



FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER

Strengthening Humanitarian Response

Lessons Learned & Good Practices in the Somalia Food Security Cluster

Exercise Conducted by WFP/FAO co-led Global Food Security
Cluster

9/1/2013

Synthesis Report

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Acknowledgements

The Global Food Security Cluster would like to thank the Somalia Food Security Cluster Co-Coordinators, INGO Coordinator and all the Somalia FSC Secretariat for facilitating these Lessons Learned and Good Practices and for participating in their discussions.

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1. Executive Summary

The Lessons Learned and Good Practices Project was designed to officially document key coordination accomplishments of the Somalia Food Security Cluster and to identify those particular areas where the Cluster Lead Agencies' experiences might be useful for other clusters. Three of the most successful areas include the following:

- i. Governance & Coordination
 - The cluster co-management system
 - The Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)
 - Central Review Committee (CRC)
 - Field Support Architecture
 - Funding Allocation Group
- ii. Information Management Tool
- iii. Response Strategy and Implementation

2. Methodology

The findings mentioned in this report are the result of consultations with the WFP/FAO Somalia Cluster Co-ordinators and the INGO Coordinator, literature reviews, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions with the Somalia FSC Secretariat and FAO Somalia Office. An interview checklist was prepared, where Cluster Lead Agencies (CLAs) were asked to outline what worked and what did not work for each section, as well as to provide recommendations for ways to enhance the existing system, where necessary. Preliminary findings and best practices were reviewed by the Somalia Cluster, and feedback incorporated into this report.



3. Cluster Context

3.1 Over the past eight years the humanitarian community in Somalia has responded to three major crises (2005-2006, 2008-2009 and 2011) with the most severe emergency leading to the declaration of Famine in July 2011. However, over the past ten years, the agro-pastoral and agricultural livelihoods within Somalia have fluctuated between Famine/Emergency/Crisis and Food Secure/Stressed.

3.2 As a result of a combination of shocks such as poor rainfall, global price fluctuations and eruption of resourced-based or regional inter-state conflict, between 3.4 and 6.5 million people of Somalia have, to some degree, lost their assets and remained food-insecure.

3.3 As of July 2011, 3.2 million people required life-saving assistance in Somalia. The country raised \$1.3 billion, of which only \$800 million went through the CAP system. An estimated 2.8 million people in need were located in the south, with displacement serving as a catalyst in people's survival choices. Approximately 253,000 people fled as refugees to Kenya and Ethiopia, while 167,000 became internally displaced mostly in and around Mogadishu. The Somali Government's leadership and response were limited. Aid policy and distribution were shaped largely by the IASC cluster system, ICRC, Somali NGOs and a large humanitarian initiative by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). UN, Red Cross and NGO operations were mostly led remotely from Nairobi.

3.4 With the support of the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC), the former Somalia Food Assistance Cluster and Somalia Agricultural Livelihoods Cluster, under the leadership of WFP and FAO, merged to form a single Somalia Food Security Cluster in March 2012.

3.5 The overall goal of the Somalia FSC is to be the primary source of information on the ongoing humanitarian response addressing food insecurity and to facilitate the development of a strategic vision and guidance for its members in their food security responses to the acute and underlying causes of the recurrent crisis in Somalia.

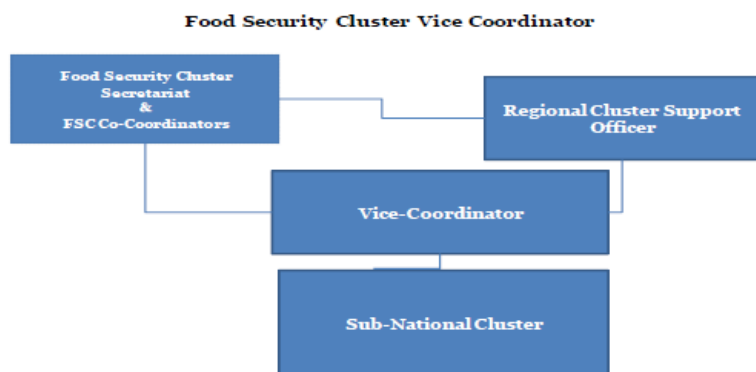
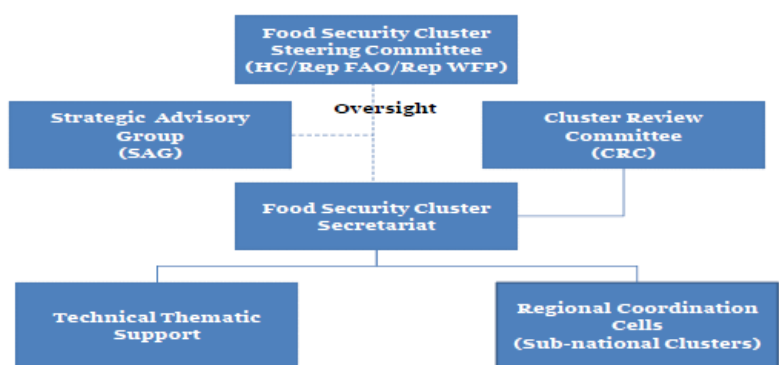
3.6 The Somalia Food Security Cluster therefore provides guidance to its membership from a multi-year perspective on how member responses must address the acute seasonal needs for improved access to food. The Cluster also addresses livelihood vulnerability through activities that build resilience and provides regular and dependable safety nets to begin to arrest the seasonal changes between Famine/Emergency/Crisis and Stressed.

3.7 The cluster is co-led by FAO and WFP and is co-coordinated by the co-leads and Save the Children. The Somalia Food Security Cluster has a membership of over 400 organizations. Currently, there are twelve sub-national clusters that are coordinated by vice-coordinators, the majority of which are from LNGOs. The cluster is supported by a team of eight dedicated staff (cluster secretariat) who work together with lead agency staff acting as field level Focal Points ensuring that support is provided to the local level clusters. This is complemented with over 30 elected cluster member volunteers in leadership positions such as Field Level Vice-coordinators, Strategic Advisory Group, Technical Working Groups and Cluster Review Committee.

3.8 The Nairobi based national cluster is the strategic hub while the sub-national clusters focus on operational implementation. Nairobi based cluster meetings take place on a bi-monthly basis; they are divided into FSC partners meetings and general information sharing members/partners meetings, while management of data and information takes place at the national level.

3.9 It is within this operational framework that the Somalia FSC strives to promote responses that are timely, proportionate and appropriate and that duly take into account different assessed needs and livelihood enhancement schemes.

Structure of the Food Security Cluster



4. Coordination Architecture

4.1 Co-Management

Lessons Learned:

- A good working relationship exists between the WFP/FAO Somalia Co-Coordinators and the Save the Children INGO Coordinator because they clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and agree on the same minimum standards.

- WFP short-term and FAO long-term programmes complement each other well within the Somalia context because they are able to address issues related to both improved availability/access to food and livelihood support.
- The INGO Coordinator serves as a good counterweight to the UN CLAs and proactively communicates with NGO partners at sub-national level to promote reporting compliance and raise awareness on outstanding needs.

4.2 Support from SAG & CRC & Transient Working Groups

Lessons Learned:

- A transparent and inclusive process is used to identify Cluster roles and responsibilities, through SAG involvement and endorsement of agreed criteria.
- SAG members are elected and render the decision-making process more inclusive by allowing different agencies with different programs to voice their opinions and contribute to the management process.
- Project experts in the CRC enhance the quality of Emergency Response, CAP and CHF Proposals through the provision of technical guidance.
- FSC Working Groups strive to enhance programmatic response through contributions from technical staff and lead agencies and the development of agreed minimum standards. The Cash Based Response Working Group (CBRWG) is meant to promote awareness and guidance on cash related transfers nationally and sub-nationally, whereas the Urban Livelihoods Working Group draws links with resilience building activities to assist those affected by the protracted crisis.

4.3 Field Support Architecture

Lessons Learned:

- Effective coordination and partnership exists between sub-national and national level clusters, where the former focus on operational coordination (i.e. monthly response reports and contingency planning), and the latter provide normative guidance on strategic planning and response implementation.
- Working with the 12 NGO Vice-Coordinators enhances overall coordination efforts because they ensure the provision of adequate and timely information to affected populations in rural areas of Somalia, which are inaccessible to the FSC Secretariat and promote capacity building by mentoring their national staff on key areas of cluster work.

4.4 Funding Allocation Group

Lessons Learned:

- As a result of effective advocacy efforts and bi-monthly meetings with donors, the FSC is always among the highest beneficiaries of CHF and CERF allocations and has managed to secure multi-year funding through the CAP.
- Pooled funds are allocated in an equitable and transparent manner in accordance with set criteria. The CHF has an internal board which formulates decisions on funding allocations, without cluster representation and influence. After allocation decisions are made, recommendations are sent to cluster members regarding funding priorities and geographical targeting. The FSC Secretariat through the CRC ensure that the most technically sound proposals are recommended for funding to the CHF board.

5. Information Management

Lessons Learned:

- Trainings on the FSC online reporting, analysis and mapping tool ensure systematic data collection and information sharing.
- The Reporting Tool ensures that data collected is collated into a user-friendly interface and tracks results against objectives and targets, so as to inform corrective action.
- Bi-monthly Cluster Coordination Meetings serve as a good forum for partners to voice their concerns and to identify response gaps.



6. Response Strategy & Implementation

Lessons Learned:

- Timely Assessments are developed using the IPC approach and information generated from FSNAU. Guidance on using the IPC to develop response objectives is produced by the FSC and endorsed by the SAG.
- The Cluster is fully engaged in inter-cluster assessments at the ICWG level and is actively involved with FSNAU for the development of the biannual main assessment.
- The FSC Planning and Reporting Tool allows for tracking of new and ongoing partner Assessments so as to ensure work complementarity; it also enables partners to assess the needs of different population groups (i.e. urban vs. rural/ stressed vs. afflicted).
- The FSC uses early warning information to assess how response objectives should be nuanced during a particular season.
- A Standardized Contingency Planning Template for the flood in Middle and Lower Shabelle was developed together with the WASH cluster, to track ongoing activities and extrapolate key lessons learned for future reference.
- Response Planning has a solid evidence-base because partners report on their current and planned operations, so that the cluster can ensure work complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts.
- The FSC promotes national capacity development through Trainings on Project Cycle Management, the Online Project System, IPC, CAP 2013-2015 Lessons Learned, FSC Reporting Tool, and Gender & Protection Mainstreaming. These trainings contribute to more harmonized interventions and better quality proposals submitted to the CHF.

7. Way Forward

The lessons learnt from the Somalia Food Security Cluster can be used to inform other coordination mechanisms at both national and global level. The Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) wishes to adapt the current Somalia IM Planning and Reporting Tool on a macro-scale, so as to develop an IM system that all national Food Security Clusters can use. This in turn would facilitate better gap analysis across the board and ensure a more consistent approach to address population needs.

Although the governance and coordination architecture mentioned are particular to the Somalia context, elements of this structure could also be applicable to different national contexts. The idea of a Strategic Advisory Group and a Central Review Committee is very useful in attempting to render the decision-making process as inclusive as possible and promoting ownership of the system from multiple stakeholders with different mandates.

In particular cluster systems that have over one hundred partners to coordinate, the SAG and the CRC are useful forums for developing consensus-building mechanisms. Moreover, clusters that do not have technical working groups that provide normative guidelines on food security related issues, could use specialized experts within a CRC body to enhance the technical quality of partner response proposals.

Similarly, the Somalia field support architecture could also be applicable to different contexts. The idea of a national cluster setting the strategic policy direction, while the sub-national structures ensure operational coordination, has proved very effective in ensuring better streamlined information and a more harmonized response analysis. Lastly, the Somalia FSC capacity building strategy is also a good reference model for other clusters to use to ensure continuity in existing food security responses and strengthen the existing knowledge base.

ANNEX 1 – Glossary of Terms

CAP – Consolidated Appeals Process

CC – Cluster Coordinator

CERF – Central Emergency Response Fund

CHF – Common Humanitarian Fund

CLA – Cluster Lead Agency

CRC – Central Review Committee

EFSA – Emergency Food Security Assessment

FSNAU – Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit

gFSC – Global Food Security Cluster

HCT – Humanitarian Country Team

HDD – Household Dietary Diversity Approach

HDDS – Household Dietary Diversity Score

HEA – Household Economy Approach

HPC – Humanitarian Program Cycle

ICWG – Inter-Cluster Working Group

IM – Information Management

IP – Implementing Partner

IPC – International Phase Classification

OPS – Online Project System

PCM – Program Cycle Management

SAG – Strategic Advisory Group

ANNEX 2 – FSC Somalia Coordination Meeting Standardized Agenda

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Review & Agreement of Previous Minutes

- Review/Follow-up Actions from Previous Meeting
- Access Constraints
- Presentation of District Level Information by Response Objective, Activity and Planned versus Actual
- Review of Gaps per District and Response Discussion
- AOB

ANNEX 3 – FSC Somalia Contingency Planning Template Operations

Middle Shabelle Region							
Flooding Information & Data							
District	Village	Estimated Population in Village	Estimated Population Affected by floods	Proposed Activities for Mitigation	Agency responsible for mitigation activities	Activities/ Responses if flooding occurs	Agency responsible for activities/ responses if flooding occurs
				I			
Guidance Notes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt coordination of information (on who is doing what and where, those affected, extent of effect, first wave of information) and reporting Liaison with INGOs/LNGOs and Government • Indicate if areas/ villages are currently accessible • Who is doing assessment, snapshot results, actions being undertaken • When and where meetings can be held • Immediate and life saving responses required • Be adept with historical information regarding the 2006 floods 							

ANNEX 4 – FSC Somalia Reporting Tool – Partner Operations

- **Program Objectives**
 - Relief
 - Recovery
 - Development
- **Response Objectives**
 - Improved Food Access (*targeting households/individuals*)
 - Livelihood Construction (*Assets*)
 - Livelihood Support *via*:
 - Animal redistribution
 - Animal treatments/vaccines
 - Fishing gears
 - Seeds, tools, fertilizer treatment
 - Capacity Building
 - Safety Net *in the form of*:
 - Institutional Assistance to household/individual
 - Prepared meals
 - School feeding
 - School take-home ration for children
- **Modality**
 - Cash/Cheque
 - Food
 - Goods
 - Vouchers
- **Operation Description**
- **Is this activity part of your agency resilience strategy?**
- **Operation Description**
- **Is this activity part of your agency resilience strategy?**
- **Goods**
 - CCPP vaccines
 - CFW
 - Chicken
 - Food
 - Goats
 - PPR vaccines
 - Seeds
 - Shoats
 - Tractor hours
- **Targeted Beneficiary**
 - IDPs
 - Rural Population
 - Urban Population
- **Status of Operation:**
 - Completed
 - Ongoing
 - Planned with CAP/CHF/ERF Funding
 - Planned with Funding Confirmed
 - Planned with Funding Not Secured
- **Number of Cash & Voucher Transfers per month if applicable**
- **Cash/Voucher delivered to beneficiary per month**
- **Ration Size & Kcal value**

General Information

*Fields with * are required.*

Organization *	<input type="text" value="Select an Organization"/> Add	Targeted Beneficiary *	<input type="text" value="Select a Targeted Beneficiary"/> Add
Imp Partner	<input type="text" value="Select Implementing Partners"/>	Status *	<input type="text" value="Select a Status"/> Add
Local Imp Partner	<input type="text" value="Select Local Implementing Partners"/>	Start Date *	<input type="text"/>
Donor *	<input type="text" value="Select a Donor"/> Add	End Date *	<input type="text"/>
Project Code	<input type="text"/>	Cash/Vouchers Transfer System	<input type="text"/>
Objective *	<input type="text" value="Select an Objective"/> Add	Number of cash/vouchers transfers per month	<input type="text"/>
Response Objective *	<input type="text" value="Select a Response Objective"/> Add	Cash/vouchers per delivered per beneficiary per month	<input type="text"/>
Modality *	<input type="text" value="Select a Modality"/> Add		
Description	<input type="text"/>	Ration Size	<input type="text"/>
		Kcal Value	<input type="text"/>
		Goods	<input type="text" value="Select a Good"/> Add

Is this activity part of your agency resilience strategy? * Yes No

▼ Manage Operations

Manage Operations
Edit Populated Values

ANNEX 5 – FSC Somalia Reporting Tool – Partner Capacity Assessment

-Offices:

- Main Office Name & Address
- Field Office Name & Address
- District Name
- Email

-Organization Structure:

- Mission
- Vision
- Objective
- Strategic Plan
- Governance Structure

-Information on Human Resource & Financial Management

-Partners are requested to attach 3 different samples of previous projects implemented by their institutions over the last 3 years

-Information on office equipment, vehicles and other tools readily available for emergencies

-Monitoring:

- M&E Unit?
- M&E dedicated staff?
- Do you have a well-defined and managed database to capture, verify, analyze and present monitoring data?

-Information on Trainings attended and level achieved