

EVALUATING MULTI- STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS: SOME LESSONS LEARNED

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Outline

- About Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- How evaluation was designed and conducted
- Key challenges
- Lessons learned

Committee on World Food Security

- ❑ Established in 1974
- ❑ Sees itself as “...the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.”
- ❑ Uses multi-stakeholder approach to developing and endorsing policy recommendations and guidance on wide range of food security topics
- ❑ Reports to UN General Assembly through ECOSOC, and to FAO Conference

Reformed CFS

- Reforms adopted in 2009
- Established mechanisms for civil society, private sector and philanthropic foundations to be participants (not observers) in CFS work
 - ▣ Participate in negotiations in Plenary
 - ▣ Serve on Advisory Group
- Established independent High Level Panel of Experts for research and technical inputs
- Technical and financial support from Rome-Based Agencies

Our task

Produce evidence on CFS **achieving vision** outlined in Reform Document and **three main outcomes**

Assess extent to which CFS is **performing its roles** outlined in the Reform document, efficiently and effectively, and what is the impact

Review **working arrangements** to assess how decision-making processes and planning may be impacting effectiveness

Propose **forward-looking recommendations** to enable CFS to respond effectively to emerging food security and nutrition challenges

Generate **learning** on multi-stakeholder collaboration – CFS a possible model for replication in UN system

Key Evaluation Questions

- Three Key Evaluation Questions:
 - Is the reformed CFS achieving its intended outcomes?
 - How is the reformed CFS functioning?
 - Is the CFS multi-stakeholder collaboration approach worth replicating?
- 10 sub-questions

Overview of methodology

Highly consultative approach to ensure use of evaluation results

Two quality assurance processes for credibility of evaluation results

Team with technical and facilitative skills, experience with different sectors

Developed **interview protocol that covered all key evaluation questions** that served as basis for specific protocols for different categories of interviewees

Conducted **desk review of secondary data sources**

Primary data collection done through **semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions** (in Rome and 6 countries)

Interview summaries prepared during missions/immediately after using an agreed format & emerging themes were noted during debriefing meetings

Comments during briefing on preliminary findings and written comments submitted considered in drafting evaluation report

Interview data triangulated with secondary data from CFS and external sources

Used results from earlier CFS Effectiveness Survey

Primary data was qualitative data. **Responses were analyzed using a two-step process:** grouping responses by stakeholders and clustering by categories

Systematic coding of raw data to confirm frequency of terms used and **to provide weighting**

Role of Bureau

- Discussed and endorsed all phases of work in consultation with Advisory Group
 - ▣ Terms of reference for evaluation
 - ▣ Inception report
 - ▣ Preliminary findings
 - ▣ Two drafts and final report
- Led consultative process to discuss recommendations and how they could be implemented
- Final report and results of consultation endorsed Oct 2017

Challenge 1: Understanding CFS

- Many sub-structures in CFS and its participants and stakeholders
- No formal organogram
- Formal Rules of Procedure with many grey areas

Challenge 2: Theory of Change

- No approved results framework
- Team developed tentative theory of change
- Refined theory of change as evaluation progressed
 - appreciated by CFS and using it to guide strategy

Challenge 3: Understanding evaluation approach

- ❑ Not all had same understanding of evaluation
- ❑ Some wanted an audit approach
- ❑ Some wanted an investigative approach
- ❑ Pressure to be comprehensive to accommodate all stakeholders
- ❑ Strong preference for detailed and many recommendations

Challenge 4: Being inclusive with limited budget

- ❑ Sought to cover all 7 CFS regions, compromised on number of countries per region
- ❑ Most interviews conducted in capitals – smaller CSOs could not participate unless assisted with transport
- ❑ Only executive summaries of draft reports could be translated into all official CFS languages (affordability issue)

Challenge 5: Navigating politics

- Different and competing interests of stakeholders
- Caution on terminology – participants vs stakeholders
- Some insight into political dynamics gained during inception mission
- Team had to be seen to be impartial

Lessons learned

- Evaluation process must be inclusive from the outset – ‘leave no stakeholder behind’
- Importance of stakeholder analysis with a political lens – don’t assume all partners at the table are equal or have capacity to participate on an equal footing
- Don’t treat civil society or private sector as homogenous

Lessons learned

- Be flexible with time for comments on drafts to allow stakeholders with geographically dispersed constituents sufficient time to consult
- Can't always start evaluation with a Theory of Change – latter may be an output of the evaluation
- Limit number of key evaluation questions and sub-questions

Conclusion

- Not so different from other evaluations but rather certain aspects are amplified in MSP evaluation:
 - ▣ Inclusiveness of evaluation process from the outset
 - ▣ Deep analysis of power relations in the MSP – can't just do normal stakeholder analysis
 - ▣ Stakeholders need enabling environment to participate equally and have their voices heard
 - ▣ Premium on political astuteness and facilitative skills, not enough to have good technical skills as evaluators
 - ▣ Importance of thorough quality assurance for credibility of evaluation with all stakeholders

Questions? Comments

Thank you