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Joint FAO-WFP Evaluation of the Food Security Cluster Coordination

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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1. WFP and FAO decided to formulate a single and joint Management Response to the *FAO-WFP Evaluation* as a reflection of the integrated manner in which both agencies are working and interacting in relation to the food security cluster.
2. Overall the Evaluation is positive and acknowledges the work accomplished since the establishment of the food security cluster in December 2010. The interaction between the evaluators, the global Food Security Cluster and co-lead agencies before, during and after the completion of the evaluation both at headquarters and field level is considered appropriate and is fully appreciated. The process also allowed ample scope for securing feedback from the field and global partners in disparate geographical locations.
3. The objectives of the evaluation and the methodology – using predominantly qualitative methods – are found to be well articulated and robust. The Food Security coordination theory of change is extremely relevant. It is noted the diagram included in the Executive Summary differs from the one included in the full report.
4. The recommendations are welcome and agreed upon, noting that some are already underway by the Cluster Lead Agencies and the gFSC. In particular, the new gFSC Strategic Work Plan for 2015/16 under preparation is already addressing most of the evaluation findings and recommendations.
5. Given the impact of the funding constraints on the FSC core functions, both at country and global level, the relevant evaluation findings and recommendations should be further appraised to ensure the needed support from key stakeholders and resource partners.
6. The breakdown of recommendations per category of stakeholders in Annex 1 is extremely useful. However, some recommendations will require further clarification to define responsibilities and effective implementation modalities.

Recommendations	Action by	Management response and action taken	Implementation deadline
<p>Recommendation 1: Advocate with and support the IASC in revising standard system requirements to ensure they are lighter and more operationally focused.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <p>Provide the IASC principals and IASC working groups with feedback on experiences with the coordination protocols for level 3 emergencies and help to make these protocols lighter, more realistic and more focused on operational benefits.</p> <p>Advocate with the IASC to also revise the standard requirements for non-level 3 emergencies.</p>	<p>FAO&WFP senior management and emergency directors</p>	<p>Partially Agree.</p> <p>Further examination would be needed to determine those protocols requiring lightening.</p> <p>The Cluster Lead Agencies and the gFSC closely coordinate with relevant IASC fora, OCHA and the Global Clusters. For instance, substantial input was provided during 2013/14 to the review of the Humanitarian Programming Cycle (HPC) and Transformative Agenda (TA) implementation which resulted in updated IASC protocols such as the Strategic Response Planning (SRP) guidance and the Cluster Coordination Reference Module aiming at greater effectiveness and operational relevance. It should be noted that a review of the protocols may take place as part of a system-wide L3 lessons learning exercise.</p> <p>The experience gained by the FSC in Level-3 and other responses has fed into the HPC/ SRP review process and will continue to capture lessons learned to improve effectiveness. Lead agencies are represented in the Senior Team on the TA implementation and related fora and will continue to advocate for improved coordination and protocols at the policy level.</p>	<p>2014/15 (Note: TA implementation is foreseen to be completed within 2014)</p>

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<p>Recommendation 2: Strengthen mentoring for and capacities of coordination teams to focus on operationally relevant activities.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <p>Ensure that coordination activities are based on demand, adopt a participatory approach, use adequate formats and follow a clearly defined agenda and purpose.</p> <p>Strengthen activities related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the analysis and use of data (including needs assessment and analysis, response analysis, gap analysis and gap filling); - the cluster's normative role; - mutual/joint learning; and - networking/trust-building. <p>Strengthen mentoring and guidance for coordination teams at country and local level to help them cope with system-wide demands and focus on operationally relevant issues.</p>	<p>Coordination teams</p> <p>GST</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Lead agencies notes, however, that while coordination activities should be demand-based, there is need for coordination to systematically produce a number of expected deliverables in line with the IASC Cluster Coordination Reference Module. To strengthen coordination capacities, the lead agencies will work closely with the global cluster support team to increase awareness of the cluster internally within various units/departments, regional and country offices and with the donor community.</p> <p>The lead agencies will strengthen activities related to the analysis of data and needs assessments, drawing on well-recognized tools and approaches, such as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). The current roll-out and training for the new FSC IM tool, aims to further strengthen needs-based strategic response planning, implementation and resource mobilization. The gFSC has a dedicated working group that actively promotes access to, and understanding of available tools for assessment and response analysis and the sharing of best practices in order to improve the relevance, quality and timeliness of food security and livelihoods responses.</p> <p>The learning tools developed by the cluster, such as the e-learning module and the Cluster Coordinator trainings, will play a key role in presenting the role of the Cluster to stakeholders – internal and external - and delivering the cluster core functions.</p> <p>Mutual and joint learning will continue through regular consultations between the gFSC and lead agencies. Frequent interactions with Coordinators and Information Managers aim to increase sharing of experiences and approaches. Bi-annual</p>	<p>2014/15</p>

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		<p>meetings and regular interactions with the gFSC Global Partners increase outreach, promote learning process and boost networking.</p> <p>The above tools and approaches will support the mentoring of coordination teams, which includes essential briefing kits and GST backstopping support. It should be noted that the support offered by the GST is dependent on its actual capacity and resources. The Lead agencies will continue to reinforce analytical and programmatic support to the FSC as and when necessary.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 3: Enhance the GST’s capacity and improve the preparation of deployed teams in order to further strengthen coordination capacity.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <p>Enhance the GST’s capacity and ability to mentor country coordination teams and deploy its team members to emergencies by advocating for donor funding, dedicating lead agency core resources and mobilizing further secondments from partner organisations.</p> <p>Systematically provide newly deployed teams with briefings and a food security coordination starter kit.</p> <p>Reduce general trainings and strengthen mentoring and coaching, as well as targeted trainings.</p> <p>Develop a stronger human resource strategy for food security coordinators and information managers.</p>	<p>Lead agencies GST WFP & FAO human resources departments</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Lead agencies have already taken concrete steps on most actions listed. However, a key challenge in strengthening coordination capacities is the volatility/unpredictability of funding at both global and country office level which has a significant impact on capacity development and the length of deployments.</p> <p>Regarding global support team financing, it should be noted that while agencies mainstreaming has taken place (about 50% of annual cost) and donor advocacy continues, donor support to the global support team remains a significant constraint. In 2014, to strengthen the human resources available for the cluster, lead agencies increased their involvement through participation in cluster coordinator training and have been proactive in engaging the global food security cluster on emergencies in their region. This will widen the pool of human resources available for deployments and reduce reliance on consultants.</p>	<p>2014/15</p> <p>The IM training is ongoing (2 sessions will be delivered in 2014, and additional ones in 2015 are subject to funding).</p> <p>The updating of the GST roster is ongoing and will be completed by 2014, and it is foreseen to remain active during 2015-16.</p>

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<p>Deploy coordination team members for longer periods of time and increase the involvement of national staff members in coordination.</p> <p>Strengthen learning among coordination teams.</p>		<p>FSC briefing kits are available online. The GST started a more systematic briefing of deployed staff.</p> <p>The GST launched in 2014, a new format of targeted Cluster Coordinator training for Level-3 emergencies aiming at building a pool of qualified and deployable coordinators. New IM training is starting. The GST will seek to further strengthen mentoring and coaching, with the caveats noted under Recommendation 2.</p> <p>The lead agencies and the GST are pursuing a more strategic approach to FSC human resourcing and coordination to build a roster of qualified Cluster Coordinators and Information Managers combined with targeted training. This is supplemented by development of partnerships, both with Global Partner and Stand-by Partners for surge deployments and staff secondments. The Lead Agencies will continue to offer support through their existing stand-by partnership arrangements and engage with new partners.</p> <p>The GST will continue to support learning among FSC teams, through its working groups, training, lessons learnt reviews, and other mechanisms.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 4: Strengthen nationally-led coordination mechanisms or increase the involvement of government actors in food security coordination mechanisms to enhance national ownership and sustainability.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <p>Strengthen the role of FSCs or the lead agencies in</p>	<p>FAO&WFP country and regional offices</p> <p>Coordination teams</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Lead agencies in their individual capacities are already engaged in preparedness activities, in line with the IASC Emergency Response Preparedness Approach (ERP) and will seek to strengthen the FSC's role. The role of clusters in preparedness is defined in the Cluster Coordination Reference Module. Preparedness will also be a focus of gFSC work plan for 2015/16.</p>	<p>2014/15</p>

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<p>preparedness, including informal government capacity assessments and scenarios for scaling up coordination support.</p> <p>Better utilise existing contacts between the lead agencies and government offices to facilitate links with the food security coordination mechanism.</p> <p>Engage early in transition and exit planning, regularly review the coordination set-up and, where necessary, include capacity-building activities for national institutions.</p> <p>In cooperation with Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams, strengthen links with development actors and their activities, especially relating to capacity-building.</p>		<p>Lead agencies will continue to ensure country offices collaborate and involve FSC in preparedness activities at country, regional or global level. They will facilitate relationships between the cluster, agency and government counterpart to ensure the cluster role in working with government is well understood and, where conditions allow, the transition of the role to governments. It is noted that engagement with government counterparts can take place on the important condition that humanitarian principles are upheld.</p> <p>IASC guidance on transition and on integrating early recovery approaches will be supported, including capacity building. Longer-term capacity building requirements are foreseen to be addressed within relevant agency and inter-agency country programming frameworks. It should be noted that capacity-building activities are particularly constrained by funding. During the transition from humanitarian clusters to nationally-led mechanisms, lead agencies will pursue their supporting role for country-led efforts.</p> <p>FSC lead agencies will continue to be active in humanitarian and UN Country Teams and advocate for stronger linkages between humanitarian and development actors.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 5: Engage national and local civil society organisations and non-traditional humanitarian actors more closely in food security coordination.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <p>Strengthen outreach to non-traditional humanitarian actors at</p>	<p>WFP&FAO partnership/ donor relations branches</p> <p>WFP&FAO regional</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>The broadening of collaboration with non-traditional humanitarian actors will need to remain focused and realistic and in accordance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Principles.</p> <p>To strengthen the outreach to non-traditional actors, lead</p>	<p>2015</p>

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<p>headquarter and regional level.</p> <p>Better utilise existing contacts of lead agencies and members with civil society and non-traditional humanitarian actors.</p> <p>Adopt a more field-based, bottom-up approach to coordination to identify relevant actors.</p> <p>Offer concrete, demand-based benefits to local civil society organisations and non-traditional humanitarian actors and ask them for specific inputs or contributions.</p> <p>Adapt coordination formats and communication channels to the needs and preferences of local civil society and non-traditional actors.</p>	<p>offices</p> <p>Coordination teams</p>	<p>agencies will involve their relevant partnership/resource mobilization units at regional and headquarters level and Liaison Offices.</p> <p>Noted, as above.</p> <p>At country level, the FSC will continue to explore appropriate coordination solutions, considering subnational and inter-cluster coordination demands.</p> <p>Noted, as above. The lead agencies, as well as the gFSC are supporting clusters with tools and guidance for adopting people-centric approaches and programming, to address specific vulnerabilities and needs related to gender, protection, age, disability and accountability to affected populations across all stages of the emergency response.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 6: Take action to ensure a more consistent commitment and capacity of lead agencies to support food security coordination and advocate for enhanced donor commitment to food security coordination.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <p>Increase efforts to ensure that lead agencies' regional and country offices take responsibility for ensuring the availability of adequate human resources for coordination and for adopting a coordinated approach in their own operations, for example by including these aspects more strongly in performance appraisals and including coordination on the agenda of regional and global retreats.</p> <p>Strengthen FAO's country and field presence in emergencies,</p>	<p>Lead agencies senior management</p> <p>Regional and country office directors</p> <p>GST</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Implementation of this recommendation is contingent on available funding.</p> <p>Lead agencies will seek to increase awareness of country/ regional offices on responsibilities for cluster coordination and support needs (resources, personnel, advocacy, communication etc.). Cluster performances are now included in relevant performance appraisal mechanisms.</p> <p>Concerning the specific actions suggested to FAO, it should be noted that FAO has greatly strengthened its emergency capacity by decentralizing its operations to field offices and through the issuance of a Director-General bulletin on Level 3 emergencies which streamlines responsibilities, surge capacity and financing. The Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) is regularly drawn on to</p>	<p>2014/15</p> <p>The revision of FSC SOPs to consider cost scenarios is foreseen within mid-2015.</p>

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<p>if necessary by developing or strengthening advance finance facilities.</p> <p>Advocate with donors to consider analyses, priorities and standards developed by food security coordination mechanisms more strongly in their own decisions.</p> <p>Advocate with donors to provide financial support for food security coordination teams, flexible coordination solutions and coordination activities where the situation requires.</p> <p>Develop standard coordination cost scenarios for different contexts.</p>		<p>support priority cluster activities.</p> <p>Subject to donor's interest, a specific "FSC" window could be considered. It should be noted cluster financing is not an issue only for the FSC but for most clusters and therefore requires system-wide attention.</p> <p>Lead agencies are seeking donor support and are working with GST on strategic approaches to resource mobilization. To address recurrent funding constraints, the FSC evaluation report had recommended specific actions to the donor community that could be further explored. This will define steps to ensure required support for food security coordination.</p> <p>Lead agencies will seek to ensure the required number of coordination staff (CC, subnational CC, IMO, reporting, GIS) based on identified needs and in proportion to the scale of response to ensure clusters deliver on their core functions. The FSC Standard Operating Procedures will consider standard coordination cost scenarios.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 7: Work with the IASC, OCHA and other clusters to further clarify roles and responsibilities in the coordination architecture and promote more efficient coordination solutions.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <p>Develop models for linking sector-based and area-based coordination models (e.g. activation of clusters at national level, small number of merged clusters at hub level, integrated, area-based coordination at local level).</p>	<p>WFP and FAO IASC principals Emergency directors GST</p>	<p>Agree.</p> <p>Principals are pursuing more structured approaches to inter-cluster coordination and the feasibility of regular meetings at global level.</p> <p>The gFSC will continue to explore different context-specific Cluster coordination models and arrangements..</p> <p>Inter-cluster coordination is being strengthened, in particular with nutrition, health and WASH and country practices (e.g. South Sudan) are being reviewed. The new FSC Information Management Tool has been developed in coordination with</p>	<p>2014/15</p>

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<p>Continue to strengthen links between food security and nutrition coordination mechanisms (as well as with other clusters such as WASH and Health) and ensure that information-management tools of different clusters are compatible (e.g. 4Ws).</p> <p>Allocate responsibilities for coordinating livelihoods activities and cash and voucher programming under different scenarios.</p> <p>Strengthen compliance with guidance on early recovery as a cross-cutting issue.</p>		<p>OCHA and other clusters, taking into account taking data compatibility and reporting issues.</p> <p>Responsibilities for livelihoods activities and cash and voucher programming are often context-specific and should be taken up holistically within the FSC and at inter-cluster level.</p> <p>The gFSC and lead agencies are coordinating with the Global Cluster on Early Recovery, to implement the IASC Principals Recommendations on strengthening early recovery and the coordination architecture. Both lead agencies are Members of the Early Recovery Global Cluster Strategic Advisory Board, and will continue to support mainstreaming of compliance and guidance in Early Recovery cluster activities.</p>	