

March 2009

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منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

FAO DESERT LOCUST CONTROL COMMITTEE

Thirty-ninth Session

Rome, 10-13 March 2009

Experiences with the CERF instrument - the Yemen example (Agenda Item 11)

Introduction

The Central Emergency Response Fund or CERF; started in 1991 as a facility to provide loans to agencies with a commitment from a donor but who were waiting for deposit of funds to start operations. FAO uses the CERF loan facility now only for amounts too large to be approved from other funds.

In 2006 CERF expanded to include the ability to make grants. FAO has used the grant facility extensively and we are the fifth highest recipient Agency. Through the end of 2008, FAO received 130 grants for \$89.2 million for work in 85 countries. This makes CERF the third largest source of funds¹ for emergency projects.

There are two types of grant, for Rapid Response and for Under Funded crises. The first can be disbursed at any time, under funded grants are made twice a year in February-March and in August-September.

Management of the CERF process is a good example of coordination of many players. This work is shared among, for example,

- The UN CERF Secretariat in New York, country offices of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and participants in interagency meetings.
- The FAO Representative and the Emergency Coordinator work closely with the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the UN Country Team on the proposals for CERF funding, as all CERF grant proposals must come from the country level.
- In FAO headquarters there is a main focal point assisted by seven operations officers and others as necessary.
- The network extends through the operations officers to their counterparts in the field including the Emergency Coordinators. Our meetings often involve representatives from our technical division partners when necessary.

¹ The top two are USA and EC

A success story

The immediate availability of CERF funds in an emergency has been a major factor in the success in the critical first days and weeks of an intervention. One of the clearest examples of this impact was during a Desert Locust outbreak in Yemen. An assessment done in May 2007 of the Desert Locust situation revealed the worst infestation that country had faced in 15 years. Without control, by the end of the summer unchecked Desert Locust swarms could have moved into the Highlands and onto the coastal plains of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden with dramatic consequences on national food security and livelihoods. A significant and timely contribution from CERF allowed a control campaign to be mounted quickly against the locust infestations.

CERF funds were received less than a week after signatures of the Understanding with CERF. Thus, FAO was able to marshal both national and international resources and to buy needed equipment and supplies without delay. However, one of the major inputs, the pesticide, was not available on the international market in the quantities required – there was an acute shortage on the world market. Nevertheless, the availability of CERF funds, the assistance of WFP and an outstanding spirit of cooperation between the governments of Yemen which needed the chemicals and Mauritania which had an excess supply allowed an immediate airlift of the pesticides and no delay in the start of operations. Over 30,000 ha of land were treated and in less than three months, few locusts remained in the country.

FAO has long experience in operations to control outbreaks of Desert Locust but technical appraisal of this project confirms it represents the first time all the necessary factors came together in the critically short time available to ensure success.

An added benefit was the reduction of potential environmental risk in Mauritania due to the large stocks of pesticide remaining from the 2003-2005 locust campaign.

Other Country stories of CERF funding

In many cases money received from CERF made an important difference to FAO's ability to deliver in crisis situations. For example, in Uganda, CERF funds allowed FAO and partners to immediately buy planting materials needed early in the planting season which wouldn't otherwise have been available. This underlines the need to carefully coordinate availability of funds with the planting seasons.

The projects to control the Rift Valley Fever in Kenya and Tanzania were especially aided by the early availability of funds from CERF. This disease threatens animals, human life and livelihoods. A wide array of laboratory equipment was supplied to veterinarians and allowed them to quickly diagnose the fatal disease and put control measures in place in a very short time.

In Burundi CERF funds enabled FAO to distribute 1.7 million healthy cassava cuttings with fertilizer to 100 000 households. This helped offset the effects of severe cassava mosaic disease which threatened to seriously impact food availability. Another 10 000 households in provinces that were already weak because of the effects of long conflict and years of sparse rainfall were assisted by seeds provided through CERF finance.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo the long-lasting insecurity due to the socio-political crisis in the country had ruined the food production capacity of thousands of households. Through the provision of CERF funding FAO was able to address the lack of planting material and agricultural tools and a serious deterioration in the road network.

In 2007 Madagascar suffered from a series of cyclones and tropical storms leading to flooding which affected large populated and cultivated areas throughout the country. These natural disasters destroyed in some areas 80% of harvested food. Timely intervention with CERF funding enable

the distribution of quality seed in time for the second planting season. This action benefited more than 60 000 households.

Future issues

Given the importance of the CERF as a source of funds for FAO, we continue to work with our technical colleagues, other UN Agency counterparts and the CERF secretariat to improve the operation of the fund. Some of the issues which will be addressed in the near future include:

- An assessment of the impact of CERF grants on a project's objectives,
- Consideration of incorporating grants in a country or regional programme approach rather than with an individual project focus,
- Review of system wide procedures including the life-saving criteria, financial and narrative reporting and a proposed Umbrella Letter of Understanding.