



# Thematic Evaluation of Supply Chain Outcomes in the Food System in Eastern Africa

2016-2021

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LOGISTICS BRIEF





# CONTEXT

## Introduction

To support increased emphasis on food systems approach, WFP Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa (RBN) commissioned a regional Supply Chain evaluation. The objective was to **identify and assess the nature and extent of the effects of Supply Chain activities on the food system**, and thereby to make recommendations to improve future interventions.

## Subject and focus of the Evaluation

The subject of the evaluation was the **wide range of Supply Chain activities implemented by procurement and logistics teams in collaboration with programmes within WFP Eastern Africa region**. As a thematic evaluation, it

focused on the relevance, results, and factors affecting performance and outcomes of WFP Supply Chain activities in the cross-cutting area of food systems.

Another key focus was to understand how outcomes may have varied according to specific groups of stakeholders, particularly women.

The evaluation covered **all nine country offices** supported by WFP RBN **from January 2016 to December 2021**. The region-wide assessment was complemented by three focal country case studies in Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan.

The evaluation has provided a number of findings and recommendations relevant to **WFP Logistics**. One overarching evaluation brief and one procurement brief are also available.

# KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

## Development of Physical Infrastructure

**Rehabilitation of roads and waterways has had high impact on food system**, by reducing cost of trades, stimulating economic development and facilitating market-based assistance. This essentially logistics-lead intervention has had fundamental implications for market development. Traders have followed WFP food distribution trucks and markets have developed in those areas.

## Storage and Transport

WFP logistics has played an important role in developing country transport and storage capacity. Outsourcing by WFP has stimulated transport and storage capacity but the impact has remained small on public and private investment in these areas. Overall effect of WFP operations on the transport and storage sector has not been easily discernible.

While transport and storage systems may have enjoyed more business, it has not been enough and of a nature to stimulate additional investment.

**WFP logistics has focused on low costs and efficient performance through its larger commercially orientated contracts, with less attention given to sustainable and equitable food systems development.** Therefore, the current system has favoured already established suppliers and have not specifically empowered women and youth.

On the other hand, **the provision of logistics services has been effective and appeared to be financially sustainable**, including the Humanitarian Logistics Base in Djibouti and operations in the Kenya's port of Mombasa. WFP engineering interventions in Port Sudan have also helped to improve bulk cargo discharging, allowing for faster and cheaper delivery of food commodities.



## Market Development

**Cash-based transfers using vouchers have led to significant increases in business and benefits for retailers and wholesalers** connected to these schemes. However, looking at beyond those local effects, observations have suggested that the systems which benefit these retailers and wholesalers have operated mainly in parallel without impacting local food systems and with limited wider effects.

The role of the new technologies in WFP market development interventions has been mixed. It has helped internal accountability and operational efficiency. However, it has not led to efficiencies for retailers and wholesalers at scale. In some cases, issues around these technologies and WFP delays in reimbursement have resulted in increased costs to retailers.

## Post-Harvest Loss (PHL)

**WFP interventions to reduce PHL have been effective and potentially very significant**, especially since WFP has operated at a scale that could influence grain supply markets. The commercial vulnerabilities of the hermetic storage system have yet to be addressed.

## National Capacity Strengthening

The most common area for national capacity strengthening has been in food commodity standards assessment and regulation. This has contributed to significant changes in food systems in Kenya. Elsewhere, similar interventions have not yet achieved the same level of outcome. This has highlighted that in this particular thematic area, **outcomes have been highly dependent upon context and could not be determined by resources deployed or training provided.**

## Inclusiveness

**WFP logistics systems have been often gender-blind, with limited intentional focus on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.** In some specific areas, most notably commercial transport and storage contracts, women and youth have been generally excluded. Indeed, **WFP logistics has operated as to give priority to efficiency, rather than inclusiveness.**

The extent to which women have been excluded from food systems has varied. Women have been well-represented in production but with a smaller role in marketing and even less in transport and wholesale supply. They have been again well represented amongst retailers. Overall, while WFP logistics and market development interventions have benefited disadvantaged groups, they have not done so in a way that could be considered to address the specific constraints that those groups face. Such benefits that have been achieved have been largely fortuitous rather than designed.

WFP logistics interventions have not focused on youth. With the exception of casual employment opportunities for loading and offloading trucks, there has been no evidence that youth as a group have specifically benefited from WFP activities.

## Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration

**The extent of both knowledge sharing and collaboration has varied considerably according to the nature of logistics interventions.** In the case of both market development and smallholders capacity strengthening, there has been close collaboration between programme and logistics units. In the case of commercially orientated contracts with wholesalers and transport companies, there has been little evidence of any regular collaborative process. Supply chain management has been well aware of nutritional and environmental priorities as well as considerations of gender and inclusiveness, but these have been secondary to the primary consideration of cost-efficiency.

## Data collection and analysis

The existing data collection systems **have not been adequate to inform a robust assessment of changes in food systems.** The information collected by Monitoring & Evaluation, Supply Chain and VAM units has been well suited to the specific purposes for which it is gathered, but it could not be readily integrated and provide a comprehensive assessment of food systems development.



# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOGISTICS

**Access to Markets.** WFP country offices should consider **supporting infrastructural development** and in particular the rehabilitation of trunk roads, feeder roads, rail, and waterways as a component of market development.

**Enhancement of Inclusiveness in Procurement and Distribution.** WFP RBN should promote the inclusion and participation of stakeholder to maximise the competitiveness of food systems.

**Data Collection and Analysis.** WFP RBN should consider the **adoption at country office level of data collection and management systems specifically to monitor changes in food systems**, following WFP interventions, including specific concerns of disadvantage groups.

**Reduced Post-Harvest Losses.** WFP country offices should consider **strengthening post-**

**harvest loss reduction activities**, for example: advertising and paying a premium to smallholders for all grains delivered in hermetically sealed bags, to offset the cost of the bag; and developing commercial relationships with shelling businesses or establishing their own shelling operations to allow smallholders to reduce harvest time by delivering and selling unshelled maize cobs (as practiced by Kumwe Harvest and AIF in Rwanda).

**Climate Change Mitigation.** WFP RBN major focus on transport and distribution allows few opportunities for the mitigation of climate change. Nevertheless, WFP RBN and country office's Supply Chain Unit should consider the **regular estimation the carbon footprint of WFP distribution exercises** for purposes of a) the comparison of different distribution modalities and b) emission audits undertaken to inform emission reduction strategies.

**Reference:**

Full evaluation report, as well as evaluation briefs are available at [\*Eastern Africa, Supply Chain outcomes in the Food System: Evaluation | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)\*](#)

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