



European Union Food Facility
FOUNDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION
An Initial Review of Selected Projects



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ACRONYMS

ABC	Agriculture Business Centre
ACWG	Agricultural Working Group (Zimbabwe)
ADS	Agricultural Development Strategy (Afghanistan)
AFSI	L'Aquila Food Security Initiative
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
AMP	Agricultural Master Plan (Afghanistan)
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANSOR	Afghanistan National Seed Organization
ARIA	Agricultural Research Institute of Afghanistan
ASDS	Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (Kenya)
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CA	Conservation agriculture
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CFA	Comprehensive Framework for Action
CFU	Commercial Farmers Union
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COCODE	Communal Development Councils (Guatemala)
CSP	Country strategy paper
DCSRP	Strategy Paper for Growth and Poverty Reduction (DRC)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey (DRC)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DVS	District Veterinary Services (Kenya)
EC	European Commission
ECRU	Emergency Relief Coordination Unit
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
EUFF	European Union Food Facility
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	Farmer-based organization
FFS	Farmer Field School
FFW	Food for work
FIF	Financial Intermediary Fund
FISRI	Farmer Input Support Response Initiative (Zambia)
FSTF	Food Security Thematic Fund
FUNADERS	National Fund for Sustainable Development (Honduras)
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
GART	Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HLTF	High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis
IARBIC	Intensification of agriculture through strengthening of cooperative input shops
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ISE	Improved Seed Enterprise (Afghanistan)
ITF	Input trade fair
MACO	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (Zambia)

MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (Sierra Leone)
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (Lesotho)
MAGA	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (Guatemala)
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (Afghanistan)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management information system
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPG	Machinery pool group
NARP	National Agriculture Response Programme (Sierra Leone)
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NIP	National Indicative Programme (DRC)
NSDAP	National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (Sierra Leone)
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OPV	Open pollinated varieties
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSAN	Policy on Food Security and Nutrition (Honduras)
RDC	Rural Development Committee
ROM	Results-oriented monitoring
RSSP	Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project
RVF	Rift Valley Fever
SCP	Smallholder Commercialization Programme (Sierra Leone)
SDR	Rural Development Strategy
SDRP	National Strategy for Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction (Niger)
SESAN	Secretary of Food and Nutrition Security (Honduras)
SIAD	Strategy for Decentralized and Joint Procurement of Inputs for Sustainable Agriculture
SNEA	National Agricultural Extension System (Honduras)
SPFS	Special Programme for Food Security (Guatemala)
SSIS	Small-scale irrigation system
STW	Shallow tube well
TCP	Technical Cooperation Programme
TLC	Teaching and Learning Centres
ToT	Training of trainers
UCEFA	Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WOS	Women Open Schools
WUA	Water users association

1. INTRODUCTION

The past few years have been extremely challenging for global food security. The combined effect of the high food prices crisis of 2007-2008 and the global financial crisis of 2009 has driven an estimated additional 105 million people into hunger and malnutrition. These events pose a threat to global food and nutrition security and create a host of humanitarian, human rights, socioeconomic, environmental, developmental, political and security-related challenges. The global food crisis endangers millions of the world's most vulnerable people, and threatens to reverse critical gains made toward reducing poverty and hunger as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It requires an urgent comprehensive, coherent and coordinated response.

While many commodity price levels declined in 2009, partly as a result of the financial crisis and slowing demand, new price surges in 2010 and persistent volatility suggest that medium to long-term food prices are likely to remain significantly

higher than their 2004 levels, posing a continuing global challenge. Although risks may be more pronounced in urban areas, around 70 percent of the estimated 1.1 billion people in poverty live in rural areas and depend on the productivity of ecosystems for their livelihoods. Many of the rural poor are smallholder farmers whose capacities to benefit from high food prices are severely constrained by lack of inputs, investment and access to markets.

1.1 The European Union Food Facility (EUFF)

World leaders have addressed the need for urgent action to quell global food security concerns in several high level meetings, including the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, and two consecutive G8 Summits. Common programme response frameworks have been established through the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA), the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) and the Rome Principles (see Box 1).

BOX 1:

International policy responses to the global food crisis: a bird's eye view

The Comprehensive Framework for Action – July 2008

The Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) is a document representing the consensus view of the UN system, the Bretton Woods institutions and relevant partner organizations on how to respond to the global food crisis in a coherent and coordinated way. Developed by the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), the CFA presents a **twin-track approach** to promote a comprehensive response to the global food crisis which includes: (i) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable; and (ii) medium and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty, including through the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

An Updated Comprehensive Framework for Action (UCFA) was released in 2010 to better reflect ways in which UN System bodies advise national authorities and numerous other stakeholders engaged in promoting food and nutrition security. The UCFA concluded that the CFA's analysis and emphases remain very relevant, but that policymakers still face challenges to link agriculture, food security, rural employment, social protection, better nutrition, climate change and humanitarian action. Still based on the twin-track approach, the UCFA **prioritizes environmental sustainability, gender equity, the prerequisites for improved nutrition and the needs of those least able to enjoy their right to food**. It acknowledges that, while States have the primary role in ensuring food and nutrition security for all, a multiplicity of other actors have vital contributions to make.

L'Aquila Joint Statement on Food Security – the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) – July 2009

At the G8 meeting in July 2009, 27 countries, the European Union and 15 international organizations endorsed the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security, which stated that food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture must remain a priority issue on the political agenda. The meeting launched the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI), which strongly supports the twin-track approach and recognizes the link between economic growth and social progress as well as with political stability and peace.

The AFSI recognizes that sustained and predictable funding and increased targeted investments are urgently required to enhance world food production capacity. Commitments to increase Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) must be fulfilled, and the tendency of decreasing ODA and national financing to agriculture must be reversed. As of today, 12 countries and the European Union have pledged a total of USD 22.4 billion under the AFSI. Of that total, USD 6.1 billion is "additional to previously planned expenditures". It is expected that the majority of funds pledged under AFSI will be administered through bilateral funding channels. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a World Bank (WB) managed Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF), established under the auspices of the AFSI, is already in operation and has approved grants to eight countries totalling USD 321 million to help alleviate poverty through investments consistent with the CFA.

The Rome Declaration – November 2009

At the World Summit on Food Security held in Rome in November 2009, governments adopted the Rome Declaration. Signatories agreed to undertake all necessary actions required at national, regional and global levels to halt the increase in the number of people suffering from hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity through the following Five Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security:

- Principle 1:** Invest in country-owned plans, aimed at channelling resources to well designed and results-based programmes and partnerships.
- Principle 2:** Foster strategic coordination at national, regional and global level to improve governance, promote better allocation of resources, avoid duplication of efforts and identify response gaps.
- Principle 3:** Strive for a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security.
- Principle 4:** Ensure a strong role for the multilateral system by sustained improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, coordination and effectiveness of multilateral institutions.
- Principle 5:** Ensure sustained and substantial commitment by all partners to investment in agriculture and food security and nutrition, with provision of necessary resources in a timely and reliable fashion, aimed at multi-year plans and programmes.

The **European Union has been at the forefront of the response, generously allocating one billion euros through the European Union Food Facility (EUFF)** as a rapid response to the food crisis. This contribution, formalized in December 2008 in close collaboration with the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF), was one of the first large-scale donor responses to the crisis, which, in addition to financing substantive country response programmes, has also developed an operational model for other response initiatives.

The EUFF is targeting the transition period from emergency aid to longer-term development in developing countries most affected by the crisis. Launched in 2009, the primary objectives of the EUFF are to:

- (i) encourage a positive supply response from the agricultural sector in target countries and regions;
- (ii) support activities to respond rapidly and directly to mitigate the negative effects of volatile food prices on local populations in line with global food security objectives, including UN standards for nutritional requirements;
- (iii) strengthen the productive capacities and governance of the agricultural sector to enhance the sustainability of interventions.

The EUFF complements the European Union's other current development instruments. Of the € 550 million in Food Facility funds channelled through international organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been responsible for implementing 30 projects totalling € 228 million (approximately USD 314 million) in 28 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

BOX 2:**The EU Food Facility at a Glance**

The EU Food Facility is a *rapid response instrument* and the delivery channels were chosen with this in mind. Most funds have been channelled through the **International Organizations** in the **UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis**. These organizations have existing frameworks for policy dialogue and assistance in place that can be easily supported and scaled up.

Over € 550 million of the Food Facility funds are being channelled through the international organizations. On 15 May 2009, the European Commission signed the first Contribution Agreements of the Food Facility with three UN implementing partners: FAO, UNRWA, UNICEF and on 26 May with WFP for a total of **€ 212 million**.

Similar contribution agreements have been initiated with the World Bank, IFAD, UNDP and UNOPS.

In order to promote the **involvement of the Non-State Actors** (NGOs) and other relevant entities such as the

cooperation agencies of the EU Member States in the implementation of the programme, the EU provided 200 million for Calls for Proposals from these institutions. This was launched on 26 May 2009 and targeted **35 developing countries** selected from the 50 priority countries of the Food Facility.

For certain activities, there is a regional **value added**, such as trade facilitation, harmonisation of policies and regulations. These types of activities will be channelled through **regional organizations**, such as the Economic Community of West African States, for an amount of **€ 60 million**. Finally, one part of the programme will be implemented via **national budgets** of the beneficiary countries through budget support for an amount of **€ 165 million** in the third phase.

Source: EU website

1.2 Purpose of the report

With the EUFF-financed projects coming to a close in mid-2011, FAO has initiated an exercise to **document initial outcomes** of selected projects in **13 of the 28 countries** it has been responsible for implementing in the framework of the EUFF. These 13 countries¹ have been selected based on the level of project completion, the variety of project activities they represent and the diversity of regions in which they are implemented. As the projects are still under implementation, it is too early to evaluate fully their impact on food production and food security. The review has thus focused on the achievements of the projects in relation to the original objectives of the EUFF.

For each selected project, an information sheet (**see annex 1**) has been prepared from the project monitoring systems as well as interviews with project coordinators, backstopping staff at FAO headquarters and other stakeholders involved at country level. Based on these project information sheets, this report provides policy makers involved in the EUFF and the larger development community with highlights of initial project outputs and outcomes, together with lessons learned and suggestions for the way forward.

¹ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Lesotho, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe

2. INITIAL OUTCOMES OF SELECTED EUFF PROJECTS

Food security¹ is a multi-faceted issue that, to be addressed effectively, requires a diverse range of interventions. Short-term emergency relief programmes typically focus on improving the **physical availability** of food as the need for a quick response requires interventions to be designed and implemented in a simple and straightforward manner. As the EUFF looks to bridge the gap between short-term emergency relief and long-term development, however, efforts also need to be made to address the other dimensions of food security, including measures to improve **access to food**, **food utilization** and the **stability of food security** over time.

The two-year timeframe of the projects presents challenges and limits to what can be accomplished, but EUFF projects being implemented by FAO have been stretching the boundaries by trying to address these various dimensions of food security. Some of the main types of interventions have included: (i) **distribution of seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs** (e.g. tools, equipment and machinery), often through the use of innovative mechanisms such as vouchers; (ii) **seed multiplication and the development of the seed industry** to boost the

availability of quality seeds; (iii) **mechanization and rural infrastructure improvements**; and (iv) **capacity building and training activities** to strengthen the technical capacities of farmers and farmer groups to grow crops, promote sustainable agricultural practices and diversify agricultural production and income-generating opportunities. These types of interventions are briefly discussed in this chapter using concrete country-level examples.

2.1 Distribution of seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs

The EUFF projects have provided productivity-enhancing safety nets to poor smallholder farmers by supporting a variety of targeted programmes to supply critical inputs such as tools and implements, locally adapted quality seeds, fertilizers, animal feed, small irrigation pumps and veterinary medicines and services. Through the distribution of such key agricultural inputs, EUFF projects have tried to boost production not only to increase food availability for household consumption but also for sale on the market.

¹ Food security exists when all people, at all times, have the physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets the dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (World Food Summit, 1996).



In several cases the distribution of inputs has been achieved through the organization of so-called **Input trade fairs (ITF)**. Such ITFs are rapidly becoming the preferred method of agricultural input distribution in many areas where FAO works. Through this system, vouchers with a cash value are distributed to farmers who have been identified as requiring assistance. These farmers gather at the fairs and ‘purchase’ agricultural inputs and seeds of their choice, using their own discretion as to which items meet their specific needs.

Input trade fairs can also have spin-off benefits. The suppliers benefit from a greater demand of goods as farmers, through the vouchers, have access to funds to purchase inputs. This provides a boost to the local economy and can encourage suppliers to expand trade in more remote areas, benefiting themselves and farmers. Purchases can be done in cash, which increases the availability of inputs at the community level. ITFs can also serve as an informal training opportunity as the interactions among agriculture extension workers present at the ITF, traders and farmers can stimulate an exchange of knowledge and ideas.

In Lesotho, for example, the ITFs organized by the EUFF project have become a social event, attracting wide attention and bringing together a great concentration of people in remote areas. Many local farmers have attended the fairs, even though they were not selected as project beneficiaries. Some farmers have purchased inputs with cash to use for their own agricultural production. The fairs have also provided a market for local producers of quality Open pollinated varieties (OPV) seeds, which are not always available from commercial suppliers. The project has made HIV and AIDS testing and information accessible to farmers throughout the country by inviting Population Services International, an AIDS service organization, to provide these services during ITFs. Under normal circumstances, the long distances travelled for such services often prevent communities from accessing them.

In Niger, on the other hand, the EUFF project is building and expanding on 12 years of FAO experience in the country in developing a network of **agriculture input shops, owned and operated**

by farmer groups. These input shops, which have shown success and have become well known in the region, were developed as a way to facilitate farmers’ access to quality agricultural inputs and to exchange and disseminate information on agriculture production techniques. They **collectively purchase agriculture inputs in bulk and sell them in smaller quantities** that are adapted to the needs and cash flow of farmers. Purchases can only be made in cash and inputs are provided at prices which cover the costs of operation. The shops also **rent out small agricultural tools and provide advice to clients**.

The EUFF project **in Zambia** has used a voucher system that illustrates how the **private sector (agro-dealers) can be encouraged and partnered with a project** at the local level, contributing to enhanced input availability and distribution and stimulating local economic development. Electronic vouchers (compared to paper vouchers) have reduced the bureaucracy involved in providing subsidized input supplies and have stimulated competition among the agro-dealers. They have facilitated the creation of client-supplier relationships between smallholder farmers and local agro-dealers, whose businesses have been significantly enhanced by the EUFF project. In time, it is anticipated that agro-dealers will also become buyers of agricultural products such as cereals, legumes and oilseeds, thereby improving market access for farmers. The voucher system was **linked up with conservation agricultural practices**, helping to increase production and to create awareness among smallholder farmers of the efficiency and sustainability of conservation agriculture as opposed to traditional farming systems. The system has empowered farmers to make decisions on the choice and variety of crops to grow and which conservation agriculture tools to use (e.g. Magoye ripper).

Although the projects are still being implemented, a couple of countries have reported some initial increases in crop yields due, in part, to the timely distribution of agricultural inputs. **In Zimbabwe**, the project’s beneficiaries managed to get an average maize yield of about 1.13 tonnes/hectare. This

represents a 100 percent increase compared to the average yield obtained by non-project beneficiaries in the same districts (0.57 tonnes/hectare). Beneficiaries recorded higher maize yields than their non-beneficiary counterparts in all areas except in Hurungwe district, where the early planted crop was reportedly adversely affected by a mid-season dry spell. Sorghum seed beneficiaries performed better than their 'counterparts' in all areas, except in Masvingo district. Beneficiaries managed to get an average sorghum yield of 0.40 tonnes/hectare as compared to 0.26 tonnes/hectare of non-beneficiary farmers (a difference of 54 percent). Overall it is estimated that the project contributed to about 85 and 28 percent of total annual cereal requirements for maize and sorghum respectively for beneficiaries.²

In the Philippines, the project aims to increase rice yields through the promotion of small-scale irrigation and integrated crop systems in rainfed areas. The short-term results are encouraging, with

a preliminary study³ indicating **increases in yields of approximately 20 percent between project (2010) and baseline yields (2009)** (further analysis is required). The supply of shallow tube wells (STW) and pump-sets and associated training will ensure that farmers maintain the improved production levels. It is likely that there will be significant improvement in food security at the household level due to the increased production of staples and the amount of marketable surplus. Because this is **a pilot for future activities** related to small-scale irrigation in rainfed areas, with a limited number of beneficiaries, this intervention is unlikely to have a significant impact in the short term on the country's food security; however, the longer-term impact could be far greater. Also, there will **likely be some improvements in household nutrition levels**, thanks to the promotion of alternative crops in the dry season, which will help provide dietary variation.

2.2 Seed multiplication and development of seed industry

Effective seed systems that provide the needed **quantity and quality** of seeds are essential for agricultural development and food security. The informal seed sector, as largely represented by farmer-

² Annual per capita cereal requirement is 133 kg. An average household of 5 members requires 665 kg/year.

³ Preliminary report: Increasing rice yield and productivity through the promotion of small-scale irrigation and integrated crop systems in rainfed areas. Ryo Takahashi. 2010



saved seeds and on-farm seed multiplication, is of great importance because small farmers rely on seed multiplication especially for subsistence crops. Interventions aimed at ensuring that the informal and formal seed sectors are able to provide small farmers with the **quantities** of seed required to achieve food security are thus important. In addition, the availability of **quality** seeds is limited in many developing countries and farmers are forced to use poorer quality seeds, which lead to lower yields and production. The availability of quality seeds in a country is an important ingredient for ensuring good production levels.

Several of the EUFF projects have seed multiplication components. For example, the project in **Afghanistan** supports and encourages local seed enterprises in several provinces to be able to produce and sell diversified certified seed of staple crops on a sustainable basis. It also endeavours to significantly increase the number of farmers that buy certified seed at prices that will enable the private enterprises to function and remain in business. Through these interventions, the EUFF project is contributing to higher food security by raising the productivity of wheat as the priority crop. In 2010, the **annual production of wheat increased by 20 percent**, due in large part to the increased supply of certified seed.

Although it is only for two years, the project in Afghanistan supports the **long-term seed industry development strategy** put in place by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and implemented as part of the Agriculture Master Plan (AMP) under the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). It also builds on an ongoing European Commission (EC)-funded project implemented by FAO (GCP/AFG/045/EC), aimed at accelerating certified seed production and marketing in Afghanistan, which provided basic start-up support to eight pilot seed enterprises in 2004. Twenty-nine more private seed enterprises have subsequently been set up in 11 provinces. The EUFF project is working to create 20 new seed enterprises in 17 additional provinces to ensure more farmers have access to certified seeds. By August 2010, 11 new enterprises were operating.

FAO is also supporting 16 private sector enterprises to diversify seed production to help **pave the way for long-term profitability and sustainability**.

The EUFF project is also strengthening state institutions such as the Agricultural Research Institute of Afghanistan (ARIA), responsible for the production of breeder seeds, and the state-owned Improved Seed Enterprises (ISE), responsible for the production of foundation seeds. This is being done through the provision of research and production equipment for better quality control and increased capacities to meet the growing demands of the private sector.

In Kenya, the provision and multiplication of fodder seed have enabled the harvesting of significant quantities of both grass and grass seed in areas where grass is exceptionally sparse. This has fostered local demand for hay. In many cases, fodder production in irrigated schemes is more profitable than vegetables. As the production of fodder is keeping pace with livestock production (the primary livelihood source in these areas), farms are now supporting rather than competing with wider pastoral systems.

In Niger, the EUFF project has a seed multiplication component. Through the increased availability of certified seeds, the project has been improving the availability and accessibility of the target population to basic foods, thus contributing to their food security. The certified seeds grown through project support are considered by farmer groups and farmers to be the best that are available on the market. Seeds that are packaged in small quantities have been 'branded' by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, which reflects a confidence in the quality of the seeds produced. The seed multiplication component of the project has also acted as a **catalyst for other economic activities**. Income earned from seed production has been used for investment in other income-generating activities such as livestock production. A similar type of impact is foreseen in the regions where the vegetable gardening component is being implemented. The training and mentoring of farmer organizations has led to a greater cohesion of communities and project target groups.

In Lesotho, the project has encouraged a positive supply response. The project's rapid and direct response helped to ease the burden of volatile food prices on farming communities (22 551 in 2009 and 12 820 in 2010; 47 percent of the beneficiaries were women). By **strengthening the capacity** of selected vulnerable households to practise conservation agriculture and **on-farm seed production**, and by supporting government extension workers, the project has shifted from an emergency to a medium-term response. The fact that more than 90 percent of the seed that was accessed through the ITFs were open pollinated varieties also augurs well for farmers **being self-sufficient in seed during the next few seasons**. Thanks to this project as well as previous efforts, national capacity for on-farm seed multiplication has also been strengthened.

In the post-conflict situation of **the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, the project has **initiated a seed multiplication, certification and distribution system for food crops**. The project has provided support to farmer organizations to develop their organizational and management capacity and to enhance their agricultural practices and technical skills. In response to the local demand for quality seed, several farmer organizations have started producing food crop seeds with the support of the official agency for seed certification (SENASA). Part of the seed to be distributed in 2011 will be locally procured and bought from these organizations. Further efforts are required to scale up project outcomes to build local and regional seed multiplication and distribution systems, and to document the lessons learned from this experience.

2.3 Mechanization and rehabilitation of rural infrastructure

Increased agricultural production is most often brought about by the introduction of improved crop varieties and by creating an optimal environment such that the plants and animals can develop to their full potential. Mechanization and rehabilitation of rural infrastructure, however, also have an important role to play to improve food security.

The planting, tending and harvesting of a crop each require a significant amount of power and a suitable range of tools and equipment. The mechanization of farming can increase the area that can be planted and contribute towards increased yields, mainly due to the precision with which the crop husbandry tasks can be accomplished. The rehabilitation of rural infrastructure is also important for improving agricultural production and income earning opportunities. The productivity of crops can be increased through investments in irrigation, post-harvest losses can be reduced through the introduction of appropriate drying and storage facilities and access to markets and income earning opportunities can be improved through better road networks and market facilities.

In Sierra Leone, the EUFF project has been equipping Agriculture Business Centres (ABCs) with machinery including threshers, hullers and cutters for rice as well as power tillers, cassava graters and fertilizers, which will improve the productivity of farming. Although the project is still being implemented, some beneficiaries **already report improvements in their yields and enhanced income earned from farming**. The project meets the needs of target groups (42 000 members of ABCs), whose success will in turn have a beneficial effect on local food availability and prices, thus strengthening poverty reduction and national food security.

One of aims of the EUFF project in **Pakistan** is to **rehabilitate and construct** irrigation channels and water harvesting structures. So far, 265 irrigation rehabilitation schemes have been identified, while the construction of 203 water harvesting structures is ongoing. The 2010 floods affected 63 of the irrigation schemes identified for rehabilitation, which would benefit approximately 22 700 households. Additional assessments are being completed to determine whether alternative sites in the same districts have to be identified. The World Food Programme (WFP) is supporting food for work activities related to FAO's irrigation channel rehabilitation and water harvesting infrastructure work. Joint FAO-WFP activities have been particularly effective, maximizing synergies of the respective organizations.



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The maintenance and rehabilitation of road infrastructure is one of the main activities of the EUFF project in the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**. Work is being done to rehabilitate strategic routes to help open up production areas. The project is also focused on building up infrastructure for the production, storage, processing, marketing and transportation of agricultural products. The EUFF project falls between a conventional emergency project (distribution of inputs and tools) and a medium-term investment project (training of organizations, construction/rehabilitation of infrastructure and equipment).

The dialogue between the Government, FAO and the European Union Delegation in Kinshasa has led to close and effective monitoring of project activities. This has helped to refocus strategies for implementing infrastructure rehabilitation activities, and amend the logical framework when necessary. This partnership is expected to continue beyond the duration of this project so that achievements can actually serve as a launching pad for more ambitious agricultural investment programmes that are able to meet the needs of a country like the DRC.

In Bangladesh, a major technology transfer process is being carried out within the project's fishery and

crop mechanization components. In the fishery component, the project is assisting small-scale fishermen groups by helping to reconstruct part of the fishing boat park that was destroyed by the 2007 and 2009 cyclones. In particular, the project has supported the development of technical specifications and ad hoc training to local boat builders for the construction of more resistant wooden fishing boats. At the same time, locally produced fibreglass fishing boats are being purchased. The fibreglass boats will be managed by fishermen groups, who will be responsible for their use and maintenance. These activities have tremendous potential to increase fish production in a sustainable way and to contribute to the food and nutrition security of fish farmers who have lost their assets. Furthermore, the boats help to increase fish farmers' safety at sea.

In terms of the crop machinery component, the project is currently distributing 640 power tillers, 100 power threshers for maize and 160 threshers for rice to a total of 320 farmer groups as well as 10 000 grain and seed silos to mitigate post-harvest loss. Each group has formed a committee to manage the operation of the machines. It is expected that mechanization will strongly impact yields, essentially through improved soil preparation.

2.4 Capacity building and training activities

Many developing countries suffer from institutional weaknesses and are unable to develop and deliver the public goods and/or commercial services needed for sustainable agricultural growth, rural development and food security. Institutions require strengthening and new institutional arrangements to facilitate the supply response to meet rising food needs.

Most of the EUFF projects have included a capacity-building component for boosting agricultural production. Many include training in **agricultural production techniques**. Training for **enterprise management and/or marketing of goods** has also been conducted in some countries while direct training in agricultural processing techniques is less so. For institutional building, a two-pronged strategy can be seen. The majority of projects have advocated measures for **strengthening existing government institutions** to deliver better services to farmers. Several countries have also proposed measures to **strengthen local organizations' capacities** in planning and management, and to strengthen their advocacy abilities. In some cases, attention has been given to developing measures to **encourage private-public partnerships or improve coordination among national institutions** responsible for agriculture and rural development.

In Pakistan, for example, project counterparts agreed to implement an integrated capacity-building plan, involving both national authorities and farmers. The plan covers thematic training such as reducing post-harvest losses as well as Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Women Open Schools (WOS). So far, 13 973 female households have participated in the WOS (from a total of 36 041 beneficiaries of the capacity-building plan). This is particularly significant and resulted from the tailoring of best practices by FAO to the specific Pakistan context, through, for example, the use of female trainers in household compounds. By enhancing women's capacities, particularly in small-scale vegetable production, the project aims to generate additional income during the off-season, thereby **contributing to the stability of food availability and diversification of diets**.

The project promotes farmer community groups for the effective delivery of technical support. Four different types of groups were set up: cereal growers; vegetable growers; water users association (WUAs); and machinery pool groups (MPGs). These groups played a key role in promoting entrepreneurial approaches through household agriculture, with a particular emphasis on off-season vegetable production. The vegetable seeds distributed, and the related training delivered to farmer groups, are expected to generate small-scale agribusinesses and additional income. This should have a particularly positive impact on female-headed households.

The project machinery component represents a major transfer of technology that has excellent potential to positively impact agricultural production. With a view to ensuring sustainability, a total of 100 MPGs have been set up to receive, manage, operate and maintain the machinery kits provided by the project. Operational guidelines have been developed to define roles and responsibilities of MPGs members and to ensure the proper use of the goods distributed.

In Sierra Leone, capacity-building activities are an integral component of the EUFF intervention to ensure sustainability in the long run. The project aims to develop Agriculture Business Centres (ABCs), which are owned and operated by farmer-based organizations (FBOs), to commercialize smallholder agriculture. **Training materials** are being developed and tested on group organization and leadership, ABC governance and basics of accounting as well as materials for machine operators and shop keepers. **Training sessions** have also been held for ABC board members on basic business development, entrepreneurship, governance/leadership skills and basic financial management (i.e. record keeping, budgeting and asset management). Shopkeepers and equipment operators have also been trained on the use and maintenance of power tillers, with more training planned for rice hullers, cassava graters and other small farm equipment.

Many FBOs that manage ABCs are the outcome of Farmer Field Schools (FFS). The capacity to foster field-based experimentation and learning is central

BOX 3:**Developing rural promoters in Guatemala**

In Guatemala, the Teaching and Learning Centres (TLC) are a good example of community participation. Different types of technology and best practices - many related to conservation agriculture - are being implemented by the EUFF project. The TLCs take place on the land of community lead farmers – *rural promoters* – who use their plots to demonstrate the technologies and best practices introduced by the project extension workers, such as the use of organic fertilizer in the soil, contour planting, mulching and terracing.

Rural promoters have played an important role in achieving results in Guatemala. They have encouraged an exchange of experiences and better communication within the community. It has also been observed that the work of promoters is important in improving existing social ties within the communities as community members interact during the development of project activities.

The reinforcement of social ties is important for the sustainability of the project activities. Hence further work is being supported for the reinforcement of social ties with the institutionalization of project activities. The first step for this

institutionalization is the creation and strengthening of Communal Development Councils (COCODE). With the COCODEs, communities now have institutions that express their demand, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and organize communal activities (e.g. deciding on the use of capital from revolving funds or organizing participation in Teaching and Learning Centres).

The second step in institutionalizing project activities is done with the municipalities. Sixteen mayors signed letters of agreement with FAO after the start of the project in their municipalities, showing interest in cooperating with this activity. Thanks to this collaboration, some of the extension workers who support rural promoters in their work have been hired by the municipalities, thus transferring ownership to the mayor. Most municipalities now recognize the role they have to play in agriculture extension and production and allocate funds to these activities that were previously used for public works (roads, bridges etc.). Concerned mayors are well-informed about project activities and consider them part of their own development programme, which augurs well for sustainability.

to the success of commercializing smallholder agriculture and developing the ABC system. A successful FFS programme requires a well-organized and functioning network of community facilitators (government extension agents) and farmer facilitators (farmers themselves who assume leadership with the FFS). The EUFF intervention provided an intensive four-month **FFS Training of Trainers (ToT) course** in which 42 Smallholder Commercialisation Programme District Coordinators were trained and are now practising their newly acquired skills. The EUFF project has supported the establishment of 370 new FFS and promotes tools such as Agro-ecosystem Analysis, integrated crop management and participatory technology development to improve farming techniques and intensify production.

The EUFF project in **Honduras** is interesting as it is an emergency project within a long-term development framework. In addition to the distribution of inputs, the project addresses issues related to governance and institutional development.

It also tackles problems related to food availability, access and stability in Honduran rural areas by improving agricultural systems, productivity and the post-harvest crop management capacity of subsistence farmers in the dry areas. The project is benefiting 11 000 households with **inputs and training**. Of these 11 000 households: 1 500 have benefited from the provision of storage silos; 800 from support in creating backyard gardens (which contribute to improved food utilization and stability through crop diversification); 400 from support to poultry activities (poultry and feed); and 300 from rain water harvesting systems. The project also plays a role in improving the country's institutional and governance framework, particularly at local level, by establishing partnerships with municipalities and supporting communal organizations such as *cajas rurales* (community-based saving and credit groups). The municipalities frequently provide additional support to the project activities. The project has also created strategic alliances with numerous NGOs to improve the impact of activities.

In **DRC**, the project has contributed to building 90 grassroots farmer organizations with the support of local NGOs. More than 200 leaders have been trained in management and organizational aspects, and 3 500 farmers have received technical training in agricultural practices. As a result, some 36 000 farmers could initiate food production activities. Combined with infrastructure rehabilitation, capacity development activities are an important step towards building inclusive food value chains. The coming steps should focus on further consolidating farmer organizations, developing market linkages involving traders, processors and transporters, and making market information available for all actors.

2.4.1. Strengthening of sustainable agricultural production techniques

The extent to which investments in food security lead to long-term increases in the resilience of rural communities depends on the sustainability of improvements in smallholder farmers' food production and income. This is influenced by a number of factors, including alterations to the production environment due to climate change and potentially emerging competition between food and energy crops. It is also necessary, however, to implement safeguards — restoring degraded soils and preventing further damage, improving the efficiency of water use, ensuring the biodiversity of agroecosystems (focusing on local varieties, land, watersheds and other resources), using research to enhance these systems (including the protection of local seeds) and developing improved market linkages between farmers, buyers and consumers. This means that investment policies should, wherever possible, reflect the heterogeneity of farming systems.

In most countries it is possible for smallholder farm yields to be doubled through policies that encourage the use of available technologies — linking support for the use of agricultural inputs to transfer of technologies. Priority should be given to technologies that reinforce existing smallholder farming and risk management systems. Integrated natural resources management, such as soil and water conservation approaches and conservation agriculture, and crop and livestock systems, small-scale aquaculture and enhanced inland fisheries

provide a strong basis for improved productivity and climate change adaptation as well as the sustainable use of resources.

In **Guatemala**, the EUFF project is introducing different types of technology and best practices — **many related to conservation agriculture** — which have helped to increase yields. In Alta Verapaz, for example, the EUFF project has **increased the maize productivity** of beneficiary households from an average of 2.1 tonnes/hectare to an average of 3.5 tonnes/hectare. This has created household surpluses of twenty percent on average. Twenty-three percent of this surplus (1350 tonnes) was sold to WFP — a higher quantity than expected — which means that at least some of the producers were able to achieve a good level of organization and produce according to international quality standards. From the total number of beneficiaries in Alta Verapaz, 27 percent are women; many of them are single mothers or widows. Beneficiaries in Baja Verapaz and Quiché have seen their maize productivity increase from an average of 720 to 850 kg/hectare. These households — 46 percent of them headed by women — have also grown vegetable gardens and improved small livestock management.

In **Zambia**, a post-harvest survey reported that farms practicing conservation agriculture (CA) had maize yields of 2.6 tonnes/hectare compared to 2 tonnes/hectare on farms that practised conventional agriculture. This was an increase of 30 percent. Other benefits of CA, in terms of improving soil structure and increased organic matter, will become apparent over time. Several farmers reported that they had sold maize for the first time in their lives as a result of adopting CA. Based on the experiences during the project's first year, it is expected that the EUFF intervention will contribute to strengthening the productive capacities and governance of the agricultural sector to enhance the sustainability of interventions, especially with a view to conservation agriculture practices.

2.4.2 Diversifying agriculture and income-generating opportunities

Farmers are renowned for adopting risk-averse strategies to ensure their food security. Farmers will often plant a mixture of crops to cater for a range of

BOX 4:**Conservation agriculture**

Conservation agriculture (CA) is a concept for resource-saving agricultural crop production that strives to achieve sustainable and profitable agriculture while at the same time conserving the environment. The three main principles of CA include minimal soil disturbance, permanent soil cover and crop rotation. CA holds tremendous potential for

all sizes of farms and agro-ecological systems, but its adoption is perhaps most urgently required by smallholder farmers, especially those facing acute labour shortages. It has been proven to work in a variety of agro-ecological zones and farming systems and is seen by practitioners as a valid tool for Sustainable Land Management (SLM).

conditions and enable them to absorb negative shocks should a certain crop fail. While farming remains important, rural people also look for opportunities to increase and stabilize their incomes as a way to avoid risks from agriculture. It is important for agricultural research and extension to recognize the changing dynamic of livelihood strategies and to tailor their strategies accordingly. The impact of diversification on agriculture varies from negative effects, such as the ‘withdrawal of critical labour from the family farm’ to positive ones including the ‘alleviation of credit constraints and a reduction in the risk of innovation’.

In Sierra Leone, the Government has established its Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP), a national initiative aimed at increasing the productivity of Sierra Leone’s agricultural sector. The programme aims to address the barriers that limit the ability of smallholder farmers to engage in commercial farming. In order to achieve this goal, Agricultural Business Centres (ABCs) that are owned and operated by farmer-based organizations (FBOs) are being established as a vehicle to develop private farming enterprise. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) is strengthening the capacities of existing FBOs so that they can strongly participate in the production, processing and marketing of local goods. The ABCs provide smallholders access to agricultural inputs and value-added services such as drying, storage, marketing and distribution, which can reduce post-harvest losses and improve income earned from agricultural production. Strong efforts have been made to **include women** in the project activities; approximately 40 percent of FBOs being supported by the project are headed by women.

In Niger, a **warehouse receipt system** (*warrantage*) is being used to enhance food security. The *warrantage* scheme is a system whereby farmer organizations can gain access to credit from a financial institution by storing their seasonal surplus in a safe and reliable warehouse as collateral for obtaining a short-term loan. This loan not only provides money to satisfy cash needs of farmers at harvest time without having to sell their production when prices are at their lowest, but, more importantly, **provides capital for investment in an income-generating activity**. When the loan expires, the farmer pays back what is owed and regains access to the stock that was left as collateral. The farmer can then sell the stock at a price higher than what could have been received at the harvest time. If the borrower does not repay the loan by the due date, the bank seizes the stock and sells it to a third party.

This concept is not new and is practised widely in Latin America and in some Asian countries. A crucial element of the *warrantage* system is the availability of reliable storage facilities and storage operators. These should not only have the necessary infrastructure and technical skills in storage management and pest control, but also the business skills and independence from political pressure, which will provide a reasonable guarantee of the integrity of the stocks. In Niger, in order to respond to the potential/constraints of the country, the *warrantage* model has been adapted so as to be done directly between farmer associations and microfinance institutions. The farmer associations, on behalf of the member farmers, sign loan contracts with the participating local financial institution and redistribute individual loans to the farmers according to the volume of their stored produce.

3. EUFF AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

At the World Summit on Food Security held in Rome in November 2009, signatories of the Rome Declaration agreed to undertake all necessary actions required at national, regional and global levels to halt the increase in the number of people suffering from hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity. Governments committed to reinforcing their efforts to meet by 2015 the targets of Millennium Development Goal 1 and the World Food Summits, and they committed to take action towards sustainably eradicating hunger at the earliest possible date. The following Five Principles were endorsed and deemed important as a means to attain global food security: (i) invest in country-owned plans; (ii) foster strategic coordination; (iii) strive for a comprehensive twin-track approach; (iv) have a strong role for the multilateral system; and (v) ensure a substantial and sustained commitment by all partners.

The EUFF was developed before the establishment of these Five Principles. However, in looking at the design and implementation modalities of the EUFF projects, they regularly adhere to these Principles.

The EUFF project in **Bangladesh** was designed in line with the ongoing national programme for food security supported by the Government. Coordination and harmonized work with other national and international development actors have been achieved, ensuring assistance to vulnerable households not covered by other interventions. The coordinated selection of provinces and beneficiary groups avoided duplication of interventions by the Government, other development partners and NGOs.

The EUFF project in **Sierra Leone** is fully embedded in the Smallholder Commercialisation Programme (SCP) – the Government's flagship initiative to develop the agricultural sector. The SCP is a **well-designed, country-owned plan** to promote the commercialization of smallholder agriculture under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) framework. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) extension staff and features **strong collaboration between multilateral partners as well as a twin-track approach** to addressing



food security. Technical support from FAO to develop Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and use ABCs as a tool for the commercialization of agriculture helps to address medium- to long-term food security issues, while the food-for-work (FFW) activities implemented by WFP for the construction of ABCs and the rehabilitation of inland valley swamps of the lowland FBOs are an important safety net mechanism for vulnerable households.

In Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the **multilateral system**, especially FAO, WFP and IFAD, has played an important role by ensuring sustained improvements in responsiveness and coordination. The project, by design, followed a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security consisting of: (i) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable; and (ii) medium- and long-term initiatives to up-scale conservation agriculture and hence put agriculture on a more sustainable and productive footing.

In Kenya, the EUFF project has also adopted a **comprehensive twin-track approach** to food security. The project created the conditions for production increases, including access to inputs, markets, animal health facilities, fodder production and capacity building through Pastoral Field Schools. The project also promotes research for food and agriculture in order to ensure the limited amount of funding available is used to target and effectively fill any identified gaps. Through this approach, the project is **supporting coordination between different initiatives and enabling institutions to work with one another**, each playing to its own strengths. As a result, the project has strengthened synergies among stakeholders and contributed to reinforcing already well-established partnerships with the Government, national agricultural research institutes, UN agencies, NGO partners and the private sector.

By building on existing initiatives and enhancing coordination between implementing partners, the project in Kenya has achieved a significant amount with the funds available. Relationships with the Government have been exceptionally strong, as evidenced by the fact that the Ministry of Livestock

has recommended that the project be scaled up with the assistance of FAO. Based on this recommendation, the EU has set aside € 5 million for FAO to assist in the coordination and assessment of innovative opportunities in its forthcoming dry lands programme under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF).

In Lesotho, the EUFF project, from its inception, has strongly built on a supportive policy framework and the foundation laid by previous projects. There is strong Government commitment as indicated by the fact that the project steering committee is chaired by the Director of Field Services in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), and three other departmental directors are members of the committee. In this way, the Government has a strong influence in steering the course of the project. Furthermore in implementing all aspects of the project, FAO has adopted the approach of working side-by-side with MAFS staff to build their capacity for future implementation of similar interventions.

In the Philippines, the project, initiated at the request of the Government, has developed into a good example of **a country-led initiative**. It follows on from an earlier FAO-funded project¹, and dovetails with the Philippines Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project (RSSP), also supported by the IFAD/EU Rapid Food Production Enhancement Programme, in that aims to increase rice production and productivity in rainfed areas. The project is being successfully managed by the strategic coordination of multiple institutions, including the Department of Agriculture, PhilRice, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, Agricultural Training Institute and the regional field units.

In the difficult context of the **DRC**, the project has greatly contributed to improving the effectiveness of food security interventions through the creation of an information system on food security, and through testing of adapted implementation approaches.

¹ "Increasing Rice Supply in Regions VIII and X by Improving Farmers' Capability through Technical Assistance Trainings and Demonstration of Rice Production Technologies cum Small-Scale Irrigation Facilities"

Through data available on the information system (data on prices of 17 food commodities as well as information on livelihoods and status of food security), a bulletin has been disseminated on a weekly basis to all actors since 2008, and more thorough analyses on food security are also published regularly. The system provides reliable data for all actors involved including the Government, donors, NGOs and the UN system.

The project has also developed approaches combining strengths of emergency operations (diligence and quick responsiveness) and development (focus on institutional outcomes) that seem to be adapted to the context of a

transition from emergency to development. These include collaborative approaches to infrastructure management (involving enterprises, Government department for rural works, communities), and fast-tracking procurement. Moreover, approaches aimed at concentrating development efforts (infrastructure, technical and organizational support to farmer associations, equipment for storage and processing) appear to be effective in the context of a very large and landlocked country like the DRC. Next steps should aim at better documenting these approaches, sharing the lessons learned with other partners and exploring options for scaling up the experiences initiated by the project in the country.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

The EUFF was set up and launched in just five months to address the effects of soaring food prices in the worst affected countries. As the projects are still being implemented, it is too early to judge the impacts that they have had on the ground. Several countries, however, have reported **some initial increases in production, productivity and/or incomes** from the project interventions.

The short time span to prepare the EUFF projects as well as the two-year time frame to implement them have presented challenges and limits to what can be accomplished in terms of assuring a sustainable impact. Nevertheless, as has been shown from the experiences cited above, the EUFF projects implemented by FAO are pushing the limits and actively seeking not only to increase the physical availability of food, but to improve food access, food utilization and food security over time. The project processes have also been responding to the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security.

One area that could be improved is the way in which projects address food utilization. While some projects have actively sought to involve women in the activities (e.g. Guatemala, Pakistan, Sierra Leone), interventions to provide health and nutrition education are only in a couple of the countries examined (e.g. Lesotho, Zimbabwe). The case of Niger has shown that greater coordination of and collaboration between EUFF projects being implemented by different agencies could help to improve the EUFF's impact on food security in the country. For example, the FAO EUFF project could improve its impact on the health and nutritional aspects of food security from a closer collaboration with the EUFF UNICEF project, which is developing and disseminating advocacy tools specific to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

The experiences so far suggest that it is important that projects **work through existing structures and entities** and complement and build synergies and

partnerships with ongoing national and international projects to **increase impact and enhance sustainability**. At the country level, this requires the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders including government staff as well as the private sector, NGOs and farming communities in the project's implementation. Such involvement also facilitates the scaling-up of successful project components.

In addition, the integration of programmes in regular institutions, both public and private, will help reinforce the institutional memories of these institutions. This contributes to a more effective identification of perceived beneficiary needs and the improved choice of project activities and inputs to address these needs.

In some of the EUFF projects it has been demonstrated that, in order to achieve a medium-term and sustainable outcome, a **more systems-based approach is needed**, which starts with improved access to inputs for increased production of surpluses for the market within the existing agricultural systems. This would need to be considered in the design of future programmes of a similar nature.

Given the nature of the EUFF – to deliver improvements in a short time frame – relevant national ongoing programmes that support sustainable agriculture should, wherever possible, be built on and extended. **The focus should be on increasing input availability, boosting productivity and improving distribution of outputs through better market linkages, as addressed in Kenya, Lesotho and Zambia.**

Boosting production not only requires access to inputs but better methods of crop production. Through extension methodologies that include Farmer Field Schools and systems such as the use of rural promoters, appropriate advice can be provided through on-farm demonstrations on sustainable

production intensification, good agriculture practices, conservation agriculture, soil fertility management, small-scale irrigation and crop diversification.

Support to small-scale **commercial enterprises** is also important as a way to ensure sustainability of the EUFF interventions. For example, in **Kenya**, fodder production groups are being provided with

business skills training and linked to available markets to ensure that they are able to continue benefiting from fodder production after the project has ended. In **Bangladesh, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia, the involvement of private sector entrepreneurs** has increased the availability of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer, tools, and veterinary medicines) in the project areas.

5. WAY FORWARD

The EUFF has been aiming to bridge the gap between providing short-term emergency relief and medium- to longer-term development support. While there have been some positive achievements, any development **intervention, if it is to have a sustainable impact, needs more than the two-year time period allotted for the EUFF project implementation.** With this in mind, FAO has been making efforts, wherever possible, to integrate its EUFF project interventions into existing national policies, projects and programmes as a way to better ensure sustainability or continuity once the EUFF funding has ended.

It is evident, however, that the EUFF projects on their own, because of their nature and scale of operations, will not significantly contribute to preventing new food crises in the countries. Billions of dollars need to be invested globally each year to significantly impact food security and enhance agriculture and rural development. According to a 2009 discussion paper prepared for the High Level Expert Forum on How to Feed the World by 2050, it was estimated that additional annual net investments of USD 83 billion need to be made in agriculture in developing countries if there is to be enough food to feed 9.1 billion people in 2050.

Nevertheless, the EUFF projects being examined in this report have been perceived as a positive initiative by many development actors. While it is too early to judge the impacts of the projects, this mid-term review has shown that the projects are **addressing the original objectives of the EUFF.** Projects in several countries are encouraging a positive supply response from the smallholder agricultural sector and the project activities look to be addressing global food security objectives. The EUFF projects have initiated activities to improve the productive capacities and governance of the agriculture sector, although such capacity-building activities **will still require further follow-up support** to ensure a stronger appropriation by beneficiaries. It can thus be said that

the EUFF has provided funding at a time of severe crisis and many projects have helped to build or strengthen the foundations of existing national projects and programmes to address food security and nutrition concerns.

Governments in developing countries face critical budgetary constraints, which can hinder their ability to fully implement national projects or programmes for food security and follow-up needs of EUFF interventions. The funding that has been made available through the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) recognizes this constraint and has been provided to fill existing funding gaps found in national agriculture investment plans. In the case of Sierra Leone, for example, the EUFF funding played a key role in up-scaling activities of the SCP, which, in turn, played a catalytic role in mobilizing additional funding from other donors. In June 2010, Sierra Leone received a USD 50 million grant from the GAFSP, a part of which will directly support FBOs and ABCs. This will thus ensure that the investments made by the EUFF project will continue to be supported until 2014, by which time it is expected that ABCs established under EUFF funding will be fully operational and able to function on their own without outside assistance.

The case of **Sierra Leone** can be seen as an example of how the EUFF has played an important catalytic role in leveraging funding to ensure a longer-term sustainability of the intervention. Other projects will also need to mobilize further funding to strengthen the foundations they have established for food security. In this regard, the European Union, through the Fragile States Pillar of its Food Security Thematic Fund (FSTF), is considering the provision of some additional funding to build on lessons learned and achievements of the EUFF projects. In particular, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guatemala, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan and Somalia are being considered for the

FSTF funding in 2011. Such funding would help to build on the achievements, **maintain the momentum of the EUFF** and increase the likelihood of greater sustainability. Countries that have shown promising results through the EUFF activities may also be in a better position to mobilize additional funding from other donors to ensure possible follow-up activities. This has already occurred with Canadian funding to sustain activities in Honduras.

As mentioned in the updated CFA, projects need to be accompanied by consistent and supportive agricultural, trade, financial and aid policies. Long-term food security policies need to recognize that smallholder farmers who are currently food insecure, are not only likely to be hard hit by high food prices, but also by climate change and other environmental shocks, because they farm and rear animals on marginalized land and often depend on erratic rainfall.

ANNEX 1:

EUFF PROJECT INFORMATION SHEETS

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Expanding certified seed production and utilization in Afghanistan

The economy of Afghanistan is heavily dependent on agriculture, which currently accounts for 53 percent of the Gross Domestic Product and employs around 66 percent of the workforce. Up to 85 percent of the Afghan people live in rural areas where they practise and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, agricultural production has declined significantly in the country as a result of decades of conflict and prolonged drought. Therefore, rehabilitating Afghanistan's agricultural production capacity is fundamental to the recovery of food security and the livelihoods of the rural population.

Agriculture is practised largely on a subsistence basis with wheat serving as the most important staple. The current average yields of 2.6 tonnes per hectare (irrigated) and 1.1 tonnes per hectare (rainfed) are significantly lower in comparison with the yield potential of the improved varieties (up to 5 tonnes per hectare). This wide yield gap could be reduced by promoting wider utilization of certified seed by farmers, increasing the productivity of wheat by up to 30 percent.

Afghanistan has been hit hard by the global rise in food prices. Compared to the same period in 2007, there was an 80 percent increase in wheat prices in April/May 2008, just nearing the time for the main wheat harvest. It has been shown that using certified seed of improved varieties could raise wheat yields by about 30 percent in irrigated areas. Improving wheat productivity by this amount could bring wheat yields to an average level of 3.4 tonnes per hectare, resulting in over 6 million tonnes total wheat production in irrigated areas compared with current levels of about 4 million tonnes. This increase will require greater availability and use of certified seed. Improved seed that has been distributed and utilized by farmers over the years only covers about 50 percent of irrigated areas (about 750 000 hectares).

As the main suppliers of certified seed, the 29 existing private enterprises differ widely in resources, facilities and operational scope. While some enterprises have sufficient seed cleaning and storage facilities, many others require significant improvement. There is also a need to establish new enterprises in more provinces around the country in order to bring certified seed production closer to farming communities. Furthermore, as appropriate and depending on agro-ecological conditions, some enterprises will need support to diversify from wheat into other major crops. In this case, specialized seed cleaning and packaging equipment will be needed.

Project objectives and activities

The project aims for seed enterprises in several provinces in Afghanistan to be able to produce and sell diversified certified seed of staple crops on a sustainable basis. It also endeavours to significantly increase the number of farmers that buy certified seed at prices that will enable the private enterprises to function and remain in business. The goal is to contribute to higher food security by raising the productivity of wheat as the priority crop.

Some concrete activities include an assessment of the existing seed enterprises and definition of eligibility criteria and conditions for support (this included the preparation of business plans, co-financing by the enterprises). On the basis of those criteria, the project has been engaged in ordering essential farm machinery and seed equipment to upgrade selected enterprises, making contracts and constructing storage/office facilities for selected enterprises, installing seed cleaning equipment and starting processing operations. Intensive stakeholder and community-level consultations were held, contracts made and specific training activities conducted to strengthen the capacity of the seed enterprises, particularly in the area of business management and market exploration.

Innovative features

Although the European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project (GCP/AFG/059/EC) duration is only two years, the project supports the long-term seed industry development strategy put in place by the Government. It also builds on an ongoing EC-funded project implemented by FAO (GCP/AFG/045/EC) aimed at accelerating certified seed production and marketing in Afghanistan. Thanks to the success of this project's initial phase, which provided basic start-up support to eight pilot seed enterprises in 2004, 29 more private seed enterprises have been set up in 11 provinces. The EUFF project has already established 20 new seed enterprises in 17 additional provinces to ensure more farmers have access to certified seeds. By October 2010, 18 new enterprises were able to operate. This project is also supporting existing enterprises to diversify seed production to help pave the way for long-term profitability and sustainability.

Training is an essential component of the project. Community seed assistants and staff from the Agricultural Research Institute for Afghanistan (ARIA), the Improved Seed Enterprise (ISE) and new seed enterprises have received training on breeder, foundation and certified seed production, crop handling and field management, while 33 members of seed enterprises from 11 newly created wheat seed enterprises have received business training based on the 'Small Scale Seeds Enterprise – Startup and Management' manual.

It is through the use of improved varieties of certified seed that Afghanistan hopes to boost wheat yields by about 30 percent in irrigated areas, helping not only to feed more people but to strengthen the country's seed stocks.

Achievements to date

On the whole, during 2010, the EC and EUFF projects implemented by FAO have enabled up to 20 new enterprises to enter the private sector for certified seed production. This brings the total to 94 enterprises in 28 provinces thus accounting for over 80 percent geographical coverage. In September 2010, all 94 enterprises participated in an annual production planning workshop during which a target of 30 000 tonnes of certified wheat seed for 2011 was agreed upon. This quantity exceeds the original 2011 project certified seed plan of the Variety and Seed Industry Development (GCP/AFG/045/EC) project by 25 percent, which indicates enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in certified seed production and higher absorption capacity largely accounted for by effective complementarity between the EC project (GCP/AFG/045) and the EUFF project (GCP/AFG/059/EC).

EUFF objectives

The project is fully in line with the national strategies for the development of the agricultural sector. It is implemented as a part of the Agricultural Master Plan (AMP) and its operational Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS), which form a part of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), an MDG-based plan that serves as Afghanistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The

project encourages a positive supply response from the agricultural sector by increasing access to certified seeds. The project therefore contributes to mitigating the direct negative effect of volatile food prices on the local population.

Rome Principles

The EUFF project fosters strategic coordination and stakeholder involvement and there is Government commitment to enhancing agricultural production. It adheres, to a certain degree, to Principle 3 by focusing on achieving medium- and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty through developing the country's seed sector.

Impact on food security

It is anticipated that the project will contribute to improved and sustainable food security in Afghanistan through increased yields of wheat and other major food crops by supplying farmers, through the private sector, with improved and certified wheat seed. In 2010, the annual production of wheat increased by 20 percent due to increased supply of certified seed.

Way forward

The EC and EUFF projects being implemented by FAO have supported the institutional development for the entire seed multiplication chain in Afghanistan, ranging from breeder seed by ARIA stations to foundation and registered seed by ISE stations to certified seed by private seed enterprises under the umbrella of the Afghanistan National Seed Organization (ANSOR). The projects are laying a good regulatory foundation in terms of a National Seeds Policy and a Seed Law supported by Seed Rules, Regulations and Procedures. The operation of a free seed market without undue interference by the Government will be a vital prerequisite for sustainability of the seed sector.

The projects have enabled ARIA station staff to acquire essential technical skills and knowledge in breeder seed production. The Ministry of Finance has now allowed ARIA stations to operate bank accounts and retain income for day-to-day operations, which is a significant development for the sustainability of the research stations and breeder seed production.

The sustainability of the project is strongest at the level of the private sector with independent enterprises producing certified seed and ANSOR serving as an overall umbrella organization. Continuity and sustainability of actions supported by the seed projects would be largely ensured if the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) took ownership of key operations after the projects end in June 2011. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) containing technical and operational guidelines for the MAIL has been signed with the Government to ensure proper administration and oversight of the use of the equipment by the new and existing enterprises, fully in line with the purpose and objectives of the EUFF project. The strategy also embodies the vision for the ANSOR as a future umbrella organization to continue with building the capacity of seed enterprises for their sustainability and to represent and protect the interests of stakeholders in the Afghan seed industry.

The seed projects have laid a strong foundation for seed certification in terms of a network of well-equipped laboratories and trained government personnel who are currently in charge of taking seed samples, doing seed analysis and issuing quality certificates with FAO technical guidance and oversight. In order to ensure long-term sustainability, MAIL will need to be supported to build up enough capacities in the development of a Seed Certification Service to take over this crucial quality assurance role. Collaboration between MAIL and FAO in agricultural development in Afghanistan will continue and so will the support for seed industry development.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh

Support to assist landless, marginal and small farmers to overcome soaring input and food prices in impoverished areas of Bangladesh

During the last decades, Bangladesh has made significant progress in terms of economic development and food security. Gross Domestic Product per capita has increased from USD 211 in 1973 to USD 554 in 2007/2008. Since the early 1990s, the country has been experiencing rates of economic growth of over five percent per annum, with a parallel increase in production and consumption of food items. Despite this remarkable progress, poverty and food insecurity are still widespread, with income inequality and regional inequality on the rise. The situation is worse in the south-western and northern regions of the country, where poverty ranges between 46 and 52 percent, compared with a national average of 40 percent. Poverty and food security, especially in these regions, are strongly affected by recurrent natural disasters.

Between 2007 and 2008, Bangladesh experienced a significant increase in the incidence of poverty and vulnerability to food insecurity. The combined impact of the global food prices crisis, along with large-scale natural disasters, pushed an additional 7.5 million people into poverty (living on less than USD 3 per day), while 6.9 million more people became severely food insecure. The crisis meant that over 65 million people were unable to meet the cost of the basic food basket (currently, 3.8 percent of the world's undernourished people live in Bangladesh). The crisis mainly affected landless and smallholder farmers in the south-western regions, which were hit by floods in 2007 and Cyclones Sidr (2007) and Aila (2009). Cyclones Sidr and Aila washed away river embankments, causing significant damage to crops, livestock and fisheries.

Within this context, the main challenge for the Government was to identify and implement measures to maximize production so as to improve food availability from domestic sources. Some of the major constraints facing the agriculture sector included: limited use of technology (i.e. genetic engineering or mechanization); inefficient water management and increasing irrigation costs (due to rising fuel prices); and lack of preparation by Bangladeshi smallholder farmers (accounting for four-fifths of all farm holdings) for the growing competition in the global market.

In view of the Government's commitment to achieve food security for all, the European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project was launched in May 2010 to improve the food security and nutritional status and to reduce the poverty of landless, marginal and smallholder rural households, by boosting agricultural production and improving income-generating opportunities. The project is providing farmers with improved seeds (field crops and vegetables), fruit tree seedlings, fertilizer, agricultural machinery, livestock, animal feed and materials to build animal sheds. A fishery component is distributing fish seeds, feed, fishing boats and equipment to facilitate aquaculture and open water fishing. The intervention is focused in the country's south-western regions, targeting a total of 82 000 households. The budget allocated by the EU is about USD 9 million and includes capacity development activities to complement the input support components.

Innovative feature

The project is addressing four main aspects of food production including crop production, water management, livestock and fishery in 12 districts of south-western Bangladesh. These areas, affected by recent natural disasters, have high agricultural production potential.

Despite the project's limited time frame (May 2010 to June 2011), innovations to achieve rapid and sustainable impacts can be found in the: identification and distribution of high-yielding and adaptable

seeds (mainly rice and maize); the implementation of Farmer Field Schools; and the promotion of farmer and fishing organizations. A major technology transfer process is also being carried out within both the fishery and crop mechanization components.

In the fishery component, the project is assisting small-scale fishermen groups by helping to reconstruct part of the fishing boat park that was destroyed by the 2007 and 2009 cyclones. In particular, the project has supported the development of technical specifications and ad hoc training to local boat builders for the construction of more resistant wooden fishing boats. At the same time, locally produced fibreglass fishing boats are being purchased. The fibreglass boats will be managed by fishermen groups, who will be responsible for their use and maintenance. These activities have tremendous potential to increase fish production in a sustainable way and to contribute to the food and nutrition security of fish farmers who have lost their assets. Also, these boats enhance safety at sea.

In terms of the crop machinery component, the project is currently distributing 640 power tillers, 100 power tillers for maize and 160 threshers for rice to a total of 320 farmer groups as well as 10 000 grain and seed silos to mitigate post-harvest losses. Each group has formed a committee to manage the operation of the machines. It is expected that mechanization will strongly impact yields, essentially through improved soil preparation.

Considerable losses of livestock were caused by Cyclones Sidr and Aila. In addition, the livestock sector had a spread of contagious diseases such as Avian Influenza and Foot and Mouth Disease. As a result, most of the landless, marginal and small farmers did not have livestock (cows, buffaloes and goats), thus losing a major source of income and food security.

Through local organizations, the EUFF project is contributing to restocking the project areas with animals by supplying cows, goats and poultry to project beneficiaries including landless, marginal farmers and female-headed households. To increase sustainability, training was provided to livestock rearers in improved meat, dairy and poultry production, basic animal health, influenza surveillance and animal housing through participatory and extension approaches and Farmer Field Schools.

Achievements to date

EUFF objectives

The project is ongoing and it is too early to evaluate its impact in terms of increased food production and food security in the targeted areas and communities. During the first six months of implementation, most of the input procurement and distribution had been achieved. The complementary farmer capacity development activities (Farmer Field Schools) are being implemented, aimed at maximizing the effectiveness and sustainability of the input distribution components.

The project is well-aligned with the EUFF objectives and food security principles. The interventions involve the crop, livestock and fishery value chains and are expected to enable targeted farmers to intensify and diversify agricultural production, as well as increase productivity and marketable surplus. A focus on diversified food production is expected to improve food availability (in both the crop and off-seasons) and to positively impact household diets and health. The distribution of improved varieties of Boro and Aman rice seeds, vegetable, maize and pulse seeds, as well as appropriate fertilizers and crop protection products potentially contributed to diversifying diets.

The transition from an emergency response to a medium- and long-term development process is being pursued mainly by providing agricultural machineries to replace the draught animals and other equipment lost in the 2007 floods and cyclones and by expanding the cultivated area (particularly in the Boro season). The re-stocking of animals, complemented by the distribution of improved animal feed, veterinary services and animal shelters, as well as the rehabilitation of fish ponds and improved

aquaculture packages, are also supporting a sustained agricultural development process. Capacity building of formal and informal small-scale producer groups is being achieved through the involvement of local Government authorities and 10 NGOs contracted as implementing partners.

Rome Principles

The project is in line with the ongoing national programme for food security. The Government of Bangladesh is strongly committed to ensuring food security in the spirit of the 1996 World Food Summit Declaration: access by all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life. The country has always provided strong emphasis on increasing domestic production of food commodities to ensure adequate food availability for all people, especially the poor. This is clearly reflected in mainstream Government documents such as the National Food and Nutrition Policy 1997, National Fisheries Policy 1998, National Livestock Development Policy 2007, Animal Quarantine Act 2005, Animal Disease Prevention and Control Act 2005 and the National Food Policy Plan of Action (2008-2015). In particular, the EUFF project is coherent with the present Government commitment to achieve self-sufficiency in food production by 2013.

Coordination and harmonized work with other national and international development actors have been achieved, ensuring the provision of assistance to vulnerable households not covered by other interventions. The primary beneficiaries of the EUFF project are small and marginal farmers from 12 districts of the south-west region of Bangladesh (Bagerhat, Barguna, Barisal, Bhola, Faridpur, Gopalganj, Khulna, Madaripur, Narail, Patuakhali, Shariatpur and Satkhira). Two other districts (Jhalokathi and Pirojpur) are covered by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) while another district (Jessore) is covered by a special Government programme which has different agricultural practices and a large area under Boro cultivation. The coordinated selection of upazilas (provinces), and beneficiary groups avoided duplication of interventions by the Government, other development partners and NGOs, especially those implemented by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and WFP under the EUFF.

Way forward

The project has only six months left to finish the planned activities. However, the results achieved so far are encouraging. In particular, the project has been able to provide an effective relief response in a short period of time. The project components have been defined in a participatory process with the involvement of the Government and other stakeholders. The approach and the technical aspects applied have been identified on the basis of previous FAO experiences and lessons learned.

The project aims to build linkages with existing private seed sector entrepreneurs in order to enhance the availability of and accessibility to improved seeds and other inputs. Due to engaging farmers in group-based learning processes (FFS) it has been observed that project beneficiaries have been sufficiently trained to adopt – and continue with - relatively modern agricultural practices introduced by the project.

The evaluation of the real impact on improved production, increased productivity and food security will be carried out in May 2011. It is expected that the findings will support Government and donor community decisions to scale-up the project strategy.

FAO has formulated a concept note titled “Food and Nutrition Security Improvement in Climate Change Prone Areas of Bangladesh”. The interventions proposed in the concept note are an integral part of the Country Investment Plan for agriculture, food security and nutrition developed by the Government. They follow upon the EUFF project as interventions will cover the same south-western areas of Bangladesh. This concept note will form the basis for developing a detailed proposal for submission to the EU Food Security Thematic Fund (FSTF) for possible funding in 2012.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Tackling the impact of soaring food prices in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Despite its vast natural resources, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is in the midst of a severe crisis with alarming humanitarian and social consequences. The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted throughout the country indicates that 46 percent of children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition, while 20 percent of children under five die from preventable diseases. This only adds to a humanitarian tragedy that has unfolded in the country since 1998; ongoing conflict has caused the loss of 5.4 million lives. The current level of agricultural production in the DRC is about 30-60 percent below what it was before 1997, depending on the region of the country, while food consumption needs continue to grow due to population growth (3.3 percent per year). Food shortages, exacerbated by high food prices, are common.

Project objectives and activities

The dramatic situation in the country requires a multifaceted response to assist vulnerable people and to increase food availability in major provincial cities where almost 30 percent of the population lives. This project, spread over two years, aims to mitigate the impact of soaring food prices on vulnerable populations. Specifically, it aims to reduce the food insecurity of 36 000 vulnerable households in Kisangani, Kindu, Kananga, Mbuji-Mayi and Kalemie by increasing agricultural production by an additional 16 900 tonnes of food, while facilitating market access of products and producers. The project's main activities aim to:

- a. support mechanisms for regular collection, analysis and dissemination of food security data, notably on prices, from 53 rural and nine urban observatories;
- b. support the formation and capacity building of farmers' organizations (1 300 producer groups, 90 farmer organizations and 10 pre-cooperatives);
- c. improve the availability and accessibility of quality inputs to increase production (36 000 households supported - 180 000 tools, 740 tonnes of food crop seeds, 1.36 tonnes of vegetable seeds distributed over two growing seasons);
- d. rehabilitate strategic routes to open up production areas (250 km of rehabilitated hot spots, or 1 250 km of track);
- e. establish infrastructure for production, storage, processing, marketing and transportation of agricultural products (14 threshers/shellers, 48 processing kits and 360 storage warehouses with staff trained to maintain them).

Achievements to date

Despite the difficult situation in the country, after nearly 18 months, the European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project has managed to achieve four interesting results: (i) the establishment of a reliable information system on food prices and food security; (ii) the creation of farmers' organizations; (iii) the initial development of a seed value chain; and (iv) the efficient and timely implementation of activities in a vast landlocked country, where infrastructure and institutions are still dysfunctional.

Creation of an information system on food safety. This entails the collection of information on quantities and prices of 17 food commodities in major markets in the five affected provinces, as well as data on the state of food security and livelihoods in targeted areas. Information on prices and quantities of food products has been disseminated on a monthly basis since 2008. Bulletins analyzing the evolution of food security have been published since September 2009 and distributed every two months. This system can provide a reliable knowledge base for all national and international actors involved in food security (Government, donor agencies, NGOs, UN agencies, etc.). Using this information to identify and analyze food insecurity and track prices and flows allows various actors to improve the efficiency and quality of emergency and development interventions as well as the coordination of their operations.

Development of Farmer Organizations (FOs). About 90 FOs have been identified and trained by three NGOs. External specialized structures provide initial intensive assistance (formation, organization and technical support) supplemented by constant monitoring by implementing partners throughout the project's duration. Two hundred and thirteen people (166 members of FOs, 27 NGOs operators and 20 Government officials) have received initial training. In addition, 3 436 members of producer groups (PGs) have received training on improved cultivation techniques (66 percent of the outcomes to be attained by the end of the project). Along with the distribution of inputs, these trainings have enabled 33 835 households (from a total of 36 000) to start agricultural activities. This is a very important first step in setting up more structured food value chains. Future efforts and investments should allow for the linking of FOs with other actors in the value chain (traders, transporters, processing, etc.) while strengthening their technical, managerial and institutional capacities.

Initial development of a seed value chain for food crops. Some producer groups supported by the project are agri-food seed growers certified by the official certification agency (SENASA). They are beginning to meet the demand for improved inputs (a portion of the basic seed distributed by the project was purchased for these producer groups). Though modest, the initial development of the seed sector is a significant result that deserves to be further researched and developed in order to build a stronger system of production and distribution of quality seeds.

Efficient and timely implementation. In a vast landlocked country like the DRC, with poorly developed or absent infrastructure and institutions, project implementation appears to be effective, with satisfactory rates of implementation and disbursement that are close to the expected objectives. In this regard, participatory approaches to identify critical areas for rehabilitation and collaboration (businesses, DVDA, communities) for setting down tracks in a relatively short time and for maintaining them seem promising. Furthermore, methods of concentrating development efforts geographically - construction of feeder roads and storage facilities, processing and support to producer organizations - also seem promising and adapted to the context of a landlocked country like the DRC. The implementation methods and approaches, which could perhaps be improved, should be consolidated and shared with other donors and development partners. This will improve the design and implementation of food security investment projects in DRC while providing a concrete operational base for further scaling up of investments in the future.

EUFF objectives

The project objectives are consistent with DRC's national policy in which agriculture is one of the key sectors (Strategy Paper for Growth and Poverty Reduction [DCSRP] 2006-2009). Although there is no clear sectoral policy, the project seeks to address important constraints recognized in the DCSR (lack of quality seeds, inadequate technical and financial support, impassable roads and farm tracks, limited community spirit, lack of storage and processing facilities for crops). The project is consistent with EC priorities for development, established in the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and National Indicative Programme (NIP) for 2008-2013 of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF). The maintenance and rehabilitation of road infrastructure is one of the three principal axes, as is tackling the impact of the

food price crisis. Insofar as the project is adjusted to national development priorities, even if not translated into realistic strategies and focused on results, one could say that it respects the principles of the Paris Declaration. It is consistent with Article 3.3 of EC Regulation establishing a facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries.¹

This operation fully meets the objectives of the EUFF. It falls between a conventional emergency project (distribution of inputs and tools) and a medium-term investment project (training of organizations, construction/rehabilitation of infrastructure and equipment). Project achievements in terms of knowledge, methods and operational approaches (implementation) can form a solid basis for future investment programmes (scaling up) (Article 1.1). In its implementation, the project was strongly associated with civil society, particularly in guiding farmer organizations (Article 1.3).

With its emphasis on improving farm productivity, diversifying production and strengthening farmer organizations, the project is consistent with the objectives and principles of the EUFF, namely, to promote food availability and support activities to respond quickly and directly to mitigate the negative impact of volatile food prices on local populations, and to strengthen the capacity and governance of the agricultural sector in order to improve the sustainability of interventions (Section 2.1). Strategies and approaches are designed and implemented by the people and their organizations, Government and NGOs, and seem tailored to country circumstances (Article 2.2).

Project activities (inputs, infrastructure, equipment and support to farmer organizations) are all consistent with those envisioned by the EUFF (Section 3.2). Similarly, the project focuses on small family farms as provided in Article 3.3. Entities receiving funding (FAO, Government, NGOs, farmer organizations, service providers, etc.) are all listed in Article 4.

The dialogue between the Government, FAO and the European Union Delegation in Kinshasa has led to close and effective monitoring of project activities. This has helped to refocus the strategies for implementing infrastructure rehabilitation activities, and amend the logical framework when necessary. This partnership is expected to continue beyond the duration of this project so that project achievements can actually serve as a launching pad for more ambitious agricultural investment programmes that are able to meet the needs of a country like the DRC. The dialogue should be broadened to include other partners, notably as part of thematic working groups established to ensure alignment and harmonization of development operations strategies and the system of the country. FAO is leading the group on food security, which should facilitate this.

Impact on food security

It is too early to measure the direct impact on food security. The regular bulletin on food prices already allows for the assessment of food needs of the population in targeted areas. The project provides an additional production of 16 900 tonnes of food. Such an increase in agricultural production (food and seed quality) will lead, in principle, to an improvement in the food security of the targeted populations, an additional source of income and an improvement in the supply to secondary markets. The production of quality seeds will help meet the demand of farmers. Combined with the effects of other activities, it will lead to improved agricultural productivity. However, the production obtained by a project with such limited funds (but covering half the area of a country as big as the DRC) will not have sufficient impact to influence market prices to the extent anticipated in the project logical framework (i.e. reducing food prices by at least 70 percent).

The project's impact seems to lie rather in its ability to develop approaches and partnerships that could provide knowledge and an operational base for future investments. This project allows for a positive

¹ Article 1.1 of Regulation (EC) No 1337/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of 16 December 2008 establishing a facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries

dynamic in which the main actors, beginning with the farmers, their communities and their organizations, mobilize their resources to work and grow together. The creation of farmer organizations and the strengthening of market linkages (physical, economic, organizational) are key milestones in the development of food chains, where future developments require substantial investments over much longer periods.

Risk Management

The project appears to have had significant results as well as substantial benefits for farmers and their organizations involved. However, there are a number of risks that could affect the likelihood of these benefits continuing once external support has finished:

- a. lack of mechanisms to rehabilitate infrastructure (by communities, state or companies) to ensure sustainable market access;
- b. short duration of support for the formation of farmer organizations, preventing them from having sufficient technical and economic autonomy to grow and develop;
- c. low development of food chains including insufficient links between farmer organizations and their environment (financial institutions, service providers, input supplies, traders, etc.) that do not ensure sustainability of services required to guarantee a stable food supply;
- d. limited human and financial resources of the state, which do not ensure a minimum level of public goods and services to producers and citizens;
- e. ongoing conflict in the DRC.

Way forward

Based on very positive results and risks faced, the following channels should be explored to consolidate gains and keep the momentum going:

- a. **Strengthen the partnership dynamic** by expanding the dialogue to other partners, notably donors, and improve ownership of partners in the country. It is also necessary to keep an open mind as to the modalities for implementing future investments. Thematic groups between the Government and development partners established under the Aid Effectiveness Framework will serve as a springboard for such dialogue.
- b. **Take stock of lessons learned**, particularly regarding farmer organizations, operational approaches and seed producer groups, in order to share and improve upon them. The difficulties encountered (e.g., construction and road rehabilitation) should also be documented for discussion.
- c. Prepare a detailed strategy for transitioning **from relief to development and investment**. To this end, it is necessary that each project activity lead to a clear outcome: documentation, continuation and/or mainstreaming into existing institutions or future programmes. The plan must be adapted to each of the provinces or project areas, as the transition period may unfold at a different pace.

The Republic of Guatemala

Improving the food supply of the most vulnerable in the departments of El Quiché, Alta and Baja Verapaz in Guatemala

In Guatemala, there is a wide gap between actual and potential staple grain yields. Grain productivity could double if existing technology were properly used. Guatemala is highly dependent on imported food, and thus vulnerable to price fluctuations in international commodity markets. Therefore, it is important to increase the productivity and availability of local grain. Around 51 percent of the population lives in poverty; 71 percent of the poor reside in rural areas and rely on farming activities.

The European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project in Guatemala, jointly implemented by FAO and WFP, aims to reduce the food insecurity and malnutrition of vulnerable populations in the short and medium term by increasing both the agricultural productivity and marketing capacity of smallholder farmers.

Twelve thousand small-scale farmers in 16 municipalities were initially identified by the Government and their own communities as suffering from high poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity. Efforts are under way to help these farmers improve their maize productivity in a sustainable way and to diversify their agricultural systems. In Alta Verapaz, beneficiaries are being supported in the marketing of their produce. The project also provides supplementary feeding support to vulnerable households to prevent the nutritional status of children and pregnant and lactating women from deteriorating.

Two main livelihood systems, two approaches to emergency and development needs

Two main approaches were developed: (i) one for maize producers capable of producing a surplus in Alta Verapaz; (ii) another for farmers unable to produce enough for subsistence in Baja Verapaz and Quiché. Once beneficiaries were selected, livelihood studies and an ongoing consultation with beneficiaries were carried out, enabling project activities to be designed according to specific needs. This approach is part of a project methodology put into place by the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) in Guatemala in the last 10 years.

Alta Verapaz – 10 000 beneficiary households

The project focuses on improving the productivity and quality of maize in households with an average of five hectares of agricultural land. Thanks to an increase in production and improved grain quality, farmers are obtaining a surplus, which can be marketed. In some cases, surpluses have been sold through farmer organizations to WFP for the production of VitaCereal¹. This has generated income, which in turn has enabled farmers to diversify their diets. It has also helped producers to become organized and to meet the high quality standards necessary for selling in formal markets.

Baja Verapaz, Quiché – 12 000 beneficiary households

This component targets subsistence farmers with an average of 0.3 hectares of land per household, who are unable to grow enough food for a year. In an effort to make them more self-sufficient, the project seeks to boost and diversify their production through improved maize productivity, vegetable gardens and small livestock rearing. WFP provides food in exchange for improved agricultural practices.

¹ VitaCereal is a fortified food blend developed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and Guatemalan scientists to address malnutrition. Its ingredients include maize, soy and micronutrients.

The idea is that if families achieve one year of self-sufficiency, they are not forced to migrate in search of paid work. This in turn influences other important factors such as children's school attendance and family health. In Quiché, there is potential to sell vegetables locally, and farmers are benefiting from irrigation systems and training in water management. They are able to have an extra cropping season and to extend their period of self-sufficiency.

Achievements to date

The project is aligned with Government policy and priorities of the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS). The EUFF project includes the provision of extension services, the use of improved seeds for staple crops, the development of local markets and diversification, as well as the progressive inclusion of women in decision making within the household and an effective legal framework against domestic violence.

The EUFF project has also been followed by five short-term emergency projects. These emergency projects would not have been able to go beyond the simple distribution of inputs had the EUFF project not been in place to facilitate the rapid training of staff and implementation of these emergency projects.

Achievements in Alta Verapaz

In Alta Verapaz the productivity of beneficiary families has increased from an average of 2.1 tonnes/hectare to an average of 3.5 tonnes/hectare. This has created household surpluses of twenty percent on average. Twenty-three percent of this surplus (1 350 tonnes) was sold to WFP – a higher quantity than expected – which means that at least some of the producers could achieve a good level of organization and meet international quality standards. From the total number of beneficiaries in Alta Verapaz, 27 percent are women and many are single mothers or widows.

In addition to the programmed activities, the project has remained flexible in its design to meet demands from beneficiary populations. Vegetable garden and small livestock activities, which were not programmed in this region, have been added to this component upon demand.

The project has also worked closely with municipalities, increasing their capacity to support their communities. In Raxruha, for example, extension workers hired by the municipality, with the support of the EUFF project, collaborate on different projects through the recently created Rural Development Committee (RDC), which now coordinates 30 projects in the municipality. In doing so, all municipal projects benefit from the training provided to the extensions workers through the EUFF project. At the same time, extension workers supported by the EUFF project are seen as part of the municipal staff.

Achievements in Baja Verapaz and Quiché

Beneficiaries in Baja Verapaz and Quiché have seen their maize productivity increase from an average of 720 to 850 kg/hectare. These households – 46 percent of them headed by women – have also planted vegetable gardens and improved their management of small livestock. Another important achievement is the functioning of the Teaching and Learning Centres (TLC). Community lead farmers – *promoters* – use their land to demonstrate the technologies and best practices introduced in the local agricultural system by the EUFF project. Different types of technology and best practices - many related to conservation agriculture - are being implemented through the project including the avoidance of slash and burn and the incorporation of organic fertilizer in the soil, contour planting, mulching and terracing.

Beneficiary satisfaction with the project is demonstrated by the demand for new types of activities. Thanks to the vegetables gardens, communities in Baja Verapaz are now interested in having drip irrigation equipment and training for vegetable production during the dry season.

The active participation of MAGA and the municipalities has contributed to these achievements. In Baja Vera Paz, MAGA and municipalities are hiring extension workers with their own resources to support project activities. In Quiché, MAGA is supporting extension activities similar to those supported by the EUFF project in four municipalities which were not part of the project.

The coordination between FAO and WFP is also important in Baja Verapaz and Quiché. Some 4 204 EUFF project beneficiary households are part of WFP's "food-for-work" and "food-for-training" programmes. Beneficiary families carry out relevant agricultural practices, which have been introduced and monitored by FAO. In return, they receive food from WFP during the months in which they are not self-sufficient. Part of the food supplied is maize bought from project beneficiaries in Alta Verapaz. WFP and FAO officers in Guatemala agree that this model of collaboration should be continued.

General achievements and project sustainability

The project increased the number of beneficiary households from 12 000 to over 20 000, focusing on households that had never benefited from a project before. Part of this increase was possible due to the interest of some communities that had not been initially selected for the project. These households bought inputs with their own resources and were provided with technical support through the project.

In general, beneficiaries have shown a willingness to invest their own resources in practices promoted by the project. For example, after the distribution of poultry vaccines and the training of *promoters* in their administration, beneficiaries paid for additional doses of vaccines and administered them themselves. In total, 400 000 chickens have been vaccinated, helping to reduce chicken losses during the winter to almost zero.

Rural promoters have played an important role in achieving these results as they have encouraged an exchange of experiences and better communication within the community. It has also been observed that the work of *rural promoters* is important in improving existing social ties within the communities as community members interact during the development of project activities.

The reinforcement of social ties is important for the institutionalization, and thus sustainability, of project activities. In fact, some steps have already been taken, the first being the creation and strengthening of Communal Development Councils (COCODE). The existence of COCODEs means that communities now have institutions that express their demand, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and organize communal activities (e.g. deciding on the use of capital from revolving funds or organizing participation in Teaching and Learning Centres). COCODEs also have a role in the organization of activities not related to the project.

The second step in institutionalizing project activities is done with the municipalities. Sixteen mayors signed letters of agreement with FAO after the start of the project in their municipalities, showing interest in cooperating with this activity. Thanks to this collaboration, some of extension workers who support *rural promoters* in their work have been hired by the municipalities, thus transferring ownership to the mayor. Most municipalities now recognize the role they have to play in agriculture extension and production and allocate funds to activities that were previously used for public works (roads, bridges etc.).

Way forward

Funds from the EUFF project have enabled work that began under the SPFS to continue. In addition to providing the necessary resources, they have also allowed for a certain level of flexibility for adjusting project activities and support according to the demands and needs of the beneficiary households. Thanks to its effective response, the project, after having addressed the most basic needs, has been able to identify new needs and demands.

The EUFF project methodology is serving as an extension model in the country. The project is currently training MAGA extension workers, contributing to the rebuilding of the National Agricultural Extension System (SNEA). This has motivated the Secretary of Food and Nutrition Security Secretary (SESAN) to try to mobilize funds from the Government and development partners – namely a portion of the € 33 million programmed for budgetary support to the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) in the EU strategy for cooperation and development for Guatemala – for the implementation of an adapted and reinforced EUFF methodology by Government services.

The EUFF project can also contribute to the strengthening of the country's seed policy in coordination with the regional project "GCP/RLA/182/SPA - Strengthening of the staple grains seed production policy in support of smallholder farming and food security" on issues such as the validation of varieties or creation of communal seeds banks. Future contributions from the EUFF project in the improvement of food security in Guatemala could also address the improvement of pest and weed management practices, the introduction of some mechanization and the reduction of crop losses (mostly during the last development stages of maize and post-harvest handling).

Finally, the work of FAO and WFP in assisting the production of quality maize for VitaCereal has shown positive results and should continue to be supported in order to guarantee the sustainability of the newly created farmer groups in charge of commercializing production. With the training and support provided by FAO and WFP, small farmers could be able to supply hospitals and the army. Hence, there is an opportunity for WFP and FAO to keep working together, sharing complementary expertise and experiences.

The Republic of Honduras

Immediate support to restore agriculture-based livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural families affected by drought in the dry region of Honduras

The combined impact of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, drought in 2001, 2002 and 2009 and price hikes in 2008 has affected agricultural productivity in Honduras and the welfare of its rural populations, reinforcing a vicious cycle of poverty.

Over 60 percent of Hondurans live below the poverty line, with 74 percent residing in rural areas. Most of these poor households struggle to access food because of price increases. In August 2008, the cost of the monthly food basket was USD 462, which is above the monthly income of poor households and the minimum wage.

The European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project in Honduras has been designed to provide a quick response to food insecurity. The project aims to tackle problems related to food availability, access and stability in the country's rural areas by improving agricultural systems and productivity as well the post-harvest crop management capacity of subsistence farmers in the dry regions. The project is providing 11 000 households with inputs and training. Of these, 1 500 households are also benefiting from the provision of storage silos; 800 from backyard gardens (which contribute to improved food utilization and stability through crop diversification); 400 from poultry activities (poultry and feed); and 300 from rain water harvesting systems.

The project also plays a role in improving the country's institutional and governance framework, particularly at local level, by establishing partnerships with municipalities and supporting communal organizations such as *cajas rurales* (community-based saving and credit groups).

An emergency project within a long-term development framework

FAO Honduras' programme consists of a number of projects under a common framework, with the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) at the centre. Each project developed by FAO Honduras supports one or a few branches of this common framework, which aims to improve food security and nutrition by strengthening the different livelihood assets of Honduran rural populations: natural, physical, financial, social, and human capital. Within this framework, FAO projects promote soil and conservation practices, provide physical capital to the most vulnerable, introduce production, post-harvest, food safety and nutrition enhancing technologies, build capacity on topics related to food security, including environmental conservation and entrepreneurial development, reinforce social structures and help create rural employment opportunities.

The EUFF project in Honduras focuses mainly on two aspects of this strategy: (i) building up the capital of impoverished communities; (ii) and strengthening existing social structures. By adding significant working capital to the global efforts of FAO Honduras, the EUFF – as presented by its national coordinator – “adds speed to an already moving train”.

The project works with existing communal organizations, providing capital through agricultural inputs. The organizations' members establish their own rules for setting up a revolving fund that enables the growth or at least maintenance of the capital introduced by the project in the community over the long term.

The project provides support for the legalization of these organizations into *cajas rurales*, which are micro-financing institutions regulated by the National Fund for Sustainable Development (FUNADERS). The next step is for each *caja rural* to be part of a network. This would allow them to obtain or provide

credit to other *cajas rurales* in the network. The ultimate objective (which was not achieved during the short EUFF project period, but which will be taken up by other FAO Honduras projects) is the coordination of these networks by Savings and Credit Cooperatives. These are formal credit institutions responsible for setting standards and facilitating the network.

The work that is being implemented by the EUFF project benefits from the accumulated experience of the *cajas rurales* and rural extension as well as the human resources of the SPFS in Honduras. For example, the training calendar and curriculum for participants in the EUFF project were designed together with SPFS field staff.

Achievements to date

The FAO EUFF follows FAO Honduras' approach of aligning activities with major national policies (Policy on Food Security and Nutrition - PSAN) and programmes (e.g. *Bono Tecnológico Productivo*¹) while at the same time working with local institutions and partners.

When creating partnerships at the local level, it is important to "keep one foot in social society and another in public institutions", according to a project coordinator. "This is the only way we can move without limping."

The EUFF largely contributes to the efforts of FAO Honduras. The injection of significant capital (seed and fertilizers) provides an incentive to mayors to get involved in food security-related activities. Some municipalities have signed agreements with FAO to financially support complementary activities, such as the storage of inputs or the acquisition of herbicides. It is expected (and this is supported by the experience of the SPFS) that once the mayors are more aware of the results of food security-related activities and the population continues to demand support from the municipalities, food security-related investments could be incorporated into a number of municipal development plans once the project finishes.

Work with civil society consists of strategic alliances with implementing partners and the already mentioned efforts with communal organizations. The EUFF has established strategic alliances with 11 implementing partners. Strategic partners are mainly local organizations, which are preferred to larger international NGOs, as they provide long-term permanent assistance to the communities they serve. By being involved in the implementation of project activities these organizations will be able to strengthen their capacities in technical assistance and project management. The project is building up capacity within communities to be able to recognize demands, express community needs, raise funds, manage projects and provide technical assistance once the project finishes. Achievements in the management and reporting abilities of these institutions have already been verified.

With regard to farmer organizations, the project is working with and reinforcing a total of 523 *cajas rurales*. The *cajas rurales* are recognized by the municipal authorities where they have been implemented or reinforced. In these municipalities, all projects that supply a form of capital to the communities need to be integrated into the framework of each communal *caja rural* and the capital provided included in the revolving fund.

As staple food agriculture is mainly a male activity in the country, there is a risk of not adequately meeting women's needs. Three different strategies have been followed to offset this risk:

- Focus on vulnerable groups, particularly single female-headed families;
- Promote backyard gardens and poultry activities, helping to diversify diets and provide additional income to women;
- Encourage women's participation in the board of *cajas rurales*.

¹ National programme that provides seeds and fertilizers for the planting of 0.7ha of maize or bean and, promoting capitalization of the transfer through *cajas rurales*

This last aspect constitutes an example of how *cajas rurales* are not merely institutions that provide credit for agriculture production. Some community leaders also mention the role of *cajas rurales* in providing support to members of the community by financing a visit to the doctor or buying medicines.

Risk management

Through its holistic approach, FAO Honduras is working to mitigate risks within the EUFF activities. For one, work on soil and water conservation technologies improves resilience to adverse climate conditions, while work with local implementing partners and authorities, cushions against the negative effects of political instability at national level, which could jeopardize the implementation of the project.

Way forward

Leaving communities more food secure in the long term can not be achieved solely by an 18 month-project such as the EUFF. As with the risk management strategy, the sustainability of EUFF activities depends on linkages with the work of FAO Honduras and public and civil society partners.

Those municipalities where implementing partners and communities have improved their capacities to the point where they can develop activities promoted by the project are now in a better position to access food for their communities; those municipalities where further support is needed to sustainably improve institutions and capacities will continue to be supported by the existing FAO projects, namely the SPFS.

FAO Honduras' long-term holistic approach to food security has gained the confidence of the country's development partners. This work, along with the EUFF funds – which has proven FAO's ability to carry out large projects in a limited time frame – contributed to the approval by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) of a proposal for USD 16 million for the extension and scaling up of the SPFS.

Farmers in the municipalities assisted by the EUFF will have better financial capacities to continue using the good practices and technologies that have been introduced and to adopt new ones through the new phase of the SPFS.

The Republic of Kenya

Enhancing livestock production to support vulnerable populations in Kenya affected by volatile food prices

Agriculture is the second largest contributor to Kenya's gross domestic product, after the service sector. The majority of Kenyans depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and survival. However, in 2009, the high cost of agricultural inputs and fuel, coupled with a prolonged drought, killed livestock, withered crops and left nearly 4 million people at risk of hunger. People living in the Northern and Rift Valley regions were especially hard hit. Outbreaks of animal diseases and the increased frequency of drought and competition over scarce water resources and grazing lands left pastoralists living in semi-arid and arid regions even more vulnerable.

Following the food crisis, both the pastoral livestock production system and the small-scale dairy production system required assistance. The constraints faced by both systems needed to be addressed immediately to ensure more livestock products on the market and to ease the burden of high food prices on vulnerable livestock keepers.

Project objectives and activities

The project's overall objective is to contribute to the improved food security of targeted rural populations affected by volatile food prices through an increase in the purchasing power of vulnerable households. The project aims to increase livestock products through a rapid supply of inputs and to strengthen the productive capacities of local communities to allow Kenya to resume the growth trend it has experienced in recent years. Activities carried out include: promoting fodder production through the provision of drought-tolerant grass seed; supporting camel milk hygiene and marketing; supporting the smallholder dairy sector through radio-based training; supporting livestock marketing through improved infrastructure; improving information on livestock diseases and movement (using the digital pen technology); and improving the response to disease outbreaks through the purchase and delivery of sufficient quantities of vaccines (particularly for Rift Valley Fever).

Innovative features

The project has a number of innovative features:

- Project activities were aligned with other ongoing projects in the livestock sector, thereby building upon experiences, avoiding duplication of efforts and enhancing sustainability.
- Based on difficulties in reaching a significant proportion of the population, both with this project as well as in the past, the project has designed a radio-based training programme in collaboration with the Government's Dairy Training Institute and Radio Citizen. This has led to the enrolment of almost 5 000 individuals in the course (4 000 more than the initial target). And this only reflects the number of people who paid the registration fees; the programme has an audience of well over one million people.
- The use of the digital pen for disease reporting and mobile phones and text messages for livestock movement control have attracted much attention, with the Government showing interest in using the same technology for the collection of early warning information for the food security sector.

Achievements to date

EUFF objectives

Encourage a positive supply response: By providing seed, the project has enabled the harvesting of significant quantities of both grass and grass seed in areas where grass is exceptionally sparse. This has created a local demand for hay. In many cases, fodder production in irrigated schemes is more profitable than vegetable production. As the production of fodder is keeping pace with livestock production (the primary livelihood in these areas), farms are now supporting rather than competing with wider pastoral systems.

Mitigate the negative effects of volatile food prices: Those dependent on livestock saw their terms of trade erode due to volatile food prices, which meant that they were unable to buy as much food (primarily maize) from the sale of one animal as they could before. The 2009 drought, which drove livestock prices down well below their five-year average, exacerbated this. Since the project's start, however, the terms of trade for livestock keepers have changed dramatically, with an average increase of 122 and 66 percent in the price of cattle and goats respectively from October 2009 to October 2010 (taking prices well above the five-year average). Maize prices decreased by an average of 18 percent during the same period.

Strengthen the productive capacities and governance of the agricultural sector to enhance the sustainability of interventions: Through its integration into Government systems, Government involvement in joint monitoring missions and direct support to Government initiatives on animal health and disease surveillance, the project has positively influenced policy makers' thinking about development approaches. It has also actively advocated the inclusion of similar initiatives in future livestock sector budgets.

Transition from emergency to medium- and long-term response: The project in Kenya is focused on a medium- to long-term response and is built on existing initiatives in order to ensure that the rapid release of funds and the supply of inputs do not undermine longer-term development.

Consistent with the overall strategic framework for the eligible country concerned: The strategic priorities of Kenya's agricultural sector can be split into two broad categories – poverty reduction and the commercialization/promotion of a market-based economy. Through its focus on vulnerable groups and their integration in to markets, the project is fully in line with the strategic priorities of the sector.

Rome Principles

The EUFF project adopted a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security that consists of: (i) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable; and (ii) medium- and long-term sustainable agriculture/livestock, food security, nutrition and rural development interventions to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty. The project has created the conditions for production increases, including access to inputs, markets, animal health facilities, fodder production and capacity building through Pastoral Field Schools. The project has also promoted research for food and agriculture in order to ensure the limited amount of funding available is used to target and effectively fill any gaps. Through this approach, the project is supporting coordination between different initiatives and enabling institutions to work with one another, each playing to its own strengths.

As a result, the project has strengthened synergies among stakeholders and contributed to reinforcing already well-established partnerships with the Government, national agricultural research institutes, UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

Impact on food security

Significant progress has been made towards achieving the overall objective of *“Improved food security of targeted rural populations affected by the volatile food prices”*. Most notably, the percentage of children under five who are at risk of malnutrition has dropped from 18.6 percent at the start of the project to 14.85 percent (against a project target of less than 15 percent, based on the average MUAC¹ rate taken across four representative districts – Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera and Kajiado). Malnutrition rates have increased slightly as the 2010 dry season continues. Rates have risen from a low of 13.9 percent in July to the most recent figure of 14.85 percent (which still remains well below the five-year average). It is difficult to measure the extent to which these improvements can be attributed to the project. However, one significant difference from this year, compared with previous El Niño years (1998 and 2008), is the absence of a Rift Valley Fever (RVF) outbreak. The impact on food security is very clear; there have been no market closures or movement bans, meaning that livestock have been able to return home (increasing the availability of milk). Prices for livestock have increased to well above their long-term average, whereas they failed to do so during the El Niño years because of market closures. Therefore, it is highly likely that the project has contributed significantly to the progress made towards achieving an *“Improved purchasing power of targeted vulnerable households”*, especially with prices of cattle and goats increasing by 122 and 66 percent respectively against the baseline figures. The decrease in maize prices (as a result of Government intervention) has also helped to improve the purchasing power of pastoralists. At the start of the project, one 50 kg bag of maize was exchanged for the equivalent of 1.6 goats; this has now dropped to 0.96 goats.

Lessons learned

By building on existing initiatives and enhancing coordination among implementing partners, the project has achieved a significant amount with the funds available. Relationships with the Government have been exceptionally strong; the Ministry of Livestock has recommended that the project be scaled up through FAO. Based on this recommendation, the EU has set aside € 5 million for FAO to assist in the coordination and assessment of innovative opportunities in its forthcoming dry lands programme under the 10th European Development Fund.

A main lesson learned is that it is important that projects work through existing structures and entities, and complement and build synergies and partnerships with ongoing national and international projects to increase impact and enhance sustainability. This also allows the scaling-up of successful project components. The design of this project has also shown the importance of linking emergency programmes with development-oriented programmes at the outset of operations.

Way forward

Exit strategies: **Fodder:** Fodder production groups are being provided with business skills training and linked to available markets to ensure continued benefits from fodder production after the project has ended. **Animal Health:** One of the key factors limiting the sustainability of the provision of rural animal health services is the lack of coordination between the Director of Veterinary Services and NGOs. In many cases, there have been disagreements between the two parties on the most appropriate methods for sustaining services. The project has organised a workshop, which will be run by the District Veterinary Services (DVS), to chart a way forward in terms of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding

¹ (MUAC) = mid-upper-arm circumference

between NGOs and the DVS, clearly stipulating the support that each entity can expect from the other. The workshop will also outline clear parameters for situations where the DVS will accept the use of community animal health workers (one of the key controversial issues between NGOs and the DVS). The project is supporting a radio-based training programme that is being provided by an existing Government institution and which is in line with the goals and objectives of the Ministry of Livestock Production. The running costs of the programme could therefore be covered within the normal Government budget. Despite this, the costs for airing the programme (which are separate from the running costs) pose a major challenge to sustainability. The project will use the programme's first pilot to attract private investors (e.g. an Agro Vet company will be asked to support the animal health module while a processing company will be asked to support a module on milk hygiene) as well as other donors. **Livestock Marketing:** Although the project is supporting the construction of livestock markets, the main focus of this component is on the community management of livestock markets. The development of agreements of shared revenues (between community institutions and county councils) and the provision of management training constitute the exit plan for this component.

Catalytic role: The work that this project has pioneered on disease surveillance and the tracking of livestock movement have stimulated a significant amount of thought and discussion within the Government department of veterinary services. The project team was asked to support the development of a concept that links improved disease surveillance to improved access to international markets. This concept will be presented by the department to international donors. If funded, it will re-define the shape of veterinary service delivery and livestock market access in the country.

Country Strategy: During the course of this project, Kenya has achieved a number of significant milestones. It has adopted a new constitution, defined its Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS) and passed a new livestock policy. As a result of its role in this project, FAO has been elected as a key member of a task force designed to map out the implementation modalities for the livestock policy. The work of the project is in line with the recently formed country strategy and the next phase will fully support progress towards the national goals of poverty reduction and improved access to markets as defined in the ASDS.

The Kingdom of Lesotho

Support to vulnerable farming households affected by soaring food and commodity prices in Lesotho

Lesotho is a small country in southern Africa and one of the Continent's poorest. Around 59 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, with some 40 percent living in extreme poverty. The country has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world, with over 23 percent of the population believed to be infected. This has had serious consequences for the country's productive workforce. Most people in Lesotho reside in rural areas and depend on subsistence agricultural for their survival.

According to data collected by FAO during the period April-December 2008, prices of maize seed rose by 35 percent, sorghum by 34 percent, beans by 60 percent and fertilizer by 208 percent. The combination of rising food and agricultural input prices made people more vulnerable to hunger and food insecurity. In order to cope, vulnerable households tend to focus what resources they have towards meeting immediate food requirements at the expense of buying farming inputs (seeds, fertilizers and tillage). There is an urgent need to provide productive safety nets that ensure that already vulnerable households do not become even more vulnerable to food insecurity. Furthermore, given the limited arable land available in Lesotho, it is important to promote farming practices such as conservation agriculture, which increase productivity. These efforts should also be complemented by efforts to promote self-reliance in accessing inputs. Open pollinated variety (OPV) seeds can be recycled for two to three seasons, particularly if the large ears are selected at harvest, properly dried and safely stored for use as seed in the next season.

Project objectives and activities

The project's overall objective is to mitigate the impact of soaring food prices on vulnerable farming households. To help farmers increase food production during the main cropping seasons in 2009/2010 and 2010/2011, FAO is facilitating the provision of agricultural inputs to 35 700 households through Input Trade Fairs (ITFs). These fairs enable farmers to use vouchers to buy good quality seed, fertilizers and other inputs from participating local vendors. FAO has been supporting these fairs for a number of years in Lesotho as a way to stimulate local production. In addition, farmers receive training to be able to maximize production from the inputs. Through the first round of trade fairs, more than 22 000 farmers were able to access 715 tonnes of seed – maize, pea, wheat, sorghum, beans, potatoes and vegetables – as well as fertilizers and agricultural tools such as yokes, chains and hand hoes. Most of the seeds were OPVS. In the second round of ITFs, so far over 12 000 farmers have accessed 368 tonnes of seed, 119 tonnes of inorganic fertiliser and 3 146 tools/pieces of agricultural hardware. More than 90 percent of the seeds were OPVs. Depleted soil resources have seriously hampered agricultural productivity in Lesotho. This project has provided technical support to farmers to practise conservation agriculture, a technique that helps restore the health of the soil, paving the way for higher yields. Over 900 farmers have been identified to participate in this activity. FAO has also provided technical support to seed producers so they can multiply certified seed for sale through the ITFs and other input trading channels. FAO is working closely with Lesotho's Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) to implement the project, helping to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry to carry out similar activities in the future.

Innovative features

An innovative feature of the European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project is that, from its inception, it has built on a supportive policy framework, strong Government commitment and the foundation laid down by previous projects. The project steering committee is chaired by the director of field services in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) and three other departmental directors are committee members. In this way, the Government has a strong influence in steering the course of the project. By implementing all aspects of the project, FAO has adopted the approach of working side-by-side with MAFS staff to build their capacity for implementation of similar interventions in the future.

The project is also linked with the ongoing Government input subsidy programme where agricultural inputs are subsidized by 30 percent. Project beneficiaries have been able to access Government-subsidized fertilizer cheaply.

Three agricultural seasons ago, through a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project, FAO supported farm-level multiplication of certified open pollinated maize and bean seed. The project was very successful, resulting in the creation of an energetic cadre of small-scale seed producers – a first for the country. However, these farmers faced considerable marketing challenges for the seed; they were competing with large multinational seed producers from South Africa, who have better economies of scale and an established reputation. Furthermore, the small-scale seed producers were producing relatively unknown maize seed varieties.

However, in addition to MAFS efforts to advertise the seed through the media, the EUFF project, provided seed producers with an outlet for their seed through input trade fairs. The organization of these input trade fairs is another innovative feature, which has helped to facilitate the timely delivery of inputs. Through this system, vouchers with a cash value are distributed to farmers identified as requiring assistance. These farmers gather at the fairs and ‘purchase’ agricultural inputs and seeds of their choice, using their own discretion as to which items meet their specific needs. The fairs also provide a market for local producers of quality OPV seed, which are not always available from commercial suppliers. Input trade fairs support local agricultural retail businesses and encourage them to expand trade in more remote areas, benefiting themselves and the farmers. The project has made HIV and AIDS testing and information provision accessible to farmers throughout the country by inviting Population Services International, an AIDS service organization, to provide these services during the ITFs. Under normal circumstances, the long distances travelled to access such services often prevent communities from accessing them.

Achievements to date

EUFF objectives

The project has encouraged a positive supply response and has responded rapidly to help ease the negative effects of volatile food prices on farming communities (22 551 in 2009 and 12 820 in 2010, of which 47 percent of the beneficiaries were female). By strengthening the capacity of selected vulnerable households to practise conservation agriculture and on-farm seed production, and by supporting Government extension workers, the project has shifted from an emergency to a medium-term response. The fact that more than 90 percent of the seed accessed through the ITFs were open pollinated varieties also augurs well for farmers being self-sufficient in seed for the next few seasons. Thanks to this project and previous efforts, national capacity for on-farm seed multiplication has also been strengthened.

Rome Principles

The EUFF project has fostered coordination and stakeholder involvement, and there is a national Government commitment to improving agricultural production.

Impact on food security

Feedback received from Government officials, extension workers, lead farmers, agro-dealers, etc., has been universally positive. The project conducted a post-harvest assessment in mid-2010. Across all of the country's agro-ecological zones, farmers who had received assistance had better harvests than those farmers not assisted.

Lessons learned

Conservation agriculture is a proven technology for increasing productivity and managing climate risks. However, experienced practitioners indicate that the conservation agriculture learning curve is very long. Over the last five seasons, FAO and other partners have supported the Government in promoting conservation agriculture, and the current project has provided the necessary resources to enable more farmers to practise these techniques. Conservation agriculture enables farmers to manage climate risks by minimizing input costs (e.g. costs of tillage and weeding can be significantly reduced through conservation agriculture). Because conservation agriculture improves the soil's moisture holding capacities, it also buffers crops from droughts and dry spells.

A key lesson learned is that for conservation agriculture to succeed, efforts to promote it and to provide the necessary training to farmers and extension staff need to continue.

Input trade fairs are an excellent way to make inputs accessible to farmers, especially in a country with a difficult terrain such as Lesotho. One lesson would be to improve on the methodology, taking into account practices in other parts of the world (e.g. the use of agro-dealers already present in certain areas), and in certain contexts, the use of electronic vouchers to minimize paperwork and increase efficiency. It is also important not to associate ITFs just with an emergency response. There is no reason why they cannot be used in a development context.

MAFS has embarked on a programme to expand and scale up conservation agriculture and open pollinated variety seed production. Given that MAFS has been promoting and providing resources for conservation agriculture in the country for several years now, their commitment to building on the successes of this project is evident.

It is important that projects work through existing structures and entities and complement and build synergies and partnerships with ongoing national and international projects to increase impact and enhance sustainability. This also allows the scaling-up of successful project components. Linking emergency programmes with development-oriented programmes should also be considered at the outset of operations.

Way forward

The project has involved MAFS staff in the planning and implementation of all project activities to ensure that once the project ends, staff from the Ministry will have the capacity to take over project activities. MAFS staff have been actively involved in ITFs, monitoring and evaluation (post-planting and post-harvest surveys), seed security and conservation agriculture. In addition, farmer training in basic crop management was undertaken during the cropping season to ensure that farmers have the necessary skills to optimize their yields.

The amount of open pollinated seed varieties traded in ITFs has increased from 70 percent in 2009 to 90 percent in 2010. The idea is to ensure that once beneficiaries receive support in the input trade fairs, they can continue to have seed from their own harvest for a number of seasons.

Finally, the project commissioned a study to review input trade fairs with a view to making recommendations to MAFS for the mainstreaming of this input delivery approach into existing approaches. The findings will be presented to stakeholders (MAFS and the project steering committee) for discussion, with a view to reaching consensus on the way forward.

The Republic of Niger

Intensification of agriculture through strengthening of cooperative input shops (IARBIC): rehabilitation and strengthening of rural populations livelihoods in Niger

Niger is characterized by a difficult climate and poor natural soil fertility, which strongly affect agricultural production. Soils are generally acidic in nature, low in organic matter and highly deficient in phosphorus and nitrogen content. Coupled with strong demographic pressures (annual population increase of 3.3 percent), households in Niger struggle to produce enough food for their subsistence. This food insecurity situation is exacerbated by existing poverty in rural areas and external shocks such as floods and droughts.

Although the Government has been making efforts to address problems facing farmers and the agriculture sector, the drastic rise in food and agriculture input prices hit vulnerable households particularly hard. The European Union Food Facility (EUFF) responded to the situation in Niger by providing € 3 million to scale up and strengthen an existing project known as the “Intensification of agriculture through strengthening of cooperative input shops (IARBIC)”.

The IARBIC builds upon previous FAO experiences and successes. From 1999 to 2008, the Project for promoting the utilisation of agriculture inputs by farmer organizations (known as “Projet Intrants”), has provided farmer organizations with agriculture inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, seeds) in an innovative manner by establishing warehouse receipts schemes (known as *warrantage*) to finance the purchase of inputs, the distribution of inputs through agriculture input shops (known as *boutiques d'intrants*) and training in improved fertilizer use through “micro-dosage” techniques and collective purchasing of inputs. Farmer field schools are also used as a participatory system of agricultural extension not only to train producers in farming techniques, but also to strengthen their capacities to make decisions with respect to the integrated management of their fields according to the local agro-ecological and socio economic conditions.

The EUFF project activities are focused on a number of inter-related interventions, including construction and rehabilitation of agriculture inputs shops and warehouse receipts facilities, support to organize the production of certified seeds, establishment of farmer field schools, provision of fertilizers for agriculture input shops, development and rehabilitation of 100 ha of vegetable gardening sites many of which involved women and youth groups. These activities, which directly benefit 56 000 households, were developed taking into consideration the requests for assistance expressed by farmer organizations involved in the IARBIC project.

Innovative feature

The EUFF project is building and expanding on 12 years of FAO experience in Niger in developing a network of agriculture input supply shops that are owned and operated by farmer groups and warehouse receipts schemes that have shown success and become well known in the region.

Agriculture input shops

The agriculture input shops were developed as a way to facilitate farmers’ access to quality agricultural inputs and also exchange and disseminate information on agriculture production techniques. The agriculture input shops collectively purchase agriculture inputs in bulk and sell them in smaller quantities that are adapted to the needs and cash flow of farmers. Purchases can only be made in cash and inputs are provided at prices which cover the costs of operation. The shops also rent out small agricultural tools and provide advice to clients.

Warehouse receipts system

The *warrantage* scheme is a system whereby farmer organizations can gain access to credit from a financial institution by storing their seasonal surplus in a safe and reliable warehouse as collateral for obtaining a short-term loan. This loan not only provides money to satisfy cash needs of farmers at harvest time without having to sell their production when prices are at their lowest, but more importantly provides capital for investment in an income-generating activity. When the loan expires, the farmer pays back what is owed and regains access to the stock that was left as collateral. The farmer can then sell the stock at a price higher than what could have been gotten at harvest time. If the borrower does not repay the loan by the due date, the bank seizes the stock and sells it to a third party.

This concept is not new and is practised widely in Latin America and in some Asian countries. A crucial element of the *warrantage* system is the availability of reliable storage facilities and storage operators. These should not only have the necessary infrastructure and technical skills in storage management and pest control, but also the business skills and independence from political pressure, which will provide a reasonable guarantee of the integrity of the stocks. In Niger, in order to respond to the potential/constraints of the country, the *warrantage* model was adapted so as to be done directly between farmer associations and microfinance institutions. The farmer associations, on behalf of the member farmers, sign loan contracts with the participating local financial institution and redistribute individual loans to the farmers according to the volume of their stored produce.

Achievements to date

Coherence with national development strategies and EUFF objectives

The EUFF project is fully in line with the National Strategy for Accelerated Development and Poverty Reduction (SDRP), which addresses the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and is the strategy from which all sectoral strategies and annual plans are developed. On the basis of the SDRP, a Rural Development Strategy (SDR) has been developed which covers all aspects of agricultural production. The IARBIC in particular falls under programme 3 of the SDR, which is focused on the development of professional organizations and structuring of agricultural value-chains. Led by the World Bank, this programme aims to increase agricultural, forestry and pastoral production by reinforcing the organization and capacity of various value chains to better identify market opportunities and coordinate actions. The project is also fully integrated in the Strategy for Decentralized and Joint Procurement of Inputs for Sustainable Agriculture (SIAD) of Niger.

The objectives of the EUFF project are also in line with the Country Strategy Paper of the EC (DSP) 2008-2013, especially in the area of providing support for rural growth, improving food security and strengthening rural organizations.

The project activities are consistent with EUFF objectives through their measures to improve access to seeds, maintain and improve agricultural production capacity and meet the basic food needs of the most vulnerable populations.

Consideration of gender issues

Gender is an important criterion for selecting beneficiaries. This is particularly true for the project's vegetable gardening component, with some areas completely managed by women. The project is trying to improve its outreach to women and vulnerable groups by adapting its training methods accordingly. Some things being considered include the use of oral and radio communications as well as closer collaborations with the Dimitra project and the "Project Capitalisation" to take advantage of their expertise in participatory approaches to knowledge exchange and their systematic integration of gender issues.

Advances made in project implementation

The project implementation is on track. Forty-five of the 75 agriculture input shops have been built. Out of the 100 new *warrantage* facilities planned for construction, 73 have been completed. Activities to rehabilitate 50 existing *warrantage* facilities have been initiated and have been moving forward as originally planned. All 30 of the Farmer Field Schools have been trained and half of the vegetable gardening sites have been completed.

Impacts on food security

As the project is based on the strengthening and scaling up of previous successful experiences, it is expected to generate positive impacts. The establishment of input stores has had a positive impact on agriculture production in the targeted regions as farmers have access to quality inputs at an affordable price and in quantities that are relevant to the area of land they cultivate.

The provision of 650 tonnes of fertilizers by the project to 188 agriculture input shops has provided a boost to the beneficiary areas. Income earned from the sale of fertilizers has provided input shops with money to purchase more fertilizers. The use of this fertilizer should raise crop yields in the beneficiary zones.

According to the EUFF Results-oriented Monitoring (ROM) report, through the increased availability of certified seeds, the project has been improving the availability and accessibility of the target population to basic foods, thereby contributing to their food security.

The certified seeds grown through project support are considered by farmer groups and farmers to be the best available on the market. Seeds that are packaged in small quantities have been 'branded' by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, which reflects a confidence in the quality of the seeds produced.

The project's seed multiplication component has also acted as a catalyst for other economic activities. Income earned from seed production has been used for income-generating activities, such as investments in livestock production. A similar type of impact is foreseen in the regions where the vegetable gardening component is being implemented.

The training and mentoring of farmer organizations has led to a greater cohesion of communities and project target groups.

Lessons Learned

The project is establishing the physical infrastructure and also providing training in the management of input stores, warehouse receipts systems, seed multiplication and vegetable farming techniques. The project implementation is on track and the technical design of the project interventions are having the intended effects and also enabling producer groups and farmers to develop other economic activities.

There is, however, still a need to further strengthen and continue to support the business and financial management capacities of farmer organizations with regard to the management of input stores and *warrantage* facilities. The seed multiplication component has been producing quality seeds, but further support is required to build upon this achievement through the establishment of an effective legal framework (certification, accreditation) and to improve the business and trading capacities of farmer organizations that are producing the seeds.

Greater coordination of and collaboration between EUFF projects in the country would also help to improve the EUFF impact on food security in the country. For example, the FAO EUFF project could improve its impact on health and nutritional aspects of food security from a closer collaboration with the EUFF UNICEF project which is developing and disseminating advocacy tools specific to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

Way forward

As mentioned previously, the EUFF project is fully in line with the national strategies for food security and development, including the SDRP, SDR and SIAD. The efforts made to refurbish and reinforce capacities of existing inputs stores, *warrantage* facilities and producer groups is providing a positive boost in increasing the production and income of farmers and ensuring their long-term viability.

With regard to the newly established input stores, *warrantage* facilities and seed certification component, the two-year timeframe is quite ambitious. There is a need to further strengthen the business and financial capacities of farmer groups for an optimal achievement of results and benefits planned by the project. The EUFF project is seeking to strengthen links with the “Projet Capitalisation” financed by Belgium. This project aims to improve accessibility and dissemination of information to male and female farmers on good practices in agriculture and training in management of inputs shops and *warrantage* facilities. Such collaboration can help to ensure sustainability of the EUFF intervention in Niger. A concept note is also being developed to highlight the capacity building needs of farmer groups so that newly established facilities under the EUFF project can fully function without outside assistance in the long run.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Addressing the negative impact of rising food prices on food insecure and vulnerable households in Pakistan

The 2007-2008 international soaring food price crisis significantly worsened the food security situation in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Relying heavily on imports to feed its population, national agricultural production is undermined by a combination of factors, including unfavourable weather conditions, recurring floods, limited access to quality inputs and rapid urbanization distorting production and supply chains. The increased cost of seeds, fuel and fertilizers and declining yields, combined with the widening gap between demand and supply, meant that approximately 17 million people joined the already 60 million food-insecure, bringing the total number to about half of the country's population.

Rural households, particularly in the Western provinces bordering Afghanistan, were the most affected. At the time of the crisis, one-third of Pakistan's population lived below the poverty line; 75 percent of the poor lived in rural areas. Poor households' spending on food increased to more than 70 percent of their incomes, undermining their ability to meet education, healthcare and other basic needs.

Measures for improving domestic food supply were therefore urgently required to address food security in deficient areas and to contribute to stabilizing food prices in general. The European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project was designed and launched in that emergency scenario.

The project is the single largest EUFF intervention in terms of budget (€ 24 702 081). The strategy is aimed at increasing production and productivity to reduce the impact of rising food prices and food insecurity of rural households in 17 of the most affected districts of Balochistan, NWFP, Sindh and Punjab provinces. The specific project actions include: (i) distribution of quality agricultural inputs (fertilizers, high-yielding and drought-resistant seeds and machinery); (ii) provision of post-harvest storage silos; (iii) rehabilitation and construction of irrigation channels/water harvesting structures; (iv) capacity building through extensive training at both farmer and local agricultural authority levels. A total of 166 710 households were targeted (equivalent to approximately 1 167 000 people).

During the second year of project implementation, Pakistan experienced floods (August and September 2010) that devastated agricultural lands and crops and destroyed infrastructure in rural and urban settlements across the country. In the context of this much larger humanitarian emergency, which affected almost 20 million people, part of the EUFF project's input distribution component was reoriented to urgently provide seeds and fertilizers to an additional 55 000 flood-affected vulnerable farming households in pre-existing project areas.

Innovative features

The project will continue until the end of June 2011, and progress towards expected results and objectives is on track. It is too early to fully assess the project's impact on longer-term food security; however, success stories and innovations can be already identified.

The capacity development component has represented a major area of work during the first 18 months of implementation. Project counterparts implemented an integrated Capacity Building Plan, involving both national authorities and farmers. The implementation of this Plan covered thematic, targeted trainings including wheat, pulse and vegetable production technologies and management of post-harvest losses through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Women Open Schools (WOS). By the autumn of 2010, 13 973 female farmers had participated in WOS out of a total of 36 041 beneficiaries of the Capacity Building Plan. This achievement resulted from the tailoring of previous FAO good practices to

the specific Pakistan context, through, for example, the use of female trainers in household compounds. Enhancing the capacity of women, particularly in small-scale vegetable production, has been pursued with a view to generating additional income and to contributing to the stability and diversification of diets and food availability, with particular emphasis on off-season vegetable production.

The promotion and development of farmer community groups has been carried out in order to facilitate and streamline the interaction between the project and the targeted beneficiaries. Four different types of groups have been set up, including cereal growers, vegetable growers, water users association (WUAs) and machinery pool groups (MPGs). These farmer groups play a key role in promoting entrepreneurial approaches in household-based agriculture. The groups were the main recipients of extension services focused on micro agribusiness and income generation, with significant potential to positively impact on women's incomes.

The machinery component represents a key transfer of technology activity, which will strongly impact agricultural production. A total of 100 MPGs have been formed to receive, manage, operate and maintain the machinery kits provided by the project. Operational guidelines have been elaborated to define roles and responsibilities of MPG members and to ensure the proper use of the machinery distributed. In the medium to long term, these measures are expected to strengthen the sustainability of the investment undertaken.

Achievements to date

EUFF objectives and principles

The project is on track with regard to the implementation of initially planned activities. The results achieved so far are encouraging and show alignment with core EUFF principles and objectives. The project will provide agricultural inputs to 106 055 households for at least three seasons between autumn 2009 and spring 2011, ensuring continuity of assistance for as long as possible. During Rabi 2009 (spring harvest), a total of 83 338 households received agricultural inputs, which was increased for the Kharif 2010 (autumn harvest) and Rabi 2010 distribution campaigns to 106 055 households. Procurement for the Rabi 2010 season has recently been completed, for a total of 4 503 tonnes of DAP fertilizer, 4 503 tonnes of Urea fertilizer, 4 503 tonnes of various wheat seed varieties, 64 tonnes of lentil seed and 106 055 packets of vegetable seed. All seed procured for both Rabi 2009 and Kharif 2010 seasons met the required quality standards.

Due to the August 2010 monsoon floods, it was agreed to extend the Rabi 2010 seed and fertilizer distribution component and reach an additional 55 000 households in areas hit hard by floods.

Irrigation related works are progressing. Two hundred and sixty-five irrigation rehabilitation schemes have been identified, while the construction of 203 water harvesting structures is ongoing. The 2010 floods affected 63 of the irrigation schemes identified for rehabilitation, which will benefit approximately 22 700 households. Additional assessments are being completed to determine whether alternative sites in the same districts have to be identified.

It is too early to fully understand the project's impact on food production and food security, as the assessment of the outcome and impact of the Kharif 2010 intervention is still under way. The Rabi 2010 inputs will only be harvested in May/June 2011 while the Kharif 2011 inputs will be harvested in September 2011. However, data from the assessment of the outcome of the Rabi 2009 season shows that good wheat yields were obtained across all four target provinces, with increases between 24 and 67 percent over average yields. This will help ensure that basic food requirements for an average family are satisfied (based on 150 kg per person per annum), as well as provide planting seed for future seasons and additional income. Based on the Rabi 2009 outcome, the percentage of households with less than three months food self-sufficiency has decreased from 26.2 to 12.1 percent, when compared against project baseline data.

Rome Principles

The project is in line with the Government of Pakistan's ongoing national programme for food security ("Crop Maximization Programme Phase II – Productivity Enhancement of Small Farmers in 1,012 Villages"). The EUFF funding complemented the Government budget allocations for cash transfer programmes (targeting 5.2 million food-insecure households) enabling support to part of the 1.8 million households that remained without assistance. Effective participation of the Government at different stages of project design and implementation has been achieved. National counterparts contributed to the identification of target areas, selection of household beneficiaries and definition of technical specifications of inputs to be procured. This was possible thanks to the capacities of national counterparts (at both central and local levels), which are critical in maximizing the impact of FAO technical assistance.

The project has also been designed and implemented in coordination with WFP. FAO seed distribution has been complemented by the distribution of food assistance by WFP to the same beneficiaries. The WFP intervention is supporting FAO objectives by avoiding consumption of the seeds distributed for crop production as food. In 2009, WFP provided food assistance to the 55 900 most vulnerable of FAO identified farming households across 13 Districts. In addition, WFP is supporting food-for-work activities related to FAO's irrigation channel rehabilitation and water harvesting infrastructure work. Joint FAO-WFP activities have been particularly effective, maximizing synergies of the respective organizations.

The presence of decentralized project offices in Sindh and Punjab was critical in supporting the launch of the 2010 monsoon flood relief response by the UN and other humanitarian partners.

Way forward

In order to mitigate the negative effects of volatile food prices, the project is specifically aimed at revitalizing the market economy, improving the efficiency of critical productive infrastructure and providing small farmers with access to high quality agricultural inputs. The implementation of the integrated Capacity Building Plan, involving farmers and governmental agricultural institutions, is contributing to enhanced agricultural productivity. The combination of project components was designed to facilitate the transition from an emergency situation to longer-term food security.

The assistance provided by FAO in the selection and procurement of high quality and, wherever possible, disease and especially rust resistant wheat seeds, has added value to national agricultural management capacity. It is expected that the Government and the international donor community will mobilize resources to bring continuity to the intervention, in particular by strengthening the stability and sustainability of food production and distribution.

The Republic of the Philippines

Increasing rice yield and productivity through the promotion of small-scale irrigation and integrated crop management systems in rainfed areas renewal

The Philippines is vulnerable to the impact of high food prices as the country's poor spend almost 60 percent of their income on food, with 18 percent of that for rice. In 2008, the ADB¹ predicted that a 10 percent increase in the price of rice would result in a further 660 000 people being forced into poverty. The country is about 85 percent self-sufficient in rice; however, the sheer volume of import requirements (2.4 million metric tonnes in 2008) makes the Philippines the largest rice importer in the world, and particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in global prices. Even with adequate food supply levels through importation, subsidized rice had to be rationed in 2008 and consumers had to line up for hours in some places to get it². Successive typhoons in 2009, resulting in major floods in Luzon, were followed by periods of drought brought on by the El Niño phenomenon, destroying crops and pushing another two million people into poverty.

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Agriculture, responded to this situation by launching the Rice Self-Sufficiency Plan (RSSP) for 2009-2010. The Plan focuses on increasing rice productivity not only in irrigated areas, but also in rainfed and upland areas, which account for approximately five million hectares and support 20 million Filipinos. The RSSP aims to pursue location-specific interventions that can help farmers achieve higher yields, including the rehabilitation of irrigation systems for greater effectiveness and efficiency, the use of high-quality seeds, integrated crop management and the improved delivery of extension services.

Projects objectives and activities

The project aims to support the Government's efforts of attaining rice self-sufficiency by increasing rice yields and productivity through the promotion of small-scale irrigation systems (SSIS) and integrated crop management systems in rainfed rice areas of priority provinces as outlined and identified in the RSSP. The overall objective is "Enhanced food security of rice farming communities to buffer the effects of volatile food prices in the Philippines".

The project has five main outputs: (i) development of SSIS farmer capacity; (ii) development of SSIS human resources capacity; (iii) development of SSIS policy and institutional capacity; (iv) effective institutional and governance framework; and (v) effective monitoring and evaluation systems. Activities include: (i) creation and implementation of a Farmer Field School (FFS) specifically for SSIS development in rainfed areas; (ii) development of SSIS; (iii) agricultural production support; (iv) training of farmers, extension workers and other Government staff; (v) development of a 'rent-to-own' scheme; (vi) mobile phone management information system (MIS); (vii) development of rainfed agriculture policy; (viii) project management support; and (ix) monitoring, evaluation and visibility activities. Given that the scale of the project is relatively small in terms of the number of beneficiaries (approximately 4000), many of the activities are pilots for possible future interventions.

¹ Has Inflation Hurt the Poor? Regional Analysis in the Philippines, ERD Working Paper No. 112, ADB, 2008

² Milled Rice Update, GAIN, USDA FAS, Oct 2010

Innovative features

This project incorporates an innovative participatory development approach into an emergency-oriented response. Farmers help to develop the FFS curriculum, and they choose the types of pumps, equipment and inputs to be supplied through project interventions. The approach includes intensive farmer training (through the FFS), capacity building of departmental staff and provision of irrigation facilities to ensure longer-term benefits alongside the provision of shorter-term agricultural enhancement support.

The project is also developing innovative tools: mobile MIS; rent-to-own scheme; and SSIS FFS. The introduction of a mobile phone-based monitoring system, where each of the FFS and their facilitators upload information through text messages and data services, leverages the services of the phone companies (data services, mobile cash payments) with project MIS. Uploaded information is automatically entered into a web database to process and produce aggregate project summaries. The system allows for payment authorizations to be made to FFS facilitators, and will be linked to the PhilRice e-learning centre and the rent-to-own scheme. The project is linking the rent-to-own scheme with the FFS, whereby only farmers who have completed the school will be eligible to 'rent-to-own' equipment. This ensures that the maintenance and repayment of equipment will happen. The SSIS FFS is a new development and is one of the first to include a farming systems approach. It is reportedly being actively sought for use in other projects/programmes.

Achievements to date

The project is providing short- and longer-term benefit to farmers. The short-term results are encouraging, with a preliminary study³ indicating increases in rice yields of approximately 20 percent between project (2010) and baseline yields (2009) (further analysis is required). The training and supply of shallow tube wells (STW) and pump sets should ensure that these farmers (clusters) sustain the improved production levels. It is likely that there will be significant improvements in food security at the household level due to the increased production of staples and the amount of marketable surplus. This may have a spin-off effect at the village level, where there are a critical number of clusters. In the broader scope, at least in the short term, this intervention is unlikely to have a significant impact on the country's food security, as the number of beneficiaries is limited. However, given that it is a pilot for future activities relating to small-scale irrigation in rainfed areas, the longer-term impact could be far greater. There will likely be some improvements in household nutrition levels thanks to the promotion of alternative crops in the dry season, which provide dietary variation.

The project was initiated at the request of the country and has developed into a good example of a country-led initiative. It follows on from an earlier FAO-funded project⁴. The project dovetails with the Philippines RSSP, which is also supported by the IFAD/EU Rapid Food Production Enhancement Programme, in that it aims to increase rice production and productivity in rainfed areas. The project is being successfully managed by the strategic coordination of multiple institutions, including the Department of Agriculture, PhilRice, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, Agricultural Training Institute and the regional field units.

³ Preliminary report: Increasing rice yield and productivity through the promotion of small-scale irrigation and integrated crop systems in rainfed areas. Ryo Takahashi. 2010

⁴ "Increasing Rice Supply in Regions VIII and X by Improving Farmers' Capability through Technical Assistance Trainings and Demonstration of Rice Production Technologies cum Small-Scale Irrigation Facilities"

Lessons learned

This project has a relatively high cost per beneficiary, in comparison to other EUFF projects, due to the outlay for drilling and pump units and the emphasis placed on farmer support services through the FFS. This reflects the compromise between shorter-term emergency and development response interventions. The project is likely to become increasingly cost-effective as the rent-to-own scheme recovers funds from farmers and expands (to other rainfed farmers) as project innovations become incorporated into new projects and regular department activities.

Previous studies indicate that there is excellent potential to scale up SSIS in rainfed areas⁵ in the Philippines. Taking into account the effects of climate change, the benefits even from supplemental irrigation for the monsoon crop would have a significant impact on food security. To realise these opportunities, policy development and further assessments of the sustainability of groundwater resources are required.

The preliminary lessons that could be drawn from this project are that: (i) it is possible to successfully implement short-term irrigation projects (which traditionally run over much longer time frames) when dealing with SSISs; (ii) emergency responses can have a developmental approach; (iii) emergency responses can be participatory and managed locally; (iv) it is important to start policy dialogue early and keep focus within the scope of the project; (v) it is important to include systems for the management and monitoring of water resources, if they do not already exist (including community management for confined aquifers and smaller watersheds); and (vi) it is important to reduce the exclusion of the most vulnerable beneficiaries (due to cost sharing) and promote credit, marketing and input procurement activities within the farmer groups.

Way forward

The further development of rainfed areas, which are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, remains a high priority for the Philippines. The success of this project needs to attract additional investments in this area. While this project has paved the way for further development of small-scale irrigation for rainfed areas, further investments should be flexible enough to think outside (but not necessarily exclude) irrigation.

To facilitate investments in rainfed areas this project has highlighted the need for an enabling environment with appropriate policies, particularly in relation to sustainable groundwater extraction and licensing. As such, much work needs to be done to assess the sustainability of water resources, in particular ground water. This requires improvements to the groundwater monitoring network, the issuing (and policing) of drilling and bore licences.

The products developed under the project have practical uses beyond the scope of this project, and while there is a comprehensive project visibility plan, perhaps a more concerted effort should be made to package and actively promote these products.

⁵ Collation, generation and validation of benchmark information for the preparation of a feasibility level proposal for an action program for accelerated shallow tubewell irrigation development. CGP/PHI/046/AUL, CEAT, FAO 2006

The Republic of Sierra Leone

Support to the implementation of the “National Agriculture Response Programme” (NARP)

The food price crisis was deeply felt in Sierra Leone, with the country experiencing a 50 percent increase in the price of rice from January to June 2008. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) raised this as a potentially destabilizing issue for a country that recently ended a war. While prices have since stabilized but not decreased, the global financial crisis and economic downturn are creating additional concerns as the Sierra Leone diaspora may reduce the amount of remittances sent back to their families, which is thought to have been an important coping mechanism for dealing with high food prices.

In response to the food crisis, which most strongly affects low-income urban and peri-urban areas as well as smallholder food-deficit farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), in close collaboration with development partners (i.e. FAO, WFP, IFAD, AfDB and a coalition of NGOs), developed its National Agriculture Response Programme (NARP). The NARP looks to increase food access and production over a period of three years (2008-2011) by introducing measures to boost production, facilitating access to markets (i.e. support to post-harvest transformation and storage, rehabilitation of rural access roads), providing short-term safety nets (in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP)) and providing management support and capacity building to MAFFS staff.

The NARP, which is now fully integrated into the Government’s Smallholder Commercialization Programme (SCP), aims to establish a total of 195 Agriculture Business Centres (ABCs) that are owned and operated by existing Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs), many of which started out as Farmer Field Schools (FFS). These ABCs together form a nationwide network of agribusiness service points that give rural coverage for retail outlets of agricultural inputs and tools. The ABC also serves as bulking centres for agricultural produce. It aims to provide rural farming communities with sustainable access to services for input and produce marketing, equipment hire services, communications and technical advisory services for production, processing, institutional capacity building and financial services. The ABC serves to strengthen the organization of farmers at community level to enable them to gain better access to services. Two categories of service providers – private sector and public sector – provide the ABC with different types of services as listed below.

- A. Private sector intermediaries and agents provide:** input and hardware shops, bulk purchases of produce, service of equipments and financial audits.
- B. Public services providers, including donors and NGOs, provide:** institutional strengthening of ABCs, enterprise development, record keeping, marketing techniques and information and communication systems.

These services outlined above are the key activities around which EUFF sub-programmes are currently being developed to support ABCs. Specific capacity-building programmes are being tailored to each sub-programme. Gender issues are being mainstreamed in each sub-programme and support to social safety net interventions is being incorporated into the district ABC forum activities.

The EUFF project has provided core funding for the start-up of the SCP by directly supporting the construction and equipment of 138¹ ABCs (benefiting 42 000 households), the distribution of agricultural

¹ While the initial plan was to establish 105 ABCs, cost savings generated by the project has allowed for the building of 33 additional ABCs for a total of 138 Centres.

inputs such as seeds and fertilizer and the provision of training to ABC Boards, machine operators and shop keepers. The EUFF also finances actions to directly support MAFFS (through training, operational budgets, equipment and technical advice) to help it coordinate and mentor the entire network of ABCs in the country.

Innovative feature

The SCP is a national initiative aimed at increasing the productivity of Sierra Leone's agricultural sector. The Programme aims to address the barriers that limit the ability of smallholder farmers to engage in commercial farming. MAFFS is strengthening the capacities of existing FBOs so that they can strongly participate in the production, processing and marketing of local goods. The ABCs are the vehicle to develop private farming enterprise by providing smallholders access to agricultural inputs and value-added services such as drying, storage, marketing and distribution which can reduce post-harvest losses and improve income earned from agricultural production.

The sustainability potential of the EUFF project intervention is strong as it is fully embedded in the SCP, which is the Government's flagship initiative to develop the agricultural sector. The SCP is the outcome of an extensive national process, involving consultation with stakeholders, development partners and experts as well as in-depth analysis of the agriculture sector in Sierra Leone. It therefore has Government support at the highest level, with strong ownership and visibility on the ground. The project builds upon and strengthens existing FBOs whose members share social ties and are accustomed to working with one another. With the focus on commercialization, the project looks to develop the skills of those who have an enterprising spirit. The strong emphasis on cost recovery contributes to its potential sustainability in the long run. The support being provided for the management of ABCs is being done with a view to eventually allow them to become private limited liability companies with full autonomy to run affairs of the ABC on behalf of the farmers after the end of the project

Achievements to date

The objectives and purpose of the project are in line with EUFF regulations. In particular, support to the development of ABCs will strengthen the productive capacities and governance of the commercial agricultural sector contributing to the sustainability of the intervention.

The *Agenda for Change*, Sierra Leone's second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, was published in 2008 and set out a five-year national plan for the country's development. Agriculture was clearly identified as one of four strategic priorities, and a critical factor in meeting Millennium Development Goal 1, reducing poverty and food insecurity. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) subsequently developed a National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP), a broad sector-wide framework for putting the objectives of the Agenda for Change into action. The EUFF project is thus fully in line with the development framework of MAFFS as it is supporting the implementation of the SCP, which is the spearhead element of the NSADP. The NSADP incorporates all previous food security initiatives in a coherent framework and is also Sierra Leone's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Compact. This assures that the project intervention responds to European Commission policies such as the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action and the Effectiveness Agenda.

The EUFF project is also in line with the Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security. The SCP is a well-designed, country-owned plan to promote the commercialization of smallholder agriculture under the CAADP framework. The project is implemented by MAFFS extension staff and features strong collaboration between multilateral partners as well as a twin-track approach to addressing food security. Technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to develop FFS

and use ABCs as a tool for the commercialization of agriculture helps to address medium- to long-term food security issues, while the Food-for-Work (FFW) activities implemented by WFP for the construction of ABCs and rehabilitation of inland valley swamps of the lowland FBOs are an important safety net mechanism for vulnerable households.

While the EUFF is providing the largest contribution to the SCP, other funding has also been provided by the Republic of Ireland, Italy, the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and FAO. Funds from Irish Aid, Italy and the IDB have in particular supported the construction of an additional 22, 26 and 6 ABCs respectively, bringing the total number of ABCs operating under the SCP to 192. In June 2010, Sierra Leone received an allocation of USD 50 million from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) to support the implementation of the SCP. A sustained and substantial commitment by all partners has thus been exhibited with the provision of necessary resources in a timely and reliable fashion for this multi-year programme.

Impact on Food Security

Through the interventions of the project, farmers are expected to intensify and diversify agricultural production, gradually move to permanent farming systems and increase productivity and marketable surplus. The project is equipping ABCs with machinery including threshers, hullers and cutters for rice as well as power tillers, cassava graters and fertilizers which will improve the productivity of farming. Although the SCP is still in the process of being implemented, some beneficiaries can already report improvements in their yields and enhanced income earned from farming. The project meets the needs of target groups (42 000 member of ABCs), whose success will in turn have a beneficial effect on local food availability and prices, thus strengthening poverty reduction and national food security. Strong efforts have been made to include women in the project activities; approximately 40 percent of FBOs being supported by the project are headed by women.

While the project has progressed rapidly in the construction, equipment and stocking of ABCs, **capacity-building activities** are also an integral component of the EUFF intervention to ensure sustainability in the long run. **Training materials** are being developed and tested regarding group organization and leadership, ABC governance and basics of accounting as well as materials for machine operators and shop keepers. **Training sessions** have also been held for ABC Board members on basic business development, entrepreneurship, governance/leadership skills and basic financial management (i.e. record keeping, budgeting and asset management). Shopkeepers and equipment operators have also been trained on the use and maintenance of power tillers, with more training planned for rice hullers, cassava graters and other small farm equipment.

Many FBOs that manage ABCs are the outcome of farmer field schools. The capacity to foster field-based experimentation and learning is central to the success of commercializing smallholder agriculture and developing the ABC system. A successful FFS programme requires a well-organized and functioning network of community facilitators (government extension agents) and farmer facilitators (farmers themselves who assume leadership with the FFS). The EUFF intervention provided an intensive four-month **FFS Training of Trainers (ToT)** course in which 42 SCP District Coordinators have been trained and are already practicing their newly acquired skills. The EUFF project has supported the establishment of 370 new FFS and promotes tools such as Agro-ecosystem Analysis, integrated crop management and participatory technology development to improve farming techniques and intensify production.

Lessons learned

The use of FBOs to establish and manage ABCs is a cost effective way of implementing the SCP as it builds on social ties and networks already established at the grassroots level. While the EUFF intervention is well-designed and implemented, the two-year time frame to carry out activities is quite

ambitious and short to allow optimal achievement of results and benefits planned. While the recent approval of the GAFSP funding will ensure continuity in the EUFF intervention, the additional funding can place pressures to further upscale the ABC model without stepping back to examine lessons learned from activities implemented thus far.

The EUFF has laid the foundation for the establishment of about 492 ABCs under the GAFSP by 2014. The GAFSP intervention under the SCP will begin with consolidation of 150 ABCs that have started under funding from the EUFF, Ireland, Italy and the IDB. These ABCs will now be retrofitted with sound institutional arrangements and stronger management systems following an intense programme of farmer institutional capacity building that is currently ongoing under the EUFF. A process to consolidate and further strengthen ABCs established by EUFF funding would thus be needed prior to any further expansion of the ABC model. In this regard, the project has maintained close contacts with IFAD, the supervising entity for the GAFSP funding, to ensure that any scaling up of the ABC model be conducted only after a process of consolidation.

Way forward

The EUFF intervention in Sierra Leone has played an important role in ensuring a transition from emergency to medium- and long-term response. The EUFF contribution to implement the NARP and SCP has played a catalytic role in mobilizing funding from other donors, the most significant being the recent approval of the USD 50 million funding from GAFSP. A portion of this GAFSP funding will directly support the development of FBOs and ABCs. This will thus ensure that the investments made by the EUFF project will continue to be supported until 2014, by which time it is expected that ABCs established under EUFF funding will be fully operational and able to function on their own without outside assistance. Coupled with the strong commitment of the Government, the exit strategy of the EUFF intervention is on solid footing.

The Republic of Zambia

Farmer Input Support Response Initiative (FISRI) to rising prices of agricultural commodities in Zambia

Zambia is a landlocked, sparsely populated country in south-eastern Africa. Prone to both droughts and floods, it also has some of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world. Such challenges have depleted the assets of farmers and left many facing hunger. Agriculture accounts for around 72 percent of all employment in Zambia; however, the poor use of land resources and lack of working capital has resulted in severely degraded soils, making it difficult for farmers to raise agricultural production beyond subsistence levels.

The United Nations identified Zambia as one of the countries at risk of being negatively affected by soaring agricultural input and commodity prices. Between January and May 2008, fertilizer prices increased by 40 to 50 percent, while at the same time the price for maize, the main staple, rose by over 25 percent. The rising cost of maize and other staples in 2007 and 2008 posed significant problems for already food-insecure Zambians, both in urban and remote food-deficit rural areas.

Project objectives and activities

The overall objective of the Farmer Input Support Response Initiative (FISRI) is to increase food production in order to ease the impact of high food prices. This is being done through improved access to agricultural inputs and the promotion of conservation agriculture principles among small-scale farmers in selected districts in the Central, Lusaka, Western, Southern and Eastern Provinces.

The project aims to:

- increase agricultural productivity and production through the provision of yield-enhancing inputs, such as fertilizers and improved seed varieties of legumes and cereals;
- boost household income through increased agricultural production and competitiveness;
- improve cost-effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural input use by training farmers in good agricultural practices and the basic tenets of conservation agriculture.

The project is reaching out to 3 920 smallholder farmers and 400 camp extension workers. Main activities include:

- facilitating the training of lead farmers and agricultural extension workers in conservation agriculture techniques by respected institutions such as the Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust. Each lead farmer trains 15 other participating farmers, bringing the total number of beneficiary farmers to 58 800. FISRI has extended its activities to 16 additional districts for the 2010/2011 agricultural season;
- providing material support including seeds, fertilizers, CA tools (e.g. Magoye rippers) and development of training manuals. The project also organizes field days and extension visits to farmers and agro-dealers.

Innovative features

An innovative feature of the FISRI project is that, from its inception, it has built on a supportive policy framework and strong Government commitment (conservation agriculture is a Government policy). Its

activities are also aligned with other ongoing projects, thereby avoiding duplication of efforts and enhancing the sustainability of project interventions. By linking input distribution to innovative conservation agriculture practices, the FISRI project has helped to increase production and create awareness among smallholder farmers of the efficiency and sustainability of conservation agriculture as opposed to traditional farming systems.

The use of the voucher system in the project has illustrated how the private sector can be encouraged and partnered with at the local level, contributing to enhanced local economic development. The electronic voucher system has facilitated the creation of client-supplier relationships among smallholder farmers and local agro-dealers, whose businesses have been significantly enhanced by the FISRI project. The voucher system has empowered farmers to make decisions on which crops and varieties to grow and which conservation agriculture tools to acquire.

The electronic voucher system is more advantageous than the paper voucher system. It has helped to reduce the bureaucracy involved in providing subsidized input supplies and to stimulate competition among the agro-dealers. This in turn has also encouraged the establishment of agro-dealer businesses in new areas, allowing farmers to access quality inputs closer to their homes. In time, it is anticipated that agro-dealers will also become buyers of agricultural products such as cereals, legumes and oilseeds, thereby improving market access for farmers.

Achievements to date

EUFF objectives and principles

The Post-Harvest Survey of Conservation Agriculture Farms reported that maize yields on farms practicing basin-type conservation agriculture were 2.6 tonnes/hectare compared to 2.0 tonnes/hectare on farms engaging in conventional agriculture. This represents an increase of 30 percent. Other benefits of conservation agriculture, in terms of improving soil structure and increased organic matter levels, will become apparent in time. Several farmers reported that they had sold maize for the first time in their lives as a result of adopting conservation agriculture. Based on the experiences during the first year, the project is expected to contribute to strengthening the productive capacities and governance of the agricultural sector to enhance the sustainability of interventions, especially with a view to conservation agricultural practices.

Rome Principles

During both the preparation and implementation phase, the multilateral system, especially FAO, WFP and IFAD, has played an important role in ensuring sustained improvements in responsiveness and coordination. The project followed a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security consisting of: (i) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable; and (ii) medium- and long-term initiatives to up-scale conservation agriculture, thereby putting agriculture on a more sustainable and productive footing.

Impact on food security

The enhanced agro-dealers network has had a positive impact on agriculture production in the targeted regions as producers have access to quality inputs at an affordable price (through the vouchers) and in quantities that are relevant to the area cultivated. In addition, the training and mentoring of lead farmers, who in turn train other smallholder farmers, have led to greater cohesion within communities and project target groups. Feedback received during the monitoring mission from officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, extension workers, lead farmers, farmers and agro dealers, was universally positive. And, results from the Post-Harvest Survey clearly show increased yields in areas where conservation agriculture was applied as opposed to areas where traditional methods were used.

Lessons learned

- (i) It is important that projects work through **existing structures and entities and complement and build synergies and partnerships with ongoing national and international projects to increase impact and enhance sustainability**. This also facilitates the **scaling-up** of successful project components. In addition, the mainstreaming of programmes in regular institutions, both public and private, will help **tap into the institutional memories** of each stakeholder to support the needs assessment for each programme that is being planned. This contributes to a more effective identification of beneficiary needs and the improved choice of project activities and inputs to address these needs. **The merging of emergency programmes into development-oriented programmes should also be considered at the outset of operations.**
- (ii) Farmer registration, **training and follow-up mechanisms** need to be strengthened and continued in the near future. For example, farmers need better support in the correct use of agrochemicals as it has been verified that over-dilution can reduce the effectiveness of herbicides, resulting in lower productivity.
- (iii) There is a need to **continue strengthening the private sector agro-dealer networks** so that competition increases among them, leading to greater availability of a broad range of inputs to the farming community.
- (iv) The introduction of the **electronic voucher system** has significantly reduced the bureaucracy involved in subsidized input supplies and stimulated the expansion of agro-dealer businesses, bringing necessary inputs, such as improved seeds and fertilizers, closer to farming communities. Competition among agro-dealers has also visibly increased, resulting in lower input costs.
- (v) In the case of the Farmer Input Support Response Initiative (FISRI) project, **input delivery is done in the context of conservation agriculture**. This has contributed to improving land management, reducing soil losses and enhancing sustainability at farm level. Additionally, most of the activities are being implemented by existing provincial and district government staff, thereby contributing to enhanced sustainability. **The subsidized delivery of inputs, however, may be a heavy burden for the Government of Zambia to continue in the future and exit strategies need to be designed.**

Way forward

The project is in line with the Zambian sector strategy and the priorities of FAO and the EUFF. The strong national involvement and implementation of the project through the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO), district and provincial services, Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust (GART), Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) and other organizations, are to be commended.

However, it is important to discuss the project's exit strategy and scaling-up of project results, including the eventual phase-out of the physical inputs presently provided under the project. Finally, enhanced support to MACO in policy formulation, livestock-related activities and the creation of agricultural/seasonal credit instruments is required.

The Republic of Zimbabwe

Agricultural input assistance to vulnerable smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe and the coordination and monitoring of agricultural emergency interventions

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in southern Africa with a population of about 12 million. The country's protracted socio-economic crisis has taken a toll on its agricultural sector, hitting the poorest farmers the hardest.

About 70 percent of the population makes a living from agriculture. However, steep declines in production over the years – brought on by the high cost and shortage of inputs, adverse weather conditions and policy constraints – have caused farmers' earnings to dwindle and food insecurity to rise.

Despite some recent mitigating factors (e.g. the dollarization of the economy contributing to price stabilization, and an increase in available cereals) and some effective coping strategies (e.g. remittances, wild food consumption and informal cereal imports), rural Zimbabwean families still face numerous production constraints. For one, agricultural inputs (cereal seed and fertilizer) are expensive and often in limited supply, especially fertilizer. Many households do not have sufficient amounts of grain or maize and have seen their assets continue to erode. Because of high grain prices, many households are only able to eat one meal of maize per day instead of two as in previous years.

In order to boost production to meet food requirements, the country's small-scale communal farmers need to be provided with agricultural inputs in a timely manner.

Project objectives and activities

The project's overall goal is to improve vulnerable households' livelihoods as well as their access to food. In collaboration with Government structures, the project aims to reach farmers involved in crop and livestock productions in communal and old resettlement areas. The three main components include: coordination of emergency programme activities; monitoring; and input distribution.

Systematic monitoring of the agriculture sector is critical given the country's continuously changing operational environment. This includes monitoring NGOs and conducting national assessments. The results of the different monitoring activities provide humanitarian actors with crucial information for measuring the impact of current interventions and for programming future activities. Monitoring results can also be used to inform and influence policy.

The project has assisted up to 150 000 farmers with appropriate inputs for the 2009/10 agricultural season. Efforts have been made to link up with and complement other activities under the "coordination" umbrella, where areas of chronic food insecurity have been identified and prioritized according to vulnerability criteria.

The input assistance component has focused on the timely delivery of seed (mainly maize and sorghum) and fertilizer packs, combined with simple extension messages (timely planting, plant spacing, weeding and correct application of fertilizer) to communal farmers. Implementing partners (NGOs and AGRITEX) have been involved in beneficiary selection, verification, distribution of inputs and extension support.

Some **concrete activities** include: the procurement and delivery of seeds and fertilizers through NGOs; the monitoring of input distribution and planting of seeds on a regular basis; effective coordination among stakeholders engaged in agricultural relief interventions in Zimbabwe; the chairing of various agricultural working groups; the development of guidelines for standards and agricultural sector strategies; and capacity building of AGRITEX and NGOs.

Innovative features

An innovative feature of the European Union Food Facility (EUFF) project is that it has **significantly strengthened the institutional coordination framework through effective communication and management** to enhance cooperation and planning among stakeholders engaged in agricultural relief interventions in Zimbabwe. Monthly Agricultural Working Group (ACWG) meetings and a donor forum have been set up to ensure coordination and to minimize duplication. The ACWG meeting is attended by the vast majority of stakeholders involved in the agriculture sector, while the donor forum includes members from key donors to the sector over the past few years.

By building on achievements and lessons learned by the FAO Emergency Relief Coordination Unit (ERCU) over the past few years, the project has promoted consistency in various areas of assistance. For example, coordination activities and the sharing and dissemination of information have been done through the ACWG. Monitoring activities have been conducted to take stock of lessons learned.

Technical training has been provided to enhance the capacity of local institutions. Coordination among key stakeholders has been enhanced through the different fora for discussion, information sharing and provision of technical guidelines and maps/statistics showing the extent and scope of agricultural interventions. All agricultural working groups are functioning and working together. This has resulted in the creation of a common position and development agenda to be implemented by the humanitarian community.

Within the framework of the Agricultural Working Group, updates on the current status of the agricultural sector have been disseminated by a number of stakeholders, including the Government of Zimbabwe (Ministry of Agriculture, National Early Warning Unit, and the Meteorological Department) and FAO. A particular emphasis has been given to programmes implemented by the humanitarian community, and their interaction with Government plans.

Another important innovative feature is **the strong emphasis on extension and training**. Three agronomic training sessions for trainers were carried out, focusing on pre-planting, in-field management, yield estimation and post-harvest training. All had a component on HIV/AIDS and nutrition. Three sets of key agronomic information from each of the trainings were produced and distributed to input providers and AGRITEX staff for use in the field. In each of the 21 targeted districts, at least two agronomic field technical backstopping missions were carried out.

Achievements to date

EUFF objectives

The project has encouraged a positive supply response from the agricultural sector by increasing access to good quality maize seed and other agricultural inputs for at least 176 000 communal households. This in turn has contributed to reducing the negative effects of volatile food prices on the local population.

Rome Principles

The EUFF project fosters strategic coordination and stakeholder involvement. The Government is committed to enhancing agricultural production. It adheres, to a certain degree, to Principle 3, which strives for a comprehensive twin-track approach to food security that consists of: (i) direct action to immediately tackle hunger for the most vulnerable; and (ii) medium- and long-term sustainable agricultural, food security, nutrition and rural development programmes to eliminate the root causes of hunger and poverty, including through the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. By enhancing the coordination mechanism (i.e. AGWG) the project also ensures sustained improvements in efficiency, responsiveness, coordination and effectiveness (Principle 4).

Impact on food security

In Zimbabwe, the project's beneficiaries managed to get an average maize yield of about 1.13 tonnes/hectare. This represents a 100 percent increase compared to the average yield obtained by non-project beneficiaries in the same districts (0.57 tonnes/hectare). Beneficiaries recorded higher maize yields than their non-beneficiary counterparts in all areas except in Hurungwe district, where the early planted crop is reported to have been adversely affected by a mid-season dry spell. Sorghum seed beneficiaries performed better than their counterparts in all areas, except in Masvingo. Beneficiaries managed to get an average sorghum yield of 0.40 tonnes/hectare compared to the 0.26 tonnes/hectare produced by non-beneficiary farmers (a difference of about 54 percent).

In terms of food security, the project contributed to about 85 and 28 percent of beneficiaries' total annual cereal requirements for maize and sorghum respectively.¹

Lessons learned

Zimbabwe has been experiencing a protracted socio-economic crisis for almost a decade, which continues to affect all sectors of the economy and all sections of the population, particularly the poor and vulnerable. The once prosperous economy has recorded nine consecutive years of negative growth as a result of a drastic reduction of output in all productive areas (notably agriculture, industry, manufacturing, mining and tourism). The consequence of such a collapse has been a severe reduction or complete interruption of services provided by the state. Millions of Zimbabweans have already left the country, owing to increasing levels of unemployment, falling living standards and critical shortages of basic commodities. It is evident that under such harsh and unstable conditions, the enabling environment may not be conducive to guaranteeing long-term sustainability. However, an important **lesson learned from the EUFF project is that even in unstable economic and political environments, donor programmes can positively impact on food security.**

Way forward

The programme was designed to take advantage of and reinforce existing coordination structures and field expertise and to avoid the creation of new or parallel forms of operations. Therefore, by complementing and improving upon past and ongoing initiatives, the programme does not require a formal "exit strategy". The strong emphasis on training and extension in the programme's design ensures that beneficiaries of input assistance are equipped with new farming skills, enabling them to improve their field operations and become more food secure and less dependent on free food or agricultural handouts. At the same time, the strengthening of coordination mechanisms is expected to assist in the discussion, analysis and design of future programmes adapted to the new needs and realities on the ground, and to mobilize further support for the continuation and up-scaling of successful and sustainable programmes.

¹ Annual per capita cereal requirement is 133 kg. An average household of 5 members requires 665 kg/year.



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