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**EVALUATION OF USAID/BHR'S GRANT TO  
THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM FOR  
DISASTER MITIGATION**

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"The Disaster Mitigation Grant has contributed in no small measure to important if not vital changes in WFP's views on the role and scope of food aid both as an emergency and transition input. The relevance of the VA exercises as well as the preparedness and strategic contingency planning and case scenario exercises are becoming part and parcel of WFP's operations in the field. Country offices are currently looking for ways to finance the continuation of VAM positions within their own budgets."

- Bronek Szynalski, Director  
Operational Policy and Support Division  
World Food Program

## Acronyms

ALITE	Augmented Logistics Intervention Team for Emergencies
BHR	USAID Bureau For Humanitarian Response
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	WFP Country Strategy Outlines
DMG	OFDA Disaster Mitigation Grant to WFP
DMP	WFP Disaster Mitigation Program
DMTP	Disaster Management Training Program
DPPC	Ethiopia Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
EGS	Employment Generation Schemes
EM/O	Emergency Management/Operations training
EPA	Malawi Extension Planning Area
EUE	Emergency Unit of Ethiopia
EWS	Early Warning System
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWS	USAID Famine Early Warning System
FFD	Free Food Distribution
FFW	Food For Work
FHANIS	Food, Health and Nutrition Information System
FODAG	United States Mission to United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture
GIEWS	FAO Global Information Early Warning System
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOE	Government of Ethiopia
GOM	Government of Malawi
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HH	Household
HR	WFP Human Resources and Administrative Services Division
HSA	Health Surveillance Assistant
LLPPA	Local-Level Participatory Planning Approach
M4E	Monitoring for Empowerment
MRR	Malawi Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation
NASC	Needs Assessment Steering Committee
NEWS	National Early Warning System
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OFDA	USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OMW	WFP Western Africa Bureau
PAM	Program Against Malnutrition
PI/F	Project Identification, Project Formulation
PMPP	OFDA Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness and Planning Division
PPM	Program to Prevent Malnutrition
SCF/UK	Save the Children Fund/United Kingdom
TDY	Temporary Duty

UNDP United Nations Development Program  
UNHCR UN High Commission for Refugees  
UNICEF United Nations International Children's Fund  
USAID U.S. Agency for International Development  
USDA/ERS U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research  
Service  
VA Vulnerability Assessment  
VAM Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping  
WFP World Food Program  
WWW Worldwide Web

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Maureen Mericle  
Arthur J. Dommen  
Maxx Dilley

## Executive Summary

In 1993 OFDA awarded a grant to WFP for a Disaster Mitigation Program. The program includes three OFDA-funded components: VAM, emergency training, and project identification and formulation. This report evaluates WFP's performance over the three years since the grant award on the basis of criteria provided in a log frame jointly developed by WFP and OFDA specifying the grant's expected results. The evaluation comprised an interim review of the present status of the grant with the aim of identifying both progress and constraints on the way to reaching intended results, and a strategically-informed evaluation of the effectiveness of the three WFP program components supported under the grant.

Overall, the DMG has contributed to the visible improvements in WFP. VAM and training have had positive results and are leading to improved programming decisions and staff capabilities.

Activities undertaken in the VAM component are appropriate to the original purpose of "better targeted response in emergency situations". They have achieved limited but identifiable successes in improved targeting. Additional improvements are likely to occur in WFP country programs as VAM techniques are adopted and refined. Two additional foci of the VAM component--logistics preparedness support and maps for public relations and general communication--have value-added features that were positively assessed.

The workshops in emergency management and emergency operations organized periodically by WFP have been favorably assessed by the participants. The use of the grant for purposes of improving WFP's staff capability has been effective in moving WFP to establish a pool of trained emergency personnel. New advances in vulnerability analysis and mapping have been incorporated without delay in training materials, constituting a feedback from one component of the grant to another.

Improved project identification and implementation result from investments in technology and human resources. Therefore, this is the last component to show results, chronologically speaking. As the benefits from VAM and training are only now beginning to be realized, changes in project identification and formulation cannot yet be fully assessed in isolation from other factors. Trends in food aid distributions in the countries visited are overlain by the powerful influence of the erratic recurrence of drought or other emergencies. The team found instances, nevertheless, where VAM maps were being used constructively in project identification. The state of acceptance of VAM techniques for operational purposes by host governments showed quite a bit of variability among

countries.

A number of recommendations are provided at the conclusion of the report with respect to the three components evaluated. The recommendations were directed at WFP Rome and at WFP country missions visited by the team.

In summary, the DMG has substantially contributed to improvements in WFP's emergency management and disaster mitigation capabilities, principally stemming from investments in VAM and training. These changes in WFO are pervasive and evident at many levels, and are not all due to the OFDA grant. WFP's approach to food aid has changed over the last three years and the DMG has played an important role in this process.

Chronology of events leading to implementation of WFP Disaster Mitigation Program (DMP)

- 12-MAY-93 WFP submits DMP proposal
- 20-MAY-93 Barry N. Heyman, OFDA Assistant Director, PMPP Division, and Maxx Dilley, Science Advisor, TDY to WFP/Rome to discuss grant design issues.
- 30-JUN-93 WFP submits revised DMP proposal for VAM, PI/F, emergency training and Rapid Response Teams
- 19-JUL-93 OFDA reviews WFP DMP proposal
- 10-AUG-93 WFP responds to issues raised at OFDA review.
- 28-SEP-93 Redelelegation of Authority cable implementing OFDA grant to WFP for DMP.
- 02-NOV-93 FAO vulnerability assessment workshop, Rome.
- 09-NOV-93 WFP submits first workplan.
- 14-DEC-93 FODAG notes WFP emergency response capacity inadequate (Rome 21387).
- 24-JAN-94 WFP/OFDA correspondence concerning VAM hardware/software requirements.
- 04-FEB-94 U.S. Department of State obligates \$500,000 of \$815,000 for WFP Rapid Response Teams (Rome 2395).
- 14-MAR-94 WFP DMP grant design team visits OFDA for joint development of log frame specifying intended results.
- 07-JUN-94 New CSO Guidelines released.
- Mid-1994 VAM officer Pablo Recalde arrives in Rome.
- 27-JUL-94 First WFP progress report.

## Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation combined elements of both interim and strategic evaluations. Its purpose was to review the strategy chosen to overcome the constraints identified by WFP and determine progress to date so that lessons learned can be applied to future endeavors where applicable. Constraints include the sharp rise in the number of worldwide emergencies, the need to realize lasting benefits from food-aid, the diminishing supply of food-aid, the need for systematically collected information at the local-level and the need to systematically undertake PI/F.

Evaluation criteria were provided by a log frame jointly developed by WFP and USAID/OFDA stating specific results to be expected under the grant. The evaluation employed indicators of results at the purpose and output levels as a basis for assessing grantee performance.

Evaluation activities included: review of relevant documentation; review and analysis of relevant statistical data; interviews with WFP officials in Rome and in the country offices; interviews with FAO and other UN agencies in Rome and the field missions; interviews with USAID and FEWS officials in Washington and the field missions; interviews with host country government officials and local leaders; interviews with local and international NGO's which were involved in VA; and field site visits for the purpose of observing potential project identification and implementation activities.

The evaluation team visited WFP headquarters in Rome and three African countries at various stages in applying the VAM methodology. Emergency management trainees were interviewed as available. The countries visited were Malawi, Zambia, and Ethiopia.

The team consisted of three members:

Maxx Dilley, Team Leader, science advisor at USAID/OFDA/PMPP. Dilley focused on the VAM component of the grant, which was aimed at improving identification of type and degree of vulnerability in specific populations and improved decisions about where, when, and how to target food assistance.

Arthur J. Dommen, agricultural economist at USDA/ERS. Dommen focused on the Emergency Management Training component of the grant, which was aimed at improving the planning and management of emergency food and disaster operations.

Maureen Mericle, food aid specialist, USAID/OFDA consultant.

Mericle focused on the PI/F component of the grant, which was aimed at the prevention of acute shortages at household and community levels and linking emergency relief needs to longer term development. Mericle also returned to Rome at the end of the evaluation to debrief WFP officials.

## The Wider Context

In the policy context that WFP has set itself, food security is only meaningful when it relates to the household<sup>1</sup>. This is very ambitious. The fundamental dilemma posed by this concept of food security is that one has to have a detailed understanding of the livelihoods of large numbers of people who are in intimate social and economic relations with their neighbors, who are often living in other administrative units and even across national boundaries, in order to have some idea of how vulnerable they may be to food insecurity. Doing vulnerability assessments accurately, therefore, poses a host of problems of investigation.

VAM is potentially an important tool for addressing multiple questions of food insecurity. Besides making targeting of relief food aid a more cost-effective exercise, VAM should allow one to identify those geographic areas where mitigation activities are likely to have impact. Because food aid is an important weapon against food insecurity, VAM should offer a practical approach to integrate food aid into a food security concept. A comprehensive evaluation of WFP in January 1994 recommended "supporting WFP participation in work on vulnerability mapping, subject to cost effectiveness being kept clearly in view"<sup>2</sup>.

VAM efforts are still at an early stage. VAM is therefore still a relatively blunt instrument for guiding program activities and needs to be sharpened. Care needs to be exercised in guiding the ongoing process so as to avoid the pitfalls of needless data collection efforts that can prove expensive and time consuming. The team's observations of giving priority to methodological coherence and of exploiting already existing data sets were reassuring in this respect.

To be of value for mitigation activities VAM indicators should have an element of forewarning so as to allow actions to safeguard livelihoods. Indicators showing poverty may not be sufficient in this regard. By preventing, or at least reducing, loss of assets on the part of productive people, the length of time during which they would be dependent on relief food aid is shortened. Designing appropriate VA indicators for this purpose presents a challenge, since they must take into account the relative

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World Food Program, "Tackling Hunger in a World Full of Food: Tasks Ahead for Food Aid." Rome: 1996(?).

Dale Harstad, Hedy I. von Metzch, and Ralph Salituri, "Evaluation of the World Food Program" (January 1994), Abridged Version, p. 20.

effectiveness of coping strategies known to disaster-prone populations. Such coping strategies enable them to avoid falling into poverty.

The country situations encountered by the team were all different from one another<sup>3</sup>. In Malawi and Zambia, for example, the efforts supported by WFP have passed the data collection stage and moved into statistical analysis of indicators, whereas Ethiopia is still in the process of selecting indicators. In Malawi, and to a lesser extent in Zambia, the results of VAM are seen as useful enough to be fed back to national and international development organizations for use in their activities, while in Ethiopia it is too early for comparable feedback. Still, there are criticisms that can be made of the process, even in Malawi (the most developed system), when one looks at the effort in a wider context than just estimating a "food gap" whose size is based on the difference between production and trend consumption variables.

A more appropriate approach to assessing food needs than the "food gap" approach would be based on an appreciation of market forces at work in the economy. The distribution of food among the population is more likely to be governed by market forces, including the distribution of income, assets, and prices in input (including labor) and output markets, than by a consumption norm calculated in kilograms or calories. The observation that a "food gap" does not exist in a good crop year can easily create the illusion that food security has been achieved in some significant way when it has not. The VAM effort can be directed toward identifying those sectors of the population, for example hired laborers on estates and their families, whose purchasing power remains insufficient for them to achieve household food security. Conversely, the VAM can be used to prevent over-estimating food needs of people who already have adequate food, or workable coping strategies in place, and decisions to import food that result in destruction of market incentives for producers.

In Zambia, the tendency to use VAM as a "food gap-filling" instrument has gone the furthest. More than half the indicators originally chosen by the VAM Steering Committee are static, that is, they do not change significantly from year to year. The Zambian VAM effort is in a way the transfer of the "food gap" approach to the district level. The choice of proxy indicators is such that the most remote districts in terms of travel time and cost rank as the most vulnerable. Food needs estimates were

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It is worth pointing out that in none of the three countries visited did disaster mitigation activities enjoy a high priority in the USAID mission.

ranked accordingly. "The VAM provided a ranking, but it was very difficult to interpret the information," said one Zambian government official. There is, however, a recent effort to incorporate new data on incomes and assets.

In Ethiopia, different actors are experimenting with different approaches. The effort of the VAM unit in WFP is orientated to the identification and use of proxy indicators, although the leaders of the effort are keeping an open mind about the possible value of complimentary approaches. Save the Children Fund (UK) is experimenting with a method of VAM that relies upon key informants to provide data on thresholds on which decisions about interventions can then be based. Specialists on both sides claim they are working toward a common objective and minimize the differences inherent in their approaches.

The Government of Ethiopia (GOE) has adopted a food security policy that favors mitigation efforts by restricting free food distribution to 20 percent of the food distributed. However, with respect to food distribution, targeting has always eluded the policy-makers, according to the WFP/Ethiopia Country Director. Information used by assessment missions was very thin despite pre-VAM efforts to gather information on a systematic basis.

A complicating consideration in the Ethiopia situation is that the food aid distributions of the past two decades have themselves become a factor that affects both data collection and analysis. To separate the question of food aid eligibility from the question of food needs seems essential. Practically speaking, the VA exercise may become means to avoid the process of reaching a food aid figure through negotiation and compromise between host governments and donors on the annual food needs assessment or even between national level governments and local administrations.

Finally, USAID/FODAG officer David Garms put the DMG into a larger context of recent USAID/UN cooperation on emergency response and food security. USAID's support to the SAFIRE project in the early 1990s provided email access to southern Africa WFP country offices for drought response operations. WFP has since expanded this capability to other country offices, which has assisted WFP in the implementation and management of the current OFDA grant. OFDA and the USAID Africa Bureau have given another grant to WFP for the AFRINET project for similar communications and data transfer improvements. In another positive development, comments on FAO's crop and food assessment methodology by USAID FEWS project manager Will Whelan were extremely well received by FAO and helped gain donors a role in FAO assessments. Mr. Garms characterized the relationship between the VAM unit and FAO/GIEWS as excellent. In addition, the U.S. Department of State-funded WFP Rapid Response

Teams also use VAM logistics and contingency planning maps.

It is in this wider context, then, that the achievements and shortcomings of the VAM effort should be viewed.

## GRANT COMPONENT EVALUATIONS

### I. Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping

#### 1. Introduction

Nearly all VA data collection and analysis takes place within the host countries. The Rome VAM unit manages the grant and coordinates activities, providing technical assistance, methodological guidance, equipment and personnel to country offices. The unit is also working to expand WFP's concept of food security beyond its traditional crop-loss focus.

The purpose of the VAM component is "better targeted response in emergency situations." As implemented, the VAM component included two additional foci: logistics preparedness support and maps for public relations and general communication. VAM efforts in all three areas have been widely appreciated within WFP. Activities undertaken for the original purpose are appropriate and have achieved limited but identifiable successes in improved targeting. These are enumerated below. Additional targeting improvements are likely to occur in WFP countries engaged in VAM as additional vulnerability analyses are completed and assimilated into country office programming.

Logistics preparedness support activities by the VAM unit in Rome are not a subject of this evaluation. These largely involve preparation of maps showing stockpile locations, transportation infrastructure and contingency planning scenarios. The ALITE unit in the Transport and Logistics Division in WFP/Rome is the principal user of these products.

Maps for public relations and general communications purposes are a distraction from the original purpose of the VAM component. They have, however, raised VAM's visibility, garnering widespread support for the VAM unit within WFP and among the donors. Other donors are providing funds for the VAM unit in Rome. This support is critical for continuation of VAM activities past expiration of OFDA's grant. However, it is important that the VAM unit not lose sight of its primary focus on improving WFP's field performance by being diverted towards satisfying a growing demand for logistics support and public relations maps within WFP/Rome.

Whatever the application, the popularity of the mapping capability was evidenced in practically every office visited by the multitude of colorful maps hanging on the walls. The ability to visually display individual or composite indicators through mapping is a centerpiece of every VAM unit from Rome down to the field offices. Additional benefits of the VAM component, although outside the

scope of the evaluation, are worth noting. VAM unit logistical and food security-oriented maps are, or soon will be, available to a substantial proportion of the international humanitarian assistance community through the WFP WWW internet site. The VAM has received permission from ADC Worldmap to publish their base maps of flashpoint areas on the WWW as well, so that other users can download them as overlays<sup>4</sup>. This links the grant results back to OFDA, also a WWW user. Such widespread distribution also promotes OFDA/PMPP's longstanding efforts to increase information sharing for disaster response coordination.

## 2. Indicators

The following sections evaluate the performance of the VAM component according to criteria developed jointly by WFP and OFDA.

**Output 1: Better targeted response in emergency situations**

**Result 1.1 Most vulnerable populations receive priority**  
**Indicator 1.1 Was food assistance targeted in accordance with VA?**

In both Malawi and Zambia the evaluation documented specific instances where targeting of the most vulnerable populations was done on the basis of VAM, particularly for non-food assistance. In Ethiopia the initial VA has not yet been completed. Although output 1 concerns emergency situations only, the evaluation took place during non-emergency times; none of the countries visited were experiencing an emergency situation. The VAM efforts, being relatively new, have not had the chance to be tested in emergency situations as all three countries visited have been relatively stable since the VA process began. Malawi was beginning VA efforts when the 1994/95 drought hit, but only used a small portion of the information.

Although the VAM analyses evaluated in Zambia and Ethiopia were preliminary or incomplete, respectively, it is reasonable to assume that they will be adopted by their country offices as a targeting basis. There is a growing demand for VAM throughout WFP, of which WFP's proposal to OFDA for funding was a manifestation. In Malawi, the need for targeting and

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It is important to note for copyright reasons that these maps will be available only to the development community and cannot be used for commercial purposes. Downloading these maps will require special permission from WFP.

vulnerability assessment was recognized during the 1991/92 drought and the increased targeting and identification of the neediest beneficiaries that occurs today came about largely through independent efforts by WFP and FEWS prior to the OFDA grant. It was not until the OFDA-funded VAM unit became aware of the already established VA efforts in Malawi that support was provided by Rome to WFP/Malawi which enabled WFP/Malawi to provide FEWS with a computer, color printer, and two consultancies. Helping people accomplish something that they are already struggling to do on their own is an excellent way to ensure that the outputs of the exercise will be used.

One commonly heard benefit of VAM at the country level was that it provided an antidote to political demands associated with the distribution of emergency food assistance. Terry Jones, the UNDP resident representative to Malawi, said that preliminary VAM information provided a basis for resolving disagreements with the GOM over targeting of emergency food during October-December 1994. All three country offices visited maintained that VAM was critically needed in order to improve targeting of the most vulnerable.

VAM has led to improvements over previous targeting methods. Malawi has the best example of targeting. The FAO/WFP Mission assessing the 1991/92 drought estimated that 3.5 million people would need 300,000 MT of relief maize country-wide. At the time there was no ability to target geographically. Each district commissioner drew up a list of recipients of unverifiable accuracy. Pushed by WFP's need for targeting information, FEWS, the GOM, donors and NGOs subsequently organized a monthly monitoring system (M3S). When the 1993/94 rains failed and relief food was again required, the most vulnerable Malawi EPA<sup>5</sup> could be, and were, targeted one by one, according to a list of relative vulnerability. Unfortunately, after the 93/94 situation was resolved, the monitoring system fell apart and this targeting ability was lost and there was no system in place when the 94/95 drought hit. The VAM effort had to be restarted from scratch. It's impact has already been viewed as useful. According to USAID, in cable Lilongwe 2409, "In our view these efforts have materially improved WFP/Malawi management of and accountability for its activities." Contributing substantially to this effort, OFDA funds paid for two consultancies: one that built consensus leading to the formation of the national VAM committee, another for statistical assistance. The VAM unit is also now in the process of allocating OFDA funds for dissemination of VAM result and \$20,000 for GPS logistics data (bridges, markets, tertiary

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There are 154 EPA's in Malawi.

roads) collection and training. WFP's contributions give them a high degree of ownership and access to FEWS targeting data at a modest cost.

WFP is not the only user of VAM for targeting of vulnerable populations in Malawi. Monitoring For Empowerment (M4E) is a VAM sub-system implemented by the Malawi Ministry of Health. Nationwide 40,000 M4E household surveys are administered monthly to obtain data on malnutrition, health, and agriculture. The information is used at the local level by the HSAs to diagnose and correct health and nutrition problems. It is also passed up to the district and national levels as one component of a national VAM system. The evaluation team visited Chikwawa district where M4E is helping to target Oral Rehydration Therapy within the district. M4E information also provides a basis for therapeutic feeding which was previously targeted purely on the basis of clinic registrations. Children are selected on the basis of weight-for-age and given a daily ration provided by WFP. Food aid deliveries were stopped in March 1996, based on improving malnutrition rates reported through M4E. They will resume if a need is indicated by M4E data. One local Chikwawa health official said, "M4E is the backbone of the preventive health program."

In Zambia, a preliminary VA was produced in June, 1995. It is, however, currently being revised owing to data and methodological weaknesses. These problems notwithstanding, WFP/Zambia has implemented two pilot road-improvement projects in districts identified on the basis of VA rankings. The Zambian umbrella NGO, PAM, a member of the WFP-organized VAM steering committee, used vulnerability assessment and cropping maps to target seed in crop diversification project in 1995. PAM also used VAM road maps to chart their transport costs which is a good example of sectoral planning information which can be extracted from the VAM unit's work.

In Zambia during the 1991-92 drought, prior to the OFDA grant, targeting was based on food aid requests from local committees established in each district. The committees did food needs assessments to determine the amount of food-aid needed. Although the distribution system worked well, in the intervening years controversy has developed over the accuracy of food needs requests at the local level.

The Zambian NEWS Director, Mr. Justin Mwansa, is very supportive of VAM because it takes the analysis from the national to the district level. Beyond that, however, VAM applications are constrained by the fact that sub-district data are not currently available. Districts are large, heterogeneous administrative areas. Whereas in Malawi if an EPA was evaluated as vulnerable



and improve the EW guidelines. WFP/VAM pulled together many agencies' comments and drafted a revision that was released by the DPPC in December 1995. It is too early to tell what effect the new guidelines will have on the DPPC's ability to detect emergency food needs earlier.

Overall, VA information, depending on the selected indicators, may contribute limited information to a NEWS, but in no way is VA expected to play the role of an early warning unit. NEWS and VA will together contribute to a more complete informational picture which in turn will contribute to a better, quicker, and more appropriate response, whether proactive or reactive.

**Output 2: Improved VA**

**Result 2.1 Improved needs assessment**

**Indicator 2.1 VA applied to needs assessment**

Improving the current method of assessing food needs is one of the most eagerly anticipated applications of VAM by WFP. In countries where indicator data sets represent relatively large and diverse geographic units like zones and districts, however, VA cannot be expected to contribute to identification of "pockets" of vulnerable groups or improved targeting on the smaller geographical areas where most of the distortion is likely to occur. This is where needs assessments come into play, by providing field verification of VA findings. Data compiled and organized by VAM cells are beginning to be used during needs assessments. The DMG has contributed to improved needs assessment methods for complex emergencies. The VAM unit commissioned a consultant who drafted Assessment Guidelines for WFP needs assessments in complex emergencies<sup>8</sup>.

In Zambia, the groups that now form the VAM steering committee performed a food needs assessments at the district level for the 1994/95 drought. Inputs to the VAM analysis, including population, rainfall and food production, were used to assess the amount of food aid required by district. While the 85k MT of food ultimately distributed may have been high, most districts were said to have received roughly what was needed.

In Ethiopia, the WFP country office anticipates that VAM will contribute to needs assessments at both the national and local levels. Assessments in the past are felt to have been somewhat

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The new guidelines will be commented on extensively by first WFP and then other UN agencies before coming under consideration for adoption as WFP policy.

high. The VAM unit is striving to complete its analysis by August in time for the next FAO/WFP mission. It remains to be seen how VAM will affect needs assessments in Ethiopia. The output from a VA is relative vulnerability, whereas the output from a needs assessment is number of people in need and tons of food-aid required. The greater availability of data compiled is, at a minimum, likely to make needs assessment easier. In Ethiopia, emergency food aid has been delivered in relatively massive amounts every year for almost 25 years. Practically speaking, the various parties involved in this process<sup>9</sup> recognize which are deficit zones. What is needed is a process to better identify and target the specific areas within zones or districts that are needy, or pockets of vulnerables within traditionally stable areas. WFP/Ethiopia, and in fact, WFP as an organization, needs to clearly demonstrate how the VA and needs assessments can form a mutually sybiotic relationship, both feeding into each other.

Where VA can be of most use to needs assessments is in contributing additional and compiled information to national crop and needs assessments. In Ethiopia, according to Country Director Allen Jones, the VAM unit was initially established for this very purpose: as a data collection unit for the annual FAO/WFP crop and needs assessment that determines national food requirements. To this end, the unit is collecting historical information at the zonal level to provide to the assessment teams. Eventually, the unit would like to do much of the assessment work itself, using the annual FAO/WFP team to verify the results and report them. The unit is collecting current year information on what it calls "shock" indicators on things like floods and droughts which may be of some use in determining whether free food distribution is warranted or whether some alternative intervention could be used more effectively.

However, it is important to recognize that even with the VA information, the traditional practice of dispatching teams to conduct needs assessments on the local level will need to continue. What is needed is a clearer linkage between VA results and the needs assessment results. This lack of linkage is a gap in the VAM process at this time. WFP must clearly articulate how the VA results can feed into and guide the needs assessments, particularly local level needs assessments.

<b>Result 2.2</b>	<b>Improved CSO preparation</b>
<b>Indicator 2.2</b>	<b>VA applied to CSO preparation</b>

This indicator is a duplicate of the indicator in the PI/F

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WFP, the GOE, NGOs, etc.

section. Please refer to page 32, Section 2.1, for the discussion.

**Result 2.3**                                    **Improved project identification**  
**Indicator 2.3**                                **VA applied to project identification**

VAM results influencing project identification have been limited to date, although several specific examples of its relevance are cited. The impact, thus far, is primarily seen in the targeting of non-food (and non-WFP) projects.

According to Malawi UNDP resident representative Terry Jones the UN system VAM has begun to guide some UN food security program targeting. UNICEF provides vitamin A supplements and UNDP promotes drought-resistant indigenous crops targeted at the poorest (subsistence, non-market) sector based on the VAM. VAM will allow the UN and the GOM to target assistance and identify projects in a coordinated way, removing constraints through a decentralized "District Planning System" approach. In contrast to this view, the UNICEF representative, however, stated that it was too early to begin using VAM results for targeting and expressed some criticism of the indicators being used in the VA process.

USAID/Malawi Agricultural Officer Kurt Rockeman said that the VAM information had been invaluable to a recent joint donor food security assessment which was trying to find an appropriate framework for using food aid without upsetting market liberalization.

In Zambia, WFP pilot road improvement projects in Lundazi and Samfya were identified using VAM, which indicated that road access was a constraint in those vulnerable districts.

In general, WFP is shifting from a project to a program approach. This means that rather than being earmarked for particular projects throughout their entire lifespan resources are tentatively allocated to projects but can be shifted around. This is a much more useful application of resources in the planning of more effective interventions and is a scenario in which VA will be able to play a more significant role. Without the ability to shift resources as needed to respond to the VA results, VA as a tool of programming becomes much less useful.

**Result 2.4**                                    **Improved project implementation**  
**Indicator 2.4**                                **VA applied to project implementation**

With the exception of Malawi Ministry of Health M4E local-level health survey applications, VAM is generally at too coarse a spatial scale to guide implementation of individual projects.

However, there are local-level activities which could be incorporated into VAM in Ethiopia. For example, under WFP project 2488 (a development FFW project), the GOE assists communities to develop and implement soil and water conservation projects. These plans are generated through a formal LLPPA that includes locally produced maps of factors affecting food security throughout the administrative area. Although it would require considerable effort, as it has in the case of M4E in Malawi, these maps of the food security landscape could form the basis of an integrated local- to national-level map-based vulnerability information system, tracking local-level project implementation and food security constraints and priorities as identified by the beneficiaries. Linkages like this should be recognized and encouraged where the capacity allows.

**Output 3: Personnel capability to produce vulnerability analysis ["personnel" refers to WFP staff, NGOs and counterparts]**

**Result 3.1 More personnel preparing vulnerability analyses**

**Indicator 3.1 Increased number of practitioners engaged in collection and analysis of information for VA**

The number of personnel engaged in collection and analysis of VA information is growing markedly. Within WFP this increase began prior to the OFDA grant and is continuing both through the grant funding and independently of it. Prior to the DMG, only the larger programs had the capacity to establish their own VAM units unassisted because they have the staff and resources. Bangladesh, for example, has had a large emergency program since 1975 and was the first WFP country office to develop and use VAM as documented in the Vulnerability Mapping Guidelines for WFP Country Offices by Borton and Shoham (1991). The Cambodia office has also developed its own VAM capability and wants to reproduce their successes in other country offices. The Rome VAM unit provides a institutional mechanism for systematically transferring these targeting and food security approaches to other country offices. Use of complementary approaches of VAM among WFP's counterparts is also growing. SCF/UK's "Risk Map" system is being field tested in 15 countries and uses a key informant approach to identifying food economy regions and household food security. Practitioners in all countries visited were coordinating their efforts through VAM steering committees including WFP, NGOs and host-country governments.

The VAM cell in Ethiopia has been working to build capacity among counterparts in the government and collaborating NGOs. For example, the VAM unit recently trained 75 DPPC staff in map use

and development and CARE and WFP/VAM are now exchanging GIS/cartography and statistical training. Despite these efforts, there are some at WFP who make the case that VAM should remain a WFP tool for their own programming. WFP does not do institution building, according to several WFP officials, and should limit the training and institutional development (of VAM) given to outside sources.

As the VAM exercise spreads throughout WFP's country offices more people will become aware of VAM and, although there is a limit to how much training and technology transfer WFP can do with their outside partners, it is important that these partners understand the methodology. WFP's continued cooperation and training at the technical level should help in this regard.

**Result 3.2                      More personnel using VA**  
**Indicator 3.2                  Increased use of VA shown in wording of**  
**project documents**

Acceptance of VAM is rapidly becoming WFP-wide. Desk officers at WFP's Asia Bureau said that virtually every country office now accepts the need for targeting and this need is driving VAM adoption. In addition to currently providing material or technical support to offices in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Senegal, and Ethiopia, VAM cells will also be established in Angola and Mozambique in the near future.

Other cooperating institutions recognize the importance of VAM as well. Getachew Diriba of CARE/Ethiopia cited three reasons for CARE's participation in the Needs Assessment Steering Committee VA working group: 1) VAM has the potential to inform CARE food security policy, 2) to set limits on CARE operations in terms of where sustainable impact is possible, and 3) to set priorities among countries (Ethiopia's need versus needs in other countries). According to Mr. Diriba, VAM is "a crucial turning point in the history of Ethiopian food aid". The NASC working group, organized by VAM, is a "far-reaching step." In his view, agencies involved will make better informed decisions and improve use of resources.

An in-depth discussion of references to VA in CSO's is provided in Section 2.1 of the PI/F evaluation on page 32.

## II. Emergency Management Training

### 1. Introduction

The HR Division of WFP/Rome currently organizes a periodic one-week workshop for Country Directors and senior staff in emergency management and a one-week workshop for program officers (P-2/3) in emergency operations. These workshops have been well attended and have elicited favorable comments from participants. The Kampala workshop in November-December 1994 received an overall rating of 4.10 (out of a possible 5.00); the Harare workshop in May 1995 received 4.47; the Abidjan workshop in October 1995 received 4.06; and the Rome workshop in January 1996 received 4.52.

Similarly favorable comments were received by the team in interviews in Rome and in the field with WFP staff who had participated. For example, Nancy Walters, WFP Rome Program Officer for Malawi, called emergency training "absolutely critical." The Chief of the OMW Bureau observed: "The training component has finally given us the possibility of training our future managers in emergency operations." Charlie Clark, Head of the Disaster Mitigation Program at WFP/Malawi, observed: "The training sessions brought us together and we saw we had the same problems." E. T. Tagoe, another participant from WFP/Malawi, saw the benefits of the workshop as being: (1) picking up problems faced by other country teams through participative sessions; (2) sharing in the experiences of and lessons learned by other Country Directors; (3) learning how to interact with other Country Directors.

In Zambia, where no workshop participants were interviewed, an extra effort would seem to be called for to bring WFP staff up to speed with staff elsewhere; this may occur when staff changes currently planned have had time to be implemented.

In Ethiopia, one participant in an emergency management workshop and three participants in emergency operations workshops were interviewed. All stated that the training had benefited them and improved their work. One of the latter group, Maureen Forsythe, had not had much experience with WFP at the time she participated, but on the other hand was assigned to work on emergency relief, so the workshop was very relevant. She found the workshop was well organized, but a little too heavily weighted to theory. She compared the WFP workshop with an FAO workshop she attended, which she said as concentrating more on practical exercises, which were relegated to a secondary role in the WFP workshop because of the time constraints. However, when she returned to Addis Ababa, the government organized an assessment team because of a flood emergency and she was able to apply her training immediately by

knowing what kind of questions to ask. Another participant, T. Nour, had been with WFP at the time he attended, and found the workshop to be a valuable investment because he had not worked directly on emergencies.

Suggestions from the WFP/Ethiopia participants for improving future workshops were to mix ranks among participants and to include more participants from other UN agencies and government counterparts. Daniela Owen, who works on refugee programs, said a representative from UNHCR attended her workshop, and she has attended UNHCR workshops. "The more we have joint workshops, the better it is," she said. There is now a memorandum of understanding between WFP and UNHCR. UNDP, UNICEF, and EUE were other partner agencies suggested. The participants also suggested that workshops be held more frequently and be made available to program assistants. Several people who had requested training, but had not be selected requested that the selection criteria for the training be disseminated so they could know what type of training candidates Rome is looking for.

The Head of the Staff Development Unit within HR/WFP Rome, George Aelion, sees a growing demand for such training. He has kept a log frame of the training component of the OFDA grant at hand and has carefully monitored the outputs (see table). He foresees the possibility of including participants from UNHCR and other UN agencies in future workshops, although this may raise certain problems initially.

The team has received a favorable impression of WFP's use of the OFDA grant to improve staff capability and to make use of these capabilities in the ongoing processes of preparing vulnerability assessments and identifying emergency response activities. New advances in vulnerability analysis and mapping have been incorporated without delay in training materials. This constitutes a vital feedback from one component of the grant to another.

An important reason for training is the institutional difficulty of maintaining large teams in countries after the end of emergencies. WFP has started to form a pool of trained emergency officers. This will enhance WFP's flexibility in moving personnel from one country to another and in rapidly deploying and redeploying staff to sudden and/or rapidly escalating emergencies without resorting to external consultants, who lack the working knowledge of WFP's operational procedures. Thus, the training effort can provide WFP with much needed stability of personnel.

As further steps within WFP, additional training, beyond the Emergency Management/Operations training needs to be considered.

Several WFP staff members expressed a desire for continued training in more focussed, job specific training to follow up the EM/O courses. It might be useful for a training committee to be established in Rome to look at this issue.

## 2. Indicators

**Output 1:** Increased capacity (in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes) of WP staff, counterparts and implementing partners to execute and manage food security interventions before, during and after emergency situations.

**Indicator 1.1** Increase in the knowledge and skills of WFP and counterpart staff in the execution and management of food security interventions by the end of the training intervention in 1996.

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 Staff trained in emergency management by grade:

Grade:	P-1	Percent of total trained:	0
	P-2		0
	P-3		7
	P-4		55
	P-5		32
	D-1		5
	D-2		1

(Total population: 77/80)

Staff trained in emergency operations by grade:

Grade:	P-1	Percent of total trained:	10
	P-2		25
	P-3		51
	P-4		13
	P-5		0.8
	D-1		0
	D-2		0

(Total population: 118/250)

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Source: Data compiled by HR/WFP Rome.

As mentioned earlier, it is unclear to what extent WFP can undertake to provide training for NGO and government counterparts. There did not appear to be consensus within WFP management on WFP's role in the institutional capacity building. Training of outside parties will need to be discussed within WFP and in consideration of it's mandate. However, it is essential that a position be taken. Obviously, the above indicator was developed

in conjunction with WFP staff; those staff members considered the training of "counterparts and implementing partners" to be appropriate. If it is not, that should be made clear to the staff in the field offices.

### III. Program Identification and Formulation

#### 1. Introduction

PI/F has changed in its relation to the DMG. Originally one of the three funded components of the grant, the funds for PI/F were shifted to the VAM component because WFP received other donor funds for PI/F activities. Despite the shift to alternative funding, the team evaluated the PI/F component because both WFP and OFDA consider improved project-level impact to be central to VA efforts.

Despite some identified progress, the PI/F component has perhaps the least clearly demonstrated achievement of the three. This is explained by three reasons. The first is simply based on linear activity progression. PI/F improvements were expected to stem from the investments made in emergency management/operations training and VAM. Improved PI/F is the result of investments in technology and human resources. Therefore, chronologically, it is the last component to be achieved. As the benefits stemming from VAM and training are only now beginning to be realized, changes in PI/F cannot yet be fully assessed. It is also difficult to attribute WFP's significant improvement in vulnerability assessment wholly to the DMG. Within WFP, the thinking about PI/F has been changing simultaneously with and separately from the DMG. During the evaluation it was repeatedly reported that the funding constraints of the early 1990's created a need for a targeting mechanism. This is not to deny the importance of the DMG in this process within WFP. The DMG facilitated some high profile VAM efforts that helped spread the concept of targeting much faster than might otherwise have happened. However, due to the multiple influences, some of the changes that are documented are difficult to assign credit for. This is particularly true in the field where the DMG has had less of a direct effect on PI/F. Finally, progress in PI/F is limited by WFP's mandate which restricts the organization to food aid interventions which often may not be the appropriate response to problems identified by the VA. For this reason, non-food PI/F, using VA information, will be considered progress in the scope of this evaluation given the larger food security environment.

#### 2. Indicators

The log frame indicators developed for PI/F remain valid, particularly because it is here that we can see the benefits improved project identification and formulation have begun to have on the beneficiaries. Moreover, Pablo Recalde indicated that he has used DMG funds to work to tie the VAM to PI/F through training.

The PI/F goals and progress indicators are:

**Overall Component Goal: Improved Coping Capacity so that food-insecure people can respond to disasters.**

**Output 1: Improved disaster mitigation projects**

**Result 1.1 Improved Targeting of Hungry Poor**  
**Indicator 1.1 Reduced Proportion of Resources Expended in a Country for Free Food Distribution**

In general, targeting of food aid using VA has not yet occurred to a significant extent in any of the countries visited. It is too early to be able to attribute any reduction in food aid resources to efforts made by the various VAM units evaluated. In any event, this specific indicator's relevance would vary per country. In Malawi and Zambia, for example, which have both suffered from chronic droughts in recent years, there are spikes in the free food distribution pattern because of drought-related needs. In these countries it would be impossible to deduce anything from dramatic drops in free food distribution from year to year because such drops would not signify anything other than the occurrence of a non-drought year. In any case, improvements in targeting are hard to identify based on reductions in resources devoted to free food distribution.

While these spikes in free food distribution do indicate that neither Malawi or Zambia have successfully mitigated the effects of drought, nonetheless, modest improvements can be identified. In Malawi, food aid targeting in the 1991/92 drought was based on blanket registration at the district level. With the advent of VA indicators, relief food targeting in the future will be based on two indicators - Days of Food Remaining in Household (HH) Stocks and Days of Livelihood Derived from Non-Agriculturally Related System.<sup>10</sup>

While it is difficult at this time to actually identify from the

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The targeting of relief food using these indicators has three assumptions that attend it: (1) Livelihood systems can be replicated from month to month (on a seasonal basis); (2) EPA surplus will not gravitate to deficit areas (there is little known about private trade, but it is assumed that most surplus leaves the area altogether, as the most vulnerable population does not have the purchasing power to keep the surplus in local markets); and (3) maize is the staple food.

data available any trend toward reduction in free food distribution, each WFP office, and equally importantly, host country government representatives we visited conveyed their determination to reduce free food distribution.

**Result 1.2                      Long Term Benefits (Non Consumptive)**  
**Indicator 1.2                  Increased Local Production, Employment, and**  
**Infrastructure**

Traditionally FFW activities have been the avenue through which food aid was used to bring about longer term, non-consumptive benefits. These days FFW is being re-thought within WFP. Not only are questions about its conceptual appropriateness being raised, but operationally the projects themselves are beginning to take on the shape of more community identified and initiated activities rather than the top-down imposed "busy work" of the past.

In both Ethiopia and Malawi, use of food aid through FFW projects is aimed at creating long-term benefits such as aforestation, crop diversification, and resource conservation. Despite the changes occurring in FFW implementation, there remain a number of organizations and individuals who are resistant to using FFW, taking the view that it will undercut community-based programs and self initiative. In Zambia, FFW seems to be doing that very thing, that is, leading local populations to become dependent on food aid. In one village visited, the old women said men would no longer help their elderly neighbors or female-headed houses (example given of thatching a roof) without being paid. In another example, teams of workers repairing a road under a FFW project had become, apparently, almost entirely dependent on the food assistance they were receiving. In Malawi, national WFP staff were very sensitive to the potential of FFW to undermine the "self-help spirit" and in a number of NGO's and government ministries there were organizational policies against FFW.

In Ethiopia, which in each of the past eight years has ranked among the top six recipient countries of food aid deliveries<sup>11</sup> there is discussion as to whether FFW projects like Project 2488 do indeed contribute to the increased development of the areas and people that they affect. In WFP/Rome, two senior managers expressed their disagreement over the Ethiopia FFW projects saying that looking for a sensible FFW project is like looking for a "drop in the ocean." WFP/Ethiopia Country Director Allen Jones

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World Food Program, The Food Aid Monitor, Special Issue (April 1996), table 15C, pp. 52-55. In 1992 and 1995, Ethiopia ranked first in the world in tonnage terms of food aid delivered.

told the team that he was interested in calculating the additional cost per metric ton of doing FFW versus FFD as a cost-benefit exercise. He thought of FFW as making "a big difference to a small number of people." This opinion was verified by the team's visit to several development FFW sites. While the improvements made by FFW (field drainage, micro catchment areas, pond construction) were important to the beneficiaries (mostly private farmers), the numbers reached were modest due to a lack of resources. An important aspect of the Ethiopian development FFW projects visited was the participatory methodology being used to have the beneficiaries themselves determine the type of projects needed in the area. In October 1993, the GOE announced a new policy that had at its crux the idea that no able-bodied person should receive free food. The GOE has created a program of Employment Generation Schemes (EGS) with a target of 80 percent of food aid through the EGS (or FFW) and 20 percent through FFD<sup>12</sup>. However, as noted above, many WFP officials (and others) are skeptical of the schemes and have said "Yes, we can ask a person to dig a hole and then fill it back up again before we give him food, but is that really useful?" One WFP official even called the EGS "disaster creation schemes", because it is viewed as an attempt to create false employment which does not have a graduation component and hence causes dependency. EGS appear not to have the same structure of participatory decision-making and structured implementation as WFP's Project 2488. While they are targeting different groups (2488 is development-orientated and the beneficiaries are of a higher income group than EGS beneficiaries), there is a feeling in WFP that EGS would do well to adopt a framework similar to 2488.

While it is difficult to actually determine the long-term benefits accruing from food assistance, the types of FFW projects and the participatory methods by which they are chosen certainly signal a positive trend. Whether food can, in fact, actually bring about long term benefits without creating dependency is not the subject of this evaluation.

<b>Result 1.3</b>	<b>Proportionally Less Free Food Distribution</b>
<b>Indicator 1.3</b>	<b>Proportion of People Receiving Free Relief Food</b>

As stated in section 1.1, recurrent droughts in Malawi and Zambia mean that an absolute move away from free food distribution is premature in these countries. Malawi is showing signs of reduction of food aid through free distributions despite the

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Previously, this breakdown had been about 5 percent FFW and 95 percent free food distribution.

droughts. In the 1991/92 drought, over 6 million people were receiving food aid through free distributions. In the 94/95 drought the number of beneficiaries was reduced to 4.5 million. Although VA wasn't used during this drought, some of the secondary data which fed into the VA were used in identification and targeting. Moreover, it is important to note that Charlie Clark thought that even had the VA information been used in the 94/95 drought, it would not have reduced the amount of FFD, but rather would have targeted the FFD to areas where it was more needed.

In Zambia, the rate does not seem to be decreasing in this year as one might expect. As a matter of fact, the proportion of the population receiving relief food increased from 12 percent in the 1994/95 drought to 14 percent this year (1995/96) when harvests were above average.

It is difficult to determine whether Ethiopia has actually made progress away from free food distribution since WFP was unable to give the team information on what percent of relief food was going to FFD and what percent was going to FFW (through EGS). However, they were quite certain that the GOE had not reached it's target of 20% - 80%.

Overall, this indicator was of limited use in actually determining whether mitigation projects were reducing long term vulnerability. Free food distribution is often a result of multiple factors, climatic and economic conditions coupled with food aid policies, which may have very little to do with mitigation.

<b>Output 2:</b>	<b>Improved Country Strategy Outlines</b>
<b>Result 2.1</b>	<b>Better Identification of Vulnerable Groups and Areas</b>
<b>Indicator 2.1</b>	<b>Increased use of Vulnerability Mapping</b>

CSOs have been prepared for nineteen countries since 1994. According to WFP officer Kees Tuinenberg, all of these CSO's include discussions of targeting and in his view, this improvement is partially attributable to the OFDA grant. The consultants who lead CSO teams are instructed to obtain targeting information from wherever they can find it (FEWS, local EWS, etc.). The VAM unit in Rome maintains contacts with these organizations and briefs consultants going out to prepare CSOs, even in countries where the VAM is not active.

The Country Strategy Outline guidelines detail the increased focus on improved identification of vulnerable groups. "Central in the policy discussions...was the need to better target the Program resources on those who are hungry and poor, and to use food aid

only in those cases where food aid can make a significant difference in their lives. Better targeting, therefore, has a central place in the new guidelines." It specifies that the CSO's should clearly identify the target groups which are made up of "households where food accounts for some 70 percent of the total budget." Although the CSO guidelines do not specifically require use of VAM, it is clear that in the countries where VA is active it is one tool to better identify appropriate projects and appropriate target groups.

The team found substantial evidence that the vulnerability maps are being put to good use in the actual identification of projects. Most of the applications at this time, however, are found in the targeting of non-food projects, which although slightly outside the scope of this evaluation gave excellent evidence of the eventual use the information and maps could be put to in development of food aid projects. In Malawi, the evidence was overwhelming. One example was given by an official at the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development when he told the team that identified public works projects were targeted in vulnerable EPA's that had been identified by the VAM. Another example came from ActionAid, one of the prominent NGO's in Malawi, was able to target assistance (seeds and fertilizer) down to the household level. FEWS/Malawi reported that at least every week they have organizations, governmental and non-governmental, coming to their office to get maps of different variables so that this information can be used to select the most appropriate project sites.

In Zambia, the first CSO prepared in 1994 (prior to the VA) was rejected by WFP. The second CSO, now in draft form, mentions VA and some initial results, but does not appear to actually use those results in the identification of project areas. However, the VAM has been used to select geographical project sites in a few examples. Specifically, it was used in selecting WFP FFW project sites and the local NGO Program Against Malnutrition (PAM) used it to select districts in which to target seed distribution in a crop diversification project. However, in Zambia using VAM did not necessarily coincide with successful projects. In fact, the team heard substantial criticism regarding the above mentioned projects, leading us to acknowledge the obvious: using VAM is only as useful as the user makes it.

In Ethiopia, the VAM unit is still selecting indicators, and therefore is not at the stage where extensive vulnerability mapping based on indicators is appropriate. WFP/Ethiopia is operating under a CSO that is now three years old but it is likely that the VAM analysis will be completed in time for the next one.

Despite these examples on the ground of identification of vulnerable, the CSO is perhaps too general a document to allow specific groups to be identified. While geographical areas may be illuminated as the traditionally vulnerable areas, specific and local target groups will change over the length of a CSO. However, where VAM is being used to formulate CSO's and to select projects on the ground, it is clear that there is progress in this indicator.

**Result 2.2**                      **Formulation of Disaster Mitigation Project Ideas**  
**Indicator 2.2**                  **CSO's Reflect Mitigation Ideas (Relief to Development Continuum)**

Since the CSO guidelines require elements of targeting and vulnerability, all the CSO's include some directions to identifying the hungry poor, which previous strategy documents did not always contain. However, some of the CSO's, especially the earlier versions, simply contain statements that are too general to be of significant use. Assertions such as "target women-headed households" or "target the invisible rural poor" are more "boilerplate statements" than genuine targeting directives based on vulnerability analysis. However, this is changing. In a recent letter to OFDA, WFP said "The importance the initiative [VAM] has gained within WFP has led us to look at the...integration of the VAM results in the Country Strategy Exercises, which would result in disaster mitigation projects being integrated into the country programs of WFP and its partners." There is clear improvement in the quality of recent CSO's, some of which have taken into consideration information generated by the VAM unit. For example, Malawi's CSO is clearly oriented to the move from relief to development. "A major thematic concern for the programming period [1997-2000] will be to develop to the extent possible linkages between relief and development. This will be achieved by incorporating development concerns into relief projects, by prioritizing food for work projects which have a clear disaster mitigation focus and by strengthening disaster preparedness measures such as vulnerability mapping." There is an entire section on disaster mitigation that states, "disaster mitigation is considered to be an integral part of the development program." The CSO prioritizes longer-term FFW projects such as improving smallholder productivity and rehabilitating marginal lands and refugee-affected areas, community forestry initiatives, small farm diversification, and agroforestry.

Ethiopia's CSO was developed in October 1993, and while it mentions in passing that "the WFP program during the eighties was principally driven by an immediate and short-term response...rather than by the longer-term preoccupation

with...food security," it does not address in detail specific mitigation activities that might be undertaken. In fact, it recommends an increase in food aid contributions to the GOE to the scale of 300,000-400,000 in a good year and much more in a bad year and an increase in project food aid from levels of approximately 30,000 to 60,000 Mt without clear instructions how this additional food should be used for the most vulnerable populations. It is a typical example of the early versions of a CSO. The WFP/Ethiopia staff remarked that it is clearly time for a revision of the CSO to take into account new modes of thinking. Zambia's CSO's has been recently released in draft form and includes a section on VA. Mitigation, however, is not a major focus.

The CSO development seems to clearly follow the developments in thinking at WFP. As interest increases in the rationed use of food aid and better targeting, the CSO's seem to reflect that. As the VAM unit in Rome continues to gather vulnerability information on a larger number of countries, this will influence development of future CSO's and should save work on the part of the person drafting the CSO as much of the pertinent information will already have been compiled.

**Output 3: Improved Project Design**

**Result 3.1: Flexible designs which can be adapted to changing conditions.**

**Indicator 3.1 Designs include contingency planning**

The Malawi CSO clearly reflects the idea that projects need to have an element of disaster preparedness in order to respond quickly to a changing situation. Use of mapping for infrastructure identification (bridges, roads, etc.) are components of this disaster preparedness. At the request of Rome, WFP/Malawi is preparing to use GPS to geo-reference all locations of appropriate infrastructure (roads, bridges, storage locations, etc.) that would be used in case of an emergency.

WFP/Ethiopia has perhaps the best example of contingency planning. In late February 1996, SCF/UK became worried that the short (Belg) rains were not starting on time and they became convinced there had been a severe underestimation of the food needs. While WFP was more cautious about sounding the alarm, the two organizations went through a contingency planning exercise that involved coming up with the "worst case scenario". They came up with a potential need of 185,000 Mt of additional food. Using the maximum potential need they were able to look at the in-country stocks and determine that any additional needs could be met from these reserves.

Although it turned out that in fact the Belg harvest will be excellent--even far above average--this contingency exercise was a good example of how the analytical tools within VAM can be used to prepare for the unexpected. The VAM unit should also be credited with a potential savings of thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands, of tons of food that would have been drawn from in-country reservoir stocks or imported. SCF/UK was intent on raising the alarm prematurely about the additional food needs, but the VAM unit was able to convince them to go through the contingency planning exercise before making any decisions. By the time the exercise was finished, the rains had begun and it was clear that SCF's worries had been premature. Taking the situation away from "gut reactions" into an analytical exercise is one of the best examples of good contingency planning.

Another example of WFP's work on this type of contingency planning is an interagency exercise called ALITE which, although not funded by the DMG, receives mapping support from the VAM unit in Rome and in fact, the Office of Transport and Logistics provided significant support to the VAM unit in Rome (1 person, 1 computer) because they felt the mapping capability of the VAM unit was integral to their contingency planning. Several interviewees indicated that the VAM unit was a contributing factor to the establishment of the ALITE unit. ALITE is essentially a case scenario analysis for various "hot spots," including places like Burundi and Liberia. A notable success was their plans for the former Yugoslavia region which assisted IFOR in their deployment to the region. These linkages between vulnerability mapping and logistics contingency planning connect operational concerns with analysis of vulnerability and to the specific response mechanisms and contingency planning.

Overall, WFP is more active in contingency planning at headquarters than in the country offices and the CSO's do not include a section on contingency planning. This should be considered especially in countries where it is probable that some sort of emergency could arise in the future. Even at WFP/Ethiopia, where the very useful exercise mentioned above went on, the staff said that the exercise was more of a "side activity" than a normal activity. This kind of activity should be taking place at every opportunity and it is important that WFP/Rome allows the VAM cells in country to take a wider view of the potential applications of the collected information than just VA. While data collection and organization is a primary task, other useful activities should not be under-emphasized.

**Result 3.2: Better reflection of local inputs and needs.**  
**Indicator 3.2 Beneficiary/Community input required in CSO/Design Missions (Social Scientist on**

teams)

Multi-disciplinary teams for CSO development did not become established, and hence the social scientist mentioned in this indicator did not happen. However, project designing in all three countries has begun to take beneficiary input into consideration. In Malawi, the M4E system allows the beneficiaries to view the trends occurring in their area and discuss with local officials how to proceed. At the moment, this is only occurring on the health side, but will hopefully be extended to the agricultural side as well.

In Zambia, ostensibly the communities have a say in project design. However, this seems to vary by NGO. For example, PAM said that they were fully participatory, but when a site visit was conducted it turned out that, in that area, decisions were being made by a committee consisting of government extension workers. There were also no women on the committee and when a team member met with the women they all said that they would like to have women on the committee and felt that women were better at identifying persons in need of targeting. In other instances, PAM says that the members, while still primarily men, are democratically elected and are not local government members.

In Ethiopia's Project 2488, the participatory LLPPA has become part of the project design process. Although 2488 was not reviewed in the scope of this evaluation, the process has proven successful and may be copied in the relief-focused EGS.

WFP, like other development agencies, has begun to recognize the importance of beneficiary input in project design. There is still substantial room for improvement in this area, however.

**Output 4: Improved Collaboration with Host Country and Donors**

The success of VA is dependent on receiving support from and collaboration with WFP's NGO and host country government partners. While WFP is developing VA as a tool for its own programming purposes, WFP does not operate in a vacuum. WFP is not the only agency making decisions about amounts of food aid, identification of beneficiaries or transportation issues. In fact, the larger picture encompasses a food security situation which goes beyond food aid altogether. While WFP must maintain control of the VA process in order for it to remain a useful tool, it is especially important that WFP work with its counterparts to achieve a seamless collaboration. Not only does this involve collaboration in the collection of data sets or selection of indicators, but it involves careful introduction to the value of VA and ways in which

it can be used. Good will efforts such as basic training of line ministry staff can go a long way toward establishing this kind of relationship.

The process in Malawi was a good example of how VAM can be used to facilitate relations between the various actors involved in food security issues. In 1993, when VAM was first introduced to the government, it opened up a contentious discussion over numbers of beneficiaries. One government official told the team that VAM at first appeared to be isolated and donor-dominated. However, once the GOM realized that VAM was a tool by which it could justify its decisions to its constituents, the GOM came on board with the idea and has substantially taken ownership of the process. In fact, both USAID and WFP offered the opinion that if the donors walked away tomorrow from FEWS and the VAM work, the GOM would probably try to find a way to keep it going anyhow.

In Zambia, a VA steering committee was formed with the idea of involving the relevant agencies and ministries in a dialogue on VA. However, government participation has dwindled to a stop at recent meetings and the WFP staff said that perhaps the GRZ was less interested in the process than in the results. Various GRZ officers expressed interest in VA, to the team, but the people who expressed the most interest and seemingly had the most capability to understand and absorb the VA techniques were not the ones with the influence to disseminate or enforce the use of the VA information.

Unfortunately, in Ethiopia an attempt to institutionalize the VAM unit was handled without due consideration for the sensitivity of the GOE and recently derailed (hopefully temporarily). First, there appears to have been little or no effort to obtain high-level support for the effort before involving the DPPC in working group sessions. In the case of the VAM unit, prior official, written communication between the WFP Country Director and the Commissioner of the DPPC would have avoided the unfortunate outcome in which the Deputy Commissioner of the DPPC accused the NASC of working outside governmental authority and failing to consult the DPPC.

There is discussion within WFP about where this collaboration should lead. Although it appeared that within WFP government collaboration is universally recognized as necessary, one senior official remarked, "Leave VAM as a WFP/donor instrument. WFP is not a development or technical assistance agency" and would prefer to limit the active participation by host country governments. WFP field staff stressed the need for WFP and the donors to have an independent capacity to make program decisions that is separate from the host country government. This raises the question of how

much government involvement is optimal and how much may be too much. VAM relies on data collected by government ministries. So, while there must be collaboration, care must also be taken that VA does not develop into some sort of "negotiation", which food aid levels often were, rather than an objective tool. One WFP consultant said that one of the main flaws in the original Zambia VA occurred when non-technical actors began making technical decisions about indicator selection and the process became politicized and the VA usefulness was jeopardized. This is clearly an issue at the center of the future direction of VAM and will need to be further explored.

The three countries visited by the team showed the spectrum of government involvement in the VA process. Both Ethiopia and Zambia are moving in the right direction, although more slowly and with more rough spots than Malawi, and it was obvious to the team that WFP is committed to encouraging host government participation in the VA process. Although the team did not evaluate this issue closely, in all countries visited the relationships between WFP and donors seemed strong and mutually supportive.

## Conclusions

The DMG has had an important and substantial impact on WFP. VAM has set the stage for improved uses of food-aid in countries where implemented. There are, however, outstanding issues. For example, it was apparent to the team that there high expectations about the potential savings of resources based on VA. In fact, VA by itself has limited potential for causing significant reductions in either overall amounts of food aid or in levels of free food being distributed. While VA conducted for large, heterogeneous geographical regions is of limited use in targeting discrete populations, it is one tool which can substantially improve the information upon which food aid decisions are based. For that reason it is vital as the development community not only looks more and more at the rationalization of resources, but at the impact food aid can have on the beneficiaries. The linkage between VA and needs assessment, however, needs improvement.

The training component has been essential in modernizing the attitudes and capabilities of WFP's staff. It is important that this element continue within WFP. It is also important that the training continue to be updated and revised.

Overall, the DMG has been successfully used by WFP in meeting the original goals of the grant. That being said, there are still refinements and clarification needed. Are the goals of VAM clear to the expected users? Is VAM solely a WFP activity or should it be viewed as a larger food security venture with multiple partners? Related to that, where does WFP come out on capacity building of its partners? Despite these outstanding issues, WFP has shown that it has the will to improve its capacity. Continued support and direction from donors will aid this change. Most importantly, dialogue must continue between the actors in food security so that these tools that WFP is working so hard at developing are sustained.

## Recommendations

1) WFP should examine its practice using outside consultants to draft the CSOs and instead consider perhaps using a facilitator to take the country office staff through the process of developing/updating the CSO. In the team's opinion, having the country office staff, who understand the country and WFP program and goals much more in depth than any outside consultant, go through the strategic planning process would not only produce better CSOs but be very useful to the staff as well.

2) Currently the VAM cells are centered around an imported specialist who may or may not work with a national VAM officer. The team recommends that a permanent national officer be assigned to work on VAM issues in each country office with a VAM cell. This is important so that there remains capability, continuity and links with the host country government that endure beyond the tenure of this specialist.

3) An identified need in the VAM cells is access to statistical expertise in order to address the complexity involved in dealing with multiple data sets. This is particularly important in Ethiopia which is at a critical stage in indicator selection.

4) WFP/Ethiopia was considering the development of a "custom-made, menu-driven data management tool, linked to GIS software, to provide collaborators with ready access to tabular, graphical and map-based presentations of important indicators". Collaboration is already occurring at a technical level and access to the data by decision-makers will be through VAM outputs and briefings, rather than by directly accessing the data through specially developed software. It is important that VAM not expend valuable resources developing custom software that will likely never be used.

5) The Emergency Management/Operations Training should continue until the unmet need from the field is satisfied. Related to this is a need to disseminate the selection criteria for attendance at this course to potential trainees.

6) As mentioned in the Training section, there is a clear need for an Advisory Committee on Training in WFP/Rome to give direction to the "next steps" in the training effort and replace the present situation of haphazard initiatives in setting new training directions.

7) The real beneficiary level impact of the VAM component will be felt through the operations of the field offices. While the operations of the VAM unit in Rome are impressive, the generation

of maps for public relations and general communications purposes are a distraction from the original purpose of the VAM Unit.

8) Criteria should be established in order to prioritize where to undertake VA, such as, but not limited to:

- vulnerability of country to "shocks" like drought or civil unrest;
- quality and quantity of data availability (in countries where this is a limitation, alternative methodologies such as SCF/UK's knowledge based approach might be considered);
- national level of poverty;
- geographic variability of vulnerability within country;
- whether VA is already being undertaken by other agencies;
- WFP's future plans;
- difficulty of operations;
- size of WFP program;

9) The Zambia country office is in a state of transition. The new country director and his vision of how to use food aid will have major impact on the future utility of VAM. In addition to this, there is an issue of sustainability both internally in WFP (with Brad Flamm leaving and no national officer) and within the GRZ (lack of an identifiable partner). Until these issues have been resolved, WFP should reconsider whether this effort should be continued.

10) The VAM cells in the country offices need the full support of the WFP country management, particularly the Country Director. The Country Director should be active in introducing the VA to senior government and NGO officials and gaining any necessary agreements. This will avoid the type of situation like in Ethiopia where senior officials felt that they were bypassed by the technical people.

11) More substantial briefings should be given in Rome and in the field to the VAM personnel so that they have a full understanding of their working environment, particularly as it relates to politics within their organizational partners.

12) As mentioned in the body of the report, a clearer link between VA and needs assessments should be articulated and demonstrated at WFP. WFP management should begin an intra-organizational review of the types of changes which might complement the overall shift in approach and attitudes about food security. In particular, using field staff, especially monitors and assessment teams to provide field-level verification of VA results, as well as provide local-level information to feed into VA, would contribute to the overall food security process. The linkage of field assessment capability with the VAM office should be considered.

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