

FOOD SECURITY INFORMATION FOR ACTION



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Governments in developing countries often request help in understanding and addressing the causes of hunger in their territories. Better information and analysis is crucial for more effective policy decisions and anti-hunger programmes.

The EC-FAO Food Security Information for Action Programme is funded by the European Commission and implemented by FAO with the aim of enhancing national capacity to generate, manage, and use food security information for the formulation of more effective policies and programmes. This multidisciplinary country-based initiative draws on FAO's expertise in

- early warning and remote sensing
- economic and policy analysis
- statistics
- nutrition
- training and capacity building

Programme activities take place in three different contexts:

- **Countries under protracted crisis and conflict**

Where states are fragile and institutions weakened by prolonged crisis, the programme works with government and external agencies to help local communities build resilience to continuous shocks

through improved analysis and programming.

- **Countries undergoing structural economic transformation**

Countries making the transition to a free market economy often request assistance in strengthening their food security information systems and analytical capacity in order to formulate more effective policies and interventions.

- **Countries in a state of chronic food insecurity and poverty**

Where food insecurity is chronic, adequate and relevant food security information, from different sectors, is crucial for understanding the long term structural causes of hunger and poverty. The programme helps decision makers improve their capacity to formulate policies and interventions that effectively address both short and long-term causes of hunger.

The EC-FAO Information for Action Programme currently provides 17 countries with technical assistance and tools for obtaining high quality and timely food security information. In the Sudan, for example, programme staff provided the government with technical assistance in formulating National

Funding modality	Donor	Geographical area	Services provided
GCP Trust Fund.	European Commission.	Worldwide with current activities in Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central and Southeast Asia.	Knowledge exchange, policy advice, training and capacity building.

Programmes for Food Security in both the North and South. In the Lao PDR, it has helped the government to develop a National Nutrition Policy (NNP) for 2008-20 and a strategy for its implementation.

In order to make it easier for countries to pool information from different food security sectors together and therefore foresee impending crises, it has helped several countries set up Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) workstations. The programme has also helped countries improve their ability to gather and analyse food security statistics. Examples of activities in this field include building national capacity and providing technical assistance in analysing household budget surveys to understand the causes and extent of food deprivation in nine countries.

Programme activities in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Tajikistan include providing training in the key concepts and analysis of food security, improving quarterly agriculture surveys (Georgia), installing the GIEWS workstation (Armenia), and helping Moldova harmonize its veterinary quality control standards and legislation to meet EU standards.

In five countries (Cambodia, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Haiti and

Burkina Faso), specific training has also been given to improve the relevance, credibility and accessibility of food security information products such as Web sites, food security bulletins, etc., making sure they respond to actual information needs for decision-making.

Assistance has also been provided in developing and implementing crop yield forecasting systems that alert decision-makers to forthcoming droughts and floods (Cambodia, Laos, Malawi) and using monitoring tools for assessing household level food access and dietary diversity (Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya).

At the global level, the programme provides a series of e-learning courses and training materials aimed at improving the collection, management, analysis and dissemination of food security information. These materials can be customized by national institutions to suit their own training needs. It also provides a wide range of tools that foster the better management of food security information. Last but not least, it has been involved in the further development and roll-out of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) – a framework for improving situation analysis and response in crisis situations.



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▲ Focus on Cambodia: Intensive Training in Crop Forecasting and Cambodia's first Agro-meteorological Bulletins

Two experts from Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, as well as two colleagues from Laos, attended a 3 month course in Rome on crop yield forecasting.

Thanks to expertise gained in using crop yield forecasting software and tools, Cambodia's first agro-meteorological bulletins have been published. The bulletins aim at informing decision-makers, analysts and technicians about the crop situation during the agricultural season. In addition, a rice yield forecasting system has been set up. Furthermore, one of the Cambodian participants is now training other experts in Laos and Cambodia.

PRODUZIR:

Small collective enterprises help marginalized people generate income



Funding modality

Unilateral Trust Fund.

Donor

Brazil.

Services

Capacity building, technical assistance.

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▲ In 2005 the programme organized aquaculture workshops for small-scale fishermen and established 20 tank-nets. Some fishermen learnt how to farm tilapias while other groups of the community specialized in fish processing. Further funding from the Bank of Brazil allowed the building of 200 more tanks. Two years later, 125 families were benefiting from the project, and a small scale fish plant has been established which produces and sells 600 kg of fish fillets a week to Brazil's National Company of Supplies for school meals. The number of families living off state subsidies has decreased to only 20, proving that the initial aim of creating economically self-sufficient communities has been reached.

Unemployment and the prevalence of informal jobs continue to plague the labour market in Brazil. In 1994, a programme was set up to accelerate the social and economic development for urban and rural areas with high poverty concentration. New small enterprises were created as a way to generate employment and income and allow the beneficiaries to participate in Brazil's economic and social modernization process. The programme, now named PRODUZIR targets all of Brazil's regions but specially those characterised by so-called poverty sacks, such as the peripheral areas of large cities and rural areas affected by drought.

PRODUZIR's main activities are focused on short-term training workshops with a high motivational content, aimed at instilling self-esteem and identifying vocations and business potentials among the beneficiaries. It also promotes the formation of collective enterprises for the production of various goods and services.

The programme is financed by the Ministry of Integration and executed locally by NGOs, and State and Municipal government. FAO's role has been to provide technical expertise for the implementation of the programme on a national scale, as well as monitoring and evaluating the different components of the programme.

Lessons learned are that non-agricultural activities are vitally important in a food security strategy, particularly for the poorest, marginalized population that lacks access to land and for whom agricultural activities hold little promise. This also helps reduce pressure on the demand for land. The promotion of non-agricultural activities requires the participation of institutions that traditionally were not part of the agricultural and rural development system, particularly at the local level.