

# Technical Note

## Operation Evaluation

Version August 2017

### 1. Introduction

1. The purpose of this TN is to clarify specificities of an operation 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 OPERATION evaluations.
2. To date, WFP has been operating under four **types of Operations** (also called programme categories). As part of the Integrated Road Map to Zero Hunger, the Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) will become WFP's strategic and programmatic instrument for a country and will replace existing operations. Until CSPs are in fully rolled out in all countries where WFP is operating, the Operation Evaluations remain relevant. The main characteristics of each operation type are provided below.

**Table 1: Characteristics of WFP operations**

Summary characteristics of an operation in WFP	
<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 strengthening and augmentation activities that do not entail the provision of food assistance</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emergency Operations (EMOP)</b> are launched in response to natural and/or man-made disasters; their emphasis is on saving lives, reducing malnutrition and protecting livelihoods.</li> <li>• <b>Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO)</b> respond to protracted needs during and in the aftermath of complex emergencies and long-term crises. They focus on re-establishing and stabilizing livelihoods and food security to the extent possible, while providing relief as necessary.</li> <li>• Development programmes, which comprise <b>country programmes (CPs)</b> and <b>development projects (DEVs)</b> support longer-term objectives. CPs last for up to five years and include several components, while DEVs are generally limited to a single activity.</li> <li>• <b>Special operations (SOs)</b> are undertaken to rehabilitate and enhance transport and logistics infrastructure to facilitate the timely and efficient delivery of food assistance, especially for emergency and protracted relief, and to enhance coordination within the United Nations system and with other partners through the provision of common services.</li> <li>• <b>Trust funds</b> are not a programme category in themselves, but are used as mechanisms for programming extra-budgetary resources received as contributions for specified purposes – such as providing services to governments, development partners and other United Nations organizations – that do not fall within one of the four programme categories but that are consistent with WFP's objectives and policies.</li> </ul>

## 2. What is an operation evaluation?

3. An Operation Evaluation “assess the appropriateness, performance and results of individual operations, helping to embed evaluation planning and use of results in the programme cycle.<sup>1</sup>”
4. **Operation Evaluations** evaluate the design, implementation and results of the Operation—including its component activities - against specific evaluation criteria. They also provide reasons for successes and shortcomings – helping WFP to learn from both what has worked, and what has not.

## 3. What criteria and questions should be applied for Operation Evaluations?

5. The [Technical Note on Evaluation Criteria and Questions](#) provides the definitions of the evaluation criteria, and explains how they should be applied.
6. **Not all evaluation criteria are suitable for all Operation Evaluations.** At the minimum, all evaluations should assess relevance (appropriateness), effectiveness and efficiency. Additional criteria are selected and applied depending on the nature of the Operation – particularly whether it is an emergency-focused or a development-oriented Operation - and the purposes of the evaluation. For example, sustainability is not a suitable criterion for an Emergency Operation – since emergency responses are not intended to be long-term interventions - though connectedness (linkage of an emergency response to longer-term resilience issues) is.
7. Examples of evaluation questions under each criteria are available in the [Technical Note on Evaluation Criteria and Questions](#), but Table 2 below adapts these for WFP Operations specifically.
8. Additionally, **specific Activity areas within WFP** operations including nutrition, asset creation, cash and vouchers and P4P have their own Guidance, which it is important to consult prior to designing questions for an operation evaluation. In particular, read the [Technical Note on key aspects to consider when evaluating FFA programmes](#).

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<sup>1</sup> WFP Evaluation Policy (2016-2021)

**Table 2: Example of issues per evaluation criteria**

<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Example of issues – Operation types</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance of choice of activities (e.g. General distribution, school feeding, nutrition) to beneficiaries' immediate needs; Appropriateness of transfer modalities (in-kind, cash, voucher) to beneficiary needs</li> <li>• relevance of the Operation's balance between relief and recovery-oriented activities; extent to which activities were geared to rebuilding livelihoods; extent to which the Operation supported national food security and nutrition objectives</li> <li>• Extent to which the Operation was geared to supporting the achievement of national development goals and objectives on food security and nutrition; targeting of marginalized or excluded groups</li> <li>• Extent to which the Operation was geared to building human and physical assets for the long term; appropriateness of the Operation's coverage in terms of the country's stability</li> <li>• Extent to which the SO was designed to support the needs of the emergency response/wider humanitarian community.</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>achievement against relevant outputs and outcomes as per the project design</i></li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of each specific activity within the operation</li> <li>• Cumulative effects of multiple activities on beneficiaries' lives</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer modality choices; Omega value; ration adequacy; proportionality to need; comparative cost-effectiveness between relief and recovery components; predictability of transfers; cost-sharing between components, ration adequacy</li> <li>• Efficiency of community targeting mechanisms; targeting accuracy; proportionality to need;</li> <li>• Predictability of transfers; seasonality; use of national systems for delivery, logistics choices, food losses ; timeliness (pipeline).</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extent to which capacity strengthening strategies were developed and applied (institutions and individuals); extent to which national or community ownership was promoted and generated; extent to which the Operation was integrated into national systems/strategies/budgets</li> </ul>

#### **4. Key issues to consider when undertaking an Operation Evaluation**

9. When undertaking an operation Evaluation, key issues to consider are summarized in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Key issues to consider**

<b>Strategic importance of the operation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the operation (in \$ value and coverage) significant enough to warrant a specific evaluation?</li> <li>• How will evaluation of this operation provide learning about the effects of WFP's interventions across the country portfolio?</li> <li>• Would this evaluation have broader organizational relevance for informing the design of operations in different country contexts?</li> <li>• Is this operation representative of other interventions taking place in other contexts?</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there momentum within the government/donor community/other actors in relation to the sector(s) covered by the operation that can be informed by and/or inform evaluation of this WFP operation?</li> </ul>
<b>Timing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the most appropriate time to conduct the evaluation so that it can best inform future decisions on programme implementation/design, and/or when there are maximum opportunities for learning?</li> <li>• If the operation has been evaluated in the last three years (through a centralized or decentralized evaluation) are there particular reasons to evaluate it again? Were there needs that were not met or questions unanswered by the past evaluations?<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the operation been funded and implemented to an extent that makes evaluation possible?</li> <li>• Does the operation have a logframe? 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 requirement for evaluation?</li> </ul>

## 5. Data and approaches for Operation Evaluation?

10. 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 operation 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)

<sup>2</sup> For example, if the operation was included in a Country Portfolio Evaluation, and the Country Offices decides the findings warrant closer examination through a specific operation evaluation