

# COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

The Kyrgyz Republic: An evaluation of WFP's  
Portfolio (2008 - 2012)

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## **Disclaimer**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Factsheet: WFP’s Portfolio in the Kyrgyz Republic</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Map of Kyrgyz Republic</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Evaluation Features	1
1.2 Country Context	3
1.3 The International Aid and WFP Contexts	8
1.4 WFP’s portfolio in the Kyrgyz Republic	9
<b>2. Evaluation Findings</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Strategic Positioning and Alignment	13
2.2 Making Strategic Choices	22
2.3 Portfolio Performance and Results	28
<b>3. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>43</b>
3.1 Overall Assessment	44
3.2 Key lessons for the future	45
3.3 Recommendations	46
<b>Annexes</b>	<b>48</b>
Annex A Terms of Reference	48
Annex B Methodological Approach	59
Annex C Evaluation Matrix	65
Annex D People interviewed	70
Annex E Focus Group Interviews	72
Annex F WFP’s Key Monitoring Activities	112
Annex G Additional Data	113
Annex H Bibliography	114
Annex I Maps	120
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>List of Boxes:</b>	
Box 1 WFP’s planned assistance to school feeding.....	11
Box 2 WFP strategy as outlined in the PRRO project document .....	14
Box 3 FFW/Training partnership to support women’s groups .....	21
Box 4 Safety nets in conflict situations: the United Nations platform in Georgia ...	27
Box F1 OECD DAC Aid Data for the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008–2010.....	113
<b>List of Tables:</b>	
Table 1 Breakdown of Interviews .....	2
Table 2 Regional poverty in the Kyrgyz Republic 2009-11. ....	5
Table 3 Declining poverty and malnutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic 1990–2008. ....	6
Table 4 WFP portfolio 2008 – 2011 by Programme Category in Kyrgyzstan.....	10
Table 5 Portfolio activities vs. WFP Strategic Objectives.....	10

Table 6 How the EFSA determines food insecurity.....	23
Table 7 WFP Beneficiaries planned vs. actual 2009–2011 .....	28
Table 8 WFP Beneficiaries by Gender 2009–2011.....	28
Table 9 Percentage of household expenditure spent on food .....	34
Table 10 FFA Projects: planned vs. actual .....	36
Table 11 Summary table of WFP achievement against objectives.....	41

**List of Figures:**

Figure 1 Food insecurity by region and season (number of people).....	6
Figure 2 Donor shares of WFP funding 2008-2012 .....	12
Figure 3 Prices of sugar and sunflower oil 2009 – 2012.....	24
Figure 4 Uneven development trajectory .....	25
Figure 5 WFP caseload figures for VGF vs. severe food insecurity by oblast .....	29
Figure 6 Average food consumption levels from VGF beneficiaries (2009-11) .....	32
Figure 7 Variations in food consumption levels before & after 2010 VGF distributions. ....	33
Figure 8 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.....	35
Figure 9 Land productivity .....	37
Figure 10 Evolution of food consumption from WFP EFSA and from KIHS. ....	39
Figure 11 Levels of poverty and extreme poverty (%) 2000–2007 .....	40

## Factsheet: WFP's Portfolio in the Kyrgyz Republic

Timeline and funding level of Kyrgyzstan portfolio 2008 - 2011

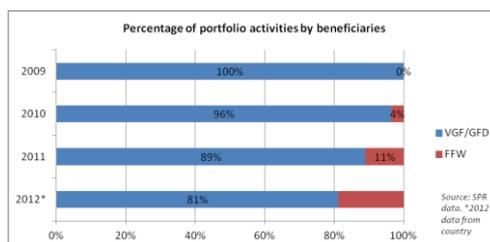
Operation	Title	Time Frame	2008	2009	2010	2011
PRRO 200036	Support to Food Insecure Households	Jul 11 - Jun 13				Req: \$ 30,833,363 Contrib: \$18,795,102
EMOP 200161	Food Assistance to Conflict-Affected Populations in the Kyrgyz Republic	Jul 10 - Jun 11	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <b>LEGEND Funding Level</b>  <span style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 2px;">&gt; 75 %</span>  <span style="background-color: yellow; color: black; padding: 2px;">Between 50 and 75%</span>  <span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">Less than 50 %</span> </div>			Req: \$ 24,856,415 Contrib: \$20,238,723
EMOP 10804.0	Kyrgyzstan Winter Emergency Food Aid Response	Jan 09 - Jun 11		Req: \$ 22,555,569 Contrib: \$ 17,881,042		
IR-EMOP 200158	Food Support to Population Affected by the Conflict in the South of the Kyrgyz Republic	Jun 10 - Sep 10				Req: \$497,592 Contrib: \$464,965
IR-EMOP 108020	Winter Emergency Food Aid Response	Nov 08 - Feb 09	Req: \$ 434,371 Contrib: \$ 434,371			
SO 200165	Logistics and Emergency Telecom. augmentation and coordinat. in support of the humanitarian response in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan	Jun 10 - Sep 10			Req: \$4,431,378 Contrib: \$910,961	
Food Distributed (MT)			n.a.	9,697	19,658	15,918
Direct Expenses (US\$)			69,000	8,663,000	12,742,000	14,088,000
% Direct Expenses: Kyrgyzstan vs. World*			n.a.	0%	0%	0%
Total of Beneficiaries (actual)			n.a.	401,750	1,063,790	569,145

Source: last SPR available, Resource Situation (27 November 2012), APR 2009 - 2011

Direct expenses figures are 0% due to a low absolute figure not captured by the %

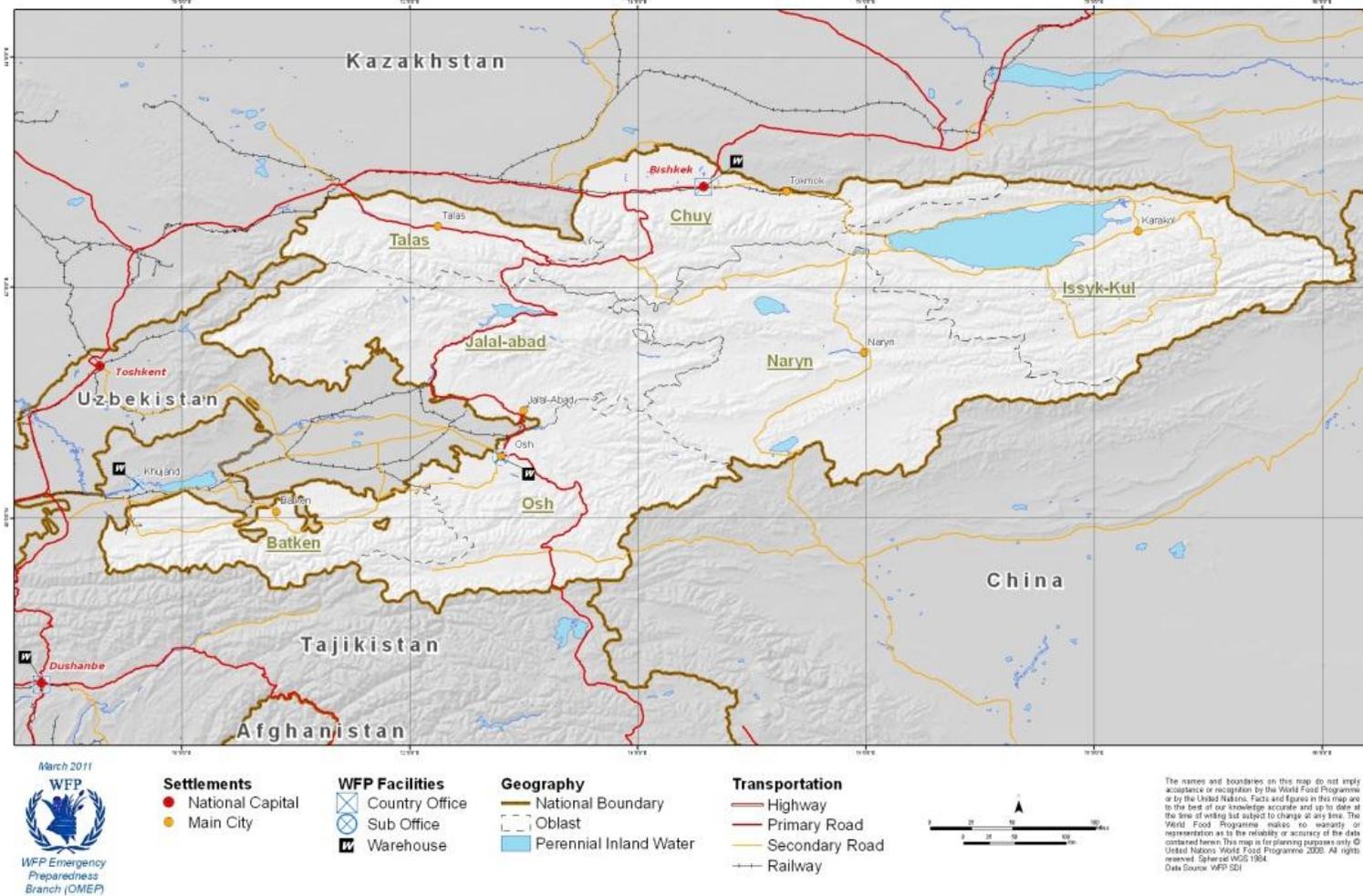
## Distribution of portfolio activities by beneficiaries

Operation	GFD			FFW/FFA/FFT		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
EMOP 10804.0	X			X		
EMOP 200161	X					
PRRO 200036	X			X		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>Number of beneficiaries 2009</b>	196,845	204,905	<b>401,750</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Number of beneficiaries 2010</b>	488,730	529,455	<b>1,018,185</b>	20,350	18,050	<b>38,400</b>
<b>Number of beneficiaries 2011</b>	319,925	339,910	<b>659,835</b>	48,775	32,500	<b>81,275</b>
<b>Number of beneficiaries 2012</b>	n/a	n/a	<b>407,559</b>	n/a	n/a	<b>94,345</b>



# Map of Kyrgyz Republic

## KYRGYZ REPUBLIC - General Map



Source: e-library #90.

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

### **Evaluation Features**

1. The country portfolio evaluation of WFP activities in the Kyrgyz Republic covers the period from when WFP started working there in 2008 until 2012. It serves the dual objectives of accountability and learning and focuses on: i) the alignment and strategic positioning of WFP's operations in the country; ii) the drivers of strategic decisions; and iii) the performance and results of WFP operations.

1. The evaluation was conducted between April and November 2012 by a three-person team, including a national member. Methods included primary data collection in six of the seven provinces, informant interviews, project site visits and extensive document review.

### **Context**

2. The Kyrgyz Republic gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. After an initial economic shock, the economy picked up, poverty and child mortality fell and life expectancy rose. However, economic setbacks since 2008 reversed this positive poverty reduction trend; the country is the second poorest in Central Asia, with 1.7 million people – about one third of the population – living below the poverty line in 2009. Food insecurity is strongly associated with poverty and is worse in rural areas.

3. In recent years, the country has experienced political turbulence. Notably, in 2010 conflict in the south targeting ethnic Uzbeks temporarily displaced hundreds of thousands of people. The country's mountainous terrain exposes it to frequent floods, landslides and earthquakes. The Kyrgyz Republic ranks low on global corruption indices, and has periodic disputes with neighbours over trade and shared water resources.

4. International aid has provided significant policy support as well as financial aid. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries have provided about US\$350 million of aid per year; regional donors such as Turkey and, especially, the Russian Federation, are prominent.

### **WFP's Portfolio**

5. In November 2008, the Prime Minister requested United Nations assistance for people affected by an extremely harsh winter. WFP launched an immediate-response emergency operation (IR-EMOP), which also provided for an office to be opened in Bishkek in December 2008. The first emergency food distributions took place in spring 2009, and a sub-office was opened in the city of Osh in September 2009.

6. Until mid-2011, most of the portfolio and 65 percent of the planned budget focused on emergency relief (see Table 1). Figure 1 shows the numbers of beneficiaries and the increasing importance of food for work (FFW).

**Table 1: WFP Portfolio Overview**

	Project type	Number of operations	Requirements (USD\$)	% of overall requirements	WFP Strategic Objectives	Activities
2008–2011	IR-EMOP	2	997 488	1	1 – Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies	GFD
	EMOP*	2	47 411 984	59		GFD, VGF and FFW
	Special operation	1	4 431 378	5		Logistics augmentation
2011–2013	PRRO	1	28 097 458	35	2 – Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures; 3 – Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods; and 5 – Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger	VGF, FFW, FFT and capacity development
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>80 938 308</b>	<b>100</b>		

\* Strategic Objective 3 was added to the second EMOP in 2010, when FFW operations began.

Source: Standard Project Reports., FFT: food for training, GFD: general food distribution, PRRO: protracted relief and recovery operation, VGF: vulnerable group feeding

**Figure 1: Percentage of beneficiaries by activity**



\* 2012 data from country office.

Note: n/a = not available

Source: Standard Project Reports.

7. The largest contributors were the Russian Federation, followed by the United States of America, multilateral sources and the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. All contributions were in cash, but most were tied to purchases in the Russian Federation or the region. Emergency work was funded by several donors at more than 70 percent of requirements. By contrast, the Russian Federation was the PRRO's only bilateral donor, providing more than 86 percent of its funding.

8. With total contributions of US\$56 million, the portfolio represented a minute fraction of WFP expenditures worldwide and less than 4 percent of official development assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic during the period. It faced the challenge of implementing WFP's new strategic direction with limited resources for advocacy, capacity development and food-based programme delivery.

## Evaluation Findings

### Strategic Alignment and Positioning

9. **Evolution of the WFP strategy.** WFP's initial emergency interventions in the Kyrgyz Republic were rapid responses to successive shocks – harsh winter, high food prices and conflict. The two-year PRRO, launched in mid-2011, articulated a more coherent intervention strategy than the preceding EMOPs, gradually shifting from relief activities towards recovery and government capacity development, particularly in food security monitoring.

10. The PRRO aligned better with the Kyrgyz development path – which still faces significant risks, including recurring food price hikes, political instability and natural disasters – and with the chronic nature of food insecurity rooted in poverty. The portfolio thus steadily improved its strategic position.

11. However, despite the evolution of objectives and the use of different programme categories, the portfolio has remained largely the same, dominated by twice-yearly distributions of three months of food aid rations – wheat flour and vegetable oil – to vulnerable families. FFW activities started to change this, but in 2012 still only constituted 19 percent of the portfolio in terms of beneficiary numbers. v

12. **Relevance to need.** The two main portfolio activities were found relevant and covered critical gaps. The poorest households depend mostly on seasonal, low-skilled day labour complemented by small-scale subsistence farming and livestock herding. Food insecurity is highly seasonal, peaking at the end of the winter lean season:

- The autumn VGF distribution contributed to household reserves over the winter; the spring distribution saw households through until planting work started.
- FFW provided income-earning opportunities that complemented sporadic labour opportunities linked to the agricultural cycle.

13. Beneficiaries preferred food to cash because of corruption concerns and the high quality of the food distributed; they reported that they would have spent most of the cash received on the same staples. The volume and type of food aid appeared appropriate to the national context. As WFP food accounted for less than 3 percent of total imports, and wheat is an imported commodity that people purchase in any case, it did not adversely affect local farmers' livelihoods. With rapidly rising food prices, food aid may provide a hedge against price inflation and stability to the poorest households.

14. **Alignment with national strategies and programmes.** The national poverty reduction strategy includes economic growth and social protection measures that include safety nets. This is congruent with international efforts promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank since the 2008 food price crisis.

15. WFP's VGF programme supported national poverty alleviation objectives. However, although at the corporate level WFP recognizes the importance of situating its interventions in an evolving social protection framework, VGF in the Kyrgyz Republic was not fully aligned with national social protection efforts.

16. Kyrgyz social assistance programmes that have poverty alleviation objectives and target lower-income households include:

- unified monthly benefit (UMB), a last-resort variable cash benefit targeting children from low-income families and considered the main safety net for offsetting the impact of inflation on vulnerable groups;
- monthly social benefit (MSB), a cash income-replacement programme targeting disadvantaged groups unable to work; and
- additional benefits, such as social pay for people in mountainous areas and occasional subsidized food distributions.

17. In 2009, the Government began significant reforms to improve the system's effectiveness and efficiency, supported by donors such as the European Union and agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). An important element was monetizing in-kind benefits. In January 2010, the UMB and the MSB were increased by 18 and 81 percent, respectively.

18. However, a 2010 report by the Asian Development Bank, the IMF and the World Bank revealed that these safety nets were badly targeted, with the UMB missing 67 percent of the extremely poor. Further increases pledged by the Government remained uncertain. Conversations with donors aimed at enhancing efficiency and effectiveness for national safety nets, notably through expanded coverage, fewer exclusion errors and increased benefit levels.

19. The VGF programme, which WFP considered a "top-up" to safety net payments and which ran parallel to the government system, using different methods but similar targeting, may have contributed to inconsistencies in the social welfare system supplied by the Government and WFP. The VGF programme reached only 56 percent of the extremely poor because of scale limits; it was somewhat unpredictable, as beneficiary numbers and target areas varied annually. As VGF had a higher income threshold than the UMB, these factors, compounded by exclusion errors in the Government's safety net programme, meant that some of the poorest received the UMB and VGF, some received one or the other, and some received neither.

20. WFP argued that the direct implementation approach was justified by the limited government capacity. However, the Government implements a much larger social protection programme focused on the same cohort and has the necessary infrastructure; the only issue raised by focus groups was the size of UMB benefits. WFP used the government system at the local level to target beneficiaries and implement its VGF programme.

21. In contrast to VGF, the WFP school feeding project that started in early 2013 was designed to work within national systems from the outset. It assists the Government in

strengthening the strategy, design and implementation of the national programme. Implementation is limited to pilot testing of new approaches for the government programme. A joint project with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), launched in late 2011, is transferring knowledge and tools to develop the capacity of the National Statistics Committee (NSC) to monitor food security and analyse production.

22. The FFW component of the portfolio was also better aligned to national efforts for community development, and local authorities designed FFW activities for work that communities could not have afforded otherwise. Stakeholders agree that FFW is less likely than VGF to foster dependency. Most FFW activities focused on: i) disaster mitigation, such as strengthening riverbanks; ii) repairing irrigation canals; iii) tree planting to support the Forestry Department's reforestation efforts; and iv) supporting women's groups to improve their agricultural practices, including through FFT.

23. **Partnerships.** WFP has an extensive field presence, including in many remote areas, and is well connected to the Government as its main partner in the country. This enhanced the effectiveness of WFP programme implementation. District and village authorities were closely involved in targeting, implementing and reporting on WFP activities.

24. WFP's government network includes the Prime Minister's Office; its main partners are the Ministry of Social Development for VGF, the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Forestry Department for FFW, and the NSC for the joint WFP/FAO project. However, after four years in the country and despite very cordial relations, WFP – and several other agencies – continues to operate without a Basic Agreement. WFP has not established durable working relationships at the national level, except with NSC, hampering its strategic approach.

25. The high turnover of government senior officials was a serious constraint to engagement and dialogue: there have been 36 ministers of agriculture in the past 21 years and there were three ministers of social development during the evaluation. However, other agencies such as UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have remained engaged. While their longer presence in the country – more than 20 years – may have facilitated this, the evaluation attributed most of the difference to the agencies: i) focusing primarily on leveraging government and donor resources for a social protection and equitable development agenda; ii) working on policy; and iii) implementing stand-alone programmes.

26. Major stakeholders repeatedly made the point that WFP needed to invest more in understanding how the Government works and in influencing – as well as carrying out – activities. The country office is endeavouring to develop this area of work, but is handicapped by the limited resources available for activities not directly linked to food-based programme delivery.

27. Besides the Government, WFP also has valuable partnerships with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and sister agencies. All were highly appreciative and complimentary about WFP, noting that it delivered well on its commitments. These partnerships were more visible and arguably more productive at the operational level, especially in FFW activities (see section on Portfolio Performance and Results).

28. **Donor coordination.** WFP made strong efforts to be part of the donor community and to engage with national policy on food security. WFP and FAO reinigorated the donor coordination working group on food security, and WFP

contributed inputs to the new mid-term development plan. WFP is closely aligned with its major donor to the Kyrgyz Republic – the Russian Federation – but less so with other important donors.

### **Factors Driving Strategic Decision-Making**

29. **Operational analysis.** WFP invests significantly in food security and operational analysis to determine how many people are food-insecure, understand where food insecurity is most prevalent – geographically and socially – and inform programme work. This analysis is widely regarded as being of high quality and is used by a broad range of partners, including the World Bank, as a contribution to their own analyses. It includes:

- twice-yearly emergency food security assessments (EFSAs), covering household demographics, income, assets, expenditure, food consumption and coping strategies;
- post-distribution monitoring (PDM) of assistance received, livelihood strategies and WFP's contribution to household food consumption; and
- market price monitoring to track the monthly prices of staple commodities and other basic necessities.

30. **Strategic analysis and learning.** While the country office's analysis provided good insight into important features of food insecurity in the country – the immediate problem – it gave WFP and partners little information on which strategy might deliver the best, most equitable social protection to the severely food-insecure – the long-term solution. The country office appeared to analyse only the food aid provision, and not the range of policies and measures needed to tackle food insecurity durably. In addition, the effects or impact of WFP interventions were not evaluated.

31. The regional bureau supported the development of the PRRO, and some country office staff attended a regional meeting on cash transfer programming. The regional bureau also provided central policy support, notably for design of the new school feeding programme. However, such a small country office would benefit from greater and more sustained support, perhaps through regional secondments and knowledge exchange. In particular, it could benefit from more systematic sharing of WFP experiences of engaging in social protection and supporting government-led social safety nets in other former Soviet republics; the regional bureau could facilitate this.

32. **WFP systems.** The rigidity of some WFP internal systems may have constrained the country office's strategic and innovative approach, despite the emphasis since 2008 on a new business model at the corporate level and despite lower risks associated with innovation in small offices.

33. For example, the WFP funding formula linked to tonnage distributed creates an operational bias and is particularly unfavourable to small country offices, limiting the resources available for staffing and for testing new approaches. Programme management is also rigid; once an operation is approved at the central level, any change – such as in commodity – requires several levels of approval and is time-consuming and complicated, thus limiting the flexibility to experiment.

34. Despite these constraints, and the lack of a Country Director for 14 months at the time of the evaluation, the country office was creative in using consultancies to fill staffing gaps, bringing maximum benefits at the lowest cost. It also leveraged new corporate initiatives – pilots – which brought resources and drove experimentation. For

example, as part of FFW, WFP participates in a multi-agency partnership supporting women’s groups, which has been innovative and shows real impact potential.

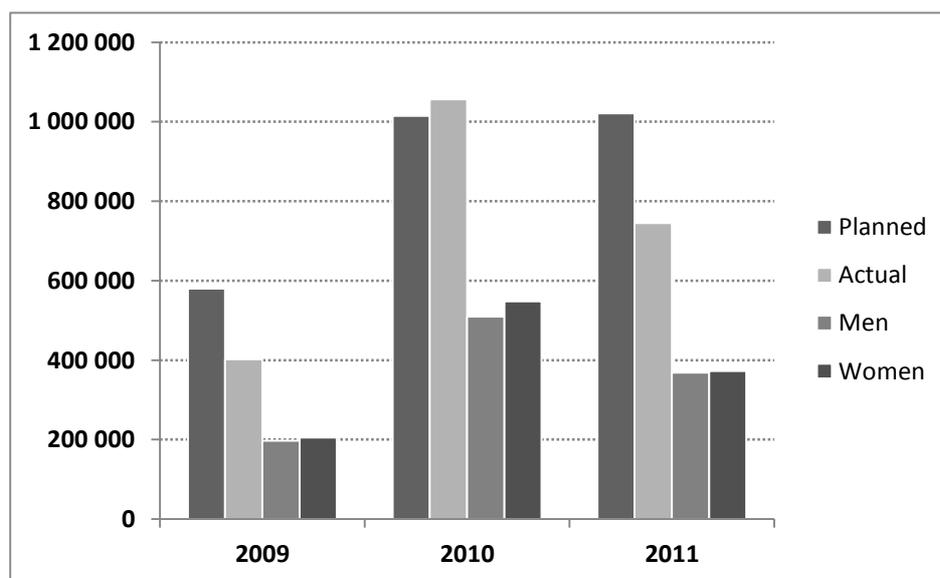
35. **Donor support.** Another limiting factor was the lack of broad-based donor support. Apart from the Russian Federation’s generous, timely and flexible support, contributions were limited. This may have made WFP more conservative about changing its strategy and limited the evolution of the WFP programme.

### Portfolio Performance and Results

36. **Efficiency.** Figure 2 shows that WFP exceeded its planned beneficiary number in 2010, and was close to or exceeded 70 percent in 2009 and 2011 – a respectable performance. Women beneficiaries slightly outnumbered men in each year.

37. The targeting system drew on food security analysis – mostly EFSA’s – to determine focus areas, and reports from social workers corroborated by WFP field staff to select households meeting the assistance criteria. The criteria were closely aligned to government safety-net criteria, but the WFP income threshold was slightly higher. The WFP targeting system sought to avoid the exclusions of State safety nets. Names were published and local residents had the opportunity to object. PDM reports suggest that this worked well, despite inevitable issues involving people who did not receive assistance, which were raised in focus group interviews.

**Figure 2: VGF beneficiaries, 2009–2011**



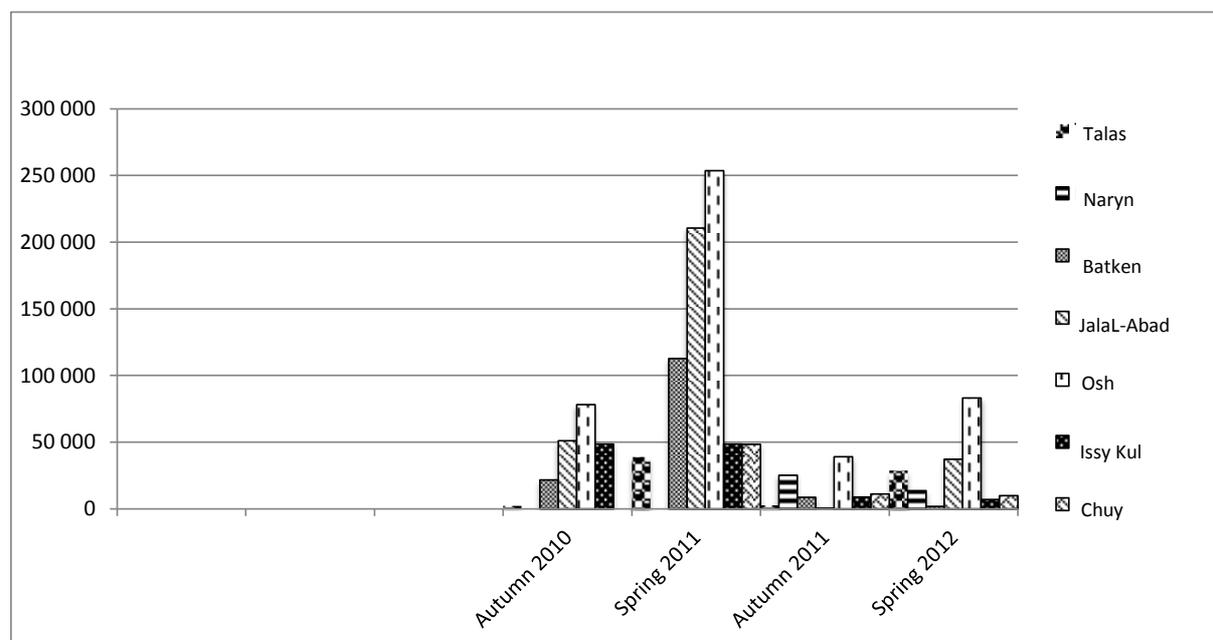
Source: Standard Project Reports.

38. The evaluation found excellent logistics, implementation, oversight and quality control. No logistical or supply issues were reported, despite the challenging terrain and restricted access to many communities in the winter. All the beneficiaries interviewed appreciated the quality of the wheat flour and vegetable oil and the timeliness of the assistance; they repeatedly volunteered that WFP measured “to the last gram”.

39. The robust monitoring system provided a very satisfactory compliance and oversight mechanism. It built trust in WFP, which is important in a country where corruption is perceived as endemic. Ten percent of total beneficiaries were randomly monitored on a regular basis. Villages where irregularities were found were blocked from receiving food until matters were resolved.

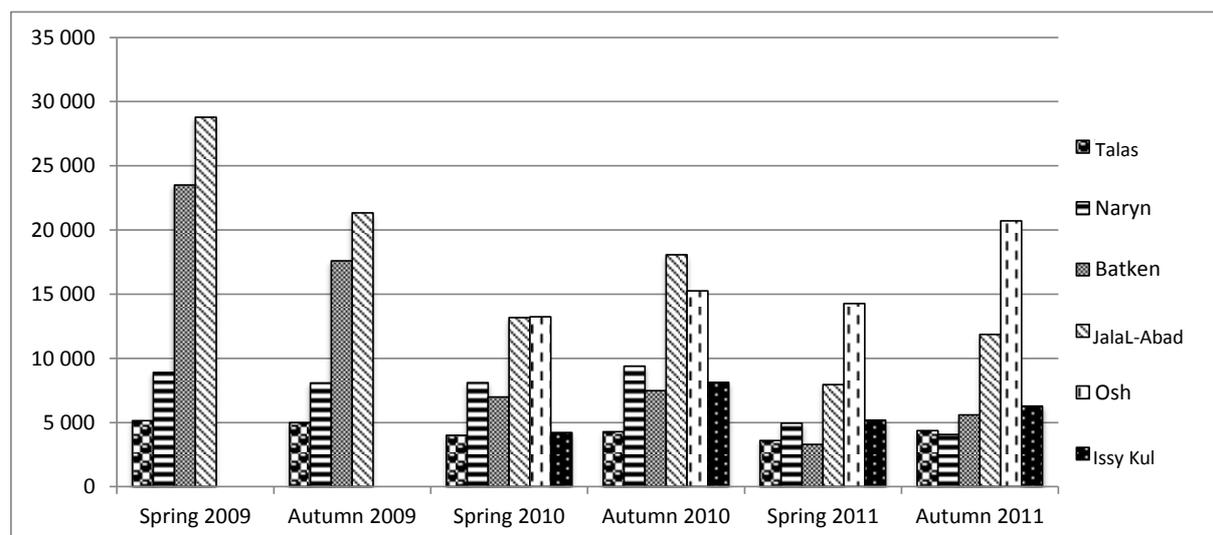
40. Overall, the evaluation estimated that the programme reached about 56 percent of the extremely poor and 90 percent of the severely food-insecure. While the combination of detailed targeting and efficient delivery proved satisfactory, the shortage of funding left some provinces, such as Bishkek and Chuy, and some districts without coverage, and assistance was not always delivered at the times of greatest need. This was most obvious in spring 2011, when food insecurity was the highest and food distribution the lowest (see Figures 3 and 4).

**Figure 3: VGF beneficiaries and periods of severe food insecurity, by province**



Sources: EFSA reports and country office data.

**Figure 4: Beneficiaries by province**



Sources: EFSA reports and country office data.

41. **Cost-efficiency.** Although data are limited, it appears that the programme has been very good value for money. According to crude calculations, the total cost of

providing WFP food – including Headquarters overhead – was about US\$30 per bag of wheat flour delivered to beneficiaries. This sum covered due diligence to ensure that the right people received the food, PDM and the raw commodity price, and therefore compares favourably with market food prices of US\$27–US\$32 at the time of the evaluation.

42. **Effectiveness.** Beneficiary interviews revealed that the assistance had a positive effect on household food consumption and reduced the need for negative coping strategies during the lean season. Even more significant was its role as a resource transfer. For larger households, the economic value of VGF was close to that of their annual government social safety-net payment, and could be considerably more under FFW. Households reported spending 10–20 percent less on food following distributions (see Table 2) and using the money saved to buy other essentials such as winter clothes for children, fuel and education materials. However, this effect appears to have diminished over the years.

**Table 2: Percentage of household expenditures spent on food**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2010</b>		<b>2011</b>		<b>2012</b>	
<b>Spring/autumn VGF distributions</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Autumn</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Autumn</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Autumn</b>
<b>With WFP</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Without WFP</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: PDM data.

43. The evaluation used the livelihoods framework of the United Kingdom Department for International Development to analyse the effects of FFW activities on productive capacities. It noted clear contributions to a range of livelihoods capital, and anecdotal evidence from focus groups was encouraging on livelihood outcomes (see Table 3). Although FFW was largely opportunistic, its contribution to community development was highly appreciated by communities, officials and partners. It was found most effective when carried out in partnership and integrated into partners' broader projects.

**Table 3: Contributions of FFW to livelihood assets and outcomes**

Livelihood assets		Livelihood outcomes
<b>Physical capital</b>	Rebuilding bridges and strengthening riverbanks: 70% of planned output met in 2011. Rehabilitating irrigation canals: 30% of planned output met in 2011.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Riverbank-strengthening schemes tested by spring melt prevented flooding, protecting homes and arable land and producing a meaningful impact on people's ability to use their land and safeguard their assets.</li> <li>➤ Several new or repaired bridges increased trade flows among villages, enhancing access to markets and services.</li> </ul> <p>Quantification of the economic value of combined disaster mitigation and recovery projects was beyond the evaluation's scope, but it is clear that such value exists and is probably greater than the input value, which itself contributed to household income.</p>
<b>Natural capital</b>	Forestry project. Timber used for construction and as fuelwood. 100% of planned seedlings planted in 2011 – site visits revealed that target may be considerably exceeded.	
<b>Financial capital</b>	Providing people with food for their work allowed them to save money from other sources.	Greater income and exponential growth in women's groups.
<b>Human capital</b>	Skills enhancement (Community Development Association, CDA)	Canal cleaning had positive effects on yield, estimated at 20% to 100%. Some collective action started around irrigation canal cleaning, but most farmers interviewed would not engage in the activity without payment, implying that the effect will be temporary.
<b>Social capital</b>	Some small institution building (CDA) and exponential growth in women's groups.	

Source: Evaluation team.

44. Of the four main FFW/FFT/food-for-assets activities, the most appreciated was the support for women's groups project with the Community Development Association (CDA). The scheme involves a collaborative partnership among WFP, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for social mobilization, FAO for training, the World Bank, and the German Agency for International Cooperation for seeds. It forms self-help groups of women, usually migrants or with migrant family members, who receive improved seed varieties and training on improved farming. Food provides an incentive for women to attend training and to work on their plots. The women contribute small monthly savings for buying seeds for the following year. This project was supported with peace-building funds, as it seeks to reduce potential conflict between host communities and migrants.

45. Yields from the new seed varieties were significantly greater than those from the previous crops, increasing household income – and food stocks – and enabling women to escape the poverty trap of poor labour and poor income to achieve greater food security. The project led to exponential growth in women's groups, to about 700 groups with more than 3,000 members nationwide. The groups formed their own NGO so they could bank their savings, and currently hold US\$65,000 in their account.

46. Partnerships with local NGOs allowed the combination of WFP's scale with grassroots activism, resulting in growing numbers of self-sufficient women's groups and

greater mobilization of rural residents and community groups – including cooperatives, farmers’ groups and agricultural schools – which helped to introduce community development principles and increased the attention to lasting resilience at the local level.

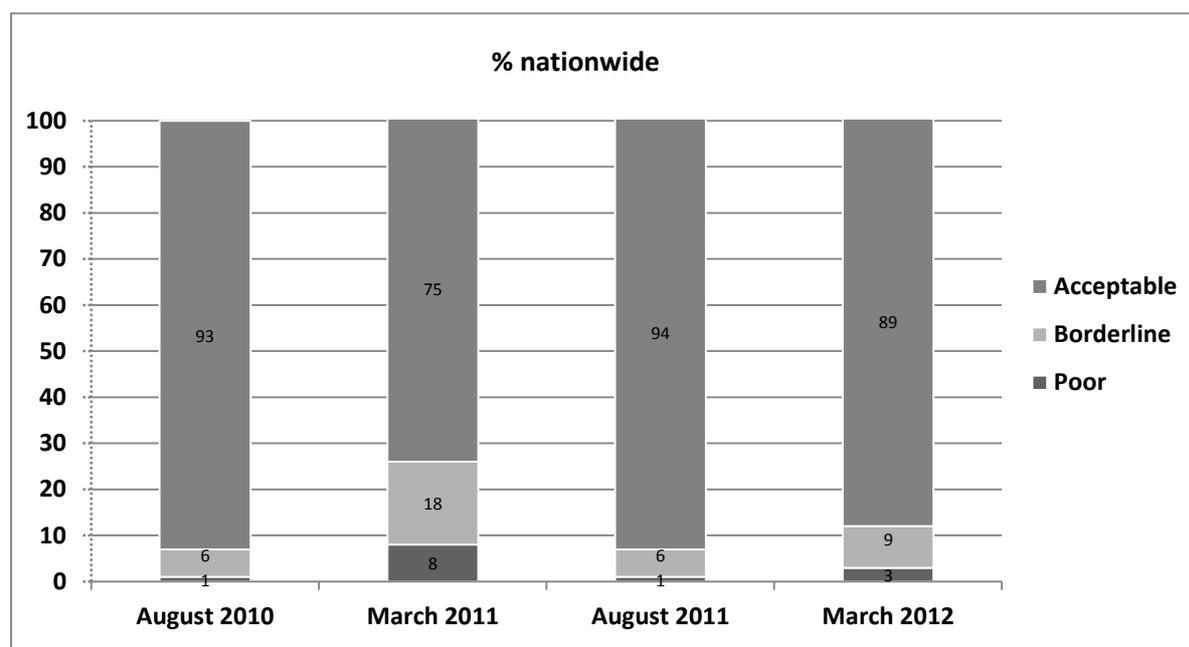
47. Another good example of practical collaboration resulting in tangible outputs is the partnership for disaster mitigation projects, involving UNDP for material and technical inputs, WFP for food for beneficiaries’ labour, and local government and the Ministry of Emergency Situations for projects and material.

48. **Impact.** It is harder to draw conclusions on impact given the range of internal and external factors influencing national food security and poverty, which have been increasing since 2008. Contributing factors included external economic pressures – not least the global economic downturn, which increased the food and fuel prices to which the Kyrgyz Republic is highly sensitive as a net food importer, with migrant labour and remittances constituting up to one third of the economy.

49. The significant temporary increase in the percentage of people with poor or borderline food consumption in spring 2011 was most likely caused by the 2010 conflict and the sharp increase in food prices (see Figure 5). Data show that extreme poverty is numerically concentrated in Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, which were the most affected by the conflict. Displacement, border closures and disrupted markets and employment patterns worsened the situation despite WFP blanket feeding during the second half of 2010.

50. Extrapolating from data on programme coverage and the positive household effects noted earlier, it can be concluded that WFP assistance likely contributed to mitigating the impact of shocks.

**Figure 5: Food consumption over time**



Source: EFSAs.

51. **Sustainability.** Only small elements of the current programme are sustainable. VGF and much FFW would likely stop without WFP’s assistance, and questions regarding communities’ willingness to maintain some FFW assets remain despite country office efforts to obtain communities’ commitment. The school feeding

programme has the potential to be more sustainable, as it pilots approaches that the Government has the capacity and financial resources to maintain.

## **Conclusions**

52. The evaluation found WFP activities appropriate and their delivery highly efficient. Food aid was appropriate in the Kyrgyz context, was delivered on time and without interruption, and was of high quality. Excellent food security analysis was used effectively for targeting and was useful to development partners. The country office was agile in securing and using resources, and creative in its programming. It established valuable operational partnerships at the regional and local levels.

53. When food assistance was provided, it made a measurable contribution to recipient households' income, leading to more predictable consumption of staples in some of the poorest households at critical times. FFW programmes were highly appreciated by communities and local authorities and showed various impacts.

54. While WFP assistance reached more than half of the extremely poor, the national-level impact is less clear. There is a close correlation between food insecurity and poverty, with poverty rising over the portfolio period because of adverse global and regional economic factors and internal instability. WFP assistance was not of sufficient scale to counter these more significant factors.

55. Issues related to the portfolio's strategic positioning and alignment may also have constrained impact. The portfolio gradually improved its strategic positioning in the local context and its alignment with government priorities – reflected in FFW, the food security monitoring system and the new school feeding programme.

56. There is need to position the food assistance programme better within the national social protection programme and to move from stand-alone assistance programmes to supporting structural safety-net reforms, which are a priority of the Government and its partners. The end of the PRRO presents a good opportunity for the country office to start a new planning process towards integration of the WFP and government systems.

57. The evaluation highlighted other constraining factors: WFP's operational bias, reinforced by its funding formula linked to tonnage distributed; the inflexibility of some internal procedures, limiting innovation; and dependency on a single donor.

## **Lessons**

58. WFP's move from food aid to food assistance presents implementation challenges for small country offices. The Kyrgyz Republic's experience provides valuable lessons for tackling these challenges.

59. WFP's funding model makes it particularly difficult for small country offices – those running small programmes – to cover policy and advocacy roles as well as programme implementation. However, as host countries progress they are likely to need proportionately more policy and technical support and less direct implementation.

60. To maximize impact in these contexts, WFP needs a different country office funding model. Expertise is also needed in productive safety nets, chronic nutrition issues, innovative social policy such as conditional cash transfers, best practice in monitoring and evaluating such systems, and cutting-edge food security and poverty analysis.

61. Small country offices can also be testbeds for innovation. They can more easily pilot new approaches and feed lessons back to the wider organization for scaling up.

## **Recommendations**

### *For the Country Office*

62. **Recommendation 1: WFP should undertake a formal country strategy process.** This will require analysis of WFP's comparative advantage in the Kyrgyz Republic and its complementarity with other actors in the country. There should be a move from implementation to policy support and advocacy. WFP should continue to focus on reducing food insecurity in the country, but less through food aid than through better targeting of social protection schemes and benefits and development of the rural economy. WFP should also help the Government establish plans for dealing with emergencies of the type encountered in 2008 and 2010 – as in the September 2012 earthquake simulation exercise.

63. **Recommendation 2: The country strategy should seek to integrate the VGF programme into government safety net/social protection schemes.** WFP must use its on-the-ground experience to influence the conception and delivery of these schemes. This will require policy analysis and advocacy resources – people – in the office to design the WFP programme and to work with the Government on integration. It is not possible to recruit the necessary country office/regional bureau staff using budgets related to tonnage.

2a) WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping/EFSA and experience should be used to inform targeting and be integrated into the government safety-net system. WFP should leverage its current programme with the European Union for this purpose.

2b) The transition will take time; WFP may need to extend its PRRO for at least a year.

2c) WFP should seek to ensure that the government safety net can be expanded quickly in times of emergencies.

64. **Recommendation 3: WFP should continue increasing the percentage of FFW/FFT in the PRRO extension to facilitate the transition.** With the Government, it should explore the use of such public work schemes for more general poverty alleviation and development projects – as a productive safety net. This work should be linked to ongoing efforts to increase local administrations' capacity to plan and implement projects.

### *For the Regional Bureau*

65. **Recommendation 4:** The regional bureau should help the country office design its social safety-net programme, drawing on regional experience, including through study tours and secondments. This requires knowledge management to facilitate sharing of expertise and experience across the region. A more coherent regional approach to evaluation could assist, with country teams helping to evaluate each other's programmes and the systematic sharing of evaluation reports.

### *For WFP Headquarters*

66. **Recommendation 5: WFP should rethink the role of smaller country offices and support them accordingly.**

5a) Small country offices may not be large enough to implement programmes at the national scale, so they will have to work on influencing government policy and

interventions as much as on delivering food aid. There is need for Headquarters support to country office policy work.

5b) Small country offices need fundraising support, so they can avoid single-donor dependency and be creative in securing resources for influencing government policies and interventions. An additional budget line should be available for smaller offices, to enable them to do the necessary policy work.

5c) WFP rules and procedures should allow small country offices flexibility to operate effectively. These offices should be seen as opportunities for innovation – where new approaches can be tested with a receptive audience in government.

With WFP's Donors

**67. Recommendation 6: WFP should engage donors in any change of approach, such as the transition from food aid to a food security approach integrated into general government social protection mechanisms.** It should also:

6a) encourage donors to support and fund WFP policy work as well as direct assistance; and

6b) encourage larger donors to engage with government on designing a more effective food security system.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Evaluation Features

1. **Scope.** Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) go beyond the individual operations undertaken during the period to evaluate the performance and results of the portfolio as a whole and provide evaluative insights to guide strategic and operational decision-making. The present evaluation covered all of WFP's operations and analytical work in the Kyrgyz Republic between 2008-2012. The portfolio is summarised in the Factsheet on page i above, and described in detail in section 1.4 below.

2. The full Terms of Reference (TOR) for this evaluation are at o. CPEs address three key evaluation questions, as follows:

**Question 1:** *Strategic positioning.* Considering WFP's mandate, capacities and comparative advantage locally, to what extent has the portfolio been strategically positioned?

**Question 2:** What has driven the *key strategic decisions* which have oriented the portfolio?

**Question 3:** What have been the *performance and results* of the WFP portfolio?

3. **Rationale.** The Kyrgyz Republic was selected by the Office of Evaluation (OE) as one of twelve countries to undergo an independent portfolio evaluation in the 2012/2013 biennium. Countries are selected based on a set of transparent criteria which are meant to ensure a balance of regional representation, portfolio size and evaluation coverage. The Kyrgyz Republic CPE is representative of small WFP portfolios. It has never been independently evaluated and offers a rare opportunity to review how WFP opened an office and started emergency operations from scratch. The choice was endorsed by the Country Office (CO) and Regional Bureau in Cairo and the evaluation has been timed to ensure that relevant findings could feed into subsequent programme design.

4. **Objectives.** Evaluations serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning. As such, the evaluation's objectives were to:

- assess and report whether or not the focus, performance and results of the CO portfolio are in line with the food security and development challenges facing the Kyrgyz Republic, and are consistent with the strategic orientation of the government of the Kyrgyz Republic (GoK), the WFP's main partners and WFP's own Strategic Plan (accountability);
- identify and analyse the reasons for observed success/failure and draw relevant lessons to produce findings that will allow the CO to make informed strategic decisions about its future programming and implementation strategy (learning).

5. **Users.** The intended users of the evaluation are the CO (primarily), the regional office, the head office technical and policy staff and the WFP executive board. It is hoped that the evaluation will also be of interest to external audiences, in particular WFP partners and donors in the Kyrgyz Republic.

6. **Approach and methodology.** The evaluation approach was defined through an extensive inception period that included a one-week inception mission to Kyrgyzstan in June 2012. The inception mission scoped out expectations with partners and the field office, as well as examining the evaluability of the portfolio. The inception process included an extensive literature review and stakeholder analysis, as well as a detailed methodology design. The approved methodology and work plan were set out in an inception report (Sida et al 2012) before the main field work – a three-week visit in October 2012. The methodology is summarised in Annex B. A matrix of key evaluation questions (reproduced in Annex C) informed both the design of instruments used in data collection and the structure and content of this report.

7. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, combining literature and document review, key informant interviews and semi-structured interviews with groups of beneficiaries. In total almost 500 people were interviewed across six oblasts and 43 sites (see Table 1 below). The evaluation also interviewed 44 key informants, including from WFP headquarters and the regional bureau. An in-depth analysis was also undertaken of WFP data, drawing also on national statistics. Annex D provides a list of people interviewed and Annex E reports findings from the focus group interviews. A two-day workshop at the end of the field work informed the preliminary findings; these were then presented to the country team for validation at the end of the mission. This final version of the evaluation report takes account of reference group comments on the draft.

**Table 1 Breakdown of Interviews**

<b>Total focus group interviews</b>	<b>73</b>
<i>Of which:</i>	
Vulnerable Group Feeding (focus group)	21
Food For Work (focus group)	25
Local Authorities (oblast, rayon, AO) (focus group)	27
Total people interviewed (focus groups) 464 (240 women, 224 men)	
<b>Key informant interviews</b>	<b>46</b>
(16 WFP, 9 Government, 9 donor, 7 UN & 5 NGO)	

8. **Team.** The team consisted of three experts (two international and one national). Their combined expertise included familiarity with the collection and analysis of statistics in the Kyrgyz Republic, and extensive experience in the delivery and evaluation of humanitarian aid by bilateral, multilateral and non-government agencies, both in Asia and in other regions.

9. **Quality Assurance.** The evaluation was subject to rigorous quality assurance by the Office of Evaluation through the WFP EQAS system, and was also subject to internal peer review and quality assurance by the contractors (Mokoro Limited and Valid International).

10. **Constraints.** A key constraint for the evaluation was the inability to talk to respondents in the Kyrgyz government at national level. Although there was some contact during the inception phase, the change-over and turmoil described in section 1.2 below meant that the Country Office struggled to find people for the evaluation team to

interview in the key Ministry of Social Protection. The team mitigated this situation by undertaking extensive interviews with provincial and district level government officials, as well as talking to donors in Bishkek.

## 1.2 Country Context

### 1.2.1 Political and economic context

11. **Geography.** The Kyrgyz Republic nestles between China and Kazakhstan and is comprised of stunning mountain ranges that led Marco Polo to call it “the roof of the world”. Because of its geographic location in a seismically active and mountainous region, the country is highly susceptible to natural disasters with frequent earthquakes, floods, mud slides, avalanches, snow storms, and mountain lake spills.

12. **Population.** Over two thirds of the 5.3 million population live in rural areas. The country is ethnically diverse: Kyrgyz make up nearly 70% of the population and Uzbeks, concentrated in the Ferghana Valley in the south, account for about 15% of the population. Russians have a significant presence in the north and in the capital, Bishkek. Tensions between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities in the south over land and housing led to violence in 2010.

13. **Politics and administration.** The country is divided administratively into Oblasts (provinces), Rayons (districts), and Ayil Okmotus, which are typically a cluster of villages. Whilst the Kyrgyz have a culture and language that are centuries old, they have rarely existed as an independent political entity; instead they have been part of empires from Tamerlane to the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union broke up, the Kyrgyz Republic gained independence in 1991. President Akayev won elections which were judged to be free and fair, but following the ‘Tulip revolution’ in 2005 he was ousted and replaced by President Bakiyev, who was in turn ousted in riots in 2010. The Economist Intelligence Unit describes the Kyrgyz Republic as the only ‘hybrid regime’<sup>1</sup> in Central Asia (with all the others as autocracies) (EIU 2012). Transparency International ranks the Kyrgyz Republic 164th out of 182 countries for corruption (a widespread source of dissatisfaction) (Transparency International 2011), and narcotic flows and trans-national criminal and terrorist networks criss-cross the region.

14. The Kyrgyz Republic is in a region that is often hostage to wider geopolitical forces. It is the only nation to have both Russian and American airbases on its territory (as well as a Russian torpedo testing station) and it shares a long land border with China. There have been disputes with both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, leading to border closures and trade disruption.

15. **Economic performance.** As with much of the rest of Central Asia, at independence the Kyrgyz Republic experienced the loss of its largest export market and significant external subsidies. Loss of support from the centre led to the collapse of state enterprises and to a painful economic restructuring. Notably, the agricultural sector was radically reformed with the dismantling and privatisation of the former collective farms.

16. Production is mostly concentrated on primary agricultural goods, services, extractive industries (gold mining), construction materials and light industry. With limited industrial development, remittances from migrant workers remain one of the

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<sup>1</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit's *Democracy Index* is an assessment of countries' democracy. Countries are rated to be either *Full Democracies*, *Flawed Democracies*, *Hybrid Regimes*, or *Authoritarian Regimes*. Full democracies, flawed democracies, and hybrid regimes are considered to be democracies, and the authoritarian nations are considered to be dictatorial. The Economist bases its ratings based on: civil liberties, conduct of elections, media freedom, participation, public opinion, functioning government, corruption, and stability.

pillars of the economy, making up nearly a quarter of GDP. Some 10% of GDP comes from the Kumtor gold mine (26% of tax revenues and 40% of export earnings), currently majority Canadian-owned but under threat of nationalisation from the Kyrgyz parliament.<sup>2</sup> The Manas airbase (of the US) also brings in significant revenue, but is due for closure.<sup>3</sup> Most significantly however, the economy remains heavily dependent on agriculture (24.8% of GDP) and remittances from overseas workers (27% of GDP), almost all (90%) from Russia (EIU 2012). The Kyrgyz Republic is heavily reliant on imported fuel and food, and about one third of its grain requirements are imported.

17. Despite the economic collapse and political turmoil at the end of the Soviet era, the Kyrgyz Republic made good economic progress between 1998 and 2008: sound macro-economic policy led to consistent GDP growth at over 5% p.a. and, with broad support from international partners, to considerable economic and social progress. This progress was halted between 2008 and 2010 by a series of shocks.

18. The 2008 global economic crisis led to economic contraction and reversed some of the gains made in combating poverty. Global food price increases led to rising inflation and hurt the most vulnerable. Regional recession led to a drop in remittances. Internal shocks made things worse. A drought in 2007 depleted reservoirs and led to energy shortages and reduced agricultural production. It was followed by severe winter weather in 2007/08. In June 2010, following the overthrow of President Bakiyev, inter-ethnic violence broke out in the cities of Osh and Jalal-abad; some 765,000 people were affected, with extensive damage to houses and infrastructure. These shocks were compounded in 2010 by significant energy tariff reforms, which sharply increased the consumer costs of electricity, heating and water (EIU 2012, and WB & Kyrgyz Republic 2012).

19. While the political situation has largely stabilised, underlying issues remain unresolved, and include: poor state accountability and service delivery; widening socio-economic disparities; competition over scarce resources such as agricultural land, irrigation water and pastures; widespread unemployment and under-employment, particularly among youth and women; and a lack of civic participation in wider social, political and economic processes.

### ***1.2.2 Poverty, food security and nutrition***

20. **Poverty** is measured by the government twice a year through the Kyrgyz Integrated Household Survey (KIHS). This is based on Soviet systems of data gathering and has been upgraded over time. Sample sizes are statistically significant and questionnaires are in line with current good practice. The technical capability of the National Statistics Committee (NSC), which runs the KIHS, is high, but like all such exercises it has at times been subject to political influences.

21. The available data suggest that from 1998 onwards, as the Kyrgyz economy revived, poverty fell precipitously. Despite this the Kyrgyz Republic remains the second poorest nation in Central Asia (having been the second poorest in the Soviet Union), just ahead of Tajikistan in the human development index (at 126th) (UNDP 2012). Poverty has been rising again since 2008. Absolute poverty rates, which fell by 29% between

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<sup>2</sup> And in fact production has slowed in 2012 due to technical difficulties, reducing the growth in GDP nationally. This is at the same time that protests around Kumtor led to riots in front of parliament and the temporary jailing of a prominent deputy.

<sup>3</sup> The present lease runs out in 2014, and the government has been reluctant to extend it.

2003 and 2008, stood at 31.7% (1.7 million people) in 2009<sup>4</sup> with higher rates of rural poverty than urban poverty (37% and 22% respectively). Half of the poor live in the two most populous oblasts (provinces) of Osh and Jalal-abad. 75% of the poor reside in rural areas. (WB 2011d)

22. The dismantling of collective farms and the introduction of private ownership since independence appears to have been one of the main drivers of rural poverty. Productivity and labour rates have increased (presumably on individual farms and for agricultural workers), but arguably this has also led to the loss of economies of scale, management and technical knowledge. There is concern that the growth of small-scale private farming has led to reduced use of agricultural land, machinery and other inputs, with an increase in the proportion of subsistence farming.

23. The highest concentration of poverty is in Naryn Oblast. Higher rates of poverty are found in the mountains and in larger families. Table 2 below shows geographical patterns of poverty which changed significantly between 2009 and 2011.

**Table 2 Regional poverty in the Kyrgyz Republic 2009-11.**

	2009	2010	2011	Change
<b>Bishkek</b>	13.5	8.3	18.5	5.2
<b>Issyk-kul</b>	46.1	19.6	32.3	-13.8
<b>Jalal-Abad</b>	53.4	55.1	56.3	2.9
<b>Naryn</b>	44.2	54.0	50.2	6.0
<b>Batken</b>	53.3	48.3	52.0	-1.3
<b>Osh</b>	53.7	53.4	56.2	2.5
<b>Talas</b>	33.0	42.3	50.3	17.3
<b>Chui</b>	23.1	22.0	28.8	5.7

(Units: percentage below poverty line)

Source: NSC 2012

24. Although large numbers of people remain below the poverty line, the World Bank reports that poverty is relatively shallow:

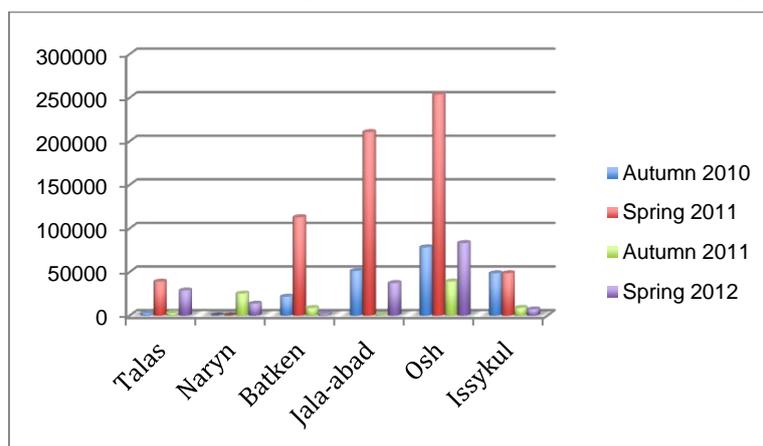
*Poverty is relatively shallow in the Kyrgyz Republic.* Estimates of the average gap between the actual consumption of the poor and the poverty line as a proportion of the latter (the poverty gap) indicate that poverty is not especially deep. In 2008, the total poverty gap was 7.5 percent. In theory, this implies that the transfer of Kyrgyz Som 1,374 per year to an average poor individual would allow the individual to exit from the poor category. Similar to the case of the headcount poverty rates, the poverty gap is more pronounced in rural areas. The depth of poverty is two times higher in rural areas than in urban areas: 9.0 percent in rural areas versus 4.5 percent in urban areas. (WB 2011)

25. **Food security and nutrition.** Food insecurity<sup>5</sup> is strongly associated with poverty, with Osh and Jalal-abad the most food insecure (see Figure 1). The WFP emergency food security assessment (EFSA) report (WFP 2012h) suggests that food insecurity is largely chronic.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank poverty figures are generally consistent with those reported by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, which collects the Kyrgyz Integrated Household Survey, and has recently released the latest poverty estimates.

<sup>5</sup> See ¶101 and Table 6 in section 2.2.1 below for discussion of how WFP defines and measures food insecurity.

**Figure 1 Food insecurity by region and season (number of people)**



Source: Generated by evaluation team from EFSA data.

26. As with poverty, higher rates of food insecurity are found in rural areas (than urban) and present marked seasonal variations (Figure 1 above), with the autumn (just after the harvest) recording much lower values than the spring (when the food stocks have run out). The most severely food-insecure resort to negative coping strategies (consuming less food, borrowing)<sup>6</sup> which entail risks for health and nutritional status in the short and medium term.

27. As poverty has declined so has child mortality and malnutrition (Table 3 below). However, as we discuss in section 2.3.4 below, there is some evidence that nutrition trends may have reversed since 2008.

**Table 3 Declining poverty and malnutrition in the Kyrgyz Republic 1990–2008.**

Indicator	Kyrgyz Republic	
	1990-99	2000-08
Hunger and poverty		
Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	15	14
Malnutrition prevalence, height for age (% of children under 5)	33	18
Malnutrition prevalence, weight for age (% of children under 5)	8	3
Poverty headcount ratio at US\$1.25 a day (PPP) (% of population)	25	19

Source: UNDP 2010

28. A recent report (WB & UNICEF 2011) identifies the main nutritional issue as micronutrient deficiencies, notably of iron, vitamin A and iodine. Although there is a strong correlation between food insecurity and poverty,<sup>7</sup> the report cites evidence which shows that improvements in nutrition lag behind income growth. Surprisingly high levels of malnutrition, due to poor nutrition practices or lack of micronutrients, persist in families with ample incomes for adequate food intake.

### 1.2.3 Government strategy, policies and programmes.

29. The Government's development objectives are articulated in its Country Development Strategies. Although there have been some changes in emphasis in

<sup>6</sup> EFSA, various.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance WFP EFSA (2010) which states that:

The characteristics of the food insecure showed that **food insecurity** in the Kyrgyz Republic is essentially **chronic**, with **poverty** as the basic cause of poor food consumption. (WFP 2010f)

successive documents,<sup>8</sup> they all commit the Kyrgyz Republic to pursuing the MDGs and emphasise the importance of economic growth in enabling poverty reduction. The strategies for 2007–2010 and 2009–2011 do not mention hunger or nutrition at all, but the 2012–14 strategy does include “implementation of programs to improve the nutritional status of women and children” as a component of its health programmes. Food security is addressed in these documents, if at all, as an issue in national food self-sufficiency, rather than in terms of individuals eating enough.

30. Social protection does feature in all the strategies – for example:

*Social policy along with the policy of economic growth encouragement will aim at more efficient and targeted policy of providing support to vulnerable population (GoK 2007, ¶162).*

The 2009 strategy reports rationalisation and monetisation of the social protection system, but acknowledges “insufficient level” and “inadequate targeting” of benefits, (GoK 2009, section 6.3.3).

The 2012 MTDP repeats the same diagnosis: *social support is not provided in targeted way. As a result, state support of that category of people who are in urgent need, is insufficient (GoK 2012).* It also envisages: *expansion of social projects for temporary employment.*

31. The development context in the Kyrgyz Republic has been volatile in recent years, as successive governments have introduced new paradigms. The 100 day action plan (GoK 2012b) was introduced in March 2012, to be followed by the Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (GoK 2102c) in September 2012, followed by the National Sustainable Development Strategy (GoK 2013) in February 2013, indicating a new strategic document every six months. Nevertheless, many of the main strands of policy remain consistent as strategy is updated, such as social protection highlighted in the preceding paragraph.

32. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for food security issues and chairs an inter-ministerial working group in charge of improving food access, which has taken a number of limited measures to dampen inflation. Other ministries involved in humanitarian and development assistance include the State Directorate for Recovery of Osh and Jalal-abad, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Social Protection has the main oversight for the administration and distribution of the safety nets, through its network of social workers at the Oblast and Rayon levels.

#### **1.2.4 International assistance and role of aid agencies.**

33. The role of donors and aid agencies in supporting the Kyrgyz Republic, and shaping public policy, is significant. The World Bank alone has committed over USD 1bn since 1992, with the majority of that as budget support. The Kyrgyz Republic received an annual average of about USD 350m in aid from OECD countries and multilaterals from 2008–2010 (the last year shown in the creditor reporting system). Over that period Turkey was the largest bilateral donor, followed by the US, EU, Germany, Japan and the UK. As well as the World Bank, the AsDB and IMF are significant multilateral donors. (Details in o.)

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<sup>8</sup> The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers / Country Development Strategies covered the periods 2007–10 (GoK 2007), 2009–11 (GoK 2009), and, most recently, the Medium Term Development programme for 2012–14 (GoK 2012).

34. The US has focused on economic development (agriculture, local administrations), education, health (new insurance fund) and democracy (election support). Other OECD donors and multilaterals have tended toward budget support, i.e. non-project aid which has been contingent on progress on social protection (as well as sound macro-finance and good governance), and there is a new medium-term development programme (MTDP/PRSP) in place that reflects this.

35. Apart from the OECD donors, Russia and China are thought to be major aid contributors, although they do not publish their statistics. Russia has been WFP's major donor throughout its presence in the country.

36. For the UN in the Kyrgyz Republic, the UNDAF 2005-2011 (UN 2004) was complemented by flash appeals in 2009 and 2010 for humanitarian relief and by the Extended Delivery as One programme for 2010-2011, which expands UN assistance to address issues of economic, food security and energy challenges. These issues have been built into the 2012-2016 UNDAF (UN 2011).

37. UNICEF and FAO are the two UN agencies that share most common interests with WFP. UNICEF has been present in the Kyrgyz Republic since 1994 and is actively involved in nutrition and social protection issues. It commissioned a 2008 study by the Centre for Social and Economic Research to assess the effectiveness of cash transfers to families and children. Jointly with the World Bank, it conducted a nutrition situation analysis in 2011, following up earlier findings on the extent of micro-nutrient deficiencies. It has helped to pilot the use of "sprinkles" to address micronutrient deficiencies in young children, and it has also supported salt iodisation and flour fortification programmes. Its forward programme emphasises advocacy and the modelling of initiatives that can be scaled up.<sup>9</sup>

38. FAO is one of 15 other UN agencies and funds operating in the Kyrgyz Republic, and like WFP started its operations in 2009. It has focused primarily on assisting government with agricultural strategies, with some programme work in small-scale agriculture (vegetable gardens). FAO is working jointly with WFP on a project to improve food security analysis, funded by the EU, as well as joint projects like the community development associations covered in section 2.1.3. WFP has also undertaken joint projects with UNDP on disaster management and environment using the food-for-work modality.

39. In addition to the UN agencies and donors outlined above, the country enjoys an active civil society, with many international and national NGOs. Larger development actors include the Aga Khan Development Network and international NGOs like Save the Children, and there are also between 8,000 and 12,000 registered national NGOs.

### **1.3 The International Aid and WFP Contexts**

40. Over the period of this evaluation, WFP has been adapting to a significantly **changing international environment for aid**. There has been a less expansive aid climate since the financial crisis of 2008, coupled with increasing demands that aid should show demonstrable results. Geo-political concerns have been prominent (not least in the neighbourhood of the Kyrgyz Republic), and emerging donors (including

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<sup>9</sup> "Anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies among women and children will be addressed through the development, implementation and monitoring of a National Nutrition Strategy and enforcement of the law on flour fortification. The integrated approach initiated in one province, which combines the distribution of Sprinkles micronutrient powder to children with appropriate food practices and promotion of early childhood development, will be strengthened and scaled up nationwide." (WB & UNICEF 2011)

Russia and China) have become more important relative to the traditional OECD DAC group.

41. The aid effectiveness agenda, defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, continued to evolve through the 4th High Level Forum in Busan. The **focus on fragility** in Busan is potentially meaningful in the context of the Kyrgyz Republic. Although currently not classed as fragile, the Kyrgyz Republic certainly contains elements of uncertainty in its development trajectory because of its landlocked position, the inter-ethnic conflict in the south and its vulnerability to shocks (both external and from disasters).

42. There are also important evolutions in terms of social protection approaches and frameworks for addressing the challenges of hunger and nutrition, which are described in section 2.1.

43. **WFP Context.** The period under evaluation corresponds to a changing business model for WFP. This is encapsulated in the shift from "food aid" to "food assistance" that was embodied in the 2008–2013 Strategic Plan (WFP 2008a). The new strategic approach was facilitated by a change in the resource base of WFP, which has become much less dependent on in-kind donations of food and therefore more able to embrace a variety of food assistance instruments.

44. In order to operate more flexibly, WFP has recognised the need to adapt its internal financing model and incentives, proposing a new financing model to the board in 2010. However, this has yet to roll out effectively to country level although it is potentially crucial in enabling WFP to deploy advisory and capacity development resources that are not mechanically linked to "tonnage".

45. The interplay between WFP-wide strategic reforms and the Kyrgyz Republic country portfolio is made more significant by the Kyrgyz Republic being a new programme that has evolved entirely within the current WFP strategic plan period. WFP has recently undertaken a number of key strategic evaluations which provide general insights into issues faced at country level. These include the mid-term review of the strategic plan's implementation (WFP 2012g), an evaluation of CO adaptation to change (WFP 2012e) and three additional strategic evaluations concerning WFP's role in social protection and safety nets, partnerships in the transition from food aid to food assistance, and WFP's role in ending long-term hunger (summarised in WFP 2012f). These all describe the (evolving) context in which COs have to operate. The evaluation of change, in particular, describes the challenges COs face and draws general conclusions about progress and obstacles in adapting to WFP's new strategic directions and processes. The present CPE drew systematically on these evaluations as a point of reference for understanding WFP's strategy and operations in the Kyrgyz Republic (See Annex D).

#### **1.4 WFP's portfolio in the Kyrgyz Republic**

46. WFP's operations in the Kyrgyz Republic have been predominantly emergency focused (see Table 4 below, and also the Factsheet at the front of this report, which shows the evolution of the portfolio and funding levels, and the percentage of planned beneficiaries by activity).

**Table 4 WFP portfolio 2008 – 2011 by Programme Category in Kyrgyzstan**

	No. of operations	Requirements (US\$ million)	% of requirements by project type
Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP)	2	997,488	1%
Emergency Operation (EMOP)	2	47,411,984	59%
Special Operation (SO)	1	4,431,378	5%
Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO)	1	28,097,458	35%
<b>Total</b>		<b>80,938,308</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: SPRs

47. In November 2008, at the request of the Kyrgyz Prime Minister, WFP launched an emergency operation from its office in neighbouring Tajikistan to assist populations affected by an extremely harsh winter combined with energy shortfalls and a lack of access to heating: an Immediate Response Emergency Operation provided for an office to be opened in Bishkek in December 2008, and the first emergency food distributions took place in spring 2009. A sub-office opened in Osh city in September 2009 and the emergency operation was extended into the next winter.

48. In 2010, conflict in the south led to a new Immediate Response Operation, a Special Operation in support of the logistics and telecoms clusters and another Emergency Operation for victims of the conflict and of the wider continued economic crisis. In 2011, a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) was started and it continues to be implemented up to 2013. It concentrates mostly on vulnerable group feeding, with some food for work, with the latter supporting environmental (tree planting), agricultural (rehabilitation of irrigation systems) and infrastructure (including disaster management) projects. WFP works with and through the Ministry of Social Protection, using the social workers to target vulnerable families and individuals.

49. Table 5 shows how WFP activities across the six operations align to WFP's five strategic objectives. Two-thirds of activity has been emergency focused – saving lives and protecting livelihoods (SO1) – and until recently (with the introduction of FFW under an ongoing EMOP in 2010 and its expansion under the PRRO) this type of activity predominated.

**Table 5 Portfolio activities vs. WFP Strategic Objectives**

<b>WFP Strategic objectives 2008 – 2013</b>	<b>Major activities in the Kyrgyz Republic portfolio</b>
SO 1: Saving lives and protecting livelihoods in emergencies.	Targeted food distribution. General food distribution.
SO2: Preventing acute hunger and investing in disaster preparedness and mitigation	Targeted food distribution. Food for work
SO3: Restore and rebuild livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situations	Targeted food distributions, Food for assets.
SO5: Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger through hand-over strategies and local purchase	Institutional strengthening/ food security analysis

50. The CO is also in the process of starting a school feeding operation. This will build on an existing government programme, and will be mostly in the form of expertise and capacity building (see Box 1 below).

## Box 1 WFP's planned assistance to school feeding

From January 2013, WFP expects to implement a new school feeding operation “optimising the primary school meals programme” (DEV 200176). Although its implementation falls outside the evaluation period, the project provides insights into the evolution of WFP's country strategy.

The Government has been operating a universal primary school meals programme since serving almost 400,00 children since 2006. This is strongly supported and financed by the government, but WFP has been asked to assist in strengthening its design and delivery. Assistance will focus on supporting the government to develop: i) an efficient, sustainable national school meals strategy, implementation plan, and policy framework that is aligned with international quality standards for sustainable school feeding; and ii) an improved coordination structure with enhanced capacities to manage and implement a national school meals programme.

As part of this exercise, WFP will pilot an enhanced school feeding programme, which will target up to 25,000 school children in approximately 250 primary schools in rural areas of the country identified by the Ministry of Education and Science as being the most in need of assistance. The pilot will test alternative rations and implementation approaches that can be achieved within the existing per capita cost of the government programme; it will model improved coordination of the school meals programme, improved supply chains, improved meal quality, and rehabilitation of school canteens, and water and sanitation facilities.

The WFP operation is financed by the Russian Federation, and WFP will partner with a Russian non-governmental organization, the Social and Industrial Food Services Institute.

The project is aligned with WFP's SO5 (national capacity and handover strategies), and SO4 (reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition); it will be the first operation to focus on SO4 (cf. Table 5 above). Unlike WFP's previous operations, the school feeding project will, from the outset, work within national systems, with the aim of strengthening them.

*Source: WFP 2012k*

51. **Objectives.** In the absence of a specific country strategy document, WFP's objectives and strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic have been set out in its successive project documents. The objectives of the early EMOPs were to:

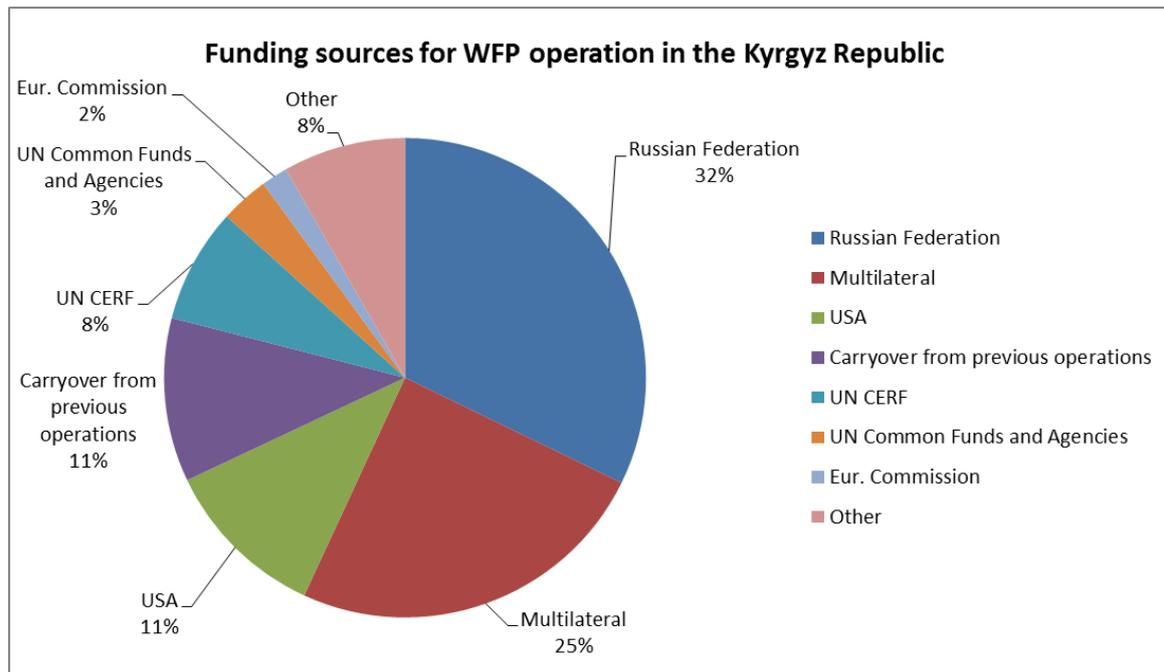
- Stabilise and improve dietary and nutritional status.
- Restore adequate food consumption.
- Maintain health status.
- Save lives in emergencies and contribute to improved food consumption for the conflict-affected households.
- Protect livelihoods and enhance self-reliance in the emergency and early recovery phases.

52. The ongoing PRRO project document (WFP 2011j) sets out three main objectives:

1. Ensure adequate food consumption for families at risk of falling into acute hunger;
2. Enable communities with depleted assets to recover; and
3. Strengthen national capacity to assess and respond to food insecurity.

53. **Instruments.** The portfolio has included the following instruments:
- General food distributions:** took place following the conflict displacement of 2010, and consisted of high energy biscuits, wheat flour and vegetable oil; this was followed by targeted distributions to a reduced number of beneficiaries of wheat flour, vegetable oil, pulses and iodized salt.
  - Targeted food distributions:** called vulnerable group feeding (VGF), this is now the bulk of the portfolio. Carried out twice a year, it provides families (households) with an allocation of wheat flour and oil. Households are identified by local authorities and social workers, against agreed WFP criteria including that they fall below the poverty line.
  - Food for work/assets/training:** FFW started in EMOP 108040 in 2010, and is ongoing as one of two tools in the PRRO alongside VGF. The FFW is focused on disaster mitigation (for instance strengthening river banks), environment (tree planting) and agricultural rehabilitation (irrigation channels) and vegetable production. Some of this work has been financed from peacebuilding funds.
  - EFSA/ VAM/ Institutional strengthening:** EU funded project jointly with FAO to help the National Statistics Committee improve their analysis of food security. Builds on EFSA/ VAM work that has been ongoing since 2010.
  - Augmented **logistics** and telecommunications following the emergency: special operation initiated following the 2010 conflict in support of the relief operation.

**Figure 2 Donor shares of WFP funding 2008-2012**



Source: see WFP resource information.

54. **Donors.** All contributions have been in cash, but the majority of funding has been tied to purchases in Russia or regionally. As shown in the Factsheet, the emergency work has been relatively well and diversely funded (above 70% of the requirement). This was not the case for the Special Operation (logistics and telecoms cluster set up following the Osh emergency), perhaps because the emergency was perceived to end relatively quickly. By contrast, the Russian Federation has been the only bilateral donor to the PRRO. The Russian Federation has been WFP's largest bilateral donor across the three major operations, leaving the office to an extent dependent on their continuing support (see Figure 2 above).

## 2. Evaluation Findings

55. In section 2.1 we consider the strategic positioning of the WFP portfolio, in terms of the relevance of its activities and its alignment and complementarity with programmes of government and other partners. The quality of the decision-making that informed WFP's strategic choices is then reviewed in section 2.2, while section 2.3 presents findings on the performance and results of the activities implemented.

### 2.1 Strategic Positioning and Alignment

56. WFP interventions have been carried out in an increasingly complex context characterised by changing, and in some cases worsening, political, institutional, and environmental conditions (section 1.2 above). Volatility in national policy and security has implications for policy application and institutional attention. Intermittent, unpredictable levels of insecurity and inconsistency in policy implementation have resulted in sporadic attention to national food security policy and food reserves and impeded effective coordinated action between key institutions and donors.

57. WFP's initial interventions in the Kyrgyz Republic (the four EMOPs and the Special Operation described in section 1.4 above) were conceived as rapid responses to immediate emergencies – responding to WFP's first Strategic Objective (SO1 – save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies), but a more strategic approach was gradually articulated.<sup>10</sup> The EMOP implemented in the first half of 2009 anticipated that “Pending an assessment of the food security situation after the winter and based on further consultations with the Government, WFP could foresee a possible role in mid to longer-term recovery activities in the Kyrgyz Republic, under the new Strategic Plan” (WFP 2009c), but the PRRO, with its two-year time frame, was the first to articulate an explicit country strategy. It planned to combine relief and recovery activities, and linked proposed activities to WFP's SOs 2, 3 and 5, with a gradual shift in the balance towards recovery activities – see Box 2 below.

58. Thus WFP has recognised the complex and structural nature of poverty and food insecurity in the Kyrgyz Republic and has sought to move away from simple emergency food distribution to food for work, and latterly capacity building to improve government food security analysis and its school feeding programme.

59. Yet, despite an evolution of the objectives and financing instruments over the four-year period of operation, the programme as delivered has remained largely the same, dominated by a twice-yearly distribution of food aid (wheat flour and vegetable oil) to vulnerable families. Food for work has started to alter the nature of the

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<sup>10</sup> SO3 was an added objective for the second EMOP in 2010, the year in which FFW operations began.

programme, but FFW still only accounted for 19% of beneficiaries in 2012 (see Factsheet).

### **Box 2 WFP strategy as outlined in the PRRO project document**

WFP's interventions in the Kyrgyz Republic will focus on three main objectives:

- (i) To ensure adequate food consumption for families at risk of falling into acute hunger (WFP Strategic Objective 2 "Prevent acute hunger and invest in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures")
- (ii) To enable communities with depleted assets to recover and restore productive capacity and protect agricultural land and improve food security (WFP Strategic Objective 3 "Restore and rebuild lives and livelihoods in post-conflict, post-disaster or transition situations")
- (iii) To strengthen national capacity to assess and respond to food insecurity through improved monitoring and social protection (WFP Strategic Objective 5: "Strengthen the capacities of countries to reduce hunger through hand-over strategies and local purchase")

Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) is seen as a **relief** component, focused on SO2; FFW/T is seen as primarily a **recovery** component focused on SO3, though with also an element of promoting community resiliency to shocks (SO2).

"..exceptional measures are required **to help break the cycle and accelerate recovery** from the deteriorated food security situation of vulnerable households. WFP's intervention under this PRRO will address the most pressing food security needs over the next two years as the country and the most vulnerable persons continue to face the multiple impacts of political, economic challenges, and persistent high food prices." (¶34, emphasis added)

**Capacity development** (SO5) is to be pursued mainly through strengthening food security monitoring, jointly with FAO. ("The FSMS will be developed jointly with the Government and integrated into the national system.")

The PRRO strategy also envisages a shift in the balance of activities:

During the implementation of this PRRO, through a gradual increase of the FFW/T programme, WFP plans to intensify activities which build and protect the productive assets of households and communities, thus improving their food security situation and building resiliency to shocks. Based on the FFW/T model, WFP will formulate and implement a medium-term strategy that builds recovery mechanisms jointly with partners to gradually transfer responsibility to local stakeholders, particularly the Government. (¶41)

WFP's interventions should be seen in the context of a broader portfolio of food security and nutrition-related interventions that will focus on the medium- to long-term improvement of food security in the Kyrgyz Republic. This may include WFP support to reform the existing national school feeding program. (¶38)

Source: WFP 2011j

### **2.1.1 Relevance**

60. **Seasonal food insecurity.** Figure 5 below (section 2.3) shows the highly seasonal nature of food insecurity in the Kyrgyz Republic, with the second quarter of the year always the time when people have the least food. From qualitative interviews and extensive household data, the majority of the poorest households rely on a combination of day labour and small-scale farming and livestock. Seasonal labour is closely related to the agricultural cycle and the weather, starting in spring with the planting season and ending in late autumn with the harvest. Typically households go into winter with reserves related to their own harvest and the money they have managed to save over the summer, and these reserves are stretched thinnest at the end of the winter before the spring planting labour has started.

61. In this context the WFP ‘vulnerable group feeding’ (VGF) food covers a critical gap for many families. The autumn distribution contributes to families’ reserves over the winter period, and the spring distribution covers the gap until work is available again.

62. This is also the case with food for work (FFW), albeit in differing ways. FFW is a form of payment for labour, which in a context where the biggest single problem is unemployment is highly relevant. For those working on the larger FFW schemes, it is possible to earn six months’ worth of food or more, providing a significant contribution to household income and therefore economic and food security.

63. Both WFP activities can be viewed as providing additional household income. Whilst most of the families being assisted conduct some small-scale subsistence farming activities, it is erroneous to think of them as farmers. The majority are low-skilled labourers who would previously have worked in factories or on large collective farms. In the absence of formal employment they rely on whatever sporadic work is available, supplementing this with small-scale low-technology farming.

64. **Relevance of food aid.** It is appropriate to consider whether food (rather than money) is the more appropriate transfer. Occasionally markets fail, meaning food aid is a more relevant intervention than other types of interventions – bringing prices down (or stabilising them) and increasing availability. Equally, occasionally food aid has precisely the opposite effect, depressing food prices to the detriment of local farmers and making life harder for the majority.

65. In the Kyrgyz Republic the wider economic effect of WFP food aid appears to be neutral. WFP food accounts for less than 3% of total imports, and as wheat is an imported commodity that people buy in any case, it does not impact on local farmers’ livelihoods. In fact, in the current Kyrgyz context of rapidly rising food prices, providing poor households with food directly will possibly be a hedge against food price inflation.

66. The relevance of food aid is reinforced by the beneficiaries themselves. In all of the interviews for this evaluation, beneficiary groups insisted that they preferred food over cash. There were a number of reasons for this. People were worried about corruption if cash was involved, and about receiving a lower equivalent value of cash. They also found the quality of the wheat flour better than any on the local market, and they would spend much of any cash given on the same staples, so receiving it directly simplifies transactions.

67. **Community development.** Currently FFW is used for four broad types of activity: *disaster mitigation works* in support of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (and local communities); *repair of irrigation canals in support of water users' associations* (and local communities); *tree planting in support of the forestry department*, and *supporting women's groups to improve their agricultural practice*.

68. All these activities are relevant as a contribution to community development and are highly appreciated by everyone the evaluation team spoke to, from recipients of assistance to officials and partners. WFP's approach to partnership is further considered in section 2.1.3 below, and the results of FFW activities are assessed in section 2.3 below.

69. **Nutrition** has not, at least until recently, featured prominently in national strategy documents (§29 above) despite the serious nutritional problems that the Kyrgyz Republic faces. However, various initiatives, including the provision of micro-nutrients, iodisation of salt and flour fortification, are under way. A comprehensive analysis by the World Bank and UNICEF has reviewed the nutrition landscape and proposed an agenda for evidence-based interventions (WB & UNICEF 2011). This is congruent with the dynamic international aid framework for addressing the challenges of hunger and nutrition – encapsulated in the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) initiative and Road Map (UN 2010).

70. In terms of tackling food insecurity in the short term, diversity of diet is almost as important as absolute consumption. Food poverty in the Kyrgyz Republic is more than simply a lack of the staples. In fact, people always manage somehow to acquire the staples (flour and oil), but often lack other types of foodstuffs. This in turn leads to the most obvious symptom of food insecurity, stunting. This is as much about food diversity as it is about overall availability. On this measure, the WFP assistance is helping as it provides fortified wheat (with added micro-nutrients and iron). Education is also important in combating micro-nutrient malnutrition, something WFP is now exploring with its partners.

## Conclusions

- C1 WFP has recognised the complex and structural nature of poverty and food insecurity in the Kyrgyz Republic and has sought to move away from simple emergency food distribution to food for work, and latterly capacity building to improve government food security analysis. Yet, despite an evolution of the objectives and financing instruments over the four-year period of operation, the programme as delivered has remained largely the same, dominated by a twice-yearly distribution of food aid
- C2 The WFP interventions have been highly relevant to the communities where WFP works. VGF and FFW cover a critical gap for many families during the spring 'lean' period. They have been primarily relevant as an aspect of social protection, but also play a role in addressing undernutrition.
- C3 Beneficiaries preferred food to cash, whilst at the same time acknowledging it was primarily an economic transfer.
- C4 WFP's food assistance is fortified with added micro-nutrients and iron, and thus contributes to reducing malnutrition through the provision of micro-nutrients as well as through (macro) calorie provision. Education is also important in combating micro-nutrient malnutrition, something WFP is now exploring with its partners.

### **2.1.2 Alignment with national strategies and programmes**

71. Alignment has several dimensions – support for government objectives, consistency with government policies, and use of government systems. The main WFP interventions have clearly supported government objectives, and have been welcomed by government on that basis. The questions of alignment with policies and systems are less straightforward.

72. **Social protection.** The WFP's PRRO intervention is primarily related to food security in the context of chronic poverty.<sup>11</sup> The main tool of the state and donors in combating poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition (beyond economic growth) has been social protection measures in the form of safety nets.

73. Internationally, social protection concepts have evolved in recent years from a relatively narrow definition of a social welfare safety net instrument to a more comprehensive tool for fundamental poverty reduction. The definition of social protection varies by agency and by country with a diverse range of concepts, tools, and modes of implementation, and continues to evolve. The World Bank's emerging social protection policy reflects their current thinking and is a relatively good summary of the view held by the major social protection actors (such as the EC, DFID, UNICEF and ILO). For the World Bank, effective, efficient and equitable social protection programmes directly reduce poverty and inequality, and build resilience by helping individuals and families even out their consumption and handle shocks. They also can promote opportunity, productivity and growth. As such, they stress three inter-connected functions for social protection:

- *Prevention* of drops in wellbeing from income and expenditure shocks.
- *Protection* from destitution and catastrophic losses of human capital.
- *Promotion* of improved opportunities and livelihoods through 'connecting' to better jobs and opportunities. (WB 2011c)

74. Since the high food price crisis of 2008, both the IMF and the World Bank have advocated the development of social protection systems as a key tool for poverty reduction. Consequently, many host governments are now including social protection within their own poverty reduction strategies. The evolving social protection framework is extremely important for WFP in terms of situating its food security interventions and the WFP corporate strategic plan recognises this.

75. The chosen Kyrgyz government social protection system, which is backed by large donors such as the EU and by agencies such as UNICEF, is articulated around the following main safety nets:

- The Unified Monthly Benefit (UMB) (also 'subsidy', and more recently known simply as MB) is a last-resort poverty-targeted variable cash benefit aimed at children from low-income families. Administrative data suggest 396,000 low-income families received UMB in 2009. In January 2010 the UMB was raised by 18%. National legislation on food security has been updated over the 2008-2012 period with a view to using the MB as the main safety net to offset the impact of inflation on vulnerable groups.
- The Monthly Social Benefit (MSB) is a cash income-replacement programme targeted at disadvantaged groups unable to work (mainly elderly without a

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<sup>11</sup> See for instance WFP food security update 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2012, which states, "Food insecurity in the Kyrgyz Republic is essentially chronic, particularly in rural areas, with poverty as the base cause."

pension). It is a flat rate benefit, and administrative data suggest that 64,800 people received this in 2009. The MSB is seen to be performing well by comparison with similar programmes in many other ECA countries (WB & UNICEF 2011). In January 2010, the MSB was raised by 81%.

- Social pay to people in mountainous areas.
- *Ad hoc* distributions of subsidised food.
- Various compensations (for everything from military service to Chernobyl victims).

76. Social safety nets have responded to the crises in various ways. Funds have traditionally been channelled to a patchwork of “old-style” benefits known as “privileges” that were poorly targeted and costly. In 2009 the Government began significant reforms to improve the system’s effectiveness and efficiency. A key element was monetising the in-kind benefits. Despite reforms, the measures have not focused on channelling social protection resources to the lowest-income households. Only two of the social assistance programmes have poverty alleviation objectives and are targeted at lower-income households.

77. The previous government had pledged incremental increases in the UMB and MSB until 2015, and whilst it delivered on some of these, further increases are in some doubt. This pledged increase is part of donor requirements for budget and sector support, and important macroeconomic conversations are continuing around this topic.

78. The WFP intervention does not quite fit with these national efforts. The stated intent of the VGF programme, is to ‘top up’ the government safety net payments. It is a resource transfer to the very poorest, who are also the group being targeted by the monthly social protection payments. Yet, only 56% of the extreme poor are receiving the food ration because of an understandable scale problem (WFP only operates in rural AOs where over 40% of households live below GMI). What this means is that some groups receive both MB and WFP, some receive only WFP and some only MB. Because VGF is not a part of the government system but a parallel system using different methods and similar but not identical targeting, the effect is to amplify the inconsistencies in the overall social welfare system.

79. Thus the WFP assistance may be compounding, rather than resolving, the problems of poorly targeted social assistance. Indeed, the WFP food aid is a ‘top up’ to the social protection scheme (and is so described by WFP staff) but this monthly payment is widely regarded as both too little in real terms, and missing many of the neediest. A joint AsDB, IMF and World Bank report looking at the impact of the 2010 crisis concluded that, “it should be noted that with the exclusion of 67 percent of extreme poor from the (U)MB system, and 60 percent of disabled from the MSB system, the social assistance scheme of the Kyrgyz Republic could be considered badly targeted.” (AsDB, IMF & WB 2010).

80. The WFP system has a higher income threshold than the MB (KGS 450 per person compared to KGS 350 per person in the MB). In practice, however, some of those who are most food insecure are receiving both WFP food and the monthly government welfare payment, some are receiving one or the other, and some are receiving neither.

81. **Use of government systems.** WFP cannot deliver food to every poor household in the country as it would be prohibitively expensive. However, the government can, and does, deliver its welfare payment to every one of the poorest households on its list because it has the intent and the infrastructure for it. In interviews

for this evaluation, focus groups did not identify problems in receiving the MB payments (apart from their size). Yet, the WFP office maintains that direct implementation of food distribution is the only option as government does not have the capacity, despite the reality that a) the government implements a much larger social protection programme targeting the same cohort, and b) WFP largely uses the government system at the local level to implement its own programme, with local officials heavily involved in identifying eligible beneficiaries of VGF, and government agencies directly involved in most categories of FFW activity.

### Conclusions

- C5 The main WFP interventions have clearly supported government objectives, and have been welcomed by government on that basis.
- C6 The WFP strategy of making a transition from free food to more sustainable recovery and development activities is appropriate given the context.
- C7 The food aid programme does not quite fit with national strategy on social protection and safety nets. There is a strong role for WFP in these national strategies, and a need for closer alignment.
- C8 WFP needs to situate itself better in the wider landscape of policy initiatives, in particular by better integrating its efforts to address food insecurity into the government social protection strategy.

#### **2.1.3 Approach to partnership**

82. Choice of partners to work with is a key dimension of strategy. WFP Kyrgyz Republic has a valuable range of partnerships, and has tried hard to form as many diverse and effective relationships as possible. In interviews for this evaluation all of WFP's partners were complimentary about the organisation, feeling that WFP delivered well on its commitments. Several respondents told us they hoped WFP could increase the size of its assistance. This sentiment was shared by government partners who seem highly appreciative of the partnership.

83. While these partnerships exist on all levels – national, provincial, district and local – they are more visible, and arguably more productive, at the operational level than at the national level.

#### **Partnership with the government**

84. The main WFP partner in the Kyrgyz Republic is the government. The question of the WFP relationship with government is a complex one, and is certainly one of the main factors that has constrained a more strategic approach to date. Despite very cordial relations, and much expressed goodwill, the organisation continues to operate on a temporary basis, without a Basic Agreement.

85. However, the organisation is well established in the country after only four years, as a result of its extensive 'field' presence. WFP has been working in many of the remotest parts of the country, and its field monitors are often in the oblasts, rayons and ayil okmotus. On an operational level, WFP is extremely well connected to government, and is highly valued and appreciated.

86. It is in the villages and districts that the most concrete partnerships are realised. At district and ayil okmotu (AO) level (the lowest level of administration, typically several villages), the authorities are intimately involved in the planning and execution. This is true both of VGF, where the authorities invest considerable time and energy in

the targeting process, and of FFW where it is the AOs who have to design the interventions. Many AO officials interviewed for this evaluation had used FFW for projects they could not previously have undertaken, typically bridge building but also disaster management works and irrigation canal cleaning. There was a great desire to continue and expand such work, as their budgets allow only for salaries and some very basic maintenance work (usually roads), but not new development.

87. At the national level the picture is reversed. Whilst the organisation is known to the most senior political figures (the current Prime Minister for instance is a former mayor of Osh and knows WFP well), it has not managed to establish durable relationships with the national working level of government. The main explanation advanced for this by the country office (CO) is that turnover at the political and senior official level has made this practically impossible.

88. National Ministries seem generally appreciative of the partnership. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is the organisation's main partner for the delivery of VGF. The Ministry of Emergency Situations is the main partner for disaster management, and the forestry department for the tree planting. WFP has a significant partnership with the National Statistics Committee (NSC) for its EU-funded food security monitoring system (also in partnership with FAO), and WFP is variously networked into government on issues of food security more broadly – for instance, through the Prime Minister's Office.

89. Yet, with the exception of the NSC project, the focus is at village and district level, on effective and efficient implementation. A great deal of effort goes into getting this right, and it is highly significant in the local communities in which WFP works. At the national level there are more limited formal relationships with government partners.

90. This is an issue that is acknowledged by the office, and there are several processes or plans in place to develop this area of work. Both WFP and FAO have put effort into reinvigorating the donor coordination (DPCC) working group on food security. WFP has provided input into the new mid-term development plan (MTDP) on food security, and – as above – keeps national counterparts informed of its activities. It worked hard to ensure food security was in the UNDAF, and has worked within the DPPC to influence strategies such as the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSSD), albeit unsuccessfully. In key stakeholder interviews, however, respondents repeatedly made the point that WFP needed to invest more in understanding how government works, and in exerting influence as well as carrying out activities.

91. The evaluation has found this issue to be highly relevant to the strategic work of the CO. This is not to under-estimate the constraints. In the past 21 years there have been 36 Ministers of Agriculture, for instance, and during the course of this evaluation there were three Ministers for Social Development (with one arrested for corruption). Such rapid turnover makes high level engagement very difficult, and severely constrains any policy dialogue. New Ministers arrive with unrealistic plans to revolutionise their sector, and leave before the first measures are implemented.

92. On the other hand, other agencies (UNICEF, UNDP) have managed to maintain working, policy-level relationships and to achieve progress despite this turbulence. Some policy measures remain remarkably consistent, despite the periodic introduction of 100 day plans. UNICEF, working with the EU, was instrumental in the forming of the current Ministry for Social Development and has been pushing legislation on issues of nutrition (albeit with uneven success).

93. This suggests that however difficult it may be to work on policy, it is possible. One key difference is that UNDP and UNICEF have been working in the country for longer

and both have Basic Agreements (all other UN agencies who have come subsequently do not have these). This may mean they are on a more ‘stable footing’ in engaging with government. Probably the most significant difference, though, is their way of working. Both organisations see their role as primarily policy focused – catalytic, leveraging government and major donor/IFI resources for a social protection and equitable development agenda. WFP, in contrast, remains largely practically and operationally focused even at national level. A key recent success was an earthquake simulation, including government and international agencies. This led to a realisation that better inter-agency coordination in government was needed. To have this kind of impact on national policy however, means in practice having more policy officers, investing in social research and advocacy as well as implementing stand-alone programmes.

### **Other partnerships**

94. WFP has also partnered with local NGOs. Box 3 below highlights the relationship with a local NGO, the Community Development Association (CDA). This is a good example of where grassroots activism and understanding can combine with WFP scale and capacity to produce results. In the case of CDA, the partnership has resulted in a growing number of self-sufficient women’s groups. WFP also has a significant relationship with the national NGO Shoola. Here, the partnership has helped to verify effective and efficient food distribution and ensure accountability at local level (helping to monitor conflict over disputed VGF entitlements), mobilise rural citizens and community groups including cooperatives, farmers groups and agricultural schools helping to introduce community development principles, and is now providing potential scope for extending and expanding the reach of FFW.

#### **Box 3 FFW/Training partnership to support women’s groups**

Of the four main FFW/T activities, the one most clearly appreciated by communities in evaluation interviews was the support for women’s groups. The scheme involves a partnership between WFP, UN Women, FAO, the World Bank, GIZ and two local NGOs (CDA – Community Development Association – and ADI – Association of Development Initiatives). Set up by CDA, it involves forming self-help groups of women, usually migrants or with family members who have migrated. The women are provided with improved seed varieties and training on how to farm better. The food is used as an incentive to attend trainings and work on their plots. The women have to contribute small savings each month that enable them to buy the next batch of seeds the following year. The CDA project was supported with peace-building funds, as part of the rationale is also to reduce potential conflict between host communities and migrants.

95. As truly national local partners, CDA and Shoola represent important agents for shifting a mentality of dependence towards more lasting resilience at local level. Both CDA and Shoola, as indicated, have also involved inputs from FAO (training), UN Women (social mobilisation), and the World Bank and GIZ (seeds). In this sense, these are truly collaborative partnerships.

96. WFP has also had an extremely productive partnership with UNDP in its disaster mitigation projects. UNDP finances materials and provides technical input, WFP provides the food to pay for the labour and local government identifies projects and often also contributes materials. This is another good example of practical collaboration resulting in tangible outputs.

## Conclusions

- C9 WFP has a valuable range of partnerships in the Kyrgyz Republic, and has tried hard to form diverse and effective relationships.
- C10 The main relationships are with government, especially at local and regional level. These are especially effective around operational issues.
- C11 Government turnover and turbulence have made it difficult for the country office to engage properly at the national level. However, other UN organisations seem to have achieved more in this respect and WFP could learn from their efforts.
- C12 WFP needs to invest more in understanding how government works, in exerting influence as well as in carrying out activities. It needs to change to a primarily policy-focused role which, in practice, means having more policy officers and investing in social research and advocacy.
- C13 WFP has some very productive relationships with local NGOs which show how grassroots activism and understanding can combine with WFP scale and capacity to produce results. WFP has also had an extremely productive partnership with UNDP in its disaster mitigation projects.

## **2.2 Making Strategic Choices**

97. The preceding section noted the strategic positioning of the WFP programme (summarised in Box 2 above), its relevance to national needs and government policies and programmes, and the strategic partnerships that have been developed. The present section examines the quality of the decision-making that underpins the strategy that has emerged; it takes account of the constraints that a small CO experiences and how these may affect its options in practice.

### **2.2.1 Analysis**

98. The analytical basis of the Kyrgyz Republic portfolio is one of the central issues for this evaluation. WFP invests significantly in analysis and this is widely regarded as being of high quality. However, it is almost exclusively operationally focused.

### **Operational analysis**

99. On the operational level, WFP collects a formidable amount and range of data, and this is quite rightly perceived as a key resource. These various data collection efforts provide valuable, detailed insight into the factors that affect food security. They allow WFP and others to track the evolution of food insecurity, and to understand where this is most prevalent in the population geographically and socially. The World Bank views WFP information on food prices, household food security and micro level inflation as extremely important for its ongoing analysis, and WFP has provided the WB with qualitative monitoring of the impacts of high food prices. As has been noted elsewhere in this report, the detailed analysis that WFP has collected on the household food security situation is impressive, as is the way it connects to programme work.<sup>12</sup>

100. The main product generated by this analysis is the bi-annual Emergency Food Security Analysis (EFSA). This is a survey of 2,000 households across the country and a large number of key informants. It uses a detailed household questionnaire to look at

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<sup>12</sup> The post-distribution monitoring (PDM) report in February 2012 concluded, “beneficiary selection criteria was the basis for successful VGF implementation. The PDM reports of previous cycles – with their wealth of data about seasonal trends in food shortages, household income and expenditures – are used to fine-tune the list of criteria for subsequent VGF distribution cycles.”

household demographics, income, assets, expenditure, consumption and coping strategies.

101. To determine who the most food insecure are the EFSA cross-references the food consumption score with household income. Families with an income below the extreme poverty line and scoring the worst for food consumption are deemed food insecure. Table 6 below shows this cross referencing. Food consumption is worked out by asking families what they have eaten in the last seven days and then using a simple ranking system to establish dietary diversity, food frequency and the nutritional value of the food consumed.

**Table 6 How the EFSA determines food insecurity**

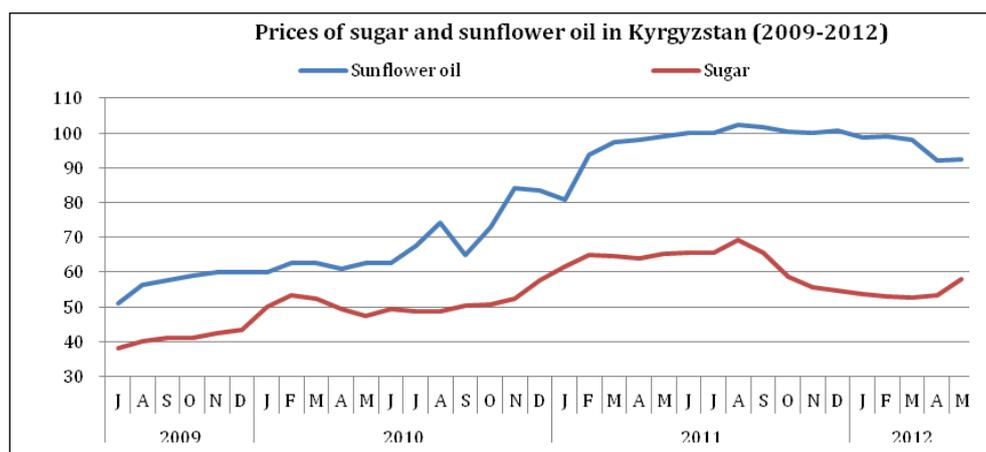
Food access groups (cash level)	Food consumption (FC) groups			Total
	Poor	Borderline	Acceptable	
Poor	% severely food insecure	% severely food insecure	% moderately food insecure	% poor access
Average	% severely food insecure	% moderately food insecure	% food secure	% average access
Good	% moderately food insecure	% food secure	% food secure	% good access
<b>Total</b>	% poor FC	% borderline FC	% acceptable FC	<b>100%</b>

102. A coping strategy index is also used to further understand household food insecurity. This asks the simple question, “What do you do when you don’t have adequate food, and don’t have the money to buy food?”

103. In addition, WFP carries out detailed post-distribution monitoring (PDM). This looks at a range of issues from whether people received the correct amounts of assistance to livelihood strategies and the contribution of WFP assistance to household consumption. The PDM also uses the food consumption and coping strategy indexes.

104. Finally, for most of the period WFP has been collecting market information on a monthly basis. This has tracked prices in the market of staple commodities and other basic necessities (such as fuel) in multiple locations. A good example of this is reproduced below at Figure 3.

**Figure 3 Prices of sugar and sunflower oil 2009 – 2012**



Source: WFP

### Learning and strategic analysis

105. Whilst the monitoring system is very robust, the evaluative function is less evident. There is little evidence of any review or lesson-learning processes following the various EMOPs, or following the distribution cycles. This is also the case with food for work (FFW). Projects are monitored to ensure that they are completed, and that there is good input from WFP, from design through to completion. When it comes to understanding what is working well and what is not, however, this remains more within the shared understanding of programme staff rather than being formally documented.

106. This is not necessarily a bad thing. This evaluation is not advocating the creation of another bureaucratic process that will serve little real purpose. Programme staff are the ones who are overseeing implementation and therefore it is most important that they are equipped with the knowledge to make good decisions. This learning comes primarily with experience. In a small office it is easy for field monitors to mix with each other and exchange experiences, although this could be done more structurally, including ensuring the southern and northern offices regularly interact.

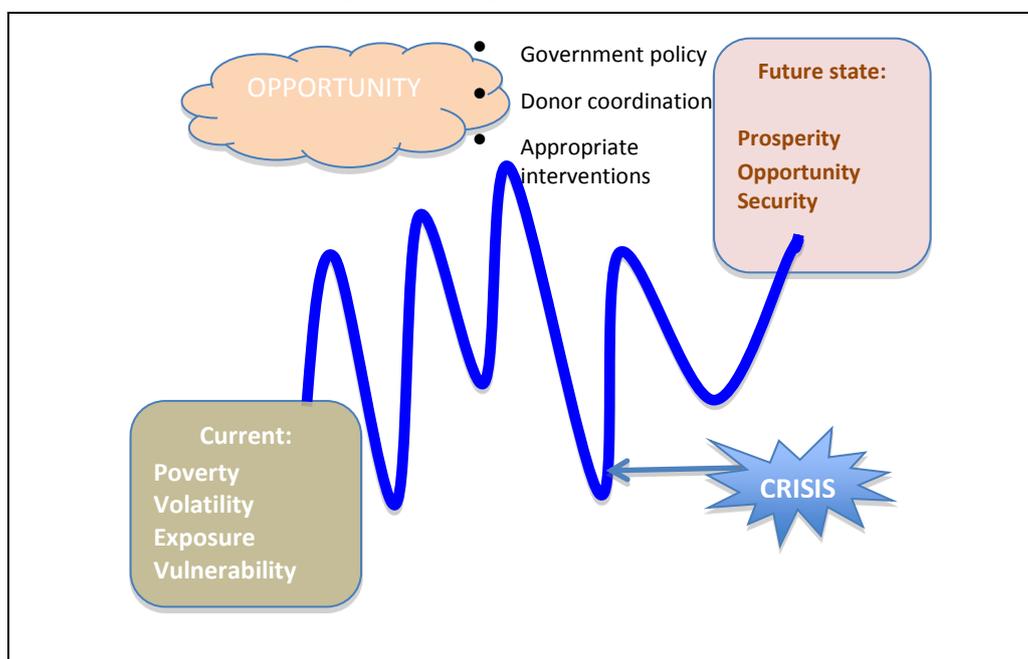
107. Whilst the operational analysis is excellent at helping WFP in delivering its programme, it contributes little to helping WFP and others work out what to do to improve food security. Here WFP is much less robust, even weak. *Hence the analysis is an excellent insight into the problem, but not particularly into the solution.* It does not apply the same rigour to analyse the range of systems and policies that might deliver the best, equitable social protection to the extremely food insecure, resulting in the use of a single, relatively blunt instrument (food aid).

108. The main stated rationale for the PRRO is that the country needs a buffer to recover from the twin shocks of high food and fuel prices in 2008/09 and political turmoil and conflict in 2010. The problem with this rationale is that it implicitly suggests a linear model – relief, recovery and then development. It perceives the 2008 and 2010 shocks as anomalies on the path to development and seeks to help buffer these shocks through the provision of free food (and some that people have to work for) whilst the economy recovers.

109. The Kyrgyz Republic is on a path to development, as shown by the statistical data of the last two decades. Yet, all too often, this path is non-linear and characterised by discontinuous change (see Figure 4 below). In recent years, numerous countries have suffered extended periods of fragility, while seemingly stable and growing economies

have experienced dramatic reversals (WB 2011b and UNDP 2012). Significant downside risks include recurring food price increases, political instability and ever more costly climate-related and other natural disasters. The fact that when the country office envisaged embarking on a PRRO, a crisis in the south (2010) prompted an extension of the EMOP testifies to this. WFP is an appropriate agency to assist the government in responding to such risks, both strategically and operationally, and has the mandate and the expertise to help government build on its own response capabilities and to work on systems and operational modalities.

**Figure 4 Uneven development trajectory**



Source: Evaluation team

110. The introduction of FFW is a recognition that the food security situation is indeed much more complex, and this element of the portfolio is designed to be more sustainable than the free food distribution. A school feeding programme is also being designed that is largely developmental in nature (Box 1 above). However, these other components so far represent only a small proportion of the overall portfolio.

### **2.2.2 Constraints – donor harmonisation and support**

111. A major constraint the CO has experienced is the lack of broad-based donor support. Donors' actions often lack coherence, with a spectrum of approaches from multilateralism through bilateralism to unilateralism. Issues of accountability for aid funds are also leading to changing donor emphasis (away from budget support and towards more projectised approaches).

112. WFP has made strong efforts to be a part of the donor community, and to engage through this with national policy on food security. Donor coordination in the Kyrgyz Republic takes place through the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC). The DPCC consists of 17 international organisations, and covers implementation, financial accounting and audit evaluation of joint projects, review of project portfolios and harmonisation of financial management and procurement procedures. The DPCC has a number of thematic working groups, including social protection chaired by UNICEF. WFP and FAO co-chair a Food Security Cluster, which coordinates all UN and

non-governmental agencies' activities linked to food security and agriculture. WFP has used this channel to disseminate food security information.

113. Nevertheless, WFP does not quite seem to fit in the mainstream – it is closely aligned to the thinking of its major donor (the Russian Federation) but not necessarily to others. WFP has enjoyed extremely generous support from the Russian Federation which has been both timely and flexible. Apart from this, however, support has been limited to UN pooled funds and one grant from the EU for the food security monitoring work with government. This has meant that the office does not have a large amount of flexible resources to experiment with.

114. This 'single donor dependency' may have made WFP more conservative about changing what it does. Given that they have support for the current programme, to try to institute a radical shift involves a risk – not only would it involve a high level of risk in terms of moving from a system that works to one which is less certain, it might not gain the all-important donor support.

### **2.2.3 WFP systems**

115. This is also the case with WFP internal systems. There is a rigidity within the programming system that does not encourage innovation, despite the emphasis since 2008 on a new business model. For instance, within the PRRO, the commodities that WFP can purchase are set through the programme management system. Thus, if the country office wishes to buy potatoes, for instance, and these have not been specified in advance, it is not possible to do so without a budget revision, which is time-consuming and needs multiple levels of approval.

116. Denying the programme even small flexibilities to experiment seems counter-productive. This is especially the case when the risks associated with innovation in small offices are commensurately lower. In fact, small country offices appear to be driven by the internal funding opportunities towards experimentation and new initiatives.

117. The issues with WFP's internal funding structure are well documented.<sup>13</sup> The formula that charges donors per metric tonne means large food aid programmes have more resources than smaller and less operational programmes. This means small country offices sign up for new internal initiatives ('pilots') because they come with some resources attached – either new ideas, people to help think through tricky problems or simply small pots of funding to support staffing positions.

118. As the example of CDA/ADI shows, however, even with quite rigid rules and a traditional food aid programme it is possible to support inspirational development work (see Box 3 above). The network of women's groups supported by CDA/ADI has grown very rapidly in just a few years and continues to grow fast. It holds the promise of sustainable household income and a cooperative-based safety net (through the savings schemes) in a very short time. Whilst this will – like micro-credit – tend to help those who had unexploited potential, and not the poor households without productive labour (and therefore is never going to be the development 'silver bullet'), it is significant. It is in addition a multi-agency partnership, also rare in the Kyrgyz context.

119. This tendency towards experimentation (there is significant potential in all of the FFW projects) is not just confined to the programme sphere. More prosaically this is also the case within the office. The CO has creatively used consultancy to fill staffing

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<sup>13</sup> See for instance the financial framework review and accompanying note to the 2010 executive board EB.2/2010/5-A/1.

gaps in a way that has brought maximum benefit at the lowest cost. This ‘small core’ model has potential for other such contexts.

120. Whilst the CO has made a virtue out of necessity – flexible staffing, leveraging internal initiatives – there is at the same time an impression of benign neglect on the part of the wider organisation. At the time of the evaluation the office had been without a Country Director for 14 months.

#### **2.2.4 Cross-corporate learning**

121. One of the major strategic questions for WFP Kyrgyzstan – how best to engage in the social protection sector – is one faced by WFP in other post-soviet states. WFP works in many of the former soviet republics and has supported government-led social safety nets in several of them. Connecting similar countries, sharing innovative approaches, guiding strategy and supporting the smaller offices falls squarely within the remit of the regional bureau. An example from Georgia illustrates this point (see Box 4 below) and the role the regional bureau can, and to a certain extent does, play. In the Kyrgyz Republic there has been regional input in developing the PRRO and Kyrgyz staff attended the annual regional meeting in 2011, the focus of which was on cash transfer programming. Arguably, however, a small office like this would benefit from greater and more sustained support, perhaps through regional secondments and knowledge exchange.

#### **Box 4 Safety nets in conflict situations: the United Nations platform in Georgia**

In 2008, conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation resulted in displacement of nearly 140,000 beneficiaries. Following needs assessments and analyses, WFP’s emergency response included a cash transfer component to provide food assistance to IDPs. The programme benefited from WFP’s long-standing experience of implementing cash-based programmes in Georgia, and its pre-established partnerships with the Peoples’ Bank of Georgia (PBG), which is responsible for delivering a range of State-provided social protection instruments, such as pensions and poverty allowances. As part of United Nations humanitarian coordination mechanisms, WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR agreed to unify approaches for, respectively, food security, nutrition and shelter under a joint cash-based programme for IDPs. Agreements were signed between the agencies and the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation and the Civil Registry. These outlined the operational process, most of which was led by WFP, for determining criteria for beneficiary identification, targeting, transfer size, opening of bank accounts and issuance of smart cards by PBG. This joint, one-card platform for delivering different programmes was eventually incorporated into the Government’s social protection system.

*Source: WFP 2012l*

122. This is also the role of the head office and the CO has received central policy support. The new school feeding programme, for example, has been extensively supported in the design phase by the wider organisation, and the VAM process throughout. A portfolio-level strategic planning process is also envisaged, contingent on the outcome of this evaluation.

## Conclusions

- C14 WFP household food security information collection and analysis is impressive and is seen as a key resource by international agencies.
- C15 Whilst the operational analysis provides an excellent insight into the problem, it does not necessarily help with the solution. It does not apply the same rigour to analyse the systems and policies that might deliver the best, equitable social protection to the extremely food insecure.
- C16 There is little evidence of any review or lesson-learning processes following the various EMOPs, or following the distribution cycles. When it comes to understanding what is working well and what is not, this remains more within the shared understanding of programme staff rather than being formally documented.
- C17 Single donor dependency and inflexibility of internal systems have constrained the range of innovative approaches the Country Office has been able to adopt; nevertheless there are some good examples suggesting small country offices are a good place to test new approaches.
- C18 WFP's tonnage-related funding formula can discriminate against small COs. However, the Kyrgyz CO has made a virtue out of necessity – using flexible staffing and leveraging internal initiatives. Nonetheless, there is an impression of benign neglect on the part of the wider organisation.
- C19 There is much to be learned from the region with regard to social protection and emergency scale-up of safety nets. A small office like that in the Kyrgyz Republic would benefit from greater and more sustained support from the region, through the sharing of knowledge and regional secondments.

### 2.3 Portfolio Performance and Results

123. This section reviews the performance of the main activities in the portfolio. It notes the outputs achieved, and considers in turn (a) different dimensions of efficiency in programme delivery, (b) outcomes achieved against the objectives of the programme (effectiveness), (c) the national-level impact of WFP activities, (d) their sustainability, and (e) the gender dimensions of performance.

#### 2.3.1 Outputs

124. Table 7 shows that WFP in the Kyrgyz Republic exceeded its beneficiary target in 2010, and was close to or exceeded 70% in 2009 and 2011, a respectable performance. Female beneficiaries slightly outnumbered male in each year (Table 8).

**Table 7 WFP Beneficiaries planned vs. actual 2009–2011**

	Planned	Actual	% met
2009	580,000	401,750	69%
2010	1,014,500	1,056,585	104%
2011	1,021,000	745,110	73%

Source: SPRs. GFD and FFW beneficiaries by operation.

**Table 8 WFP Beneficiaries by Gender 2009–2011**

	Male	Female	TOTAL
2009	196,845	204,905	401,750
2010	509,080	547,505	1,056,585
2011	368,700	372,410	745,110

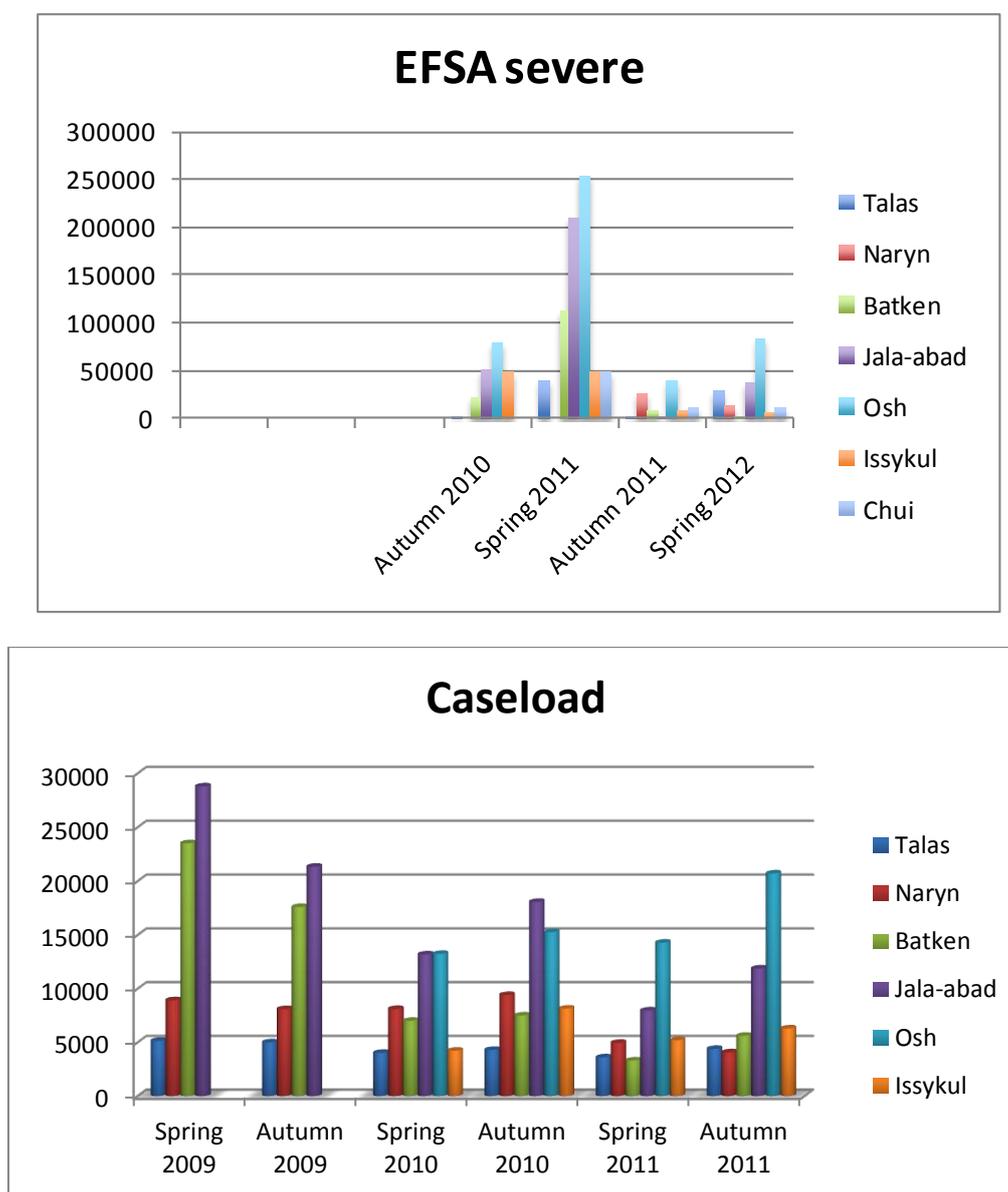
Source: SPR09, 10, 11. GFD and FFW beneficiaries by operation.

### 2.3.2 Efficiency of implementation

125. **Targeting.** The targeting system draws on the EFSA reports and the PDM for broad numbers, although the detail is based on reports from social workers, corroborated by WFP field staff. Social workers give WFP data on numbers of households living under the poverty line in advance of the distribution, and using the criteria developed jointly with government (closely aligned to the government's own safety net criteria, with the main difference being that WFP allows a slightly higher monthly income), households and villages are selected. This is then verified post-distribution in a random selection.

126. Whilst the combination of efficient delivery and detailed, well researched targeting in general has proven satisfactory, the availability of funding and the general context has meant that overall the WFP targeting has not always corresponded with need. Figure 5 shows this most obviously for 2011; at this point food insecurity was highest while food distribution was lowest.

**Figure 5 WFP caseload figures for VGF vs. severe food insecurity (from EFSA) by oblast**



127. Also, the programme does not cover the whole extreme poor cohort. Nor does it reach all those who are extremely food insecure, although it does serve the majority of this group. The EFSA for Spring 2012 estimates that 180,367 people were extremely food insecure. This could theoretically be covered by the WFP distribution, which reached approximately this number of people (the figures were still being consolidated at the time of the evaluation) during this same period. However, given that some of them live in Bishkek and Chuy oblasts, which are not served by WFP, it is clear that not all of the most food insecure in the country are being reached. In addition, not all of the rayons in Talas oblast are served by the WFP programme. Here too some of the (small numbers) of extremely food insecure will be missed.

128. These exclusions are difficult to quantify accurately – there are also some AOs with extremely food insecure families who are not served because the authorities cannot be trusted with the resource. The same EFSA quoted above calculated that 82% of the food insecure did not receive assistance from WFP. Whilst this does not look only at the extreme food insecure, it is likely that at least 10% of these are also not assisted by WFP.<sup>14</sup>

129. The WFP system tries hard not to replicate the exclusions of the state system through its targeting system. This is a variant on community-based targeting, in that a simple list of criteria are applied (income and assets – similar to government), and officials then choose the neediest who meet those criteria in a ‘street by street’ exercise. Names are published and there is an opportunity for local residents to object. PDM reports suggest this works well despite inevitable issues around those who do not receive, raised in focus group interviews. Officials also talked of difficulty in overseeing the system, especially as families with disabled children were automatically disqualified by virtue of their receipt of state benefits (taking them over the income threshold).

130. **Monitoring.** The monitoring system in place to ensure food gets to the intended recipients is extremely robust. Through the post-distribution monitoring exercise, WFP carries out monitoring of partner programmes on an ongoing basis, aiming to verify some 10% (up from 7%) of the caseload randomly. Food monitors also visit targeted ayil okmotus (AOs) on a rolling monthly basis. The combination of information gives WFP an accurate picture of implementation. (See Annex F for information on key monitoring activities).

131. The monitoring system serves two basic purposes. Firstly, and most importantly for the programme and its donors (and the recipients), it is a compliance and oversight mechanism. It checks and checks again that food is getting to the right place and is not being diverted. This is extremely important in a country where there is a perception of endemic corruption and this process builds trust in WFP. Combined with a system that blocks AOs from receiving food if discrepancies are found, it also severely limits the potential for corruption or misuse.

132. **Logistics.** The evaluation found that the logistical operation, the programme implementation, the oversight, and the quality control were all excellent. Focus groups of people receiving assistance repeatedly volunteered that WFP measured “to the last gram”. This is confirmed by WFP’s own monitoring and by local authorities who were also consistently complimentary about the efficiency of the operation.

133. The wheat flour is sourced (mostly) in Russia by the state emergency agency Emercom and is then sent by rail directly to the WFP warehouses in the north and the

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<sup>14</sup> The cohort of extreme poor in Chuy, for example, is 5.5% of the total. Talas has 16% of the extreme poor but WFP does not work in half the oblast. This alone combined probably represents close to 10%.

south. Oil is bought internationally (and some nationally) and also shipped through the rail network. Before each cycle of distribution, WFP tenders onward distribution, agreeing on a fixed tonne price per district. Food is then transported to local storage facilities (usually government offices), and from there beneficiaries either collect their own supplies or the local government arranges local delivery.

134. The feedback on the quality of both wheat flour and oil was again universally positive. The evaluation was consistently told that wheat flour and oil were of higher quality than could be obtained locally. The high quality of the food was one of the reasons people gave for preferring the assistance directly over cash.

135. The fact that there have been no reported logistical, supply or quality issues is something the country office can be justifiably proud of. The same is true of the organisation of data gathering and the attention to detail in targeting. This is also the case for the food for work partnerships, many of which the evaluation has found to be innovative and successful. Whilst the Kyrgyz Republic is a functioning country with good resources in areas like transport, it also has a challenging terrain with many communities blocked by snow in winter.

136. **Cost-efficiency** The evaluation team was not asked to carry out its own quantitative analysis of WFP's programmes, and so drew on WFP's own aggregated data. From these data, it appears that the programme has been very good value for money. The cost of WFP food, taking the crudest calculation (with all costs including HQ overhead), is about USD 30 per bag of wheat flour delivered to beneficiaries. Given that this cost includes a lot of diligent work ensuring that the right people receive the food, and post-delivery monitoring, as well as the raw commodity price, it compares very favourably indeed with food in the market at the time of the evaluation, which cost about KGS 1,250–1,500 (USD 27–32).

### Conclusions

- C20 The WFP programme has been efficient in its delivery and oversight of all of its operations and management is exemplary. WFP has been efficient in terms of its timeliness of delivery, the quality of the foodstuffs, the drive to achieve best value through tendering of transport and consistently finding ways to economise on overheads.
- C21 Furthermore, it has done this professionally and proficiently, taking time to ensure the targeting was done properly, monitoring implementation and adjusting accordingly. The monitoring system is extremely robust, ensuring that there is little diversion or corruption.
- C22 Nevertheless, there are some significant exclusions generated by the targeting system, particularly by operating only in selected geographical areas.
- C23 Whilst market prices fluctuate, making accurate comparisons difficult, WFP appears to be good value for money. The costs of delivery incorporate a well-functioning oversight and targeting system that increases value through ensuring probity.

### **2.3.3 Effectiveness**

137. **Expected outcomes.** Overtime, there have been two main expected outcomes of the portfolio as follows (see Box 2 above):

- a. To ensure adequate food consumption for families at risk of falling into acute hunger.
- b. To enable communities with depleted assets to recover, restore productive capacity and protect agricultural land and improve food security.

138. In addition, one should note two other expected outcomes, which applied only to parts of the portfolio. These are:

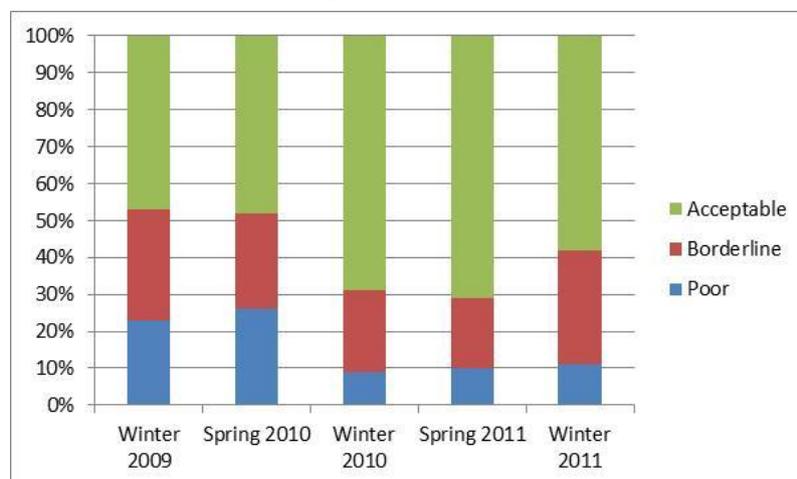
- a. To strengthen national capacity to assess and respond to food insecurity through improved monitoring and social protection (introduced in the 2011 PRRO).
- b. To contribute to maintaining the health status of beneficiaries (objective present in the first EMOP in 2009).

139. **Food consumption.** This outcome applies to both VGF and FFW/T activities but has been measured most rigorously for the VGF component, notably through the successive PDM conducted systematically after each distribution cycle in each of the six targeted oblasts of Talas, Issk-kul, Osh, Jalaj-Abad and Batken . In line with the corporate indicators framework, it uses the food consumption score (FCS) as the main indicator.

140. The FCS is a composite score based on dietary diversity, food frequency, and relative nutritional importance of different food groups. It is calculated using the standardized eight food groups: cereals, pulses, oils and fats, animal protein, vegetables, fruit, dairy products, and sugar. The PDM also monitors the evolution of the Coping Strategy Index for VGF beneficiaries but does not report on it through corporate reporting mechanisms. This index reveals the extent to which households resort to negative coping strategies to access food. Together, these two indicators provide a good measure of food utilization and access.

141. The PDM data collected since 2009 using the FCS reveal a slight improvement of food consumption amongst the beneficiary groups over the period with the proportion of households with a poor or borderline food consumption showing a positive trend overtime. (See figure 6). The PDM data is disaggregated at oblast level and point to significant regional and seasonal variations.

**Figure 6 Average food consumption levels from VGF beneficiaries (2009-11)**



Source: Compiled from PDM reports.

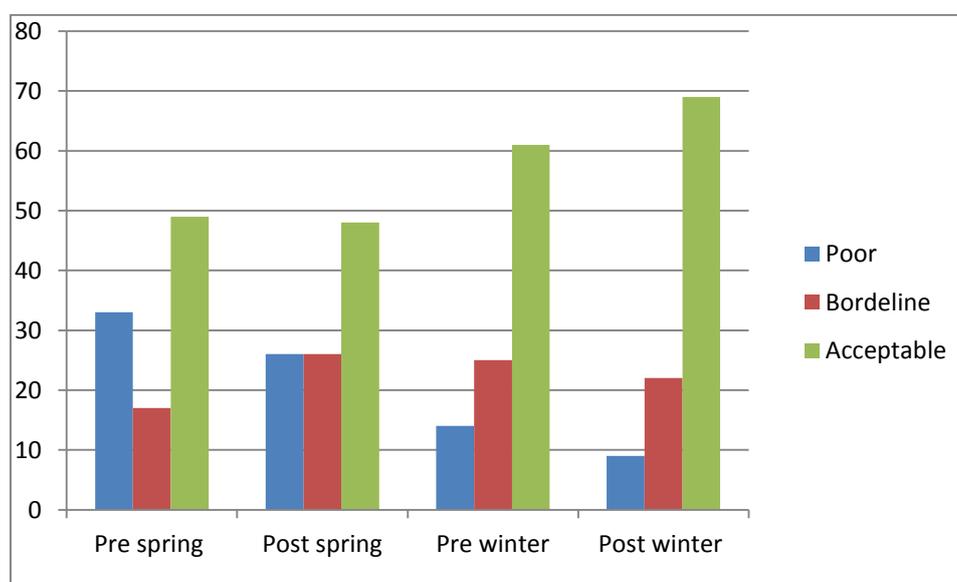
142. Yet, PDM findings are not related to programme targets and do not reflect on the extent to which findings on the FCS for example can be attributed to project

participation or to other factors such as seasonal changes. There is a need to sharpen the analysis to systematically reflect on programme targets to explore when these are not met and explain why (WFP, 2012m).

143. It is highly likely that when food was distributed, it contributed to increased food consumption for the beneficiaries targeted at critical times of the year. Figure 7 below, illustrates this for 2010 by comparing data collected as part of the verification exercises preceding distributions with the PDM data.

144. These findings were reinforced through the focus group interviews. It was clear that the food was provided when there were real shortages, and that therefore people did not have to worry about the basics in the same way they might otherwise have done. One focus group told the evaluation, “Food was useful for baking bread for children and was well-timed because they had run out of food. In January, it was very hard with no wheat flour or vegetable oil. If we have humanitarian aid this winter, we will survive.” This is representative of the feedback received.

**Figure 7 Variations in food consumption levels before and after the 2010 VGF distributions.**



Source: Compiled from PDM report, April 2011.

145. In terms of the effect of WFP assistance on household **expenditure**, the evidence is much clearer. Here there is a discernible impact, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The fact that WFP assistance is a major economic input into the poorest families is confirmed in the qualitative interviews for this evaluation. All of the focus groups interviewed – without exception – told the evaluation that WFP food allowed them not only to eat more, but also to save money to buy other essentials such as clothes for children for winter, and cover fuel and education expenses. For larger families receiving a ration twice a year, the economic value can be almost equivalent to their annual social safety net payment (UMB). The FFW can be considerably more.

146. The PDM data show this clearly (see Table 9 below). Households report a 10–20% difference in household expenditure on food straight after the WFP distributions, compared to the situation without WFP distributions.

**Table 9 Percentage of household expenditure spent on food**

Year	2010		2011		2012	
	S	A	S	A	S	A
Spring/ Autumn distribution						
% of HH expenditure on food	39	38	41	55	56	
% HH expenditure on food without WFP	53	59	56	63	68	

Source: PDM reports.

147. What Table 9 also shows, however, is that household expenditures on food are rising as a proportion of the total, and that WFP food is diminishing in impact over time (on this measure) with the percentage of general household expenditure on food in the WFP caseload steadily rising and the mitigation effect of WFP on this is generally diminishing. This situation in 2011 has been attributed (2012 PDM) to a sharp increase in food prices affecting households' purchasing power. According to WFP weekly food price monitoring prices for milk, eggs, beef and mutton meat at the end of January 2011, compared to the beginning of March 2011 have risen 31%, 15%, 13% and 11% correspondingly.

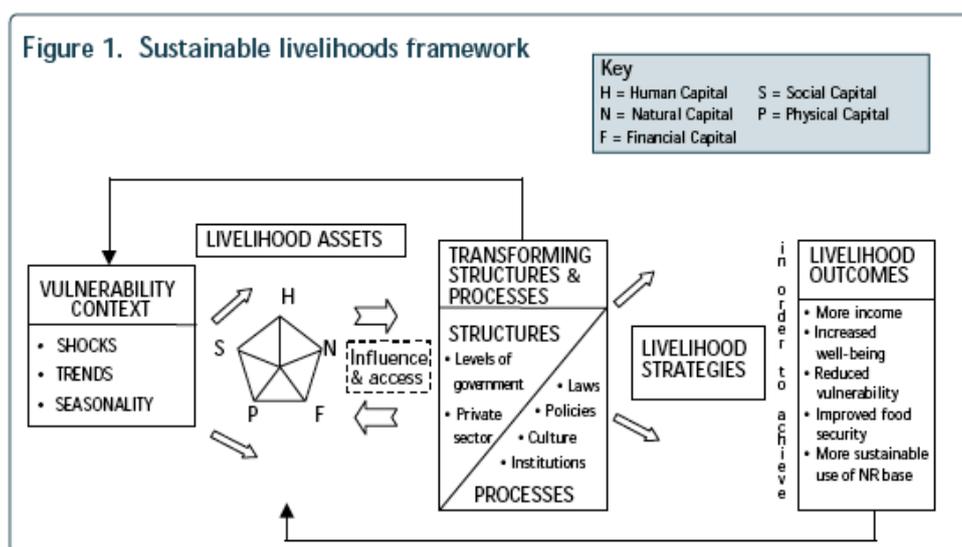
148. Whilst the number of points on the 'graph' are not enough to call this a 'trend', if it continues it will indicate a worrying worsening of the situation.

149. **Productive capacities.** The Outcome statements and indicators for the FFA and FFT components of the PRRO, which articulates a more ambitious approach to these projects than the FFW projects in preceding EMOPs, correctly reflect the corporate Strategic Results Framework (SRF). In particular, it uses the Community Asset Score (CAS) as the main indicator.

150. Yet, the 2012 monitoring review (WFP, 2012m) pointed out that the FFT and disaster mitigation FFA outcomes are not sufficiently accounted for with this way. For FFT, it does not reflect WFP's vision and success criteria including on the extent to which training successfully leads to immediate job creation and/or income generating activities. Also, certain FFA activities such as projects for the protection of communities from mudslides are not adequately captured with the ongoing CAS monitoring. The review also noted that some of the positive effects of the programme are not captured through monitoring, e.g., in relation to the planting of fruit trees and establishment of nurseries which also points to a discrepancy between visions, result statements and monitoring.

151. For the purposes of this evaluation, the term "productive capacities" has been viewed through the lens of the 'livelihoods framework'. There are many variants of this, but the original is commonly referred to as the 'DFID' livelihoods framework (see figure 8Figure 8 below). This identifies five livelihood 'assets', which the evaluation has used to assess 'productive capacities'.

**Figure 8 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**



- (a) Physical capital: the programme has rebuilt bridges, rehabilitated irrigation canals and strengthened river banks at risk of flooding. This is a clear investment in physical capital at the community level.
- (b) Social capital: there has been some small institution building (notably CDA/ADI – see Box 3 above) and some positive indication that collective action started around irrigation cleaning may continue. The social capital built is of an order of magnitude less than the physical capital, however.
- (c) Financial capital: the clearest example of financial capital is that people are paid for their work through FFW/A/T, allowing them to save money gained through other sources.
- (d) Natural capital: the forestry project is building natural capital. Timber is used for construction and as firewood. There is a link to climate change mitigation inasmuch as the Forestry Department is seeking to link forest expansion to the sale of carbon credits.
- (e) Human capital: there has been some small contribution to skills enhancement, through the FFT activity as part of the CDA/ADI project.

152. Table 10 below shows for the year 2011 that only the tree planting has reached its target, with irrigation schemes falling well short at only 30% of anticipated coverage. This reflects to some extent the slow scale-up of the FFA programme since its inception – the team has struggled to initiate enough FFA projects to meet the target.

153. However, the evaluation has also found that these coverage figures may be underestimates. For instance, the standard project report (SPR) for 2011 reports 36,000 trees produced (100% of the target), but the number may in fact be considerably more. In one project site visited by the evaluation team in Talas, it was suggested that they would produce 220,000 seedlings!

**Table 10 FFA Projects: planned vs. actual**

Activity	Planned	Actual	% met
Tree seedlings	36,000	36,000	100%
Agricultural land rehabilitated through repair of irrigation schemes	60,578	18,590	30.7%
Improved physical infrastructure in place to mitigate shocks	115	77	70%

Source: SPR 2011

154. Whilst it is possible to say that WFP has contributed across the range of these livelihood capitals, once again it is less clear what the measurable outcomes or impacts are. The qualitative evidence below was collected by the evaluation team through focus group discussion, visits to project sites and discussions with partners.

155. *Community Development Association (CDA) project to support women's groups:* The yields from the new seed varieties have been significantly greater than from previous crops. This has led to much greater income and exponential growth in the women's groups as a result. The collective of women's groups (some 700 nationally now, with over 3,000 members) formed their own NGO this year called Association of Development Initiatives (ADI) (so that they could bank their savings) and currently have USD 65,000 in their account.

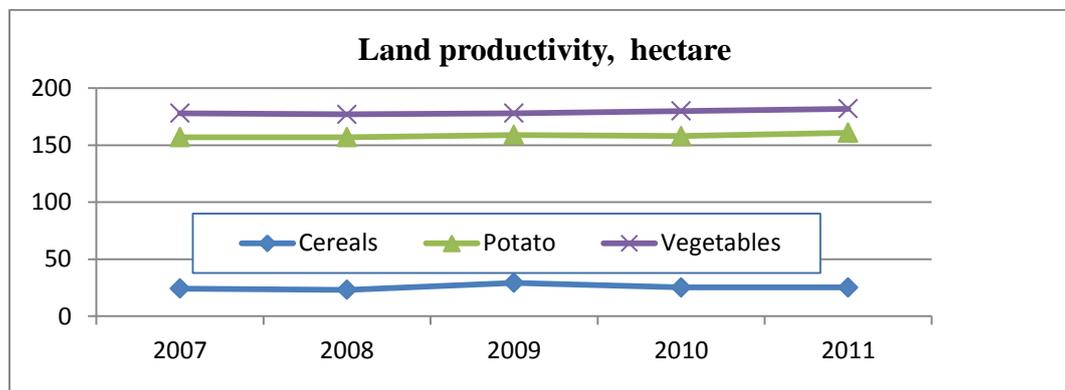
156. What is clearly so relevant about the CDA project, and why it is in such demand by those involved and in proximity, is that it quickly enables participants to achieve a far higher level of household income (and food stocks). Women can sell the crops more easily at a higher value and production is higher. They learn how to farm properly, are provided the knowledge and contacts they need to access the right inputs, they are given a system through which to save enough capital for necessary annual purchases and they are provided initial capital (through a combination of seeds and food). The higher levels of income obtained allow them to escape the vicious-cycle poverty trap of poor labour and poor income, and achieve greater food security.

157. In terms of *disaster mitigation*, the evaluation heard from several respondents that the river bank strengthening schemes have already been tested by spring meltwater and have withstood and prevented flooding, protecting homes and arable land. Whilst this is largely anecdotal, and therefore impossible to quantify at this stage, it is clear there will have been a real and meaningful impact on people's lives and on their ability to use their land and safeguard their assets. Several of the bridges WFP had upgraded or rebuilt (together with UNDP and others) have increased trade flows between villages, allowed farmers better access to market and enabled populations to have better access to services. Whilst the evaluation is not in a position to quantify the economic value of the combined disaster mitigation and recovery projects, it is clear that they exist and speculatively at a level beyond the input (which in itself of course is relevant on its own as a contribution to household income).

158. *The irrigation canal rehabilitation* has almost certainly had the most significant effect on productive capacities. Many of the irrigation canals WFP has helped to rehabilitate had not been properly cleaned in 20 years. The privatisation of farm land and of the assets of the collective farms in the mid-1990s meant that infrastructure was no longer being maintained. Whilst the local authorities are theoretically responsible for such maintenance, in reality they lack the resources, and have only cleaned a few of the biggest ditches.

159. The evaluation was told in a majority of interviews that the canal cleaning had a positive effect on yields, with estimates ranging from increases of 20% to 100%. The WFP operation is at too small a scale to affect national production, so does not register statistically (see Figure 9 below).

**Figure 9 Land productivity**



Source: Akramov & Omuraliev 2009

160. At household level, though, better flow means farmers can irrigate more often, although as the farmers also pay for irrigation water there is an economic calculation attached to this. However, whilst people recognised that there was a direct benefit to them from canal cleaning, because it led to increased income, they were not willing to do this work without payment. This suggests that whilst the FFW impact is significant beyond the work payment alone, it will not be sustained as the cleaned canals will silt up again within five years according to most estimates, and often faster, depending on spring snow melt.

161. The failure of the FFW irrigation canal cleaning to engender greater collective action is an interesting aspect of the evaluation findings. Farming in the Kyrgyz Republic in the aftermath of privatisation remains at a very low technological level. Whilst there are some larger, more profitable farms, the recipients of WFP assistance who engage in farming are doing so out of necessity, in the absence of better opportunities. They are typically former factory or collective farm workers who do not have the skills or the economies of scale for profitable modern agriculture. Most use poor seed varieties (as demonstrated by the CDA project, which introduced improved farming inputs and techniques not previously known), and many are in effect subsistence farmers, often rain dependent.

162. In the absence of a clear agricultural policy, the farming sector – which probably provides the Kyrgyz Republic’s most obvious potential for exports – languishes. And yet this is clearly the greatest hope for the food insecure and extreme poor cohort that WFP is trying to assist. By far the most common response during interviews about future prospects was that there needed to be opportunities for growth and employment in the agricultural sector, with better access to markets, small-scale processing industry, access to capital to invest and better support.

163. With this background, it seems that, whilst the WFP project has helped in a small way, it would make a greater impact as part of a coordinated strategy to increase production and invest in agriculture and livestock. Without this, such investment will remain localised and temporary. In this respect, the recent evolution (2012) of FFW on canals, shifting away from canal cleaning, which is an individual responsibility to

supporting the government water department to repair major canals connecting villages is positive and might improve sustainability.

164. **National capacity for food security assessment.** This outcome relates mostly to the joint project with FAO and the National Statistics Committee to upgrade food security and production analysis in the Kyrgyz Integrated Household Survey (KIHS), funded by the European Union. This project (under the PRRO) involves transfer of knowledge and tools, using the EFSA experience and WFP expertise more widely.

165. The corporate indicator for capacity development is the National Capacity Index (NCI), which has only been introduced in late 2011, is currently not reflected in the PRRO logframe. As noted in the 2012 monitoring review (WFP, 2012m), WFP must still clarify its vision and success criteria for its collaboration with the Government and amend its logframe. It should also prepare a detailed plan for data collection and revise its monitoring formats and reports accordingly. The review also recommended that WFP organises a workshop with the Government to establish a baseline.

166. Given the lack of monitoring data to date and the fact that the project is still in its infancy, it is too soon to expect a sustainable effect. It should be noted however, as pointed out in section 2.2.1 above, that WFP's own record in food security monitoring has been very strong.

167. **Health and nutrition.** The objective of the first EMOP in 2009 included to "contribute to maintaining beneficiaries' health status as a result of improved consumption". While food consumption was monitored, there was no attempt to assess its effect on beneficiaries' health status. Given data limitation and the absence of a counter-factual, it is not possible to formally evaluate WFP's programmes against health and nutrition criteria or to ascertain causality.

168. Although available data on health and chronic malnutrition do not show improvements in the WFP project areas (or in the wider cohort of extremely poor or averagely poor populations), the situation could have been much worse without WFP. For direct beneficiaries, there can be little doubt that the programme will have helped. Of course, some assistance will have been used to replace what would otherwise have been bought, and so will have freed up household funds for other uses. This 'legitimate' household decision-making would mean, though, that the impact of the WFP programmes would not be shown through health and nutrition alone, or even at all.

## Conclusions

C24 WFP assistance has a discernible impact, both qualitatively and quantitatively, on household expenditure and is a major economic input into the poorest families. WFP food allowed them not only to eat more, but also to save money to buy other essentials such as clothes for children for winter, and to cover fuel and education expenses. Some households are therefore less likely to resort to negative coping strategies during the lean time.

C25 The main measurable effect is as a resource transfer, with families reporting systematically in quantitative and qualitative interviews that they 'save' money as a result of WFP food. This is used for winter clothes for children, fuel and education materials. This effect appears to be diminishing over time.

C26 Food for work activities have been relevant as a contribution to wider community development, in addition to their value as income. The quality and sustainability of the FFW projects is dependent on the partners. The

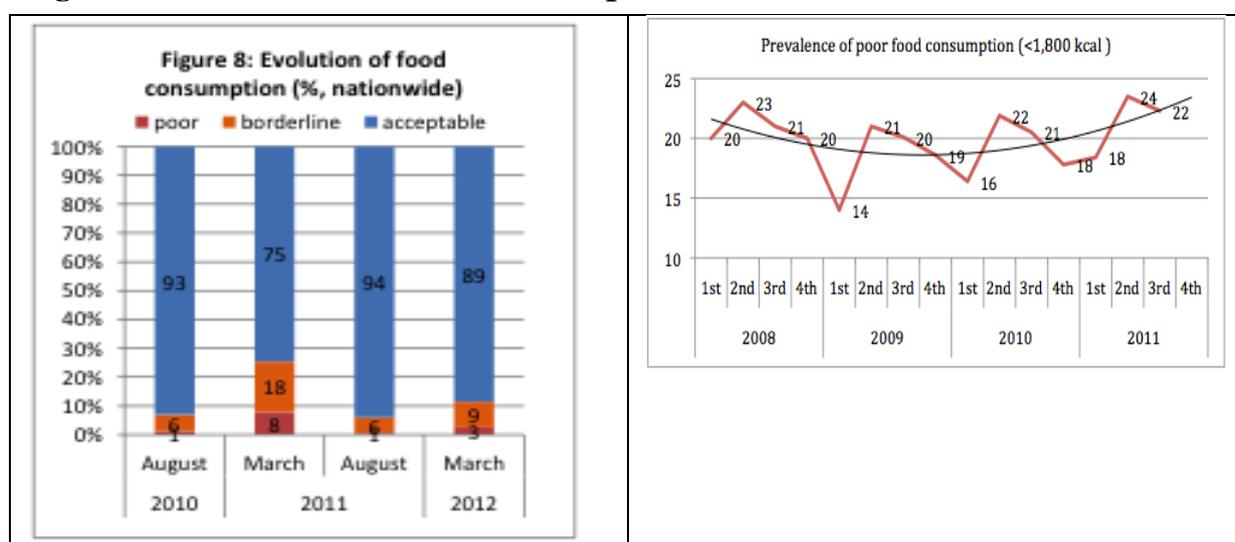
multi-partner women’s agricultural group project was consistently ranked the best by focus groups because of its multiple benefits.

- C27 In terms of the WFP contribution to ‘productive capacities’ through its PRRO, there are clear outcomes in localised farming yields, and in the protection of river banks and bridges. WFP’s FFW projects have helped in a small way, but the operation is at too small a scale to affect national production. It would make a greater impact as part of a coordinated strategy to increase production and invest in agriculture and livestock.

### 2.3.4 Impact

169. **Food Security.** The WFP programme has made an undoubted difference to those individual households who received assistance. However, programme documents made it clear that the original objectives of WFP’s assistance were focused at national level impact, and it is much harder to draw conclusions at this level. Figure 10 below shows a picture of national food security that fluctuates with season and over time. Seasonal fluctuations are normally high, and this complicates interpretation of the national-level data.

**Figure 10 Evolution of food consumption from WFP EFSA and from KIHS.**



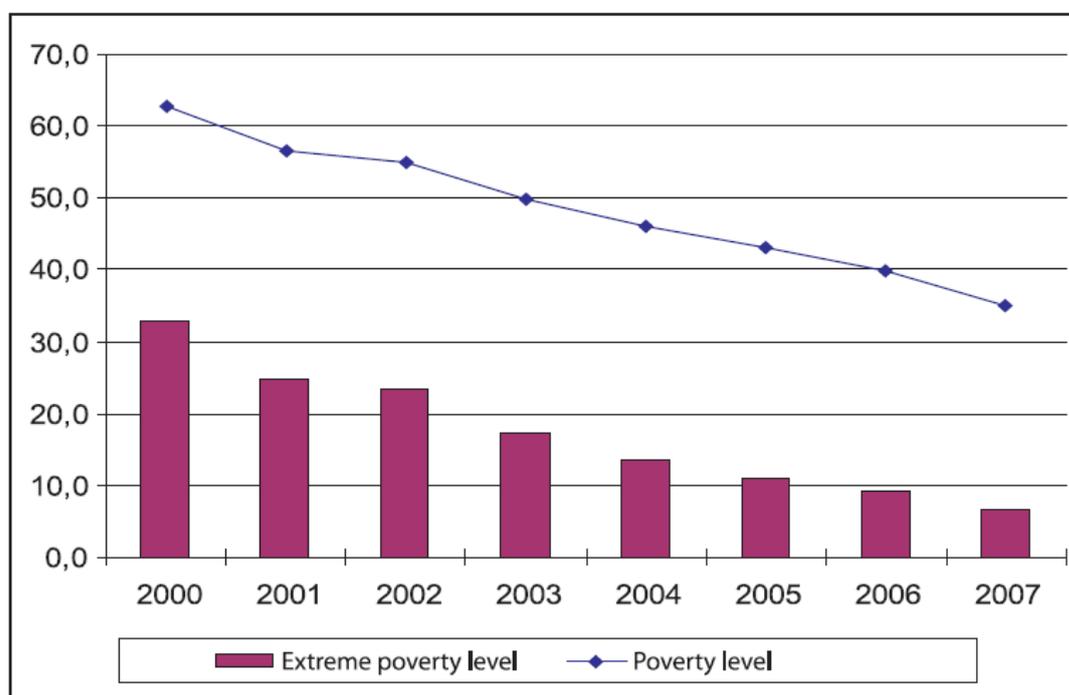
Sources: WFP 2012h and KIHS; the two surveys are not precisely comparable.

170. The scale of the internal and external factors influencing national food security was extremely significant, and it would be unfair to judge WFP’s performance against national trends. No single agency has the power to prevent huge shocks having an impact at national level. Probably the best we can do is to extrapolate from the household data, and the data on programme coverage, to draw conclusions on wider impact. Without doubt, the impact on households was positive. Given that WFP’s programme reached 56% of the extreme poor (given that WFP only operates in rural AOs where over 40% of households live below GMI), it is highly likely that it made an important difference, despite the impact of high fuel and food prices in 2008 and 2009 (and the harsh winters), and of the conflict in 2010. It does not seem too contentious to suppose that the situation might have been worse without WFP’s involvement, and that this involvement may also have led to greater improvement subsequently than would otherwise have been the case. The data have shown that people were able to eat more at a time of year when traditionally their food runs out.

171. There was, however, a significant temporary increase in the percentage of people whose food consumption is poor or borderline in the spring of 2011. This was most likely because of the 2010 conflict, as well as rising food prices; the data show that extreme poverty was numerically concentrated in Osh and Jalal-abad, those oblasts most affected by the conflict. Displacement, border closures, disrupted markets and even more uncertain employment patterns than usual will all have contributed to the worsening situation (despite blanket WFP feeding during the latter half of 2010), as people's potential to save enough for the winter would have been constrained and so their food supplies would have been exhausted earlier in the spring than usual. As with most populations receiving food, not all is used for increased consumption. People will also have saved the money they would have spent on staples for other essentials, which moderates the direct impact on food consumption.

172. **Extreme poverty.** The PRRO refers to contributing to the achievement of MDG1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger) as its goal. As with food insecurity, extreme poverty in the Kyrgyz Republic has been rising over the period of implementation of the project. Whilst poverty and extreme poverty fell steadily during the first decade of the new millennium, they have been rising again since 2009 (see Figure 11 below). This is correlated with price rises, suggesting that the high cost of food and fuel is hurting poor households.

**Figure 11 Levels of poverty and extreme poverty (%) 2000–2007**



Source: UNDP 2010

173. Despite the fact that poverty is once again rising, the Kyrgyz Republic is still largely on track to meet the first MDG. This is because of gains over the previous two decades. The role of WFP in this is not significant, given that the gains were made before WFP entry into the country. Once again, the most positive interpretation of WFP impact would be that it has safeguarded some of these gains, i.e. that things might be worse if WFP were not there.

**Table 11 Summary table of WFP achievement against objectives**

Food consumption	Productive capacities	Health/ nutrition.	Reduction of extreme hunger and poverty
<p>Positive observable impact on consumption.</p> <p>Quantitative and qualitative.</p> <p>Seasonal, sporadic</p>	<p>Physical: bridges, canals.</p> <p>Social: small institution building, collective action.</p> <p>Financial: irrigation, payment.</p> <p>Natural: forestry.</p> <p>Human: small skills transfer.</p>	<p>No observable impact on national statistics.</p>	<p>Hunger – contribution to hunger reduction. Welfare.</p> <p>Poverty – no discernible contribution. FFW positive, VGF neutral.</p> <p>** but food may not register as not income**</p>

### Conclusions

C28 Looking across the population and over time the WFP intervention does not appear to be translating into a national reduction in food insecurity. Statistically there is no discernible impact on proxy indicators for national food insecurity, which have generally declined over the period of WFP presence in the Kyrgyz Republic. Given the shocks experienced by the country, however, WFP’s contribution may still have been significant in mitigating these general trends.

C29 The WFP role in reducing extreme hunger and poverty does not appear to be statistically significant in the Kyrgyz Republic.

### **2.3.5 Sustainability**

174. The programme in its current form, apart from small elements, is not sustainable. However, vulnerable group feeding in particular, and much of the food for work, would simply stop when WFP stopped working, leaving little behind. The school feeding programme (Box 1 above), which had not yet started by the time this evaluation was conducted, may be more so. There are also signs of evolution of the FFA portfolio with has increased in proportion with the introduction of the PRRO and is intended to focus on more sustainable activities. Yet, question-marks about community willingness to maintain some of the FFW assets remain despite CO’s efforts to get communities to commit to it.

175. The question of whether programmes are sustainable or not is always complicated by definitions and differing interpretations of intent. Emergency programmes are generally not designed to be ‘sustainable’, the imperative in emergency programmes being to provide immediate support to populations in great need. Recovery operations, however, are intended to have sustainable impact (people recovered). In the case of the current PRRO, the majority of the work in the first half of the operation was VGF. As has been set out above, this is completely unsustainable. Moreover, there is also little evidence that the ‘breathing space’ assumption – that the food aid would allow people time to recover – is valid.

176. Many respondents to the evaluation, especially those in authority, expressed their preference for food for work over VGF and their fear that VGF is creating dependency. Many of the communities that WFP has served have received seven or even eight distributions over the course of the last three years. Naturally this means that people have built up expectations and are calculating their income strategies to a certain extent with WFP assistance in mind. There is a risk that people might perceive ‘escaping’ poverty as disadvantageous – being slightly above the WFP threshold might actually make them much worse off. Over time, in their decisions to pursue other income-generating strategies, this could become a factor preventing progress.

177. There is a need to use the final year of the PRRO to plan a very different type of intervention, more closely aligned to social protection and probably involving a gradual rather than a sudden phasing out of food aid (or moving to a dual system as in Ethiopia), using this gradual phasing to engage in much greater depth with government and key partners. An extension of the PRRO could well support such a process.

### Conclusions

C30 The current WFP portfolio of operations is not sustainable, apart from some small elements. To become sustainable, the programme must integrate into government social protection plans, influencing the design of these as part of the process.

#### **2.3.6 Gender**

178. The Kyrgyz Republic portfolio has not particularly targeted women, or focused on gender issues, beyond the collaboration with UN Women and the women’s network CDA outlined above. Over the lifetime of the various projects the numbers of men and women receiving assistance have been roughly equal (the numbers of women are slightly higher – see Table 8 above). This may be because the EFSA analysis has shown that female-headed households are not statistically more likely to be food insecure.

179. One important area where WFP has focused on gender issues is targeting committees, where there is a requirement to include women. In interviews for the evaluation there was certainly a good representation of female recipients of food aid, and there did not seem to be any issues of unequal distribution within the household. Neither did the evaluation hear of cases where men, or other family members, had diverted food away from its intended use.

180. Whilst gender does not appear to be a significant issue in the Kyrgyz Republic in terms of poverty and food insecurity, there are emerging issues with migration for work. In some cases where women are left behind to care for families, men either do not manage to send back enough money, or start new families and abandon their previous ones. Finding alternative sources of income for such women was the genesis of the CDA

project (see Box 3 above); migrant women and women affected by migration are the primary beneficiaries, and the project has been very effective in addressing this issue.

### Conclusion

- C31 WFP has not focused on gender issues beyond ensuring the involvement of women in targeting committees, perhaps because the EFSA's show that female-headed households are not disproportionately affected by food insecurity.

## **3. Conclusions and Recommendations**

181. WFP has recognised the complex and structural nature of poverty and food insecurity in the Kyrgyz Republic and has sought to move away from simple emergency food distribution to food for work, and latterly capacity building to improve government food security analysis and its school feeding programme. Yet, despite an evolution of the objectives and financing instruments over the four-year period of operation, the programme as delivered is still dominated by a twice-yearly distribution of food aid (wheat flour and oil) to vulnerable families. Food for work has started to alter the nature of the programme, but by 2012 it still only constituted 19% of the portfolio (in terms of beneficiaries).

182. The evaluation has found that the WFP operation is highly efficient. Food is delivered on time and without interruption. There is a well-functioning system of operational and food security analysis and data gathering that is used effectively by the programme to fine tune the targeting. Both the wheat flour and the oil are of the highest quality and are universally appreciated by the recipients.

183. WFP has made a measurable contribution to household income during the periods when it distributes food. This in turn has led to more predictable food consumption of the basic staples amongst some of the poorest households during the critical lean period. The food for work programmes are amongst the best appreciated by communities and local authorities, and create productive assets as well as supporting the incomes of participants and their ability to consume enough food.

184. Whilst the operation is effective in delivering against its plan, it is less clear that there is demonstrable impact on food insecurity nationally. Although the figures for 2012 look marginally better, the trend over the four years of the WFP operation has been either static or a slight deterioration of national food security. The proportion of people consuming under 1,800 kcals a day and the proportion of stunted children have both risen.

185. The reasons for this are rooted in the close correlation between chronic poverty and food insecurity. The poorest are also those who are less food secure. After a decade of progress, poverty has been rising again, for reasons connected to regional and global economic factors and internal instability. The WFP contribution, whilst reaching over half of the extremely poor nationally, has not been sufficient to counter these trends.

186. The government has a relatively well functioning social safety net that the WFP programme to some extent complements. Yet the WFP assistance is not seamlessly integrated into national strategy, systems and procedures. It sits beside them, a little awkwardly. It is a part of the welfare system, but to some extent an unpredictable and unreliable one. Caseloads, target areas, even amounts change on an annual basis, and

limits imposed by actual quantities mean that often even those who meet the criteria in particular districts or village clusters cannot receive food.

187. This speaks to a wider issue, the tendency for WFP to think of itself primarily in operational terms. This is reinforced by the funding formula that means offices need to be delivering food to have an overhead that pays staff salaries. Arguably, however, in the Kyrgyz context there is as much need for WFP to work on policy with government as there is to substitute for it. In fact substitution may be dangerous, creating a democratic deficit, increasing the patchwork nature of benefits and adding to dependencies.

188. Improving the effectiveness of the safety net is both a government priority and a priority for WFP and its partners. The end in a year's time of the PRRO offers WFP an opportunity to extend the school feeding approach into the social protection arena, which is effectively where the food aid programme is situated.

189. What this means, is that WFP needs to be constituted differently in countries like the Kyrgyz Republic. It needs more policy officers and fewer warehouses. It needs to be agile – better able to innovate and pilot approaches, helping government take successful schemes to scale. This can be of benefit to the whole organisation – successful approaches can be replicated elsewhere and the opportunities to innovate in such contexts are higher as there will be more space for this.

190. The Kyrgyz Republic is a small country office for WFP and, as such, offers interesting insights into the opportunities and constraints this presents. The Country Office has had to be agile in securing and using its resources and creative in its programming. There are lessons for the wider organisation in how best small country offices can make an impact, how this can be resourced and the opportunities that might exist for innovation.

### **3.1 Overall Assessment**

191. Alignment and strategic positioning: the WFP portfolio has moved steadily towards a better strategic alignment and position. The initial premise of an emergency operation did not fit the complex context of economic turbulence on an unsteady development path that is the modern Kyrgyz Republic; food for work and the new school feeding programme are seeking a better fit with government and other partner efforts. The main question, however, is how to better position the social protection programme, moving away from 'ad hoc' assistance to structural reforms.

192. Making strategic choices: WFP has excellent operational analysis, but less robust strategic analysis. Implicitly, the Country Office understands the issues well, and has tried valiantly to situate the portfolio in the development mainstream. However, single donor dependency and inflexibility of internal procedures have not helped. The proclivity of the organisation towards being operational may also be a constraint, including the way the funding model promotes this mode of working.

193. Portfolio performance and results: the performance of the portfolio is dealt with in detail in section 2.3 above. Much has been achieved that is good and worthwhile. However, WFP's programme, despite having an impact on food consumption, does not substantially diminish food insecurity on a national scale. A range of external factors – food price rises, unemployment, poor markets and infrastructure – are all more significant than the WFP assistance. (WFP's assistance may have been important, though, in mitigating these shocks. Given the complexity and size of the shocks, it cannot be negatively evaluated simply because the national picture has deteriorated.) The most clearly measurable effect is as a contribution to household income. Families

‘save’ the money they might otherwise have used for food to buy winter clothes, fuel and education materials. The secondary effects of these actions are impossible to measure, but it is interesting that child and adult mortality has declined over this period.

194. In conclusion, the current PRRO is ending in a year and the conditions are the same as when it started in terms of numbers of food insecure. Rather than arguing for a continuation of the current programme, it is crucial for the CO to acknowledge that since poverty – and therefore food insecurity – is structural then so should be the solutions. The ending of the PRRO presents a good opportunity for the CO to start a new strategic planning process. This is already envisaged and the evaluation wholeheartedly endorses this direction.

195. The strategic planning process must consider the wider landscape, and WFP's part in this. Working towards an integration of the WFP system and the government system has to be a priority, employing similar principles to those already in operation in the nascent school feeding programme. WFP must be prepared to ask difficult questions of the organisation, such as about its willingness to stay if it is unable to make a significant difference. Above all, the new strategy process must consider food insecurity as the complex and intractable issue that it is, requiring complex and creative programmes. A more coherent narrative about its contribution and added value will also help its support within government and the donor community in the long term.

### **3.2 Key lessons for the future**

196. The WFP strategy of moving from food aid to food assistance, core to the strategic plan 2008–2011, presents implementation challenges for small country offices. Principal amongst these is the funding model that pushes the agency toward operationality. In the Kyrgyz context, this has meant delivering a certain volume of food aid. It places offices in the invidious position of being not quite big enough as an operational entity, but too operationally focused to work on influencing national policy and practice. And yet in contexts like the Kyrgyz Republic, and certainly in all middle income countries, it is only government that can achieve the scale needed for real, substantive change. Food insecurity can only be tackled by concerted government action, assisted by WFP, rather than by WFP with government as an implementing partner.

197. This will increasingly be the future for WFP; middle income countries will want expertise and policy advice, regarding operations as ‘nice to have’ at best. In such contexts, small country offices will be the norm rather than the exception and will have to function differently to be relevant. Policy expertise on productive safety nets, chronic nutritional issues, innovative social policy such as conditional cash transfers, technical knowledge on best practice in monitoring and evaluating such systems and cutting edge food security and poverty analysis will be the bread and butter of such offices, not trucks and warehouses. To support this, WFP will need a funding formula that is not dependent on tonnage, and a cadre of expertise in these areas.

198. With the right support, small COs are also potential test-beds for innovation. With the requisite flexibility, they can support groups such as the women's network CDA/ADI identified in this report, trial market interventions in support of food staples relied on by the poor, and build coalitions and networks for change. They can more easily pilot new approaches and feed lessons back into the wider organisation to be scaled up.

### 3.3 Recommendations

#### *For the Country Office*

199. **Recommendation 1: WFP should undertake a formal country strategy process.** This will require analysis of WFP's comparative advantage in the Kyrgyz Republic and its complementarity with other actors in the country. There should be a move from implementation to policy support and advocacy. WFP should continue to focus on reducing food insecurity in the country, but less through food aid than through better targeting of social protection schemes and benefits and development of the rural economy. WFP should also help the Government establish plans for dealing with emergencies of the type encountered in 2008 and 2010 – as in the September 2012 earthquake simulation exercise.

200. **Recommendation 2: The country strategy should seek to integrate the VGF programme into government safety net/social protection schemes.** WFP must use its on-the-ground experience to influence the conception and delivery of these schemes. This will require policy analysis and advocacy resources – people – in the office to design the WFP programme and to work with the Government on integration. It is not possible to recruit the necessary country office/regional bureau staff using budgets related to tonnage.

2a) WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping/EFSA and experience should be used to inform targeting and be integrated into the government safety-net system. WFP should leverage its current programme with the European Union for this purpose.

2b) The transition will take time; WFP may need to extend its PRRO for at least a year.

2c) WFP should seek to ensure that the government safety net can be expanded quickly in times of emergencies.

201. **Recommendation 3: WFP should continue increasing the percentage of FFW/FFT in the PRRO extension to facilitate the transition.** With the Government, it should explore the use of such public work schemes for more general poverty alleviation and development projects – as a productive safety net. This work should be linked to ongoing efforts to increase local administrations' capacity to plan and implement projects.

#### *For the Regional Bureau*

202. **Recommendation 4:** The regional bureau should help the country office design its social safety-net programme, drawing on regional experience, including through study tours and secondments. This requires knowledge management to facilitate sharing of expertise and experience across the region. A more coherent regional approach to evaluation could assist, with country teams helping to evaluate each other's programmes and the systematic sharing of evaluation reports.

#### *For WFP Headquarters*

203. **Recommendation 5: WFP should rethink the role of smaller country offices and support them accordingly.**

5a) Small country offices may not be large enough to implement programmes at the national scale, so they will have to work on influencing government policy

and interventions as much as on delivering food aid. There is need for Headquarters support to country office policy work.

5b) Small country offices need fundraising support, so they can avoid single-donor dependency and be creative in securing resources for influencing government policies and interventions. An additional budget line should be available for smaller offices, to enable them to do the necessary policy work.

5c) WFP rules and procedures should allow small country offices flexibility to operate effectively. These offices should be seen as opportunities for innovation – where new approaches can be tested with a receptive audience in government.  
With WFP's Donors

**204. Recommendation 6: WFP should engage donors in any change of approach, such as the transition from food aid to a food security approach integrated into general government social protection mechanisms.** It should also:

6a) encourage donors to support and fund WFP policy work as well as direct assistance; and

6b) encourage larger donors to engage with government on designing a more effective food security system.

## Annexes

### Annex A Terms of Reference

#### 1. Background

##### 1.1. Introduction

1. Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPE) encompass the entirety of WFP activities during a specific period. They evaluate the performance and results of the portfolio as a whole and provide evaluative insights to guide strategic and operational decision-making.

2. The purpose of these terms of reference (TOR) is to provide information to stakeholders about the proposed evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation.

##### 1.2. Country Context

3. The Kyrgyz Republic is a small, landlocked, mountainous country of central Asia, which gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It is a low-income food-deficit country with a predominantly agrarian society and over two thirds of its 5.3 million population lives in rural areas (see maps in annex one).

4. The country is ethnically divided: the Kyrgyz make up nearly 70% of the population and the Uzbeks, who concentrate in the Ferghana Valley in the south, account for about 15% of the population. Russians have a significant presence in the north and in the capital, Bishkek. Tension between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities in the south over land and housing occasionally spill over into violence.

5. Due to its geographic location in a seismically active and mountainous region, the country is highly susceptible to natural disasters with frequent earthquakes, floods, mud slides, avalanches, snow storms, and mountain lake spills (see table one).

**Table one - Natural disasters in Kyrgyzstan 2005-2011**

Date	Natural Disaster	People Affected
Jun-05	Flood	2,050
Jan-06	Storm	9,075
Dec-06	Earthquake	12,050
Apr-07	Flood	845
Jan-08	Earthquake	3,000
Oct-08	Earthquake	1,197
2009	Drought	2,000,000
Jun-10	Mass Movement	8,350

Source: EM-DAT database

6. Production is mostly concentrated on primary agricultural goods (cotton, tobacco and hides), services, extractive industries (gold mining), construction materials and light industry. With limited industrial development, remittances from migrant workers remain one of the pillars of the economy, making up nearly a quarter of the country's GDP. Kyrgyzstan is heavily reliant on imported fuel and food, and about one third of its grain requirements are imported.

7. Between 1998 and 2008, the country has made considerable economic and social progress even if multiple social stress points persisted, including: poor State accountability and service delivery; widening socio-economic disparities; competition over scarce resources such as agricultural land, irrigation water and pastures; widespread unemployment and underemployment, particularly among youth and women; and, a lack of civic participation in wider social, political and economic processes. Key socio-economic indicators are provided in annex two.

8. Poverty rates, which were reduced by 29% between 2003 and 2008 stood at 31.7% (1.7 million people) in 2009. Rural poverty is more acute than urban poverty (37% vs. 22% respectively) and 75 % of the poor reside in rural areas. Poverty rates are also higher in high

mountainous areas and amongst larger households. The largest numbers of poor are in the southern oblasts of Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Issy-Kul.

9. Between 2008 and 2010, the country faced successive shocks which halted socio-economic progress. These included extremely severe winter weather in 2007/8; a drought which depleted key reservoirs and affected agricultural production; the effects of steep increases in food and fuel prices and a significant regional recession, which led to a steep decrease in remittances. In addition, interethnic violence broke out in the cities of Osh and Jalal-abad in June 2010, following the overthrow of President Bakiyev earlier that year. Some 765,000 people were affected and there has been extensive damage to houses and infrastructure. While the political situation has largely stabilized, the underlying issues remain unresolved.

10. The resulting poor agricultural production and disruption of trade due to border closures compounded by lack of investment have led to a sharp economic contraction (1.5% in 2010). The country is grappling with a negative trade balance, a growing fiscal deficit and an increasing foreign debt burden while remaining highly vulnerable to volatile exogenous factors. Budget allocations for social welfare are still insufficient and the country's Human Development Index declined from 0.7 to 0.6 in 2010 with Kyrgyzstan now ranking 109th out of 169 countries.

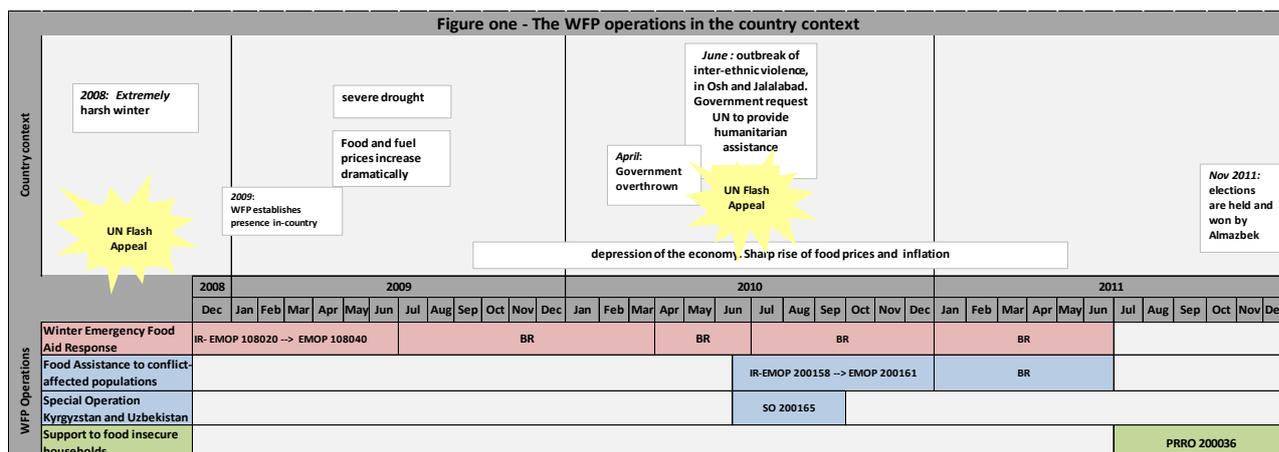
11. Food insecurity is a function of the underlying poverty and exposure to recurrent natural disasters and to the shocks described above. It presents marked seasonal variations, affects rural populations to a higher degree and was estimated to have concerned between 27 and 34 percent of the population since 2009. The most severely food-insecure resort to negative coping strategies which entail risks for health and nutritional status in the short and medium-term. While stunting levels have increased in the past few years, the most pressing nutritional issue remains micronutrient deficiencies, notably of iron, vitamin A and iodine).

12. The Government development objectives are articulated in its Country Development Strategies (2007–2010 and follow-up under preparation) and food security features high amongst these. National legislation on food security has been updated over the 2008-2012 period with a view to using the Universal Monthly Benefit as the main safety net to offset the impact of inflation on vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for food security issues and chairs an inter-ministerial working group in charge of improving food access, which has taken a number of limited measures to dampen inflation. Other ministries involved in humanitarian and development assistance include the State Directorate for Recovery of Osh and Jalal-abad; the Ministry of Emergency Situations; the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.

13. From the UN side, the UNDAF 2005-2011 has been complemented by flash appeals in 2009 and 2010 for humanitarian relief and by the Extended Delivery as One programme for 2010-2011, which expands UN assistance to address issues of economic, food security and energy challenges. These issues have been built into the 2012-2016 UNDAF. WFP and FAO co-chair a Food Security Cluster, which coordinates all UN and non-governmental agencies' activities linked to food security and agriculture.

### **1.3. WFP in Kyrgyzstan**

14. Upon government request, WFP opened an office in Bishkek in December 2008 and launched into an emergency operation (EMOP 108040) to provide assistance to populations affected by the extremely cold winter weather. It was then extended to support the most vulnerable groups in the context of the high food prices and economic crises. In June 2010, WFP opened a sub-office in Osh and started another emergency operation (EMOP 200161) in support of conflict affected populations in the south of the country. Both emergency operations ended in June 2011 when WFP embarked upon a two year relief and recovery operation (PRRO 200036) to support the most vulnerable groups and develop the government capacity to assess and respond to food insecurity. Figure one below presents the WFP operations in the local context.



15. With a total of US\$ 53 million received in donation for its operations<sup>15</sup> since 2009 mostly from the Russian Federation, USA, UN CEFR, European Commission, the WFP portfolio in Kyrgyzstan is small, representing only a minute fraction of the WFP expenditures worldwide.

## 2. Reasons for the Evaluation

### 2.1. Rationale

16. Kyrgyzstan has been selected by the Office of Evaluation (OE) as one of twelve countries to undergo an independent portfolio evaluation in the 2012/2013 biennium. Countries are selected based on a set of transparent criteria, which are meant to ensure a balance of regional representation, portfolio size and evaluation coverage.

17. The Kyrgyzstan CPE is representative of the small WFP portfolios, has never been independently evaluated and offers a rare opportunity to review how WFP opened an office and started emergency operations from scratch. The choice was endorsed by the country office and regional bureau in Cairo and the evaluation has been timed to ensure that relevant findings could feed into subsequent programme design.

### 2.2. Objectives

18. Evaluations serve the dual objectives of accountability and learning. As such, the evaluation will:

- assess and report on the performance and results of the country portfolio (accountability);
- determine the reasons for observed success/failure and provide evidence-based findings to draw lessons from experience and inform strategic and operational decision-making (learning).

### 2.3. Stakeholders and Users

19. Table two below provides a preliminary stakeholders' analysis. The evaluation team will build on this at inception stage to map the key strategic and operational partners, and understand priority issues and interests at stake.

<sup>15</sup> Out of a total of US\$83 million requirements (including the US\$ 28 million for the PRRO, which will end in mid-2013).

Table two: Preliminary stakeholders analysis	
Internal stakeholders	Role and interest in the evaluation
<b>Country office management</b>	Primary stakeholder of this evaluation. Responsible for the country level planning and operations implementation, it has a direct stake in the evaluation, an interest in enhanced accountability towards the government, partners, donors and beneficiaries and in learning from experience to inform decision-making.
<b>Regional Bureau (Cairo) and HQ technical units</b>	Responsible for guidance and technical support to country offices. Have an interest in ensuring that the portfolio is reviewed from the perspective of effectiveness and strategic positioning.
<b>WFP Executive Board</b>	As the governing body of the organisation, the EB has a direct interest in being informed about the effectiveness of WFP operations, their harmonisation with strategic processes of government and partners.
External stakeholders (*)	Role and interest in the evaluation
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	As the ultimate recipients of food assistance, beneficiaries have a stake in WFP determining whether its assistance is appropriate and effective. As such, perspectives from beneficiaries should be sought.
<b>Government</b>	The Government has a direct interest in knowing whether WFP activities are effective, aligned with their agenda and harmonised with the action of other partners. Various Ministries are direct partners of WFP at policy and activity levels.
<b>UN Country Team</b>	As a local strategic and operational partner whose harmonised action should contribute, notably through the extended delivering as one approach and the UNDAF to the realisation of the Government developmental objectives, UNCT agencies have an interest in ensuring that WFP operations are effective in contributing to the UN concerted effort. Various agencies are also direct partners of WFP at policy and activity level.
<b>NGO partners</b>	A number of NGOs are implementing food security programmes and some are WFP's partners in programme implementation. NGOs concerned have a stake in the WFP assessment of its portfolio notably in relation to partnership issues and performance and some have an interest in its future strategic orientation.
<b>Donors</b>	WFP activities are supported by a small group of donors who have an interest in knowing whether their funds have been spent efficiently and whether WFP's work contributes to their own strategies and programmes.

(\*) Table three provides a detailed list of types of beneficiaries and of the organisations making up these stakeholders groups.

20. The primary user of this evaluation will be the WFP Country Office and its partners in designing future WFP operations, country strategies and partnerships and possibly in adjusting current ones.

### 3. Subject of the Evaluation

#### 3.1. WFP's Portfolio in Kyrgyzstan

21. For the purpose of this evaluation, the WFP Kyrgyzstan portfolio is defined as the six operations implemented in the country since late 2008. No other significant activity funded through grants or trust funds took place over the period. Table five overleaf provides an overview of the operations covered in the portfolio including their type, objectives, activities, beneficiaries, budget, donors and partners. The factsheet in annex three provides additional relevant information.

22. The portfolio operations can be grouped in three categories as follows:

- Operations designed to provide emergency relief to those most affected by natural disasters (extreme winter and drought) and economic crisis from 2009 until mid-2011. These operations include the immediate response emergency operation (IR EMOP 108020), which kicked-off the subsequent emergency operation (EMOP 108040).
- Operations designed to provide emergency relief to those most affected by man-made disaster (conflict in the south) from mid-2010 until mid-2011. These operations include IREMOP 200158, which kicked-off EMOP 200161 as well as the three-month special operation (SO 200165) for logistics and telecommunication augmentation, which was supportive of WFP's and partners' relief effort.
- The operation designed to assist the most food insecure in a transition context, i.e. the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO 2000036), which started in July 2011 for two years. This PRRO builds upon predecessor emergency operations and covers relief, recovery and capacity building components. This operation will come at the mid-point of implementation during the evaluation and is the only active operation of the portfolio.

23. The portfolio is overwhelmingly emergency-focussed. 90% of the budget requirements went to operations with relief objectives (see table four below).

	No. of operations	Requirements (US\$ million)	% of requi. by operation type
Immediate Response Emergency Operation (IR-EMOP)	2	997,488	1%
Emergency Operation (EMOP)	2	47,411,984	59%
Special Operation (SO)	1	4,431,378	5%
Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO)	1	28,097,458	35%
<b>Total</b>		<b>80,938,308</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: SPR

24. The prevailing assistance modality, through which 94% of beneficiaries have been supported to date, is free food distributions including general food distributions (GFD) and vulnerable group feeding (VGF). Food for Work (FFW) and Food for Training (FFT) activities started more recently and served 6% of the all beneficiaries. Capacity building was only introduced in 2011 as part of the PRRO.

25. These activities are guided by WFP's corporate strategic plan (see annex four) and focus notably on saving lives and livelihoods (Strategic Objective 1); disaster preparedness and mitigation (strategic Objective 2); rebuilding livelihoods (Strategic Objective 3). The capacity building activity falls within Strategic Objective 5 (strengthening national capacities).

Table five: KYRGYZSTAN PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Operation Number	Operation Title	Timing	Strategic objective	Beneficiaries and activity type	Planned beneficiary numbers	Funding obtained	Donors	Cooperating International Agencies	Operational Governmental Partners	NGO Partners
IR-EMOP 108020	Winter Emergency Food Aid Response	Nov 08 - Feb 09	SO1	SETTING UP AN OFFICE + VGF to families living below the Guaranteed Minimal Consumption Level	580,000	US\$ 0.4 mil (100% of requirements)	WFP Immediate Response Account			
EMOP 108040	Kyrgyzstan Winter Emergency Food Aid Response	Jan 09 - Jun 11	SO1; and later on SO2	VGF to families living below the Guaranteed Minimal Consumption Level and later on FFW	580,000	US\$17.9 mill (79% of requirements)	UN Coomon Funds, UN CERF, Greece, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey	UNIFEM, UNDP, FAO, WORLD BANK, UN Country Team	State Agency for Social Welfare, Ministry of Emergency Situations, National Statistics Committee, State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry, Republican Centre for Health Promotion, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	SHOOLA, Public Foundation Mountain Society Development Support Programme, Public Association Community Development Alliance, Mercy Corps International, ACTED
IR-EMOP 200158	Food Support to Population Affected by the Conflict in the South of the Kyrgyz Republic	Jun 10 - Sep 10	SO1	GFD (HEB) to conflict-affected people and IDPs in the South of the country	40,000	US\$ 0.465 mil (93% of requirements)	WFP Immediate Response Account			
SO 200165	Logistics and Emergency Telecommun. augmentation and coordinat. in support of the humanitarian response in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan	Jun 10 - Sep 10	SO1	N/A	N/A	US\$2 mil (48% of requirements)	UN CERF, Private donors, Finland, Sweden	UNDSS, UNHCR, UNICEF	Ministry of Emergencies	
EMOP 200161	Food Assistance to Conflict-Affected Populations in the Kyrgyz Republic	Jul 10 - Jun 11	SO1	GFD and institutional feeding to conflict-affected residents, IDPs, returnees, pregnant and lactating mothers, children under 5 and other individuals nutritionally at risk	560,000	US\$ 20.2 mil (81% of requirements)	Russian Federation, UN CERF, USA, European Commision, Canada, Brazil, Netherlands, France	FAO, UNHCR	GoK - Unit for Coordination for the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance, Ministry of Emergencies	ACTED, Golden Goal, IRET and Save the Children Internationals
PRRO 200036	Support to Food Insecure Households	Jul 11 - Jun 13	SO 2; SO3; SO5	1) Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) for severely food-insecure households; 2) FFW/FFT in food-insecure areas, where economic shocks are exacerbated by extremely poor rural infrastructure and risk of natural calamities; 3) Capacity Development	700,000	US\$ 11.2 mil as of April 2012. (40% of requirement)	Russian Federation, UN CERF	FAO, UN WOMEN, UNDP, Agency for Cooperation and Technical Development (ACTED)	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry for Emergency Situations, National Statistics Committee, Ministry of Social Protection, Republican Centre for Health Promotion	Shoola, Community Development Alliance

### 3.2. Scope of the Evaluation

26. The evaluation will cover all operations of the WFP portfolio described in section 3.1. In line with CPE guidelines, the focus of this evaluation will be on the portfolio as a whole. The operations will not be evaluated individually. The evaluation will also review the analytical work conducted by WFP (including prior to the country office opening) to determine the extent to which it contributed to decision-making at strategic, operational and partnership levels.

27. The geographic scope includes all areas covered by the portfolio. However, the field work will necessarily focus on a sample of project sites.

## 4. Key Questions

28. The CPE address the following three key questions, which collectively aim at highlighting the key lessons from the WFP country presence and performance to inform future strategic and operational decisions. These questions will be further detailed in a matrix of evaluation questions to be prepared by the evaluation team at inception stage.

**29. Question 1: Strategic positioning.** Considering WFP's mandate, capacities and comparative advantage locally, to what extent has the portfolio been strategically positioned, i.e. to what extent has it been:

- ⤴ relevant to the population needs;
- ⤴ contributing to the government humanitarian and development objectives;
- ⤴ aligned with those of relevant humanitarian and development partners in order to achieve complementarity of interventions at policy and operational levels.
- ⤴ aligned with international good practices for non-state providers (NSPs).

**30. Question 2:** What has driven the *key strategic decisions*, which have oriented the portfolio, i.e. to what extent WFP has:

- ⤴ analysed the national food security, nutrition, livelihoods and gender context and appropriately targeted its interventions using this analysis;
- ⤴ had sufficient technical expertise (either internal or through partnership) to strategically manage the different interventions under the portfolio;
- ⤴ entered into appropriate partnerships.
- ⤴ developed and implemented appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems to support strategic decision making;
- ⤴ been driven by external funding and or political factors to alter its portfolio from the original design;
- ⤴ strategically adjusted its operational implementation in response to changing needs of the populations, funding, partners, and other circumstances.

**31. Question 3:** What have been the performance and results of the WFP portfolio, including the efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and probable impact of its relief, recovery and capacity building initiatives?

## 5. Evaluation Approach

### 5.1. Evaluability Assessment

32. The below provides a preliminary evaluability assessment<sup>16</sup>. At inception stage, the evaluation team will conduct a thorough review and analysis of the wide array of secondary data available from WFP, government and partners in order to identify information gaps and other evaluability challenges and present a plan to address these. To this end, OE has prepared an initial analysis of the portfolio and a library of key documents from various sources, which will be shared with the team.

33. Regular assessments, including emergency food security assessments (EFSAs) and market monitoring, have been conducted by the country office in addition to the quarterly food security bulletins issued by the National Statistics Committee (NSC). These will provide key baseline information.

34. The portfolio operations have been designed with specific outputs and outcomes recorded in the project planning documents. Monitoring, evaluation (SO 200165 has also been internally evaluated) and reporting documents detail achievement of outputs and outcomes for each operation thus making them evaluable against stated outcomes.

35. However, it should be noted that the intention of this evaluation to provide an assessment of the portfolio as whole going beyond operational divide does not closely match WFP's working model, which is operation-focussed. As such, there is no set of objectives for the portfolio as defined in section 3.1, nor documents articulating a country strategy emphasising WFP's comparative advantage and partnership approach. Nonetheless, from past evaluation experience the concept of a 'portfolio' closely corresponds to the perspectives of community, partners and donors and was found helpful in evaluating questions of strategic alignment and positioning, partnership, and achievement of outcomes.

36. Additional evaluability challenges might include a language barrier for the international members of the team as English is not widespread as a vernacular in discussions and documents. It is thus essential to have national experts as team members. Also, the team might face a recall issue in its interview of local stakeholders since the emergency operations making up the core of the portfolio will have been finished for over a year by the time the evaluation takes places.

### 5.2. Methodology

37. The methodology will be designed by the evaluation team and validated by OE during the inception phase. It should:

- Employ relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria including those of relevance, coherence (internal and external), efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and connectedness;
- Demonstrate impartiality and lack of biases by relying on a cross-section of information sources (e.g. stakeholder groups, including beneficiaries, etc.) and using mixed methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, participatory) to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means. In particular, the sampling technique to select field visit sites will need to demonstrate impartiality.
- Be geared towards addressing the key evaluation questions taking into account the evaluability challenges, the budget and timing constraints;
- Be based on an analysis of the logic of the portfolio and the common objectives arising across operations and on a thorough stakeholders analysis;

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<sup>16</sup> Evaluability is the extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion, which depends on the clear understanding of the situation before assistance was provided, a clear statement of intended outcomes and impacts, clearly defined appropriate indicators, and target dates by which expected outcomes and impacts should occur.

- Be synthesised in an evaluation matrix, which should be used as the key organizing tool for the evaluation.

### **5.3. Quality Assurance**

38. WFP's evaluation quality assurance system (EQAS) is based on the UNEG norms and standards and good practice of the international evaluation community (ALNAP and DAC). It sets out processes with in-built steps for quality assurance and templates for evaluation products. It also includes quality assurance of evaluation reports (inception, full and summary reports) based on standardised checklists. EQAS will be systematically applied during the course of this evaluation and relevant documents will be provided to the evaluation team.

39. The evaluation manager will conduct the first level quality assurance, while the OE Director will conduct the second level review. In addition, an internal reference group will also contribute to report reviews. This quality assurance process does not interfere with the views and independence of the evaluation team, but ensures that the report provides the necessary evidence in a clear and convincing way and draws its conclusions on that basis.

## **6. Organization of the Evaluation**

### **6.1. Evaluation Management**

40. This evaluation is managed by WFP's Office of Evaluation with Ms Claire Conan as the evaluation manager (EM). The EM is responsible for drafting the TOR; selecting and contracting the evaluation team; preparing and managing the budget; liaising with the reference group; organizing the briefing and field missions; conducting the first level quality assurance of the evaluation reports; and gathering comments from stakeholders. The EM will also be the main interlocutor between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader, and WFP counterparts to ensure a smooth implementation process.

### **6.2. Evaluation Team**

41. The evaluation team will be composed of independent consultants who will not have been significantly involved with WFP Kyrgyzstan nor have other conflict of interest. The team will include both international and national consultants and is likely to be limited to two or three members. They will combine amongst themselves expertise in the following fields:

- Emergency preparedness and emergency relief (including planning and management in the context of slow and fast onset disasters).
- Food security monitoring and programming (including in relation to the targeting, design, delivery, and M&E of food assistance);
- Partnership building;
- Strategic planning.

42. The team leader will combine expertise in at least one of these areas with expertise in evaluation (including designing methodology and data collection tools) and demonstrated experience in leading evaluation teams. All team members should have strong analytical and communication skills; experience of evaluation within the UN system and familiarity with Kyrgyzstan or central Asia.

43. The following specific qualifications are required for the team leader:

- Post-graduate degree in a relevant area with demonstrated knowledge and experience in either emergency relief operations or food security;
- At least 10 years of experience managing research and evaluations and experience in leading complex evaluations;
- Demonstrable skills (through prior work and professional education or accreditation) in evaluation methodology;

- A track record of publication and excellent English language writing and presentation skills.
- The following specific qualifications are required for the team member(s):
- At least 5 years of demonstrable expertise (through work experience and education) in at least one of the areas of competencies required;
- At least 3 years of experience in research and or evaluation;
- A track record of written work on similar assignments.

### 6.3. Roles and Responsibilities of stakeholders

44. The country office is expected to provide necessary documentation and information for the evaluation; be available to the evaluation team to discuss the portfolio, its performance and results; facilitate the evaluation team's contacts with local stakeholders; set up meetings and organise field visits; provide administrative support and facilitate logistics of the fieldwork. If required, the CO will also be responsible to identify a translator. To ensure the independence of the evaluation, country office staff will not participate in meetings where their presence could bias the responses of external stakeholders.

45. Relevant other internal stakeholders (technical units at RB and HQ levels) and external stakeholders are expected to be available for interviews/meetings with the evaluation team; to participate in the evaluation debriefing and to comment on the evaluation reports. A detailed consultation schedule will be prepared at inception stage and stakeholders will be informed accordingly.

### 6.4. Phases and Deliverables

46. The evaluation will be implemented over a 10 month period in 2012/2013 and will proceed through five phases (see annex five for details of the activities and timeline):

47. **Design phase** (April–May2012): OE will conduct background research and consultation to frame the evaluation; prepare the TOR; put together a library of key documents; select and hire the evaluation team. To facilitate communication with stakeholders, OE will summarise the TOR and translate the summary in the local language.

48. **Inception phase** (June 2012): This phase aims to prepare the evaluation team for the evaluation phase by ensuring that it has a good grasp of the expectations for the evaluation and a clear plan for conducting it. The inception phase will include a review of secondary data; a briefing of the team leader; and a one week inception mission in Kyrgyzstan of the team leader and evaluation manager.

- Deliverable: Inception report. This report will detail how the team intends to conduct the evaluation with an emphasis on methodological and planning aspects. The report will be shared with the CO for information.

49. **Field mission phase** (July – August 2012): The fieldwork will span over 3 weeks and will include visits to project sites and primary and secondary data collection from local stakeholders. Two debriefing sessions will be held upon completion of the field work. The first one will involve the country office (relevant RB and HQ colleagues will be invited to participate through a teleconference) and the second one will be held with external stakeholders.

- Deliverable: Aide memoire. An aide memoire of preliminary findings and conclusions (powerpoint presentation) will be prepared to support the de-briefings.

50. **Reporting phase** (August–November 2012): The evaluation team will analyse the data collected during the field work, conduct additional consultations with stakeholders, as required, and draft the evaluation report.

- Deliverable: Evaluation reports (full and summary). There will be two evaluation reports: the full report and the summary report presenting main findings, conclusions and a limited

number of recommendations. It should be noted that, in order to shorten the evaluation process and limit the iteration of requests for comments, the executive summary of the full report will be a 4,500 words summary reflecting accurately each section of the main report and will constitute the summary evaluation report.

**51. Follow-up phase, report presentation and dissemination** (Nov 2012-February 2013): During this phase, the WFP Executive Board (EB) Secretariat will prepare the summary evaluation report for EB submission (editing and translation); the RMP division will coordinate the management response to the evaluation recommendations with input from the country office and other stakeholders, as required; and the OE and RMP directors will respectively present the evaluation report and management response to the Executive Board at its February 2013 session.

52. In addition, the evaluation manager will prepare a short evaluation brief and will disseminate the evaluation findings notably through the Annual Evaluation Report (AER) and other OE system for sharing lessons. The country office might, at its own initiative, conduct a follow-up workshop to discuss recommendations and determine follow-up actions with its partners.

#### **Note on the deliverables:**

The inception report and evaluation reports shall be written in English. It is expected that the evaluation team, with the team leader providing quality control, produce written work that is of very high standard, evidence-based, and free of errors.

The reports will follow the EQAS templates<sup>17</sup> and will be submitted to the evaluation manager for quality assurance. Stakeholders will be invited to provide comments, which will be recorded in a matrix by the evaluation manager and provided to the evaluation team for their consideration before report finalisation.

The evaluation reports (full and summary) will be public documents and will be made available on the WFP website. The inception report will remain an internal document.

### **6.5. Communication**

53. In order for this evaluation process to be an effective learning process, the evaluation management and team will emphasize transparent and open communication with stakeholders. Regular teleconferences and one-on-one telephone communications between the evaluation team, the evaluation manager, and the country office focal point will assist in discussing any arising issues. OE will also make use of data sharing software to assist in communication and file transfer with the evaluation team and the country office. All significant documents related to the evaluation progress will be posted on OE's internal website in the "evaluations in progress" section<sup>18</sup>.

### **6.6. Budget**

54. The evaluation will be financed from OE's Programme Support and Administrative budget. OE will cover: the remuneration of the evaluation team; international travel of the team and evaluation manager; domestic travel (including internal flights and hiring of vehicles as required) and translation costs.

<sup>17</sup> The CPE report templates are available on the WFP Evaluation website [www.wfp.org/evaluation](http://www.wfp.org/evaluation)

<sup>18</sup> <http://go.wfp.org/web/evaluation/evaluations-in-progress>

## **Annex B Methodological Approach**

1. The evaluation team was guided by the need to look at the whole portfolio of WFP activities in the Kyrgyz Republic, and then to provide value-added strategic and operational insights. Although the operations were not evaluated individually, it was important for the team to review the separate programmes to determine their links to the wider country strategy and to be able to answer the key questions, especially key question 3 concerning performance and results.

2. As there was no country-specific set of objectives for the overall portfolio, nor documents articulating a country strategy emphasising WFP's comparative advantage and partnership approach, the team needed to deduce and draw out a sense of what these objectives and strategy would have looked like had they been articulated at the time, and how these might have changed as operations unfolded and experience was gained in the country. Discussions with key WFP staff members were essential to this process, as were discussions with other stakeholders such as government, donors, other UN partners and NGOs, and civil society representatives as well as with beneficiary populations.

3. The evaluation team employed relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria (OECD DAC) including relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Systematic use of these standard evaluation criteria (set out in the TOR) ensured appropriate balance in the evaluation. Thus the criteria of efficiency, effectiveness and impact addressed the results and organisation of the interventions undertaken, but the relevance criterion considered possible alternative choices of broad intervention or specific design that could have been made, and the sustainability criterion considered whether WFP is supporting long-term solutions to underlying hunger problems.

4. The team looked at what were the most cost-effective, predictable and timely ways of delivering the appropriate level of assistance. This included an analysis of government policy and beneficiary preference in relation to this.

5. The evaluation team used a pragmatic mixed methods approach in addressing the evaluation questions. This is further described below.

6. The evaluation *process* was always a vital part of the methodology. Key requirements were:

- to engage systematically with the multiple and highly diverse stakeholders in a constructive way, so as to ensure recommendations are useful and used, while maintaining the independence and objectivity of the evaluation;
- to ensure the multi-disciplinary perspectives of different team members are effectively brought together.

7. The organisation of the evaluation was designed to serve both these requirements.

### **Evaluation Matrix**

8. Table B1 below shows how the three key questions posed by the TOR were broken down into a series of logical evaluation questions (EQs) to structure the enquiry. This is further elaborated in the evaluation matrix at Annex C. For each EQ the matrix shows relevant sub-questions, together with the indicators, data sources and data collection methods that were applied.

**Table B1 Main Evaluation Questions**

<p><b>Key Question 1: Strategic positioning.</b> Considering WFP’s mandate, capacities and comparative advantage locally, to what extent has the portfolio been strategically positioned?</p>
EQ1. What is the strategic context of food security and aid in the Kyrgyz Republic?
EQ2. How relevant have WFP interventions been to population needs in the Kyrgyz Republic?
EQ3. How well have WFP interventions been aligned in terms of complementarity with other interventions?
EQ4. How well have WFP interventions reflected international good practice?
<p><b>Key Question 2: What has driven the key strategic decisions, which have oriented the portfolio?</b></p>
EQ5. What was the analytical basis for WFP's interventions?
EQ6. To what extent have WFP's decisions been informed by a coherent country strategy?
EQ7. To what extent has WFP in the Kyrgyz Republic been able to learn from experience and to adapt to changing contexts?
EQ8. What factors have facilitated and/or constrained WFP's strategic decision-making?
<p><b>Key Question 3: What have been the performance and results of the WFP portfolio?</b></p>
EQ9. What have been the outcomes and impacts of WFP interventions?
EQ10. How efficient and effective have they been?
EQ11. How sustainable have they been?
EQ12. To what extent has WFP's portfolio in the Kyrgyz Republic been more than the sum of its parts?

### **Data Collection Methods**

9. The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach. This consisted of:
- Document/ literature review.
  - Review of secondary data.
  - Key informant and stakeholder interviews.
  - Field visits.
  - Focus group interviews.
  - Workshops.

The combination of these methods built a picture, with each step in the process adding a layer of evidence to substantiate findings and conclusions. Table B2 and the subsequent analysis identified the principal methods and data outcomes, thus far and planned. This served as a basis for triangulation and interview.

**Table B2 Overview of principal methods and outcomes**

<b>Document Review</b>	<p>Overview of the context and the programme that was established and the analysis that informed it, situating the evaluation analysis in relation to Kyrgyz Republic food security and the wider socio-economic situation.</p> <p>The document/literature review provided the evaluation team with an understanding of the context and of the WFP programme. The context analysis situated the WFP programme with regards to the social and economic situation of the country, and of the communities and households with whom WFP is working. Combined with a review of secondary data, it also allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the actions of others in the social and economic domains – the government, civil society and external actors such as aid agencies and bilateral donors.</p> <p>Meta-analysis of programme documents to assess results of the WFP portfolio.</p> <p>The team is using dropbox for collating all documents reviewed, building on the WFP library initially provided.</p>
<b>Review of secondary data</b>	<p>The inception mission concluded that there was a significant amount of secondary data, enough to answer household level questions about food insecurity (and as a result dropped the idea of a bespoke survey for the evaluation). Data were used primarily to answer the area of enquiry relating to performance and results.</p> <p>This was principally taken from KIHS, EFSA and the PDM (but also health, other). Patterns identifying progress were particularly interesting (and were cross-referenced against WFP activity).</p>
<b>Key informant and stakeholder interviews</b>	<p>These were a key source of information for the evaluation. They included telephone and face-to-face interviews, and included WFP staff (HQ, regional and in-country), government, partners, donors, other agencies and civil society.</p>
<b>Field visits</b>	<p>The evaluation team visited a purposive sample of WFP projects around which in-depth analysis of the documentation, key informant interviews and data were arranged. Field visits provided an opportunity to go into depth into different aspects of WFP programming allowing the evaluation team to ground truth and triangulate evidence from other sources.</p>
<b>Focus group interviews</b>	<p>Focus group interviews were a main aspect of the field visits, and looked at what the perceived needs of the population are, how the various WFP modalities have met these and what their perceptions of outcome and impact are.</p>
<b>Workshops</b>	<p>A validation workshop was held in-country at the end of the field visit. This was to share initial findings with the country team before preparing the draft report. This is an important aspect of the mission, in order to gain a shared ownership of the evaluation process. A further feedback session may be arranged at the end of the evaluation.</p>

10. The document/literature review provided the evaluation team with an understanding of the context and WFP programme. Full review has been made of general literature on the Kyrgyz Republic, government, donor and aid agency strategies, policies, reports, reviews. In addition, detailed review has been made of wider grey and academic literature on development in the Kyrgyz Republic where relevant and WFP project and programme documentation.

11. The secondary data review was handled and developed further by the team leader and the national team member, who is an economist and has worked previously on the Kyrgyz Household Survey.

- What the problem is (in terms of household food security).
- Main sources of income and opportunity to improve household food security.
- What impact there has been over time on food availability.
- Whether there is adequate national health data to report discernible impact on health outcomes.
- What can be deduced from a meta-analysis of WFP's in-country monitoring and analytical work, about the relevance, efficiency (e.g. targeting), effectiveness and impacts of WFP's interventions.

12. Internal WFP project documents set out in detail the operations from objectives through resourcing to implementation. This enabled the evaluation team to establish what was done. Part of the evaluation process was to verify this by visits to communities who participated in WFP programmes, and by interviewing key stakeholders – implementing partners, local and national government officials and others. The stakeholder/ key informant interviews (KIIs) therefore provided a second layer of data collection and analysis, partly verifying the degree to which WFP had done what it says, and partly further enriching understanding of WFP actions by contextualising the documentation.

13. The KIIs also set the strategic context more broadly. Whilst this can be understood to a certain extent through the literature and document review, KIIs helped to apply what tends to be generalised analysis to the specifics of the food security and WFP intervention and offer an opportunity for reflection (both internal and external) that helps frame evaluation findings.

14. Community based group interviews offered a third layer of data collection and analysis. Through understanding beneficiary perspectives on what their major problems were that WFP programmes were seeking to assist with, and how in fact this assistance helped (or did not), the evaluation moved from understanding the detail of what has been done (at input/output level) to an understanding about what the outcome had been. This helped to understand external and internal perceptions of WFP, triangulated in two ways – firstly the focus group interviews (FGI) were iterative. As they were semi-structured and qualitative, emerging issues were replayed and tested in later interviews. This allowed for ongoing triangulation of emerging findings. Secondly, the findings of the FGIs were tested against KIIs and the document review – in both directions. Community interviews can be enriched through intimate knowledge of the detail of the programmes, and key informant interviews can be similarly enriched through the introduction of issues emerging from communities.

15. Evaluation findings were analysed by the team individually and collectively. Through a series of internal team meetings during the evaluation an initial set of findings were agreed on. These were then tested through 1) validation workshops with the country office and with external stakeholders, 2) peer review, and 3) the quality support process. The team then produced an initial draft of the evaluation that was further tested through the OE quality assurance process.

16. Key informant interviews were undertaken as per the stakeholder analysis and the evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix and stakeholder analysis combined set out the key evaluation questions that needed to be informed by the KIIs and who was best placed to answer these questions. The approach was semi-structured and tailored to each interviewee.

17. The focus group interviews were undertaken in all six oblasts where WFP works (Batken, Osh, Jalal-abad, Talas, Naryn and Issyk-kul – see main report for statistics). Purposive sampling ensured coverage of all of the different types of assistance (GFD, VGF and FFW/FFT), different types of projects within the FFW category (environment, agriculture, infrastructure), different causes of food insecurity (conflict/displacement and structural poverty) and different time frames of implementation (old caseload, current caseload).

18. Focus group interviews were semi-structured and iterative. That is to say, there was a set of broad themes that needed to be understood by means of these interviews. These are shown in Table B3 below, which also shows which EQs and which evaluation criteria were most relevant to each theme. For all these EQs, findings from the FGIs were triangulated against other sources of evidence, as shown in the evaluation matrix. The FGIs addressed two of the three key evaluation questions (*strategic positioning*, and *performance and results*); EQs related to *key strategic decisions* (and also to EQ4 on international good practice) were addressed in key informant interviews with staff of WFP, GoK and other concerned agencies, including WFP's implementing partners.

**Table B3 Interview themes vs. EQs and assessment criteria**

<b>Focus group interview theme</b>	<b>Relevant EQs and evaluation criteria</b>
(a) The perceived needs of the populations being assisted by WFP, and what the causes of these needs are.	EQ2 – relevance EQ1 –relevance
(b) How the different modalities of assistance WFP employs are perceived in terms of addressing these needs.	EQ2 – relevance EQ3 – external coherence (also connectedness – link from relief to development)
(c) The outcomes of WFP assistance, both in terms of how outcome is defined, and how the assistance programme contributes to these outcomes.	EQ9 – effectiveness, impact, connectedness
(d) The impact of programmes on productive capacities and extreme hunger.	EQ9 – impact
(e) The sustainability of various interventions. How sustainability is defined and the degree to which it is being achieved.	EQ11 – sustainability
(f) Measures to improve the way assistance is delivered, the outcomes and impact of the assistance, and the sustainability (including how WFP works with others and fits into the larger picture of food security and institutional action).	EQ10 – efficiency, effectiveness EQ11 – sustainability, connectedness EQ3, EQ12 – coherence

19. These six broad questions guided interviews. However, the substance varied over time, depending on location and depending on the community. Initially interviews tended more towards establishing livelihood patterns and the general social and economic context. As the focus group interviews progressed and the team was able to better establish this context quickly – as a common starting point for discussing assistance – the balance of the interviews tipped more towards analysis of various assistance programmes, how WFP fits and what were the best ways to address their major problems over time (see 0 for record of the interviews).

20. The country portfolio evaluation is not an impact study. It is first and foremost a strategic study. However, to answer questions about strategic direction and alignment it was necessary to understand to some degree the outcomes from the programmes, and where possible the impact. This also strongly fulfilled the accountability function of this evaluation. Thus the evaluation determined both outcomes and impact to the degree that this was possible, conscious that this required a minimum standard of rigour to be credible. See Table B4 below for data sought.

21. The questions of strategic alignment and decision making were addressed by building on this base of results evidence and overlaying this with an analysis of the causes of food insecurity and the policy prescriptions being applied by the State of the Kyrgyz Republic and the major international actors. Implicit in making this analysis were the degree to which the combined operations represent a coherent portfolio, something addressed in various parts of this inception

report. Given the reality that the greatest part of WFP action in the country has been consistently similar (targeted feeding based on village level lists, twice a year) the evaluation team is confident that a) there was enough of a coherent ‘portfolio’ to be evaluated as such and b) that the portfolio was sufficiently internally coherent for a strategy to be discerned and therefore for issues of alignment and decision making to be analysed.

**Table B4 Outcome Data to Inform Assessment of WFP Contributions**

Outcome/ impact	Target Data	Source of Data
Health outcomes	Life expectancy at birth (years) Adult mortality (per 1000 adults 15 – 59 years) Under 5 mortality (per 1000 live births) Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) Morbidity of key diseases related to food insecurity, including stunting, micro-nutrient deficiencies and anaemia.	MoH, WHO, KIHS, MICS, DHS, evaluation FGI.
Adequate food consumption	Food consumption indices (kcal consumed per day) Diversity of diet indices Nutritional status (wasting and stunting). Household income and expenditure. Poverty rates.	KIHS, EFSA, MICS, evaluation FGIs.
Productive capacities	Household income and expenditure Poverty rates Land under cultivation Land productivity Livestock data Labour data	KIHS, EFSA, FAO, evaluation FGI.
MDG 1 (hunger and poverty)	Prevalence of undernourishment (% population) Malnutrition prevalence, height for age (% children under 5) Malnutrition prevalence, weight for age (% of children under 5) Poverty headcount ratio at US\$1.25 a day (PPP) (% of population)	KIHS, EFSA, MICS, evaluation FGIs.

## Annex C Evaluation Matrix

Area of enquiry	Specific Questions	Analysis/ indicators	Data Source	Data collection
Strategic alignment	<b>EQ1. What is the strategic context of food security and aid in the Kyrgyz Republic?</b>			
	In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are food security specifically and social protection generally addressed in the Kyrgyz Republic's poverty alleviation strategies?</li> <li>What are the issues involved in addressing extreme vulnerability in the context of transition from Soviet Union to market economy in the short, medium and long term? What does this imply for appropriate approaches and aid modalities?</li> <li>What is the degree of exposure/ fragility of the Kyrgyz Republic to 'shocks' from global factors (food price rises), natural disasters and communal strife?</li> </ul>	Analysis of key policies (MDTP/PRSP, government commitments). Analysis of general literature, current international policy.	Government, donor, academic, development agency, WFP, strategies and documentation.	Literature/ document <sup>19</sup> review (LR), stakeholder/ key informant <sup>20</sup> interviews (KII), secondary data analysis (SDA).
	<b>EQ2. How relevant have WFP interventions been to population needs in the Kyrgyz Republic?</b>			
	What are the needs? In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the need in terms of food insecurity (and what are the characteristics of vulnerability), how is this being met and who are the main actors in terms of policy and delivery?.</li> <li>To what extent does the WFP programme/ portfolio meet the real needs of the most vulnerable and fit with efforts by communities, government and other development and humanitarian actors?</li> </ul>	Nutritional and food security status of population, morbidity and mortality, population and policy makers' perceptions.	Government, WFP, academic, development agency documentation. Beneficiaries.	LR, SDA, KII, focus group interviews (FGI).

<sup>19</sup> For ease of reference the term literature review in this matrix is intended to mean all potential types of documentation apart from data analysis i.e. from peer reviewed journal articles, through journalism and reference literature to project documentation.

<sup>20</sup> As above. The abbreviation KII will be used for stakeholder/ key informant interviews.

Area of enquiry	Specific Questions	Analysis/ indicators	Data Source	Data collection
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is need disaggregated by gender, and what are WFP efforts to address this.</li> </ul>			
	<p><b>EQ3. How well have WFP interventions been aligned in terms of complementarity with other interventions?</b></p>			
	<p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What has been the WFP role in humanitarian and development efforts in the Kyrgyz Republic with regard to other major actors such as government, donors, international financing institutions and other UN entities.?</li> <li>Has WFP been best placed to deliver in terms of role, but also approach and cost? (i.e. has WFP followed its comparative advantage)</li> </ul>	Analysis of where WFP stands in relation to government policy, other major aid actors.	Government, donor, academic, development agency, WFP.	LR, KII, SDA.
	<p>How effective are WFP partnerships? In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How WFP works collaboratively within UN, with government and donors, on a strategic policy level and at an implementation level.</li> <li>How well partnerships are managed and the quality of these.</li> </ul>	Perceptions of partners. Delivery metrics.	WFP, donors, government, UN.	LR, KII.
	Level of national capacity to manage development efforts transparently and effectively and how this determines modes of operation.	Analysis of independent commentary.	Donor, academic, development agency.	LR, KII.
	How well WFP was able to respond to the 2010 emergency in terms of timeliness and appropriateness.	Perceptions of key stakeholders. Amount of time taken to stand operation up.	WFP, partners, government.	LR, KII.
	<p><b>EQ4. How well have WFP interventions reflected international good practice?</b></p>			
	What is the mix of approaches available to WFP in responding to vulnerability and food insecurity and how have these been used?	Comparison of WFP approaches to other instruments.	Government, donor, academic, development agency, WFP, partners.	LR, KII, SDA.

Area of enquiry	Specific Questions	Analysis/ indicators	Data Source	Data collection
	Degree to which WFP meets international standards, including Sphere and principles of aid effectiveness.	Analysis of outputs.	WFP, partners.	LR, KII.
Strategic decision making	<b>EQ5. What was the analytical basis for WFP's interventions?</b>			
	For each of its interventions (past and planned) what analysis did WFP undertake in deciding whether and how to intervene? In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of data and analysis gathered by WFP and others for strategy formulation, and for influencing others.</li> <li>Analysis of the food security, nutrition, livelihoods and gender context, and how this is used for effective targeting.</li> </ul>	Analysis of programme direction against need set out in EFSA and other key analytical instruments.	WFP, partners, government, donors, partners.	LR, KII, SDA
	<b>EQ6. To what extent have WFP's decisions been informed by a coherent country strategy?</b>			
	Extent to which a country strategy has been (formally or informally) articulated and used as an element in prioritisation	Programme documentation or key participant recall of strategy	WFP	LR, KII.
	Balance of operational and policy influencing work.	Comparisons with other agencies.	WFP, donors, government, partners.	LR, KII.
	Whether decision making is driven by funding or politics	Comparisons.	WFP.	KII.
	<b>EQ7. To what extent has WFP in the Kyrgyz Republic been able to learn from experience and to adapt to changing contexts?</b>			
	How well WFP has been able to strategically adjust to changing or evolving context	Comparisons.	WFP, government, donors, partners, development agencies.	KII.
Whether there are appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems.	OECD, ALNAP good practice	WFP.	LR, KII.	

Area of enquiry	Specific Questions	Analysis/ indicators	Data Source	Data collection
	<b>EQ8. What factors have facilitated and/or constrained WFP's strategic decision-making?</b>			
	Degree to which funding model allows for strategic decision making. How does the funding model impact ability to build a development portfolio? Whether it is "fit for purpose" in a transition/ development/ structural poverty context?	Comparison with similar agencies (e.g. UNICEF), donor and country leadership.	WFP, donors, partners.	LR, KII.
	Staffing and capacity of the CO including support from the regional bureau and HQ.	Fit between CO responsibilities and staffing levels/competences	WFP.	LR, KII.
	Whether WFP has sufficient technical expertise available for supporting programmes	Inter-agency and WFP standards.	WFP, partners, government.	KII.
	Degree to which the decision to open a country office in 2008 was resourced, and what the medium-term plan for achieving strategic relevance and financial sustainability was.	Analysis of capacity and resources.	WFP.	LR, KII.
	<b>EQ9. What have been the outcomes and impacts of WFP interventions?</b>			
Performance and results	What impacts were sought in WFP's programmes and were they achieved? In particular is there discernible impact in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health outcomes</li> <li>▪ Adequate food consumption</li> <li>▪ Productive capacities</li> <li>▪ MDG 1 (3 sub targets - poverty, employment and hunger).</li> </ul>	Health outcomes = morbidity, mortality data. Food consumption = SDA Productive = FGI MDG = FGI, SDA.	Beneficiaries, government, partners, academic, donors, development agencies.	FGI, KII, LR, SDA.
	What have been the main outcomes of the different WFP instruments (IR EMOPS, EMOPS, SO and PRRO)? In terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stabilisation of the food security situation during emergency.</li> <li>▪ Protection of the most vulnerable.</li> <li>▪ With relation to gender difference.</li> </ul>	Perceptions of key stakeholders. Some impact analysis as above.	WFP, beneficiaries, government, partners.	FGI, KII, SDA, LR.
	<b>EQ10. How efficient and effective have they been?</b>			

Area of enquiry	Specific Questions	Analysis/ indicators	Data Source	Data collection
	How effective has WFP been in achieving its desired objectives and outcomes?	Analysis of key programme documents against perceptions of stakeholders, and some impact analysis.	WFP, beneficiaries, government, partners.	FGI, KII, SDA, LR.
	How efficient has WFP been in terms of logistics, systems and delivery and the degree to which this represents value for money?	Comparison of cost, quality and timeliness in relation to other actors .	WFP, government, partners.	KII, SDA, LR.
	<b>EQ11. How sustainable have they been?</b>			
	Degree of sustainability achieved and how defined in the Kyrgyz context and in the context of the various operations?	Analysis of key stakeholder perceptions.	WFP, beneficiaries, government, partners.	FGI, KII, SDA, LR.
	Degree to which development objectives of food for work projects are well aligned with general development. Sustainability of these projects.	Analysis of oblast and rayon development objectives.	WFP, partners, beneficiaries, government.	Project visits, FGI, KII.
	<b>EQ12. To what extent has WFP's portfolio in the Kyrgyz Republic been more than the sum of its parts?</b>			
	Degree to which WFP's operations and its other activities (analysis, monitoring, advocacy etc) have complemented each other	Stakeholder perceptions, plus evaluation team assessment of EQs1-11	WFP, partners, beneficiaries, government.	All of the above
	Degree to which WFP's operations and the portfolio as a whole have complemented GoK and other agencies' activities	Stakeholder perceptions, plus evaluation team assessment of EQs1-11	WFP, partners, beneficiaries, government.	All of the above

## Annex D People interviewed

<b>Name</b>	<b>Org. type</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Title</b>
Michael Huggins	WFP	UN WFP	Deputy/Acting Country Director
Nadya Frank	WFP	UN WFP	Programme Officer
Shukhratmirzo Khodzhaev	WFP	UN WFP	Head of Sub-Office
Sharifbek Sohibnazar	WFP	UN WFP	Head of Logistics
Zarif Rakhmanov	WFP	UN WFP	Head of Finance & Administration
Mairambek Sattbaev	WFP	UN WFP	Food Aid Monitor
Dinara Kokoeva	WFP	UN WFP	Food Aid Monitor
Dilshod Ismonaliev	WFP	UN WFP	Food Aid Monitor
Ulan Raimkulov	WFP	UN WFP	Food Aid Monitor
Jyldyz Begaliev	WFP	UN WFP	Food Aid Monitor
Jonathan Veitch	UN	UNICEF	Representative
Cholpon Imanaliev	UN	UNICEF	Health and Nutrition specialist
Johann Siffointe	UN	UNHCR	Head
Sabine Machl	UN	UN Women	Representative
Tatyana Jitenera	UN	UN Women	National Programme Officer
Dinara Rakhmanova	UN	UN FAO	Assistant Representative
Kaldarov Mukash	UN	UNDP	Chief technical advisor, DRM
Byron Pakula	NGO	ACTED	Country Director
Talantbek Aldashov	NGO	Aga Khan Foundation/Mountain Social Development Support Programme	Executive Director
Aida Jamngulova	NGO	Community Development Association	Consultant on rural development issues
Vinera ?	NGO	Shoola	General Director
Tom Massie	Donor	European Union	Head of Operations
Aibek Baibagysh Uulu	Donor	World Bank	Economist
Talaibek Koshmatov	Donor	World Bank	Senior Rural Development Specialist
Kenji Mishima	Donor	JICA	Representative
Keiichiro Onishi	Donor	JICA	Project Formulation Adviser
Laurent Guy	Donor	SDC	?
Stefan Lutz	Donor	KfW	Director

<b>Name</b>	<b>Org. type</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Title</b>
Andrey Krutko	Donor	Embassy of Russian Federation	Ambassador
Fatima Kasmahunova	Donor	USAID	Public Outreach & Humanitarian assistance
Chargynov Adil Mametmusaevich	Government	International Cooperation Department	Head
Akylbek Sharipovich Osmonaliev	Government	National Statistics Commission	Chairman
Lyuksina Aigufovna Tekeyeva	Government	National Statistics Commission	Deputy Chairman
Galina Yakupovna Samohleb	Government	National Statistics Commission	Head of Sample survey division
Sabir Sadykdjanovich Atadjanov	Government	State Agency for Environment Protection & Forestry	Director
Chyngojev Abdymital Turgunaliyevich	Government	State Agency for Environment Protection & Forestry	Deputy Director
Gulmira Altmurzaeva	Government	Republican Centre for Health Promotion (MoH)	Director, Medical Sciences
Narynbek Toktusonov	Government	Talas Oblast	Director, Social Protection
Ryskeldi Torukulovic Botikov	Government	Talas Oblast	Vice Governor

## **Annex E Focus Group Interviews**

5<sup>th</sup> October, 2012

### **Osh Oblast**

#### **Village 1: Katta Tal dyk AO, Kara Suu Rayon, Osh Oblast**

VGF & FFA/W. 11 women, 7 men plus Director, House of Culture & Librarian

#### Needs

1. "Life is very hard – whatever we get is helpful. We have to buy everything, water is very limited for irrigation." Rain and harvest have been poor over last 3-4 years. Grain/flour, oil is expensive. Want to cultivate but conditions are very poor – easier in other places to cultivate vegetables, grain. Some rice here.
2. Diesel/petrol for tractor & vehicles are expensive – forces manual wheat & hay harvest and collection; younger children help parents.
3. Land allocation is 2 types: 0.25 (agric), 0.26 (hay). 1990 land settlement - each family/household (HH) (7-8 people) has approx. 2 ha.  
Hay production per ha: 100 bales (max 130), 1 bale price = KGS 100; cost = KGS 15 (KGS 2k per ha). Last winter was very hard; summer very hot and no irrigation. Over last 5 years – only 2 good years. Price falls when harvest good. Short growing/harvest season to prepare for winter.
4. In bad years, we get by selling livestock and labour (hired work, potato digging) – paid in kind (KGS 200-250 per day) for HH consumption; 10 days makes 3 sacks. A young person can earn this but not enough for HH especially young families. On average, can get approx. 2 months' work per year. Hay harvesting is 6 kms and 11 kms away. HH must buy water for all domestic uses (drinking, laundry, washing etc). 1 tank = KGS 400 (standard size 2.5 tonnes, for 10 days). Medicines are also needed and are expensive.  
Alternatives include: Some go to Osh City for employment in petty services (after travel, perhaps can make KGS 150). In a bad year, can sell assets and buy wheat flour to bake and sell bread in the city. Can also borrow from neighbours and repay as soon as possible once there is flour. Local store provides interest-free credit and majority take credit and try to repay as soon as possible. Sometimes people bring car loads of goods and advance these on loan to be repaid.

#### Assistance

5. Government gives help through the GMI but it depends on many factors – arrangement/registration, numbers of children per HH, other categories of people in the HH. Only 2 from this group receive subsidies for children. Only 3 in group get GMI (KGS 370 per person per month); income levels disqualify other group people in the group (e.g. one woman has her mother-in-law in the HH who gets a pension and is disqualified even though she is a mother with young children). 50% of the group get no pension or subsidy. Every family with more than KGS 400 (month) is disqualified from GMI; any pension payment prevents receipt of subsidy; widows/widowers are entitled to subsidy; disability receives a once off, annual payment for medicines.
6. WFP – last VGF was May 2012:  
Categories –  
family with 3 children – 25 kg wheat flour; 3 ltrs vegetable oil (2 in group)  
3-7 children – 75 kg WF, 6 ltrs VO (11 in group)

>7 children – 100 kg WF, 7.5ltrs VO (2 in group)

FFW (green) projects have helped 11 HH. It was worth doing FFW for hard workers (26 kg WF, 2.3 ltrs VO). Two months work was completed in one month.

Food was useful for baking bread for children and was well-timed because they had run out of food. In January, it was very hard with no WF or VO. “If we have humanitarian aid this winter, we will survive.”

How long the food last depends on the number of children in each HH. On average, it last 2 months (1 sack WF lasts one month if there are less than 7 children). WF is used to bake bread instead of having to buy it.

All group confirmed that WFP food was distributed properly; group leader was involved and there are no complaints. Improvements? It could be better to have more food on a quarterly basis instead of twice a year. Timing – May is better than March because hay collection and other agricultural work has started (some think that March is better for humanitarian aid because of lean season; Dec/Jan is good.

Off-loading is not a problem; food is appreciated and group is able to self-help. When supplies arrive, all those entitled participate; those who don't help will be last in distribution. No problems were experienced with transport to point of distribution by ACTED.

#### Future

7. If not WFP /VGF – what can they do to prepare? Look for jobs. Green project is very good and would like to do poultry and sheep breeding (45k sheep from collective farm were distributed; now there are only 4k left).

Need to tackle problems of water supply and make the land workable with irrigation (before, it was better organised in Soviet times; a helicopter sprayed the fields). Group has heard about a Chinese project to implement 60 kms of irrigation.

Group is willing to work together e.g. to consider land plot management (it was arranged like that; 30 of 50 HH were managed together as a collective but then divided because couldn't recover expenses and pay debts),

Food distributions could helped them work together (divided opinion); need subsidy (lower fuel prices) and State needs to provide technical equipment.

Green projects have been very successful, need more grants, lack water and hard to develop without it. Sincere thanks to WFP and for interest in their lives (through visit).

#### **Village 2: Taldyk village. Katta Taldyk AO, Kara Suu Rayon, Osh Oblast.**

Initially 10 men, at the bridge. The interview then moves to a school nearby. After transfer to school, there are 17 people, 10 women and 7 men. Mostly teachers.

1. The project is food for work. They built a bridge. Materials were paid for from local business people (60,000 som), the Ayil Okmotu (150,000 som) and UNDP (214,000 som). The Ministry of emergency situations provided metal grill. The workers were paid in food by WFP. The bridge replaces a very narrow and poorly constructed wooden footbridge. Wide and strong enough for vehicles (they were grateful also for the technical support provided by government). Very significant benefit for the village.
2. 33 people worked on the bridge, which took about 1 month, split into two parts. Workers got 10kgs wheat flour/ 400g oil/ day. Food was deemed to be extremely useful – somewhere between 2 weeks and one months consumption. The workers were mostly from young families with no regular employment, so very beneficial. The bridge has been standing for almost a year, through winter, so has been tested and is working well.

3. The village is 1,000m above sea level so experiences harsh winters. They can only really farm for 6 months of the year. They have to pay a lot for coal in winter. Also 50kms from Osh city so hard to find work. They were grateful for the work from the project.
4. The predominant crops in the village are wheat, carrots and hay. They are too high for vegetables and find the wheat unpredictable. Means they are not a rich community. Many have migrated to Russia for work (send 5,000/ 10,000 roubles 2/3 times a year). Most teachers work in the field too to supplement their salary.
5. There are 375 families in the village, of which 36 are extremely vulnerable. Very poor people get help from the A.O. Orphans, old people. 98 people receive support through the GMI. 76 families will get humanitarian assistance (VGF through WFP). In the previous 2 rounds there were 99 families who received. Ration is according to family size.

### **Village 3: Joosh AO, Kara Suu district, Osh Oblast**

FFA/W (irrigation channel) - 10 men

#### Needs

1. Group dug irrigation channel 2k metres (1k m<sup>3</sup>) for 124 ha. because no tractor to improve crops (potatoes, tomatoes).
2. All farmers in group have landholding (average plot size is 0.11 ha per person; 6-8 family members gives approx. 1 ha. per HH).
3. Before the irrigation work they grew wheat & maize but not vegetables (because of water required). Yield per ha. was on average 3 MT; 5 MT in a good year. Produce is sold in the local market or processed by the miller. Typically, fields are divided – tomatoes 0.1 ha.; wheat 0.45ha.; maize 0.45ha.  
If yield is good they sell produce before milling; if poor, they keep crop for HH consumption. Average price per kg is KGS 15-16. Bad weather has prevented planting. Small HH keep produce for consumption. Fertiliser costs KGS 400 per ha. 1 MT wheat milled produces 65%; 35% is lost (including cost of milling).
4. Newly irrigated 124 ha plot will be used to produce vegetables for sale so as to buy wheat. This is seasonal income with intensification of land use. The group projects that planting ½ ha will yield 20 MT tomatoes. Can sell for KGS 10-15 per kg in Osh (some private companies are processing tomatoes). Transport costs are KGS 30 per box (1 box = 25 kg), approx. KGS 1 per kg. Tractor costs for 4 days of cultivation are KGS 1.5/2k per cultivation (depending on quality & diesel). Also depending on quality, costs of tomato seeds/seedlings are KGS 1 per ½ ha. Vegetables need various fertilisers (nitrogen, phosphorous) and pesticides. Farmers prefer organic because these deplete land. Vegetable farming is hard work – 1 person can only do 0.1 ha.

#### Assistance

5. WFP FFW helped 12 workers on irrigation channel. For 6 days work they received 130 kg WF and 14 ltrs VO each. Channel serves 150 HH (of 555 HH in the village).
6. Not aware of VGF 2011 humanitarian aid for most vulnerable (“really poor”) in village (elderly without working head of HH). 15 such HH. Reasons why people are not working – no young people, disabled children or children died early. They get help from AO (group not sure if WFP supports this) and community helps (some budget set aside and zakat of about 10%).

#### Future

7. Irrigation channel will help. They usually dig ditches but WFP FFW enabled removal of trees. With this they can doubled their income. They plan to work together and have solved lots of problems as farmers. 2 kms of channel have not been dug for a long time and need re-digging; they can involve young people in this but need equipment (takes too long by hand).

They feel a strong group and can help vulnerable but if winter is hard it will be bad for the most vulnerable. AO/State needs to help.

#### **Village 4: Zymyryk village, Otuz Adyr AO, Kara Suu district, Osh Oblast**

14 women.

1. The project is food for training/ agriculture through a local community group called CDA. CDA is based on self help groups, usually 6 women, who pool funds for investment. They are a multi-ethnic (Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Turkic, Uyghur) group following the 2010 conflict. They also work predominantly with the families of migrant workers who are not receiving remittance. They have self help groups in 19 villages, in 11 AOs of 5 Rayons in Osh Oblast. In total there are 700 members of groups across the oblast (600 of which are women). There are 12 self help groups in Zymyryk village, which is large (approx. 2,000 people). The heads of the self help groups are in the interview.
2. The self help groups are primarily agricultural. They grow vegetables as cash crops, using their pooled subscriptions (savings in essence) to buy high quality inputs – high yielding seed, fertiliser, tillage and so on. They pay 30 soms/ month as subs (often on a quarterly basis, or when they have income). This started as 5 soms/ month but has increased as they have seen value. There is a charter which sets out how the groups are organised, what the rules are for subs and so on. Across the whole network of groups (in the Oblast) they are now saving 530,000 soms (year? Month?).
3. CDA has done a poverty profile of the village to help them target their membership. Also as an advocacy tool with the local authorities who they say are under-reporting poverty figures due to bureaucratic pressure to be seen to be reducing poverty year on year. They have done this exercise for the last 4 years, finding, interesting that whilst the number of rich and very poor have stayed relatively constant, there has been a gradual slide from medium into poor over this period (see table below).

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Rich	4.98% (11 families)	2.38 (5)	2.38 (5)	4.5 (10)
Medium	43.9 (97)	38.08 (80)	34.3 (72)	29.5 (62)
Poor	45.7 (101)	55.73 (117)	58.5 (125)	60 (126)
Very poor	5.5 (12)	3.81 (8)	3.82 (8)	5.5 (12)
total	221	210	210	210

4. Self help groups consist of poor and very poor, typically without a major breadwinner in the family. Very poor have an old house, few clothes, small or rented land and poor nutritional status.
5. The programme is aimed at equipping them with the skills for farming in addition to seeds and the capital through savings. New members get trained in farming techniques and the WFP food supports this training, effectively tying them over until their first harvest comes in. The training and seeds are provided through GIZ. After this they are theoretically sustainable so don't need the training or food any more.
6. They receive 200kg wheat flour and 16 litres of oil, connected to the training and the agricultural work. There have been three cycles of food for work/ training so far. They feel they could be independent from WFP in this village now, but not in other villages. They feel there is still lots of potential for expansion (each AO has a population of 26,000).
7. When asked if they would prefer cash they universally said they would prefer the food, because of the quality.

6<sup>th</sup> October, 2012

### **Gulcho town, Gulcho AO, Alai district, Osh Oblast**

9 men.

1. The project is a forestry one, essentially planting trees. They planted 30,000 pine trees. The trees were all grown as saplings by the forestry department and then transplanted by the workers on this Food for Work project. The trees are planted on the land of the AO (10 Ha) and the Rayon (20 Ha). The main purpose is to stop erosion. Trees have to be maintained 5 times during the first year (weeding, clearing etc), and then every year for five years with diminishing intensity.
2. The men who worked on the project received wheat flour and oil depending on hours/days worked. Ranged between 140kgs wheat/ 12ltrs oil and 248kgs wheat/ 24 ltrs oil. People were chosen to work on the project who did not have an income (unemployed), or with large families.
3. The men in this group are all making a living from day labour. Working on construction, harvesting for other people as a forester and so on. They get about 1,800 soms/ month if they work at forestry (and if the work is there). They also grow potatoes. They plant about 0.1 Ha of potatoes from which they get about 1MT yield in an OK year. They keep about 500kg for family consumption, which lasts them the year, and sell the rest. Price per kg on the market varies from 5-10 som/ kg depending on the market. The past two years have been bad for the crop and this year the price is low (competition from neighbouring area).
4. Many people from this area have gone to Russia to work. Several people in the group had children in Russia who would send money back. This is not an easy option as they lack documents and can only find casual work, but the rouble is higher than the som. They will send back a few times a year (30,000 roubles total?).
5. The WFP food was approximately a months supply, used over a 3 – 4 month period on average. Quality was very good. They said they would prefer food to cash, as:
  - Inflation issues.
  - People owe money to shops so they would have to pay it back rather than just consuming the food.
  - They fear it will not be used effectively.
6. The WFP operation was very efficient from their perspective. Delivery was on time and amounts accurate. The only issue they have is onward distribution of food to the furthest distribution site, which is 80kms away. Also they only get the food for the planting, but have to find a way to do the maintenance with little resource.
7. The men liked the FFW as they did not feel like passive recipients of aid. Liked working on the forestry project as felt like they were doing something worthwhile.

### **Korul AO, Alai district, Osh Oblast**

Two groups in the same village, one after the other. 12 women in the first (VGF) group, which became increasingly disrupted by the arrival of first, the head of village, second the director of the school (who gave a long speech) and finally the head of the Ayil Okmotu (in town for a wedding) at which point this interview was abandoned. The second group was a FFW/ forestry group of 9 men. There are 375 families in the village. The notes from both interviews are merged as they were to some extent contiguous.

1. The village is at altitude and experiences hard winters (can go as low as -35C). There is not much formal employment. Fuel is expensive for the long winter. They rely on coal, wood and dried manure. Can need up to 2 or even 3MT fuel per family. Coal costs 6 or 7 som/ kg.
2. The main livelihood is livestock. People rear cattle, sheep, goats and horses. A few people have 20 or 30 sheep, but the majority have a few animals (2 or 3 sheep). One cow per family

is standard. They sell animals in Gulcho. Sheep sell for 3,000 som currently, but can get up to 5 – 6,000 in a good year (the price is down because of closed borders making export difficult). A cow + a calf goes for 30 – 40,000. They also grow potatoes, typically on 0.12 Ha plots yielding 2 – 300kgs, which is enough for a year. They also do day labour – construction – and there is some migration/ remittance.

3. All of the women in the VGF group receive the GMI, depending on age and number of children.
4. The WFP food represents a significant input. Typically represents about a months worth of food. For the FFW work group, they on average received 114kg wheat/ 12 ltr oil, which they also estimated at a months food, although for a large family this might only be 15 days. The forestry work was spread out over 3 months, so whilst it was significant, it was not always efficient for them.
5. They would prefer food to cash. They like the quality of the WFP flour, and say that flour is expensive. They do not believe that we would give them the equivalent cash! And they would only buy wheat flour anyway.
6. They think the WFP criteria excludes some disabled people. Those people have more livestock than meets the criteria, but actually they do not profit from them. Once they have sold animals the profit only buys fodder for the other animals. They found the criteria difficult and complicated.
7. They think the future will be fine as long as there is political stability.

### **Jany Alay AO, Alai district, Osh Oblast**

12 women.

1. They have received VGF distributions for the past 3 years. This means they have had 6 cycles so far, with a 7<sup>th</sup> to come in Autumn. They get the usual ration based on family size i.e. 100kg wheat flour/ 7 l oil for 7 people, 75kg wheat/ 6 l oil for 6.
2. This is a farming community: people typically have about 0.5 Ha of land and plant corn, cotton, wheat and vegetables. They might plant 0.2 Ha of vegetables for instance. Otherwise they do day labour or cleaning at school and so on. A few people have family working in Russia (children). Some also go to Osh (it is near) and work in restaurants, or do sewing.
3. The ration will last approximately 2 months. Great help as allows them to buy things like clothes and toiletries. Many people also get GMI. They use this for the same thing – every day items.
4. They prefer food to cash. Think the cash will just disappear.
5. They think the organisation is good. The only thing they think can be improved is to do it more!
6. For the future they would like low interest loans. They would invest in farming or livestock.
7. There are 700 families in the village of which 230 receive both GMI and VGF. The selection process is public, managed by ACTED and local authorities. Heads of street propose families, lists are then compiled and publically posted and debated.

7<sup>th</sup> October, 2012

### **Alaikuu. Alai district, Osh oblast**

This village is a 5 hour drive from Osh, in the remote mountains on the Chinese border.

23 people. 19 men, 2 women.

1. The village is at 2,400m of altitude and experiences heavy snow in the winter, sometimes as high as 3m. This means they are effectively cut off for 3 months of the year as the road

(unmade and clinging to the cliff edge) into the village through the mountains gets blocked regularly by avalanche/ snow falls. Over this period they will clear, then the road will stay open for 10 days, then it will get blocked again and so on. The distance also means they have to go a long way to market, and that goods are more expensive because of transport. In Soviet times border villages were paid special attention, but this is no longer the case.

2. The project is food for work, planting trees for the forestry department. They planted 15 Ha of forest with 30,000 trees. Pine trees for stopping soil erosion and 'widow' trees for firewood. The main aim of the project was to plant more trees in the Kyrgyz Republic and stop soil erosion. Seeds are planted in greenhouses and then the saplings are transplanted.
3. They use the firewood for fuel in winter, which lasts for 6 months and is hard. A typical family will use up to 6 cubic metres of fuel over the winter, made up of wood and dried manure. During the project people 50% of the widow trees in their own land, and 50% in forestry land. The forestry department sells wood – 240 som/ cubic metre. People typically buy about 2 cubic metres from them.
4. They received on average 3 bags of flour and 20 l oil each. This lasts the average family approximately 3 months. They eat a lot of flour and oil, not much meat. They can't eat their own sheep as they don't have many (4/5 typically) and they are for breeding/ selling. They can only grow onions, carrots and potatoes. Typically they grow enough for their consumption through the year.
5. Everyone has livestock – sheep, goats, cows and horses. Most (all?) families have 1 cow (at least), use the milk for children. One sheep gets about 5,000 som at market. But transport to Osh (best market) can cost 2,000 som for cattle.
6. They estimate about half of the village is 'poor', meaning working for the other half who are better off (for money), and of 300 families total about 50 are extremely poor. This means small house in poor condition, 10 children, no animals. Elderly get subsidies, younger ones look after other people's cattle (work). But because of long winters there is only 3 months worth of this type of work.
7. They would prefer to get food to cash. If they got cash they would have to pay transport, and they are worried they would spend it on other things. Mostly though they are worried about corruption.
8. Future? They think a stable political situation is the key. With this, everything else will be Ok.
9. They think WFP performance is good. Distributions are done honestly and on time. No problem with onward distribution.

6-7 October, 2012

## **Batken Oblast**

### **Village 1: Chauvai AO, Kadamjai Rayon, Batken Oblast**

Patma (Municipal Social worker in AO, since Mar 2012) – assesses & reviews population needs, enables applications for social passport and helps in securing social subsidies. Participated in humanitarian distribution – no international involvement but local people and those who have left and gained wealth seek her advice.

Many poor people here – no land, no jobs (except teachers, 10 government workers, 10 in hospital – but very low salaries approx. KGS 1300 per month), no income sources (factories closed in 1993). Health is poor – disability, pollution/radioactivity in water, water poisoning despite routine inspection. Migration is high – to Russia, Kazakhstan. Only young children and elderly women are left; remittances are coming but some leave and do not get work or die.

VGF – 9 women.

1. Life is very hard – the environment in the mountains is dangerous, there is no work, and normally people take subsidies. These are very low (KGS 1000 per month) and is only used for main food item purchases in the city; there is a local shop for small items. They cope by growing fruits for sale and harvest in October. Last year was better than this year. For apples they can get KGS 12-15 per kg and grow between 100-500 kg; this produces enough cash until winter. They grow potatoes for HH consumption.  
It was better in Soviet times – Moscow provided good and supplies, there was a strategic factory (mercury) and jobs. Who looks after them now? They feel neglected but their only complaint is the lack of jobs and the AO could help create jobs – they are able to do any work. There has been cattle stealing recently.
2. Only one WFP distribution has been received in Dec 2011 for 100 HH, selected by the social worker. The distribution was useful but not enough. HH with 7-9 children received 75 kg WF and 7 ltrs VO; HH with up to 7 children received 50 kg WF and 5ltrs VO. This lasted for 15 days and they tried to make it last as long as possible but many were unable to make it last long and used it up fast.  
The process of the distribution was satisfactory – they were well-informed by the local AO, they were invited to come and it was delivered on time. Distribution was equal and fair.
3. When the food runs out they borrow money from neighbours and repay from the subsidy. They work independently, not together, and take good to market alone. Transporting their harvest costs KGS 1000; it also costs them KGS 50 (one way) to go to market. Migrants may send remittances but this not universal. Some of the children who have gone to Russia (e.g. to work as sweepers and other petty services) can send KGS 2000 per month.
4. “We can’t think about the future – only about survival. It’s even harder for people living in more remote mountain areas.” They prepare for winter by storing apples; apricot trees produce a very small harvest and are used for their own consumption and mainly for wood-fuel.

## **Village 2: Maidan AO, Kadamjai Rayon, Batken Oblast**

FFW – hospital water supply. Brigadier - was informed about FFW by relative (Head of Forestry, knows of WFP).

1. Brigadier had then gathered together 13 workers from poorest HH to construct water supply - piping and housing to provide continuous supply to hospital (at least 500 ltrs/day) and renovation of the external water tank (20 m<sup>3</sup>, 24 hrs supply). Work was completed in 47 days and workers received half sack of WF (uncertain how much VO).
2. In this area, there is some work (hospital, teachers), some land (approx. 0.5-1 ha per HH for larger holdings, some casual work in petty services. People cope with poverty – everyone has something to eat by planting potatoes, maize, wheat, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers; larger plots can produce for sale. Apples sell to transportation costs).wholesalers at KGS 13-15 per kg (and people prefer to avoid

VGF – 4 men (farmers; plus social worker, librarian)

1. Problems/needs: land holding are very small (0.6 ha per HH and divided further). Life is OK with State support and World Bank (?not defined) but prices are rising every year. There are different levels of poverty between and within HH. The ‘poor’ are HH with children and young couples; if a family receives KGS 6000 (e.g. KGS 2000 each for a father, son, daughter-in-law), this is not enough to feed the children.
2. Land can produce maize, potatoes, wheat, apples & apricots only, and cattle. The best crop is apples: KGS 12-13 per kg (good quality) and KGS 5 per kg (poor quality); average annual production is 1 MT, depending on weather. (From 0.15 ha you can produce 1-1.5 MT per year; up to 5 MT from larger plots.) But this is not enough to supplement HH budgets. There

is sufficient demand for apples in Gazulka City, although wholesalers buy cheap at low prices and transport to Russia and Kazakhstan. (If farmers pay transport costs, this is KGS 20 per sack (30 kg) plus KGS100 per person and then it is sold through others.)

3. The major problem is the lack of jobs – “we need a factory” – and it is hard to keep young sons from migration. This has been massive since 1995 (before it was urban drift within the Kyrgyz Republic). Migrant workers do send remittances – those who find work send enough money to build houses, buy cars, and pay for family celebrations. But this also creates problems because men and women leave and this has an impact on children and grandparents who have to take over their care. Migration destroys families and there is a lot of divorce.
4. State has provided WF, VO and subsidy, land tax exemption, and wheelchairs for disabled people.  
WFP has provided food in – 2009 (Spring, Autumn), 2010 (once), 2011 (Spring, Autumn), 2012 (Spring). They don’t know if there will be another one this year. The process was smooth – a commission came from outside and divided the food). There was sufficient food only for some – the original list was 560 HH (of a total of 700 poor HH in 13 villages); only 330 HH were included and 230 HH did not receive food because they were late to be included in the lists. Uncertainty about numbers because the population is divided between mountains and lower hills. The total list of 560 HH was sent to the Rayon but they lost the papers and didn’t have enough time to re-submit the lists before the distribution. It is the responsibility of the Rayon to request the list from AO and then process this to Oblast level. WFP then comes to distribute the food and beneficiaries help with unloading. WFP lasts for approx. 15 days on average, depending on HH size.
5. Future: If WFP does not distribute – “without it we will be fighting for survival – sometimes we have only water to drink”. They will sell livestock, look for work, Before 2009, they had tried various alternatives – cows, sheep. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to distribution of livestock but these have been lost.
6. “The only thing we need is peace – no conflict.” Working together is useful (like collectivisation) and there are some ideas to build a cooperative farm. But land plots are not big enough and there is no equipment to make it worthwhile; they need seeds, tractors for harvest, and fuel (KGS 40 per ltr of diesel), Some milling equipment has been brought it. Livestock are only for the rich (who got land with water – it is dependent on having water supply. It is very hard for poor people to buy livestock, find the cost of feed (KGS 400-700 per bale of hay).

### **Village 3: Kotormo AO, Kadamjai Rayon, Batken Oblast**

25 people had assembled and waited much of the day but 12 men (mixed ages older & younger; including 3 forestry workers) remained until the meeting because they “wanted to see the people who had helped them”.

FFW – forestry (plantation, seedlings/nursery, soil preparation & conservation, forest security and care of plantations). There is a special account to pay for work but WFP subsidised this cost.

1. 131 people – 30 from this AO plus those from 4 other AOs in Rayon; most workers came from Kotormo AO. They were invited by letter from the AO seeking people from poor HH. For 6 months work starting in late 2011 they received 160 kg WF and 53-80 ltrs VO each for one season.
2. The work was good and supported improvement in forestry/environment; the food resolved a food problem in HH and improved lives. THE AO was helpful in selecting people from poor families because “we live in the mountains and have to look for work in other places”. The Brigadier organised people and seasonal work is very arduous and under hard conditions (i.e. living in tents, poor food supply). They need these things (tents, food) and have told the AO about it; AO wants WFP to help.

- People prefer food products to cash because cash will be spent very fast (holidays etc.) and one sack of WF last longer and is safer. Some is still remaining since July.
3. This was the first time they had worked together but imagine they can do more of it e.g. collecting seeds, soil preparation for next year. Initially, when they heard information about FFW they did not understand but now more and more are coming and want to be enrolled. This programme provides work and food (WF/VO) for 6 months. There is a minimum of one person per HH who migrates and sometimes entire families move for 1-2 years. Others go to Russia but some cannot because of language, illness etc. Not everyone can afford to migrate; only about 40% are successful and there is a high failure rate and deportation.
  4. Without this project there would be difficult times and many needs – WF/VO solve the problem of basic food needs. Without it they will have to work for rich people. Poor people have land plots, grow apples and have some sheep. In Kotormo AO, the average land size is based on 0.10 ha per HH, although this varies in 39 AO and 2 bigger villages up to 0.4 per person. But land quality also varies and there is differential population pressure on land by area; Kotormo is more populated. There is some uncultivated land (State land fund) remaining from a 1965 land settlement and because of land pressure now, landless are being sent there.
  5. Future: More people will go to Russia. To be prepared, they have plans to do construction work and field work, as well as working for other people (some people have a lot of money) but you have to work a long day to make KGS 200 and it is only seasonal. They can also plan to reproduce livestock (sheep) for sustainability. Maybe after 2-3 years they will be more self-sufficient. The biggest need is still for WF and FFW is an important income supplement; they have carrots & other vegetables but do not have enough land and plot sizes are too small.

#### **Village 4: Ak Taty AO, Batken Rayon, Batken Oblast**

FFW – greenhouse, improved vegetable production, training. Working with CDA. 9 women.

##### Needs

1. Good soil and good harvests but big problems with agricultural pests. Can grow vegetables (potatoes, peppers, eggplant, onions etc.) for own consumption but not wheat on approx. 1 ha per HH (0.2 ha per person). Maize is grown for animal feed and sale and gets KGS 20-40 per kg (Mar/April); yield is 1 MT from 0.1 ha, with good seed and in a good season. Can manage food for a whole year between harvests; potatoes are held in stock for periods of shortage.

##### Assistance

2. FFW has helped with unemployed families and WF is useful for children. In the group there are some extremely poor people because children are small and they can't work and many young people have gone to Russia.
3. CDA gave seeds in 2010 and WFP provides seeds and WF/VO. Oblast coordinator provided training in planting seedlings, pest control, improving post-harvest storage and processing e.g. for apples, tomatoes etc. With improved quality they can sell for increased prices.
4. FFW was carried out in Mar/April 2012. 31 people were involved in work from Aug/Sept 2011 and received 100 kg WF and 8ltrs VO in one distribution in Mar/April. The food lasted for one month and reduced the burden on HH; it was high quality and subsidised the costs of school needs/books etc.

##### Future

1. Without WFP food? Group is planning other activities – sewing, production of blankets (e.g. for dowry), canned products. Groups have built up funds that support activities and they can sell goods in the market; they can provide for young women (dowry) and support mothers in

this. If FFW stopped would they stop their activities? No – they will continue with greenhouse and seed production: they are now substituting what they can produce for imports that they used to get from Tajikistan and Tajiks are now coming to buy from them. They feel confident – have funds, quality production and have built groups with CDA. The humanitarian assistance came later. The first groups were established in 2010 and have grown in number. In 2012 there have been less groups because women now have to go to summer pastures for grazing and because men have migrated to Russia.

2. Could they have coped without WFP FFW? The main need is to get seeds – before they didn't understand the importance of seed quality but now they have learned this and built up funds as well.
3. WFP FFW has been very helpful because limited land means no WF.

### **Village 5: Samarkandek AO, Batken Rayon, Batken Oblast**

FFW – irrigation pipe/gabionettes. 3 men; 1 social worker (new AO Head hovering in doorway ...)

1. Work began in October 2011 with AO and UNDP and FFW was provided in Mar 2012. UNDP gave KGS 245k plus 10 MT cement; Mo Emergency Situations provided 100 gabionettes. 11 workers worked for 27 days and were paid 150kg WF and 13 ltrs VO each. The gabionettes were filled and extended 24 metres to reinforce an irrigation pipe across a river and enables supplies from Tajik sources to agricultural plots (covering 67 ha) and to 52 ha of residential area for 519 HH (2700 people).
2. The 11 workers were invited from the poorest HH, identified through house-house (half day) assessment based on AO list to identify the poorest. Food was received in Mar 2012 because the Commission was late to inspect the work and they had to wait. This was described as “not a problem” but asked how they coped they added that they had to contact WFP and Dilshod helped them sort out the delay and secured the food.
3. They face many problems – no income, no work, many children, no land, no/limited water supply and irrigation. Without FFW, they would have had to borrow and with increased price of WF they would have had big and bad debts. The food lasted approx. one month (depending on HH size) and came in March at the most difficult time (peak of the lean season), so had “double value”.
4. They have benefited from the irrigation and since March, they have identified a 17 km channel that requires removal of waste/mud. FFW is very good for those who don't have work (especially 18 poorest HH) and they could increase the number of workers.

VGF – 5 women (plus men from FFW project, Head AO)

#### Needs

1. Groups is very grateful for food because there are problems of no work for men and HH need food. HH are diverse (richer and poor) but land without water means no production capacity. The land allocation of 1.2 ha per HH is for house construction and cultivation. The poorest are those Kyrgyz from Tajikistan who came late and were allocated the least and poorest quality. They can cultivate everything if there is water but they need more land to recover from poverty. There is considerable land pressure in Batken Oblast; it's better in other oblasts.
2. Annual income is not enough for the whole year and children migrate as soon as they leave secondary school. They can sell their produce in the market and also have to hire their labour to rich people for seasonal work – the most you can make is KGS 250-300 per day for house construction; sometimes it's as little as KGS50 per day.

## Assistance

3. Government subsidies are KGS 250-300 per child per month which is not enough to feed them. You are not eligible if you are from Tajikistan.
4. WFP provided food in April 2011 and June 2012. The categories were clear (HH with less than 3 children – 25 kg WF, 1.5ltrs VO; up to 7 children – 50 kg WF and 6 ltrs VO; over 7 children 100 kg WF). The process of distribution was governed by list of poor people developed by neighbourhoods for those entitled and information was given through the village head. The list was 600-700 HH but only 400 HH received the distribution. This led to a lot of complaints and protest to the AO because the lists included more people than those who received food. They did not appear to know how decisions were made about who was included in the lists but understood that assistance was limited. They said that AO and social worker collected the data (income, HH etc.) and the criteria were explained but all 700 HH matched these criteria. ACTED validated the list formation and eligibility on house-by-house basis.
5. VGF food was very useful and WF was enough for one month. It is hard to sell produce and to find temporary work so it was used to feed children only when the cost of food was increasing.

## Future

6. Without WFP/VGF it will be very difficult and they will have to find work. There is no benefit from the FFW project because that is in a different village. Water in the VGF location is restricted because of constraints to widening of the river on the Tajik side. The village is at the end of the water supply and had has very limited supply. They are only able to irrigate once each month. This risks the loss of the harvest because of fires (and no water to fight them) and they are unable to water fruit trees (although apricots are more resilient and sustainable).

8<sup>th</sup> October, 2012

## **Jalalabad Oblast**

### **Massy Rayon, Jalalabad Oblast**

Group in the Rayon office: director of water users associations (WUA), district coordinator WUA, district social worker, deputy head of Massy A.O. + 2 others.

1. They get two kinds of assistance in the rayon, humanitarian aid (HA) and food for work (FFW). The H.A. is the responsibility of the Ayil Okmotus (AO); FFW is with the rayon because of the WUA.
2. They used the FFW to clean silted up irrigation canals. They did three different places, with the longest 5kms, and the others approximately about 1km each. They chose canals in strategic places, and had to use labour as they were inaccessible to excavators. Together these canals serve over 1,250 Ha of land. They were almost completely out of use – five years without maintenance (not entirely clear whether just silted up through neglect or floods or both).
3. People received approximately 55kgs wheat/ 5.5 l oil. Good help. Lasts for 4 months (this seems very unlikely!). Big help for poor people. They don't think we should give cash because people would just drink it. They have 42% of the population below the poverty line in Massy A.O., but this is an improvement on a decade ago when it was 55%.
4. The social worker believes the drop is due to assistance from UN agencies. She also thinks that FFW is better than VGF. With FFW they get food and they get development assistance. There are people who are too vulnerable to work, but there are lots more who could work and get HA. Unemployment is the principal source of their poverty, so giving work is good.

- Feels that sometimes it is confusing to have to choose people between the lists. VGF does not give benefit – FFW gives benefits and brings the community together. VGF is not efficient.
5. They feel the criteria for VGF excludes some of the truly vulnerable – elderly and disabled. Because of their other benefits they do not qualify, but the WFP assistance is much greater than the value of their other benefits.
  6. They also think the FFW criteria is too low, as they only get lazy/ useless workers. People who earn below 1,000 som/ month are not good workers. Took over a month to dig these canals when it should only have taken 5 days. i.e. hire the poor, not the very poor.
  7. They have about 60kms of ditches in the rayon, and they need to be dug every year. This is mainly what they would use FFW for. Maybe also some bank strengthening, or road cleaning.
  8. They are happy with the efficiency of the operation. Food is of good quality, comes on time and in correct amounts. The optimum time for them for the FFW would be March/ early spring. The only thing they would add is that they think there should be monitoring during the food distributions, not just afterwards.

### **Mambekov AO, Massy Rayon, Jalal-abad Oblast**

12 people. 7 men, 5 women. Mixture of CDA (women's groups, seeds), FFW and VGF. There are 3 Ayil Bashis (village heads) in the group from the 3 villages in the A.O., plus a social worker, a WUA head, head of a CDA, with the others beneficiaries.

Pop: 12,551; Families: 2,260; Poor: 960 (42.5%).

1. People are very satisfied with the CDA project. They get high quality vegetable seed, which brings them extra income. Tomatoes, onions, potatoes. They plant the vegetables in between cotton seasons, which provides them extra income. There were 5 CDA groups (52 people). And they got wheat flour and oil. Makes them more hopeful for the future. CDA groups also do savings. Pay 100 som/ month.
2. Kalla village. One of the biggest villages in the AO. They have 136 extremely poor households. They work with the social worker to implement both VGF and FFW. They get twice a year in spring and autumn. Very grateful – all the poor families get help, and there is no corruption.
3. One small problem is the criteria. They are excluded above 0.35 Ha, but if a family can't use the land then this is no good. i.e. can still be extremely poor with land.
4. Three years ago, 500 families received assistance. Now only 2 – 300 receive. There is a limit on actual numbers from WFP, but this means people who qualify using the criteria are not receiving. Hard to explain why to them. They do this through the public meetings (selection). So people will say, "take this one of the list because she has a son in Russia". But he might not be sending back any money yet.
5. The assistance lasts for approximately 2 months. Can be less if the family is big. This is a big input. Cost equivalent might be 2,000 som, twice a year. That is 3 or 4 months income. Means people can use the money for something else – clothing. Without they would live the life they had before.
6. Food for work is a good programme, but there is some work they can't use it for. Maintaining work is also an issue.
7. Asked to rank the three programmes the group scored 1) CDA, 2) FFW and 3) VGF. CDA because it gave most profit; FFW because they could clear ditches and VGF last because there was no contribution to the wider good.
8. Most people in the AO farm cotton. Price is not in their control – depends on world price. Average land holding was 0.13 Ha/ person based on family size in 1996 when it was divided.
9. Future? Need stability (from government at national level). Would like low interest credit to support farmers and small business. Invest in agro-processing to add value and marketing.

## **Sakaldy AO, Jalalabad Oblast**

12 men. 2 Ayil bashis; director WUA, Sakaldy AO.

1. Project is Food for Work (FFW). Digging irrigation canals. There are 3 village sin the AO. They looked for the most strategic ditches. Formed 3 groups of 75 men. Took 25 days to dig out 18km of ditch. Lots of interest in the scheme. There were 7 ditches in total, each one serving 50 – 75 Ha of land. Canals outside of the village have to be done by excavator.
2. Lots of discussion about whether they get a better yield as a result of the project. One man planted corn because of the increased water flow and got a good yield. Most people plant cotton but couldn't (or wouldn't) say whether the increased water flow resulted in better yields, or less money and time bringing water to the fields.
3. The irrigation ditches that they dug out were ones that had been neglected for the past 5 years causing them to silt up. The ditches have to be maintained every year but because there is no collective responsibility for this, they get neglected. The problem is that everyone only digs out the bit of lake adjacent to their field. This means that when people are away, or not clearing their piece of the canal, eventually it silts. This despite the reality that keeping the ditches clean makes money for people through better yields and more efficient use of water.
4. Long discussion about the rights and wrongs of this, ending with the conclusion that there is no possibility of collective action. The only way is to pay people for doing this.
5. Even with the project they had to find poor people who were willing to work.
6. A bag of wheat flour makes a real difference. There are no jobs. Especially in spring.
7. Future solutions? Collective action, motivation. Land is the main source of income. Also the issue of small plots – people might have received 0.25 Ha in 1995, but now have 5 kids.

## **Nooken AO, Nooken rayon, Jalalabad Oblast**

5 men

1. The project was FFW, constructing water outlets for the irrigation system (so slightly more technical). The water outlets are essentially small gates controlling water flow (they work by a screw mechanism). They received the construction materials (aggregate, sand, cement, gates). 200 Ha are irrigated through the system that the outlets are part of. Before they had to be closed by bunging them up with whatever was to hand. They had fallen into disrepair because no maintenance – which in turn is because no one was responsible. Privatisation of land meant no-one looking after communal assets, and no sense of collective responsibility. Now the water users association (WUA) is responsible for the outlets, and they nominate people to maintain them.
2. They received food as labour for their work. 159kg wheat/ 15 l oil. Lasted 2.5 months.
3. Big impact. Bag of wheat = 850 som. 15 l oil = 1,500 som. (over 4,000 som).
4. They are cotton farmers. As an example, one of the participants has 1.4 Ha of land. He has a large family (10). His yield from this is 4.5MT cotton, which he sells to the local factory. He receives 1MT wheat flour, cotton oil and money in return. The actual amount of cash is complicated, because he gets an advance from the factory and has costs etc. But the price of cotton/ kg is 38 som normally and 30 som/ kg this year. He also works a bit (gets 3,000 som/ month) and his wife has a pension.
5. One of the biggest issues locally is that so many of the youth have gone to Russia to work. Only the old and the weak stay behind!! They use to hire youth from Uzbekistan to pick their cotton, but border closures mean this is not possible. Now they help each other to pick in small groups.
6. Best help they have had from any NGO.

9<sup>th</sup> October, 2012

### **Alvetim AO, Aksy district, Jalalabad Oblast**

Head of AO and Deputy

1. The project was FFW, to build a bridge connecting 3 villages on one side of the river (left bank) with the main AO centre on the other (right bank). There are 740 HH in the 3 villages that are on the left bank, and some 300 HH from that side use the school in the AO centre. The AO centre also has the main market and the hospital, and the left bank has the cemetery. Prior to this project they have had a wooden bridge since 1960, which was dangerous and was partially damaged in a flood.
2. 60 people worked on the bridge for one month. The total amount of food distributed was 11MT wheat flour and 950kg oil. WFP also gave 95,000 som in cash. UNDP gave 106,000 som and the AO 56,000 som. Local people also helped and the forestry department gave the wood. The coordinator of the project was the previous head of the Ayil Okmotu, who also drew up the designs. The rayon architect helped. The UN also monitored construction.
3. The food also made a big difference to the village economy. 3 bags of flour and oil is a big input. Meant people had money to buy clothes and fuel for winter.
4. This village mostly makes its income from livestock, although they also grow crops (everything except wheat). Livestock is sheep, goats, cows and horses, with horses the most profitable. There is a livestock market in the village.
5. In the whole AO there is 3% extreme poverty. However they do qualify for extra government help and lower taxes because they have small land plots.
6. WFP were very efficient help. They also did other projects such as irrigation ditches. Big help. The delivery of the food was very timely. They finished work on 20 December and the food came on 22<sup>nd</sup>. People were very satisfied.
7. Improve? The 10MT minimum excludes many small projects that would make a big impact. They would like to be able to make applications for projects of 3 or 4MT.

### **Jergetal AO, Aksy rayon, Jalalabad Oblast**

12 men, 3 women. Female head of AO. Social worker. AO reporter. FFW participants.

1. They have been working with FFW since 2011. 6 projects, with more than 22MT in total. What she (head of AO) liked most was that they had problems they could not solve with the AO budget that they can solve now – for instance the construction of a bridge.
2. The population is 2,200 households (HH) of which 900 HH are really poor, defined using social passport. They try and work with the poorest HH, defined as head over 40 years old, 5 or 6 kids and no job. 106kg wheat and 15 l oil was the minimum ration on this project.
3. Main work has been irrigation ditch clearing, drinking water projects capturing springs and piping it, constructed bridges and planting trees on river banks to strengthen them.
4. They have lots of ideas for projects. The village is growing – the need roads, electricity, piped water – basic services. But the minimum project size is inhibiting them. They would like to be able to do smaller projects – 5MT.
5. The purpose of the tree planting project was to strengthen the river bank, stop flooding and protect the nearby school (800 kids attend). They have planted 3.5 Ha of forest since 2011. They also put gabions in place in collaboration with UNDP.
6. Feel that WFP was very efficient. Food was of high quality and; “measured till the last gram”
7. Meant people were very satisfied with the honesty.
8. They would prefer food to cash. They can't buy that quality of food in the market for the price. When asked if that is just a question of the amount we should pay, they still want food. “food fights hunger”.

9. If an average sized family received 200kgs then it lasted 2/3 months. Meant people could spend money on clothes, shoes for kids, school materials. When asked if it also meant greater diversity of food they said yes (but seemed actually quite uncertain).
10. People mostly have livestock in this village, although also farm small plots of land (0.11 Ha). Some have enough potatoes for their own consumption but, “people would not work for WFP food if they had enough”. They mostly have sheep and sell a lamb every year. Some also have horses (mares) which they use for making mares milk dishes (local speciality). They did not want to engage on questions of household or village income really substantively. There was also a conversation about whether they produced wool (which they don’t – they shear the sheep but burn the wool). They say it is about scale and markets.
11. Future? They are optimistic. The young people are in Russia working and sending money, and if there is stability (government) then they will invest in the basics and people will do the rest. Every day something is being done. They used to only have dirt roads, now they have gravel roads. Perhaps in future they will be asphalt. They feel that;

“WFP was the start of development”

12. Bringing water where there was none, putting bridges where there were none. Not 100% development, but helping them not to go backwards. Preventing schools from being flooded.
13. The big issue for them is the project limit (minimum). They have tried pooling, even teaming up with neighbouring AOs. Small projects can have a big impact.

### **Kerben town, Aksy district**

8 men, including a local councillor (deputy), the vice-major of the town and an ayil bashi of a nearby village.

1. The project is FFW, river bank strengthening. They wanted to prevent flooding in two villages affected by seasonal flooding (including 350 Ha of farm land). They put 90 gabions (wire mesh) in place (filled with stone). Material for the project came from the city administration.
2. According to the criteria they selected poor households to work on the project. 14 people worked in total and it took about a month. They received rations according to hours/ days worked, with 4 hours counted as a full day (so that they could also do their farming). The minimum ration received was 70kg wheat/ 6 l oil.
3. The flood defences have been tested already. They had a month of rain and there was no flooding. This has given the city and the ayil bashi great credit.
4. The food was a medium/ big help to people, as they were unemployed. Minimum was a months worth of wheat flour and two months worth of oil. At first people were sceptical and it was hard to get them to work for food. Had not heard of it before, used to working for cash. Now they would prefer the food. Quality is good and they might spend the cash on something else. One of the women in the work team (who did the cooking) was a widow with 5 children. Made a big impact for her – allowed her to save money for other things and eat more.
5. WFP performance was very good They brought it straight to the people and it came on time (food).

“they distributed honestly. Measured to the last gram”

6. In terms of the local economy, they would like to be able to process agricultural produce. Now they only sell raw materials. They would like to export vegetables – they have very good organic fruit and veg. how to export? (internally and externally). The same with livestock.

## **Karakasoo AO, Aksy district, Jalalabad oblast**

6 men including head of AO.

1. The project is FFW/ disaster mitigation. They laid gabions to prevent flooding. 2 villages and a school were at risk. The scheme has already been tested several times and work – it was done last autumn and it flooded in spring.
2. There were 5 workers on the scheme. Got 110kgs wheat/ 11 l oil. Distributed by WFP workers.
3. The project was very beneficial. Helped the AO, helped the people involved and helped the community.
4. The AO has a total budget of 21m, which it mostly spends on salaries (teachers, AO employees). Out of this the local budget is 560,000 som. 20% of this goes on tax to central government. The rest is spent on local roads and so on.
5. In terms of HH budget 110kg is enough for a family of 10 for a month.
6. The main income is livestock. There is very little land – only 0.01 Ha/ person of irrigated land. They grow some potatoes, buy the rest. People have goats, sheep, cows and horses (mares). Cows are the most profitable because people use the milk. Little market for animal products (wool, cheese) and they do not do this. Some people sell surplus milk. They also have apples which they sell (in fact fruit is probably their major economic activity).
7. The impact of the assistance is that people can save money and protect assets. Without it they might need to sell animals.
8. Food is better than cash. “security of mind”. Wheat flour and oil are the main staples for people.
9. Performance of WFP was good. Food arrived on time:

“everything measured to the last gram”

10. Close collaboration will make effectiveness even better. They need to solve peoples problems and lack the resources. They need to be able to process their agricultural output. They have businessmen who dry apples and apricots and sell them. They would like to do more of this – more capacity for processing, better marketing.

10<sup>th</sup> October 2012

## **Toktogul AO, Toktogul rayon, Jalalabad Oblast.**

11 women.

1. Lots of poor people. Large families, disabled in the family. Most people are unemployed. One woman in the group has 10 children and 15 grand-children.
2. They don't need this kind of help monthly, but twice a year is really helpful. Bigger families get 75kg wheat flour and 6.5 l oil, smaller ones 50kg flour/ 3 l oil. For a family of five, 75kg is enough for a month.
3. WFP food helps them save some money. With the money they save they buy clothes, stuff for school for the kids and other types of food (meat, bananas, apples, fruit, vegetables).
4. In the countryside people are farmers, in town they are day labourers. People in this group live in the town. There are not enough jobs, even for the youth. Some people cope by cultivating small plots, and growing some food for subsistence. Corn, potatoes. 0.07 Ha. Enough for 4/5 bags of potatoes – lasts the winter. Some people have livestock. Maximum 5/6 sheep. Chickens. They send the sheep to summer pasture. Costs 35 som/ month.

5. One woman in the group tells us she has 5 children and is sharing an apartment. She doesn't have work and neither does her husband. They do not have land and they do not get the GMI because her passport has expired. She is in the process of renewing it.
6. During the Soviet Union there used to be lots of factories in Toktogul. People worked in the factories, and there was full employment.
7. Most of the youth have gone to Russia to work. Their children are being looked after by the grandparents and they send money back. Not everyone can find work in Russia or send money back regularly.
8. Performance of WFP was good. They got the aid according to the list. Quality was good. Selection is mostly fair. Some people get missed.
9. Cash? Depends how much! Some people in the group say they would prefer food as they will use the cash for other things.
10. Wheat flour is very expensive at the moment. 1,500 som/ bag. Oil too. The woman with 10 kids says she buys 10 bags for the winter.
11. GMI. Distributed fairly and organised well. They get it on time. Buys clothes for the small kids, school stuff. Sometimes food (extra vitamins). Doesn't last for a month.

Vice-head AO, social worker (Rayon), deputy social worker.

1. They have no complaints about the WFP programme apart from the numbers who receive. There are 5,800 extremely poor HH in the rayon and only 1,938 get assistance from WFP. In Toktogul AO there are 817 extremely poor HH, only 350 receive. People who don't get complain.
2. In the other AOs they have irrigated land, livestock. In the town there is nothing. Lots of young families, and food is expensive. People are working as day labourers, trying to make a living.
3. They manage the difference between need and available assistance by telling people they will receive next time (i.e. alternating families).
4. Same issue with elderly and disabled. They don't fit the criteria because they get pensions, but actually are very needy. Need to buy coal and food and 1,000 som is not enough. (200 elderly like this in the rayon, 56 in town). Hard to explain to them why they can't receive. One HH has 7 children of which 4 are disabled. Really hard to explain why they don't receive.
5. GMI and WFP are quite similar. People use the money for school stuff. With WFP they can save money, buy school stuff.
6. Asked if we should just combine WFP and GMI, perhaps as a one off winter payment, they said this was not a bad idea. They like the way that WFP works though.

### **Ketmendobo AO, Toktogul rayon, Jalalabad Oblast**

10 women, VGF.

1. The food is a big help, they are unemployed. Ration depends on family size. Large 100kgs/ 8l; medium 50kgs/ 6l.
2. They have received 6 times in total (for the last 3 years).
3. They use the money they save to buy clothes and school stuff.
4. They do small scale farming (0.02/3 Ha irrigated land). They farm everything – potatoes, corn, vegetables, sun-flower. Can get a bag of potatoes, last 2/3 months. Husbands don't have work and they have no livestock.
5. Wheat flour really expensive – 1,500 som, depending on the quality. WFP is really good quality.
6. WFP performance good. Food comes on times, most people receive.
7. GMI is also good. Comes on time. They get 370 som/ person, but not enough for kids expenses. Winter shoes are 800 som. Mostly using GMI for kids food and clothes.

Head of AO, Ayil Bashi

1. Among the AOs they have received every distribution with no stoppages, because they have been good.
2. However, he feels that VGF is making people lazy. He has a suggestion – he calculates the value of the VGF food at 500,000 som. Why not just use the money to build two houses for poor people and give them to them?
3. Feels FFW is much better. The AO gave 10 Ha for forestry. 4MT wheat, ? oil. They also submitted a bridge project but this hasn't happened yet (they thought it had the go ahead for May 2012, but nothing happened. Still waiting).
4. They would like to do more FFW and less VGF. Still need some VGF as there are some vulnerable families who can't work.
5. Feels the operation is very efficient and effective. However, also feels that they could buy more food with the money that WFP is spending. That would allow them to cover more families (he says 24MT, which could cover 350 families).
6. The Ayil Bashi is also concerned about people who meet the criteria but don't get because there is not enough.

Food for work. 16 men, including 3 from forestry department.

1. They planted 62,000 trees on 25 Ha of land. 20 Ha was pine and the other 5 Ha nut trees. A total of 91 people worked for about a month, receiving 200 – 250kg wheat and 25l oil on average.
2. Purpose was primarily about climate change. More trees = fresh air, combating car pollution. Secondary purpose was to stop soil erosion and landslides in some parts. The nut trees are divided up amongst poor HH to harvest for their own use.
3. The food was good quality. They would prefer food to cash as they would only spend on food anyway! And food is expensive.
4. The organisation was good. Came on time, right amount.
5. Asked if they would prefer to receive VGF or FFW, they said FFW. They feel the programme is clear – they get what they work for. Honest.
6. They really appreciated the involvement of the WFP monitors. Very involved in the projects. Better than government!

### **Belaldy AO, Toktogul rayon, Jalalabad oblast**

10 people, 3 men and 7 women. VGF.

1. They have no complaints, they are receiving assistance!
2. They do farming and livestock. Farming is corn and potatoes. 0.02 Ha irrigated land, 0.21 not irrigated.
3. Most people have livestock in the village. Rich people have 20/30 sheep, poor people 2/3.
4. There are 912 HH in Belaldy of which 424 are extremely poor, 68 are poor, 69 are average poor and 350 are better off.
5. The main reason is lack of land and distance from the market. A poor family might only have chickens and live in a two room house with a dirt floor.
6. The head of the women's association in the village (who is in the group) says that one of the biggest problems women have is lack of proper medical facilities, especially for pregnant women. If there are complications there is no ambulance and Toktogul is far away.
7. There is no community transport. Costs 200 som in a taxi to Toktogul, which is also the biggest market.
8. There is also an issue with water. People don't have wells or piped water so have to fetch from the river by horse or donkey.

9. The winter is hard in Belaldy. Winter lasts for 6 months and they have 1m of snow. During this time cars can't get along the road so they use horses to go to Toktogul. They mostly use dried manure for fuel, some firewood and very little coal. Coal is very expensive 270 – 300 som/ bag so they might buy 2 or 3 bags maximum.
10. They received:
  - Family size 1-3: 22kgs wheat/ 2l oil
  - Family size 3-8: 50kgs wheat/ 4l oil
  - Family size 8+: 70kgs wheat/ 7l oil
11. The ration size changes every year.
12. They have received 8 times in total (there were some distributions in 2008).
13. Quality is good.
14. The wheat flour lasts a large family for 10 days, a medium one for 15 days (bread is the main staple). The oil lasts for a month. With the money they save they buy clothes or stuff for school. Shoes cost 1,000 som.
15. Wheat costs 1,500 som in Toktogul and 50 som to transport. Oil is 170 som. Bread has gone up from 10 – 15 som.
16. They prefer the food to cash. Food is expensive and there are transport costs.
17. Compared to GMI, WFP is more important. GMI is monthly 1,200 som (average).
18. In terms of the future, they need to be able to process their farm produce. Some young people already have low-tech ways of canning, but its too expensive to get it to market. Markets and processing. They are trying to find ways to improve themselves. They have built a new AO office themselves and are now building a new medical facility. They plan to build a culture house. People are really trying but just need a little help.

11<sup>th</sup> October 2012

## **Talas Oblast**

### **Pakrovka AO, Manas Rayon, Talas Oblast**

6 women.

1. They work as day labour, as do their husbands. They also do a bit of farming on rented land. Beans, peppers. They get 350/ 400 som/ day during the season, which lasts from Spring to October. The three – four months of the winter they can't find work.
2. They don't find work everyday. Out of a month maybe half the days. They save for winter.
3. Expenses? Bag of wheat flour is 1,250 – 1,300 som. They also buy oil, macaroni, sugar, potatoes, tea. Most people eat potatoes, some rice. They have to buy clothes for their kids, shoes, coats.
4. They use coal as fuel in the winter. 1 MT is 4,000 som. They buy bag by bag, perhaps use 2MT overall. Some people go to the fields to collect dried manure.
5. WFP give 1 bag of flour and 3 or 4 bottles of oil depending on family size. It lasts a month depending on family size. If the family is large then only 15 days.
6. Impact? They use the money saved to buy clothes for the kids, pay for electricity.
7. Cash? Would be OK, but they are worried about corruption. Also, they are worried the amount would be steadily reduced. They compare it to GMI, which is not enough. One woman gets 280 som a month. It's a joke. A litre of oil and some soap and its gone.
8. Their children have to help them when they get work. They are working from a young age. They take them out of school to help them with work.
9. They think the organisation is average. Think WFP should pay close attention to the people who make the lists and to the distributions.
10. Twice a year is a big help! Much more than GMI.

### **Head of Manas Rayon + assistant.**

1. Rayon has a population of 33,000. They are stable, for which they are thankful.
2. They are grateful for WFP. Try to involve the poor people in FFW. People are really satisfied.
3. There are cases where people get 25 bags of flour and 25 – 40 litres oil! Enough for a year. The average is 9 – 10 bags. Big contribution. They are ready to collaborate in future.
4. Thinks WFP way of working is perfect. There are stereotypes in the population about corruption in government. Because WFP do it themselves people have confidence.

“measuring to the last gram”

5. FFW is very efficient. Helps the people and helps the forestry department.
6. Balance VGF/ FFW? Thinks there should be more FFW, but not abandon VGF altogether. There are some vulnerable people who can't work. Make the shift gradually.

Head of AO.

1. Thanks us for the assistance, very grateful.
2. Population of AO is 10, 845; 2,015 HH, of which 235 are extremely poor. About 100 receive VGF, differs each year. They cope with the difference by trying to alternate – so some receive in Spring and others in Autumn.
3. They try to distribute properly. Social workers go street by street, village by village to make the lists.
4. The contribution to the family budget is at least a month. Big contribution! Can use the money for something else.
5. They are also doing FFW, but thinks there is more scope for VGF. Once the forestry is finished then that is it for FFW. But VGF can help year on year. Asked whether they could use for other things, he says he likes the idea of using for small scale development projects – pipes for drinking water, school construction, gymnasium construction for kids. Should direct FFW to infrastructure, leave something behind. Roads, bridges.
6. Thinks performance is good. Everything done on time, distributions orderly, monitoring good.

Food for work (forestry).

We visited the site where land was being cleared and hoed to plant seeds. Approximately 8 people working on this, mostly women. Also small plot of saplings, basically a outdoor nursery. Pictures to accompany.

Short interview with head of forestry department (on site).

1. There are 40 participants. They have planted 62,000 trees on 4 Ha of land so far. Mostly poplar although some maple and nut trees.
2. AO gives the list of participants. WFP provides 27MT flour/ 2.5MT oil. They have received the first distribution of 10MT flour and 1MT oil. Hope to be finished by the end of the year.
3. The main purpose is to provide poor people with jobs. Secondary purpose is to provide the forestry department with income. Harvest the poplar for timber, sometimes firewood.

### **Mai AO, Manas Rayon, Talas Oblast**

Vice-head and social worker.

1. Beneficiaries are working, which is why they could not attend. Although, it became apparent at the end of the interview that actually they had not received VGF for the last 2 years, which was probably the main reason why people could not be bothered to attend the interview.
2. 2 villages. Population 4,595. HH 781, of which 283 are poor. They have three categories:
  - Extremely poor: 149
  - Poor: 50
  - Medium poor: 54
3. Poor people are engaged in seasonal labour. They work on bigger farms as day labour. Earn 500/ 600 soms/ day (which is better than in other places). The season is April – October. Some people work across the border too (we are right on the Kazakh border). There is a big market on the Kazakh side where people work. The big farms grow onions and carrots for export.
4. People also have quite large irrigated plots. 0.43 is the average. People grow wheat, corn and alfalfa. Some vegetables but mostly for their own consumption.
5. If the soil condition is good you can get 3MT of wheat from this size plot, if average then 2MT. 100kg wheat = 75kg flour. However the underground irrigation pipes are now leaking (haven't been repaired since Soviet times) so water can be an issue.
6. The extremely poor tend to be young families with several children who have no land (the land distribution took place in 1996). So they are working on their parents land. Which is their main income alongside GMI (and work if they can find it). Day labour money buys clothes and coal for the winter.
7. Now they are also getting low interest loans from the government (7%). Buy a cow.
8. WFP gave depending on family size (75kg/ 7.5l; 50kg; 6l; 25kg/ 3l, families 8-11, 5, 1-3). Prior to that received 11 l oil for 8-11 family.
9. Impact significant. Hard life. Stress. Moral support. Lasts for about a month. With the money saved they can buy different types of food, clothes, pay electricity.
10. 140 HH received first time, 112 second time. 70 HH receive the GMI. Some of the really poor don't receive either as their parents receive pensions.
11. Combine WFP/ GMI? Not a bad idea, but WFP really good. Spring/ Autumn when really needed.
12. Cash? People can't buy that quality of food, might spend on something else.
13. FFW? Yes, but can only cover a small amount of people, so VGF better.
14. Overall performance has been good. Well organised. Seminar. Lists. Monitor. Waybills. Storage. Measure:

“till the last gram”

15. Food arrives on time, people know the rules.
16. But they have not received for 2 years! Why? People are waiting.

### **Uchkogor AO, Manas Rayon, Talas Oblast**

Reporter & Social worker

1. They mostly receive VGF from an NGO called Aris (foreign). Seeds, wheat flour and oil. From each of 7 villages 7-10 HH.
2. This is a farming AO. Big farmers and people who work on farms. Beans, onions, carrots, corn, alfalfa, wheat, vegetables, pepper, hot pepper.
3. Most people have land, but many lack the finance to exploit it so they give away to renting. Get 10,000 Ha/ year (or equivalent).
4. People who are really in need are those receiving GMI. The AO gives them humanitarian assistance (HA) and also helps on document issues. They are poor because they are renting their land, and the income is not enough. And people who come here to settle. People come

because they are close to Kazakhstan and there is a big market over there. Also the day rate is better here.

5. Is WFP really necessary? There is real need. People are trying to get out of poverty. If they receive HA then it is enough for a month. They can save for the winter – fuel, clothes. GMI is really low.
6. They did a FFW project but it did not go very well. They started late and did not complete before the winter set in. The water users association also didn't organise very well. People still got some food.
7. In 2010 they got assistance from USAID. 10kgs sugar/ person and 30kg sunflower seed/ person.
8. In Spring they worked with forestry. 94 people worked on FFW, received a bag of wheat each and 4 l oil.
9. There is also an association of disabled kids who received 5 bags wheat flour and 20 l oil.

CDA. 3 women.

1. They received improved variety seed for vegetables – onions, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers. Very happy with the yield. They have made lots of jars of pickle and got better prices in the market. 13 bags of onions from 0.75kg seed; over 100 jars of pickle.
2. They also received two lots of WFP food. 2 bags of wheat, 8 l oil (twice).
3. CDA is groups. Migrant families. Save money. 20 som month minimum. 2,000 total. Use to buy improved seed for the next season. Oblast coordinator of CDA gives the seeds initially. They plan to use the money saved to buy seed for juicy tomatoes and sell to the local ketchup factory.
4. Difference between crop before CDA seed and afterwards is quality, quantity, shape, taste, longevity, suitability for drying. And the previous seed was 30 som/ kg, whereas CDA seed is 20 som/ kg. Sold tomatoes for 8 som/ kg. First 100kg, then 120kg. Exchanged for potatoes and apples, gave some away to family. Good quality so high demand. And they ripened quicker so they could sell them in the market before anyone else had them. Got as much as 30 som/ kg at that time.
5. WFP food – one bag lasted for a month. Less in larger family – 15/20 days. For smaller families lasted 3 – 4 months. They used some of the oil in the preservation process. Used the money saved to prepare for winter – coal, clothes, school stuff.
6. They also received training on better farming techniques. 2 lots of training for 2 days each. Taught irrigation, ploughing, planting, how to use fertiliser etc.
7. If they had to choose 2 of the 3 they received (food, seeds, training), they would choose the seeds and the training.
8. But for the poorest members of the CDA groups the food makes a real difference. They have their pyramid of poverty – the ones at the bottom (big families) can save enough to buy a MT of coal for the winter.

11<sup>th</sup> October 2012

### **Talas Rayon administration, Talas district.**

Social worker and head of WUA.

1. There is 51% poverty in Talas rayon. Some areas are remote and mountainous and people can't grow enough wheat. WFP helping.
2. The rayon plays a very active part in the programme. Unlike in other places the AOs are not responsible for selection – they have formed village committees to do this (also incorporating village health committees). At first there was lots of conflict because people didn't understand the programme (in 2008, after the revolution). But now people really get it. Will come and say, "oh such and such household needs assistance". Not for themselves –

for their neighbour. This system has helped – the people making the selection are from the village. Trusted. More credible than the local authorities.

3. They get both VGF and FFW in the rayon. There are 10,995 households (HH) in the rayon (in 28 villages), of which approximately 2,000 receive VGF and about 180 receive FFW (555 worked).
4. When FFW first started people didn't get it. Thought it was odd working for food instead of cash. But now they are really for it, and more people want to do it.
5. The food typically represents a months worth of food. People can use the money they save for other things. In spring they can use the money for investing in agriculture – paying the diesel for the tractor.
6. Not every HH receives VGF every time. There are more HH than there is aid, so they alternate. Some get in Spring, others in Autumn. There are 109 HH with disabled or widows and these are the only ones that get consistently.
7. Helps moderately with the economy of the rayon. They dug out the irrigation canals, for which they would have had to raise taxes otherwise. Helps people save money.
8. There are 124kms of main irrigation ditches in the rayon, serving 32,000 Ha of land. There are 754kms of secondary ditches. People won't dig out the main canals for free, and were spoilt during Soviet times by this being done.
9. The Rayon has a plan of maintenance annually. They aim to dig out about 15km of canal on a rolling basis. Ideal would be in the range 20 – 25kms (would take about 300/ 400 guys a couple of months).
10. WFP helped them dig out two canals – one was 25kms and the other 6kms. Now there is more water, which means more yield.
11. In the Rayon there are 5 mountainous villages with the others being lowland farming. They grow beans, wheat, potatoes, hay. In the mountainous zones the weather can be very harsh, sometimes not even potatoes will grow. No fruit. They rely on livestock – sheep, cows, goats. But there is no market for their dairy products. A litre of milk in Talas is 30 som, in these villages 5 som (furthest is 80km away at 2,100m).
12. They think the WFP operation is well run. Food comes on time, its well organised. Quality is very high. Better than they get locally.
13. Their only complaint is that disabled children are not included. Want to help disabled kids get into school.

### **Kalbai AO, Talas Rayon, Talas Oblast**

Head of the AO

1. WFP very helpful to them as they lack budget.
2. 2011 they did FFW, cleaned a canal. People paid in flour and oil. As a result there is more water and therefore more yield. Good contribution to the budget, people are interested.
3. Doesn't really matter whether we pay cash or food. At first people didn't get it, but now they are OK with it. But he thinks cash would be good.
4. He has no complaints about performance. Its timely and well organised. Hope for more in future.

10 people. 3 men, 7 women.

1. They received VGF. 75kg flour/ 6l oil. They received it in May, enough for a month (or 15 – 20 days if you have 6 kids).
2. Impact:
  - Woman 1: she works at the school and her husband is disabled. Sometimes she doesn't have money to buy food.
  - Woman 2: bought clothes, school stuff, electricity with the money saved.
  - Woman 3 (she is older, a pensioner) bought a carpet!!! (a really nice thick one 5x3m).

3. People are farmers. Grow beans, potatoes, hay, fruit. Have 0.5Ha land (although carpet lady has 3 Ha!). The beans are the most profitable crop.
4. Beans fetch 40 som/ kg from the middle-men. Get somewhere between 20 – 40 bags (50kg) from a Ha. 40 is ideal. i.e. 40,000 – 80,000 Ha.
5. Costs are: 60 som/kg for seed (need 100kg/ Ha); 1500 + 30l diesel (@40/l) ploughing; 1000 + 20l diesel for tillage and planting; 300kg fertiliser (@1,200/ 50kg bag) + irrigation expenses, and some other small ones. Approx: 16,200 Ha.
6. Approx. profit – 10,000 – 30,000 for 0.5 Ha.
7. How to escape poverty? Would like to cut out the middlemen and sell directly to the Turks. Think middle men are making double. More land not the answer – more expenses and the market for potatoes for instance is uncertain.
8. WFP is well organised, on time, good quality. They prefer food to cash. Would spend on other things.
9. 240 people receive VGF in the AO. 350 receive GMI. Social worker thinks VGF is better than FFW.

### **Bikmoldo AO, Talas Rayon, Talas Oblast**

10 people (2 men) + head of AO + social worker.

1. Under FFW they renovated the Shirin canal. 60 people worked on the project. The canal had not been repaired since the end of the SU. Was a real advantage to be able to repair the whole canal. Means people have more yield.
2. (but the head of the AO would also like to be able to clean the secondary ditches too with FFW, currently excluded under the criteria).
3. The impact of the clearance has been that people can irrigate more times during a year. Before was twice a year, now 3 or 4 times. Means 50 – 100% more yield. Before was 1MT, now 2MT.
4. People received:
  - 3 people and under: 25kg flour/ 3 l oil.
  - Under 5: 50kg/ 5l oil.
  - Over 7: 75kg/ 7l oil.
5. They received in May, and have received twice yearly since the inception of WFP (some confusion over how many distributions this was, with the social worker telling us it was 8 in total and that they had missed the first year).
6. Quality is very good. They can tell there are lots of vitamins.
7. The ration lasts approximately a month. With the money saved they buy other food products (sugar, tea, macaroni, meat). One (old) lady said she could go to weddings!
8. People make their income from farming. Beans, potatoes, corn, wheat, hay. Milk from livestock.
9. Beans were good this year and they also make money from potatoes, although the price is not stable. Depends on the market (was poor last year). Also, this year was dry for potatoes (despite increased irrigation??).
10. Distributions were well organised. Timely and well organised. Cash would be OK, but flour is better. People would just get confused.
11. Improvement?
  - More distributions!
  - Seeds instead of food in Spring.

Food for work. 3 men (+ head of AO and social worker).

1. Everyone liked the project. Was monitored by the head of the WUA.
2. Outcome is more water (this is the same Shirin canal referred to above).

3. They got paid an average of 423kg flour/ 30l oil. Still using it 4 months later, will probably last for 6 months. They worked for a month. 65 – 70 people from 2 AOs.
4. Food or cash doesn't really make a difference. They calculate the cash equivalent at about 11,000 som, which they think is an average wage for a month. However the Head of the AO says the average is more like 3,500 or even as low as 2,500 for the month.
5. Head of AO thinks food is better than cash as it will create less conflict.
6. The solution to escaping poverty? Strong central government action and small industry, probably based around agricultural processing.
7. They (head of AO and social worker) think we should also be giving food to disabled families. Often 2 people have to care for a disabled child, and the subsidy is not enough to cover this. They gets lots of complaints from families of disabled about not being included.

9-12 October, 2012

9 October 2012

### **Naryn Oblast**

#### **Village 1: Ak-kiya AO, Kochkor Rayon, Naryn Oblast**

VGF – 9 women (one child). Did not give names and did not want attribution of comments.

#### Needs

1. Only income is from work in fields, subsidy, and pensions. Very grateful for WFP food which is useful. It's especially difficult for young couples, children, parents looking after children and old people. Work own land and seasonal work, hiring labour to other HH. Those born before 1995 received land allocation (0.39 ha pp x 5 for average HH).
2. Problem is that not all HH are included on WFP lists. Some families have pension, land, cattle but no subsidy. One woman has husband with disability and children but is not getting assistance and had to fight to be included on lists. `Real' poor in community are people with disability and those with many children who have to fight to get distribution. One poor woman only got food because she pretended about her circumstances.

#### Assistance

3. They don't believe that distribution was entirely fair. They were assembled by the AO but it was those known to AO who were included: the Commission should check. No other organisations appear to have been involved in distribution. Each street self-selected representatives but there was a tendency to select those who they preferred. Members of AO take assistance for themselves. AO makes the lists and sometimes they are not informed. Some families were not registered because family members have migrated. Need a public system.
4. International humanitarian assistance comes through Dept of Social Welfare, e.g. potatoes, seeds. Earthquake (2011) – not sure where assistance came from.
5. WFP food received last May 2012 – 5 people per HH got 75 kg WF and 6 ltrs VO. They were informed by Dept Social Welfare and are aware of the criteria (subsidy/non-subsidy, numbers of children/HH). `Commission' of inspection is a formality – they (beneficiaries) believe enough assistance is distributed but they are suspicious it is not distributed fairly or evenly. Some better off people are taking assistance.
6. They do not feel able to inform AO because it is involved in the distribution and they haven't met WFP. When they are informed about food distributions they "run to the AO and start fighting for food". They hear about the distribution when people come to get their subsidies; then they hear about distribution criteria but they are not fully informed. Street community lists are not used. The March 2012 distribution arrived on a holiday (2 March) when people

were not around and there was not enough information; this caused problems. They expressed a lot of resentment about who gets food or not and were not happy about the system, information, criteria. Some HH have left the village but pretend to be there by signing on to get humanitarian assistance.

#### Future

7. What and how would they like to improve the system? New Commission without AO. They would trust the Committee of Youth Affairs and independent people in the community (i.e. not receiving food, neighbours with more land, less children, cattle).
8. Without WFP food, they will not give up hope but potatoes are hard to grow and one sack of wheat flour is KGS 1300 (if harvested locally), last approx. 15 days (max. 1 month). It is hard to cope in winter and they will have to borrow with interest. Sometimes, debt increases annually (cumulatively) and they are already in debt but winter has not yet started. They try to repay debts little by little.
9. Another problem is that assistance provided has included beans but these were not distributed because they say local people don't want them. Sometimes they get potatoes but they don't need them because they have stocks of their own.
10. They would like WFP distribution to include what, oil and sugar. They also need proper information and explanation.

#### FFW – 1 man available

1. 2010/11 – irrigation (cleaned 5km water channel in stages) and dam building/flood protection. Very good project – 200 workers and very important for poorest HH.
2. Initially, 10 workers were taken on to clean 600 metres in 15 days but they ran away because they did not believe that they would be paid and did not understand FFW. Kuan and 2 others replaced them and received 13 sacks WF and 50ltrs VO each.
3. Kuan and his colleagues were willing to take on work because they wanted work and realised it would do good for people. When FFW was first introduced no one believed it – told to work in summer and would receive food in autumn.
4. FFW project is in same village as VGF. Life is very difficult, expensive there and the subsidy is not enough. When assistance comes it is very valuable. WF & VO was given to people who received subsidies for disabilities. There is no work here and many HH are dependent on agriculture but the harvest is variable. Over the last 5 years, 2 of 4 years have been good. Kuan has 0.38 h which he uses for hay and then has to change crop production annually (to rest land) but without funds to buy fertiliser and pesticides. He would use animal manure but can't afford animals.
5. People need such (FFW) projects – there is more work to be done (irrigation, flood protection) and people could develop other projects with seeds (wheat, potatoes) and livestock. It is very important to learn from this and many are willing to do FFW.

#### **Village 2: Kum-Dobo AO, Kochkor Rayon, Naryn Oblast**

People are in the fields (potato harvest) – area yield 40k MT (10 MT per ha).

FFW - Sept/Oct 2010: clearance of irrigation channel (22 kms) for 700 ha. 502 workers did 40 days' work and received 49 MT WF and 250kg VO. For one person: For 25 days work, received 450 kg WF and 200kg VO.

1. Community is still enjoying the benefit of FFW channel & maintenance work. It now takes half the time (30 mins) to irrigate the land for all three villages in AO. It has also reduced water loss and channels have been extended to those previously without water access. Better irrigation has enabled earlier harvesting and preparation for winter because more food can

be gathered for winter consumption. In addition to earlier harvesting, there is improved quality and increased quantity of produce.

2. FFW has reduced vulnerability to 'lean season' for potato orientated culture – more food, lasts longer, more people able to harvest.
3. Only 2-3% population have work (government, teachers). 97-98% get income from agriculture (potatoes, wheat) for the whole year from differing levels of quality. E.g.:

Quality	Price (KGS per kg)		Yield levels (MT per ha)
1	10		10 (minimum)
2	9		15-17 (average)
3	8.5		25-30 (good)

4. Before FFW, WB funded larger construction of irrigation channels. Thus, FFW has helped to bring harvest on time. If they can do second 22 kms, economic/livelihood security will increase, people will not starve. Many people are unable to work because of disability, different categories of HH; not all are equal. Woman with 5-7 children gets KGS 700.

VGF – 6 women (Kayrgul, Ainura, Ainura, Bachtygul, Jazgul, Gulsayra, Dohsturbek, Isake)

1. WFP food – 3 distributions (2011, last May 2012). It is very useful especially for poor HH with children, although not all poor HH are included. Criteria is: income of less than KGS 200 pm, no livestock, number of children/HH. Sometimes distribution is not fair. E.g. if have cow then this disqualifies HH even if it is not productive. Usually, family has some livestock.
2. Beneficiaries want to see change in criteria to reflect number of children only. Local deputies from village council explained assessed and discussed criteria, but beneficiaries feel that this approach creates discontent.
3. They described the selection process for the distribution. AO (4 villages) gave indication of 600 HH (160 HH in one, 150 HH in another) but these are not the poorest (10k in 2.5k HH). Very hard choices are made and pensions, subsidies and livestock (even though have to use these in winter) disqualify people.
4. Received 1 sack (25 kg) WF and 4 ltrs VO; lasted for one month (with 4 children).
5. Land of 0.4 ha pp is the only source of income and potatoes give one harvest per year. Those born after 1995 get no land and HH are growing but the land allocation remains the same.
6. Coping without WFP? Poorest, most vulnerable may have livestock; hire labour for harvest, cultivation, irrigation at KGS 200-300 per day (e.g. harvest time).
7. FFW improved benefits for all (irrigation)? Very successful project – much more so than other international projects; other projects should adopt FFW. Only 30% entitled to such projects. Humanitarian assistance creates high discontent, inefficiency and divisive but FFW is very effective.

### **Village 3: Cholpon AO, Kochkor Rayon, Naryn Oblast**

Ayil Bashi – VGF/FFW for last 3 years (2010, 2011, 2012). In 2010/11 – 62 MT WF and 5.7K kg VO for 860 men and 290 women (total 1050 people). Very poor agricultural produce here (wheat, oats for animal feed); irrigation has improved yields by 35%. Support has led to real benefits – cost of WF (KGS 62m subsidised livestock losses and sales).

VGF – 7 women/5 men

#### **Needs**

1. Majority of AO population live in this village (Cholpon). Winter is very windy, cold but no snow and soil is very poor. Dry soil before summer season starts. In contrast to other places,

they have to bring water for irrigation which takes time to reach here and levels depend on rainfall. They therefore feel high level of vulnerability and greater needs than others.

#### Assistance

2. VGF is extremely timely and a big support. FFW has helped instead of humanitarian aid because it has enabled them to do work and it's paid (!) so they have not suffered from lack of WF & VO. FFW has also provided discipline and skills for workers and the work helps villagers to some problems. E.g. they repaired the irrigation channels and protected the river banks. They would like to do more in the next 2 years including cleaning more channels, improving water flow and supplies. In Soviet times they had 4 pumps, so it would be good to get 2 pumps. Water sources are underground and need to be extracted because there is no potable water.
3. FFW was done in June 2010-October 2011 and involved many people (2,000) in 7 villages working on shifts. They received food after 3 months and following inspection by the Commission. Food was distributed very fast. The minimum amount was 2 sacks (45/50 kg) WF and up to 50 ltrs VO (per day this was 3-4kg WF, 320gVO) and the average days worked as 15-20 per worker for up to one month.
4. FFW was distributed effectively throughout the villages and was fair, in contrast to VGF (given for free) which was very unclear and untransparent. FFW reduced unemployment, distributed food, and enabled people to work but VGF is not so well used. FFW has also helped to improve yields and water conservation (reduced 20% losses); potatoes, wheat, oats, carrots, hay are produced mainly for domestic consumption (if quality is too low wheat as well as oats is used as animal feed). In the last 2 years, harvests have been better but the weather has been poor. If next 2 years are good, they will be able to increase yields. E.g. wheat yields are on average 2 MT per ha at approx. KGS 10 per kg. But it is very hard to sell at a good price because of low quality, risk of freezing, and poor access to market.
5. VGF has been problematic. E.g. of 100 HH only 60 HH receive it. They received it in 2011, 2012; last distribution was in May 2012, Shoola (NGO) was involved. One woman said she received 4 sacks WF and 8 ltrs VO which lasted 4-5 months. Beneficiary selection criteria was stated to be:

Beneficiaries	WF kg	VO ltrs
>3 children/HH	50	5
5-7 in HH	75	7
>7 in HH	100	12

6. The process of selection is by street-street committees which compile lists; they are informed about dates and food arrived on time; young people helped with unloading; beneficiaries signed for receipt of food.
7. The food is useful, of course, especially for the poorest and those with many children. It is not given to everyone.

#### Future

8. Without VGF – will have to survive and rely on State. FFW/irrigation will improve self-reliance and harvest as a way out of need for humanitarian assistance. Better off people will help poorest if water situation improves.
9. They have ideas for new projects (e.g. fencing for kindergarten, for which they have applied for grants)
10. The initial response to FFW was low but once the food was distributed, more came forward and there are long queues.
11. It is better to have food (FFW) than cash (CFW) because the latter will never reach its purpose.

10 October

#### **Village 4: Uchkun AO, Naryn Rayon, Naryn Oblast**

FFW – 6 women (Ainura, Gulbardyn, Ainagul, Janargul, Jyrgul, Aijamal); 1 man (Marembek)

Coordinated self-help groups (CDA) started in 2010 with initiative to support local groups. 3 groups (17 members) were established. In 2011, with CDA, support was targeted to families of migrants and there are now 5 groups with 28 members.

1. FFW - Vegetable garden activities were started with seed distribution provided by WFP. Groups were trained in vegetable cultivation (tomatoes, carrots, beetroot, cucumbers) and with understanding they were able to establish seed funds (banks). In Aug/Dec 2010, 17 members were paid: 200 kg WF and 16 ltrs VO each. In 2011, 28 members received the same. In 2012, 15 members received 100 kg WF and 8 ltrs VO. No seeds were received from WFP but from the groups 'savings'
2. Group members consider the benefit of food and training to be equal and great. Seeds have increased their harvest. One woman remarked: "It is extremely good to be involved because income, food, and skills have all increased." WFP project helps only one group and this year members have invested more and gained seeds. They are happy that they received learning which is of lasting value. Life is improving gradually. This has an inspiration effect – when they are provided with good quality seeds, they worked harder and enjoyed better results.
3. Examples of what has been especially successful include – tomatoes, carrots, beetroot, onion, cabbage, cucumbers! Harvest has been good and without losses; they have been lucky with the weather (rain was timely for cucumbers) although some damage from hail/ice. They have understood how best to use the land and soil. E.g. before the project, carrots were produced for consumption only; afterwards 0.1 ha plots is used for carrots and 0.1 for cabbage. New seeds are better quality and more pest resistant.
4. Dutch seeds provided by WFP are good. They have been able to retain stocks (carrots, beetroot) for sale at higher price in winter (KGS 20 per kg in market; KGS 15 per kg to wholesalers (which they prefer because of market access and limited opportunities for them to sell in Naryn city).
5. For the future – they see a big difference, with improved harvests, and have enjoyed benefit of FFW support (which is both large but useful). They can conserve vegetables better for winter (storage is in dark basement where it stores well and last 7 months, Nov/Dec until May). They feel confident that they can sustain this and believe they are better equipped. In 2011, 4 sacks of WF and 13 ltrs VO helped one member to make savings and become better off. They feel 'rich' (better off), not poor. Success with beetroot has made their neighbours curious to enquire.
6. None of them are VGF beneficiaries. There was easy acceptance of FFW (compared to other places) because seeds were distributed from the start. Some improvement could be made in more resilient types for special conditions, i.e. winter starts early and risk of hail damage (although soil is good and seedlings survived). They need good quality seeds for potatoes, wheat, and oats.
7. FFW – irrigation cleaning (5kms). Started in Oct 2011 and completed 2 kms, when it was already snowing. For 25 days, he received 85kg WF and 8 ltrs VO; then for 6 days 20 kg and 1.9 ltrs. There were 40 people in 3 groups of 19, 8 and 11 people. In 2012, they continued for the remaining 3 kms – under their own effort and without more food.
8. It was of great support – real gratitude is expressed to WFP from their hearts because it made a real difference. They have better irrigation for 200 ha. The assistance was crucial because they were able to increase irrigated area by 150 ha and this has increased yields and now two harvest per year (oats, wheat, potatoes, hay).
9. They want to improve the main irrigation channel and the division of water into smaller channels but this has stopped because it was not included in the original design (although

some still have hope that it was). They have contacted the local water authorities and need heavy, technical equipment plus 15 MT cement.

10. For the future, they believe they can sustain improvements made in irrigation. They have already continued to work and harvests are improving. There has been a significant increase in HH income. Illustration of increased yields and value are as follows:

	Wheat MT (per ha)	Hay (MT per ha)
Before irrigation project	1.5	4.5
After irrigation project	3	7.5
Proportion sold (balance for domestic consumption)	20%	40-50%
Sale price	KGS 12 per kg	KGS 100-120 per bale

### **Village 5: Emgek-Talaa AO, Naryn Rayon, Naryn Oblast**

VGf – 5 women, 3 men

#### Needs

1. None are starving but some HH are better off and some poorer. There are no jobs and they survive from agriculture, sometimes with harvest losses. Winter is long and starting now. They are very grateful for the food support – even if it is small it is very important. This year, the summer season was dry and yields were poor.
2. 'Poor' includes – young couples without subsidy (no children), people with no pension or livestock. Humanitarian assistance was short-term but very important and given to HH with elderly and sick adults. Coping strategies are really difficult. In autumn, poor people can do casual labour (harvesting). In winter, there is nothing to do and it is really hard. They have a small amount of food, look after livestock for richer families, take debts. Migrants (men, women) leave their families and in recent years more and more young people leaving (approx. 10%) and send money home.

#### Assistance

3. Subsidies are only for women with many children (not everyone. E.g. being elderly with pension disqualifies you, even if you have many children. One person employed in the HH disqualifies you. Pension is enough only for drugs, not for food.
4. WFP food has been received 3 times (twice each year) since 2010. It is based on needs assessment. WFP decides based on food needs (and supply of food from other countries) and is provided according to criteria (number of children per HH). Amounts of food received by 20 HH were stated as: 75 kg WF and 6 ltrs VO. On average this lasts one month (if more in HH, only 15 days; 7-8 children only 10 days).
5. Criteria are not well understood; they know only about the listing made by the Social Council and Village Commission (7 people). It would be better if the number of HH on the list was increased.
6. They are very satisfied with distribution (WF/VO for 1 month) and can use their subsidy to buy sugar. The distribution is timely, clear, fair; they are informed transparently and engaged in unloading. Social passports are checked by the Commission from Naryn city. Their only suggestion is: they would like it more often, for more people and more products (but not beans – take too long to boil).

#### Future

7. Without VGf, they will survive, make a living but it is useful because it comes at very difficult times. Other options are agriculture and livestock: hay for animal feed; milk selling in Naryn city.

On average, they can produce 100 ltrs per month and sell for KGS 10-12 per ltr (winter) and KGS 8-10 (warmer). Also livestock (cows, sheep, horses, goats): on average 30 sheep per HH (4-5 for poor HH, some have none). Can sell for KGS 3-5k per sheep and KGS 17-30k per cow (depending on weight, health).

Seasonal work, hired on monthly basis, can make KGS 1500-2000 per month.

Water supply is adequate although some land plots lack access and this creates conflict.

### **Village 6: Ortok AO, Naryn Rayon, Naryn Oblast**

FFW – 10 men

1. Tree-planting/forestry since April/May 2012. 25 workers in group worked one month and received on average: 500 kg WF and 50 ltrs VO, depending on number of days worked. This lasted for one year for the average HH.
2. Project proposed by local Forestry Dept for people without jobs. Initial consultation/discussion then identified and agreed. Clearly understood food aspect of work. "Food products are better because we don't plant heat" and WF lasts longer.
3. Seedlings are elm and help with environmental improvement and will also give construction materials (in 40 years). They understand (informed by Forestry Dept) that one ha forest gives 600 kg of "fresh air" (oxygen; one person needs 36 kg oxygen). (They are also instructing school children – Forestry Day 17 Sept.). Purpose is soil conservation and improved water supply through irrigation.
4. Agriculture: potatoes, wheat, oats, hay are hard to grow because summer is short, not enough warmth, and winter lasts 6 months. Livestock (horses, cows, sheep, goats, ox/yak); they breed horses and one over 10 years gets KGS 70-80k during summer months (high season pasture), although this year these were cheaper (KGS 55-60k). Sheep get KGS 3k average per sheep.
5. HH food economy has improved because of WF/VO and before they had to buy but now subsidised by FFW food supplies. If they can continue for some years, they can make annual savings using funds saved, buy better clothes and school materials. Although not yet able to save, they believe they could do in future; it will take time to make slow improvements.
6. They have ideas for other FFW projects e.g. good quality seeds for potatoes, hay (high quality, nutritionally rich animal feed that can reproduce for several years), lots more tree planting. Preparation for winter in 2012 is better than before – "those with FFW are a bit better prepared". They have saved funds to invest in livestock and can use met for consumption instead of selling and are able to store (bury in ground pits, in -40C).
7. Support/assistance - AO role was to gather people together, arrange meeting, invite poorest and Forestry Dept. 'Poor' are families with many children, no work, no livestock, no subsidies. In group, not many members have livestock. FFW includes people without subsidies/pensions. If project continues may not need subsidy (some disagreed). Migration – people are leaving every year; FFW can help to stop this.

### **Issyk-kul Oblast**

#### **Village 7: Kok-Moynok AO, Ton Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast**

5 women, 2 men

VGF

Needs

1. Cultivate wheat, oats, potatoes but harvest is not good enough. WFP is very important. E.g. woman with 4 children has no subsidy, husband did FFW. Another woman has difficulties because she cannot harvest; there is not enough irrigation water and machinery is need to fix

bottlenecks in system. Land plots (0.45 ha per person) are allocated in different, disparate places (some nearby, others 5 kms away). Another woman complained about lack of clean water and irregular supply because the pumping mechanism does not work.

2. Harvest trends over last 5 years have been uneven. They cultivate plots in crop rotation (wheat, hay etc.); wheat is not very successful because of poor water and grain. There is inadequate food supply for domestic consumption, poor soil (white dust) and not enough food to last out winter.

#### Assistance

3. They get subsidy and pension but not for every HH. If HH has a pension or job then there will be no subsidy. Average monthly HH budget is KGS 5k, depending on number of children; KGS 10k with children.
4. VGF assistance only – received twice per year and distributed to different HH each time so they don't know if they are going to receive it. AO makes lists – they come and find out one month before distribution. List is compiled by neighbourhood commission which checks house-to-house to assess individual status. Each distribution people receive 25 kg WF and 6 ltrs VO – according to criteria (number of people/HH times ration). They are clear about criteria although there are many HH with small children. The food is useful and saves purchasing food which can be used for school materials & clothes. It lasts approx. 1-2 months (depending on number of children in HH) but is not enough for 1 months (7-8 children).

#### Future

5. Without WFP food, people will survive from sales of hay and livestock. Assistance has enabled people to buy other needs. They are looking for jobs. Not so many people are leaving for Russia from here. In summer time they can grow apples, apricots. In winter, they can sell milk and eggs. They have small gardens to cultivate; apricots are grown for sale to wholesalers. In 2012, because of hail/bad weather there were no sales.

#### FFW (UNDP) – tree planting (poplars)

1. April 2012 – 24-25 people from 3 villages worked for 10 days during one month and planted 1000 trees. Each received 3 sacks WF and 20 ltrs.
2. AO was informed about project and payment in food. At start, people had doubts and wanted cash to buy food but there was a very open conversation and worries were expressed about whether cash would be wasted and that food was intended to reduce hunger and poverty. They now accept food products and consider this better than cash.
3. They understood that UNDP tree planting was to make the area 'green' and importance of trees in village development; and that this project fits goals of other projects (poverty, food, poorest people).
4. Other ideas for FFW projects include – road construction and repair to enable access to fields; sport/playground needs repair.

11 October

#### **Village 8: Ulahol AO, Ton Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast**

Ayil Bashi (AO) –VGF is helpful, especially villages remote from AO because land is limited.

- Those who receive food are very happy but some don't get it and are unhappy. Distribution is efficient and effective through heads of neighbourhoods who are invited for discussion and to make selection. Some HH may get used to distribution and become dependent. There have been distributions over last 3-4 years; last was summer 2012.
- 5 villages receive food from FDP at AO from where it is distributed. People are informed of distribution two months in advance. AO staff and beneficiaries from nearby villages help

unload the food. Everything (including criteria) are explained at neighbourhood meetings through Neighbourhood heads who use criteria for search, selection and developing preliminary list for discussion. It is recognised that lists can include those who are better off and exclude those who are worse off. But people are very active and exercise controls – if 10 HH meet criteria and only 5 HH are included then local population will come and discuss and change lists.

- Other institutions involved include Dept Social Welfare staff (rayon level) that help with criteria and lists; they keep social passports and provide data. AO uses data to verify lists. NGO Shoola representatives are present from very start of process – talk to people, explain criteria and source of food; invited to village/AO meetings, negotiate and verify lists. WFP is seen at distribution plus 3-4 meetings at rayon level and joint events with AO (for input to district plans (WFP and other activities).
- AB is satisfied with WFP – feels that WFP could give more authority to AO to decide about HH (check/correct distortions) because criteria are not precise enough (e.g. children under 15 could be better or worse off. Would like WFP programme to continue because very helpful whilst general economy is low; begin to stop as economy improves. People gradually understand that they are better off (land, livestock) with fewer children but this will take time.

VGF- 4 women/1 man (Gulmira, Dinara, Samara, Mambet)

#### Needs

1. “Of course we need WFP food because benefit is very high”. They cultivate wheat but the harvest is not good because soil is stony, although water is adequate. They can grow approx. 1-1.5 MT wheat (not good quality) only for domestic consumption (never sell it). Some sell apples, apricots (seasonal), and livestock. Some seasonal work but very low pay at KGS 50-100 per day.
2. Average children per HH are 4-5. This is traditional Kyrgyz (if only have girls then go on until boy). No one wants only two: more children will look after each other. Next generation may have less children because of difficult conditions.

#### Assistance

3. They have received VGF 3 times (last 2 years): 2 sacks WF plus 5-10 ltrs VO (for HH with 7 children and 2 older people) (beans were given once); less children, less food. They understand about criteria and how list is developed (no work, sick/unhealthy, numbers in HH). Lists are developed by AO and believe right people are included but some HH wish they could be included and there is discontent although not really poor.
4. Generally, they are satisfied and programme is good, timely and useful. (Improvement would be programme for low interest loans.)

#### Future

5. Without WFP food – they will survive but it is good for people and they are able to use money saved to buy clothing and school needs. They can also sell sheep. They can't overcome poverty totally but food makes a difference for one month. There is no one else helping them here. Others could bring low interest loans and help young couples with house construction (if want to complete their houses, they live without food). Seasonal work income is enough only for food products.
6. Ideas to tackle their poverty include - they think they could establish a sewing workshop, do soil conservation, grow vegetables. They recognise that food assistance is used quickly and that to make a lasting difference they need activities that will benefit them. They need help to discuss ideas and plans. They have talked with AO e.g. about low interest loans but there is a lot of bureaucracy (documents to complete) and bank does not believe that they can repay.
7. They greatly appreciate WFP as an international organisation that take care of poor people.

## Village 9: Koltor AO, Ton Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast

12 women, 3 men

(NB discussion dominated by one woman; her comments seemed to have some support from others)

VGF

### Needs

1. Mainly livestock & agriculture livelihoods. Employment in school, AO and very small medical post. Land is good and they cultivate for domestic consumption (potatoes, carrots, cabbage, beetroot) but the problem is seed (which they get from their own harvests). They need good potato seed that can ensure they can grow enough food.
2. "It is very hard for women here" with HH of up to 9-10 children. They can work for better off HH. Children in senior (school) grades go to summer pastures (which improves their health and physical fitness).
3. 'Poor' HH are those with no land or livestock, receive subsidies, many children, pensioners who get no assistance. Any assets (even if they don't work) disqualify from subsidy; pension payments are enough only for medicines.
4. Men work in pastures, hay collection. Some go to Russia and Kazakhstan (both young men and women) for construction, as cooks etc. Some can't go because of family (e.g. sick, blind mother).

### Assistance

5. Within village there are better off HH who have lots of work for seasonal work and humanitarian work. 'Better off' are those with livestock for breeding, land and assets.
6. Received help in 2007 from UNDP to pregnant women, children under 3 and HH with many children.
7. Social worker completes social passport. There seems to be changes in the rules: people on lists change but this is not logical – it would be better if there was more consistent entitlement. They propose that food is allocated through lists compiled by public commission not AO. WFP food was distributed and they were told there would be more in 6 months. Should include ordinary people in public commission. At present, lists are compiled by AO and Social Welfare Dept on their own judgement and they do not consult.
8. "Here there is a lot of mess ..." they calculate the number of people in HH and many are left out. Criteria are not clear. They are told about distribution on the same day - "as soon as people hear about distribution, they run like crazy to get the food – first come, first serve". It should be done with people and be more transparent because "we all know, who lives how, and what is fair." They have talked to AO and "(we) do not blame them because rations are limited and they try to cover all the population but the better off try to get food and it very unfair."
9. WFP food was received in April 2012. Shoola visited the village and verified lists ("we don't trust them/anyone"); unhappy that Shoola talked to neighbours (lack of trust) and only visited in springtime with distribution to check living conditions.
10. Rations were mainly: 75 kg WF and 6 ltrs VO for most present and lasted for up to 1 month (some said, usually 15 days only).

### Future

11. Without WFP food? "That's a very difficult (painful) question". Without it they are entirely dependent on seasonal work, livestock and milk sales.

12. Any ideas for other income activities? Could make blankets, open a summer camp for poor children to educate on cultivation, sports etc.. Need 'no interest' loans for poor families to buy cows and produce more dairy.

### **Village 10: Kadjy-Say AO, Ton Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast**

6 women, 5 men

FFW – women: cleaning town road gutters

1. “Big success: we have worked, improved life of the community and got food.” Good if more projects like this, once only is not enough. “In the morning, we come in for shifts – it’s like real work.” Provided assistance for many people.
2. Aug/Sept 2011. Over 25 days, two teams of 10 each cleaned channels along roads. Received 2 sacks WF (75 kg) and 9 ltrs VO which lasted for one month (with many people in HH – young families with all unemployed and no pensions) and up to 2 months for others.
3. AO informed and identified the poorest HH. FFW was easy to understand through clear explanation and with no meals provided (men went to clear roads).
4. In 2012, with no FFW how have they made a living? There is scope for doing more work of this sort. Without cleaning, there will be flooding of streets and entry of waste to houses. They are dependent on land plots to grow seasonally apples, cherries, apricots for local sale and in Bishkek for KGS 10-20k depending on plot size; costs of utilities amount to KGS 2k. There is some employment in town (teachers, government, medical staff) plus pensions, subsidies, and the gold mine (Canadian Kumtor) but otherwise very high unemployment. Contact with Shoola has been limited to their involvement in checking HH income).

FFW – men: clearing/repairing mountain passes/roads

1. 70 workers worked approx. 15 days and received 2 sacks WF and 9 ltrs VO which lasted for 3 months (HH of 3). They dug/cleared roads of water and snow damage, boulders, repaired and expanded roads; to prevent further damage they laid a stone layer base. This year, there has been no repair and the road is damaged again.
2. AO is responsible for public works and usually invites school children and citizens (Saturday communal work); road construction companies handle cement & asphalted roads.
3. For the future – they certainly think they can work together but they need to apply for help, design projects, find funding. They could organise themselves to work but AO has no funding – no one will give funding, State will not do it.
4. VGF was distributed 2 years previously. When it stopped they kept asking when will it come? Some people, the poorest, need VGF – but need to ensure that it really gets to the most vulnerable. There has been unfair distribution – the totally unemployed HH didn’t receive it whilst goldmine workers did). There is low level corruption and a proper commission needs to be established that people can trust.
5. With winter, people will suffer because of lack of FFW. Price of wheat has increased to KGS 1500 per sack. Some of the poorest are living without what. Apricots are the main source of income but price was low in 2012 and they have been unable to buy enough stocks for winter. They have not yet bought coal because of low income this year and they will have to borrow from neighbours, family, use timber and their pensions to buy coal. At KGS 4.5k per MT of coal this is equivalent to two monthly pension payments.

12 October

### **Village 11: Svetlaya-Polyana AO, Jeti-Oguz Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast**

VGF – 11 women, 4 men

#### Needs

1. Life is very difficult especially in winter. Humanitarian food and subsidy/pensions are very small and some HH don't get assistance. Whatever they get is not enough. One woman said she has worked for 25 years and gets less than KGS 3k per month; subsidies are very low (KGS 10-20) and with no increases.
2. Recently, harvests have not been good for cultivating fruit and vegetables. Harvest in 2012, despite being very dry, produced a good yield for potatoes but prices were low. This is the main income and therefore they were badly affected although yield is mainly for domestic consumption (with children as students in the city and children at home). Students cannot get jobs.
3. Are they able to sell enough to live on? Of 4% produced, only 1% is sold and 3% is for domestic consumption and preparing for winter – but it doesn't last until the next season. E.g. one woman has no subsidy, pension, or job; she said that many HH are like her and some HH are really suffering and are looking for livestock.

#### Assistance

4. They have received VGF in Spring & Autumn for 2 years – although unsure and some previous distributions (including beans). Last VGF was in May 2012 and they received: 75 kg WF and 6 ltrs VO (HH with more than 5 children); HH with up to 3 children received 25kg WF and 3 ltrs VO. On average this last less than one month (HH with many children), 2 months for some HH.
5. This was received by widows and poor. They are aware of the criteria for HH. In the past only 90 HH received VGF; this year it was 120 HH. Numbers of HH increased this year because poverty increased and structure (3 categories): more people have fallen below KGS 400 per person. E.g. one man has no subsidy, no land and many are like him – with 4 children, no house, and no assistance because he lives in another village and is not registered for VGF.
6. Lists are compiled in line with poverty structure (ranking) and criteria (street-street). Monitoring is done by AO with WFP and Shoola checking. They are reasonably confident in registration and believe it to be broadly fair but food is limited and some are discontent. Lists are transparent and they are satisfied with the process of notification and allocation of the distribution.

#### Future

7. Without WFP it will be very difficult – “better for us if it will come. In May we had nothing (food) left and it was time to work in the fields. We have been able to prepare for winter – onions, carrots, potatoes and have some but fear it is not enough. We will have to buy WF and don't have enough (money) to buy WF which is now KGS 1300 for 45 kg (price increased).”

#### FFW

There is some FFW vegetable production for HH with migrants who worked with Shoola and they were paid in food products. They worked with CDA to build groups in 2010, started by secretary from AO, and now there are 64 members in 2 groups in this village. This year bought seedlings at KGS 2500 (KGS1 per seedling) and sold each at KGS 30, but yield was not good

because it was late June and they did not get a good price. They received 100kg WF and 7 ltrs VO and tried to grow cucumber in 2011; this year they tried herbs (valerian).

They feel more confidence for the future – they like working together and can make money if seeds/seedling are given to them. They can save if good seed is provided (e.g. potatoes) and get a good harvest; but every 2 years they must change what they cultivate on plots.

### **Village 12: Ak-Dobo AO, Jeti-Oguz Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast**

(One beneficiary only available because obliged to complete potato harvest ahead of storm warning.)

Talked with young woman (early 20's) – received VGF in summer 2012 of half sack WF and 2 ltrs VO (as 50% allocation to two families). She has one daughter (aged 1½ years) and husband is now working at Kumtor (Canadian-owned goldmine) and is therefore now better off. She has land for hay animal feed and 10 sheep used for domestic consumption, and occasionally sell 1 or 2. She received food because she has a long-term sick mother-in-law. Eliza said there are many poor in the village – no work, no livestock, no jobs, and without education. Many people are leaving to Russia and Kazakhstan because there is no work. She said her monthly HH budget was as follows:

Income:	Husband's salary – more than KGS 8k Pension – KGS 2.5k
Expenses:	General – KGS 3-4k Coal – KGS 5k

For others it is harder – depends on number of children, help give to and received from relatives, cost of celebrations.

### **Village 13: Lipenka AO, Jeti-Oguz Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast**

VGF – 7 women (all with young children)

#### Needs

- They are only able to be at home – looking after children:
  - Jumagul – 2 sons (lost one), 1 daughter, 1 grandchild; aged 57 she has no pension, from her cow she sells milk which can produce 50 ltrs and sell for KGS 600-700 per week.
  - Ayimkan – 3 children, 2 grandchildren, husband died; receives subsidy for children of KGS 2.5 per month as her only income.
  - Kenjebek – 6 in HH (3 children, husband, father-in-law); receives pension and sells milk (as above).
  - Dinara – 6 in HH (husband, 4 children); husband has monthly pension of KGS 1.5k and some seasonal work; lives in apartment and no land, no house.
  - Burul – 2 sons, 2 grandchildren, lives with father; on his pension and no subsidy.
  - Jamal - 2 sons, 2 grandchildren, husband died; applied for subsidy because can't get pension.
  - Aijan – husband and 4 children (one has disability), live with father-in-law; live off disability subsidy, cultivate potatoes, seasonal work.
- Lipenka has population of 300 HH – majority are poor, especially young people are poor. Many have migrated to Russia and Kazakhstan and are sending some money home.

#### Assistance

3. VGF was provided in 2011 (twice) and in May 2012 (once). All in group have been included in lists twice. The Commission comes from rayon and local AO and visited house-to-house to check assets, numbers of children, and living standards. Depending on number of dependents they received: 25kg WF and 3 ltrs VO; 2 received 75 kg and 6 ltrs. On average food lasted 1.5 months because grandchild still small. Distribution was efficient and they were well informed (at least one month in advance).

#### Future

4. They have not yet started preparation for winter because they have no income this year and will have to borrow. Prices have increased – 1 sack WF is KGS 1300, equivalent to one monthly pension payment.
5. They get credit at the local shop with no interest and try to repay within 10-15 days (agreed) using pension and mil sale proceeds. Sometimes they are refused credit and have to go to neighbours and relatives who sometime give to them and sometimes don't.
6. They are very grateful for WFP assistance.

(NOTE: this location and group was very striking for the strong degree of isolation – located far away from the main road (availability, cost of transport), and restricted to HH because of child care; very marginal – living on very limited budget, well below a 'minimum', notional monthly budget of approx. KGS 10k, with heating costs of at least 20% of income; and on very limited diet – well below daily KCal needs, no diet diversity, little protein (bread, potatoes only).)

#### **Village 14: Yrdyk AO, Jetti-Oguz Rayon, Issyk-kul Oblast**

(Few beneficiaries available because others obliged to complete potato harvest ahead of storm warning. Group interviewed was in hurry to join them.)

VGF – 2 women; FFW – 1 woman

#### VGF

1. Received for 2-3 years, twice each year; last was in spring 2012. Received 75 kg WF and 6 ltrs VO which lasted approx. one month (depending on number in HH).
2. Livelihood/HH economy – people work mainly in fields growing potatoes and carrots. Potato yield depends on quality of harvest which was poor this year (hot/dry and earlier hail).
3. Winter preparation includes potatoes, wheat; some potatoes saved for sale (higher winter price) and portion saved for seed.
4. They have heard about CDA groups but no opportunity to join.

#### FFW/CDA

1. In 2010, people came to the village and invited them to join (women's self-help) group. Nazgul joined because she was interested to grow cucumbers.
2. Now there are 7 on going groups cultivating cucumbers, carrots, onions, beetroot. Some are retained for domestic consumption and balance is for sale. Carrots and cucumbers sell for KGS 10 per kg and they plan to grow for sale next year.
3. They have received fertiliser inputs and food: 200 kg WF and 14 ltrs VO each. This has made a big difference to all group members.
4. There is scope for new members to join the groups.

## Social worker

1. People want to join the groups because they see the benefits. There are responsibilities of membership. These include – proper cultivation, irrigation; reporting on activities; contribute KGS 20 each.
2. Groups are very successful – they can cultivate and can save seed to help new members, and make up to KGS 50k from harvest.
3. There has been gradual development of the groups - started with 3 groups to get informed and there are now 12 groups with over 106 members (approx. 7 members in each).
4. A major problem is the cost and availability of seeds in spring. E.g. cucumber (good quality) is KGS 2-3k per packet. Groups need initial support – poor families come with nothing and need to be given a chance, opportunity and help.
5. Generally groups are doing well because of mutual support, exchange of information, communication and problem-solving. AO helped with paperwork and regulations; they have encouraged the groups (Ayil Bashi is an agronomist). There is a monthly report on self-help groups.
6. Rayon level gives no support. They are only supported by WFP.

## Annex F WFP's Key Monitoring Activities

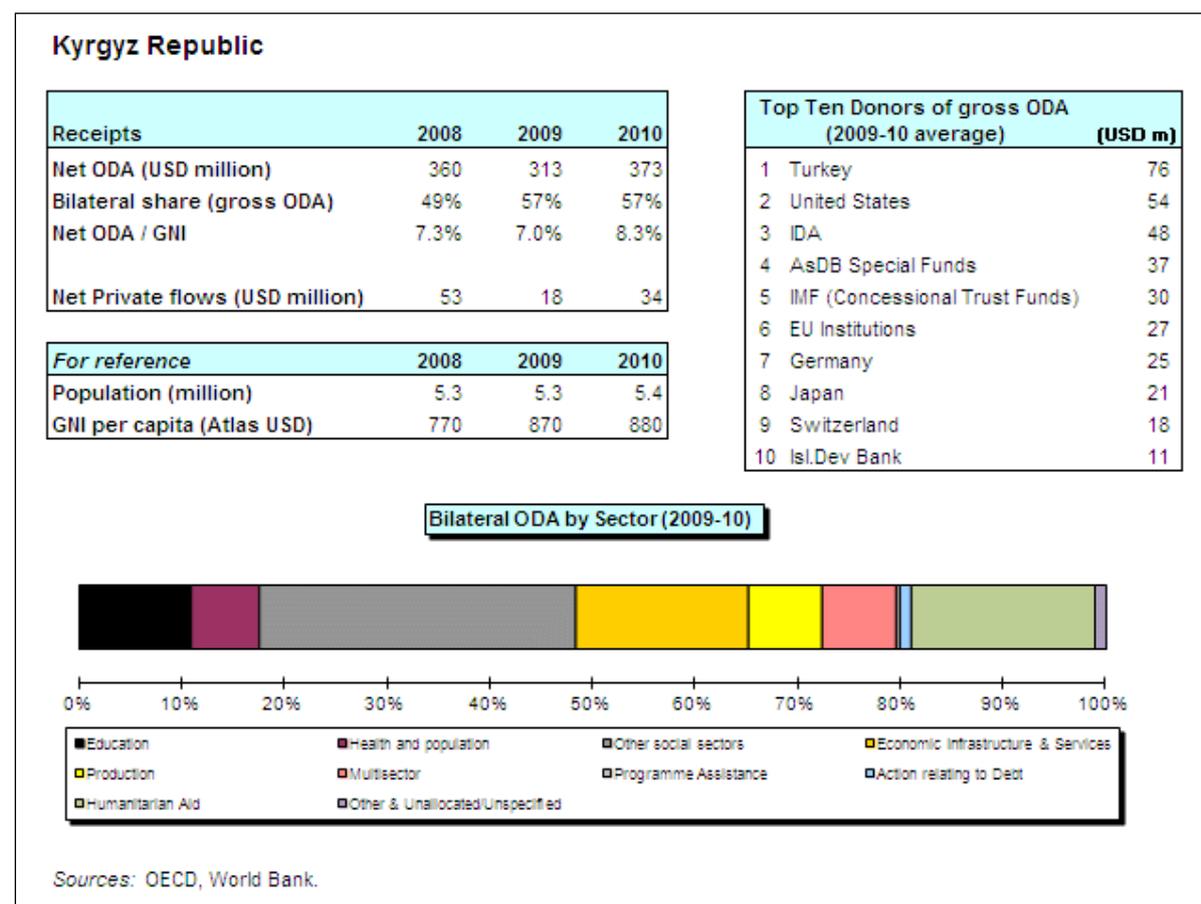
Figure 3: WFP's Key Monitoring Activities.

Monitoring Activities	FFA	VGF
<b>Verification of Beneficiary Selection lists</b>	<p>Government counterparts at AO level select beneficiaries.</p> <p>NGOs verify 7-10% of beneficiaries selected.</p> <p>Of CP implemented projects WFP verifies around 1%.</p> <p>For WFP implemented FFA projects WFP verifies minimum 5%.</p> <p>Reported: Once a year.</p>	<p>Government CPs at AO level select beneficiaries.</p> <p>NGOs verify 7-10% of beneficiaries selected.</p> <p>WFP verifies as many HH as possible, but is limited by resources constraints (time and man power). During the last cycle (October-December 2012) WFP only verified 1%.</p> <p>Reported: Once a year.</p>
<b>Distribution Monitoring</b>	<p>In FFA FDs implemented by CPs, WFP monitors between 20-50% DPs.</p> <p>Reported: Monthly</p>	<p>On average, at least, 30% of VGF DPs are randomly selected and monitored by WFP FMAs.</p> <p>Reported: Monthly and at the end of a cycle.</p>
<b>Output and Outcome Monitoring</b>	<p>FFA projects are all monitored, at least, four times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>before</b> - Community asset Score (CAS);</li> <li>• <b>during</b> (output progress monitoring);</li> <li>• <b>at completion</b> (output progress monitoring + beneficiary and asset numbers and types); and</li> <li>• <b>after</b> 3-6 months (CAS + project outcome assessment).</li> </ul> <p>Reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outputs - Ongoing.</li> <li>• Outcomes – Once a year.</li> </ul>	<p>VGF outputs and outcomes are monitored through PDM and verification monitoring and reported through PDM twice a year.</p>
<b>Post Distribution Monitoring</b>	<p>Outsourced to partners and conducted twice a year covering the first and second half of the year's work, respectively.</p> <p>The first PDM is conducted in July and the second in January.</p> <p>Reported: Twice a year.</p>	<p>Outsourced to partners and conducted twice a year: in June-July and December-January.</p> <p>Reported: Twice a year.</p>

Source: M&E Review of PRRO 200036, Malene Molding Nielsen, December 2012.

## Annex G Additional Data

### Box F1 OECD DAC Aid Data for the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008–2010



Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aidstatistics/24418103.gif>

## Annex H Bibliography

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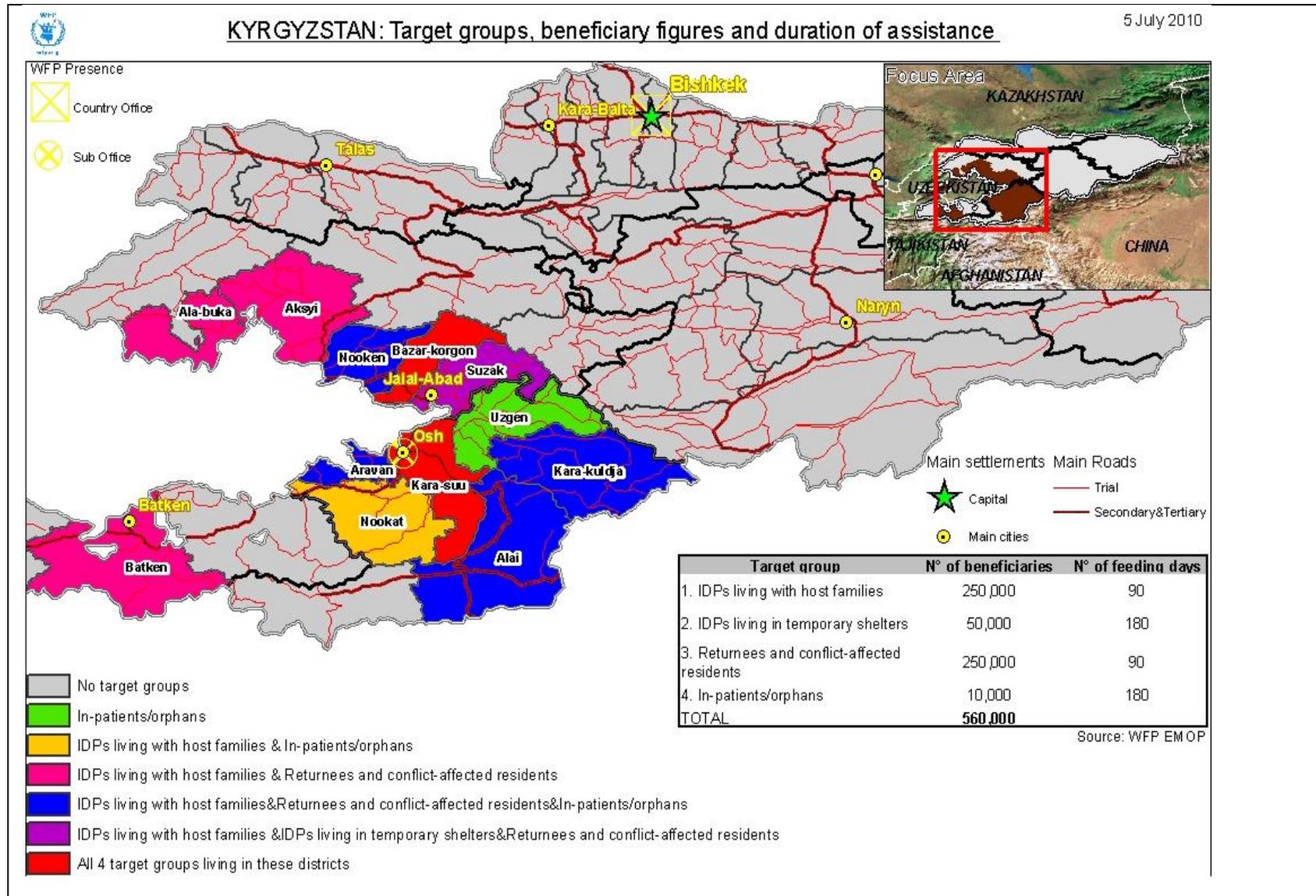
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Annex I Maps

Map 1 Target groups, beneficiary figures and duration of assistance (July 2010)



Source: e-library #93.

## Acronyms

ACTED	Agency for Cooperation and Technical Development
ADI	Association of Development Initiatives
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
AO	Ayil okmotu (sub-district)
AsDB	Asian Development Bank
CDA	Community Development Association
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
COMPAS	Commodity Movement, Processing and Analysis System
CO	Country Office
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DPCC	Development Partners Coordination Council
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EB	Executive Board
EC	European Commission
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EFSA	emergency food security assessment
EMOP	Emergency Operation
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FFT	Food for Training
FFA	Food for Asset
FFW	Food for Work
FFW/A	Food for Work/Asset
FFW/T	Food for Work/Training
FGI	focus group interview
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFD	General Food Distribution
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Germany)
GMI	Guaranteed Minimum Income
GoK	Government of Kyrgyzstan
HH	Household
HQ	Headquarters
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFI	International Financing Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR EMOP	Immediate Response Emergency Operation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KfW	German development bank

KGS	Kyrgyz som
KIHS	Kyrgyz Integrated Household Survey
KII	key informant interview
GoK	Government of Kyrgyzstan
LR	literature review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MB	Monthly Benefit
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
MSB	Monthly Social Benefit
MSP	Ministry of Social Protection
MT	Metric Tonnes
MTDP	Mid-Term Development Plan
n.a.	not available / not applicable
n.d.	no date
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Statistics Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PD	Project Document
PDM	Post-distribution Monitoring
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
OE	Office of Evaluation
QA	Quality Assurance
REDD	Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SDA	secondary data analysis
SO	Special Operation
SPR	Standard Project Report
TOR	Terms of Reference
UMB	Unified Monthly Benefit
UN	United Nations
UN CERF	United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US Dollar
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WFP	World Food Programme





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