



FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER

Strengthening Humanitarian Response

Food Security Cluster Annual Report 2012



January 2013

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Introduction to the global Food Security Cluster

The global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) became operational in April 2011 and led jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and represents a partnership of approximately 35 institutions from the UN, NGOs and International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Over the year 2012, the gFSC global support team based in Rome consisted of 14 individuals drawn from FAO, GenCap, HelpAge, IFRC, ProCap and WFP.

The vision of the global Food Security Cluster is that the specific food security needs of individuals and communities affected by or at risk of being affected by humanitarian crises (whether sudden onset or protracted) are met. Coordinated preparedness, response and recovery action at community, national and global levels result in saved lives, improved livelihoods and increased resilience of households and communities.

The gFSC aims to strengthen food security responses in crisis situations, mainstream early recovery approaches and to enhance national capacity to:

- deliver predictable and accountable leadership and coordination on food security responses;
- strengthen existing national and local humanitarian management and coordination systems, building on local capacities through the active participation of women and men from the affected populations; and
- optimize collaboration and partnerships with governments, UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, donors and other stakeholders to ensure holistic responses.

From the beginning of the cluster approach in 2005 to the end of 2012, there had been 50 countries that had established agriculture and/or food or food security clusters in response to complex and or sudden onset emergencies.

Since the inception of the gFSC in April 2010, many of the previously separated coordination mechanisms have come together to form national food security clusters. In December 2012, 36 countries had active food security cluster or sector coordination mechanisms: 30 countries have food security clusters or sectors; 4 countries have separate agriculture and food assistance clusters or sectors, but have strengthened inter-cluster collaboration to ensure more effective responses¹. (See map.)

¹ Countries with active cluster or sector coordination in place to respond to humanitarian crises

Afghanistan; Bangladesh; Benin; Burkina Faso; Central African Republic; Chad; Columbia; Cote d'Ivoire; DRC; Djibouti; El Salvador; Ethiopia; The Gambia; Guinea; Indonesia; Iraq; Kenya; Lao; Mali; Mauritania; Madagascar; Mozambique; Nepal; Niger; oPt; Pakistan; Philippines; Senegal; Somalia; Sri Lanka; Sudan; South Sudan; Tajikistan; Timor Leste; Yemen; Zimbabwe.

Orange = food security clusters with NGOs in leadership roles

Blue = split food security and agriculture sector / cluster coordination mechanisms

The gFSC focused on five core areas of work during 2012:

1. Operational and Surge Support to National Clusters
2. Capacity Development
3. Tools and Guidance
4. Information Management
5. Advocacy

The Somalia food security cluster demonstrated that delivery of the core functions of the cluster occurs in extremely varied and complex emergencies situations in dealing with over 400 cluster partners. This is a model of how to achieve maximum results by demonstrating strong leaderships through the co-ordination and resources of WFP and FAO at the national level and fully engaging and increasing the leadership capacity of national and international NGO and partners at the sub-national levels.

In Afghanistan, the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster responsibilities for the coordination of partners is shared among the two lead agencies – WFP and FAO as well as with a large NGO partner, AfghanAid. This has highlighted the positive benefits achieved by sharing leadership roles between partners to improve the quality of such partnership, of advocacy and of shared information for a better response.

Partnership is at the core of the work of the gFSC. The gFSC has three levels of engagement: partners, observers and associates. Each of these partners, observers and associates of the gFSC are involved in technical areas. They are all responsible for keeping their colleagues updated on developments and are committed to encouraging their national focal points to participate in the national FSCs, regularly attend meetings and adhere to the guiding principles which are set out in the minimum commitments of global food security partners formulated in 2011.

gFSC Partners		
ACF	DRC (Danish Refugee Council)	Oxfam UK
ACF Spain	FAO	Plan International
ACF USA	Goal	Samaritan's Purse
ACT Alliance	HelpAge	Save the Children (UK/US)
ACTED	IFRC	Solidarities International
ADRA	IMC (International Medical Corps)	Terre des Hommes
Canadian Foodgrains Bank	IRC (International Rescue Committee)	UNHCR
CARE International	Islamic Relief	Welthungerhilfe
Caritas	Lutheran World Relief	WFP
Concern	Mercy Corps	World Vision International
CRS (Catholic Relief Services)	NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council)	
gFSC Observers		
ICRC	MSF	
gFSC Associates		
Early Recovery Cluster	Global Nutrition Cluster	OCHA
Global Health Cluster	Global WASH Cluster	

Quality Programming

For the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) partners, quality programming means ensuring that in humanitarian response 'programmatic planning and implementation take into account all aspects (standards, indicators and cross cutting issues) that make up the project cycle and ensure that the services provided have the ultimate goal of (an) increased (positive) impact for all vulnerable human beings within affected populations. Sex and age are universal determinants of access to and control over resources and opportunities. There is a need to ensure it is included all phases of the programme cycle of humanitarian response and make sure these are highlighted in all impact analyses.

The gFSC support team in Rome has an Age and Disability as well as a Gender and Protection Adviser available to support country clusters. These Advisers supported cluster leads to:

- Assist national clusters to develop common understandings of vulnerability, targeting and accountability;
- Identify ways to improve practices including those relating to gender, protection, age and disability as they impact on food security and livelihoods;
- Assist with needs or gap analyses and draw lessons learned and good practices from responses;
- Develop tools and guidance on specific problems including inclusion and preventing exclusion errors, especially in relation to gender, age and disabilities;
- Conduct trainings and capacity development on gender mainstreaming, protection mainstreaming, assessment methodologies, monitoring, SPHERE and related standards;
- Formulate mainstreaming strategies with country level FSCs;
- Provide advice on the development of referral pathways, especially in relation to responses to gender based violence and child protection.

IASC and the Transformative Agenda

While the focus is ultimately on affected populations, the gFSC also has a role to play in increasing the effectiveness of the global cluster system, strengthening understanding, avoiding duplication of efforts and advocating for food security issues in humanitarian responses. The gFSC worked to build synergies with other IASC clusters at the global level and encourages programmatic inter-cluster engagement at national and sub-national levels.

The gFSC co-led with the Global Health Cluster, the task team that developed the Coordination Performance Monitoring section of the IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level. Coordination Performance Monitoring consists of two elements to monitor coordination performance: (1) the Cluster Activation Checklist and (2) the Coordination Performance Report. Both enable the identification of areas for support, improvement, and follow-up actions.

The Cluster Activation Checklist is a simple tool designed to monitor progress of cluster activation and implementation after the declaration of a level 3 emergency, in line with commitments and the level 3 emergency response timeline agreed under the Transformative Agenda²⁶. The checklist can also be used in all other contexts where clusters are activated.

The Coordination Performance Report is used in all humanitarian responses with activated clusters and when there is more time available for in-depth assessment of the quality of cluster operations and production of key deliverables.

Core Ares of work 2012

Operational and Surge Support to National Clusters

Overall, during 2012, the gFSC provided surge deployment in 11 operations as well as support missions in 20 countries. These missions raised the profile, presence and effectiveness of food security clusters and related country specific coordination solutions.

The operational and surge support delivered by gFSC was provided following bilateral negotiations between the gFSC support team and coordination teams and/or global partners. The focus of this support was on technical guidance.

The gFSC support team undertook field missions to support coordination in national mechanisms on gender issues (South Sudan, Kenya/Somalia), protection (Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia), information management (Bangladesh, Afghanistan) cluster self-assessment (Pakistan, Kenya/Somalia), cluster functions and structures, guidance and policy (Mali, Somalia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Yemen, Senegal, DRC, Djibouti, oPT).

Surge support was provided by the gFSC support team through field visits to assist coordination teams in responding specific emergencies or new challenges on the ground (Sahel, Egypt for Libya,), short or medium-term deployment of gFSC support team members (Ivory Coast, Yemen), Afghanistan, or deployment of partners and consultants (Fiji, Bangladesh, Mali, Sahel regional, Sudan).

A summary of the gFSC missions undertaken is presented below.

	GST Support Missions		Surge Deployment	
2012	1. Afghanistan	10. OPT	1. Afghanistan	9. South Sudan
	2. Bangladesh	11. Pakistan	2. Bangladesh	10. Somalia
	3. Burkina Faso	12. Panama	3. DRC	11. Yemen
	4. Colombia	13. Senegal	4. Jordan (Syria response)	
	5. DRC	14. Somalia	5. Kenya	
	6. El Salvador	15. South Sudan	6. OPT	
	7. Kenya	16. Thailand	7. Pakistan	
	8. Mali	17. Timor l'Este	8. Senegal (Sahel regional response)	
	9. Niger	18. Yemen		

In line with the IASC Transformative Agenda, the gFSC have formulated its response capacity in the event of a L3 emergency situation. Team members have participated in a number of meetings defining global L3 response capacity within the IASC architecture.

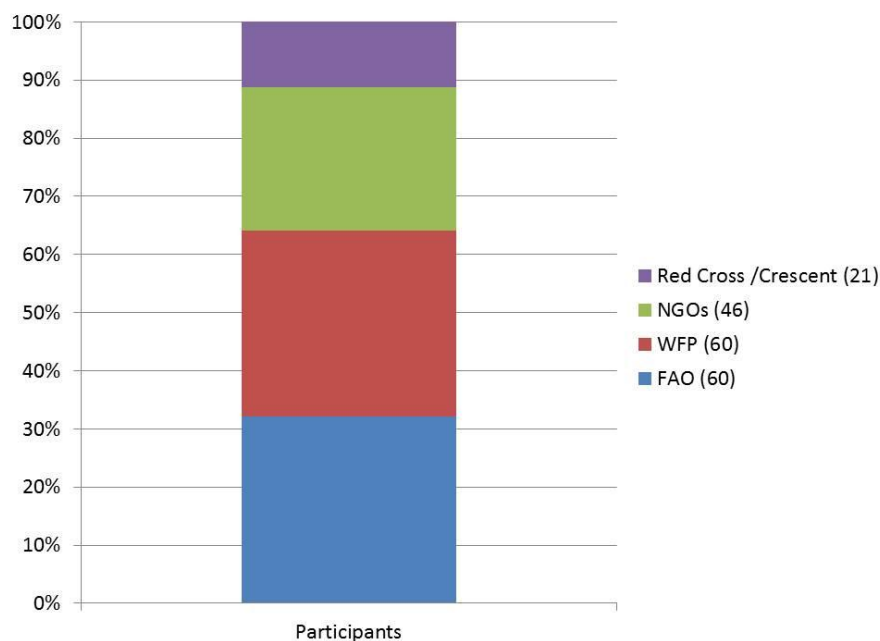
On protection four strategies have developed over 2012:

- providing support to the national Cluster leadership and members so they can develop their understanding protection and their own tools and practices;
- strengthening links between the food security cluster and the protection cluster;
- supporting the protection officer who works full time with the FSC; and
- working with or supporting protection officers of gFSC partners.

The working relationship with the protection cluster in many countries was raised as a concern as it is almost non-existent in most places. Some gaps noted included an increasing gap in the understanding of protection between the FSC co-lead agencies FAO / WFP; finding areas to get traction in the gFSC WGs – Urban, Advocacy, Assessment, Nutrition; how to best work with other Clusters on protection mainstreaming especially WASH, Nutrition, Early Recovery (transition) and linking protection with environmental issues.

Capacity Development

One hundred and eighty-seven participants from partner NGOs, IFRC, FAO and WFP have now completed the Food Security Cluster training for coordinators and information managers. The trainings have been held in English, French and Spanish in Rome (twice), Nairobi, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Bamako, Panama, and Dakar.



These country-based trainings provided technical support to cluster coordinators, information managers and partners.

Tools and guidance

The **Food Security Cluster Handbook** was developed to provide information and guidance on how a country-level food security cluster (FSC) could help to ensure an effective, coordinated response by humanitarian organizations to food-security-related crises. The handbook suggests how the food security cluster lead agencies, coordinators, information managers and partners can work together to ensure that urgent humanitarian needs are met while at the same time facilitating recovery from the earliest possible moment. It is intended to be used as a reference document when information or guidance is required on a specific topic. The Handbook is available at

<http://foodsecuritycluster.net/sites/default/files/FSC%20Handbook%20draft%203%20final%20for%20web.pdf>

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) arise from the need to provide greater clarity and guidance to those assigned to lead and manage the FSC in countries with humanitarian crises. Four sets of SOPs have been established for food security cluster as quick guidance on what to do and achieve at all times and are complementary to other existing tools like the Food Security Coordination Handbook, where more detailed and accurate guidance is given. These four SOPs developed in 2012 include:

- **SOP 1: Pre-deployment of staff to the in-country FSC: Cluster Coordinator (CC), Information Manager (IM) and/or any other appointed person**

This procedure seeks to ensure that staff members who have been selected to support country-level FSC have complied with all procedures and requirements prior to deployment and are ready to be moved to the country of deployment.

- **SOP 2: Deployment of Cluster Coordinator to the in-country FSC**

This procedure seeks to ensure that those responsible for the leadership and management of the country-level FSC provide the main deliverables expected from the Country-level FSC, mainly during the first days/weeks of a humanitarian crisis.

- **SOP 3: Management Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF)**

This procedure seeks to show how the FSC coordinates the process of applying for pooled funds (i.e. Common Humanitarian Funds - CHF), including roles of the Grant Review Committee (GRC) and Cluster Coordinator (CC). Partners can submit proposals for a variety of different funds. The main aim of pooled funds is to provide donors with an opportunity to pool their un-earmarked contributions to a specific country to enable timely and reliable humanitarian assistance in response to emergencies. Common humanitarian funds (CHFs) provide strategic funding to in-country actors in support for the consolidated appeals process (CAP) to address humanitarian needs identified in a country's common humanitarian action plan (CHAP).

- **SOP 4: Management of Surge Support Missions**

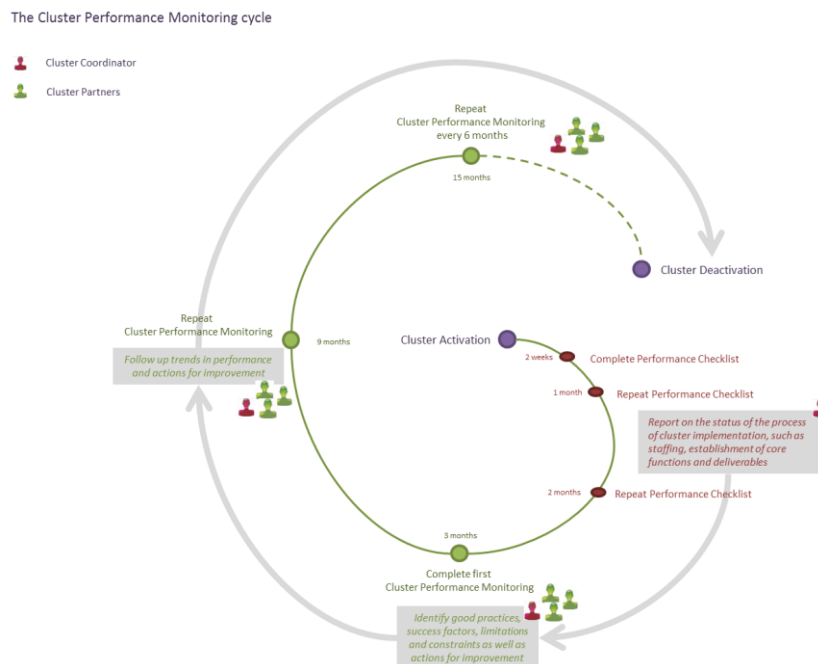
This procedure seeks to ensure that staff deployed follow the necessary steps to ensure that the support mission is carefully planned, successfully implemented and follows the established reporting procedures including recommendations that are the result of a wide consultation process.

In order to ensure that clusters are efficient and effective coordination mechanisms, fulfilling the core cluster functions, meeting the needs of constituent members and supporting delivery to affected people and the completion of the IASC Coordination Performance Report, the gFSC co-led the task team with the GHC to develop the **on-line self-assessment questionnaires for Cluster Coordinators and for cluster partners to monitor the performance of coordination at national and sub-national levels.**

Three different questionnaires have been developed: one is a general description of the cluster structure to be filled out by each cluster coordinator and the remaining two are generic self-assessment surveys to be completed by the cluster coordinators and cluster partners respectively. The process includes the completion of a 15-25 minute online survey, with anonymous responses, processing of the results, and a cluster meeting for the review of results. These steps take place over a period of 4-5 weeks. Monitoring is intended to take place every 6 months thereafter.

Results of these questionnaires are weighted and compiled into a Coordination Performance Report. The report is the aggregate of results from the questionnaires, reflecting feedback on the six core functions of a cluster as outlined in the IASC Coordination Reference Module, with an additional component on accountability to affected people.

This tool will be implemented in all cluster countries in-line with the Cluster Performance Monitoring Cycle and can be found at <http://clusters.humanitarianresponse.info/>



The tool was piloted in the Pakistan and South Sudan Food Security Clusters in August 2012 and fully implemented in the Somali Food Security Cluster in December 2012.

Information Management

Management of all information, knowledge and learning, and good practice is a Cluster function. In 2012 the gFSC ensured that all relevant information about cluster activities was collected, analysed, stored and distilled. This enabled a record to be kept to ensure an institutional memory of the gFSC. Work around lessons learned and good practice contributed to improvement of responses, assisted in the generation of new ideas and increased quality of food security preparedness, response and transition.

The gFSC provided Information Management capacity to assist national clusters. These included:

- Providing information management tools and products (3/4W, templates, databases) and assistance in adapting them to respond to the unique needs of country level FSCs;
- Reviewing country level FSC's information management strategy and practices;
- Offering space in the cluster website for new and existing clusters and assisting in website management;
- Providing e-mail addresses for FSCs;
- Providing information about different country level clusters and coordination mechanisms.

The gFSC launched the food security cluster website at <http://foodsecuritycluster.net/>. This website includes cluster country specific pages for national information management and provides useful information to all partners on tools and documents, current activities.

This information management work also included support to the technical working group for the development of Food Security Cluster core situation and performance indicators.

Advocacy

Comprehensive communication directs data to improve decision making. Setting standards and guidelines was critical to help countries achieve the best food security response possible. One of the major roles of the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) was to disseminate timely, accurate information and messages to all relevant stakeholders. Information advocating best practice was evidence-based and distributed to the people working at country level.

The gFSC worked with partners at global and country level to support:

- Initiating and maintaining communications strategies for sharing decisions, work plans, agreed actions, key achievements and challenges;

- Managing day to day communications between the gFSC support team and partners (including monthly teleconferences between FSC partners and the 6 geographical areas: Anglophone Africa, the Americas; Asia Pacific, Francophone Africa; Middle East; and South East Asia);
- Facilitating communication between gFSC, external actors, IASC and other clusters;
- Organizing gFSC and working group face-to face meetings.
- Working with co-chairs for coherent links between activities; preparing, monitoring, reporting activities and ensuring follow up;
- Preparing and disseminating reports with specific outcomes noted – directed to those with responsibility to implement;
- Identifying gaps and recommending actions/strategies to achieve work plan goals and strategies;
- Identifying and highlighting tools, trainings and strategies to achieve goals of cluster partners at country level.

Two Food Security Cluster Global Meetings of Partners were held in 2012 (April and October). These meetings were open to gFSC partners, observers and associates. Selected country FSC coordinators also participated in order to provide information regarding best practices and to help identify areas of support / increased engagement needed from the gFSC drawing directly from their work at the country level. These meetings reviewed achievements and challenges, established priority focus areas and identified specific actions needed for the global Food Security Cluster. The resulted of these meetings was strengthened and improved capacities of the gFSC partners to provide support for coordination, preparedness, response and recovery action at community, national and global levels.

Monthly teleconferences with global partners provided the opportunity for discussion among partners of progress on achieving agreed priorities and for reporting and sharing information on areas of concern.

Regular teleconferences were held on a bi-monthly or month basis between the global support team and country cluster coordinators to discuss key issues and development in each national cluster.

Essential documentation, reports and minutes of meetings, output of working groups and of missions, agendas, briefings etc. relating to gFSC were prepared and disseminated to partners.

Working Groups

In 2012, as a specific strategic response to provide technical direction to the gFSC on key areas of humanitarian food security related responses the gFSC established four working groups, whose members are representatives of the gFSC partners with specific experience in identified themes:

- 1. The Assessments Working Group (AWG)** designated two co-chairs: Vincent Annoni (ACTED) and Kathryn Odgen, WFP
 - In 2012, the working group defined the core set of Food Security Cluster situation indicators for use in humanitarian responses. The working group also commenced work on defining the different assessment approaches and subsequent needs in human responses (e.g. various needs assessments and response analysis tools available).
- 2. The Communications and Advocacy Working Group** was chaired by Mohamed Daw Care International until October 2012 then Larissa Pelham, Care International
 - Work on advocacy and communications is core for the global and country food security clusters. This working group worked to develop the food security cluster 'global voice' so that all gFSC partners' observers and colleagues speak consistently with a food security cluster voice.
- 3. The Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group.** The Chair of this WG is Allister Clewlow, Samaritan's Purse.
 - This working group identified on-going partner activities to contribute meaningfully to shaping responses to urban food insecurity in humanitarian settings. This included completing a geographical mapping of food security and nutrition activities undertaken by gFSC partners at country level; developing an initial list of Food Security Activities in emergency settings; refining the list to provide a basket of tried and tested options for food security humanitarian responses for urban settings; providing a virtual link that summarizes urban vulnerability assessments on food security in different crises.
- 4. The Food Security and Nutrition Inter-cluster.** The co-chairs of this working groups are Caroline Abla of the International Medical Corps and Hilary Motsiry of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
 - This working group developed and conducted a field survey for cluster coordinators in order to identify present coordination field practices between the Food Security and Nutrition Clusters. Upon careful analysis of the survey results and the dissemination of key findings, the working group identified principal synergies and complementarities, gaps and limitations, as well as best practices regarding existing coordination mechanisms between Food Security and Nutrition Clusters at field level.

Each working group reported back periodically for overall guidance from the gFSC partners. Throughout 2012, each working group met face-to face twice – on each occasion the day prior to the global meetings of partners. Each of the working groups also met on average once every two months via teleconference. The Working Group's Terms of Reference as well as meeting report and minutes can be found at <http://foodsecuritycluster.net/>.

The way forward

The gFSC is a viable way of ensuring the maximum use is made of resources to respond to humanitarian crises. In October 2012, gFSC partners identified four priority areas which represent the core areas of work requiring direct action from 01 January 2013 until 31 December 2014. These four pillars are:

1. **Capacity Development in Support of National Clusters.** This involves training at country level and for individuals. It includes development and application of specific tools, offering guidance and support to ensure delivery of quality programmes.
2. **Information Management.** This includes management of relevant data, learning and knowledge and compilation and sharing of best practices.
3. **Operational and Surge Support to National Clusters.** This pillar includes support missions; surge development and response mechanisms.
4. **Advocacy, Communication and Partnership.** This pillar involves internal and external communications to influence policy and resource mobilisation to enhance coordination systems and building partnerships.

It is essential that the Food Security Clusters at global, national and sub-national level remain conducive to continued partner involvement in leadership and development of tools and guidance, training, capacity building, information management and advocacy.

The gFSC remains committed to promoting guidance on technical areas such as assessments, urban food security activities as well as to increase synergies among other clusters to improve the food security humanitarian responses while ensuring the continued mainstreaming of gender, protection and all cross-cutting areas of concern.