

Summary of the Consultation Process and Responses to Recommendations from the Independent Review of the Impact Evaluation Strategy (2019-2026)

In 2021, IOD PARC was commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) to conduct the 'Review of the Pilot Phase (2019-2021) of the WFP Impact Evaluation Strategy (2019-2026)'. The Review assessed progress towards objectives of the strategy, and to what extent WFP has established the structures and capacity to deliver. Overall, the Review found that the Strategy is an important and timely initiative by WFP, and it identified substantial demand for more impact evaluations. After the Review was finalized, OEV undertook rounds of consultations with key stakeholders. This document summarises the feedback from the consultation process and articulates WFP's response to the recommendations of the Review of WFP's Impact Evaluation Strategy.



Recommendation	Summary feedback	Response	Actions to be taken	Action timeline
<p>Recommendation 1. As part of its overall approach of building internal capacity, including a strong team in OEV in HQ, WFP should consider</p>	<p>Many of the people consulted raised questions about whether expanding exclusively through regional bureaus is the most efficient way to increase WFP's capacity.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In February 2022, OEV's impact evaluation specialists were organized under a self-standing Impact Evaluation Unit to deliver the Impact Evaluation Strategy, build capacity, and develop partnerships. 	<p>Q1 2022</p>

<p>having a small number of IE specialists as focal points in the regional evaluation units. Focal points could also contribute to other evaluation-related activities in their units, and enhance synergies with regional VAM/RAM teams should be explored.</p>	<p>Individuals strongly recommend that WFP should increase the organisational capacity and resources available for effective data, monitoring, evaluation, and evidence generating activities. This should include ring-fenced budgets for any data and HR requirements and the elevation and professionalisation of all M&E positions.</p> <p>Several suggested that working directly with COs would provide greater buy-in and connection with programmes (which is needed for IEs). Alternatively, building a global pool of IE experts that provide support where needed, or work at regional levels, have both been mentioned as options.</p> <p>Considerations have been raised regarding the flexibility needed to re-deploy capacity based on levels of impact evaluation activity across regions.</p> <p>Finally, questions have been raised on resource implications and sustainability and on the type of activities and skillsets required (for example, focal points vs impact evaluation specialists).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEV, in close consultation with all stakeholders, will identify the competencies required for impact evaluation capacity in regional bureaus and country offices and develop terms of reference for these roles. 	Q1 2023
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEV will work with RAM and RBs to identify the existing and new capacity needed to meet the needs for impact evaluation support in RBs, and COs (where needed). 	Q4 2022
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In light of the Strategic Workforce planning exercise, OEV will monitor developments in REU and CO M&E structures and identify opportunities for further strengthening it. 	Ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEV will ensure any staffing changes agreed with RBs and COs are in line with the evaluation strategic workforce action plan and the staffing framework. 	Ongoing
<p>Recommendation 2. OEV has already developed a range of incipient partnerships</p>	<p>People consulted are supportive of broadening the partnerships for impact</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEV will develop a clear plan for broadening WFP's impact evaluation delivery partnerships. 	Q4 2022

<p>but should now develop a clear plan for broadening its partnerships for delivery of impact evaluations. As the range of impact evaluations increases, there will be a need to draw on expertise in other areas and windows which no single partner can provide.</p>	<p>evaluation delivery, particularly endorsing greater involvement with the Global South.</p> <p>Questions were raised regarding which roles and responsibilities can be supported by partners, which can be decentralised, and which can be delivered through a contracting model.</p> <p>It has been emphasised that having a partner at window level is advantageous as it provides greater consistency across individual evaluations. It has also been raised that more partnerships will also require greater capacity in OEV, or RBs, to successfully manage them, and potentially reduce any harmonisation across IEs.</p> <p>Finally, some questions have been raised on the incentive structures for our partners to engage with a more diverse pool of evaluators/researchers.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP will develop, test, and refine hybrid models for delivering impact evaluations combining in-house and external capacity. 	Q4 2023
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OEV will assess which strategic capacity needs require impact evaluation partnerships and those which can be obtained through contractual arrangements. 	Q4 2022
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022, OEV, in collaboration with WFP's NUT Division, will identify partners and/or suppliers for the design and delivery of a nutrition window. 	Q4 2022
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on experience gained, OEV, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, will reassess the benefits and risks associated with expanding partnerships and refine its impact evaluation delivery model. 	Q4 2024
<p>Recommendation 3. The windows concept is proving its worth and is a powerful way to ensure quality, but</p>	<p>Some of the people consulted endorsed complementing current designs with leaner and quicker impact evaluation designs to produce operationally relevant</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OEV will facilitate periodic consultations to understand changes in WFP's corporate evidence needs and assess how they can be supported by centralised, decentralised or impact evaluations. 	Annually

<p>OEV should consider how it can be applied in a more flexible way, and with a greater range of methods</p>	<p>evidence (for example, comparing two different intervention modalities).</p> <p>It has also been suggested to consider additional multi-country studies within the same windows, to cover evidence needs outside of existing window-level per-analysis plans.</p> <p>While some colleagues expressed a general caution about expanding methods too widely, others encouraged the need to use more qualitative approaches within a counterfactual framework.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OEV, together with relevant technical division and consultation with stakeholders, will adjust the focus areas covered by windows, depending on evidence needs, capacity and resources. 	Annually
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across windows, OEV will use additional evaluation methods within impact evaluations to meet priority evidence needs, depending on the resources available. 	Ongoing
<p>Recommendation 4. Alongside broadening partnerships for delivery in recommendation two above, OEV should proactively build strategic partnerships in other aspects set out in the IES and spearhead more systematic engagement on impact evaluations within UNEG</p>	<p>People consulted agreed on this recommendation, although not everyone in WFP is aware of UNEG.</p> <p>Partnerships with other UN agencies (for example, UNICEF) would also be welcome. The impact community of practice, within the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition with the LSHTM has been mentioned as a good venue for connecting with the Global South. Others suggested exploring partnerships with the Gates Foundation and USDA McGovern-Dole Programme.</p>	Agreed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OEV will work with RBs and COs to map thematic, regional, and country-specific communities engaged in impact evaluations. 	Q4 2022
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OEV will continue engaging with a wider range of strategic research and evaluation networks and communities of practice identified during the setup of windows. 	Ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OEV will continue exploring opportunities to generate impact evaluation evidence jointly with other UN and multilateral agencies. 	Ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OEV will explore how best to engage within UNEG to build understanding of impact evaluation within the UN. 	Q4 2023

<p>Recommendation 5. Given the need to raise awareness of the strategy and looking ahead to when IEs will start to be completed and published, OEV should prioritise communications aspects of implementing the IES, including the work on how IE will be used, well in advance of when they are being published</p>	<p>People consulted agreed on this recommendation, particularly on the need to make impact evaluations accessible to COs.</p> <p>Many of the stakeholders consulted commented on how IE activities should be considered in connection with all other evaluation needs and commitments made by COs and supplementing them.</p> <p>Many questioned why decentralised evaluation coverage norms could not be met by IEs, particularly if the IE is meeting a CO's priority evidence needs.</p> <p>People also highlighted the need to keep a close engagement with the COs throughout the entire evaluation process, which can take several years depending on the programme and outcomes.</p> <p>Regarding raising awareness about the IES within WFP, many questioned the value of long written guidance documents, which they felt are not read by staff.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEV will strengthen its knowledge management and communications practices to promote evaluation use, a new priority area in the updated WFP Evaluation Policy. 	Ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of its overall evaluation communications and use efforts, OEV will ensure impact evaluation outputs are accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. • 	Q4 2022
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OEV will support WFP staff and partners to increase their understanding of when and how to use each type of evaluation, including impact evaluations. 	Ongoing
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of its comprehensive evaluation capacity development efforts, OEV will develop easily accessible guidance and learning opportunities for staff and partners engaged in impact evaluations. 	Ongoing

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