



2. Methodology

The methodology used by the evaluation team consisted of four main methods:

- Research, largely centred about a collection of documents gathered by the preparatory study undertaken for WFP by Tufts University.
- Interviews with key informants in Rome and in Sudan including staff from WFP, cooperating partners, other United Nations Agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross in both Khartoum and Darfur, and a limited number of Government staff.
- Focus group meetings with beneficiaries in Darfur.
- Direct observation.

The team was very fortunate to have the benefit of the extensive preparatory work undertaken by Tufts University, including a field visit to Khartoum and Darfur by the Tufts team and WFP evaluation manager in late 2004. The report prepared by Tufts as a result of this work included a summary background and conflict analysis, a meta-evaluation of other recent Darfur evaluations, a stakeholder assessment as well as a summary of key issues for consideration based on field interviews with stakeholders from WFP Khartoum and El Fisher offices, the Government of Sudan, donors, WFP cooperating partners and beneficiaries, and Sudanese academic and civil society.

Interviews with key informants were a very important source of information for the evaluation. A list of persons met can be found in Annex 2. All interviews with key informants from outside WFP and meetings with beneficiaries were conducted without any WFP staff members being present. Interviewees were told that their comments would not be attributed to them by name, or in such a form as would render them identifiable.

Given the time lapse between the end of the 2005 EMOP and this evaluation, direct observation played a limited role in the evaluation. However, many of the circumstances of the EMOP remained the same and this allowed the team to identify some issues with logistics and with distribution practice.

2.1. The evaluation questions

The terms of reference offered a priority list of issues and a huge range of potential evaluation questions deriving from the Tufts preparatory work. The evaluation team reduced these to a series of 20 hypotheses about the WFP programme to be tested. The questions were developed on the basis of the terms of reference with input both from team members and from an external reference panel. The final version of the 20 hypotheses to be tested is presented below, and reflects the primary focus of the evaluation as a summative⁵ one with some formative elements.

⁵ Evaluations that are primarily meant to contribute to learning are often called *formative* evaluations, whereas evaluations for accountability are described as *summative* evaluations (Molund, Schill, & Sida, 2004, p. 13).



Table 6: Hypotheses tested by the evaluation

No.	Hypothesis
1:	The design, scale, timing, and scope of the EMOP and changes in it were proportionate to the changing levels of needs.
2:	The way in which the EMOP was implemented was appropriate for the needs of the affected population.
3:	The addition of sugar and additional cereal acted as an income transfer, met milling costs, and supported private markets in remote areas.
4:	WFP's food distribution complemented the interventions of other actors, including affected households, and was sufficiently coordinated with them.
5:	WFP interventions reached those who needed them and minimised leakage to those who did not.
6:	WFP's food basket met the food needs of those affected by the crisis including the principal vulnerable groups.
7:	The provision of food by WFP had a positive impact on the protection of the affected population.
8:	The various measures adopted by WFP reduced the food-aid pull factor.
9:	WFP took effective steps in its programme to take account of gender and of the risks of gender-based violence or exploitation.
10:	WFP took innovative approaches to maximise coverage in the face of severe constraints.
11:	The logistics system established by WFP, and the approach taken (airlift and own fleet) met the needs of the programme in a timely manner.
12:	The FLAs and distribution strategies adopted by WFP and its Cooperating Partners were appropriate and maximised the impact of food aid.
13:	The distribution of food items as an additional income transfer was more efficient than a mixture of food and cash would have been.
14:	Donor's funding policies were coherent with WFP mission.
15:	WFP's food operations were coherent with agreements with other UN agencies, with standards, and with WFP policy.
16:	WFP was able to monitor the effectiveness of its programme and inform managers in good time when changes were needed.
17:	WFP demonstrated learning in its Darfur operations.
18:	WFP structured the management of the Darfur emergency response to enable a rapid scale up and adequate support.
19:	WFP food prevented widespread nutritional distress and mortality in Darfur.
20:	Beneficiaries were reasonably satisfied with the assistance that they got from WFP.

2.2. Evaluation team constraints

The team encountered a number of significant constraints in undertaking the evaluation. The first of these was the same constraint that grips the whole of WFP's operations in Darfur – security. Security concerns meant that it was not possible for the team to visit as many sites as originally hoped, and prevented any visits to non-camp rural distribution sites, or to areas under SLM control.

The second constraint was simply that of timing. The field work took place in August, more than seven months after the end of the period under review. This meant that in some



cases, persons interviewed could not comment on 2004 and 2005 but only on their direct experience in 2006.

A third constraint was that the evaluation had a primary focus on accountability. Given that the activity evaluated had ended seven months previously, this limited the amount of evaluative guidance that the evaluation team could provide to the country office⁶.

The final constraint was that the evaluation dealt primarily with the two Darfur EMOPs and specifically excluded a full evaluation of the related special operations, despite their centrality to the Darfur operation.

⁶ Immediately before the field work, the Country Office requested that the evaluation be extended to cover the first six months of 2006, but this request was denied by the Evaluation Office as the evaluation contract had already been issued.