

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER ANNUAL REPORT 2013



GLOBAL
FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER

Strengthening Humanitarian Response

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The designations employed and the presentation of material in the maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of gFSC concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.

Cover photo: Amy Horton/WFP

1. Introduction

When a humanitarian crisis hits, the Food Security Cluster (FSC) coordinates the food security response, addressing issues of food availability, access and utilization. In 2013, the FSC responded to several major emergencies, including the system-wide Level 3 emergencies in the Philippines and the Central African Republic (C.A.R). In addition, it provided a coordination solution in Gaziantep, Turkey in response to the Level 3 emergency in Syria, and continued its support to several long-running crises, including Somalia, Yemen and Afghanistan.

Since starting its operations in 2011, the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) Support Team has provided direction to country-level clusters by developing of tools and guidance, conducting training and providing surge support. It has also provided comprehensive communication outreach within the cluster, with partners and with the wider humanitarian community.

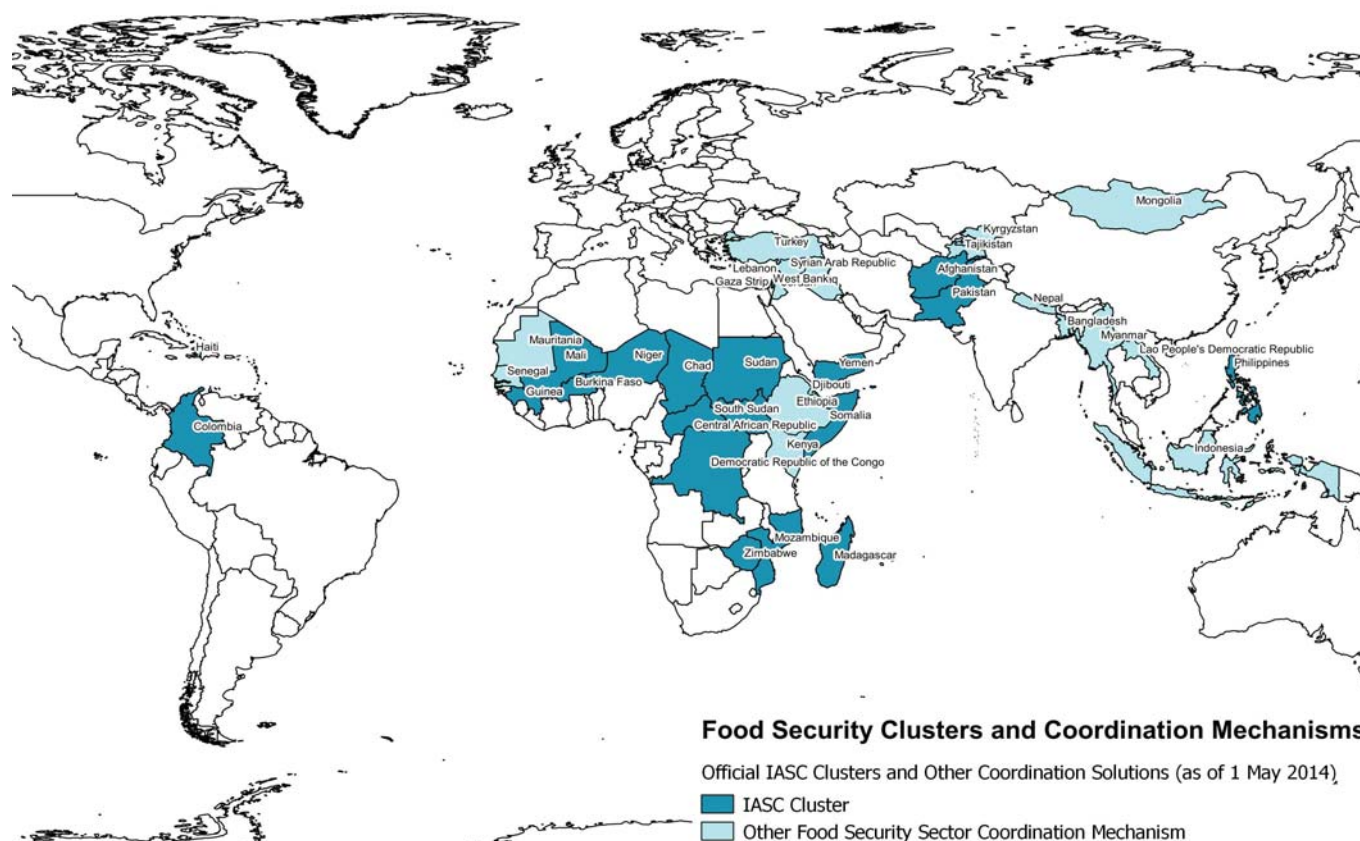
Partners are at the core of the work of the gFSC. The gFSC brings together international NGOs, civil society, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), UN

organizations, Governments and Donors. In order to continue its valuable work in preparedness for and in response to humanitarian crises, the gFSC needs the on-going support of its partners.

In 2013, the gFSC organized its work around four pillars, identified in collaboration with partners for the 2013-2014 Strategic Plan:

1. **Operational and surge support to national clusters**
2. **Capacity development in support of national clusters**
3. **Information management and learning**
4. **Advocacy, communication and partnership.**

Figure 1: Food Security Clusters and coordination solutions around the world



2. Operational and surge support to national clusters

Operational and surge support to national Food Security Clusters includes surge deployments in immediate response to humanitarian crises, demand-driven capacity support missions and roster deployments to improve humanitarian food security responses.

These missions and deployments assist in strengthening coordination, accountability and leadership of the country clusters, and support coordinated programme quality with gender, protection, age and disabilities mainstreamed into programming. In-country trainings on strategy development, assessments, monitoring and evaluation, and information management, are also undertaken as part of surge and support missions. The opportunity to engage with partners is usually through information sessions relating to the gFSC, the cluster approach and the principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Transformative Agenda.

2.1 Surge support and response to L3 emergencies

The gFSC deploys staff for new crises and peaks in chronic emergencies as cluster coordinators and information managers. During 2013, the gFSC deployed surge staff and conducted capacity support missions in 14 countries, including in with the declarations of system-wide Level 3 emergencies in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Philippines and the Central African Republic (Table 1). Preparedness mechanisms such as existing Stand-by Partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Samaritan's Purse and HelpAge International contributed to the immediate deployment of surge staff familiar with the cluster system.

In 2013, in response to the deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic, the gFSC identified



Photo: Roberta Canulla/gFSC



Photo: Roberta Canulla/gFSC

deployable staff even before the declaration of the system-wide Level 3 emergency. Food Security Cluster Coordinator trainings and established partner networks have proved to be vital in this regard.

2.1.1 Central African Republic

The Food Security Cluster (FSC) has been active in the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) since 2006. In December 2013, following civil unrest and population movements, a system-wide Level 3 emergency was declared. At that time, 2.5 million people needed urgent humanitarian assistance and 1.6 million people needed food assistance.

Prior to the Level 3 activation, the FSC had scaled up its activities to coordinate food assistance and agricultural sector activities, managing information flows and guiding the food security and agriculture sector response by assisting some 60 partner organizations. When the Level 3 emergency was declared, the FSC coordination team was already in place, supported by additional partner capacity from the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) as cluster co-facilitator.

To meet humanitarian and recovery needs, the FSC members provided immediate life-saving food assistance, targeting the most vulnerable populations affected by the crisis. They also provided assistance to protect and restore livelihoods. As agriculture is the main source of livelihoods and income, cluster members mobilized to 'save the crop year 2014' as the planting cycle began in April 2014.

Table 1: Countries where gFSC conducted surge deployments and capacity support missions in 2013

Surge Deployments	Capacity Support Missions	
Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Niger
Central African Republic	Bangladesh	Philippines
Jordan	Central African Republic	Somalia
Mali	Jordan	South Sudan
Somalia	Kenya	Turkey (Gaziantep)
Philippines	Lebanon	Yemen
Turkey (Gaziantep)	Mali	

The gFSC achievements in C.A.R. include:

- Integration of ACTED, supported by European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), as NGO co-facilitator. ACTED contributed to the technical work of the cluster and ensured the representation of NGOs in the management of the cluster.
- Implementation of the database for urban displaced in Bangui to provide immediate response to the IDP crisis in December 2013. The database has been taken over by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to be used by all clusters.

2.1.2 Philippines

Following the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan, clusters, including Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC), were activated on 9 November 2013. As of 12 November, 11.3 million people were reported to be affected across nine regions and over 500,000 displaced. Some 2.5 million people were in need of food assistance.

The gFSC immediately deployed five people (3 Cluster Coordinators and 2 Information Management Officers) as part of their surge response. The gFSC team in Rome provided additional information management support.

Surge staff, sourced from partner agencies (Samaritan's Purse and HelpAge International), under pre-existing MOUs, were also deployed. Partners stepped in to provide cluster coordination services at sub-national levels, with Action Contre la Faim and Save the Children activating cluster coordination in Roxas. Cluster meetings were started in Manila on 15 November and in Tacloban on 20 November, indicating the speed with which the FSAC became operational and engaged with partners.

Achievements include:

- Keeping the registry of assessments up to date as well as compilation and analysis of findings. The gFSC played a supportive role in this process and helped in the compilation of findings, especially in the first phase of the MIRA.
- At the global level, ad-hoc teleconferences with partners to share information on the evolving situation and responses. The teleconferences were considered particularly useful in the early stages of the response.
- Extensive information was shared through regular email updates and the food security cluster website, which were considered valuable by the global-level partners. The gFSC also piloted a Facebook group and a Twitter account. The steady increase in followers suggests these tools were considered beneficial as a means of sharing information.
- At the country-level, the coordination and



Photo: Marco Frattini/WFP

quality of the response was enhanced by transparent and highly participatory meetings. Regular collection and analysis of assessments and collaboration with a number of programme quality groups and stakeholders ensured attention to cross-cutting issues. Strong participation of civil society organizations strengthened the accountability to affected populations. Ad-hoc technical working groups were established and inter-cluster collaboration was ensured. These functions were actively supported by secondments and external support from the gFSC.

- The FSAC interacted with the Nutrition Cluster at the country-level. The gFSC in turn advocated for a more coordinated approach to the response by holding teleconferences with the Global Nutrition Cluster to discuss key issues. Additional collaboration and interaction was also established with WASH, Shelter and Protection Clusters both at national and global levels.

2.1.3 Gaziantep, Turkey

In January 2013, the Syrian Crisis was declared a System-wide Level 3 emergency. In March 2013, the gFSC conducted a scoping mission to assess the technical and coordination support the food security actors might need in Gaziantep, Southern Turkey. One of the challenges articulated by operational actors was the absence of a common sectoral platform where various groups could strategically coordinate to harmonize their relief efforts. In response to the requested support, gFSC provided a coordination solution to local actors.

As a follow up, the gFSC deployed a Coordinator from the Global Support Team as well as an Information Management Officer in May 2013. In June 2013, after further consultations with local actors, the gFSC formalized the Food Security and



Photo: A-Aduna/FAO

Livelihood Working Group (FSLWG) with over 30 partners using this locally-adapted coordination platform.

2.2. Capacity support missions

The overall purpose of capacity support missions is to provide support to the implementation of the Food Security Cluster functions at national and sub-national levels. This can be strategic, senior-level support for cluster activation or enhance day-to-day running of the cluster.

Strategic level missions ensure that both Cluster Lead Agencies are optimally engaged in the cluster and that the Country Coordinator and the cluster team are aware of their accountabilities both to partners and to the two lead agencies. These missions also assist in identifying and facilitating adequate funding and resources for the cluster to operate.

In 2013, the Global Cluster Coordinator conducted missions to Somalia, Afghanistan and the Philippines, and the gFSC Senior Adviser went to Southern Turkey (Gaziantep) and Jordan. (See Table 2 for a list of all capacity support mission countries.)



Photo: Abeer Etefa/WFP



Photo: WFP/Dina Elkassaby

Example: Capacity support mission to Yemen

In September 2013, the gFSC sent both a Cluster Coordinator and an Information Management Officer to Yemen, who established a new information management system for the collation of regular data from partners in line with the changes implemented by OCHA for the humanitarian needs overview, strategic planning and monitoring of response.

A template was circulated to all partners one week before the monthly meetings requesting updates on their work. The information was then compiled and shared with the FSC partners to ensure all the partners had access to the information. Discussions at the cluster meetings could then focus on either providing more detailed information to other partners if requested, or discussing how other partners could cooperate on some of the planned activities, such as assessments or programme activities. Staff were trained in the use of information management tools. Experienced staff and the tools were then utilized in other emergencies, such as the subsequent system-wide Level 3 emergency in the Philippines.

3. Capacity development in support of national clusters

Since starting operations in 2011, capacity building has been a key feature of the gFSC work it. The aims of capacity development are to ensure a supply of well-trained, experienced cluster coordinators and information management officers; ensure the delivery of quality programming and improve the coordination of food security responses. Activities include training and offering guidance and support to ensure delivery of programme quality.

In 2013, the gFSC implemented training in assessment methodology, monitoring, proposal writing, food security concepts and programme design. During the year, a simulation training programme was also developed for Level 3 emergency cluster coordinators to ensure that

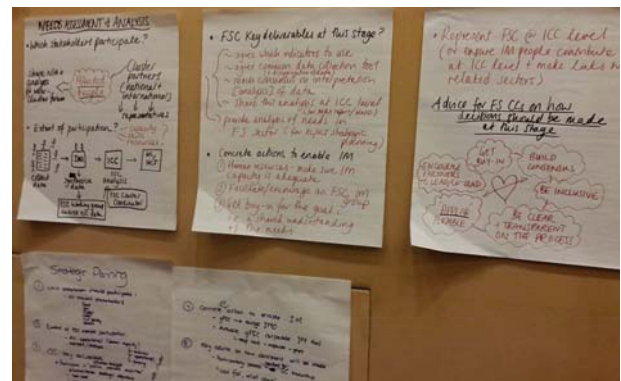


Photo: gFSC

coordinators deployed to the field for major emergencies are well-versed in their roles and responsibilities.

Capacity support activities in 2013 also included

Example: In-country training in Gaziantep, Turkey

The gFSC facilitated a workshop for the Food Security and Livelihoods Working Group (FSLWG) partners in South Turkey in July 2013. Following the sharing of the gFSC indicators with FSLWG partners there was a request for training on at least 2-3 core indicators, for example on Food Consumption Score and Coping Strategy Index. Around 30 participants from international NGOs, Syria Needs Assessment Project (ACAPS) and local NGOs attended the workshop. The workshop helped in integrating these two indicators in many partners' assessment and monitoring systems, marking a step towards harmonizing efforts.

initiating the development of an e-learning package to provide an overview of humanitarian architecture and the roles and responsibilities of the Food Security Cluster at national and global levels. This e-learning package will be used together with the simulation training to provide a comprehensive training approach. It will be finalized in 2014.

In addition, the functioning of the cluster is improved through the development and implementation of specific tools, which guide the cluster coordinators and partners in food security programming. This is an evolutionary process, where tools, such as checklists, are developed, trialled in the field, updated and modified for practical application across all cluster responses.

3.1 Accountability to affected populations, including people-centric approaches

Accountability to affected populations is one of the cornerstones of the IASC Transformative Agenda, and the country-level partners of the Food Security Cluster participated in the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) mission to Ethiopia in 2013. Throughout the mission, workshops were conducted with partners and Cluster Lead Agencies on IASC commitments on accountability to affected

populations, understanding challenges and exploring opportunities, and accountability challenges and solutions.

The IASC commitments to accountability to affected populations provide an understanding of the collective and agency-level responsibilities to accountability, identify and discuss challenges in applying the commitments, and take into account context-specific constraints to the implementation of accountability processes.

The gFSC also developed people-centric approaches to improve programme quality with multiple national clusters in 2013. The approach was a combination of gender and protection mainstreaming along with considerations of age and disabilities. In a few countries the focus was more on gender or protection, in other countries an integrated approach was followed to ensure that steps were taken to integrate gender, protection, age and disabilities together. For a list of gFSC programme quality activities during 2013, see Table 2.

Photo: FAO/Afghanistan Team



Table 2: gFSC Activities in programme quality in 2013

Core activities for the common and unified pathway	Age	Disabilities	Gender	Protection	Countries supported
Policies (including code of conduct) and trainings	✓	✓	✓	✓	Afghanistan; South Sudan
Sex and Age Disaggregated Data collection, analysis and use	✓		✓		Philippines
Inclusive assessments, Do No Harm analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓	Afghanistan; Philippines; South Sudan
Minimum humanitarian standards	✓	✓	✓	✓	Afghanistan; Philippines; Turkey
Targeting methodology and selection criteria (vulnerability analysis)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Afghanistan, Turkey
Inclusive delivery mechanisms and modalities	✓	✓	✓	✓	Turkey, Philippines
Feedback and complaint mechanism	✓	✓	✓	✓	Afghanistan, Pakistan (AAP focus), Philippines
Referral pathways and coordination with specialized partners/ other Clusters	✓	✓	✓	✓	Discussion initiated in the Philippines

Example from Afghanistan: Gender, Protection, Age and Disabilities Toolkit

An outcome of a gFSC capacity support mission on improving programme quality for a national Food Security Cluster was the development of the Gender, Protection, Age & Disabilities Toolkit, which provides guidance to help Food Security and Agriculture cluster members to improve the integration of gender, protection, age and disabilities into their work on food security. While tailored for the Afghanistan context, the toolkit provides the basis for inclusion of these components in FSC programming across all emergencies. This piece of work was conducted by a secondee to the gFSC from a partner agency specializing in protection issues.

Available at:

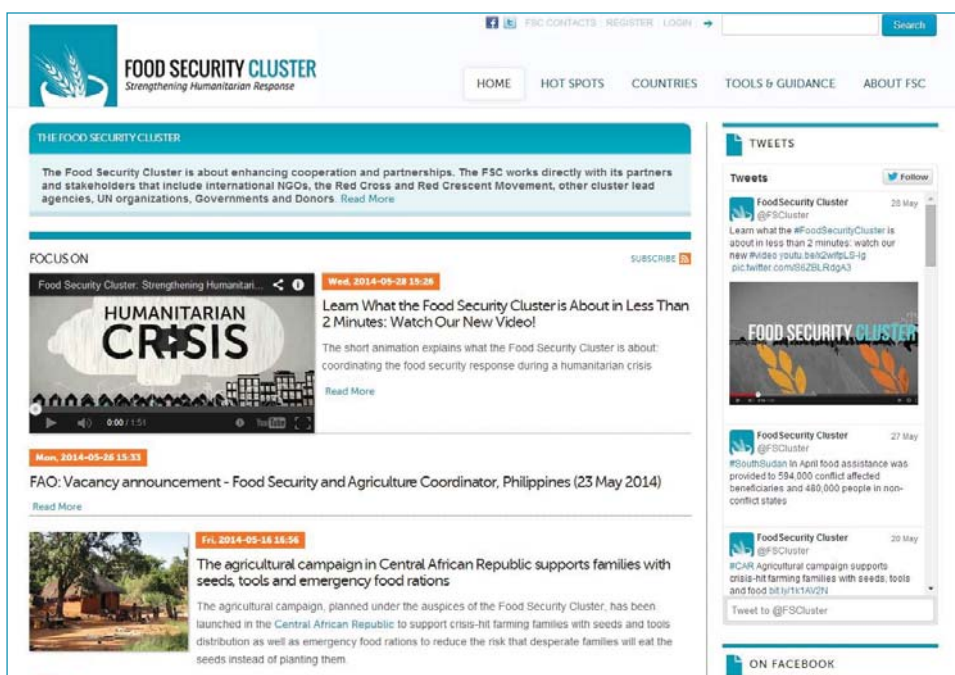
<http://foodsecuritycluster.net/document/afghanistan-food-security-and-agriculture-cluster-gender-protection-age-disabilities>

4. Information management and learning

The management of information, knowledge, learning and good practice is an important cluster function. In 2013, the following tools and guidance were developed and provided to Cluster Coordinators and Information Management Officers:

- The gFSC runs the **food security cluster website**¹, which includes country-cluster specific pages for national information management and provides useful information to all partners on tools, guidance, documents and current activities.
- **Food security indicators**² and indicator booklet³ were developed as a guide for national clusters and partners by the Programme Quality Working Group. The list contains both situation and output indicators and includes a description of the use and measurement of each indicator.
- **Country Cluster Performance Monitoring Tool**⁴. Monitoring coordination performance at country-level is necessary in order to assess whether the cluster is an efficient and effective coordination mechanism. There are two components to this monitoring system: the cluster activation checklist, which is designed to monitor the activation and implementation of the cluster following the declaration of an emergency; and the coordination performance report, which assesses the quality of cluster coordination functions through feedback from the cluster coordinator and partners.
- **Information Management Tool**. The development of the gFSC Information Management Tool was initiated in 2013 to facilitate data collection, processing and response analysis at country-level. This web-based tool will be finalized in 2014, enabling the systematic production of reports and maps to visualize gaps and overlaps of partner responses. The tool will facilitate project tracking and monitoring, and provide information for evidence-based decision making for strategic interventions and improved implementation.
- In addition to the development of tools for the country-clusters, the gFSC has also developed a **system for monitoring gFSC performance** through partner surveys. This survey was first implemented in 2013 and provided information on the gFSC

Food Security Cluster website at www.foodsecuritycluster.net



1. www.foodsecuritycluster.net
2. www.foodsecuritycluster.net/document/food-security-cluster-indicators-0
3. www.foodsecuritycluster.net/document/food-security-cluster-core-indicator-handbook-draft
4. www.foodsecuritycluster.net/content/cluster-performance-monitoring

performance at country and global levels. Feedback from this survey has shaped the strategic direction for 2014.

4.1 Evaluation of cluster performance

A formal evaluation of food security cluster coordination was requested by the Executive Board of WFP and the FAO Governing Bodies to assess the way Food Security Clusters perform at country and global levels. The inception report was published in November 2013 following its presentation at the global Partners Meeting. The evaluation, conducted by independent evaluators, will assess the performance and results of the gFSC from its inception in 2010 to 2013, focusing on country-level coordination and its effects on humanitarian response. A component of the evaluation will examine how the activities of the gFSC support coordination at country-level. The results of the evaluation will be presented to the Executive Board of the WFP in October 2014 and the FAO Governing Bodies in November 2014.

4.2 Sharing lessons learned from the field

The gFSC conducts lessons learned analyses to document key country-level coordination accomplishments and to share experiences across country clusters and partners. In 2013, documentation of lessons learned and best practices were conducted in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Somalia and Southern Turkey (Gaziantep). Lessons learned for the Central African Republic and Philippines are scheduled for 2014.

External lessons learned exercises have also been conducted in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Somalia, and the Syria Response by partner agencies, highlighting the varied approaches to food security programming and the utility of partnerships for improving food security delivery in the responses in which the gFSC is involved.

4.3 Harnessing technical expertise through Working Groups

During the course of the year, the gFSC supported the functioning of four Working Groups, which contribute to the continual improvement of food security preparedness, response and transition programming. These Working Groups covered assessments/programme quality; food security and livelihoods in urban settings; inter-cluster food security and nutrition; and cash and vouchers. The Working Groups utilize the expertise of partner organizations, who also chair and/or co-chair the groups. The Working Groups demonstrate the strength of partnership within the gFSC, with on



Photo: Ranak Martin/WFP

average 20 agencies contributing their expertise to each group.

4.3.1 Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings Working Group

The overall aim of the Urban Working Group is to strengthen coordination and capacity of gFSC partners at both global and national levels to shape food security responses in urban settings. This has emerged as a major issue amongst partners, as expressed at the biannual Global Partners Meetings. The group also acts as a platform for information sharing and for shaping common key messages to be raised at global urban events and fora.

The Urban Working Group supports the creation and operation of country-level urban coordination mechanisms and working groups, such as the Somalia Urban Working Group. To augment this work, the Working Group has developed an interactive geographical mapping of partners' urban activities and projects⁵, sharing programming information and approaches from field level to the wider humanitarian community for coordination purposes and capacity development.

The Working Group also conducts research through the collection of case studies, lessons learned and best practices and assists in the development of specific tools and guidelines to address urban



Photo: Daouda Guirou/WFP

5. <http://foodsecuritycluster.net/document/food-security-cluster-urban-mapping>.

Coordination structures: the importance of working with partners

In Somalia, the cluster has been in operation since 2005. It is led by FAO and WFP, with Save the Children as co-coordinator and has a membership of over 400 organizations. Currently, there are twelve sub-national clusters, mostly coordinated by local NGOs. The value of working with partners in the field is particularly highlighted in Somalia where the 12 NGO Vice-Coordinators enhance overall efforts by providing adequate and timely information on affected populations in rural areas of Somalia, which are inaccessible to the FSC Cluster Lead Agencies.

food security. Best practice case studies have been conducted by partner agencies Oxfam and Action Contre la Faim in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Haiti, oPT and the Philippines.

Areas of need identified through research include urban food security indicators and assessment guidelines, particularly regarding vulnerable populations. The Urban Working Group, supported by the gFSC, has developed a joint proposal for a project 'Adapting food security systems and tools to an urban world' to produce urban food security indicators and to establish an urban food security early warning and monitoring system.

Interactive Urban Project map, available at FSC website



4.3.2. Assessments/ Programming Quality Working Group

In 2013, the focus of the Assessments Working Group shifted from assessments to demand-driven work on various programme quality issues. Consecutively, the purpose of the Programme Quality Working Group is to improve the relevance, quality and timeliness of food security and livelihoods responses. In order to achieve this, the Working Group has produced a core set of Food Security Indicators for the four OCHA-defined phases of an emergency. These indicators provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement in food security responses. These indicators will be updated and improved as needed.

The Working Group aims to promote best practices in the integration of the cross-cutting themes of gender, protection, age, disability and environmental issues into overall assessment and response analyses, including the review of cross-cutting issues in urban responses. The group will map the different approaches and methodologies on people-centric issues, and working with the most vulnerable, identify a common approach for Cluster Coordinators and partners to be adapted to various countries.

4.3.3. Cash and Vouchers Working Group

The global partners expressed the need to establish a Cash and Voucher Working Group during the Global Partners Meeting in November 2013. As a result, the Working Group has been formed to promote more effective and integrated cash-based programming and to develop and advocate for capacity building activities to help humanitarian agencies improve the design and implementation of cash transfer and voucher programmes.

This Working Group will serve as a platform for discussing and addressing coordination issues as well as sharing tools, guidance and best practices.

The Working Group will liaise and collaborate with existing global and national cash initiatives and working groups to harmonize existing tools, guidance, standards and common approaches to ensure effective and complementary strategies in cash and voucher transfer programming across the humanitarian response.

4.3.4. Inter-Cluster Food Security and Nutrition Working Group

The Inter-Cluster Food Security and Nutrition Working Group has the mandate to provide operational and technical direction and guidance to the gFSC on synergies between the Food Security Cluster and the Nutrition Cluster in humanitarian responses. The primary objective is to promote better coordination between the two clusters at field level.

The focus of the Working Group for 2013 was to muster greater support and engagement from the two global clusters. It has worked to achieve this through joint cluster coordinator trainings, joint missions, reciprocal participation in the global cluster meetings and joint input into project proposals and implementation.

Recognizing there are strong linkages between nutrition and food insecurity, and that many of the partners are constituents of both clusters, the

Working Group identified the need for simple, practical guidance on how to work together more effectively. To outline the shared principles, the Global Coordinators of both clusters signed a letter to the country coordinators on mandates, roles and responsibilities emphasizing the working principles and linkages between the two clusters.

5. Advocacy, communication and partnerships

The Food Security Cluster functions to enrich cooperation and partnerships. Effective communications play an important role in building partnerships, enhancing coordination systems and in influencing policy and resource mobilization. Work in this area provides support, raises awareness and strengthens links between the gFSC and national food security partners, other clusters and the broader humanitarian response community.

In 2013, external communications occurred through presence and presentations at external meetings; participation on working groups and task teams; and through monthly teleconferences with global partners. High-level engagement with external processes ensures that the needs of the Food Security Cluster and its partners are reflected in the IASC Transformative Agenda and wider architecture, such as the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) revision project. The gFSC actively participated in the development of the IASC Coordination Reference Module, the IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle and related guidance development, the development of the Guidance on Country Strategic Response Monitoring and Periodic Review templates, and the on-line indicator registry for humanitarian response.

The gFSC communicates with its partners, country clusters and wider humanitarian community through its website <http://foodsecuritycluster.net>, which both serves as a repository of food security related information, tools and guidance, and as a dynamic communications platform. The website is used at both global and country-levels, providing information ranging from situation reports, contacts, assessments, meeting minutes and relevant data on cluster operations and performance. A weekly

newsletter is sent to share information on activities of the gFSC, updates from the field, cross-cutting issues and programme quality, and includes vacancy notices. Social media was piloted in the Philippines Typhoon Haiyan response when the gFSC introduced a Facebook group and a Twitter account.

The gFSC organizes monthly teleconferences with global partners, and as needed, convenes teleconferences to support the coordination of responses to Level 3 emergencies. Bilateral/regional teleconferences with country cluster teams also take place regularly.

5.1. Enhancing gFSC capacity through secondments

The capacity of the gFSC has been strengthened through the secondment of staff with specific technical expertise from partner organizations. In 2013, the gFSC had secondees from the inter-agency Protection Standby Capacity Project (ProCap) and the inter-agency Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) to support guidance development on the inclusion of gender, protection, age and disability into food security responses; from IFRC to build links with other clusters in Geneva and to liaise with national IFRC societies to enrich the food security response; and from HelpAge International to advise in the gFSC's programme quality work. The secondee from HelpAge was also deployed to Gaziantep and the Philippines as Cluster Coordinator. In addition, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has funded a Junior Professional Officer.

A secondee from Samaritan's Purse was deployed as Information Management Officer to the Philippines.

partner meetings are available at the FSC website⁶.

5.2 Sharing experiences through biannual partner meetings

The increased partner ownership of the gFSC is evidenced by the attendance at the biannual global partners' meetings. From the first meeting in October 2011, these meetings have been attracting representatives from an average of 30 partner organizations: NGOs, UN agencies, civil society and donor bodies. There has been increasing participation from country-cluster representatives, bringing in national perspectives and experience.

At the two meetings held in April and November 2013, lessons learned from the field were shared and discussed. Other topics included immediate and long-term coordination solutions, response analysis, programme quality such as people-centric issues, and cash and vouchers in humanitarian response programming. Detailed meeting reports from all



Photo: gFSC

From a partner's perspective

"In the past many partners haven't often silently felt that the cluster system is essentially UN-owned and driven by the agendas of the Cluster Lead Agencies. However, with the ever-expanding inclusion of partners (at both participation and country management levels) there is now a real sense that the cluster provides a more holistic sectoral representation. At global level, partners form a critical component of the cluster and are encouraged to set agenda items, facilitate key sessions and lead working groups. As such, the work plan can and does reflect areas of interest/needs of the partners. The gFSC strives to be inclusive and attaches value to all partners' opinions.

From my personal experience, the gFSC has been extremely valuable at standardizing the coordination of the relief process for the sector. This has allowed actors to understand the general response framework regardless of the country in which they are based. They are further able to develop guidance on macro/cross-cutting issues which are useful for reference during a response.

The Partners Meetings provide a platform to push development of key topics for the sector and achieve a high level of visibility. Partners bring a wide range of experience to the table and are often more in touch with local communities meaning that their opinions can be more reflective of ground level conditions. This has the additional impact that development of guidance documents, strategic plans, etc., reflects a broader base of opinion and technical expertise. Partners also bring key sub-sector specializations to the table which can fill the gap in UN or NGO agencies with very broad mandates.

Partners' Meetings are a great networking opportunity where the key sector decision-makers for various partners are able to get together. Many are then able to set organization-level direction on the same path as the global cluster and ensure that key sector trends are widely disseminated."

Ruco Van Der Merwe, Food Assistance Advisor
Samaritan's Purse International Relief

6. <http://foodsecuritycluster.net/content/partner-meeting-reports>.

5. Strategic direction 2014

As endorsed at the global partners' meeting in November 2013, the gFSC will continue to strengthen the capacity of the cluster to respond to the food security needs of individuals and communities in humanitarian crises. In 2014, the work of the cluster continues to be organized around the four pillars, while remaining responsive to partners' needs:

1. **Operational and surge support to national clusters.** In response to the needs of country clusters, the gFSC will provide strategic capacity support and surge deployments. The cluster will further develop the roster of skilled Cluster Coordinators and Information Management Officers for surge support and formalize partner involvement through negotiating MOUs for immediately available surge deployees.
2. **Capacity development in support of national clusters** to ensure national clusters are accountable for cluster performance, to encourage programme quality, and to ensure country-level clusters are staffed by well-trained Cluster Coordinators and Information Management Officers. In 2014, the main focus areas include capacity training on programme quality, developing the skills of Cluster Coordinators and Information Management Officers through the provision of training courses, and providing accessible training through an e-learning package that will be finalized during the year.
3. **Information management and learning.** The focus of this pillar is continuous and enhanced information sharing including the compilation and dissemination of lessons learned, development and implementation of systems to monitor national and global cluster performance, the development of standardized tools for use by country clusters (including finalizing the development of the Information Management Tool) and support to the technical working groups.
4. **Advocacy, communications and partnerships.** The gFSC will capitalize on the strength of its partnerships through information sharing at the biannual meetings and access to specific technical expertise through secondments; develop and implement its communication strategy; and maintain its operational collaboration with other clusters, the IASC and the broader humanitarian community.

6. Financial Information 2013

The gFSC budget needs for 2013 were estimated at around USD 2.5 million. Out of this, the total funds received and spent in 2013 (both in-kind* and cash contributions) amounted to USD 1,826,828.55, including costs for both staff (staff, secondments and consultants) and activities. Due to the funding gap, not all planned activities materialised in 2013. Funding permitting, they will be carried out in 2014.

In 2013, gFSC received contributions from FAO, WFP, GenCap, HelpAge International, IFRC, ProCap and Samaritan's Purse, as well as the Governments of Finland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Table 3: gFSC Strategic Plan 2013-14 result areas and amounts received and spent in 2013

Result 1. Operational and Surge Support to National Clusters	USD 461,957.99
Result 2. Capacity Development in Support of National Clusters	USD 513,473.39
Result 3. Information Management and Learning	USD 526,134.02
Result 4. Advocacy, Communications and Partnership	USD 325,263.15
TOTAL	USD 1,826,828.55

*as estimated value of in-kind/ staff secondments.

ANNEX: About the Food Security Cluster and the IASC Cluster System

The Food Security Cluster (FSC) coordinates the food security response during humanitarian crises, addressing issues of food availability, access and utilization. Since its inception in 2010, and becoming operational in 2011, the global Food Security Cluster (gFSC), jointly led by the WFP and FAO has enhanced coordination of preparedness, response and recovery actions in humanitarian emergencies to ensure that food security needs of individuals and communities are met. The gFSC has utilized the strength of its partnerships to develop guidance and training packages and to create a pool of qualified professionals for surge support.

The purpose of the gFSC is to respond in a manner that is proportionate, appropriate and timely and to improve the implementation and accountability of humanitarian food security responses.

In 2013, the gFSC support team in Rome consisted of 14 staff, working on policy, programmes, operations and support. These staff are sourced from the co-lead organizations, WFP and FAO, and partner organizations including HelpAge International, IFRC, ProCap and GenCap through secondments. This rich mix of staff ensures the cluster has extensive knowledge of programme

quality and technical expertise to lead the development of policy and guidance and to support operations in the field.

The gFSC is committed to ensuring that planning, decision making processes and operational implementation of humanitarian responses take into account appropriate standards, indicators and cross-cutting issues. It is also committed to ensuring that the services provided have a positive impact on the most vulnerable within affected populations. The gFSC brings cross-cutting issues into food security policy and develops guidance on best practice to support an effective humanitarian response.

The gFSC provides demand driven support services to country clusters in sudden-onset emergencies, post-conflict situations, complex emergencies, slow-onset and protracted crises. These support services can be related to a broad range of food security activities including food assistance, agricultural input support, rural livelihood-centred interventions, food security interventions in urban contexts, cash transfers, vouchers and preservation and restoration of agricultural assets. The gFSC contributes significantly to global policy, reflecting country needs.

Vision, mission statement and objectives

The **vision** of the gFSC is that food security needs of individuals and communities in humanitarian crises are met. The vision is supported by a **mission statement**: to ensure improved coordination of preparedness, response and recovery actions at national and global levels.

The gFSC aims to strengthen food security responses in crisis situations, mainstream early recovery approaches, and to enhance national capacity in order 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 affected populations; and
- Optimize collaboration and partnerships with governments, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, donors and other stakeholders to ensure a holistic response.

Partners, Observers and Associates

Partnership is at the core of the work of the gFSC. Each partner is unique and the overall diversity allows the cluster to address the broad spectrum of food security in a coordinated manner. The gFSC uses three levels of engagement; partners, observers and associates. This engagement involves, for example, input into Working Groups to provide technical direction, engagement at Partners Meetings to share lessons learned and best practices, and provision of technical staff to the cluster through secondments. For a full list of gFSC partners, see next page.

Partners are organizations, including international and national NGOs, international organizations and UN Agencies, which have an operational mandate that includes assisting vulnerable people to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts on food security of natural or man-made disasters, and have a commitment to humanitarian principles and the Principles of Partnership:

- Participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected populations;
- Participate regularly within the cluster and consistently engage in the collective work of the gFSC;
- Have capacity and willingness to contribute to the gFSC Strategic Plan;
- Work cooperatively with other gFSC partners to ensure effective use of available resources, including sharing information and organizational talents; and
- Request to be considered partners of the gFSC.

Observers are organizations who would otherwise be Partners of the gFSC but choose Observer status over that of Partner.

Associates are organizations, including international and national NGOs and consortia thereof, international organizations, UN Agencies, instrumentalities of national governments, educational and research entities, who are not directly engaged in food security activities as per the Partner description, yet intersect strongly with the work of such partners, and who request to be considered Associates of the gFSC.

Focal points of partner institutions are involved in technical working areas of the Food Security Cluster at global level. As focal points, they keep their colleagues updated on developments of the FSC and are committed to encouraging their colleagues at country-levels to participate in the national FSCs.

Country Clusters and Coordination Mechanisms around the world

Coordination is a means to an end and coordination arrangements need to be tailored to the country's operational context to ensure system-wide preparedness, technical capacity and clearly designated leadership and accountability. Different coordination mechanisms are possible and may include formal IASC clusters or informal structures, based on the needs in specific situations.

Active Food Security Cluster coordination mechanisms (comprising Clusters formally established by IASC or other types of mechanisms) supported by the gFSC can be found in some 37 countries/regions and territories (see map on page 3): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, occupied Palestinian Territories, Pacific Islands, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, Somalia, Republic of South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey (Gaziantep) Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Global Food Security Cluster Partners

ACT Alliance	Islamic Relief Worldwide
Action Aid International	Lutheran World Federation
Action Contre la Faim	Mercy Corps
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	Norwegian Refugee Council
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED)	Oxfam
Canadian Food Grains Bank	Plan International
CARE	Samaritan's Purse
Caritas International	Save the Children
Catholic Relief Services	Solidarites International
Concern Worldwide	Tear Fund
Danish Refugee Council	Terre des Hommes
Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	Trans-Atlantic Food Assistance Dialogue
GOAL	UN Habitat
HelpAge International	UNHCR
Impact Initiatives	Unicef
Interaction	Welthungerhilfe
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	World Food Programme
International Medical Corps	World Society for the Protection of Animals
International Rescue Committee	World Vision International

Global Food Security Cluster Observers

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Médecins Sans Frontières
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Global Food Security Cluster Associates

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Global Logistics Cluster
Early Recovery Cluster	Global Nutrition Cluster
Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster	Global WASH Cluster
Global Health Cluster	

IASC Cluster System Roles

Global Cluster Lead Agency: This is an agency/organization that formally commits to take on a leadership role within the international humanitarian community to ensure adequate response and high standards of predictability, accountability & partnership. The Cluster Lead Agency takes on the commitment to act as the “provider of last resort”, where this is necessary.

Cluster Lead Agency (Country-Level): Cluster Lead/Co-Lead Agencies at the country-level are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator, for ensuring that coordination mechanisms are established and properly supported; Serving as a first point of call for the Government and the Humanitarian Coordinator, and Acting as a provider of last resort in their respective sector. The Cluster Lead Agencies are also responsible for appointing individuals with the appropriate seniority, skills and competencies required to promote strategic and action-orientated cluster coordination. A Cluster Lead Agency at the country-level need is not necessarily the same agency/organization as the Global Cluster Lead Agency for that sector.

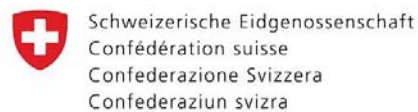
Global Cluster Coordinator: this is a person who is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and facilitation of the work of the global cluster, as designated by the Global Cluster Lead Agencies. In 2013, the Global Food Security Cluster Coordinator was Graham Farmer.

Cluster Coordinator (Country-Level): this is a person who has been designated as cluster coordinator by the Cluster Lead Agency(ies) at the country-level. The Cluster Coordinator provides leadership and works on behalf of the cluster as a whole, facilitating all cluster activities and developing and maintaining a strategic vision and operational response plan. He/she also ensures coordination with other clusters in relation to inter-cluster activities and cross-cutting issues.

More information on the IASC/Cluster system can be found at:

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/clusters/space/page/who-does-what>

Since becoming operational in April 2011, the gFSC has received financial and in-kind support from the following organizations:



Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC