6. Principal recommendations

The following recommendations are linked to the findings and conclusions presented earlier in this report. The aim of the recommendations is to suggest ways to improve and amend aspects of WFP's evaluation function where the Peer Panel has identified problems or shortcomings in relation to UNEG's norms and standards or to established evaluation practice.

The recommendations are presented under the headings of a number of issues instead of being sorted along the three main dimensions for the review: independence, credibility and utility. This is intended to make it easier to see to which area or function a recommendation should be applied.

While all recommendations are in principle directed to the management of WFP, i.e. the Executive Director, they are for practical reasons addressed to either WFP or to the evaluation office OEDE, depending on whether it concerns an overall, corporate issue or an issue that can be handled by OEDE directly. As the governing body of WFP they are also directed to the Executive Board for their consideration.

6.1 Relationship between OEDE and the Executive Board

To the Executive Board:

The Panel considers the current reporting lines between OEDE, the Executive Director and the Executive Board as appropriate. However, in order to strengthen OEDE's credibility and perceived independence and to enable deeper engagement and follow-up on evaluations by the Board, the Panel suggest the following measures:

- Establish a Board sub-committee on evaluations in line with existing practice at IFAD. This sub-committee could then be tasked to meet at regular intervals with OEDE to discuss such issues as planned strategies, budgetary allocations, strategic use of evaluations and evaluation follow-up.

- Furthermore, future appointments and contract extensions of the Director of Evaluation should be discussed with the Board prior to their implementation. It would be appropriate to ask a Board Member (possibly the head of the potential evaluation sub-committee) to participate in future interview panels.

6.2 Evaluation policy and strategy

OEDE should develop an evaluation policy that encapsulates and consolidates the previous evaluation policies and fully meets all United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation.

Such an updated and consolidated evaluation policy should i.a. cover:

- explanation of the concept and role of evaluation within WFP;
- explanation of the different types of evaluation applied within WFP as well as between evaluation and other instruments for assessment applied in WFP (e.g. policy research, internal audit, external audit, inspection, after action reviews);
- definition of the roles and the responsibilities regarding the evaluation function within WFP, both at headquarters and at Regional Bureaux and Country Offices;
- the mandate of the OEDE (see also below);
- description of the ways in which evaluations are programmed and prioritised;
- description of the way in which WFP's two-year budget for evaluations as well as the budgets for decentralised evaluations are defined and by whom;
- description of the ways in which individual evaluations are budgeted, organised, managed and adopted;
- mechanisms for the management response of evaluations (both OEDE and decentralised evaluations);
- description of the adherence to WFP's evaluation guidelines and a quality assurance system supporting the decentralised evaluation system.

This policy should be actively shared with the Executive Board, WFP staff, WFP partners and evaluation teams engaged by OEDE or for decentralised evaluations.

The evaluation policy should then be translated into action through the development of an evaluation strategy which would specify how OEDE would implement this policy. The strategy should follow a logical framework format by setting clear goals, outcomes, and outputs, indicate targets and measurable performance indicators. Considering the

current challenges to improve both centralised and decentralised evaluation functions (with a focused on improving learning and accountability), it may well be that the strategy will imply increasing the funding for the evaluation function in WFP. Given the fact that this is unlikely to be a realistic proposition, the Panel nevertheless feels that in the medium-term OEDE should approach key donors for short-term funding of specialist staff positions, junior professional officers, evaluation posts in Regional Bureaux and support to modify, develop and test appropriate tools and guidelines.

The role and purpose of and the relationship between (a) self-evaluation, which essentially means self-reflection on performance using, for example, AARs as one method, (b) decentralised evaluations (where Country Offices commission evaluations of their own interventions using external evaluators), and (c) external evaluation (where OEDE, which has no involvement in programs, commissions evaluations) should be studied. It should be clearly articulated in both the evaluation policy and also in the overarching policy and strategy documents of WFP.

6.3   OEDE's mandate

The mandate for OEDE should form part of WFP's evaluation policy. The OEDE mandate should include:

- undertake (a) strategic (thematic) evaluations of WFP's management and programme policies, conduct evaluations of specific policies in the organisation and (b) evaluate the outcomes and impact of WFP funded programmes and projects (both humanitarian and development);
- promote the use of evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons in policy development and programme/project formulation;
- ensure that evaluation findings are accessible throughout the organisation and to WFP's stakeholders (Executive Board, cooperating partners and other stakeholders) and that evaluation results and lessons are build into WFP's management information system;
- develop and disseminate evaluation guidelines, methods and tools to assist OEDE staff and programme managers in the conduct of evaluations;
- develop methodological tools and systems to support results orientation in WFP (the OEDE should establish a closer working relation with Oversight, the Change Management Unit and units currently responsible for 'mainstreamed' RBM);
- engage in continuous interaction with Country Offices and Regional Bureaux to foster the internalisation and application of evaluation standards within WFP as well as among cooperating partners;

- oversee the evaluation function of WFP, including compliance with and tracking of recommendations adopted in the management response to evaluations;

- prepare the Annual Evaluation Report which is submitted to the Board (preferably the Annual Evaluation Report should include a section on how the lessons and recommendations have been followed up as well as a section on the quality of decentralised evaluations);

- maintain and develop partnerships within the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), ALNAP, and other appropriate international and regional evaluation networks in order further develop the quality of evaluation and the harmonisation of evaluation practices.

6.4   External accountability;
    relations with partners and stakeholders

To OEDE:

A key challenge for WFP's accountability is that, while institutional accountability tends to be 'upwards' towards their Board and major donors, WFP's accountability towards intended beneficiaries is mainly dependent on the interface between the host government and/or NGO cooperating partners.

Recommendations

- OEDE should develop an 'accountability map' of key WFP stakeholders, both internal and external, to help in clarifying roles and responsibilities.

- Based on this 'accountability map' develop guidance both for WFP staff in functional units and partners identified in the map as key stakeholders to help them in fulfilling their accountability responsibilities and enhancing communications.

An example of a stakeholder "map" linked to a communication strategy is shown below. While this implies that WFP staff may need to adopt different approaches with certain stakeholder groups and reprioritize resources, recommendations below attempt to illustrate how participatory approaches can help spread the workload and make more effective use of limited resources.

Key stake-holder groups	What info do they need?	What do they need info for?	When will they need it?	How should it be com-municated?*	Who should communi-cate it?
WFP field staff					
Host govt					
NGO Partners					
Communities					
Donors					
WFP Board					

* Typical examples are workshops, stakeholder meetings, list(s) of FAQs, summary docs, talking points, bilateral meetings, conferences, role-play, video, policy papers, guidelines to WFP.

Recommendation

WFP should look for ways of promoting, and providing incentives for staff to adopt more participatory approaches in evaluations. While engagement with partners (whether at a country, regional or global level) is normally with WFP staff outside OEDE, OEDE could play a facilitatory role in terms of:

- emphasising participatory practices in a revised evaluation policy;
- adapting, adopting and disseminating relevant guidelines; OEDE staff involved in evaluations, either as a manager and/or team member, can model or facilitate participatory processes.

A genuine participatory approach requires substantive involvement of relevant stakeholders at each stage of the programme and project cycle, not only at the evaluation stage, and there is extensive 'good practice' guidance available. WFP staff should thus already be using participatory approaches with partners anyway and the responsibility of the OEDE evaluation manager and evaluation team leader is to make optimal use of participatory systems already in place during the planning, implementation and utilisation of the evaluation.

As described in the report, findings during the current Peer Review suggest that participatory approaches are not widely applied which implies that OEDE has a role to play in building capacity of WFP field staff to:

- Ensure that WFP field staff are provided with appropriate support and guidelines to facilitate participatory approaches during evaluation processes. This may start with guidance to ensure that WFP staff are aware that sharing of draft ToRs, reports, etc. with external stakeholders is not only authorized, but also encouraged.
- OEDE staff should as much as possible "model" participatory approaches, both in their roles as an evaluation manager or, periodically, as a team member. OEDE staff could also assist in facilitating or

advising on Country Office-organised workshops to disseminate results of evaluations.

- OEDE should use communication and learning strategies to support the above efforts.

6.5   Management response

The evaluation policy of 2003, where the responsibility for management response is delegated to the Director of the now defunct OEDR[9] under whom the OEDE was located, may be one reason why the lines of responsibility are blurred regarding this issue. However, it seems that the OEDE for some time has contributed to the lack of clarity by accepting, at least in some cases, to coordinate the response before an evaluation is submitted to the Executive Board.

- WFP should, both in principle and in practice, establish a clear division of responsibility regarding management response between the evaluation function and the organisation's line management. After an evaluation has been submitted to the Executive Director the Evaluation Office should not be involved with drafting or compilation of responses from different parts of the organisation; the general principle is that the Executive Director has the overall responsibility for management response whether the actual drafting is delegated or not to other parts of WFP.

- The management response mechanism should include rules about the timeframe for the response and procedures for follow-up of the management response as well as for reporting to the Executive Board and the OEDE about the results of the follow-up.

- The management response should, whenever appropriate, distinguish between short term and long term responses as well as between operational measures directly related to the subject matter for the evaluation and general lessons to be learnt by WFP and its partners.

- The management responses should include justification for not accepting a specific recommendation.

- A similar system for management response should be used for decentralised evaluations. The same kind of division of responsibilities can for obvious reasons not be established when e.g. a Country Director both commissions an evaluation and decides on management response but it is essential that ways are created for formal re-

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[9] The 2003 evaluation policy says in paragraph 30: "…the Director of OEDE will also formally submit he summary reports to the Executive Director through the Director of OEDR, thus permitting the Executive Director to prepare management's response to the recommendations for the Executive Board as an information paper. Responsibility for management's response will be delegated to the Director of OEDR, whose final responsibility will be to ensure that the lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation are translated into action."

sponses to such evaluations. For example, when an evaluation is carried out by external evaluators a Country Director can still independently formulate a management response and report to the Regional Bureau Director or the Executive Director. Follow-up should also be the Country Office's responsibility with reporting on the results upwards in the organisation.

- The management response and follow-up mechanism should be transparent with relevant documents easily accessible for WFP and partners and routinely posted in electronic form.

- Mechanisms should be found to improve the quality, credibility and ownership of evaluation recommendations which form the basis for management response. Such mechanisms may include developing recommendations in dialogue with primary stakeholders, and/or leaving recommendations up to those responsible for decisions and action in the organisation, based upon engagement by primary stakeholders around the findings and conclusions of the evaluation report.

6.6   Evaluation quality

The current emphasis placed on improving the quality, rigor and harmonisation of OEDE's work as well as the focus on systematic processes, quality checks and tools such as stakeholder maps and evaluation matrices are highly encouraged. In addition to the ongoing systematisation of processes and the development of templates and codes of conduct the Panel recommend that:

- all older documents that might cause confusion be recalled;

- Terms of Reference of evaluation teams include the stipulation that they should adhere as far as possible to the chosen professional evaluation standards or guidelines (for example the UNEG Norms and Standards; African Evaluation Guidelines; International Program Evaluation Standards). Justification should be provided in the report for key standards that were inappropriate or not met;

- further institutionalise the practice of scoping and inception missions to be undertaken by OEDE evaluation managers and team leaders to (a) help determine evaluability; (b) focus the evaluation; (c) increase the buy-in among, and contribution by primary stakeholders; and (d) help shape the final Terms of Reference and form the basis for the inception report;

- ensure all reports contain a comprehensive description of the methodology, including but not limited to the rationale for the choice of methodology, the final evaluation matrix, ethical considerations and technical constraints and level of adherence to appropriate evaluation standards;

- meta-evaluations should be done – as intended by OEDE – on all strategic and selected decentralised evaluations. Care should however be taken that they are conducted by evaluation experts who are well acquainted with standard meta-evaluation frameworks even if tailor-made frameworks are used for WFP.

The capacity of OEDE staff should be maintained over time to stimulate interest in the evaluation field and encourage professionalism. We recommend that:

- ample time should be allocated and incentives should be provided for staff to keep up with new developments in the field of evaluation.

6.7   Organisational learning

The tension and complementarities between evaluation for accountability and for learning seem not to be acknowledged everywhere in WFP. This requires more attention. Ideally the learning element should be linked to a larger organisational knowledge management strategy.

Recommendations

OEDE should establish mechanisms to systematically harvest lessons from existing evaluations. Such lessons should then be proactively shared, using internal knowledge management fora and tools such as the PASSiton, as well as external knowledge sharing fora such as ALNAP, the IASC and relevant partners.

Innovative methods for extracting and sharing of evaluation lessons should be investigated, building on the experiences of other organisations with extensive experience in this field. These would include

- creating greater ownership of evaluation results through the manner in which the evaluation process is managed;
- investigating the potential of various tailor-made communication methods for reporting tentative and final evaluation results;
- conducting frequent meta-analyses across evaluations on themes of importance to WFP. This presupposes that the evaluations will be designed in a manner that will enable extraction of contextualized lessons on such themes;
- identifying organisational disincentives for learning and knowledge and addressing them.

6.8   Monitoring and RBM

To WFP:

WFP should give high priority to address the disconnect between its various results-focused data collection, reporting and analysis tools. A thorough review of existing field monitoring systems and applications is vital to ensure that evaluations as well as the corporate monitoring system have access to more reliable, relevant and comparable data.

Ways should be developed and maintained to ensure that all interventions are linked to proper monitoring mechanisms, both at local and corporate levels, and include objectives and indicators that facilitate evaluations which satisfy WFP's as well as external stakeholders' needs.

6.9   Team selection and procurement
of external evaluation expertise

To OEDE:

It is recommended that OEDE develops a transparent, rigorous and competitive approach to the selection of team leaders. This should include advertising the evaluation consultancies on appropriate listserves, shortlisting based on expression of interest, shortlisting and selecting team leaders based on the submission of an approach note and on interviews. If possible, team leaders should be identified early on and be involved in the identification and selection of the rest of the team.

All evaluation teams should include at least one evaluation specialist, preferably the team leader, who has sufficient knowledge about and experience with current evaluation approaches and methods.

6.10   Staffing of OEDE

The peer review considers the current mix of internal WFP career staff and externally recruited professional evaluators suitable. However, given the technical nature and professional skills profile of these positions, the Panel recommend WFP to

- allow OEDE to select internal staff based on a professional recruitment process rather than through the standard reassignment exercise. This should include a selection process based on the staff members' interest in work in OEDE, the extent to which their competencies match the ones needed by OEDE, and a competency-based interview of the top three candidates;

- continue to allow external recruitment of evaluation specialists;

- base OEDE's staff profile on the profile of evaluators developed by UNEG;

- consider how to ensure an appropriate career path for evaluation specialists within the organisation and within the UN system.

6.11   Budget for evaluations

To address concerns that only a small portion of the overall evaluation budget is within the direct control of OEDE, WFP's senior management should devise ways to safeguard the considerable funding allocated to evaluations for the next biennium. The use of Direct Support Cost (DSC) of projects appears a budgetary necessity for the time being but it is not an ideal situation. Based on prior experience with this model, it is critical that the Executive Director and senior management ensure the full use of these funds by holding managers accountable for (not) implementing decentralised evaluations. Furthermore, management should consider to 'earmark' strategic and sensitive decentralised evaluations for OEDE-management to thus reduce the risk that offices seek to bypass OEDE and to ensure full independence where most needed.

The establishment of a centrally managed fund (budget line) for evaluation (both OEDE evaluations and decentralised evaluations) should be investigated.