

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP EVALUATION

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Partnership with Governments in Southern Africa

Declining resources globally requires WFP to reflect systematically on its engagement with partners and programme financing more broadly. The regional bureau for Southern Africa has identified the topic of partnership with government as an area for further learning. This brief distils insights from 15 evaluations conducted in the region.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR WFP EVALUATIONS

This Brief points to several gaps in evaluative evidence on government partnerships. These include limited evidence about the types, and effectiveness of the partnerships, the most effective modes of collaboration with government, sustainability of government partnership outcomes, and levels of government ownership.

Key areas future centralised and decentralised evaluations could explore include:

- Level and modes of leveraging domestic resources, including International Financial Institutions funding (IFI) at country office level.
- Results of capacity strengthening and levels of government ownership.
- Results of WFP service delivery to government.

Commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation

6 KEY INSIGHTS

1 There is a need to think through both the content of, and approach to, capacity needs assessments, and not limit these assessments to technical aspects but to also consider resourcing and political context.

Lack of, or sub-optimal designed, capacity needs assessments limits the ability of WFP to select the right government partners; develop evidence-based strategies that are relevant for the current context; and, ensure that resourcing is appropriate.

FINDINGS

The **Zambia** Country Strategic Plan Evaluation found that close engagement led to joint assessments that resulted in better understanding of needs, risks, capacities, and vulnerabilities. However, in developing the Country Strategic Plan, some government actors felt they were involved too late in the process and not deeply enough.

2 Having clear long term framework agreements, helps ensure a shared understanding of what the partnership aims to achieve and how. It allows for a more strategic focus that goes beyond individual MoUs on activities. As such, an explicit agreement also provides the basis for meaningful subsequent monitoring, assessment or evaluation of, and dynamic adaptations to, the partnership.

Within WFP's partnerships with governments, roles and responsibilities are not always clearly defined or well understood. There is limited use of longer-term perspectives, and it is often unclear whether WFP is partnering with the right people or entities in government.

FINDINGS

In **Malawi** partnerships with relevant government ministries were assessed as more strategic when they were based on formal multi-year medium-term frameworks or workplans.

In **Mozambique** Government relationships were found to be largely activity-focused rather than long-term and strategic. It was found that broader programmatic agreements and strategic frameworks could help address capacity strengthening needs within the government.

3 Explicitly planned transition strategies for phasing out donor support and institutionalizing programmes among government partners enhances the likelihood of programme sustainability. Pilot activities are used to encourage scale-up of efforts by national authorities however the absence of clear strategies for how the pilots are expected to be domesticated (including the strengthening of necessary government capacities) limits national ownerships and thereby their potential for government led sustainability.

FINDINGS

In **Mozambique**, handover was facilitated by an MoU aiming “to share and transfer WFP knowledge, processes, and tools to the National Institute for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in three key areas: emergency preparedness and logistics operations, supply chain planning and monitoring and evaluation”.

In **Zimbabwe**, WFP used pilot activities to encourage scale-up of efforts to alleviate nutritional stunting by national authorities; however, the absence of a clear strategy for how the pilots were expected to be domesticated (including the development of necessary government capacities) limited national ownership and thereby their potential for government- led sustainability. Similarly, school feeding and nutritional support activities were not designed to be scaled up or with a strategy to transfer them to government partners.

4 Effective partnership development and maintenance with government requires a mix of ‘soft’ and technical skills’. Factors that enable positive government relationships include high levels of engagement and flexibility in responding and adapting to government partner requests; a strong understanding of local political, social and cultural contexts, paired with mechanisms that promote transparency and collaboration.

There are also specific areas of technical expertise that are needed to demonstrate the value of WFP government partnerships on climate change, supply chains, disaster preparedness, social protection and gender.

FINDINGS

The **Mozambique** Country Strategic Plan Evaluation noted that the country office staff skillset did not match the country strategic plan needs in terms of technical areas. This included protection, climate supply chains, and disaster preparedness. There was also a perceived lack of capacity in the areas of political economy and governance analysis which was considered critical to understanding the context, providing inputs to policy discussions and being able to engage appropriately at central and decentralized level.

5 Establishing and maintaining diverse partnerships across ministries, national and local entities, and technical and political partners, can strengthen the likelihood of contributing to outcomes. Changes in the political, economic, or other local contexts frequently interrupt and pose challenges to WFP partnerships with governments. Working with partners at both national and local level, and with both technical and political actors within the government, creates potential for continuity of engagement and can help mitigate the effects of sudden unexpected changes.

FINDINGS

In the **Malawi** Country Strategic Plan Evaluation, the importance of engaging with national and district levels was noted. District level engagement was facilitated by WFP merging heads of field office positions with field level head of operations thereby emphasizing posting staff of adequate seniority and experience to district level operations. Several government staff (district -level and national) noted WFP’s field office as a strength, providing an open line of communication, ensuring its presence in district coordination meetings, and as a source of technical advice.

In **Madagascar**, conflict and violence in some areas of the country affected WFP programming; this was mediated by WFP’s close partnerships with mayors and governors.

6 Opportunities to increase joint evidence collection and learning exists. In some cases, WFP is working with government stakeholders to develop monitoring systems in key areas such as agricultural vulnerability and resilience or nutrition or has conducted programmatic reviews that have improved its positioning within the government. However, the learning outcomes of these activities are not well documented.

FINDINGS

In **Lesotho** there was joint monitoring with WFP and the government on the food and nutrition pilot whereas in the **Madagascar** Country Strategic plan Evaluation opportunities were missed to share knowledge with the government that could have resulted in a better approach. There was a lack of evidence showing that the government was progressively taking on responsibilities. Process and tools developed seem to be forgotten and then reinvented. The evaluation notes that the Country Office continues to act on behalf of the government instead of with it.

BREADTH OF EVIDENCE

This summary of evaluation evidence brief brings together findings from 15 evaluations commissioned by WFP between 2018 and 2022. It offers lessons on engagement with governments as part of WFP programming.

The 15 evaluations were selected to maximise thematic and geographic coverage while avoiding overlap with other evaluations. They were also selected to capture the three dimensions of WFP government partnerships, namely leveraging domestic, and co-financing, resources for the country strategic plan (CSP); country capacity strengthening and ownership for sustainability; and service provision to the government. It is important to note, however, that these evaluations did not present a fully comprehensive picture of WFP's partnerships with government.

Of the evaluations, eight were country strategic plan (CSP) evaluations and seven were decentralised or global evaluations.

This summary applied the approach and methods set out in WFP's technical note on summaries of evaluation evidence, namely:

- A purposeful sample of evaluations undertaken
- Evidence was systematically extracted from the evaluations using an analytical framework reflecting key areas of interest identified during the framing stage.

- Evidence was analysed and clustered around themes, with key patterns and findings identified alongside gaps in evidence.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.



ANNEX ■ EVALUATIONS CONSULTED

1. [Evaluation of Democratic Republic of Congo WFP Interim Country Strategic Plan 2018-2022](#)
2. [Evaluation of Mozambique Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021](#)
3. [Evaluation of Tanzania Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021](#)
4. [Evaluation of Zimbabwe Country Strategic Plan 2017-2020](#)
5. [Evaluation of Zambia Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#)
6. [Evaluation of Malawi Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#)
7. [Evaluation of Namibia Country Strategic Plan 2017-2023](#)
8. [Evaluation of Madagascar Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#)
9. [Evaluation of the Policy on South-South Triangular Cooperation](#)
10. [Strategic Evaluation on School Feeding contributions to the SDGs](#)
11. [Joint Evaluation of the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis \(RVAA\) programme \(2017-2022\)](#)
12. [Thematic Evaluation: WFP Contribution to Market Development and Food Systems in Southern Africa 2018 to 2021](#)
13. [Formative Evaluation of the Integrated Social Protection Programme in the South of Madagascar \(2020-2022\)](#)
14. [Final Evaluation of the SDG Joint fund project Social Protection for the SDGs in Malawi \(2020-2021\)](#)
15. [Evaluation of the Asset Creation and Public Works Activities in Lesotho \(2015-2019\)](#)


WFP EVALUATION

 wfp.org/independent-evaluation

 wfp.evaluation@wfp.org

 @WFP_Evaluation

 Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70, 00148 Rome, Italy

 T +39 06 65131

Cover photo: WFP/Michael Castofas