

Prepared by: Jane Hardy, Second Secretary, Dhaka Post

Approved by: Head of Mission, Dhaka Post

Independent Evaluation of DFAT's Investment to the World Food Programme for Supporting Vulnerable Communities in Cox's Bazar

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Initiative Summary

Initiative Name	Support to Vulnerable Communities in Cox's Bazar		
AidWorks initiative number	INK969		
Commencement date	4 April 2013	Completion date	30 April 2018
Total Australian \$	19,500,000		
Delivery organisation(s)	World Food Programme (WFP) Bangladesh		
Implementing partner(s)	WFP Bangladesh		
Country/Region	Bangladesh		
Primary sector	Food security		
Initiative objective/s	<p>Australia provides flexible, un-earmarked funding support to WFP in Cox's Bazar, which is aligned with Australia's global partnership with WFP and DFAT's Humanitarian Strategy. Australia has partnered with WFP since 2011.</p> <p>WFP's assistance in Cox's Bazar is provided through two distinct yet complementary channels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO): Food security and nutrition interventions to registered refugee camps in order to improve food security and nutrition.2) Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN): Economic and social empowerment and food security support to ultra-poor households in three disadvantaged and refugee-hosting sub-districts. <p>Consistent with Australia's aid delivery approach in Bangladesh, this is a partner-led investment with WFP leading on all aspects of implementation. Post is focused on monitoring key management actions identified during the investment design and annual reviews; harmonising engagement with other development partners; engaging bilaterally with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) on Rohingya issues; and conducting field visits.</p>		

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Objective:

The Australian Government has a requirement to undertake an Independent Evaluation of DFAT's bilateral investment to WFP Bangladesh for its Cox's Bazar program. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of WFP country operations focussing on the Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) component of operations in Cox's Bazar, to assess the effectiveness of the operation to date and inform future funding and partnership management decisions between DFAT and WFP at the country level. DFAT, WFP and WFP's implementing partners are primary stakeholders of this evaluation. The evaluation took place in Bangladesh, specifically in the program locations in Cox's Bazar and Dhaka. The evaluation recommendations will inform DFAT's future programming support to WFP Bangladesh.

The evaluation provides an opportunity to ascertain whether the interventions are still coherent and useful to key stakeholders, coherent to DFAT and WFP's strategic objectives and to assess whether the activities are being conducted in an efficient manner as per DFAT and WFP standards and aligned with the partnership objectives.

Evaluation Completion Date: April 2018

Evaluation Team:

John Winter - Team Leader/Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist

Jennifer Anne Mudge – Gender Specialist

This management response was prepared by DFAT.

DFAT's response to the evaluation report

The Evaluation was intended to be an opportunity to assess DFAT's partnership with WFP Bangladesh and identify gaps and areas for improvement for the next phase of the partnership. DFAT considers the review to be of a good quality; that it sufficiently addressed the questions in the Terms of Reference and the Evaluation Plan and that it meets DFAT's monitoring and evaluation standards. It provides practical recommendations to strengthen the DFAT-WFP partnership as well as to continue to inform the quality of WFP's program in Bangladesh. The recommendations proposed in the review are based on the Evaluation team's discussions with WFP staff in Dhaka and Cox's Bazar and analysis of WFP reporting over the duration of the Initiative. They relate to suggestions for the future direction of DFAT's partnership with WFP.

Key findings of and responses to the report

The evaluation provides evidence that support to WFP in Bangladesh remains highly relevant to Australia's interests in Bangladesh. It is clear the EFSN component is making a difference at the household and village level, with evidence of effective outcomes for the target population, particularly with the income generation/behaviour change communication component of the program for ultra-poor women.

It is also clear the partnership with WFP at the country level reaffirms the decision of the DFAT bilateral program to work with a limited number of trusted partners. The knowledge and relationships developed through the partnership allowed Australia to make additional contributions to the Rohingya crisis that commencing in August 2017 quickly and with confidence.

Future directions of the partnership

The Evaluation is timely at this point in the program. In late 2017, DFAT entered into a three-year strategic partnership arrangement with WFP Bangladesh. This new partnership aligns with WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for Bangladesh which shifts WFP's focus from direct implementation to capacity development and technical assistance to the Government of Bangladesh. Through the CSP, WFP plans to transition from blanket to targeted food assistance while maintaining its aim of supporting the most vulnerable households including Rohingya camps and host communities. Cox's Bazar operations will remain a special focus for WFP and DFAT under the partnership.

DFAT will track the actions set out in the recommendations below to ensure progress is achieved in line with the recommendations. Despite the strong outcomes being achieved through the EFS and EFSN, more could be done to document the successes and lessons involved in piloting these new and unique approaches. Through the strategic partnership, Post will continue to: provide expertise and other support to WFP to define an approach to people with disability in the new programs of WFP; will maintain a dialogue with WFP and the Government on the value of school feeding and appropriate measures of success; encourage and support WFP's continued development of robust M&E framework to better capture results.

***Note on Nomenclature:** The provision of livelihoods grants and monthly support allowance, with a package of behaviour change communication activities is referred to as the Enhancing Food Security – EFS component of EFSN, and this usage is adopted in this report.

DFAT's response to the specific recommendations made in the report

Recommendation One

The Australian High Commission should maintain a dialogue with WFP over the new EFSN design as part of the new partnership based on the conclusions of this review.

Response: Agree

Actions: Continue to focus on maintaining frequent and constructive dialogue with WFP on the new EFSN design, particularly how it fits within the framework of the new strategic partnership. This will be actioned by the partnership managers at DFAT and WFP through monthly meetings to ensure DFAT is fully briefed on the EFSN design and its role within the broader WFP-DFAT partnership.

Responsibility: DFAT and WFP partnership managers

Recommendation Two

The Australian High Commission should work with WFP to ensure that the sustainability of EFS self-help groups is tracked (perhaps through the HKI contract) and lessons drawn for future interventions.

Response: Agree

Actions: Utilise frequent (monthly) program-level meetings between partnership managers and formal (biannual) partnership discussions between DFAT and WFP to ensure WFP is monitoring the sustainability of EFS self-help groups and drawing lessons to inform future programming.

Responsibility: DFAT and WFP partnership managers

The Australian High Commission, drawing on DFAT resources where necessary, should continue to provide expertise and other support to WFP to define an approach to people with disability in the new programme.

Response: Agree

Actions: Ensure ongoing dialogue with WFP on their disability strategy and operational work, and continue to provide expertise from DFAT's Disability Inclusive team to further support disability inclusion in WFP programming. This will include incorporating disability inclusive programming updates as a mandatory agenda item on monthly partnership meetings and at the biannual partnership dialogue.

Responsibility: DFAT and WFP partnership managers

Recommendation Four

The Australian High Commission, should maintain a dialogue with WFP and the Government of Bangladesh on the value of school feeding in Bangladesh and appropriate measures of success.

Response: Agree

Actions: DFAT supports this recommendation and will maintain dialogue with both WFP and the Government of Bangladesh on the value of school feeding and the most appropriate measures of success.

Responsibility: DFAT

Recommendation Five

The Australian High Commission should encourage and support, as part of its regular dialogue with WFP, WFP's continuing development of monitoring and evaluation systems and reporting practices that are appropriate for tracking and accounting for the outcomes of the country programme.

Response: Agree

Actions: Encourage continued development of WFP's M&E systems at the country program level, with a particular focus on being able to articulate outcomes of complex interventions. This will include ensuring M&E updates as a mandatory agenda item on monthly partnership meetings and at the biannual partnership dialogue.

Responsibility: DFAT