

## Technical Note

### Activity Evaluation

Version August 2017

#### 1. Introduction

1. The purpose of this TN is to clarify specificities of an activity evaluation noting that the DEQAS Process Guide is the main reference to describe key characteristics common to all evaluations. This note only includes information specific to ACTIVITY evaluations.

Key characteristics of an activity evaluation	
<b>Focus</b>	<p>2 main types of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transfer-based activities that consist of providing food assistance to beneficiaries</li><li>• Capacity development and augmentation activities that do not entail the provision of food assistance</li></ul>
<b>Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One activity within an operation, a Country Strategic Plan (CSP), Interim Country Strategic Plan (I-CSP), or a trust fund</li><li>• One activity implemented across several operations</li></ul>

#### 2. What is an activity evaluation?

2. In WFP, an ‘activity’ is typically a sub-component of a WFP operation or CSP/ I-CSP. As such, activity evaluations are distinct from other types of WFP evaluations in their consideration of a specific, bounded component of an operation, CSP/ I-CSP to understand if, what, how and why it is contributing to development results. The core activities WFP undertakes include General/Relief Distributions, School Feeding, Asset Creation, Training, Nutrition, HIV/TB and Capacity Strengthening activities.<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, WFP categorizes its activities into two main groups (which may overlap depending on the context). Box 1 below sets these out:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> COMET basic glossary of terms, <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000010000/download/>

<sup>2</sup> WFP (2015) Orientation Guide for Evaluation Companies: Key facts about WFP and its activities

## Box 1: Type of Activity

### 1. *Transfer-based activities that consist of providing food assistance to beneficiaries*

#### For example:

- General distributions (food/cash/vouchers)
- Food Assistance for Assets (food or cash)
- School Feeding
- Nutrition interventions including: Treatment or management of moderate acute malnutrition (moderate wasting), Prevention of acute malnutrition (wasting), Prevention of chronic malnutrition (stunting), Addressing micronutrient deficiencies (MNDs) and Support to therapeutic feeding programme (TFP)
- HIV and TB programmes (care and treatment; mitigation and safety nets)

### 2. *Capacity development and augmentation activities that do not entail the provision of food assistance.*

#### For example:

- Capacity strengthening
- Purchase for Progress
- Emergency preparedness
- Support to the humanitarian community through logistics services

3. Activity evaluations assess an ongoing or completed WFP activity, its design, implementation and results. They support **learning** from the implementation of a specific activity on what is working and what can be improved; and **accountability** in terms of the results the activity has delivered for WFP's beneficiaries and partners, against planned results.
4. Evaluation of a **single** activity within one WFP operation, CSP/ I-CSP (for example school feeding) or of a **single activity across several operations** (for example evaluation of school feeding activities across the portfolio of a country office which has PRRO and CP; or evaluation of school feeding activities within a region).

## 3. How is an activity evaluation used?

5. Findings from activity evaluations are often used:
  - To refine activities that are underway, or to make adjustments to implementation arrangements and processes
  - To design new activities or to inform introduction of new activities in other contexts
6. Where activities are being evaluated across operations, the evaluation can check consistency of approach, and assess whether the degree of alignment or differentiation is appropriate for the context.

## 4. What criteria and questions should be applied for activity evaluations?

7. The [Technical Note on Evaluation Criteria and Questions](#) provides the definitions of the evaluation criteria, and explains how they should be applied.
8. Not all evaluation criteria are suitable for all activity evaluations. Depending on the nature of the activity, and on what the evaluation wishes to emphasize, criteria should be selected and

applied as appropriate. For example, sustainability is not a suitable criterion for emergency food distributions – since emergency responses are not intended to be long-term interventions - though connectedness (linkage of an emergency response to longer-term resilience issues) is.

9. Within each selected evaluation criteria, specific evaluation questions will need to be identified. These will depend on the activity, and the context in which it is being implemented, as well as the issues the Commissioning Office wants to explore. Examples are available in [Technical Note on Evaluation Criteria and Questions](#). These examples need to be adapted for activity evaluations. Table 1 identifies some of the issues that activity evaluations might cover for each evaluation criteria.
10. Finally, all evaluations in WFP are required to integrate Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEEW), as part of WFP's commitments under its 2015-2020 Gender Policy (See [Technical Note on integrating gender in WFP evaluations](#), [Checklist](#), and [Quick Guide](#)).

**Table 1: Examples of issues per evaluation criteria**

Criteria	Examples of issues
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>General distribution</i> – transfer modality (food/cash/voucher); quantity, quality and variety of ration;</li> <li>• <i>Nutrition</i> – rations content; targeting modalities;</li> <li>• <i>FFA</i> – seasonality and GEEW needs; targeting ; appropriateness of design in relation to location; alignment with national social protection policies and programmes;</li> <li>• <i>School Feeding</i>: targeting rationales for schools; alignment with national school feeding policies and interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All-achievement against set Strategic Results, outcomes and outputs</i>;</li> <li>• <i>General distribution</i> –delivery to affected populations; use of transfer modality to improve household food security;</li> <li>• <i>Nutrition</i>: treatment and prevention effects; reductions in MAM</li> <li>• <i>FFA</i>: effects on resilience; quality of assets created; changed household asset levels; extent of shared benefits created</li> <li>• <i>School feeding</i>: improvements in enrolment, attendance, completion</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>General distributions</i>: <i>omega and alpha</i> value; food losses</li> <li>• <i>Nutrition</i>: recovery rates and times; accuracy of targeting mechanisms</li> <li>• <i>FFA</i>: seasonality; role of community targeting mechanisms;</li> <li>• <i>School feeding</i>; timeliness of rations in relation to school terms; cost compared to e.g. conditional transfers</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>School feeding</i>: change in literacy rates</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>FFA</i>: community ownership of assets produced; management plans for assets post-intervention; integration in national social protection policies and plans;</li> <li>• <i>School feeding</i>; handover plans to government; integration into national social protection policies and plans</li> </ul>

## 5. Key issue to consider prior to prepare for an activity evaluation?

11. Key issue to consider when considering an activity evaluation are:

<b>Strategic importance of the activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the overall proportion of the activity within the operation/ CSP/ I-CSP (in \$value and coverage) significant to warrant a specific evaluation?</li> <li>• How will evaluation of this activity provide learning about the effects of WFP's activity across the thematic/country/activity/ CSP/ I-CSP?</li> <li>• Would this evaluation have broader relevance for informing the design of activities in different country contexts?</li> <li>• Is this activity representative of other interventions taking place in other contexts?</li> <li>• Is there momentum within the government/donor community/other actors in relation to the sector(s) covered by the activity that can be informed by and/or inform evaluation of this WFP activity?</li> </ul>
<b>Feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the activity been funded and implemented to an extent that makes evaluation possible?</li> <li>• Is the activity supported by a logframe or Theory of Change? Is there sufficient monitoring data to inform the evaluation?</li> </ul>
<b>Donor requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any specific donor evaluation requirement for this activity?</li> </ul>

## 6. Data requirements and evaluation approaches for an activity evaluation

12. Any evaluation uses monitoring data as one source of information. But activity evaluation should particularly benefit of the data from the existing WFP monitoring systems as they are mostly organized per activity.
13. The [DEQAS Process Guide](#) for Decentralized Evaluations and the [Technical Note on Methodology](#) provide more information on data requirements and evaluation approaches for all evaluations including activity evaluations.

For more information on Decentralized Evaluations visit our webpage

<http://newgo.wfp.org/how-do-i/do-an-evaluation>

Or contact the DE team at: [wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org)