

POLICY EVALUATION

WFP Policy on Capacity Development:
An Update on Implementation (2009)

Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Evaluation Features

1. In November 2009, the Executive Board approved the Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation. In accordance with the WFP requirement that policies be evaluated within four to six years of their implementation, this evaluation provides an evidence-based assessment of the policy update's quality and intended and unintended results during 2009–2015.

2. The evaluation was conducted between February and July 2016, through the following lines of inquiry:

- retrospective construction of a theory of change based on the stated results in the policy update;
- extensive document review, including 356 Standard Project Reports (SPRs) and previous evaluations with findings on capacity development;
- field missions to country offices in Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya, Namibia, Peru and Senegal, and regional bureaux in Panama and Bangkok, representing a cross-section of WFP's operating environments;¹
- country desk studies of Colombia, India, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Liberia and Uganda to complement the field missions with more robust documentary evidence;
- reviews of comparator organizations – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC);
- electronic surveys of 213 senior WFP staff members from Headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices; and
- key informant interviews of 46 WFP Headquarters staff members and 11 Executive Board members.

3. Limitations included: incomplete data on the universe of WFP's capacity development work; the generic nature of the intended results as defined in the policy update, which limited the contribution analysis; a low response rate for the survey; statistically unreliable data from the review of SPRs; and few data available from the 12 sample countries on specific capacity development approaches and performance in acute crises. Despite these limitations, the evaluation team was able to construct valid findings and conclusions.

¹ The criteria used to make this selection included number and type of operations; income status; country office size; Country Strategic Plan or Financial Framework Review pilot country; range of reported capacity development activities; quality of reporting on capacity development-related results; and presence of a Level 2 or Level 3 emergency.

Context

4. WFP’s policy update applies internationally accepted definitions:
 - “Capacity” refers to the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.
 - “Capacity development” denotes the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole identify, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain that ability over time.
5. Over the past decade, important changes in the global discourse on capacity development include: i) a shift in focus from the skills of individuals to the performance of groups or organizations and the notion of capacity to deliver results as one dimension of the capacity required for an organization or system to endure, adapt and perform over time; and ii) a shift from viewing capacity development as linear and externally generated to seeing it as self-organizing, emergent and part of a complex adaptive system.
6. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 – particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, target 17.9 – emphasizes the need to “enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries and to support national plans to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.”² During this evaluation, WFP was developing its new Strategic Plan (2017–2021) as part of an Integrated Road Map to achieve zero hunger, which foresees enhanced approaches to capacity strengthening and explicit collaboration with national partners.
7. An important outcome document from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit³ recognized that responding to humanitarian emergencies cannot be isolated from broader sustainable development efforts, and that strengthening national capacities – including those of first responders – is essential to building an endogenous ability to prepare for and respond to risks.

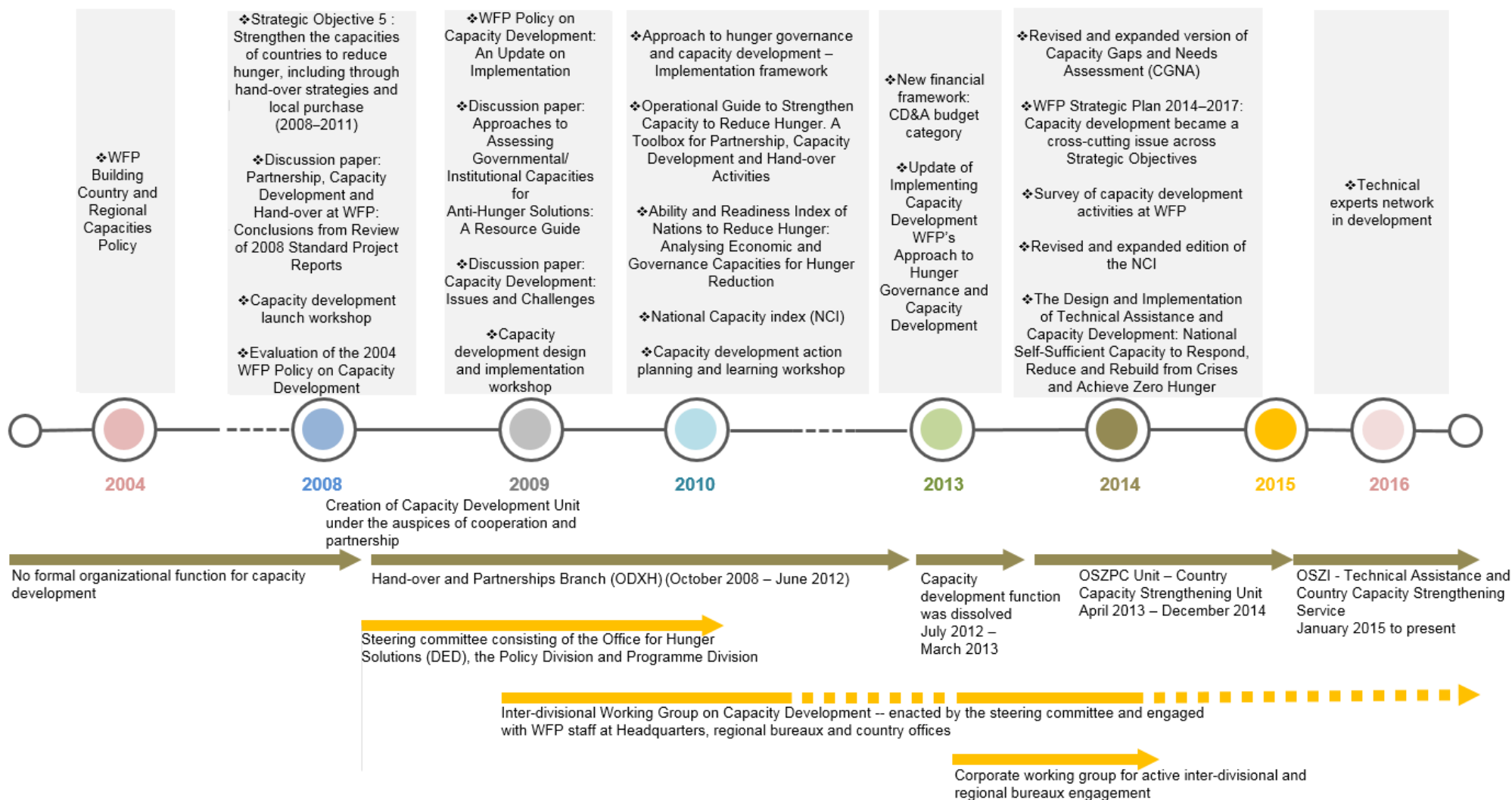
WFP’s Policy Framework for Capacity Development

8. The evolution of capacity development policies and related guidance at WFP started with “Building Country and Regional Capacities” (2004), which provided a framework for implementing capacity development in the Strategic Plan (2004–2007). The 2008 evaluation of that policy recommended a policy update and the inclusion of a results framework; this was undertaken in 2009. The 2004 policy remains in force.

² <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>

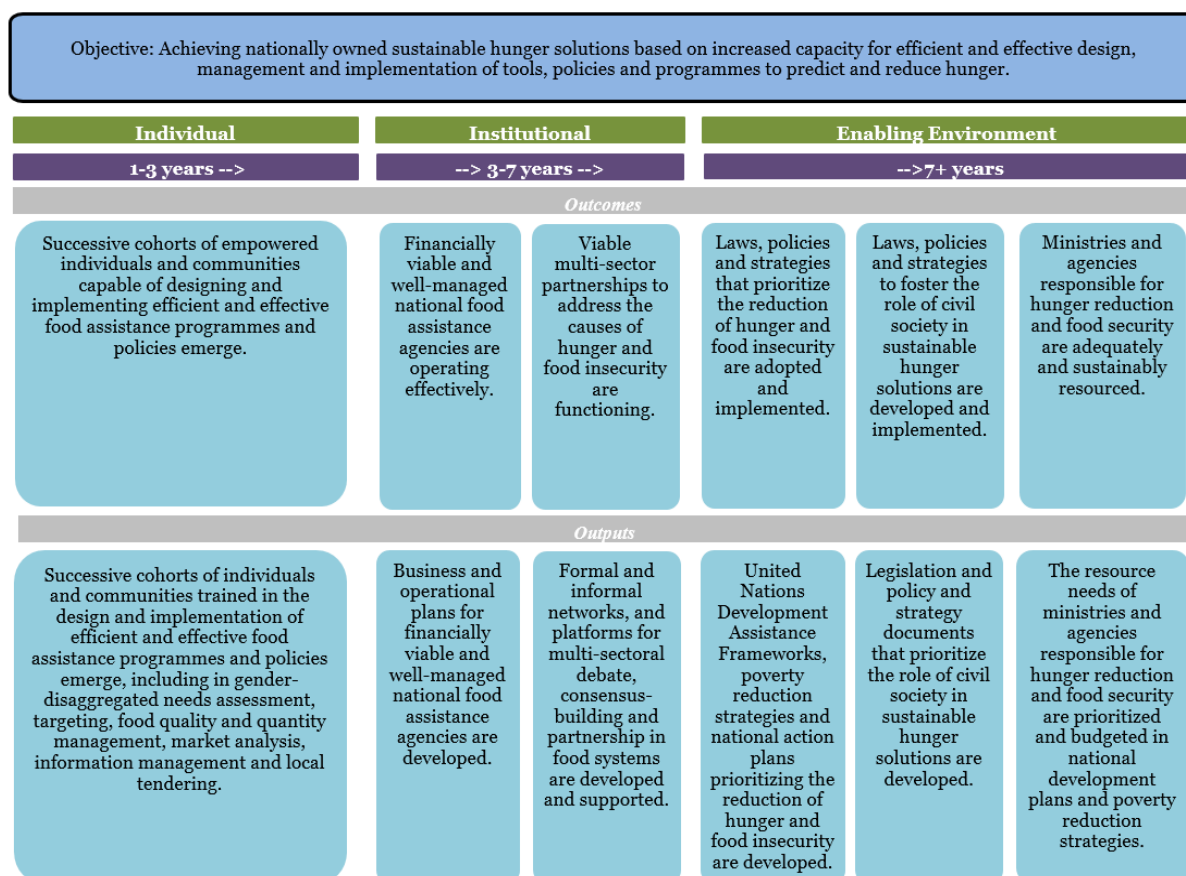
³ *The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need.*
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf

Figure 1. Evolution of the WFP Policy on Capacity Development and related guidance



9. The main features that differentiate the *policy update* from the 2004 policy include a more comprehensive policy framework with a vision, overarching objective, outcomes and outputs at three levels of capacity: enabling environment, institutional, and individual, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Results Framework – WFP Capacity Development Policy: Update on Implementation (2009)



10. The policy update was followed by an action plan for implementation of the capacity development and hand-over components of the WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2013) issued in 2010. Other capacity development-related guidance documents include:

- Operational Guide to Strengthen Capacity of Nations to Reduce Hunger (2010);
- The Ability and Readiness of Nations to Reduce Hunger (Ability and Readiness Index) (2010);
- Implementing Capacity Development: WFP’s Approach to Hunger Governance and Capacity Development (2013);
- The National Capacity Index (NCI) – Measuring Change in Capacity for Hunger Governance in Support of Projects to Strengthen National Capacity to End Hunger (2014);
- Capacity Gaps and Needs Assessment in Support of Projects to Strengthen National Capacity to End Hunger (2014); and

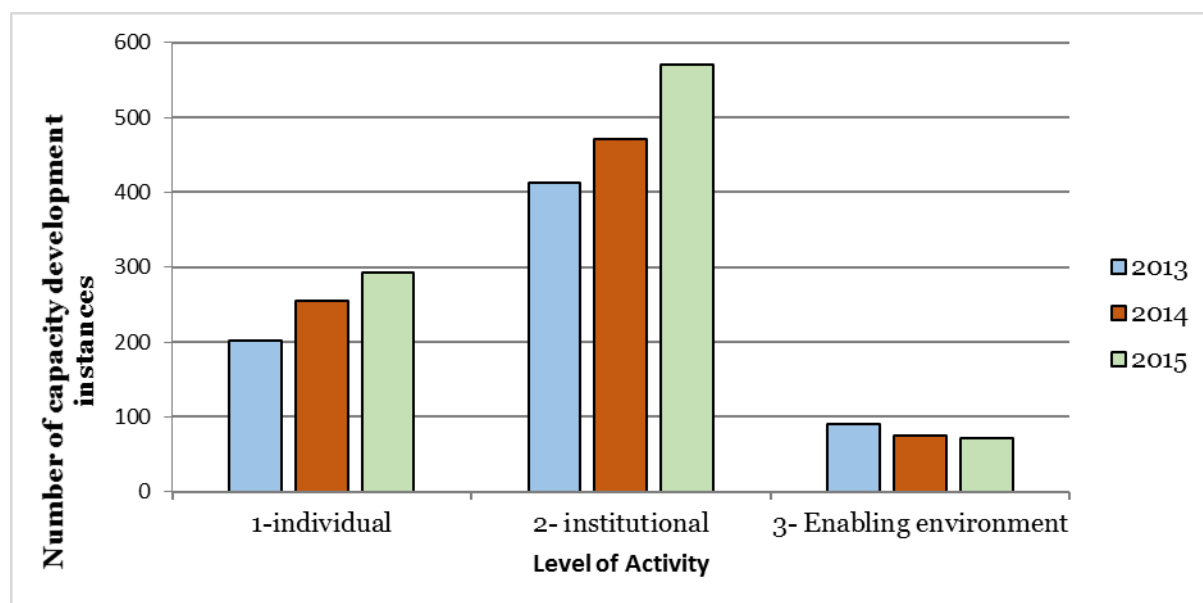
- Design and Implementation of Technical Assistance and Capacity Development (2015).

Implementation

11. All 356 SPRs for protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs), country programmes and development operations from 2013 to 2015 – covering 161 operations in 70 countries – included a capacity development and augmentation (CD&A) budget component.⁴ The total approved CD&A budget for these operations in 2014 and 2015 was USD 374 million – 16 percent of their total planned budgets. Of this total, 64 percent was for development operations and 7 percent was for PRROs.

12. Since 2013, reported annual expenditures (excluding trust funds) on CD&A have declined from USD 38.4 million to USD 13.5 million. This represents a decrease from 0.9 percent of WFP’s total programme of work in 2013 to 0.3 percent in 2015. A similar pattern emerged when trust funds were included: the percentage of CD&A in the overall programme of work decreased from 1 percent (USD 42 million) in 2013 to 0.7 percent (USD 30.4 million) in 2015. However, these data exclude special operations and where capacity development has been mainstreamed into regular project activities, in which there is evidence that considerable capacity development took place.

Figure 3. Number of reported capacity development instances by level of activity and year



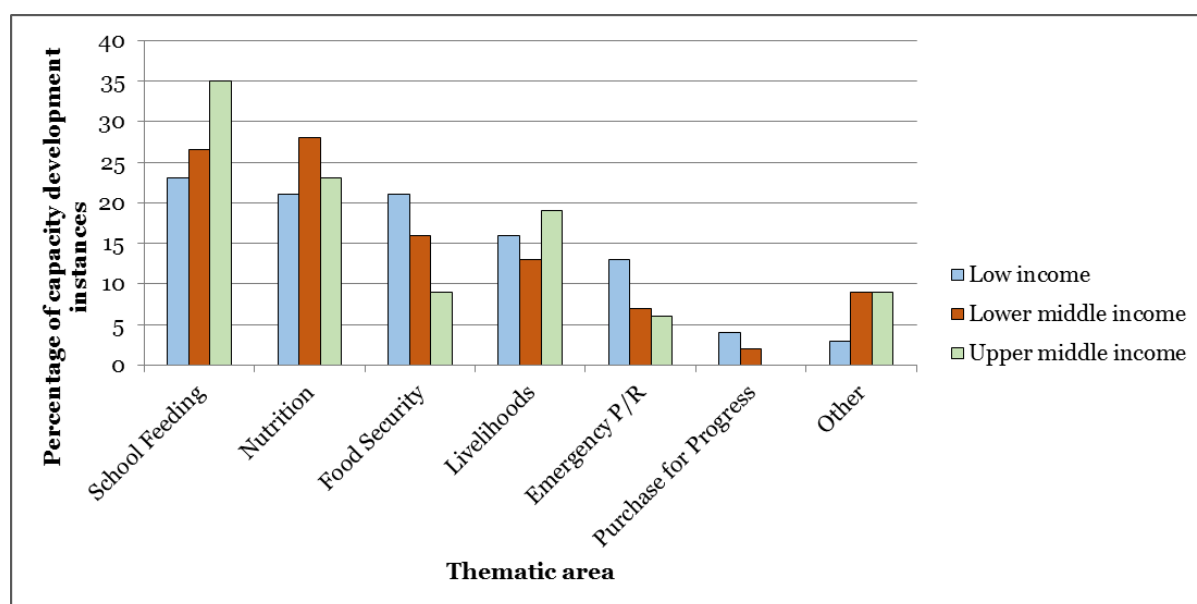
Source: WFP SPRs 2013–2015 (n = 2,448)

13. Figure 3 indicates that while capacity development efforts spanned all three levels outlined in the policy update, most interventions targeted the institutional level. Support for individual- and institutional-level capacity appears to have grown steadily from 2013 to 2015 while there was a slight decrease in support for strengthening the enabling environment.

⁴ The SPR review focused on PRROs, development projects and country programmes given the greater likelihood that these types of WFP operations would contain activities in line with the emerging understanding of capacity development.

14. During the evaluation period, WFP’s capacity development work supported national and subnational government agencies in the education, health, planning and agriculture sectors. Capacity development activities also included engagement with communities, smallholder farmers, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The SPR data indicated that school feeding had the highest number of reported capacity development activities, with 628 during 2013–2015, followed by nutrition, with 604 (Figure 4). Capacity development in the area of food security was more prevalent in low-income countries, while nearly 80 percent of capacity development in upper-middle-income countries was in school feeding, nutrition and livelihoods. As Figure 4 indicates, there were no significant differences in activity level by national income classification.

Figure 4. Percentage of capacity development instances by income level and thematic area



Source: WFP SPRs 2013–2015 (n = 2,448)

15. Recent WFP evaluation reports, such as the synthesis of WFP’s emergency preparedness and response evaluations (2012–2015), the 2014 and 2015 annual evaluation reports and the 2016 synthesis of operation evaluations, confirm that WFP has contributed to strengthening national emergency response capacity and preparedness, and is increasing efforts to reinforce capacities in diverse contexts and thematic areas, including contributions to strengthening government institutions and national policy frameworks. The evaluations also note similar shortcomings across all of WFP’s capacity development work, including: i) the need for a clearer assessment of critical gaps and areas of WFP’s comparative advantage; ii) piecemeal approaches; iii) limited staff capacity – in both quantity and skills – and insufficient resources dedicated to capacity strengthening; iv) lack of a robust performance measurement system, with few baselines or targets; and v) need for more sophisticated technical approaches, systematic guidance and support to meet future challenges.

Findings

Quality of the Policy

16. At the time of its creation, the policy update reflected contemporary thinking about capacity development. For example, it:

- used the term “capacity development” instead of “capacity-building”;
- conceptualized capacity holistically in terms of an enabling environment and institutional and individual capacities;
- emphasized the long-term nature of capacity development; and
- stressed the need to foster national ownership.

17. The policy update does not reflect more recent thinking on capacity development processes such as “complex adaptive systems”, but these are covered in guidelines and tools developed later to support policy implementation.

18. The policy update is coherent with international commitments on aid effectiveness such as the principles of strengthened national leadership and planning, harmonized approaches in alignment with country priorities and systems, and support for demand-driven capacity development.

19. Looking forward, the policy update remains broadly relevant. The objective of supporting nationally owned, sustainable hunger solutions is in line with SDG 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. Its focus on capacity development processes and results is also broadly aligned with SDG 17.⁵ The extensive conceptual and technical guidance developed since 2010 positions WFP to capitalize on the challenges presented by the SDGs and their emphasis on national capacities.⁶

20. The quality of the policy update is comparable to that of the strategic documents developed by comparator agencies UNDP, UNICEF, FAO and IFRC. As United Nations organizations, the first three of these share similar capacity development principles such as demand-driven support, and conceptualization of capacity development as a long-term process framed by the aid effectiveness agenda.

21. While none of the four comparator organizations has an explicit policy on capacity development, UNICEF and IFRC position capacity development as one of their main implementation strategies while UNDP and FAO describe it as a core function. Formulating and monitoring capacity development-specific results, indicators and targets has been a challenge for all four agencies.

22. The policy update was drafted using clear and understandable language, and appropriately positioned capacity development work in the context of WFP’s transition from food aid to food assistance. The broad nature of the policy enabled its adaptation to different contexts while stopping short of being prescriptive.

23. Numerous guidance and other tools have been developed to aid implementation (paragraph 10 and footnote 7), but are quite technical in nature. These tools provide theoretical and practical approaches to defining appropriate hunger solutions, measuring changes in capacity and identifying ways to support capacity development

⁵ SDG 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

⁶ The timing of this evaluation did not allow for a rigorous analysis of the policy update’s coherence with WFP’s draft Strategic Plan 2017–2021.

in a range of thematic areas and response modalities, such as emergency response, social safety nets, school feeding, resilience, and South–South/triangular cooperation, for example through the Brazil Centre of Excellence.

24. However, weaknesses inhibited the utility of the policy and related guidance and included: i) inconsistent use of terms such as “enabling environment” and “institutional capacities”; ii) lack of clarity on output versus outcome results and on how expected results were to be achieved; iii) the absence of results indicators and guidance on capacity development-related reporting requirements before 2014, when the NCI was developed; and iv) insufficient information on how the 2004 policy would continue to be applied.

25. The 2008 evaluation found that the 2004 policy was consistent with WFP’s mandate and other policies, but did not fully reflect the prioritization of capacity development as a Strategic Objective. Management agreed with all 12 recommendations, but only the recommendation on adapting guidance materials from partners has been fully implemented. Major aspects of the suggested review of funding arrangements for capacity development have not been addressed. The remaining ten recommendations have been partially implemented, including the development of an action plan with a results framework and milestones, and frequent updates of the policy to reflect evaluation findings.

26. There has been limited cross-policy integration, with only the 2015 Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition explicitly referring to the policy update. Compared with other WFP policies developed during the same era,⁷ the policy update was rated as weak on several assessed criteria,⁸ including clarity of methods for policy implementation, and coherence with other policies.

27. The policy update reflects only a basic level of gender awareness by: i) mentioning the need to strengthen national capacities for conducting gender-disaggregated assessments of existing food needs; and ii) noting that WFP needs to strengthen its internal gender-awareness skills.

28. Gender-related considerations could have included the potential long-term contributions of capacity development to globally or nationally defined gender equality objectives; and information about the potential role of gender considerations in prioritizing resources for capacity development.

Policy Results

29. The 2008 evaluation of the 2004 policy noted an imbalance towards a supply-driven approach. Evidence gathered for this evaluation positively indicates that the processes used to develop capacity development interventions have become increasingly standardized – largely based on WFP’s dialogue with government partners to strengthen their ability to manage hunger solutions – and adaptable, using a variety of approaches to support change processes.

WFP-supported capacity development activities include on-the-job coaching, advocacy, the provision of specialized information and tools, and facilitating South–South and triangular cooperation. The Centre of Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil represents WFP’s largest and most systematized mechanism for supporting South–

⁷ These include WFP’s policies on disaster risk reduction (2009), gender (2009), school feeding (2009) and HIV and AIDS (2010).

⁸ Other criteria include coherence with the Strategic Plan, clarity of objectives, specification of indicators, cross-policy integration and provisions for monitoring and reporting on the policy.

South cooperation and contributing to the exchange of knowledge about school feeding within WFP and among partner countries.⁹ This innovative partnership, in which WFP provides a host government with technical expertise but no food assistance, represents a new way of operating for WFP.¹⁰

Table 1. WFP contributions to Capacity Development Results in reviewed countries, by thematic area and income level

Thematic Area	Country visits						Desk reviews					
	Bangladesh	Jordan	Kenya	Namibia	Peru	Senegal	Colombia	India	Kyrgyz Republic	Lesotho	Liberia	Uganda
	LMIC	UMIC	LMIC	UMIC	UMIC	LMIC	UMIC	LMIC	LMIC	LMIC	LIC	LIC
School Feeding	2,3	1,2	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2	1,2	2	2	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3
Nutrition	1,3		1,2,3	2	1	2,3	1	2	3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3
Food Security	1	1,2,3	1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2,3	1,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2		1,2,3
Livelihoods	1,2,3	1	1,2			1,2,3	1,2	2	1,2,3	1,2	1	1,2,3
Emergency Preparedness and Response	1		1,2,3		1,2	1	1,2		1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2
Purchase for Progress			1								1	1
Other	1	2	1,2	2	1		1	2		1,2,3		2

Sources: WFP SPRs 2013–2015, country-level documentation and interviews.
 capacity development results by level: 1 = individual; 2 = institutional; 3 = enabling environment.
 LIC = low-income country; LMIC = lower-middle-income country; UMIC = upper-middle-income country.
 (World Bank: <http://data.worldbank.org/country>)

30. Evidence of contributions to capacity development results¹¹ was found in all WFP’s thematic areas of intervention (Table 1). There was a consistent pattern in all income categories – low, lower-middle and upper-middle – and all three capacity development levels, with approximately 60 percent of results accruing at the institutional level. All countries except Colombia have strengthened capacities at the individual, institutional and enabling environment levels in at least one thematic area, irrespective of income status or type of operation

Contributions to strengthening individual and community capacities

31. The analysis of SPRs, triangulated with other evidence, confirms WFP’s considerable contributions to strengthening the awareness, knowledge and skills of individuals in government institutions working on hunger solutions. These efforts usually form part of a broader approach to strengthening institutional capacities (see

⁹ The 2015 Annual Report states that direct technical assistance was provided to national governments 11 times and 17 exchanges of experience were facilitated.

¹⁰ Requests for this type of support are increasing. WFP has established offices in Brazil and China, and is providing technical assistance in countries such as the Dominican Republic, India and Namibia, which do not receive food assistance.

¹¹ Conceptual and data limitations constrained the analysis (paragraph 3).

following section). While training is still frequently employed in the sample countries, steps are being taken to avoid one-off training events and build longer-term engagement with partners.

32. While there were few plans for engaging with communities and limited information on associated results, the evaluation elicited positive feedback from stakeholders regarding WFP's contributions to strengthening the capacities of individuals and community groups (Box 1).¹²

Box 1: WFP contributions to enhancing community resilience

In Jordan, school feeding through the distribution of commercially manufactured biscuits has long been one of WFP's core activities. New and innovative approaches to strengthening community resilience have recently been introduced. Community kitchens equipped by WFP, were established in five school districts in central Jordan. Training was provided to local staff to introduce a freshly cooked school meal that was distributed to schools throughout the district. This approach strengthens community resilience through the local purchase of all the food items needed, and increases participation in the labour force, especially for women.

Contributions to strengthening institutional capacities

33. WFP has focused on strengthening the technical and management capacities of national and subnational government organizations. The following are some achievements:

- *More effective and efficient nationally led food assistance and hunger governance programmes.* WFP – sometimes in collaboration with the Brazil Centre of Excellence – assisted national governments in improving the quality, management and monitoring of school feeding programmes in Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya, Namibia and Peru.
- *Development of new or improved operational guidelines and standards for national and subnational agencies.* In India, the WFP country office compiled best practices for the national targeted public distribution system. The Government has distributed the resulting best-practice guide widely, and the state governments of Kerala and Odisha are adapting and implementing these practices. Other country offices have supported the production of guidelines and standards for national school feeding programmes.¹³
- *A strengthened evidence base to facilitate national decision-making.* In Jordan and Namibia, country offices supported the development of food security monitoring systems and are helping to strengthen government capacity to run and adapt them.
- *Enhanced partner coordination at the regional, national and subnational levels.* WFP is co-chairing cross-sectoral thematic working groups and steering committees on issues such as food security and nutrition in Peru, social protection in the Kyrgyz Republic, and agriculture and rural development.

¹² Examples are limited to the 12 sample countries reviewed by the evaluation; this does not mean that the results mentioned were achieved only in those countries.

¹³ Examples from Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Namibia and Peru were noted.

34. There was insufficient evidence to assess WFP’s influence on improving the financial viability of national food assistance agencies – one of the intended policy outcomes.

Contributions to strengthening enabling environments

35. Country-based data collection and analysis of SPRs revealed multiple instances in which WFP has contributed to the adoption and implementation of laws, policies and harmonized strategies to strengthen the enabling environment for hunger solutions through advocacy, technical inputs, modelling and coaching.

36. There was insufficient evidence to determine the extent to which WFP’s efforts led to more adequate and sustainable resourcing of government institutions in host countries – another expected policy outcome.

Likely contributions to impact

37. The policy’s constructed theory of change proposes that overall impact depends on synergies among results at the enabling environment, institutional and individual levels. WFP’s monitoring data do not allow for a full, evidence-based assessment of contributions to impact. However, as indicated in Table 1, WFP’s efforts have simultaneously spanned at least two of these three levels in 42 instances in 12 countries (see also Box 2).

Box 2: Synergies in capacity results

In Peru, WFP provided the National Institute for Civil Defence (INDECI) with technical assistance on a wide range of issues, including improving the agency’s information systems, configuring cash-based transfer schemes for emergencies, and strengthening the knowledge and skills of government officials in addressing food emergencies.

E-course modules developed by WFP and implemented by INDECI reached more than 1,300 officials at the local and regional levels in less than a month. WFP’s work has also strengthened the enabling environment by developing a directive on standards for purchasing, storing and distributing food assistance in emergencies

Links between observed results and the policy update

38. With very few exceptions, the capacity development-related results identified by the evaluation cannot be directly linked to implementation of the policy update.

39. Most of the WFP staff members consulted were either unaware or only vaguely aware of the policy’s content. Of those who had read the document, most found it to lack specificity and to have limited use in guiding the planning, implementation or monitoring of specific capacity development interventions. The numerous tools and guidance materials developed (paragraph 10) are highly technical and cover a range of thematic areas and modalities. None makes explicit reference to the policy update or provides guidance on how to achieve the outputs and outcomes set out in the policy.

40. There is little evidence that the policy has contributed to a shared understanding and coherent use of the term “capacity development” among WFP staff, managers and Executive Board members. The term is used broadly to encompass everything that may benefit local populations, and narrowly to refer only to training activities.

Gender equality considerations

41. The country offices consulted displayed a basic level of gender awareness in the design, implementation and monitoring of capacity development interventions. In most country offices however, reporting captured only sex-disaggregated participation in capacity development initiatives, with no information on contributions to strengthening gender equality in country contexts.

42. Gender was considered in the substance of capacity development initiatives in only a few cases. For example, WFP's work to strengthen the capacity of school management committees in Bangladesh, Kenya, Namibia and Peru included sensitization of committee members to gender equality and the importance of women's participation and leadership in the committees.

Sustainability

43. WFP has made deliberate efforts to enhance sustainability by fostering its partners' technical and managerial skills and supporting national ownership and leadership of change processes. Data indicate that effective hand-over is a gradual, iterative process during which WFP's role slowly changes from implementer to technical adviser, rather than being a one-directional process led by WFP. This advisory role often extends beyond the point at which national actors take over financial or managerial responsibilities from WFP-led programmes.

Explanatory Factors for Results Achieved

External Factors

44. The importance attached to strengthening national capacities as part of the global aid effectiveness agenda has created opportunities for United Nations agencies. However, this favourable discourse has not consistently translated into the provision of resources for WFP's capacity development activities.

45. The main factors that have affected the scope, nature and effectiveness of WFP's capacity development activities are:

- the political will to address hunger governance issues;
- host governments' demand for food aid versus technical assistance;
- existing government capacities at the national and decentralized levels; and
- socio-cultural factors.

46. Evidence from SPRs indicates that WFP is strengthening the capacities of institutions in countries, irrespective of a country's income level or position on the emergency–development continuum:

- In middle-income countries, governments are transitioning from being the recipients of food assistance to become the consumers and purchasers of specialized technical services from WFP. These countries offer conducive environments for lasting system-level changes, as they tend to have relatively solid legal and policy frameworks and strong capacities. However, WFP offices in middle-income countries face challenges in fundraising because of the lack of traditional food-related programming and the decrease in official development assistance in these countries.
- In contexts of acute crisis, recent WFP guidance states that “there are opportunities to support long-term capacity alongside immediate humanitarian relief. In these contexts, technical assistance will often take the

form of showing practical examples and joint implementation of activities in a specific area of capacity transfer... Building anti-hunger capacity is as urgent a priority as peace-building and humanitarian assistance or longer-term development.”¹⁴ Despite this, there is a lack of consensus about WFP’s capacity development role in emergency response.

WFP’s reputation, branding, and collaboration with others

47. WFP’s reputation and branding has tended to focus on its role as a “doer” rather than a facilitator. This has implications for the organization’s perceived positioning and comparative advantage.

48. Evaluation respondents characterized WFP’s collaboration with other United Nations actors that support national capacity development processes as working in parallel rather than jointly.

Policy dissemination and guidance

49. Commensurate with the limited resources available, dissemination of the policy update has been only moderately effective.¹⁵ The tools developed for this purpose – such as the NCI and capacity gaps and needs assessments – were found to be technically complex and difficult to utilize, with inconsistent application among country offices. As none of these tools contain explicit links to the policy update’s result statements, they have been of limited use for policy implementation.

Resources and operating environment

50. Financial resources made available to advance WFP’s capacity development agenda have consisted almost exclusively of a USD 4-million trust fund for capacity development funded by Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which was established following the 2008 evaluation. When this trust fund expired after four years, no further funding was sought.

51. Introduction of the CD&A budget line in 2013 was a positive development that allowed country offices to allocate and track dedicated resources for capacity development independently of funding for food or cash assistance. However, given that augmentation costs are often associated with special operations and include costly elements, this composite budget line masks specific capacity development expenditures.

52. Almost all the country office teams consulted identified short-term funding and budget uncertainties as critical challenges for coherent and effective capacity development planning and implementation. Unlike some United Nations agencies, WFP does not have systematic access to country-level funding to finance its capacity development work. Funds and staff originally intended for capacity development may be deployed elsewhere in the event of an emergency or resource shortfall.

53. WFP staff at all levels noted a lack of ownership of the policy update within the organization, and observed that the small and fluctuating size of the Headquarters capacity development unit had reduced its visibility and influence considerably.

¹⁴ WFP Programme and Policy Division. 2015. *The Design and Implementation of Technical Assistance and Capacity Development: National Self-sufficient Capacity to Respond, Reduce and Rebuild from Crises and Achieve Zero Hunger*. p. 18.

¹⁵ The same result was found in the 2008 evaluation of the 2004 policy.

54. The reporting systems that WFP had in place during the evaluation period led to considerable under-reporting of capacity development results. For example, SPRs do not include interventions financed by trust funds, which account for a considerable portion of WFP's capacity development work. Some regional bureaux and country offices have developed their own tools to capture capacity development-related contributions, but these have yet to influence WFP-wide monitoring and reporting practices.

55. The NCI introduced in October 2014 aimed to measure changes in capacity levels resulting from myriad investments in capacity development. NCI data are gathered through regular assessments of hunger governance indicators for four types of capacity – latent, emergent, moderate and self-sufficiency. However, despite its ambitious scope, the NCI has limitations, including its complexity and its inability to define the pathways leading to observed capacity changes.

56. WFP's staffing approach, the 2014 WFP People Strategy, includes relatively little consideration of capacity development. A review of WFP job postings at various levels of seniority indicates no competency requirements or other soft skills related to capacity development, apart from generic management and diplomacy skills. There are few incentives for staff to engage in, or excel at, capacity strengthening in WFP.

Conclusions

57. WFP's capacity development work – in terms of both funding and continuity of engagement – has been constrained by the organization's focus on emergencies and its short-term operational horizon.

58. Most of the factors that have limited the scope, effectiveness and sustainability of WFP's capacity development work are influenced less by external factors than by managerial decisions taken since 2009. As a result:

- capacity development is not prominently positioned within WFP's organizational structure;
- financial resources invested in promoting capacity development in WFP have been limited to a one-time trust fund;
- the small capacity development unit has not been able to exercise strong leadership in policy implementation;
- there have not been any comprehensive efforts to strengthen related staff capacities or tailor resource mobilization efforts to capacity development needs; and
- despite some improvements, monitoring and reporting on capacity development remain weak and inconsistent, limiting WFP's ability to showcase and learn from its work.

59. Capacity development has been cited in numerous WFP evaluations since 2009. There have been repeated recommendations for WFP to strengthen the definition, approach, measurement, funding and staffing of its capacity development activities. Capacity development was a Strategic Objective in the Strategic Plan (2008–2013), but few results were reported because the systems to support its implementation were insufficient. In the Strategic Plan (2014–2017), capacity development was

mainstreamed throughout the four Strategic Objectives, but without the commensurate engagement in critical areas needed to ensure its success.

60. WFP is well positioned to engage further in capacity strengthening with country partners, based on its proven expertise, especially in food-related emergency preparedness and response. However, the organization's strategic positioning is limited by its prevailing image as a "doer" and its comparative disadvantage compared with other United Nations agencies with more established track records in technical cooperation.

61. This evaluation showed that WFP is supporting capacity development processes in a wide range of geographic and thematic contexts, despite limited organizational support, resources, guidance and tools. However, in light of the evolving global context and WFP's stated ambition of contributing to zero hunger, continuing "business as usual in the conceptualization and prioritization of the capacity strengthening function and the internal support to it is not an option." To do so would lead to considerable reputational risk.

62. The 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, the World Humanitarian Summit and related dialogue clearly articulate the primacy of strengthening countries' capacities to develop and manage their own hunger solutions. WFP's Integrated Road Map re-visions the organization's planning, budgeting and monitoring systems to respond to the 2030 Agenda and work towards the SDGs. Capacity strengthening activities are included in WFP's Strategic Plan (2017–2021), in Strategic Objectives 1 to 3 at the individual and institutional levels and at the heart of Strategic Objective 4, and as a transfer modality in the new Financial Framework. Significant attention to ensuring conceptual clarity and explicit accountabilities for this topic will be critical going forward.

Lessons

63. As also noted in the evaluation of WFP's Gender Policy (2014), WFP has arrived at a critical juncture in its capacity strengthening work. The gender policy evaluation noted a series of strategic considerations, many of which are equally relevant to this evaluation:

- i) "When will we ever learn?" Many previous policy, strategic and operation evaluations have noted similar shortcomings. If things are to change, WFP's commitment to capacity strengthening must be sincere, systematic and sustained.
- ii) There is need to establish a clear WFP-wide understanding that the mainstreaming of capacity strengthening will facilitate the delivery of WFP's SDG commitments, rather than competing with it or other priorities.
- iii) A shift in mindset is critical: capacity strengthening should be considered "everybody's business", regardless of institutional roles or geographic locations. The responsibility should not fall on the Policy and Programme Division alone.
- iv) Failure to facilitate capacity strengthening with an appropriate organizational structure, skills and technical support poses risks to WFP's effectiveness, efficiency and credibility.

- v) Leadership and prioritization are essential and must be sustained. Partners, including United Nations agencies, donors, governments and civil society, must combine their demands for reform with supportive action.

Recommendations

64. The following recommendations were informed by discussions at a workshop in September 2016, which was attended by a cross-section of WFP staff. They are sequential, with the first recommendation being a necessary precursor to the others.

65. Recommendation 1: WFP should immediately elevate the organizational attention to capacity strengthening as a core function by creating a temporary, multi-stakeholder management transition team that will:

- a) articulate WFP's vision and strategy for capacity strengthening in line with the Integrated Road Map for 2017–2021, including conceptual and operational definitions for capacity strengthening as an issue to be mainstreamed in Strategic Objectives 1 to 3, as a programmatic focus in Strategic Objective 4, and as a transfer modality in the new Financial Framework;
- b) define the staff roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for capacity strengthening as a functional responsibility and as mainstreamed into other programming areas;
- c) review, revise and create practical tools and guidance for WFP's capacity strengthening work in the context of its Policy on Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), including in humanitarian response; and
- d) remain in place until the roll-out of the CSP approach is complete.

66. Recommendation 2: In implementing the Integrated Road Map – specifically the Policy on CSPs – WFP should ensure that country offices are provided with relevant, concrete and practical tools and guidance on capacity strengthening within 12 months. This guidance should:

- a) be based on good practice drawn from WFP's own experience and that of other United Nations agencies;
- b) be applicable in contexts along the humanitarian–development–peacebuilding nexus; and
- c) integrate criteria or conditions in which WFP support may no longer be required – including transition and exit plans – into the country strategic planning process.

67. Recommendation 3: WFP should further enhance its internal capability to effectively support national capacity strengthening processes within 12 months by:

- a) updating its People Strategy to include capacity strengthening as a functional capability;
- b) developing incentives for capacity strengthening work in staff performance assessments;
- c) designating a capacity strengthening focal point with clearly defined responsibilities and accountabilities in each regional bureau and country office; and
- d) accelerating the creation of a roster of capacity development experts in relevant thematic and geographic areas.

68. **Recommendation 4:** WFP should continue to strengthen its provisions for monitoring and reporting on all capacity strengthening work within 12 months by expanding the quantitative and qualitative information required in SPRs and trust fund reporting, including illustrative qualitative studies covering the contexts for both CSPs and Interim CSPs.

69. **Recommendation 5:** Within six months, WFP should ensure that its internal and external communications reflect and support its strategic vision for capacity strengthening, including by presenting capacity development as one of WFP's core organizational functions in all contexts.

70. **Recommendation 6:** The 2009 policy update should remain in force until all elements of the Integrated Road Map are in place. WFP should then either revise the policy update or develop a new policy to articulate its strategic approach. The policy should be accompanied by dissemination tools that align with and support implementation of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021).

1. Introduction

1.1 Evaluation Features

Evaluation rationale and scope

1. Rationale: WFP's policy on the formulation of corporate policies specifies that they should be evaluated within four to six years of implementation. The ***WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation (2009)*** (hereafter referred to as the '*2009 policy update*'), is now in its 6th year. The evaluation is also timely in the context of the recent adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with its focus on national accountability and capacities, WFP's ongoing shift from food aid to food assistance, as well as in light of the preparation of the next WFP Strategic Plan (SP) and related documents in the Integrated Roadmap due for presentation at the second regular session of the WFP Executive Board (EB) in November, 2016.
2. Objectives: As per the Terms of Reference (TOR), reproduced in full in Annex 1, the evaluation serves the dual objectives of accountability and learning with an emphasis on the latter.
3. Scope: The evaluand is the *WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation (2009)*, the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the Capacity Development and Hand-Over Components of the WFP Strategic Plan (2008-2013)* and other corporate capacity-development related guidance documents: the *Operational Guide to Strengthen Capacity of Nations to Reduce Hunger (2010)*; the *Ability and Readiness of Nations to Reduce Hunger (Ability and Readiness Index - ARI) (2010)*; *Implementing Capacity Development. WFP's Approach to Hunger Governance and Capacity Development (2013)*; *Capacity Gaps and Needs Assessment in support of Projects to Strengthen National Capacity to End Hunger (2014)*; *National Capacity Index (NCI) – Measuring Change in Capacity for Hunger Governance in Support of Projects to Strengthen National Capacity to End Hunger (2014)*; and *The Design and Implementation of Technical Assistance and Capacity Development (2015)*.
4. The evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and connectedness of the *2009 policy update* from 2009 to 2015, but also referred to earlier years to understand the evolution of the policy as well as to later periods, if relevant to current and likely future developments.
5. Stakeholders: The main WFP internal stakeholders who play a key role in capacity development and have participated in the evaluation are the WFP's Executive Board, Headquarters management and divisions (in particular, but not limited to, the Policy and Programme division), Regional Bureaux (RB), and Country Offices (CO). Key external stakeholders comprise beneficiaries, partner governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, and donor countries.
6. Intended users: The evaluation will be of use to all WFP staff included in programme design and many involved in implementation, as well as to staff of sections for which capacity development is undertaken, such as logistics. Principal intended users of the evaluation are the noted WFP internal stakeholders, in particular members of the Internal Reference Group (see TOR in Annex 1). It is expected that the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation will

be used by these groups to inform WFP's policy making and management decisions related to capacity development practices.

Methodology

7. The evaluation was conducted between February and July 2016 by an independent team of five international and five regional/national evaluators and two senior advisors for comparative analysis and evaluation methodology respectively. The WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) prepared the Terms of Reference in consultation with key stakeholders, oversaw the evaluation's design and quality assured its implementation and products.

8. A full methodology for the evaluation was set out in the Inception Report (April 2016) and is summarized in Annex 2. All WFP policy evaluations address three main evaluation questions (EQ), which also provide the structure of section 2 of this report:

- EQ1: How good is the Policy?
- EQ2: What were the results of the Policy?
- EQ3: Why has the policy produced the results that have been observed?

9. The main features of the evaluation methodology included: (i) retrospective construction of a theory of change underlying the *2009 policy update* (see Annex 3), (ii) a full evaluation matrix (Annex 4); (iii) extensive review of internal and external documents, including 356 Standard Project Reports (SPR) from CP, DEV and PRRO (see Annex 5 for key findings of the SPR review); (iv) field missions to Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya, Namibia, Peru, and Senegal, as well as to the Regional Bureaux in Panama and Bangkok;¹⁶ (v) country desk studies with document review supported by interviews for Colombia, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Liberia and Uganda; (vi) a review of four comparator organizations the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) using document review and interviews (see Annex 6 for a summary of key insights); (vii) an electronic survey of 213 senior WFP staff from headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices (see Annex 7 for survey results); and (viii) key informant interviews with 46 WFP HQ staff based in Rome and 11 WFP Executive Board members. English versions of the data collection tools, namely the survey and interview protocols, are presented in Annex 8¹⁷.

10. A full list of the 364 consulted stakeholders is provided in Annex 10; a full bibliography is provided in Annex 9; and, an updated version of the triangulation and evidence matrix that had originally been presented in the inception report is shown in Annex 11.

11. Evaluation data was used to test the validity of the theory of change, in particular of its causal link assumptions (Mayne 2014) – that is, assumptions on how and why the transitions between stages in a change process will take place – that are logically implied by the outputs and outcomes presented in the *2009 policy update* (see the constructed theory of change in Annex 3). The limited sample of countries explored in depth by the evaluation does not allow for a reliable verification of the

¹⁶ Visits to COs lasted between four and five, and visits to RBs two to three working days. All site visits involved at least one international and one national/regional team member.

¹⁷ The survey and interview protocols were translated into French and Spanish.

validity of these assumptions. Nevertheless, evaluation data do provide insights on their likely validity, as well as on related evidence gaps.

12. Gender-sensitive questions and indicators were reflected in the evaluation matrix, as well as in data collection tools. Confidentiality of stakeholder contributions was ensured by avoiding direct attribution of views to specific individuals. The evaluation team members ensured that interactions were appropriate in light of the respective socio-cultural contexts, and in relation to gender and other social roles of the respondents.

13. The evaluation team used the services of an External Quality Assurance Reviewer who was not involved in data collection or analysis, but focused on providing autonomous quality assurance. The evaluation team systematically applied WFP's Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS) quality criteria, templates and checklists.

14. The main limitations for the evaluation are outlined below along with brief mitigation strategies:

- Incomplete data on the universe of WFP's capacity development-related expenditures, activities and results, and no reliable baseline.¹⁸ Rigorous data triangulation was used to mitigate this to the extent possible.
- The generic nature of the intended results set by the *2009 policy update* only allowed for the development of a similarly generic theory of change, which did not take into account characteristics of the different thematic areas where capacity development occurs. This limited the degree to which the evaluation could apply contribution analysis. There were no suitable mitigation strategies identified for this limitation.
- The response rate to the e-survey of 21.6 per cent (46 complete responses from 213 contacted individuals) was below the common industry standard for unsolicited surveys of 30 per cent. Accordingly, survey results should not be considered statistically reliable. In the report, selected survey results are noted as an indication of trends and perceptions, but were not given the same weight as other lines of inquiry.
- The SPR review faced a number of specific methodological limitations, including: (i) the fact that the documents are self-reported; (ii) reporting on capacity development varied based on the author's understanding of the concept; (iii) the reviewed 'sustainability, capacity development and handover' sections of SPRs do not capture all of the capacity development work undertaken in a given operation; and (iv) SPRs do not clearly distinguish between completed activities and outputs. These limitations mean that resulting SPR data presented in this report need to be viewed as notional, and merely illustrative of the breadth of WFP capacity development activities and results. This is noted in the text as a caution to readers as is the other evidence used to triangulate as a way of mitigating the limitations posed by the SPRs as a data set.

¹⁸ As is discussed in section 2.3 below, one factor contributing to existing data gaps is that a lot of capacity development work conducted by COs and RBs is covered through country or regional-level funding, which until now has not been included in corporate reporting systems.

- One challenge for the evaluation has been to categorize capacity development-related achievements as either outputs or outcomes. This is due to the fact that the qualitative difference between the two types of results is not always clear in the *2009 policy update*. Instead of assigning the terms ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes’, the evaluation team has focused on identifying evidence that achievements went beyond completed activities and that WFP’s efforts contributed to bringing about observable changes in individual behavior or organizational practices.¹⁹ Examples of WFP-supported achievements defined in this way are presented in section 2.2.
- In capturing results of WFP’s capacity development work, the evaluation focused on the 12 sample countries in which it was able to verify reported information through stakeholder consultations. Noted results are, therefore, illustrative, rather than providing a comprehensive overview of WFP’s overall contributions to results. In addition, while including a number of EMOP operations, the small sample provided insufficient information on specific approaches to, or successes of capacity development in contexts of acute crisis. There were no suitable mitigation strategies identified for this limitation.

1.2 Context

Terminology

15. The evaluation used the OECD DAC²⁰ definitions for ‘capacity’ and ‘capacity development’ adopted by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and that are used in WFP’s Policy on Capacity Development update:

- ‘Capacity’ refers to the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.
- ‘Capacity development’ denotes the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain that ability over time.

16. The evaluation has used the terms in the *2009 policy update* - ‘enabling environment’, ‘institutional capacity’ and ‘individual capacity’ - to refer to the three levels at which capacity development-related results were expected. Annex 12 explains how the evaluation team has interpreted and used these and other key terms, and points to some related limitations in the *2009 policy update*. These include the absence of a definition, and narrow use of the term ‘enabling environment’ as being focused primarily on positive effects related to legal, policy and financial contexts. The evaluation team has elaborated on the term to include negative effects deriving from contextual influences, including political and socio-cultural factors. This allowed the capture of changes in, for example, sector-specific standards or methodologies as relevant changes in the enabling environment.

17. Activities that were focused on training people or organizations in order to effectively implement WFP managed projects were not considered capacity

¹⁹ The change pathways developed as part of the constructed theory of change in Annex 3 distinguish between changes in capacity, on the one hand, and subsequent changes in behaviours on the other hand, implying that behaviour changes require the actual use and application of existing capacity. The extent to which this is likely to happen is influenced by the respective enabling or limiting contexts.

²⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee.

development unless they were part of a broader plan that envisaged national actors eventually assuming responsibility for the respective programme.

External context

18. Over the past decade, the research and literature on capacity development has continuously evolved. Important changes in the global discourse during this period include: (i) a shift from a focus on the skills of individuals to placing emphasis on performance of wider groups or organizations, which was then replaced by the notion that the capacity to deliver results is but one dimension of capacity that must extend to the broader abilities needed to make an organization or system endure and perform over time²¹ (Baser and Morgan 2008); and, (ii) a shift from viewing capacity development as linear and externally generated or stimulated, especially by technical assistance (Boesen, in Greijn et al 2015), to seeing it as self-organizing, emergent and part of a complex adaptive system (Baser and Morgan 2008, De Weijer and McCandless, in Greijn et al 2015).

19. There is a continuing debate over whether and to what extent comprehensive approaches to capacity development can be adopted in fragile states and humanitarian settings (SIDA 2014).²² At the same time, capacity development is at the very center of the notion of ‘resilience’, an increasingly important concept in areas such as food security and disaster risk reduction, which is associated with the capacity of individuals, groups and society as a whole to cope, adapt and transform in the face of human-made and natural shocks (Weijer and McCandless, in Greijn et al 2015).

20. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September 2015 with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 17 - ‘Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development’ - emphasizes the need to support “*effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation*”²³. The SDGs require all parts of the United Nations system to clearly identify what and how each agency can contribute to strengthening national capacities. This implies the need to effectively articulate each agency’s individual niche, but also to ensure that the UN system as a whole overcomes its fragmentation to ensure a comprehensive and coherent UN effort (UN CEB 2015).

21. During the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul in May 2016, participating global leaders recognized that the response to humanitarian emergencies can no longer be viewed in isolation from broader sustainable development efforts. They emphasized the need for a new and coherent approach based on addressing root causes, increasing political diplomacy for prevention and conflict resolution, and bringing humanitarian, development and peace-building efforts together.²⁴ One of the key documents²⁵ prepared and endorsed by the WHS leaders outlines intentions to further strengthen the institutional capacities of national responders, including governments, communities, as well as Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

²¹ Such as the abilities to attract resources and support, to adapt and self-renew, and to balance diversity and coherence.

²² SIDA suggests a sequencing of efforts, rather than trying to address all factors relevant for capacity development at once.

²³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org>

²⁴ WHS 2016 a.

²⁵ “The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need” (WHS 2016 b).

22. During the conduct of this evaluation, WFP developed its new Strategic Plan 2017-2021 as part of an Integrated Roadmap to Zero Hunger, foreseeing enhanced approaches to its capacity strengthening and explicit work with national partners.

WFP context

23. The chronology presented in Figure 1 links the evolution timeline of the *2009 policy update* and its related guidance to relevant events within WFP.

24. The WFP Strategic Plan 2004 - 2007 (WFP 2003) introduced a stand-alone strategic objective (SO) on capacity development. This SO remained part of the subsequent SP 2008–2013 (WFP 2008d), which included the articulation of WFP’s transition from food aid to food assistance. From 2008 - 2012, a considerable amount of policy direction, guidance and tools on capacity development were prepared by the Hand-over and Partnerships Branch in the Programme Division. The capacity development function was dissolved from July 2012 to March 2013 when there was no functional representation at HQ for this programmatic area. In April 2013, a new unit was created to focus on Country Capacity Strengthening, which picked up this responsibility despite the limited human resources dedicated to this functional area.

25. In November 2013, WFP rolled out a new financial framework, which allowed COs to plan and budget specifically for capacity development and augmentation activities. In the current SP 2014-2017 (WFP 2014hh), capacity development was no longer addressed by a separate SO, but mainstreamed across all four strategic objectives. Annex 14 compares SOs and goals of the 2008-2013 and 2014-2017 SPs. Capacity development activities undertaken by WFP differ greatly depending on the socio-economic status of the country.

26. In 2015, the WFP Executive Board decided to shorten the implementation period of the SP 2014-2017 by one year and prepare an Integrated Roadmap, including a new Strategic Plan, Country Strategic Plan Approach Policy, a Financial Framework Review and Corporate Results Framework for the 2017-2021 period.

27. The recent Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the WFP Strategic Plan 2014–2017 (WFP 2016a) recommended that WFP better articulate the full scope of its mission, including its comparative advantage in providing development assistance. It further suggested that the agency reinforce its role in, and adopt more holistic approaches to supporting capacity development processes.²⁶ Similarly, several recent evaluations identified the need for and increased focus on strengthening national policy and systems, developing capacity and working in partnership, as well as improved guidance on capacity development strategy and measurement.

1.3 The WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation (2009)

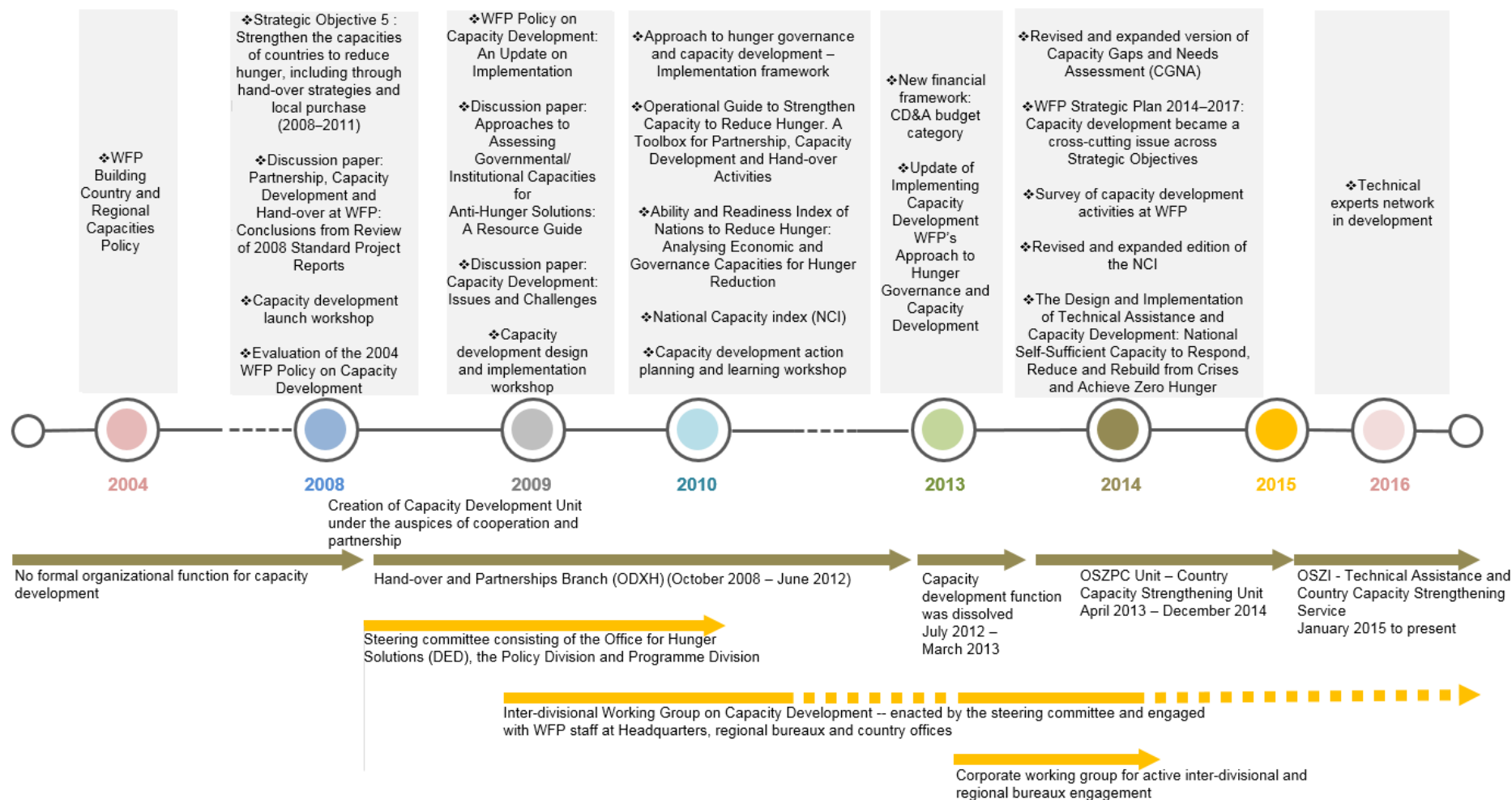
Evolution of the Policy

28. The WFP policy, ‘*Building Country and Regional Capacities*’, was approved in 2004 (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-B) to provide a framework to implement the stand-alone strategic objective (SO 5) on capacity development included in the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan. The evaluation of that policy in 2008 (WFP 2008b) identified

²⁶ Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the WFP Strategic Plan 2014–2017 (WFP 2016j), paragraphs 88-108.

strengths and successes of policy implementation, but also noted a number of areas for improvement; in particular, the absence of a results framework with clear objectives. One of the evaluation's recommendations was that WFP update this policy to include a results framework and to capture recent thinking on capacity development.

Figure 1. Evolution of the WFP Policy on Capacity Development and related Guidance



29. In November 2009, the WFP Executive Board approved the *Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation* that is the subject of this evaluation. It updates the 2004 policy, which remains in force.

Figure 2. Comparison of the WFP Policies on Capacity Development

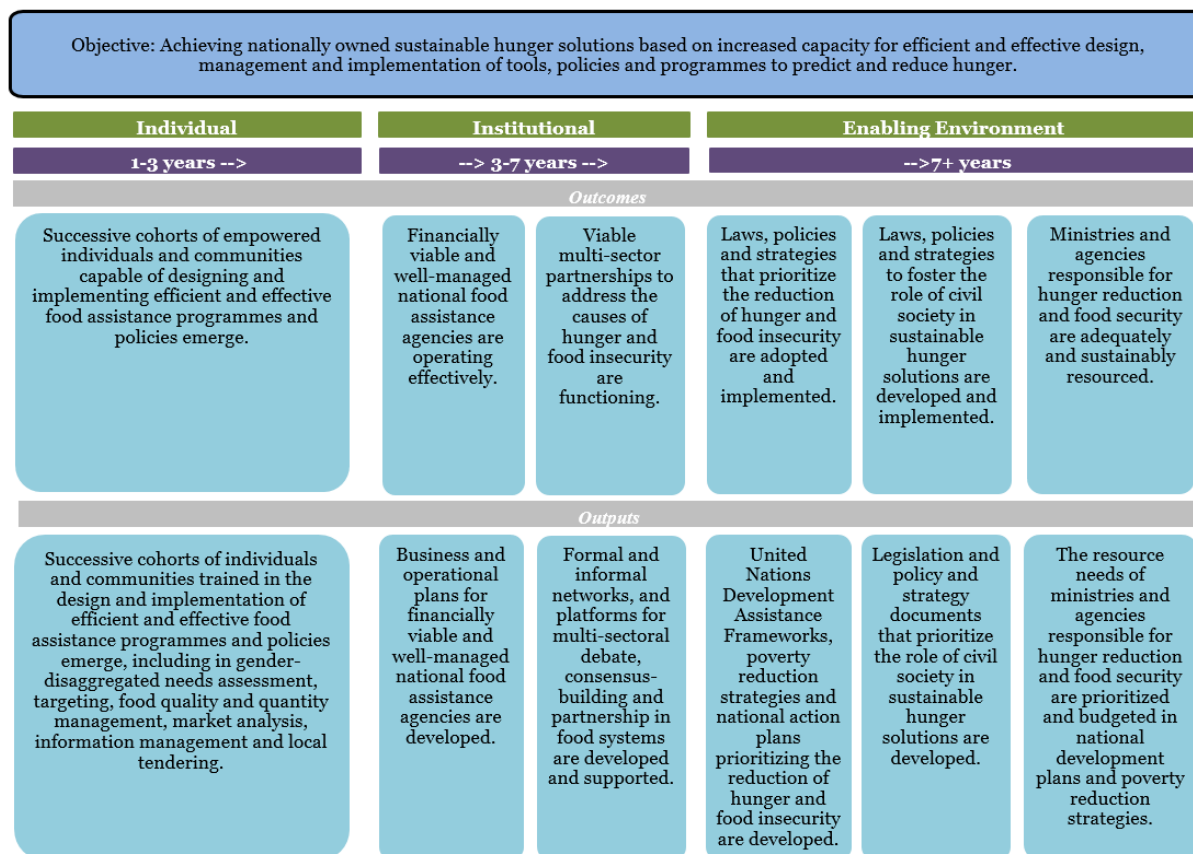
Policy	Building Country and Regional Capacities (2004)	WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation (2009)
Main elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition and conceptual framework • Review of existing policies • WFP capacity-building activities by thematic area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – analyzing and assessing hunger – programming food assistance – disaster preparedness – enhancing food management and logistics – supporting decentralization efforts – institutionalizing information sharing and advocacy – broadening resource-mobilization efforts • Implementing capacity building by context and including implementation tools • Associated risks • Financing issues • Policy recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates 2004 Capacity Development Policy • Capacity development and the WFP Strategic Plan (2008-2011) • Implementation strengths and successes • Emerging gaps – the 2008 evaluation • Policy framework, including a vision, objective, outcomes, outputs and activities • Strategic priorities

30. The process of developing the *2009 policy update* was led by a Steering Committee consisting of the Office for Hunger Solutions (DED) and the Policy Division and Programme Division. The Committee enacted an Interdivisional Working Group, which remained in force through 2010, and engaged WFP staff at headquarters, regional and country offices.²⁷ Annex 15 provides an analysis of the key stakeholders involved in and affected by implementation of the policy.

31. The *2009 policy update* outlines an overarching objective, as well as outcomes and outputs at three levels of capacity development: enabling environment, institutional, and individual. These are shown in Figure 3 below.

²⁷ The Making of Capacity Development at WFP (2008-2015). General Purpose Briefing Note. (WFP 2015ii)

Figure 3. 2009 Policy on Capacity Development update outcomes and outputs



Logic Model and Theory of Change²⁸ for the 2009 policy update

32. While the 2009 capacity development policy did not include an explicit logic model, it defines an objective, outcomes and outputs, and it provides information on key types of activities envisaged to achieve these results. The evaluation team used this information to construct retrospectively a logic model and theory of change shown in Annex 3. These were used throughout the process to inform the evaluation questions and, together, to guide data collection and analysis.

Activities for Policy Implementation

33. The 2009 policy update set out to improve the way WFP plans, implements, monitors and reports on capacity development. This policy document describes the activities that WFP should engage in to achieve the policy’s outputs and outcomes:

- At the policy and institutional level, key activities include providing technical advice and facilitating high-level consultations and informed advocacy and outreach.
- At the organizational level, WFP’s activities include the development of business plans and guidelines for implementing food assistance, secondment of staff, support for stakeholder organizations and networks, and provision of equipment and capital services.

²⁸ This Theory of Change is not to be confused with the ToC that was prepared by the Country Capacity Strengthening and Technical Assistance Unit (OSZI) in January 2016 as part of a broader exercise initiated and managed by RMP.

- At the individual level, activities include the design and implementation of training workshops, exchange visits and targeted hosting of partner staff.²⁹

34. In the years following the approval of this policy, a considerable amount of corporate guidance was produced to assist country offices in the assessment, design, implementation and hand-over of capacity development activities. The *2009 policy update* was followed in 2010 by the approval by the Executive Board of an Action Plan for the Implementation of the Capacity Development and Hand-Over Components of the WFP Strategic Plan (2008-2013). This document was intended as a road map for the transformation into action of the 2004 policy “Building National and Regional Capacities”, and the *2009 policy update* with a specific emphasis on hand-over. It outlines five priority points of engagement, and broadly describes the roles and responsibilities of HQ, RBs and COs for capacity development programming.

35. Subsequently, a significant amount of specific capacity-development related guidance documents and tools were produced between 2010 and 2015, including:

- i. *Operational Guide to Strengthen Capacity of Nations to Reduce Hunger: A Toolbox for Partnership, Capacity Development and Hand-over Activities* (2010);
- ii. *Ability and Readiness of Nations to Reduce Hunger: Analyzing Economic and Governance Capacities for Hunger Reduction* (2010);
- iii. *Implementing Capacity Development: WFP’s Approach to Hunger Governance and Capacity Development* (2010, revised in 2013);
- iv. *Capacity Gaps and Needs Assessment in Support of Projects to Strengthen National Capacity to End Hunger* (2014);
- v. *National Capacity Index (NCI) – Measuring Change in Capacity for Hunger Governance in Support of Projects to Strengthen National Capacity to End Hunger* (2014); and,
- vi. *The Design and Implementation of Technical Assistance and Capacity Development* (2015).

36. A survey of capacity development activities conducted jointly by the WFP Country Capacity Strengthening Unit and Regional Programme Advisors in 2014 (WFP 2014i), as well as primary data elicited for this evaluation indicate that all of the types of activities described in the *2009 policy update* have, indeed, been implemented and have also been complemented by others, such as knowledge-sharing and assistance for resource mobilization and fundraising (See Annex 5).

37. The review of all of the Standard Project Reports from Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO), Country Programme (CP) and Development Operations (DEV) in 70 countries from 2013-2015 (365 SPRs from 161 operations) found that all SPRs included a capacity development & augmentation (CD&A) budget component. Total approved CD&A budgets for these operations for the years 2014-2015 amounted to USD 374 million – 16 percent of their total planned budgets.³⁰ This percentage was considerably higher (64 percent) for development operations alone, and somewhat lower (7 percent) for protracted relief and recovery operations.

²⁹ WFP Policy on Capacity Development: An Update on Implementation (2009), para 44, p. 13.

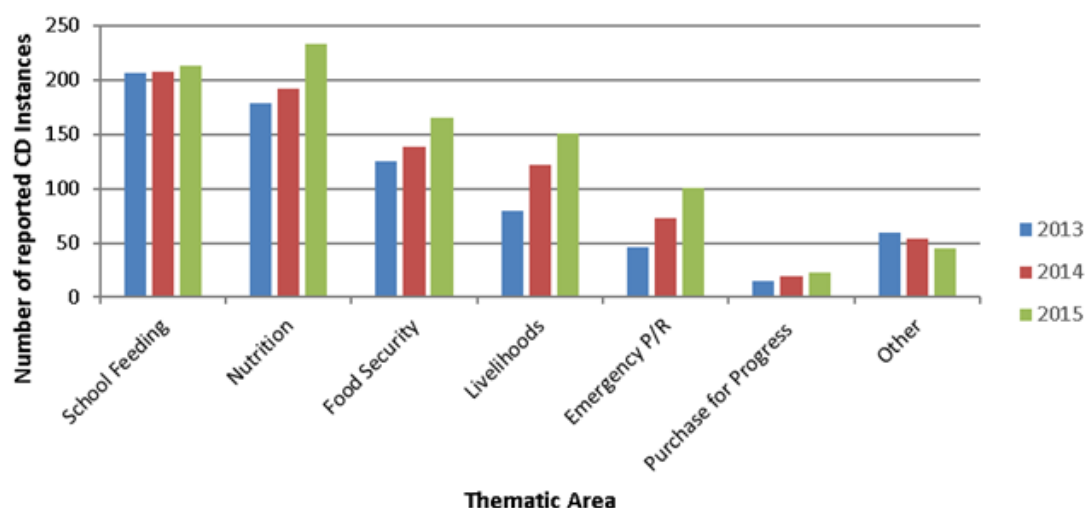
³⁰ Source of financial data: WFP 2016ee. As previously noted, available corporate data do not capture the full universe of WFP’s capacity development efforts and related expenditures, in particular those integrated into regular project activities and those financed through country level funds.

Since 2013-2014, annual expenditures for capacity development have constituted approximately 1 percent of WFP’s total programme of work.³¹

38. Data available from WFP’s reporting systems, the 2014 WFP survey of capacity development activities, as well as that generated from site visits and country desktop reviews conducted for this evaluation indicate that WFP’s capacity development efforts have generally focused on national and sub-national government agencies in the health, planning, education, and agriculture sectors. Capacity development activities have also included engagement with non-government actors, such as communities, smallholder farmers, and NGOs. In some cases, WFP has supported capacity strengthening of regional or sub-regional organizations, such as the African Union and ASEAN.

39. The WFP survey (WFP 2014i) found that school feeding and food security analysis were the two of seven thematic areas in which 80 percent of the countries participating in the survey (no=40) had conducted capacity development activities during the surveyed period 2005-2014. The other areas with the highest concentration of capacity development activities were related to nutrition (68 percent) and emergency preparedness and response (60 percent). The illustrative data from the SPR review conducted for this evaluation showed that school feeding was the area where the highest number of capacity development instances were being reported (a total of 628 for the years 2013 to 2015), followed by nutrition (total of 604 instances over the period 2013 to 2015). This is shown in figure 4 below. As shown in Annex 16, data collected in the 12 visited and desk-reviewed countries indicated the same emphasis on school feeding as the most frequently addressed thematic area for capacity strengthening.

Figure 4. Number of Capacity Development Instances³² reported in PRRO, CP and DEV SPRs (n=2,448) by Thematic Area, by Year ³³



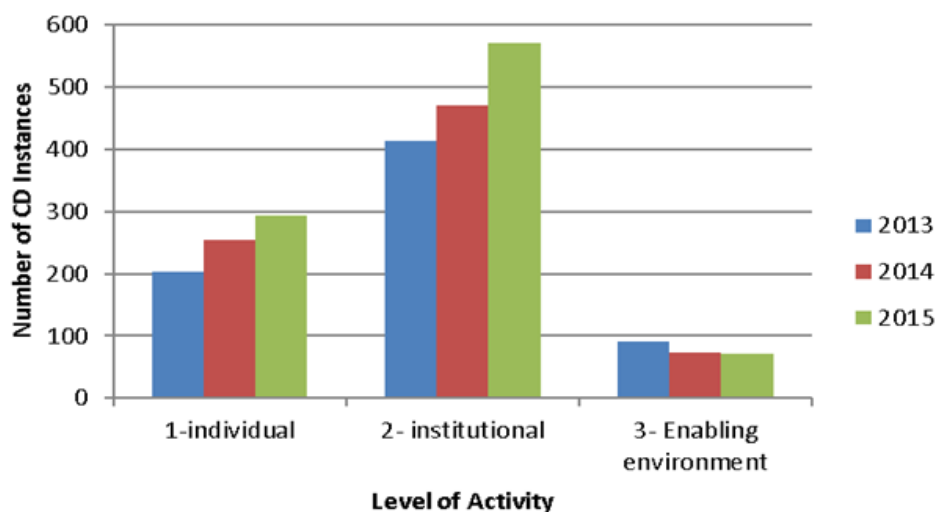
³¹ Data on capacity development and augmentation (CD&A) expenditures are available from 2013-2014. As per evaluation TOR, paragraph 34, the calculation of capacity development expenditures derives from excluding Special Operations (SO) expenditures from CD&A figures, as most augmentation expenditures occur on SOs.

³² The generic reference to capacity development ‘instances’ reflects the methodological challenge that SPRs sometimes reported on completed or ongoing activities, and sometimes on results (outputs or outcomes).

³³ The seven-fold categorization in Figure 2 is derived from the categories used in the Indicator Compendium to the 2014-2017 WFP Strategic Results Framework. It was chosen after careful analysis of different sources of information and categorizations (see paragraph 63 of the Evaluation Inception Report). The generic category of ‘Other’ pertains to initiatives that are not clearly linked to any of the other thematic areas, for example gender equality-related interventions. Please see Annex 5, paragraph 12, for information on how the categorization was applied during the SPR review.

40. WFP capacity development efforts have spanned all three levels of capacity development outlined in the *2009 policy update*, with most interventions aiming to support changes at the level of institutional capacities. Related insights deriving from the SPR review are captured in figure 5 below.³⁴

Figure 5. Number of Reported Capacity Development Instances in PRRO, CP and DEV SPRs (n= 2,448) by Level and Year



41. In 2013, half of WFP’s projects included a capacity-development component to help governments to eliminate hunger; expenditures amounted to USD 38.4 million – 0.9 percent of WFP’s programme of work. The 2015 Annual Performance Report stated that, “because of insufficient donor funding, expenditure on capacity development covered only 26 percent of needs, so the outcome-level evidence base for assessing WFP’s performance in supporting institutional emergency preparedness remained limited in 2015.”

³⁴ See paragraph 13 and Annex 2 for methodological limitations of the SPR review, such as the likelihood of double counting certain interventions. As a result, SPR review data should be understood to be illustrative rather than authoritative.

2. Evaluation Findings

2.1 Quality of the Policy

Introduction

42. This section provides an analysis of the quality of the policy as designed and the related guidance and tools developed to implement it. It is organized by overall findings against the main themes raised in the sub-questions related to EQ1 – ‘How good is the Policy?’, shown in the evaluation matrix in Annex 4.³⁵ The analysis in this section draws on evidence deriving from the document review, field missions, country desktop reviews, e-survey and stakeholder interviews.

Finding 1: The policy update reflected key aspects of contemporary thinking about capacity development at the time of its creation. While the global discourse has since evolved, the policy’s main concepts remain valid in light of how comparator agencies approach capacity development processes.

Validity of the Policy in light of the Evolving Global Discourse on Capacity Development

43. The *2009 policy update* was aligned with key aspects of the global discourse on capacity development at the time of its creation by: (i) referring to capacity development, rather than capacity building,³⁶ thereby acknowledging that national capacity is not something that can be newly created by external actors; (ii) conceptualizing capacity relatively holistically in terms of: the enabling environment, institutional and individual capacities; (iii) emphasizing the long-term nature of capacity development; and (iv) stressing the need to foster national ownership of related change processes. At the same time, other issues present in the global discourse in 2009 were not explicitly reflected in the policy update. These include the notion that system capacity goes beyond the capacity to deliver technical results, but also needs to take into consideration the ability of a system to endure and perform over time (Baser and Morgan 2008).

44. The global discourse on capacity and capacity development has evolved since 2009, notably in relation to understanding processes of capacity development as emergent complex adaptive systems (CAS). CAS are made up of a diverse set of actors whose multiple interactions produce behaviors in the whole system not found in any one of the actors, and they generate adaptation by changing, both intentionally and indirectly, in the face of new circumstances in order to sustain themselves.³⁷ In this view, there are limits to the extent to which capacity development processes can be fully planned and are difficult to capture through linear approaches such as results based management (RBM). While the *2009 policy update* does not refer to the concept of CAS, more recent WFP documents on capacity development do – in particular, the Capacity Gaps and Needs Assessment (WFP 2014f), the National

³⁵ Note that sub-questions 1.1.3, 1.2.2 and 1.5.3 are addressed under EQ 2 in section 2.3, and sub-questions 1.3.5 and 1.6.1 under EQ3 in section 2.3 as they are less relevant in relation to the quality of the policy per se, than to its implementation and related factors affecting results attainment.

³⁶ As had still been the case in the 2004 policy on “Building National and Regional Capacities”.

³⁷ Baser and Morgan (2008). See also, for example, Land et. al (2015).

Capacity Index (WFP 2014p) and the Design and Implementation of Technical Assistance and Capacity Development (WFP 2015hh).³⁸

45. While the *2009 policy update* has remained valid in relation to how capacity development support is practically approached. Evaluation data indicate that field-based staff of WFP and other UN agencies continue to conceptualize capacity development broadly in relation to the enabling environment, and institutional and individual capacities.³⁹ Also, while consulted actors noted that capacity development processes are not necessarily linear, they still tend to apply RBM thinking that is based on aiming to achieve a number of pre-defined results. These results tend to focus on strengthening technical, service delivery and logistical capabilities of national partners, and less often on broader capabilities, such as the ability to adapt and self-renew (see ¶17 above).

Coherence with MDGs, the Declarations of Paris, Accra, and Busan, and the SDGs

Finding 2: The *2009 policy update* was coherent with key international commitments on aid effectiveness in force at the time. While it remains broadly valid in light of the 2030 Agenda, implementation of WFP’s Strategic Plan 2017-2021 will require more specificity than currently provided in the policy, particularly WFP’s approach to working in partnership with others.

46. The overall objective of the 2009 Policy on Capacity Development Update is aligned with Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger,⁴⁰ as well as with the principle of national ownership as one of the foundations of aid effectiveness as outlined in the Paris Declaration (2005) and furthered in the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the Busan Partnership (2012). The *2009 policy update* further reflects some key principles formulated in these international agreements, including: (i) the view that capacity development is essentially the responsibility of the respective national government, and can be supported, but not driven by external actors; (ii) the expectation that capacity development support be demand-driven; and (iii) aiming for sustainable national solutions to development issues.

47. Looking forward, as WFP adapts its policy architecture and strategic framework to 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the *2009 policy update* remains broadly relevant. The policy’s objective of supporting nationally owned sustainable hunger solutions could be readily aligned with SDG 2: ending hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Its focus on capacity development processes and results is broadly in alignment with SDG 17.⁴¹ Further, the extensive theoretical and technical guidance developed since 2010 will enable WFP to capitalize on the challenge being presented by the SDGs and their emphasis on national capacities.

³⁸ See also Annex 19, which briefly summarizes key principles of capacity development as reflected in the relevant literature and relate it to the 2009 policy update, and Annex 20, which provides a brief review of key WFP guidance documents on capacity development and the extent to which they make explicit references to relevant literature and changes in the global discourse on capacity development.

³⁹ The specific terms used by different actors may vary slight. For example, UNICEF distinguishes between strengthening capacities at the levels of individuals, government and context. This reflects the same basic idea, however, of conceptualizing capacity strengthening as having to address interrelated dimensions of increasing complexity.

⁴⁰ In particular, MDG 1, target 3 on halving the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

⁴¹ SDG 17: Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

48. At the same time, SDG target 17.6⁴² emphasizes the need to “enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.” While the *2009 policy update* includes a generic commitment for WFP to work in partnership with others, it lacks specificity regarding the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of this commitment. For example, it does not provide an analysis of or commitment to joint planning, budgeting, implementing, and monitoring capacity development initiatives with other actors.⁴³

Comparison with the Policies of other Organizations

Finding 3: The quality of the *2009 policy update* is commensurate with strategic documents of comparator agencies, such as UNDP and FAO.

49. Comparing the *2009 policy update* with similar policies or similar documents of other organizations requires an awareness of the differences in governance models and mandates, which influence how other organizations formulate and use policies. None of the four comparator organizations – UNICEF, UNDP, FAO and IFRC – has an explicit policy on capacity development (see Annex 6); however, this does not reflect the degree of emphasis the respective organization places on the issue. In this regard, the evaluation observed no differences between humanitarian and development-focused organizations.⁴⁴

50. Some key insights deriving from the comparative review of corporate documents from these four agencies with those of WFP are:

- The WFP Policy conceptualizes ‘capacity development’ in relation to its overall programming similar to the comparator organizations. UNICEF and IFRC conceptualize capacity development as one of their key implementation strategies, and UNDP and FAO describe capacity development as one of their core functions.
- Key principles of capacity development outlined in the WFP *policy update* are very similar to those of the three UN system organizations: conceptualizing capacity development as long-term processes; promoting demand rather than supply-driven approaches; pursuing an integrated approach to capacity development that addresses the enabling environment, organizations and/or institutions, and individuals; and placing increased emphasis on forming partnerships with other capacity development actors.
- All comparator organizations have included capacity development-related results in their strategic documents. IFRC focuses on strengthening national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in relation to agreed-upon performance standards, such as SPHERE. For FAO, UNICEF and UNDP, capacity development results focus on anticipated changes in governments and other partners. For all four agencies, indicators used to measure changes in

⁴² Target 17.6: Enhancing international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries.

⁴³ See also the discussion of WFP’s strategic positioning in section 2.3, which is relevant in light of the agency’s future ability to support countries in implementing the SDGs.

⁴⁴ The evaluation team found only limited data on other Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) partners as regards their capacity development work.

capacities tend not to capture the specific contributions of the respective agency.

- Gender equality is mainstreamed in the operations of the comparator organizations and is reflected, for example, in programme planning and monitoring tools. It is not discussed in depth in the agencies capacity development related documents.
- All comparator organizations have aligned their work with the MDGs and principles of aid effectiveness, and – although not yet reflected in the reviewed documents on capacity development –with the SDGs.

Clarity and Comprehensiveness of the 2009 policy update

Finding 4: The generic nature of the *policy update* allowed flexible adaptation to different contexts. At the same time, neither the policy nor the related Action Plan provided practical guidance on how to use the outcome and output statements in specific planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes.

51. The *2009 policy update* is written in clear and understandable language and is logically structured. It was timely in relation to WFP’s transformation from food aid to food assistance as outlined in the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, and explicitly positioned the agency’s capacity development work in this context. The outcomes and outputs formulated in the policy provided high-level guidance that could be applied to different geographic and thematic contexts without being overly prescriptive.

52. The guidance and tools developed to aid the implementation of the policy update are numerous (see para 35) albeit quite technical. They provided both theoretical and practical approaches to defining appropriate hunger solutions, measuring changes in capacity and identifying ways to support capacity development in a range of thematic areas and using different modalities (e.g. emergency response, food security, social safety nets, school feeding, resilience, South-South/triangular cooperation and learning through the Brazil Centre of Excellence).

53. There are, however, a number of gaps in the *policy update*’s internal coherence and comprehensiveness, which, as is discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3, are likely to have negatively affected its use by WFP staff. These are:

- It does not include a logical framework or explicit description of how expected results will be achieved. Key assumptions on how envisaged changes will come about, and on how the three dimensions of capacity relate to each other, remain implicit.
- In addition, the qualitative difference between outputs and outcomes is not always clear, with both types of results depicting the same type of change. For example, the notion of policies or laws being developed is addressed as both an output and an outcome. The policy update neither clearly defines nor consistently applies core terms, such as ‘enabling environment’, ‘institution’, ‘organization’, ‘individual capacity’ and ‘community’ (see Annex 12 for a more detailed analysis).
- Whereas the *policy update* states that its framework, including the vision, objective, outcomes, outputs and activities, can be viewed as an elaboration of the capacity development goals, outcomes and outputs under Strategic

Objective 5 of the 2008-2013 Strategic Results Framework, it does not clarify what this means in relation to WFP's reporting requirements. That is, if and how the policy results were intended to be used for monitoring and reporting.

- It states that the 2004 policy on Building National and Regional Capacities remains in place, but does not clarify what this means in practice. For example, it remains unclear if and how the policy update's outputs and outcomes relate to the thematically structured priorities of the 2004 policy.
- While the policy update outlines the core elements of a results framework, neither the policy nor the related Action Plan define related indicators. In 2014, WFP created the National Capacity Index, which was meant to provide a comprehensive basis for developing indicators to measure countries' capacity for hunger governance at the national and sectorial levels based on the three pillars: disaster risk management, social safety nets and productive safety nets. The NCI has been tracked and reported on by all country offices in the Annual Performance Report since 2014 under Strategic Objectives 2, 3 and 4 of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan but the focus is on the level of government capacity rather than WFP's contribution to strengthening it.

Addressing Recommendations of the 2008 Evaluation

Finding 5: While all recommendations were agreed to in the management response, evaluation data indicates only partial implementation of these responses.




54. The *2009 policy update* responded to some key findings and some recommendations of the 2008 evaluation. In particular:













- It addresses the previously criticized absence of a clearly stated results framework by formulating an explicit policy objective, as well as related outcomes and outputs.
- It introduces the notion of the 'enabling environment' as an important dimension of capacity development-related activities.
- The policy update's outcomes and outputs focus solely on supporting the capacity of national partners to manage hunger solutions, thereby implicitly clarifying that capacity development is not about ensuring smooth implementation of WFP managed food programmes.
- The recommendation to develop an action plan to guide policy implementation was implemented through additional documents developed post-2009. A considerable number of guidance documents were developed to assist with the operationalization of capacity development (as listed in para 3 and presented in Figure 1). What remains missing is any costing related to the implementation of the policy or its related operational guides.

55. Information extracted from WFP's internal Management Response and Follow-up database system notes that all management responses to the recommendations from the 2008 evaluation of the *WFP Policy on Building National and Regional Capacities* are considered to have been implemented. Evaluation data show that, to date, the response to one of the 12 recommendations from the 2008 evaluation has been sufficiently addressed; 11 remain under implementation with some, but not all, aspects of the recommendation having been implemented. This is illustrated in Table

1 below. Details of each recommendation and the evaluation team’s assessment of its implementation status are provided in Annex 17.

Table 1. Implementation Status of the Management Responses to the 2008 Evaluation Recommendations

-  Response to recommendation fully or mostly addressed implementation
-  Response to recommendation is still under implementation
-  Major aspects of the response to the recommendation not yet addressed

2008 Recommendation	Status
1. Clarify how to address dual objectives of capacity development noted in the evaluation, and strengthen WFP internal capacity for implementation.	
2. Frequently update the capacity development policy	
3a Develop an Action Plan including milestones, results framework, guidance on diagnostic tools, and cost estimate	
3b Communication from management to the field to explain the position of capacity development among WFP’s Strategic Objectives	
3c Provide guidance on incorporating capacity development into the design of operations	
3d Guidance materials adapted from other partners.	
3e Capacity development assistance to be designed based on an analysis of the risk of capacity substitution and include measures for the gradual hand-over of capacities and for ensured sustainability	
3f Administrative guidance that includes how to treat capacity development in design, country strategy and reporting documents	
4 Develop performance indicators based on the results framework in the action plans	
5 Good practice in capacity development and approaches should be shared among WFP capacity development practitioners	
6 Certain job profiles should include requirements for capacity development experience.	
7 Funding arrangements for capacity development – other than to support programme implementation – should be reviewed.	

Coherence with WFP Strategic Plans

Finding 6: The *2009 policy update* supported implementation of the 2008-2013 SP that addressed capacity development as a stand-alone objective. The update was less suited to the 2014-2017 SP where capacity development was mainstreamed into four strategic objectives.

56. The overall objective of the *2009 policy update* - achieving nationally owned sustainable hunger solutions based on increased capacity for efficient and effective design, management and implementation of tools, policies and programmes to predict and reduce hunger - was aligned with Strategic Objective 5 of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013, “to strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger,

including through hand-over strategies and local purchase.” While the SP 2008-2013 did not explicitly refer to the three dimensions of capacity outlined in the Policy, it did refer to strengthening capacities of ‘countries’, ‘governments’, as well as of ‘communities’.

57. The WFP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 reflected all three of the capacity dimensions outlined in the *2009 policy update*, although it addressed the enabling environment primarily in relation to promoting gender equality.⁴⁵ The mainstreaming of capacity development that was articulated in this SP warranted targeted guidance – be it through another policy update or other tools - on how to meaningfully integrate capacity development into different thematic areas and types of operations, and how to monitor and report upon related results. Despite the various guidance and tools developed from 2009-2015, these areas have remained insufficiently addressed. See also section 2.3.
























Coherence with other WFP Policies

Finding 7: There has been very limited cross-policy integration between the *2009 policy update* and other WFP policies.

58. The *2009 policy update* does not explicitly refer to other WFP policies developed in the same era, with exception of the 2004 Policy on Building National and Regional Capacities, for which it provides an update, and the 2006 Policy on Engagement with Poverty Reduction Strategies (WFP/EB.A/2006/5-B).

59. Compared to other WFP policies developed during the same era the *2009 policy update* rated weaker against several criteria, including clarity of methods for policy implementation, and cross-policy integration. This is illustrated in table 2 below and Annex 18 provides a more detailed analysis of this topic.

Table 2. Comparative WFP Policy Analysis

Assessment Criteria	 Good – Meets criterion  Partially meets criterion  Does not meet criterion				
	Policy on Capacity Development (2009)	Gender Policy & Corporate Action Plan (2009)	Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction (2009)	School Feeding Policy (2009)	HIV and AIDS Policy (2010)
Coherence with the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 ⁴⁶					
Clarity and precision of objectives ⁴⁷					
Clarity of methods for implementation ⁴⁸					
Specification of indicators ⁴⁹					











⁴⁵ Goal 3 under SO 4 of the 2014-2017 SP aims to “Strengthen the capacity of governments and communities to design, manage and scale up nutrition programmes and create an enabling environment that promotes gender equality”. See Annex 14.

⁴⁶ Alignment of the Policies with the SP objectives.

⁴⁷ Existence, level of detail, precision and prioritization (short, middle and long term) of objectives.

⁴⁸ Availability and clarity of action plans and guidance.

⁴⁹ Availability, level of precision and comprehensiveness of indicators.

Assessment Criteria	Policy on Capacity Development (2009)	Gender Policy & Corporate Action Plan (2009)	Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction (2009)	School Feeding Policy (2009)	HIV and AIDS Policy (2010)
Cross-policy integration ⁵⁰					
Provision for monitoring & reporting on the Policy ⁵¹					

60. While several other more recent WFP policies include commitments to capacity development, only one⁵² explicitly mentions the *2009 policy* on capacity development, and no other WFP policy makes explicit reference to the three levels of capacity outlined in the *2009 policy update* (individual, institutional and enabling environment).

Incorporating Gender Equality Considerations

Finding 8: The content of the *2009 policy update* reflects only a basic level of gender awareness.

61. While the policy does not make explicit reference to the WFP Gender Policy developed in the same year (WFP 2009b), it does include two references to issues of gender equality: firstly, (¶43) when describing outputs at the individual level to including training of individuals and communities on issues such as gender-disaggregated needs assessment; and, secondly, (¶50) noting that gender awareness is one of the areas in which WFP needs to strengthen its own internal skills in order to effectively implement the Policy on Capacity Development (2009).

62. Additional gender-related considerations that could have been but are not reflected in the policy include the following:

- Basing capacity development interventions on a thorough analysis of key socio-cultural factors, including those related to gender dynamics, and an analysis of how these factors may influence equal access of men and women to the envisaged results deriving from WFP’s capacity development work;
- References to gender equality, or, more broadly, equity-related principles that are to guide WFP’s work in planning, implementing, and monitoring the results of capacity development interventions;
- References to how capacity development may, in the long term, contribute to globally or nationally-defined gender equality objectives – for example, in relation to strengthening the participation of women in all levels of decision-making;⁵³
- Whether and how gender considerations should play a role in prioritizing resources available for capacity development.

⁵⁰ Integration of objectives of the Policy with those of WFP’s other Policies (cross-referencing between policies).

⁵¹ Specification of follow-up provisions and requirements for reporting including to the Executive Board.

⁵² Namely the Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition (WFP 2015i). See Annex 18 for an overview of other WFP policies, both those from 2009 and more recent ones, and for information on review criteria used.

⁵³ Note that the new WFP Gender Policy 2015-2020 (WFP 2015t), which replaces the 2009 Gender Policy, includes explicit objectives that address issues of equal participation and of decision-making by women and girls.

2.2 Results of the 2009 policy update

Introduction

63. This section reviews results of the policy, addressing sub-questions under EQ2 as shown in the evaluation matrix in Annex 4.⁵⁴ The analysis draws upon evidence deriving from document reviews, field missions, country desktop reviews, e-surveys and stakeholder interviews.

WFP Contribution to Results

Finding 9: Overall, WFP’s capacity development efforts and achievements during the period under review represent a positive change when compared to the findings of the 2008 evaluation. WFP has strengthened the ability of national partners to manage hunger solutions, has been largely demand-driven, and has utilized a variety of approaches to support change processes.

64. The 2008 evaluation found that previous capacity development efforts had focused on ensuring adequate capacity for the smooth implementation of WFP-supported programmes, and overly relied on one-off training.

65. Data collected for this evaluation provide considerable evidence of WFP having contributed to achievements at all three levels outlined in the *2009 policy update*, that is: the enabling environment, institutional capacity, and individual capacity.

66. Key insights derived from testing the ToC throughout the evaluation are: (i) WFP activities appear to frequently contribute to the envisaged capacity changes; (ii) there is evidence of changes in behavior, but available data did not always enable the verification of whether and how these changes were influenced by preceding changes in capacities; (iii) the assumed link between changes in capacity and behavior, on the one hand, and the desired system level impact, on the other hand, is logically convincing. However, as is further discussed under finding 13, available data do not illustrate how WFP contributions to specific results were or are likely to lead to system-level changes.

67. Types of WFP capacity development activities include on-the-job coaching – be it through longer-term secondments or short-term consultants – study tours/ South-South exchange, advocacy, evidence-building, and providing relevant technical knowledge or tools.⁵⁵ See Box 1. The WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil represents the

Box 1 – Increasing WFP support for South-South Cooperation

According to the WFP intranet, in 2015, 60 percent of WFP country offices reported to have been engaged in South-South cooperation, constituting an increase of 12 percent from 2014. In addition, a partnership mapping exercise conducted by the Partnership, Policy Coordination and Advocacy Division (PGC) in 2015 identified 67 specific South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives supported by WFP in that same year. The WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil constitutes the largest and most systematized mechanism of WFP’s support for South-South cooperation. Its work has primarily focused on issues of school feeding, as well as on the areas of social protection, safety nets and development of zero hunger strategies.

⁵⁴ Note that sub-questions 2.1.3, 2.3.2 and 2.4.3 are addressed not under EQ2 but under EQ3 to avoid duplication.

⁵⁵ The Latin American region documented the “pathways towards successful capacity development approaches” in a 2016 report, which include many of the approaches listed in the report but also include the development of a regional vision for capacity development, ensuring versatility to move between the national and local levels and packing a capacity development agenda in a way that government partners can relate to. *Strengthening Capacities in Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean*, WFP Regional Bureau in Panama, p. 12-13.

largest and most systematized mechanism of WFP's support for South-South cooperation, contributing to knowledge exchange and learning both within WFP and among partner countries in the area of school feeding.⁵⁶ This represents a “new way of doing business” – that is, a partnership between WFP and a host government solely to provide technical expertise without food assistance.⁵⁷

68. While training was still frequently utilized in all 12 sample countries, in some of these countries – Kenya, Namibia, Peru and Senegal, for example – WFP has taken steps to avoid one-off events and ensure more comprehensive, longer-term engagements, which included follow-up interventions and/or other forms of capacity strengthening support to partners.

69. In some cases, WFP provided partner organizations with essential infrastructure. This included, for example, providing targeted government units with motorcycles, computers, or telephones; and providing storage facilities to community level farmers' organizations. These infrastructure improvements were not stand-alone interventions, but were related to and complemented other capacity development-related efforts with the same actors, and aimed to facilitate the application of new knowledge, skills, tools, or organizational systems that WFP had supported through other types of interventions.

70. The majority of capacity development interventions were carried out with government agencies at national or sub-national levels. This is aligned with the priorities outlined in the 2004 Policy on Building National and Regional Capacities, the 2009 policy update, as well as with the Accra Agenda for Action and Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which highlights that the responsibility for strengthening national capacity lies with national governments.

71. The 2008 evaluation of the 2004 WFP policy on capacity development also noted an imbalance towards a supply-driven approach. Evidence gathered in this evaluation indicates that processes used to determine specific capacity development interventions have become increasingly iterative and based on ongoing dialogue between WFP and its primarily government partners. There was no indication that capacity development interventions had been unilaterally decided upon or imposed by WFP in any of the country visits. Instead, the evaluation team found evidence of WFP capacity development activities having contributed to strengthening the internal capacity of the respective host governments to develop their own contextually relevant hunger solutions, and to strengthened awareness of the centrality of combating hunger as a core element of overall poverty reduction.

⁵⁶ The Annual Report 2015 states that 11 instances of direct technical assistance were provided to national governments and 17 exchanges of experience were facilitated.

⁵⁷ The number of countries where WFP is being asked to provide specific CD assistance without food aid is increasing. To date, WFP has established offices in Brazil and China and is providing technical assistance in many other countries that do not receive any food transfers, such as Namibia, India and the Dominican Republic.

72. At the same time, the evaluation noted that formal capacity and/or needs assessments have been carried out in only some of the 12 sample countries. Adapted versions of the CGNA had been applied only in Kenya and Lesotho, versions of the NCI in six of these countries (Senegal, Kenya, Bangladesh, Lesotho, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Liberia), and the EPCI in two of the sample countries (Peru and Kenya).⁵⁸ In most cases, needs assessments appear to have informed WFP planning, while being of limited relevance to the information needs of government and other relevant actors. However, see Box 2 for a positive example in this regard.

Box 2 – Comprehensive and Contextually Relevant Capacity Assessment

A good example of a comprehensive and contextually appropriate capacity assessment facilitated by WFP is the Zero Hunger Strategic Review that the WFP CO Namibia carried out in partnership with the Namibian National Planning Commission in 2016. The focus of the exercise was on identifying to what extent Namibia is ready to fulfil its global and domestic commitments around reducing hunger, rather than on the question of how WFP might be able to assist the government in addressing specific capacity gaps. Related findings are likely to guide future efforts not only of WFP, but also of other national and international actors.

73. Evidence of contributions to CD results⁵⁹ were found across WFP’s thematic areas (see Figure 6). There is a consistent pattern across all income categories (low, low-middle, upper-middle) and across the three levels of CD (approximately 60% at the institutional level). All countries, except Colombia, have been strengthening capacities at individual, institutional and enabling environment levels in at least one thematic area – irrespective of income status or type of operation.

⁵⁸ In Asia/Pacific, a recent study commissioned by the Regional Bureau in Bangkok noted that out of 14 country offices in the Asia region, only five had undertaken formal NCI exercises, while others had devised alternative assessments for which the applied methods and extent of documentation were not clear. (WFP RB Bangkok 2015, p. 5)

⁵⁹ As stated in paragraph 3, conceptual and data limitations constrained contribution analysis to outcomes or quality of results by income classification or sectors.

Figure 6. WFP Contributions to Capacity Development Results in Reviewed Countries - by Thematic Area⁶⁰

	Country visits						Desk reviews					
	Bangladesh	Jordan	Kenya	Namibia	Peru	Senegal	Colombia	India	Kyrgyz Republic	Lesotho	Liberia	Uganda
Income level⁶¹	LMIC	UMIC	LMIC	UMIC	UMIC	LMIC	UMI C	LMIC	LMIC	LMIC	LIC	LIC
School Feeding	2,3	1,2	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2	1,2	2	2	1,2,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2,3
Nutrition	1,3		1,2,3	2	1	2,3	1	2	3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3
Food Security	1	1,2,3	1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2,3	1,3	1,2,3	2,3	1,2		1,2,3
Livelihoods	1,2,3	1	1,2			1,2,3	1,2	2	1,2,3	1,2	1	1,2,3
Emergency Preparedness and Response	1		1,2,3		1,2	1	1,2		1,2	1,2,3	1,2	1,2
Purchase for Progress			1								1	1
Other	1	2	1,2	2	1		1	2		1,2,3		2

Legend for CD Results by Level: 1 – Individual; 2 – Institutional; 3 – Enabling Environment

WFP Contributions to Strengthening the Capacity of Cohorts of Individuals and Communities

Finding 10: WFP has made contributions to strengthening the capacities of individuals who work in targeted government institutions. WFP’s rationale for engaging with specific communities, and resulting changes in community capacities or behaviours, are less clearly evidenced.

74. Document review, country site visits and country desk reviews indicate that WFP’s activities aiming to strengthen the capacities of individuals and communities can be roughly divided into two categories:

- Interventions aiming to strengthen the awareness, knowledge, or skills of individuals working in national or sub-national government agencies relevant for hunger management. These efforts were usually part of interventions aiming to strengthen the overall institutional capacities of the respective agency; and
- Interventions targeting individuals, groups, or non-government organizations at the community level. This included engagement with school management, teachers and parents in the context of school feeding programmes, as well as efforts broadly linked to the issues of resilience and productive safety nets -

⁶⁰ Drawn from WFP 2013-2015 SPRs data, country-level documentation and interviews.

⁶¹ Source: World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/country>).

for example, in the context of Purchase for Progress (P4P) and similar efforts aiming to link farmers to markets.⁶²

75. In the sample countries visited, senior government stakeholders who commissioned WFP support to strengthen individual capacities of their respective staff members provided largely positive feedback on the effects of this work, and noted that it had assisted individuals and teams to improve both their own and their respective agency's overall performance.

76. The evaluation team had limited opportunities to consult with community level stakeholders. In Peru, however, community leaders from the Ventanilla district in metropolitan Lima who were interviewed noted that WFP had contributed to strengthening their capacities, enabling them to now act as promoters of higher quality nutrition to combat anemia in the district. See Box 3 for another example.⁶³

77. Overall, however, the evidence of WFP's contribution to changes in community-level capacity or behavior is limited. There is a considerable amount of activity description.⁶⁴

78. Furthermore, the criteria used to select specific community level actors to help strengthen their capacities were not always made explicit and were, at least in some cases, not evidently based on areas of greatest need, for example.⁶⁵

Box 3: WFP Contributions to Enhancing Community Resilience

In Jordan, school feeding through the distribution of commercially manufactured biscuits has long been one of WFP's core activities. However, new and innovative approaches to combining the benefits of school feeding while strengthening community resilience has recently been introduced as a result of a program jointly funded by the Russian Federation and Canada. Community kitchens were initially established in five school districts in central Jordan. These community kitchens were equipped by WFP, and training was provided to local staff to introduce a freshly cooked school meal that was then distributed to the various schools in the district. The initial success of this initiative led to its expansion to five additional districts. This innovative approach strengthens community resilience by local purchase of all the food items, increases the labor force participation especially among women and builds overall community resilience. Plans are underway to utilize the community kitchens in the ten districts to mount a second production shift to prepare pre-cooked meals that would be available for purchase in local markets and stores, thereby building longer-term sustainability for the school feeding project itself. Discussions are underway with national ministry authorities to expand this approach into other regions of Jordan.

WFP Contributions to Strengthening Relevant Institutions

Finding 11: The priority of WFP's capacity development work during the reviewed period has been to assist with strengthening the institutional capacities of government organizations at national and sub-national levels. WFP made contributions to strengthening technical and managerial aspects of national and sub-national government management, and to enhancing multi-sectoral partnerships.

⁶² Individual country offices have engaged with additional or more specific community level target groups such as young men (Jordan), nurses and health workers (Lesotho and Uganda), unemployed youth (Jordan, Liberia), women (Uganda, Bangladesh), and children (Bangladesh).

⁶³ Additional examples can be found, for example, in the recent evaluation of the P4P pilot (WFP 2014j).

⁶⁴ This is further discussed in paragraphs 91-95 that address the likely sustainability of WFP activities and results.

⁶⁵ In Peru, WFP has been working with selected communities on innovative approaches to reducing anaemia in children. Stakeholder consultations indicate that the geographic scope of interventions was primarily chosen based on proximity to the private sector organization that funded the programme rather than the greatest need.

79. Consultations with WFP staff at all levels indicated that most capacity development-related contributions to results were achieved in the context of strengthening the institutional capacities of government partners.⁶⁶

80. During the process of data collection and analysis, the evaluation team broke down the broad outcome statement from the *2009 policy update*, “financially viable and well-managed national food assistance agencies operating effectively” into sub-categories. These are reflected in rows 1-4 of table 3 below, which summarizes the main types of results that WFP has contributed to in this dimension and provides illustrative examples. Row 5 of the table addresses the second outcome statement from the policy relating to multi-sectoral partnerships.

81. Available data did not indicate to what extent WFP had contributed to making targeted government agencies more financially viable, although there are examples in which such contributions are, at least, likely. In Peru, for example, WFP’s advocacy efforts have contributed to the development of a Primer on Funding Mechanisms for Food Assistance in Emergencies that is intended to guide municipalities in how to budget resources for disaster preparedness and response.

Table 3. Types of WFP Contributions to Strengthening Institutional Capacities and Illustrative Examples

<p>1 - More effective and/or efficient nationally-led and managed food assistance or hunger governance-related programming.</p>	<p>For example, in the following thematic areas:</p> <p><u>School Feeding:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Kenya, Namibia, Peru, Bangladesh, and Jordan, WFP assisted national governments in better managing, monitoring, expanding, and enhancing the overall quality of School Feeding (School Meal) programmes. <p><u>Food Security</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In India, WFP assisted the national and state governments to improve the quality and efficiency of their existing food security programmes. This included the introduction of computerization and biometric identification in the government public distribution system and supporting the national and state governments in publishing a Food Security Atlas in Rural India to identify regions and groups affected by high food insecurity. • In the LAC region, WFP supported the development of similar Food Security Atlas – such as the Andean Atlas on Food Security, Disasters and Climate Change – which provides governments with evidence for decision making. • In the Kyrgyz Republic, the CO contributed to the development of a food security atlas, thereby strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture’s ability for evidence-based decision-making, as well as to the preparation of a National Food Security and Nutrition Programme.
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⁶⁶ This relative priority is also reflected in the review of SPRs, which found 1,455 instances of reported WFP contributions to strengthening institutional capacities. In comparison, there were 750 instances related to strengthening individual capacities, and 235 focused on the enabling environment. As noted in footnote 18, instances reported in SPR did not clearly distinguish between completed activities and outputs. As such, not all of the noted instances may refer to actual results. Nevertheless, the illustrated priority placed on addressing institutional capacities that is shown in the SPRs supports the noted observation deriving from consultations with WFP staff.

Procurement and Logistics

- In Kenya, WFP supported the development and countrywide rollout of the Ministry of Health's Logistic Management Information System tools geared to harmonizing the tracking and reporting of specialized nutrition products for HIV programmes.
- In Senegal, WFP CO contributed to improving the Food Security Commission's performance in stock management.

Nutrition

- In India, WFP advocacy and technical assistance contributed to the government introducing micronutrient supplements into school meals
- In Lesotho, the WFP CO assisted the government strengthen the implementation of its moderate acute malnutrition programme.

Emergency Preparedness and Management

- In Peru, WFP supported the National Institute for Civil Defense (INDECI) improve its own capacity development strategy and related tools for strengthening the preparation and response capacities of regional and local governments. It contributed to the establishment of guidelines for procurement, storage and distribution of food in emergencies and facilitated the establishment of private-public agreements to respond to emergencies.
- In Kenya, the CO provided financial and technical assistance to the National Drought Management Authority including in relation to mainstreaming Kenya's country programme framework for ending Drought Emergencies into the Kenya Vision 2030. This in turn strengthens the NDMA's ability to supervise and coordinate drought management-related activities according to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) regional Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability platform.
- In Senegal, WFP assisted the National Agricultural Insurance Company develop and implement a precipitation index as part of an index-based insurance.
- In Liberia, WFP supported the government in re-establishing disaster management committees in all counties.
- In Uganda, the CO provided assistance to enhance national and district level capacity for disaster preparedness and emergency response including through simulations, training, secondment of staff, and selected infrastructure.

<p>2 - Existence and use of new or improved operational guidelines and/or standards for national or sub-national agencies.</p>	<p>Related examples span a variety of thematic areas, as shown below.</p> <p><u>School Feeding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Kyrgyz Republic, Kenya, Namibia, and Peru WFP COs provided technical inputs and advice to national partners leading to the development and implementation of guidelines and implementation standards of national school feeding programmes. <p><u>Nutrition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Bangladesh, WFP assisted the government to develop guidelines and standards that, according to consulted WFP staff and government stakeholders, are now being used to inform rice fortification processes. <p><u>Food Security</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Colombia, WFP assisted the Ministry of Health and Social Protection develop a Guide for Integrated Management of Food and Nutritional Security Plans. <p><u>Procurement and Logistics</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Namibia, WFP supported the development of standard operating procedures for government-run warehouse management. • In India, the WFP CO developed a compilation of best practice solutions for the national Targeted Public Distribution system. The government has widely distributed the guide, and the state governments of Kerala and Odisha are in the process of systematically adapting and implementing the guidelines at the state level.
<p>3 - Establishment and operation of organizational or sectoral information and/or monitoring systems.</p>	<p><u>Food security</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Jordan and Namibia, the respective COs supported the development of food security monitoring systems and is currently helping to strengthen government capacity to independently run and adapt these. • In Senegal, WFP contributed to establishing a system for food vulnerability mapping. The Executive Secretariat of the National Food Security Council (SECNSA) has since produced annual food security analyses, with some continued support from WFP for field data collection. • In India, the CO supported the development of a food security targeting systems. <p><u>Social Protection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Kenya, WFP supported the National Social Protection Secretariat in the development and use of a single registry management information system, and a national complaints and grievances mechanism. <p><u>School Feeding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Namibia, the CO assisted the government in establishing and using the Namibia School Feeding Information System.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Peru, WFP developed and validated the Monitoring and Evaluation System (SIME) for the former Comprehensive Nutrition Programme and former School Feeding Programme (PRONAA) and ensured its implementation by training the responsible staff (until 2012). <p><u>Emergency preparedness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Lesotho and Liberia, WFP contributed technical expertise for developing and implementing government-run emergency early warning systems. <p><u>Nutrition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Uganda, WFP- as part of the Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) initiative - contributed to putting in place systems and processes to track implementation of nutrition interventions.
<p>4 - Strengthened evidence base suited to facilitate decision-making by national actors and potential replication for scaling-up of successful approaches.</p>	<p>Relevant types of WFP contributions in this regard are outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilots: Examples of pilots that have been successfully taken over and/or expanded by the respective government were noted in Bangladesh (school feeding and rice fortification), Jordan (community kitchens), Kenya and Liberia (School Feeding), India (food security). In Peru, a pilot on nutrition and affordable iron-rich food is likely to be replicated by WFP itself with funding from a private sector partner. • Research: In Latin America, the WFP Regional Bureau collaborated with the RAND Corporation to conduct a formative research in three countries (Bolivia, Honduras, and Dominican Republic) to understand the links between food security and nutrition and the people living with HIV/AIDS and implemented adapted interventions in the region. • In Kenya, WFP co-funded a national nutrition vulnerability profiling survey for people living with HIV. In Uganda WFP contributed to a study on the ‘cost of hunger in Uganda’, which quantified the socio-economic losses of undernutrition.
<p>5 - Strengthened multi-sectoral partner coordination at national, sub-national, and regional levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the national level, WFP contributed to strengthening partner coordination through participation in, or leadership for, UNDAF and UNPAF processes, as well as engagement in cross-sectoral thematic working groups or steering committees. In Uganda, for example, WFP was co-chair of the nutrition development partners group. In Peru, WFP has co-chaired Sectorial Working Groups on Food Security and Nutrition. In the Kyrgyz Republic WFP co-chaired the working groups for Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development, and for Social Protection respectively. • WFP contributed to enhanced collaboration among different line ministries in host countries. For example, in Kenya WFP supported the development of the National School Health, Nutrition and Meals Programme Strategy. The process involved not only the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, but also the Ministries of Health, and of

	<p>Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.⁶⁷</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Peru, WFP supported the development of Inventories of Resources for a Food-based Response in Emergencies, which identified private companies that signed agreements with provincial governments and INDECI to provide a joint response in the event of disasters. • At the sub-national level, WFP in Colombia has contributed to strengthening local governments' ability to respond to emergencies by creating a network of key players. • In the Asia-Pacific region, a recently established multi-donor regional trust fund has enabled WFP regional staff operating out of the Bangkok Regional Bureau to provide capacity development services to the small island nations of the Pacific that are most affected by the impact of climate change. According to WFP staff, WFP's technical assistance and training has contributed to increasing domestic capacity, while joint sessions involving actors from different countries have strengthened trust and cooperation among them.
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WFP Contributions to Strengthening Enabling Environments

Finding 12: There is considerable evidence of WFP having contributed to the adoption and implementation of relevant laws, policies, and strategies at national and sub-national levels of government, but less fostering the role of civil society. There is insufficient evidence to determine the extent to which WFP's efforts have led to more adequate and sustainable resourcing of relevant ministries and agencies in host countries.

82. As mentioned in paragraph 39 and figure 5, the SPR review identified 235 instances of WFP contributions primarily related to the enabling environment. Given the noted limitations of the SPR data, which did not allow for a distinction to be made systematically between completed activities and results, country site visits and country desk reviews elicited additional examples that were triangulated to ensure rigor.⁶⁸

83. All of the noted examples of such contributions related to WFP supporting national or sub-national partners in the development of relevant laws, policies, or strategies that prioritize the reduction of hunger and food insecurity and, in some cases, make provisions for a role for civil society in ensuring that sustainable hunger solutions are adopted and implemented. Related examples are provided in row 1 of Table 4 below.

84. The other expected results identified in the *2009 policy update* relate to relevant ministries and agencies being adequately and sustainably resourced. In some cases, it is plausible that WFP efforts may have, at least indirectly, contributed to related changes. For example, various national governments, such as in Kenya,

⁶⁷ The evaluation of the Kenyan Home Grown School Meals Programme (2009-2013) noted that subsequent monitoring missions aiming to observe implementation of the strategy had included representatives only from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and WFP, but none of the other ministries.

⁶⁸ In five of six countries visited the evaluation found evidence of WFP contributions to developing or strengthening laws, policies and strategies. In Peru – a middle income country where the legal frameworks are strong - WFP has focused on advocacy work in preparation for action to help further improve relevant legislation.

Namibia, Bangladesh and Jordan, have allocated increasing levels of funds and human resources for the implementation and/or expansion of school feeding programmes that had been initiated by WFP, and which continued to be support by WFP through advocacy and technical assistance. However, as mentioned in paragraph 81, available evidence does not enable a direct link between changes in the resourcing of its government partners and specific WFP’s interventions.

85. As noted in ¶16, the evaluation adopted a slightly elaborated definition of the ‘enabling environment’ than that set out in the *2009 policy update*. This allowed for other types of WFP contributions to influence the respective enabling environments beyond the ones addressed by the policy’s outcomes and outputs. These types of contributions - presented as components of the expected outcomes rather than as additional elements - as well as illustrative examples from the 12 sample countries, are shown in rows 2 and 3 in Table 4 below.⁶⁹

Table 4. Types of WFP Contributions to Strengthening Enabling Environments and Illustrative Examples

<p>1 - WFP contributed – primarily through technical inputs and advocacy - to the development of new or improved national and sub-national policies, strategies, legislation in different thematic areas, as well as – in some cases –to their dissemination.</p>	<p>Examples include policies, laws, strategies and action plans in the following thematic areas and countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Nutrition</u>, in Bangladesh, Colombia, Jordan, India, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, Senegal. • <u>School Feeding</u>, in Bangladesh, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Kyrgyz Republic, Namibia, Uganda. • <u>Emergency Preparedness</u>, in Colombia, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Namibia, and Senegal. • <u>Social Protection and Social Safety Nets</u>, in Bangladesh, Kyrgyz Republic, Uganda.
<p>2 - WFP contributed – primarily through advocacy, modeling, and coaching of teams and decision makers - to relevant national actors recognizing, adopting and applying sector-specific standards and methodologies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Bangladesh, Jordan, Kenya, and Peru WFP supported the local adaptation and implementation of tested approaches to and tools for issues such as VAM, market research, and the use of cash-based transfers. • In Jordan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Namibia, Peru, and Senegal WFP advocated for, and assisted national governments in the application of, the SABER70 tool to assess and enhance the quality of government-supported school feeding programmes. • In Bangladesh and Uganda, WFP advocacy contributed to national government and private sector actors having been sensitized to, and willing to apply, quality standards in grain (rice) production and marketing.

⁶⁹ The fact that only the 12 sample countries are mentioned does not mean that the types of results listed have been achieved only in these countries. WFP reports indicate that similar achievements have been made in a broad number of countries and regions. However, for this report, the evaluation team chose to highlight examples that it was able to verify through consultations with WFP internal and external stakeholders. As such, the examples are intended to be illustrative.

⁷⁰ Systems Approach for Better Education Results.

3 - WFP contributed – through **advocacy and technical advice** -to harmonized approaches across countries to address hunger-related issues, such as emergency preparedness and response.

- In 2012, WFP assisted the African Union (AU) in creating the African Risk Capacity (ARC), a sovereign disaster insurance pool to help AU Member States improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters. One specific WFP contribution was to develop a tailored satellite weather surveillance methodology and software.⁷¹
- In Central and South America WFP is supporting governments from nine countries to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacities. Specific WFP contributions have included, in collaboration with the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters (CEPREDENAC), the expansion of the coverage of the SATCA web tool to monitor climatic events that may potentially trigger emergencies in Central America. In addition, during a WFP-facilitated workshop, officials from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama produced a regional action plan and national action plans to improve free movement of humanitarian goods and personnel in the region.

Likely contributions to Impact

Finding 13: While it is likely that WFP contributions may, in the longer term, contribute to impact level changes, this cannot be verified through the existing WFP monitoring data.

86. The constructed theory of change for the *policy update* (presented in Annex 3 along with the logical framework) includes the assumption that the overall desired impact is dependent on synergies between changes in the enabling environment, institutional and individual capacities. Field level data show that, in several instances, WFP’s efforts and contributions have simultaneously spanned at least two of the three dimensions: enabling environment, institutional and individual capacities (see Box 4). This interconnectedness is more evident in relation to work with government actors, than with non-government ones, especially at the community level.

87. The evaluation also noted some instances where opportunities to create linkages and synergies were missed. In Senegal, for example, WFP, in collaboration with Oxfam America, has been working on the Rural Resilience Initiative (R4) to enable vulnerable rural households to increase their food and income security. This initiative involves WFP working with a wide range of government and non-government partners. While consulted partners expressed their satisfaction with their unilateral collaboration with WFP, most of them were not aware of the respective roles and contributions of other national actors and did not have significant exchange with them.

⁷¹ For more information, see www.africanriskcapacity.org.

88. Data generated by WFP's existing performance measurement systems do not enable linkages between system-level changes and specific WFP contributions over time. For example, there is no consistent information available on whether policies, strategies and laws generated with WFP support have been used by national actors and with what effects on the broader system. Similarly, little information is available on how WFP contributions to strengthening institutional standards and operational guidelines have translated into changes in organizational performance and how this is likely to contribute to the envisaged system-level changes. See also discussion on monitoring and reporting on capacity development in section 2.3.

Box 4 – Synergies between Dimensions of Capacity

In Peru, WFP and the National Institute for Civil Defense, INDECI, have collaborated since 2012 under an institutional cooperation agreement under which WFP is providing INDECI with technical assistance on a wide range of issues. WFP has contributed to strengthening INDECI's institutional capacities, for example by helping to improve the agency's information systems, configure cash-based transfer schemes for emergencies, and by providing input to INDECI's own programme for strengthening the knowledge and skills of relevant government officials in relation to addressing food emergencies.

E-course modules developed by WFP and implemented by INDECI have reached over 1,300 individual officials at local and regional levels in less than a month. At the same time WFP's work has supported strengthening elements of the enabling environment, for example by developing the Directive on standards for purchasing, storing, and distributing food to provide assistance in emergencies. The directive is aiming to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of INDECI, regional and local governments, and other members of the national system for risk and disaster management as regard food acquisition, warehousing and distribution.

In India, WFP first worked with the national government on the development of the National Food Security Act (2013) enacted by the Indian Parliament, under which food became a legal entitlement of citizens, and has since supported its implementation by strengthening related institutional capacities. This has included making the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) more efficient by introducing digital beneficiary management, end-to-end computerization of the supply chain, and biometric technology for beneficiary tracking systems, and supporting state governments in applying the improved system.

Linking Capacity Development Results to Policy Implementation

Finding 14: With very few exceptions, the capacity development-related results identified by the evaluation cannot be directly linked to implementation of the Policy.

89. Answering the evaluation question, 'what results ensued from policy implementation' required reflection on the extent to which WFP's actual capacity development-related activities and contributions to results can be associated with the policy statement under review and/or the mechanisms to implement it. This, in turn, requires an exploration of the extent to which the policy and its implementation arrangements are known and have been used by WFP staff and managers to inform their capacity development-related work.

90. Most of the interviewed WFP staff and managers from different parts of the organization were either not, or only vaguely, aware of the policy's content. Most of those who had read the document – often for the first time in preparation for this evaluation - found it to be lacking specificity and having little or only limited use in guiding the planning, implementation or monitoring of specific capacity development interventions.

91. Similarly, there is no evidence that the policy has contributed to creating a shared understanding and coherent use of term ‘capacity development’ among WFP staff and Executive Board members. The term is still used in a variety of ways, sometimes very broadly, to encompass everything that may benefit local populations, and sometimes narrowly focused on training activities alone.⁷² Also, key terms, such as ‘capacity development’, ‘capacity strengthening’, ‘technical assistance’, and ‘capacity augmentation’, are used inconsistently and, sometimes, interchangeably, indicating an overall lack of clarity about their respective definitions.

92. At the same time, WFP stakeholders noted that the mere existence of a policy on Capacity Development has had symbolic value as a signal of WFP’s corporate commitment to supporting capacity development processes. This commitment is, however, also expressed in other WFP strategic documents, in particular the two most recent Strategic Plans, which for most consulted WFP staff constituted their main point of reference to guide all programming work.

Gender Equality Considerations

Finding 15: Most of WFP’s capacity development interventions display a basic level of gender awareness, but there is no systematic tracking of, or reporting on, WFP contributions to gender equality-related capacity development results.

93. The 2014 Evaluation of the WFP Gender Policy noted that gender had not featured strongly within WFP’s strategic dialogue, partnership or capacity development efforts.⁷³

94. While data elicited for this evaluation confirm that gender has not played a prominent role in WFP’s capacity development work, they also provide evidence of COs having displayed at least a basic amount of gender awareness in the design, implementation and monitoring of capacity strengthening interventions. Often, however, related tracking and reporting has been limited to capturing how many men and women had participated in capacity development interventions, such as training events. Related data do not provide information on whether and how noted achievements are likely to contribute to strengthening gender equality in the respective context.

95. There were a few examples where the attention to gender was more developed and focused not only the operationalization, but also the substance of capacity development initiatives. In Kenya, Namibia, Peru and Bangladesh, for example, WFP’s work to strengthen the capacity of School Management Committees included the sensitization of committee members to gender equality issues and enhancing women’s participation and leadership in the committees. In Colombia, WFP’s resilience work at the community level included gender-sensitive nutrition trainings and gender equality sensitization for both men and women. Overall, however, there is very limited, if any, information available on actual development results deriving from these types of efforts.

⁷² The 2010 evaluation of UNDP’s work on capacity development made similar observations, and found that despite available guidance and awareness building activities, there was a lack of consensus in UNDP on what the term capacity development meant, with most staff considering everything that UNDP did to constitute capacity development. (UNDP 2010b).

⁷³ WFP 2014n, paragraph 28.

Sustainability

Finding 16: WFP has made deliberate efforts to enhance the likelihood of results being sustained by fostering not only technical and managerial skills of its partners, but also national ownership and leadership of change processes, as well as by continuing to provide technical assistance even after official ‘handover’ of initiatives.

96. As it is not possible to reliably predict sustainability without longer-term follow-up, the following findings focus on what WFP has done to enhance the likelihood of results being sustained or dynamically adapted to align with evolving contexts.

97. All of the visited and desk-reviewed country offices have made efforts to integrate sustainability considerations into their capacity development-related work. They have done so by identifying and monitoring related risks, and by closely working with national partners throughout the design and implementation of interventions to foster national leadership for, and ownership of, related processes and results.

- In India, for example, all pilot projects that WFP is involved in are based on existing government programmes and have a dedicated technical advisory group that includes government representatives, technical experts and research organizations. While this approach has meant that implementation progress has been slow at times, consulted CO staff members noted that it has greatly facilitated national ownership and, thereby, the potential for sustainability of the respective initiatives.
- In Jordan, Namibia and India, WFP has branded achievements that it has contributed to with logos and messaging from the respective national government, thereby acknowledging and supporting the governments’ need to demonstrate leadership and capacity to its citizens. This is likely to support the formation of national ownership of the respective change processes, which in turn constitutes a condition for their sustainability.

98. The *2009 Policy on Capacity Development* implies that WFP’s capacity development interventions culminate with the handover of programmes or systems to national actors. The evaluation found several examples where national governments have successfully taken over financial and, often, managerial responsibilities from WFP. These examples were most frequently in school feeding programmes, but also in nutrition and food distribution initiatives. At the same time, in relation to community level work, the degree to which consulted country offices had a clear plan for how to link and, eventually, hand over related efforts to national or sub-national governments was generally limited.

99. Data collected in the sample countries also show that effective handover tends to be a gradual process during which the role of WFP slowly changes from implementer to technical advisor. The extent to which these processes follow structured and agreed upon plans with timelines and milestones varies.⁷⁴ Even where such plans exist, in practice, related processes are often iterative, based on ongoing

⁷⁴ For example, the 2016 Audit of WFP’s School Feeding Programme (WFP 2016q) notes that out of 60 countries where WFP supports School Feeding, discussions on how to structure the handover process had been finalized in only 17 of them.

dialogue between WFP and national partners, and, as illustrated by the following example, influenced by external factors beyond WFP control.⁷⁵

- In Kenya, an unexpected shortfall in donor funding forced the CO to hand over a supplementary feeding programme to a number of county administrations faster and more abruptly than had been envisaged. WFP staff members raised some concerns about the sustainability of the respective programmes as a result of this quick transition.

100. Meaningful capacity strengthening processes do not necessarily end at the point where national partners formally take on financial and managerial leadership of a programme – as had been implied in the *2009 policy* – but often extend beyond. The example below also illustrates how the capacity strengthening needs of national partners can change over time.

- In Namibia, WFP handed over its School Feeding Programme in 1996. The national government has since implemented the programme. However, in 2012 the government asked for WFP support to assess the quality and efficiency of the programme. Based on findings of the resulting evaluation, the government then requested WFP technical assistance to implement a five-year road map to address the identified areas for improvement. This collaboration has been funded through government resources. Currently, partners are exploring options to fund further WFP assistance to develop a more decentralized and, potentially, homegrown SF programming model.

2.3 Factors Influencing the Achievement of Results from the Policy Update

Introduction

101. In response to Evaluation Question 3 – Why has the Policy produced the results that have been observed? – this section explores key factors within the external and internal WFP contexts that are likely to have positively or negatively affected implementation of the 2009 Policy on Capacity Development.⁷⁶ The analysis draws upon evidence deriving from document and literature reviews, the review of comparator organizations, field missions, country desktop reviews, interviews and e-survey of WFP staff.

External context

Finding 17: The stage of development and socio-economic status of a country influences WFP’s capacity development work. In middle-income country contexts, host governments are changing from recipients of food assistance to purchasers and consumers of specialized technical services from WFP. In contexts of acute crisis, there is a perceived lack of clarity within WFP as to what, if any, capacity development interventions are feasible in these settings.

102. The global importance given to the strengthening of national capacities of developing countries as part of the aid effectiveness agenda created both opportunities for and pressure on UN agencies to support related activities. Recent

⁷⁵ Several consulted WFP staff members pointed out, that the term ‘handover’ is no longer adequate in light of the current global discourse on capacity development, as it implies a one-directional and asymmetrical process led and owned by WFP only.

⁷⁶ Note that sub-question 3.4.4 is addressed under EQ 2 in section 2.2, while the second part of sub-question 3.5.3 – related to gender sensitivity – is addressed in sections 2.1 (EQ1) and 2.2 (EQ2).

discussions in the context of the 2030 Agenda have re-emphasized issues of country ownership, leadership, and the need to strengthen endogenous capacities in partnership with other actors. However, this favorable discourse has not consistently translated into resources for WFP to support capacity development processes.

103. Data limitations and contextual variation prevents definite statements on whether and how results attainment varies with national development status. As illustrated in figure 6 below, the relative proportion of WFP’s reported capacity development efforts on each of the three levels outlined in the *2009 policy update* has been almost the same in low, lower middle, and upper middle-income countries. There are some differences in the thematic areas addressed by capacity development initiatives in the area of school feeding and food security.

Figure 7. Percentage of Capacity Development Instances reported in the reviewed SPRs (n= 2,448), by Level of Country Income by Thematic Area, and by Level of Intervention

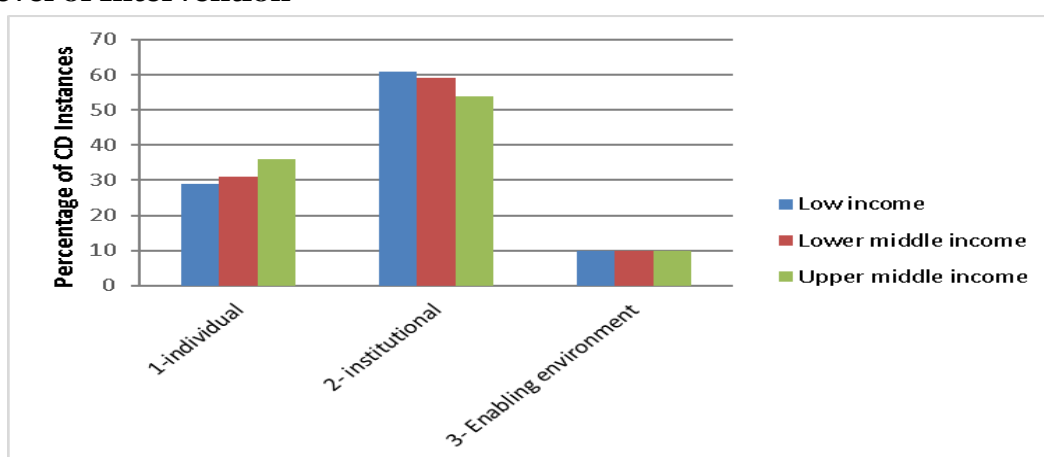
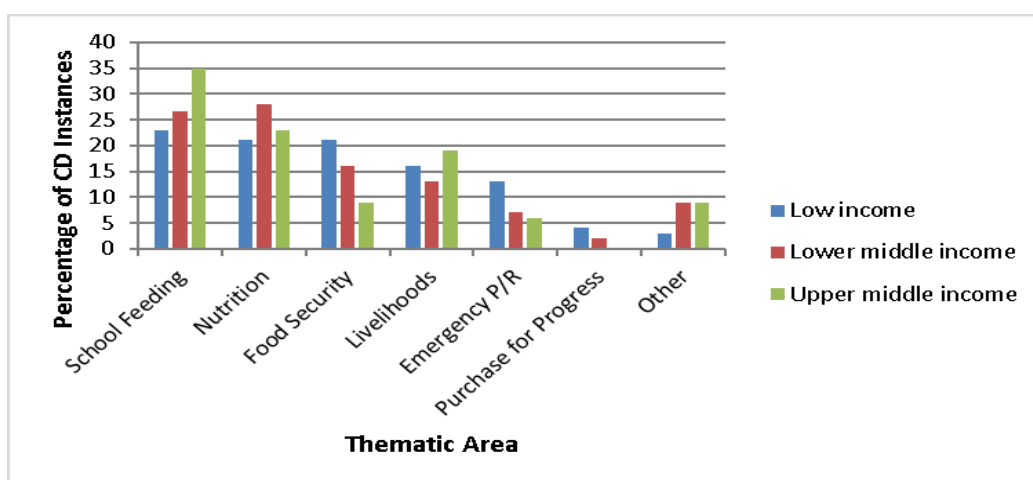


Figure 8. Percentage of Capacity Development Instances reported in the reviewed SPRs (n= 2,448), by Level of Country Income by Thematic Area



104. The following main factors have both positively and negatively influenced WFP’s capacity development efforts at the country level, with only slight differences between countries at different stages of development:

- the extent of political will to address hunger governance issues, which is often linked to the continuity or turnover of specific influential individuals;

- the degree of changes in host government demand for food aid, which has increasingly been replaced by targeted demand for capacity development support;
- existing government capacities at both national and decentralized levels, which influence the extent to which policies, laws, strategies, or systems developed with WFP support are effectively implemented and sustained; and,
- in the context of acute conflicts or emergencies, whether a functioning and legitimate government is in place at all whose capacity WFP can support.

105. Socio-cultural factors have influenced the political will of national actors to engage in, and seek support for, capacity development processes. Consulted WFP staff in RB and COs confirmed that awareness of and respect for the socio-cultural and political contexts in each country was essential for building relationships of mutual trust and respect with national actors, which was seen as the foundation for providing effective capacity development support.

106. Despite these noted similarities between countries that are at different stages of development, middle-income country contexts tend to offer both particular opportunities and challenges when it comes to capacity strengthening.

- On the one hand, WFP country offices in MICs, such as those visited in Namibia and Peru, face difficulties in accessing significant WFP funding due to the absence of traditional food-related programming, or any other kind of donor funding due to the country’s middle-income status.⁷⁷
- On the other hand, MICs tend to offer promising environments to support lasting system-level changes. MICs, such as Peru, Bangladesh, Namibia and Kenya, tend to have comparatively solid existing legal and policy frameworks, and host governments with relatively strong existing capacities. These governments are now seeking sophisticated technical advice from WFP, and are in essence contracting WFP – as well as other UN agencies – to deliver selected specialized services.
- To date, WFP policies, guidelines, processes and tools for programme planning and reporting are not yet consistently geared towards working in MICs, and consulted COs reported having to often improvise based on their own judgment and experience. See Box 5.

Box 5: The Ability and Readiness Index (ARI)

The Ability and Readiness Index (WFP ARI Guidance Notes) was published in 2010 to provide some broad direction on the elements of capacity development that can be integrated in different national contexts. Evaluation data indicate, however, that the ARI is not known and has not been used at the country or regional level to inform planning and decision-making. Consulted WFP staff at HQ noted that although the ARI was included in the 2010 operational guidelines for capacity development, it had not been intended as a field-level operational tool, but primarily to assist headquarters in making decisions about prioritizing resource allocations for capacity development.

⁷⁷ Until 2014 COs had to be engaged in providing food aid in order to obtain any funding that could be used for capacity development purposes. Since 2014, COs have been able to implement capacity development by using the separate Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A) budget line even in the absence of food aid programming. However, resources that can be obtained under this budget line are limited, and some WFP offices in MIC countries struggle to obtain sufficient funds to remain operational.

107. The evaluation found a lack of consensus within WFP about how to conceptualize capacity development in the context of emergencies and humanitarian crises.⁷⁸ WFP staff did not categorically exclude the incorporation of capacity development perspectives into EMOP work, but indicated that it had not often been done. In some contexts, existing capacity development activities have been negatively affected by sudden crises. In Jordan, for example, the magnitude and longevity of the required response to the Syrian refugee crisis is threatening to overwhelm the WFP country office's ongoing, national capacity development work.

WFP Strategic Positioning and Comparative Advantage

Finding 18: WFP's reputation and branding tend to focus on its role as a 'doer' rather than as a facilitator. This has implications for the agency's perceived positioning and comparative advantage for capacity development work. Evidence suggests that this comparative advantage is less linked to whether an organization is operational in humanitarian and development contexts than on whether it is perceived to focus on technical cooperation.

108. Strategic positioning and comparative advantage on capacity development are both about WFP's organizational assets and internal capacities, as well as about the agency's ability to communicate and be recognized by other actors for its strengths relative to the capacity development of national partners.

109. Evaluation findings on how external partners perceive WFP in relation to capacity development are mixed.

- While acknowledging that over the past 5-8 years WFP had become more engaged in issues of development and technical cooperation, all consulted WFP Executive Board Members and most representatives of other UN agencies emphasized that, in their view, WFP's main strength continued to lie in its role as a 'doer' in the context of emergency and humanitarian response.⁷⁹ They further noted that most other UN agencies working in the same thematic areas as WFP (including FAO, UNICEF) had a clearer focus on their role as technical cooperation agencies and had more related experience in support of capacity development processes.
- The views of consulted government representatives in host countries varied depending on the extent to which WFP's focus in the respective country had shifted to an 'enabling' role, including the provision of technical assistance. Overall, however, national partners appeared to have much fewer concerns about whether WFP 'should' or 'could' engage in capacity development. Instead, they focused on specific thematic areas in which they felt that they could benefit from WFP's technical expertise and experience.
- The thematic areas in which external stakeholders saw WFP as possessing strong, if not unique, expertise and experience relevant to capacity development were: i) food-related emergency preparedness and response, including through the use of VAM, and in relation to food logistics; ii) the use

⁷⁸ See paragraph 19 which notes a similar uncertainty within the current global discourse on the role of capacity development in the context of humanitarian settings.

⁷⁹ At present, most WFP Executive Board members come from the multilateral departments in their respective governments, rather than from development wings. This may influence EB members' priorities and messaging.

of cash-based transfers, and iii) food-based social protection systems, including school feeding.

- Thematic areas in which WFP was seen to have considerable, but not necessarily unique, experience and skills included nutrition, food storage, and markets. Notably, all of these are areas where one or more UN agency also has expertise.⁸⁰

110. The evaluation noted that, on the one hand, WFP's commitment and potential value added to capacity development processes has been highlighted in the past two Strategic Plans,⁸¹ as well as in other documents including the 2004 and 2009 policies on capacity development. On the other hand, WFP's branding as 'the world's largest humanitarian organization fighting hunger worldwide'⁸² continues to emphasize the agency's image as a 'doer' in the context of humanitarian crisis.

111. Capacity development-related achievements do not feature prominently in WFP's corporate Annual Performance Reports, which, instead, tend to focus on food assistance provided by WFP. The WFP Partnership Strategy (WFP 2014dd) lists the agency's 'can do attitude and practical focus on getting things done' as one of five characteristics that its partners value about WFP. The other four characteristics are: i) the scope of WFP's operational footprint ("field reach"), ii) the responsibility and integrity of WFP staff; iii) WFP's deep skills in logistics and telecommunications; and iv) contextual knowledge and understanding of vulnerability.

112. The evaluation team explored how other agencies deal with the challenge of promoting dual value propositions to donors and other partners. This applies, for example, to UNICEF, which also engages in both development and humanitarian settings but has not faced the same doubts or concerns from stakeholders as WFP has when it comes to supporting capacity development. Consulted representatives from comparator organizations stated that, in their view, this was at least partly due to the fact that UNICEF has always been perceived as being focused on technical cooperation. However, in certain regions, this is changing. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, where the vast majority of countries have obtained middle-income status, WFP has gone beyond its "traditional role as a reliable partner that purchases, transports and distributes food in conflict and other emergency situations or in the context of chronic crises. In the region, WFP has become a relevant player in the area of capacity development and has profiled itself as an actor that helps to reinforce national strengths in the field of food security and nutrition."⁸³

Coordination with, and Contributions of, Partners

Finding 19: WFP's collaboration with other UN actors who support national capacity development processes has lacked harmonization and has been characterised by work in parallel rather than jointly.

⁸⁰ According to consulted stakeholders, WFP's expertise is seen to lie primarily in large scale storage, while organizations such as FAO, IFAD and – for rural organizations – ILO have a stronger reputation for small scale and farm storage. In relation to markets, stakeholders saw WFP's expertise primarily in providing intelligence on local markets, deriving from its early warning (VAM) work, as well as on overall market prices, given that WFP is itself a buyer. Organizations, such as FAO, IFAD and ILO have a stronger reputation in relation to, for example, rural finance and, to some extent, local price monitoring.

⁸¹ And are very likely to be highlighted even more strongly in the upcoming new Strategic Plan.

⁸² WFP's corporate website: <http://www.wfp.org/about>; accessed on June 8, 2016.

⁸³ *Strengthening Capacities in Food Security and Nutrition in Latin American and the Caribbean: Analysing the Past, Building the Present, Looking to the Future*, WFP Regional Bureau in Panama, 2016.

113. Consulted WFP staff, as well as representatives of other UN agencies in the visited countries, consistently noted that collaboration among agencies on capacity development issues had largely remained weak, despite the existence of UNDAF/UNDAFs or DaO agreements. Instead, stakeholders in most countries reported on active competition over resources for capacity development among UN agencies and on a lack of harmonized positions and approaches to engaging with national partners. In one middle-income country, consulted WFP CO staff noted that UN agencies currently take differing positions on whether the national government should be expected to pay for technical assistance from UN agencies. While WFP is promoting this view, other agencies that have better access to other funding sources, are not.

114. Nevertheless, the evaluation noted several examples where WFP partnered with other UN agencies to support capacity strengthening processes with the same national actors or in the same sector. This includes collaboration with UNICEF (for example, in Namibia, WFP and UNICEF worked together to include nutrition-related data in national food security monitoring processes); with UNDP (for example, in Liberia WFP and UNDP collaborated to strengthen government capacities respectively in disaster risk management and emergency preparedness and response); and with FAO and IFAD in relation to resilience and livelihoods, for example, in Kenya. In many cases, however, these partnerships have focused on coordinating parallel interventions rather than engaging in joint needs assessments, planning, implementation, or monitoring of capacity development processes. This has limited opportunities for synergies and has not been helpful in relation to host governments' efforts to coordinate the support they receive from different partners.

115. National and local NGO's primarily role is as WFP's implementing partners. Interviews in the countries visited indicate that these partnerships tend to be transactional rather than strategic.⁸⁴ This is corroborated with evidence from evaluations as presented in the Annual Evaluation Reports from 2015 and 2014, as well as from the Synthesis of Operational Evaluations, among others. While these relationships can result in some benefits to the respective organization's internal capacity - for example, through training activities aiming to strengthen specific implementation-related capacities of the respective NGO partner-related capacity development results are neither systematically monitored nor reported upon.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Mainstreaming Capacity Development within WFP

Finding 20: WFP corporate documents, tools and practices do not consistently reflect the agency's intention to mainstream capacity development.

116. The evaluation found very little evidence of particular advantages or disadvantages derived from WFP's decision to mainstream capacity development in the current Strategic Plan in contrast with the previous SP where capacity development was one of five Strategic Objectives. Most WFP staff consulted from HQ, RB and CO addressed it primarily as a matter of reporting obligations. They noted that, on the one hand, mainstreaming capacity development into thematic

⁸⁴ The 2014 WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy distinguishes between different types of partnership that are located on a continuum from transactional to strategic, with the former focusing on an exchange of resources or services, whereas the latter relates to partnerships in which partners act together and both benefit.

areas had made it easier to capture interventions and results holistically given that capacity development work did not happen in isolation of other activities in a thematic area. On the other hand, they highlighted the risk of capacity development-related elements getting lost when mainstreamed, especially in the absence of meaningful indicators (see paragraphs 124-129).

117. Corporate templates for programme design and reporting provide generally limited direction on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of capacity development. Similarly, while six out of ten recent WFP policies, strategies and action plans reviewed address issues of capacity development support to national partners, none of them provides a definition of what capacity development means, how to concretely plan for and implement capacity development activities in the respective thematic area, or how to monitor related results. Similarly, while the WFP corporate website includes a page on ‘country capacity strengthening’ as one of eight components of WFP’s expertise, none of the sites describing types of WFP operations (EMOP, PRRO, DEV, CP, SO) includes either explicit or implicit reference to aspects of capacity development.

118. Until now, the structure of most WFP country offices has reflected the agency’s operations underway in the respective country (EMOP, PRRO, DEV, CP and SO), without assigning clear responsibilities for capacity development. This has posed a challenge for effectively mainstreaming capacity development within a country team, and for ensuring coherence and synergies among capacity development efforts conducted under different operations in each country.

119. The new Country Strategic Plans that WFP began piloting in 2016 are intended to address the often-artificial separation between different operations and allow for more integrated work at the country level. A few of the reviewed country offices have taken independent steps to strengthen their ability to support capacity development processes more systematically. The Kenya CO has organized itself by thematic areas instead of by types of operations as part of its new Country Programme approach, and the former ‘Country Program Team’ has been renamed ‘Country Capacity Strengthening Unit’. The Kyrgyzstan CO has undergone a similar restructuring, which also included adding dedicated positions related to M&E, partnership, and policy. Similarly, the Regional Bureau in Panama noted to have mainstreamed capacity development into job profiles, skills development and thematic trainings, such as on school feeding and social protection.

Financial Commitments and Resource Mobilization

Finding 21: WFP’s existing funding and resource allocation model is not conducive to engagement in capacity development that, ideally, requires predictable and dedicated longer-term commitment. Unlike some other UN agencies, WFP does not yet make systematic use of country-level funds to finance its capacity development work.

120. Consultations with WFP HQ managers indicated that the corporate financial resources made available to advance the capacity development agenda within WFP have consisted almost exclusively of an approximately \$4 million trust fund for Capacity Development funded by the USA, the United Kingdom, Canada and Sweden, established following the 2008 evaluation. It had been preceded by a \$360,000 start-up fund provided by WFP itself. When the trust fund expired after four years, no further funding was sought.

121. Almost all consulted country office teams identified short-term funding and budget uncertainties as key challenges in their ability to effectively plan for and implement coherent capacity development initiatives (see Box 6). This is linked to a range of factors:

- Recent evaluations of WFP's country portfolios noted recurring problems, especially for DEV projects, due to the often short duration of WFP funding.⁸⁵
- WFP funds and personnel may be diverted if an emergency response has to be prioritized.
- An increase in chronic conflicts and emergencies requiring sustained humanitarian funding, which tends to be earmarked for short-term and life-saving interventions.⁸⁶
- Steadily growing calls on limited ODA, which has increased only slowly in current terms, and competition between development actors for capacity development funding;
- Lack of donor funding for work in MICs, combined with variable degrees to which MIC governments themselves are willing to fund the services of UN agencies from national resources.

Box 6 –Negative Effects of Short-Term Funding

In Jordan, WFP has to rely upon less than six-month funding windows to provide support to the Jordanian Bureau of Statistics to develop new analytical modules to enable the government to better plan nutrition solutions and combat endemic hunger. Government officials reported that WFP's inability to provide longer-term funding, or even medium term assurances of funding sustainability, hampered their internal decision-making process and their ability to make matching, in-kind contributions.

122. The desire to mobilize resources and fluctuations of available funding have contributed to country offices consistently planning projects with budgets that may be appropriate in light of existing programming needs, but are regularly followed by shortfalls of actual funding against plan.⁸⁷

123. is not unique in being voluntarily funded. UNDP and UNICEF also have small regular budgets and tend to finance technical cooperation, including capacity development interventions primarily through country level funds.⁸⁸ Reviewed documents indicate that these trust funds are mostly funded by traditional⁸⁹ bilateral donors with decision-making often decentralized to the country level.

124. In comparison, trust funds as a source of revenue are still a very small proportion (less than 4%) of the overall WFP budget.⁹⁰ Also, WFP's financing model has not emphasized or systematically supported decentralized resource mobilization for technical cooperation at country or regional levels. Development funding by

⁸⁵ The evaluation reviewed a total of 11 recent Country Portfolio Evaluations. See Bibliography in Annex 9.

⁸⁶ The 2012–2014 period was less about natural disasters, and more about conflict and chronic crises. The areas of aid that are key to fulfilling longer-term needs received the least funding in this period (SOHS 2016).

⁸⁷ This was noted in recent operations evaluations in Tanzania, Honduras, Laos, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Malawi. It was also critically noted by 84% of surveyed WFP staff and managers.

⁸⁸ As well as, in some cases, regional or global Trust Funds.

⁸⁹ The term 'traditional' donors is commonly used to refer to Western developed countries such as the United States, the UK, or Scandinavian countries, as opposed to 'emerging' or 'non-traditional' donors, in particular Brazil, China, India and South Africa, but increasingly also private sector donors and philanthropic foundations.

⁹⁰ Source: Contributions to WFP by Programme Category June 2016 downloadable from <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/contributions-wfp-programme-category-12-june-2016>. Trust funds are captured on the category "Trust Funds and other".

many of the major bilateral donors is highly decentralized to country offices in lower income countries and some middle-income countries are developing country-level funding relationships with UN agencies for provision of development services. While some of the visited Regional Bureaux and Country Offices have successfully secured country and/or regional-level resources for capacity development-related work,⁹¹ consulted staff in several COs also noted that they lacked sufficient skills and corporate support to systematically pursue these types of funding sources.⁹²

Policy Dissemination and Guidance

Finding 22: Dissemination of the *2009 policy update* has been only moderately effective. WFP guidelines and tools for capacity development are theoretically advanced, but lack in utility. As such, they have been of limited use for facilitating policy implementation.

125. Consultations with Executive Board members and with WFP staff and managers throughout the organization indicate that efforts to promote and disseminate the *2009 policy update* within WFP have been commensurate with the limited available resources.⁹³ In comparison, processes to disseminate more recent policies, such as the Gender Policy (2015) appear to have been more deliberate and systematic, contributing to stronger awareness of the respective policy among WFP staff and managers.

126. Since 2009, WFP has developed and disseminated a number of guidance documents and tools for capacity development-related work. Annex 20 provides a brief review of the main guidance documents and their links to the *2009 policy*, as well as to literature on capacity development that was current at the time. Key findings regarding the relevance, quality and effectiveness of these guidance documents for facilitating the implementation of the *2009 policy update* are summarized below.

- Consultations with WFP staff throughout the organization indicate that the best known tools are the CGNA and NCI, as well SABER and EPCI. In addition, a few individuals claimed to have read, but not necessarily used, the 2015 note, ‘The Design and Implementation of Technical Assistance and Capacity Development’. None of the consulted WFP staff had applied older tools, such as the 2010 Action Plan.
- Only a few of the tools developed since 2009 make explicit reference to the policy update, and none of them elaborates on how to achieve the outputs and outcomes described in the policy. Furthermore, none of the guidance tools are structured around the three core dimensions of the enabling environment, institutional and individual capacities, which characterize the policy. See Annex 20.
- Since 2009, the quality of corporate guidance notes has continuously increased in the extent to which they explicitly refer and build on contemporary research and thinking on capacity development.⁹⁴ The more

⁹¹ For example, in the RBB, RBN, RBP, as well as in Colombia, Kenya, Namibia and Peru.

⁹² The review of comparator organizations showed that – in contrast - for the IFRC, country level resource mobilization is one of the Capacity Standards for National Red Cross Societies.

⁹³ The same was found by the 2008 evaluation in relation to disseminating the 2004 Policy on Capacity Development.

⁹⁴ See Annex 20.

recent of WFP’s guidance tools are theoretically sound and well researched. At the same time, they are also long and complex. ⁹⁵ Consulted WFP staff in RBs and most COs reported having experienced considerable difficulties in actually applying them, especially the CGNA and NCI, in their respective contexts.⁹⁶ See Box 7.

Box 7 – CO-driven Adaptations of Corporate Tools

Some WFP Country Offices, including Kenya and Bangladesh, have adapted the CGNA, NCI and (in Kenya) EPCI tools to meet the needs of their respective contexts. ⁹⁷

On the positive side, these COs found that the process of conducting a collaborative assessments of existing capacities was useful in a variety of ways, including i) ensuring a uniform and transparent approach to defining ‘capacity’ within the CO team, ii) channeling discussions with national partners in ways that helped identify realistic priorities for what WFP can support; iii) raising partner awareness of the various dimensions that constitute holistic hunger governance capacity; and iv) setting the stage for a collaborative, dialogue- and evidence based collaboration between WFP and the respective national partners.⁹⁸

At the same time, the CO teams noted that the process of adapting these tools to their respective contexts had been very time and labor intensive, and that not all COs may be in a position to engage in similar initiatives. This puts the practical usability of the tools into question. In Kenya, CO staff also raised concerns over the extent to which tools such as the CGNA and NCI were commensurate with WFP’s intention to provide demand-driven support, given that the conduct of these assessments was dependent on the initiative and technical leadership of WFP.

Finding 23: WFP’s organizational structure does not define clear roles and responsibilities for the capacity development function.

Organizational Structures and Processes

127. Consulted WFP staff at HQ, regional bureaux and country offices noted a lack of ownership for the 2009 Policy on Capacity Development Update within the organization. While other corporate policies were seen to be actively promoted and their implementation monitored by dedicated organizational units at HQ, this has not been the case for the Policy on Capacity Development. While stakeholders acknowledged the personal dedication and technical expertise of staff members of the capacity development unit, the small and fluctuating size and location of this unit within the organization were seen to have reduced its visibility and potential for influence.

128. Consulted WFP staff and managers in several COs also noted the absence of sufficient dedicated staff at RB and HQ levels who could provide rapid, day-to-day backstopping for capacity development-related work. Related needs ranged from ‘big picture’ questions, such as how to apply the NCI, to more specific issues, such as what contracting procedures to use when seconding a consultant to a national

⁹⁵ This is not uncommon. An evaluation of UNDP’s work on capacity development (UNDP 2010b) found that many staff members found the language used in available guidance materials too long, technical and difficult to understand. They noted that materials were not presented in a way which was easy to use with governments or to apply internally.

⁹⁶ Only 30% of respondents to the e-survey conducted for this evaluation found the NCI a useful tool, while 53% rated it to be not, or of only limited use. In comparison, 61% found SABER to be useful. Some consulted WFP staff in visited CO noted that they found SABER to be more concrete and less complex than the NCI as it focused on a well-defined thematic area. Concerns over, and limitations of the NCI have also been noted in the 2016 Evaluability Assessment of the WFP SP 2014-2017, as well as in recent documents prepared by the Regional Bureau in Bangkok (WFP RB Bangkok 2015) and the Kenya country office (WFP Kenya 2016b).

⁹⁷ WFP Kenya 2016b; WFP RB Bangkok 2015.

⁹⁸ WFP Kenya 2016b, p. 7.

ministry. Some WFP staff contrasted this with the guidance and support they received to implement the WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy, where there is a dedicated and resourced unit at headquarters and a dedicated Partnership Officer in some RBs. Furthermore, implementation of the Strategy is intended to be rolled out through the development of explicit regional partnership strategies or action plans.

129. Other UN agencies have strong, dedicated headquarter units and, in some cases, regional advisors for capacity development. The central unit for capacity development at FAO has 4.5 staff. UNDP no longer has a central capacity development unit or regional advisors, but did until 2010 when it was actively mainstreaming the issue.

130. An inter-divisional WFP working group on capacity development was created in 2009 but there is little knowledge of it among staff consulted at various levels of the organization. Its role in promoting, monitoring, or supporting implementation of the *2009 policy update* is unclear as is its current status. The last documented contribution of the working group was in 2013 and 2014 to provide input on capacity development guidelines, the NCI and the CGNA.

Monitoring and Reporting on Capacity Development Results

Finding 24: WFP’s current corporate systems and tools are not built to capture WFP’s contributions to result, which leads to considerable under-reporting on capacity development-related achievements.

131. The need for WFP to strengthen its systems for monitoring and reporting on results, especially at the outcome level, has been noted in a number of evaluations⁹⁹. It was also highlighted in the 2016 Evaluability Assessment of the WFP 2014-2017 SP, which noted that, “gaps in data availability and quality, especially related to capacity development, resilience, nutrition and partnerships currently limit evaluability [of the SP]”.¹⁰⁰

132. WFP’s performance against strategic results is reported in the Standard Project Reports, which are designed to feed project level data into corporate reporting. This requires the use of mandatory and, therefore, rigid, corporate indicators and reporting formats. Often, SPRs have not enabled reporting on the full range of activities and achievements in relation to capacity development. This is partly due to the fact that SPRs do not capture information related to trust fund and country-level fund-supported interventions.¹⁰¹ At the activity level, corporate monitoring has focused on tracking the number of individuals trained by WFP, and thereby on only one of various ways in which the organization supports capacity development processes. Consequently, COs are forced to develop and use parallel monitoring and reporting systems to fulfil specific country- or regional-level donor requirements. The achievements documented in these reports are often not captured at the corporate level.¹⁰² As a result, there is considerable under-reporting of capacity

⁹⁹ For example, in the 2008 evaluation of the 2004 policy on Building Country and Regional Capacities, the 2014 WFP Annual Evaluation Report, and various operations evaluations quoted in the 2016 Evaluability Assessment of the 2014-2017 SP.

¹⁰⁰ Evaluability Assessment of the WFP SP 2014-2017, paragraph 24.

¹⁰¹ Capturing all data, including trust fund-related, is, however, envisaged under the new financial framework review. Also, WFP is currently completing the roll out of its new Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool (COMET) that is offering a single platform for combining operational data, introducing a consistent method for counting beneficiaries, and capturing evidence on programme performance across countries and regions.

¹⁰² This is also discussed in the 2016 Evaluability Assessment of the 2014-2017 SP, in particular in paragraph 76.

development-related initiatives and achievements. During the field visits to Peru, Jordan, Bangladesh, Panama and Bangkok, the evaluation team discovered instances of significant WFP programming that had not been adequately captured by existing corporate reporting formats.¹⁰³

133. In an effort to strengthen its outcome level reporting, WFP introduced the National Capacity Index (NCI) as the main corporate measure of capacity development under the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. There are concerns, however, regarding the relevance, validity, utility and testability of the NCI for monitoring and reporting on capacity development processes for the following reasons:¹⁰⁴

- Changes in a country's NCI rating do not provide any information on the extent or quality of WFP contributions to these changes. While an indicator such as the NCI can provide information on how a country is performing in a certain thematic area, changes – both positive and negative – in this area may occur largely unrelated to the work of an agency such as WFP.
- Reporting a quantitative NCI value provides no insights into the quality of, or reasons for, changes in the overall rating.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the quantitative nature of NCI ratings runs the risk of falsely suggesting objectivity of ratings, as well as and comparability of ratings from different countries.
- Different indices that are in use within WFP - notably, the NCI and EPCI - have been developed in parallel by different units within the organization. They overlap in a number of instances and their relationship is unclear.¹⁰⁶

134. In regard to the monitoring of capacity development-related expenditures, the introduction of the Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A) budget line in 2013¹⁰⁷ constituted an improvement to the previous situation, where capacity development activities could only be included when linked to food or cash assistance, as it became possible to capture capacity development-related financial data on its own. However, despite this improvement, “CD” and “A” elements of this budget line are not tracked or reported upon separately. Given that ‘augmentation’ costs are often associated with special operations and include costly elements like flights and staging areas, overall amounts covered by “CD&A” do not give a realistic view of expenditures specifically for capacity development.

135. WFP is not the only organization that has been struggling to meaningfully monitor and report on capacity development. The review of comparator organizations, described in detail in Annex 6, showed that there are varying, but overall limited, degrees to which consolidated information is available on other organizations’ capacity development-related achievements and expenditures. None

¹⁰³ The Synthesis Report of 2014–2015 WFP Operation Evaluations (WFP 2015 aab) notes that while, overall, under-reporting at the outcome level had improved since 2014, data quality concerns remained particularly in relation to capacity development indicators. This does not contradict the finding that under-reporting on CD prevails, but illustrates that the existing corporate outcome statements and indicators are not suited to capture the breadth of WFP contributions to results.

¹⁰⁴ The noted concerns were raised by consulted WFP staff and managers at all levels, and also reflected in recent internal publications by the Regional Bureau in Bangkok (WFP RB Bangkok 2015) and the Kenya CO (WFP Kenya 2016b) as well as in the 2016 Evaluability Assessment of the WFP SP 2014-2017 (in particular paragraph 103).

¹⁰⁵ For example, it does not allow capturing information on implications of achievements for cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, or protection and accountability of affected populations.

¹⁰⁶ The write-up of the Kenya CO's experience with adapting and using the NCI and EPCI notes that “It is difficult to see who is the ‘owner’ of the two indicators. Obtaining further guidance or explanations from a ‘host unit’ at headquarters is hardly possible.” (WFP Kenya 2016b, p.6)

¹⁰⁷ The CD&A budget line was introduced within WFP's New Financial Framework in 2010, but became functional within WFP's financial system only in November 2013.

of the four reviewed comparators has developed indicators that identify the organization's contributions to changes in national or organizational capacities. However, the International Federation of Red Cross-Red Crescent Societies gives prominence to a publicly reported and assessed capacity index for national societies, which drives the development support given in a way that the WFP NCI does not.

136. In absence of strong corporate guidance and tools for monitoring and reporting, the RBP, RBB, and RBN have developed their own approaches to mapping, measuring, analyzing and reporting on capacity development-related interventions and results. This bottom-up approach positively reflects the respective RB's commitment to and interest in the issue. At the same time it further emphasizes the absence of agency-wide agreement over what constitutes relevant and useful monitoring and reporting in the context of capacity development.

Human Resources

Finding 25: To date, WFP's corporate staffing approach and procedures reflect few considerations related to capacity development.

137. The Action Plan (WFP 2010c) developed to guide implementation of the 2009 *policy update* committed WFP HQ to review and strengthen core staff competences for capacity development. Evaluation data show that, since that time, little has been done at the central level to implement this recommendation.

138. WFP's People Strategy includes a talent acquisition strategy, which is structured around three options for enhancing the agency's workforce: "build, buy, and borrow".¹⁰⁸ To date, there is some, albeit limited evidence of these approaches having systematically addressed workforce issues around capacity development.

- "Build": The WFP leadership programme, Leading for Zero Hunger, addresses issues of partnering and capacity development skills. Similarly, during their compulsory orientation, new WFP Country Directors receive some basic orientation about capacity development. However, to date there is no sustained training on capacity development available for WFP staff.¹⁰⁹ This has led a number of COs and RBs to independently organize training sessions and guidelines for their own staff. Others have largely 'learned by doing'.¹¹⁰ Also, as described in Box 8, HQ has not played a strong role in facilitating knowledge exchange on capacity development, as another potential approach to strengthening staff capacities.
- "Buy": CO teams that frequently use external consultants for short- or mid-term assignments reported that the absence of global or regional rosters makes it time consuming to identify relevant external expertise efficiently.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ "Build" = developing from within, "buy" = hiring externally, outsourcing and contracting services, "borrow" = leveraging partnerships, internships and rotations. Source: WFP 2014gg

¹⁰⁹ At the time of finalizing this report in September of 2016, the Human Resource unit (HR) is working to include capacity development elements into other programs, such as a supervisory skills course.

¹¹⁰ In comparison, FAO developed an e-learning module on capacity development, and offers three face-to face courses of 1.5 day each per year both in HQ and decentralised locations. To date, some 300 staff have participated in these courses. One informant noted that WFP staff had been invited to participate in FAO training courses on capacity development at no charge to WFP, but that the agency had not yet taken up this offer.

¹¹¹ The 2010 Action Plan had included the task to maintain an updated regional expert roster as a responsibility of regional bureaux, including by providing access to this roster through a web portal. Consultations with WFP staff at HQ for this evaluation indicate that the development of such a roster is currently being pursued.

- “Borrow”: The evaluation found no evidence of WFP having systematically used the ‘borrowing’ option to strengthen HQ, RB or CO capacities by leveraging secondments, internships or rotation.

Box 8: Knowledge Exchange on Capacity Development

There has been some limited and ad hoc knowledge exchange on capacity development within WFP. The existence of the Brazil Centre of Excellence was widely seen as an improvement in relation to facilitating agency-wide exchange and learning on the issue of school feeding, but exchange has been less structured and frequent in other thematic areas.

RBN, RBB, and RBP have recently conducted their own regional reviews – using varying methodologies and guiding questions - to capture information on the types of capacity development interventions that COs in their regions have been engaged in.

The RBB-initiated study (WFP RB Bangkok 2015) focused on the question of how meaningfully monitor and report on capacity development-related interventions and results.

The RBP study (WFP RB Panama 2016) provided a comprehensive mapping of, and analysis for WFP’s capacity-development work in the areas of food security and nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean.

139. A review of recent WFP job postings at different levels of seniority indicates that there are currently no competency requirements related to capacity development or other soft skills apart from generic management and diplomacy skills. Skills that are likely to be relevant for capacity development work – and which several consulted COs reported to at least partly lack - include, policy dialogue, advocacy, and decentralized resource mobilization, including communication of results to country-level donors.¹¹² In addition, COs pointed out that staff members’ existing technical skills often require adaption when applied in a capacity development context. For example, assisting a national government in building a management information system requires different knowledge and skills than are required for WFP internal monitoring, reporting and evaluation purposes.

140. Consultations at all levels of the organization indicated that there are currently few incentives for staff to engage in, or excel at, capacity development, and that WFP’s organizational culture continues to be primarily rooted in its delivery ability.

141. Several evaluations conducted during the period under review have noted a continued lack of technical and development competencies among international and national staff in WFP country offices as a challenge for development interventions overall, and capacity development in particular.¹¹³ In addition, turnover due to WFP’s international staff rotation policy sometimes negatively affects the ability of CO teams to form relationships of trust and develop in-depth understanding of the respective national, sectoral, and institutional contexts at times.

¹¹² In one visited country office, team members pointed to UNICEF as an example of a UN organization that does employ dedicated communications staff, and is very successful in presenting its capacity development (and other) achievements to actual and potential partners and donors. It needs to be noted, that at the time of finalizing this report WFP PG is developing a “WFP Guidance on resource mobilization for CSPs” specifically for COs, along with a PG toolkit on Communications, Advocacy, Partnerships, and Resource mobilization.

¹¹³ This is noted in corporate and policy evaluations, such as the evaluation of WFP’s School Feeding Policy (WFP 2011g), and the synthesis of Four Strategic Evaluations on the Transition from, Food Aid to Food Assistance (WFP 2012f), as well as in recent country portfolio evaluations, such as the ones for Afghanistan (2012) (WFP 2012c), Indonesia (2014) (WFP 2014o) and Timor Leste (2013) (WFP 2013e).

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

142. WFP's capacity development work, both in terms of funding and continuity of engagement, has been constrained by the agency's emergency focus and short-term operational horizon.

143. Most of the factors that have limited the scope, effectiveness and likely sustainability of WFP's CD work are less due to external factors than to the consequences of managerial decisions taken or not taken since 2009.

- CD is not prominently positioned within WFP's organizational structure;
- Financial resources invested in promoting CD in WFP have been limited to a one-time trust fund;
- The small CD unit has not been able to exercise strong leadership for policy implementation;
- There have been only incomplete attempts to strengthen relevant staff capacities or to tailor resource mobilization efforts to capacity development needs; and,
- Despite some improvements, corporate monitoring and reporting on capacity development remains weak and inconsistent, which limits WFP's ability to showcase and learn from its work.

144. Capacity development has been cited in numerous corporate evaluations since 2009. There have been repeated recommendations for WFP to strengthen the definition, approach, measurement, funding and staffing of CD activities. As a topic, it was made the subject of a stand-alone strategic objective in the SP 2008-2013 but there were few results reported as the systems to support its implementation were insufficient. In the SP 2014-2017, CD was mainstreamed throughout all four SOs but without the commensurate organizational engagement in a range of areas needed to ensure its success.

145. WFP is well positioned to engage further in capacity strengthening support to country partners based on its proven expertise, especially in, though not limited to, areas around food-related emergency preparedness and response. The agency's strategic positioning is limited, however, by its prevailing image as a 'doer', and its comparative disadvantage compared to other UN agencies with more established track records of technical cooperation.

146. This evaluation showed that WFP is supporting CD processes in a wide range of geographic and thematic contexts despite limited corporate support, resources, guidance and tools. However, it also clear that in light of the evolving global context and WFP's stated ambition towards zero hunger, continuing 'business as usual' with respect to how it conceptualizes, prioritizes, and internally supports the capacity strengthening function is not an option. To do so would lead to considerable reputational risk.

147. The 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, the WHS and related dialogues clearly articulate the primacy of strengthening the capacities of countries to develop and manage their own hunger solutions. WFP's new Integrated Roadmap to Zero Hunger reorganizes WFP's planning, budgeting and monitoring systems to respond to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. In WFP's forthcoming SP 2017-2021, capacity strengthening activities are

present in SOs 1 – 3 at the individual and institutional levels, at the heart of SO 4 and as a transfer modality in the new FFR. Significant attention to ensuring conceptual clarity and explicit accountabilities for this topic will be critical going forward.2030 Agenda

3.2 Lessons

148. As was the case during the evaluation of the WFP’s Gender Policy (2014), WFP has arrived at a critical juncture with regard to its capacity strengthening work. The gender evaluation noted a series of strategic considerations, many of which are equally relevant to this evaluation, including:

- i. “When will we ever learn?” Many previous policy, strategic and operations evaluations have noted similar shortcomings. If things are to change, WFP’s commitment to addressing capacity strengthening must be sincere, systematic and sustained.
- ii. There is need to establish a clear organization-wide understanding that the mainstreaming of capacity strengthening will facilitate WFP’s effective delivery of its SDG commitments, rather than competing with it or with other priorities.
- iii. A shift in mindset is critical. Capacity strengthening should be considered everybody’s business, whatever their institutional roles and wherever they work. Lead responsibility does not fall on OSZ alone.
- iv. Failure to enable WFP’s capacity strengthening role with an appropriate organisational structure, capacity and technical support poses risks to its effectiveness, efficiency and credibility.
- v. Leadership and prioritization is essential and must be sustained. Partners – including UN agencies, donors, partner governments and civil society – must combine their demands for reform with supportive action.

3.3 Recommendations

149. Based on its findings, conclusions and lessons, the evaluation team developed a total of six prioritized and sequenced recommendations that are outlined below. The recommendations are designed to give WFP’s executive leadership the means and the flexibility to continue to evolve how it addresses its mandate in light of the new global agenda and its related strategic direction.

150. Annex 21 maps the recommendations to the evaluation findings.

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
<p>1. WFP should immediately elevate the organizational attention to capacity strengthening as a core function by creating a temporary, multi-stakeholder management transition team that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) articulate WFP’s vision and strategy for capacity strengthening in line with the Integrated Road Map for 2017–2021, including conceptual and operational definitions for capacity strengthening as an issue to be mainstreamed in Strategic Objectives 1 to 3, as a programmatic focus in Strategic Objective 4, and as a transfer modality in the new Financial Framework; b) define the staff roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for capacity strengthening as a functional responsibility and as mainstreamed into other programming areas; c) review, revise and create practical tools and guidance for WFP’s capacity strengthening work in the context of its Policy on Country Strategic Plans (CSPs), including in humanitarian response; and d) remain in place until the roll-out of the CSP approach is complete. <p><u>Based on:</u> Findings 4, 6, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25.</p>	<p><u>Priority:</u> High.</p> <p><u>Responsible:</u> Policy and Programme Division (OSZ), in collaboration with other WFP units at headquarters, RBs and COs. Membership of the transition team should reflect the ongoing decentralization process and varying contexts in which WFP works.</p> <p><u>Timeframe:</u> Starting immediately upon approval of this evaluation by the WFP Executive Board, the transition management team should be time-bound until the CSPs are fully rolled out, that is for a period of approximately 2 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reflecting its focus on SDGs 2 and 17, capacity strengthening is located prominently in the new Strategic Plan 2017-2021: The envisaged results for all eight Strategic Results of the new SP make explicit reference to capacity strengthening. Similarly, one of the envisaged roles of the new Country Strategic Plans is to allow WFP to provide targeted institutional capacity-strengthening to governments to support them in designing and managing nationally owned hunger solutions. b) If WFP wants to be serious about contributing to SDGs 2 and 17, capacity development needs to be elevated o becoming a key organizational competency that is effectively mainstreamed across WFP’s thematic, geographic and functional units. The evaluation showed that this is not yet the case. One factor affecting this is that WFP does not currently have a viable organizational function dedicated to promoting and driving the agency’s work on capacity development. c) In absence of a strong central function, several Regional Bureaus and Country Offices, as well as different thematic sections within the organizations have developed their own approaches to planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting on capacity development-related work. To date, these approaches have not yet systematically informed corporate learning and practice. d) Over the next couple of years, WFP will work using a dual track approach, with an increasing number of countries gradually introducing CSPs, and a slowly decreasing number of countries continuing to engage in capacity strengthening without CSPs in place. Both types

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
		of contexts will require consistent, yet also context-specific guidance on how to plan for, implement, monitor and report on capacity strengthening activities and results, in alignment with the new SP, Corporate Results Framework and Financial Framework Review.
The following four recommendations (recommendations 2-5) are specific issues that will need to be addressed as part of WFP's vision and strategy for capacity development outlined in Recommendation 1.		
<p>2. In implementing the Integrated Road Map – specifically the Policy on CSPs – WFP should ensure that country offices are provided with relevant, concrete and practical tools and guidance on capacity strengthening within 12 months. This guidance should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) be based on good practice drawn from WFP's own experience and that of other United Nations agencies; b) be applicable in contexts along the humanitarian–development–peacebuilding nexus; and c) integrate criteria or conditions in which WFP support may no longer be required – including transition and exit plans – into the country strategic planning process. <p><u>Based on:</u> Findings 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, and especially 24.</p>	<p><u>Priority:</u> High. Dependent on and following implementation of recommendation 1.</p> <p><u>Responsible:</u> Management Transition Team and the Performance Management and Monitoring Division (RPM), in consultation with thematic units, regional bureaux and country offices.</p> <p><u>Timeframe:</u> Within the first six months of establishing the Management Transition Team for CD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In the past, WFP donors have expressed dissatisfaction with corporate reporting on capacity development, and may not be inclined to fund capacity strengthening related aspects of CSPs if they do not get a clearer sense of related results, and of what and how WFP contributes to them. b) Several RBs and COs have developed their own approaches to capturing both quantitative and qualitative data. These differ in their methodologies and foci and have not yet informed corporate practice. c) The evaluation noted considerable gaps in the available data on the universe of WFP capacity development-related activities, expenditures, and results. Some of these gaps are likely to be addressed through the new CRF and the FFR, which, together, will allow for more detailed and more comprehensive monitoring of CD activities and expenditures. This does, however, not yet address the noted information gap related to capacity development results. d) For outcome level monitoring, the new CRF strongly relies on two indicators: the Zero Hunger Capacity Scorecard, and the Emergency Preparedness Capacity Index. While these tools will allow presenting changes in national capacities in quantitative terms, they capture neither

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
		<p>information on WFP's contributions to capacity strengthening results, nor on the nature and reasons for related change processes.</p> <p>e) Illustrative qualitative studies done in regular intervals may constitute a valuable complement to the type of semi-annual or annual reporting based on global indicators aggregated at the global level as outlined in the CRF. Existing reviews and mapping studies already conducted by, for example, the RBB, RBP and RBN already provide valuable ideas in this regard. WFP strategic, policy and country operation evaluations provide another multi-faceted vehicle for assessing and capturing WFP contributions to capacity strengthening results.</p>
<p>3. WFP should further enhance its internal capability to effectively support national capacity strengthening processes within 12 months by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) updating its People Strategy to include capacity strengthening as a functional capability; b) developing incentives for capacity strengthening work in staff performance assessments; c) designating a capacity strengthening focal point with clearly defined responsibilities and accountabilities in each regional bureau and country office; and d) accelerating the creation of a roster of 	<p><u>Priority:</u> Medium. Dependent on and following implementation of recommendation 1.</p> <p><u>Responsible:</u> Communications Unit, with regular input from the Management Transition Team, thematic units at HQ, regional bureaux and country offices.</p> <p><u>Timeframe:</u> Starting immediately with establishing a Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) There is a perception by many bilateral donors that to fund capacity strengthening efforts means to take away needed resources from humanitarian crises, while failing to fully recognize that if the incidence of such crises is to be reduced national capacity to prevent and mitigate needs to be strengthened. b) While various WFP documents, including the 2009 policy on capacity development, outline WFP's strengths and areas of expertise, the agency has not yet consistently succeeded in communicating its potential value added, and its comparative advantage over other UN agencies when it comes to capacity development. This negatively affects WFP's ability to convince donors to invest in capacity strengthening interventions, and is also likely to influence the extent to which CD ranks highly within WFP's internal culture. c) To date, the Brazil Centre of Excellence has made notable

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
<p>capacity development experts in relevant thematic and geographic areas.</p> <p><u>Based on:</u> Findings 21, 23 and 25.</p>	<p>Transition Team, and then ongoing.</p>	<p>contributions to facilitating the exchange of knowledge and lessons on capacity development through South-South and triangular cooperation, albeit primarily focused on issues of School Feeding. Overall, however, knowledge exchange on capacity development within WFP has tended to be unsystematic and focused on exchange at the country or regional levels.</p>
<p>4. WFP should continue to strengthen its provisions for monitoring and reporting on all capacity strengthening work within 12 months by expanding the quantitative and qualitative information required in SPRs and trust fund reporting, including illustrative qualitative studies covering the contexts for both CSPs and Interim CSPs.</p> <p><u>Based on:</u> Finding 4 and 24.</p>	<p><u>Priority:</u> Medium. Based on and following implementation of recommendations 1 and 3.</p> <p><u>Responsible:</u> Operations Services Department (OS), Management Transition Team, Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department (PG), regional bureaux and country offices.</p> <p><u>Timeframe:</u> Starting immediately upon creation of the Management Transition Team.</p>	<p>a) The new Country Strategic Plans have the potential to facilitate the availability of dedicated and predictable resources for capacity development of funding in a way that did not exist before. They constitute a promising basis for engaging in mid-term, systematic and integrated capacity strengthening, without being limited by different types of short term operations (EMOP, EMOP, PRRO, DEV). As such, the CPS are envisaged to help strengthen country level resource mobilization.</p> <p>b) To translate this potential into reality, Country Portfolio Budgets (CPB) will need to be broken down into categories, each of which will require justification. This means that in order for COs to allocate substantial resources to CD interventions, they will need to be able to make a convincing case to donors for that and how these interventions will complement (rather than draw resources away from) other ‘transfers’ areas (Food’, ‘Cash-based transfers’, and ‘Service delivery’).</p> <p>c) Under the CPS, some activities or outcomes will continue to be funded through trust funds. While some COs have already successfully leveraged country-level funding, many still require additional skills and support for reaching out to decentralized bilateral donors, country governments in MICs, and other potential donors such as</p>

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
		<p>from the private sector.</p> <p>d) The SDGs place strong emphasis on development actors working in partnership with each other. This is likely to direct donor preferences towards joint, or at least collaborative, initiatives. Fundraising strategies for CSPs will need to take this into account. CD components may constitute promising points of entry for joint fundraising efforts with other UN agencies as well as with developing countries' national or regional organizations.</p>
<p>5. Within six months, WFP should ensure that its internal and external communications reflect and support its strategic vision for capacity strengthening, including by presenting capacity development as one of WFP's core organizational functions in all contexts.</p> <p><u>Based on:</u> Findings 18, 19, 20, 23 and 25.</p>	<p><u>Priority:</u> Medium. Following implementation of recommendations 1 and 3.</p> <p><u>Responsible:</u> a Management Transition Team and the Human Resource Division (HRM) in consultation with regional bureaux and country offices.</p> <p><u>Timeframe:</u> Within the first year of establishing a Management Transition Team.</p>	<p>a) WFP's People Strategy does not yet reflect the organization's requirements for accessing both internal and external staff with specialized technical cooperation skills.</p> <p>b) Until now, capacity development capabilities have not ranked highly in the internal culture of WFP and the way in which performance is formally or informally assessed and rewarded.</p> <p>c) A roster of capacity development experts is under development, but is not yet operational.</p> <p>d) To date, RBs and COs have largely determined the WFP technical support human resource needs and have independently developed job profiles for specific tasks.</p> <p>e) Most current WFP staff are generalists with a focus on implementation. While all staff, regardless of their area of expertise, should develop a solid understanding of what capacity development is, not everyone can or should become a CD expert. Instead, against the backdrop of context-specific CSPs, it will be increasingly important for COs and RBs to know where and how to</p>

Recommendation	Priority, Responsible, Timeframe	Rationale
		<p>access relevant internal or external CD expertise to assist national partners in addressing specific capacity strengthening needs.</p> <p>f) While many RBs, COs and individual WFP staff and managers have demonstrated interest in and commitment to capacity development, there currently is no distinct community of practice for capacity that they could draw upon or contribute to.</p>
<p>The final recommendation is not directly linked to clarifying WFP’s vision and strategy for capacity development outlined in Recommendation 1, and is assigned the comparatively lowest priority.</p>		
<p>6. The 2009 policy update should remain in force until all elements of the Integrated Road Map are in place. WFP should then either revise the policy update or develop a new policy to articulate its strategic approach. The policy should be accompanied by dissemination tools that align with and support implementation of the Strategic Plan (2017–2021).</p> <p><u>Based on:</u> Findings 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22.</p>	<p><u>Priority:</u> Low</p> <p><u>Responsible:</u> Transition Management Team in collaboration with the Policy and Program Division (OSZ) and WFP thematic units at headquarters.</p> <p><u>Timeframe:</u> Once CSPs have been fully rolled out.</p>	<p>a) While some principles outlined in the <i>2009 policy update</i> have remained valid, the current policy update no longer reflects the evolving context of WFP’s priorities and mission under the 2030 Agenda and other international commitments.</p> <p>b) Updating the policy or developing a new policy on capacity strengthening should <i>not</i> be an immediate priority for WFP given the urgency of meaningfully embedding capacity strengthening into the roll-out of the Integrated Roadmap 2017-2021 as addressed in recommendations 1-5, and given that all WFP policies are likely to be reviewed once the new SP is fully operationalized.</p> <p>c) To ensure long-term guidance and to underscore the importance of capacity strengthening to the future of WFP and its long-term commitment to the attainment of the SDGs, a refreshed policy will be required so as to better contextualize capacity strengthening and incorporate the lessons learned from the roll out of the CPS and the first several years of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.</p>

Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
ARC	African Risk Capacity
ARI	Ability and Readiness Index
AU	African Union
CAS	Complex Adaptive Systems
CCS	Country Capacity Strengthening
CD	Capacity Development
CD&A	Capacity Development and Augmentation
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CGNA	Capacity Gaps and Needs Assessment
CO	Country Office
COMET	Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool
COMIS	Commodity Management Information System
CP	Country Programme
CPS	Corporate Partnership Strategy
CRF	Corporate Results Framework
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development
DaO	Delivery as One
DCD	Deputy Country Director
DED	the Office for Hunger Solutions
DEV	Development project
DRD	Deputy Regional Director
EAG	External Advisory Group
EB	Executive Board
EM	Evaluation Manager
EMG	Executive Management Group
EMOP	Emergency operation
EPCI	Emergency Preparedness Capacity Index
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Package
EQ	Evaluation questions
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System

ERG	External Reference Group
ET	Evaluation Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Food for Assets
FFT	Food for Training
FFR	Financial Framework Review
FPF	Forward Purchase Facility
HGSMP	Home Grown School Meals Programme
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INDECI	National Institute for Civil Defense
IR	Inception Report
IRG	Internal Reference Group
IT	Information technology
LIC	Low Income Country
LoU	Letters of Understanding
LRRD	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development activities
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIC	Middle Income Country
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRF	Management Results Framework
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NCI	National Capacity Index
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
ODOC	Direct operational costs
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
OEV	Office of Evaluation

OME	Emergency Preparedness Division
OSC	Supply Chain Division
OSE	Emergency Preparedness and Support Response Division
OSL	Logistics Division
OSLT	Logistics and Transport Service
OSN	Nutrition Advisory Office
OSZ	Policy & Programme Division
OSZA	Analysis and Nutrition Service
OSZAF	Food Security, Markets and Vulnerability Analysis
OSZI	Programme Innovation Service
OSZP	Programme Policy Service
OSZPR	Resilience and Prevention
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PE	Policy Evaluation
PG	Partnership, Governance and Advocacy Department
PGC	Partnership, Policy Coordination and Advocacy Division
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations
PSA	Programme Support and Administrative
R4	Rural Resilience Initiative
RB	Regional Bureau
RBB	Regional Bureau Bangkok
RBC	Regional Bureau Cairo
RBD	Regional Bureau Dakar
RBM	Results-Based Management
RBN	Regional Bureau Nairobi
RBP	Regional Bureau Panama
RD	Regional Directors
RMPPM	Performance Management and Reporting Branch
SABER	System Approach for Better Education Results
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SER	Summary Evaluation Report
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SO	Special Operation
SP	Strategic Plan
SPR	Standard Project Reports

ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UMG	Universal Management Group
UMIC	Upper Middle Income Country
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDAP	United Nations Development Assistance Plan
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAM	Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme

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