



Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS)

Management Response from WFP Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa (RBN) to the recommendations of the decentralized evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region, DE/RBN/2020/061 from January 2016 to December 2020

1. This document, finalized in February 2023, presents the management response to the recommendations of the evaluation on Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region.
2. The evaluation, which was commissioned by WFP Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa covers WFP's relationships with international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations and Red Cross/Crescent Societies. The evaluation refers to NGOs as Cooperating Partners (CPs). The evaluation's geographic scope encompasses nine WFP Country Offices supported by RBN namely: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. The evaluation serves the dual purpose of accountability and learning. The evaluation will: (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.
3. The evaluation made six key recommendations with 21 actions. The matrix sets out whether WFP agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned (or taken) actions, responsibilities and timelines.

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>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.</p> <p>(By June 2022)</p>	RBN – Programme Cycle Team (CP Mgmt. workstream)	<i>Agreed</i>	Consultant to be hired to draft the regional strategy which will be informed by: 1. Regional CP Mgmt. Evaluation; 2. Final CP Mgmt. External Audit findings; 3. CO internal audits where CP Mgmt. is noted in recommendations; 4. CO I/CSP mid-term reviews where CP Mgmt. is noted.	RBN CP Mgmt. team (support required for HQ CP/NGO and other units; CO Mgmt in the region; CPs in the region)	Final Regional CP Mgmt. Strategy by 31 December 2022
<p>Sub-recommendation 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.</p> <p>(By June 2022).</p>	RBN – Programme Cycle Team (COs)	<i>Agreed</i>	Will be incorporated into the regional strategy.		December 2022
<p>Sub-recommendation 1.2 The strategy should include objectives that increase emphasis on capacity strengthening of CPs</p> <p>(By June 2022)</p>	RBN – Programme Cycle Team (COs & HQ- Country Capacity Strengthening Unit)	<i>Agreed</i>	Will be incorporated into the regional strategy. Implementation of capacity strengthening actions will depend on approved funding.		December 2022
<p>Sub-recommendation 1.3 The strategy should stress WFP</p>	RBN – Programme Cycle Team (COs)	<i>Agreed</i>	Will be incorporated into the regional strategy.		December 2022

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
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. By June 2022			Gradual move to multi-year FLAs starting the 2023 FLA cycle.		
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 2: WFP should articulate a more intentional approach to drawing on CP management as a strategy for increasing capacity for gender-transformative programming.</p>	(RBN) supported by HQ Units: Gender	<i>Agreed</i>	Discussions with HQ+RB Gender teams. Will be incorporated into the Regional CP Mgmt. Strategy.		October 2023
<p>Sub-recommendation 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. (By June 2022)</p>	(RBN) supported by HQ Units: Capacity Strengthening	<i>Agreed</i>	Engagement with IASC principles	HQ+RB Gender	October 2023
<p>Sub-recommendation 2.2 Define what it means by women-led</p>	(RBN) supported by HQ Gender Unit	<i>Agreed</i>	Will be incorporated into the Regional CP Mgmt. Strategy.	HQ+RB Gender	December 2023

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>organizations and organizations advancing gender equality (as per new draft Gender Policy) and clarify related expectations for partnership selection.</p> <p>(By June 2022)</p>					
<p>Sub-recommendation 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</p> <p>(By June 2022)</p>	<p>RBN- Programme Cycle supported by HQ Units: Gender, NGO Partnership (Units</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>Will be incorporated into the Regional CP Mgmt. Strategy. Guidance will be included in the CP Mgmt on-boarding document.</p>		<p>June 2023</p>
<p>Sub-recommendation 2.4 Revise budget templates for FLAs that clearly identify the resource requirements for gender capacity strengthening.</p> <p>(By September 2022)</p>	<p>RBN- Programme Cycle supported by HQ Units: Gender</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>		<p>HQ Gender</p>	<p>December 2023</p>
<p>Sub-recommendation 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</p>	<p>RBN- Programme Cycle supported by HQ Units: Gender, NGO Partnership</p>	<p>Agreed</p>		<p>RB and HQ Gender</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
women's participation in decision-making and resource management. (By September 2022)					
<p>Sub-recommendation 2.6</p> <p>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. (By June 2022)</p>	RBN- Programme Cycle supported by HQ Gender Unit	<i>Agreed</i>	New Gender Policy 2022-2025 will inform approach.	HQ Gender	October 2023
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Building on the launch of the UNPP, WFP should continue exploring ways in which it can further harmonize 	RBN- Programme Cycle	<i>Agreed</i>	<p>WFP will continue to engage with other UN agencies on harmonization of approaches and support to CP management</p> <p>HQ NGO/CP unit continues to lead on harmonized approach to technical enhancements to the UNPP</p>	Other UN Agencies Donors HQ NGO/CP unit	On-going

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>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</p> <p>▪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.</p> <p>(Ongoing)</p>					
<p>Sub-recommendation 3.1 WFP should establish agreements and partnerships with HQs or regional bureaux of international</p>	<p>HQ- Partnership Unit (RBN)</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>The RBN Programme Cycle management will take lead and work closely with HQ-</p>		<p>On-going</p>

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>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</p> <p>(Ongoing)</p>			Partnership Unit to address this recommendation.		
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 4: WFP COs should operationalize their intent to foster more strategic engagement of CPs through a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	COs (RBN)	<i>Agreed</i>	RBN CP Mgmt. will lead on regular engagement with COs on how to foster strategic engagement with CPs on an on-going basis through monthly calls, regional meetings and an annual workshop.	RBN CP Mgmt. RB+ CO Mgmt.	On-going

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 					

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>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</p> <p>(Ongoing)</p>					
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>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. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>RBN- Programme Cycles supported by HQ- NGO Unit</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>RBN Programme Cycle management team will take lead and work in close collaboration with HQ_ NGO partnership unit to among other actions: (i) Define Generic Job Profiles (GJP) at various levels and; (ii) Define CP Mgmt. structures required at the RB + CO levels including roles and responsibilities. This will be informed by other ongoing corporate initiatives.</p>	<p>HQ NGO/CP unit HQ HR CO Mgmt.</p>	<p>December 2023</p>

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>in CP management, levels of expertise and experience, and good practices in situating CP management partnership teams in country offices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) <p>(December 2022)</p>					
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 6: WFP should continue ongoing efforts to increase the digitization and</p>	<p>RBN supported by HQ TEC</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>	<p>RBN-Programme Cycle management will work with HQ NGO/CP unit seek guidance on get a well-defined</p>	<p>HQ NGO/CP unit HQ TEC RBN CP Mgmt.</p>	<p>On-going</p>

Recommendations	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response	Actions to be taken	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline
<p>automation of CP management processes at COs and FOs in the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) <p>(Ongoing)</p>			<p>digital roadmap for the CP Mgmt. function which clearly indicates digitization/automation opportunities and benefits</p>	<p>CO CP Mgmt.</p>	