORATING WITH VOPEES & OTHER EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Supporting the 2014 UNGA Resolution ([A/RES/69/237](#)), the evaluation function of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is working with countries and partners to strengthen national evaluation capacities (NEC). This brief is part of a series of five that documents results and lessons from 22 initiatives implemented across 25 countries in five regions in collaboration with 49 partners between 2018 and 2022. The briefs were informed by interviews with WFP and partner staff, and the review of background material, NECD literature and relevant external documents.

CONTEXT

This brief covers the mapping and assessment of national evaluation capacities in two regions: Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) with the development of the National Evaluation Capacity Index (INCE), and East & Central Africa with the launch of a national capacity mapping exercise.

Following the WFP Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) principle of “recognizing and identifying”, WFP sought to assess and map in each country and region the state of NEC along three dimensions: an enabling environment, organisational capacities and individual capacities. The goal is to inform a more strategic evidence-based approach to supporting national evaluation capacity development (NECD) and harmonizing international cooperation.



WFP IN ACTION

In LAC, WFP, together with the [German Development Evaluation Institute \(DEval\)](#), created INCE in 2017 (). Shaped and developed with governments and key NECD players, INCE results are today used by governments to

inform multi-stakeholder evidence-based discussions at national level on progress and recommended action.

The INCE blossomed through strong participation. WFP and DEval convened and facilitated exchanges and workshops within a working group of more than 40 entities, including governments, UN agencies (UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA), regional and national Voluntary Organizations for Professionalization Evaluation (VOPEs), the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR-LAC), the Inter-American Development Bank, civil society organisations, academia and an independent experts committee.

In East and Central Africa, WFP commissioned a mapping and analysis of M&E capacities in four countries – Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. The goal was to enhance and align collaboration with other UN agencies and development partners working on NECD in the region. The mapping was completed in 2020 using [Lahey's framework](#) for better understanding the level of maturity of national M&E systems.



RESULTS

- Identified key NECD actors in both mapping exercises, after interviewing, meeting, and working together with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Produced a [comprehensive report](#) on the status of NECD in East Africa with a clear SWOT analysis of the public sector, academia and national evaluation associations within the four countries.
- Delivered, piloted and validated a complete methodological package to assess NEC as part of the INCE design phase in the LAC region. The [working group](#) completed its consultations and design process which led to the approval of the methodological package in 2020.
- Adopted the INCE as an institutional decision-making tool for NECD by governments. After the pilot phase, five countries started using data from the index: Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico.
- Contributed to an enabling environment and fostered future alignment of NECD efforts in the LAC region, by allowing an opportunity for self-reflection and open, continuous, long-term multi-actor discussion.



EMERGING LESSONS

- 1 WFP's participation in NECD requires engaging first in existing regional and national NEC-related spaces.**

NEC mapping exercises have allowed WFP to be more aware of organizations engaging in NECD work at regional and national levels, which provides opportunities for WFP to join conversations and play a more strategic role.
- 2 NECD work, such as NEC mapping and diagnostic exercises, is best done in partnership.**

This avoids duplication and fosters a coordinated approach.
- 3 It is crucial to build and maintain relationships with governments based on trust, long-term vision and a country-leadership approach.**

"The tool is the process". Mapping and diagnostic exercises work better when the processes put the national government at the centre to facilitate ownership, relevance and use within a long-term harmonized effort. Any potential WFP or UN system coordinated diagnostics initiative would be more impactful if jointly planned and implemented under the leadership of national entities.
- 4 Governments are willing to participate in creating ready-to-use products that fill the gap between evidence needs and action plans.**

While theoretical discussions on evaluation systems and NECD entry points are quite developed, there is an appetite for rigorous, user-friendly knowledge products to inform evidence-based NECD discussions and to sustain pro-evaluation internal advocacy at all levels within government.
- 5 The INCE initiative proves there are clear advantages in building NECD through a product-oriented approach and exchange.**

This is based on national governments' internal information needs, relates to South-South & Triangular Cooperation opportunities and includes proper and timely national-led engagement debriefings on results from the diagnostics and conversations around actions.



CONDITIONS FOR SCALE UP

- 1 Create a conducive environment for a coordinated approach.**

NEC mapping exercises must be coordinated within the UN system at the appropriate level (national and/or regional) and with key global NECD players.
- 2 Understand the context and develop an adaptative approach.**

Replication of mapping and diagnostic initiatives, such as the East Africa mapping and the LAC INCE, need to pay careful attention to the context and adapt as needed.
- 3 Foster participation and country leadership.**

Ensure that the process adopts a participatory multi-stakeholder approach and is country-led.
- 4 Avoid duplication and maximize complementarity with similar tools and processes.**

The NECD space is vibrant with different actors, tools and processes especially in middle income countries. Where it is not possible to have a unified approach, tool or process, it is imperative that partners avoid duplication and work towards complementing the work within a country.
- 5 Ensure documentation to enable learning, replication and sustainability.**

For a process that developed organically like the INCE to be replicable and sustainable as staff move on, clear documentation is critical. Before replication, the INCE needs to put together and make public its conceptual roots and methodological choices and tools, so others can learn, adapt and apply.
- 6 Invest in communication and online platforms for sharing as a public good.**

In addition to direct replication and scale up, making documentation and results available publicly can have wider effects, including for advocacy by actors beyond those directly involved.

The series of briefs were prepared as part of a collaboration with the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA).