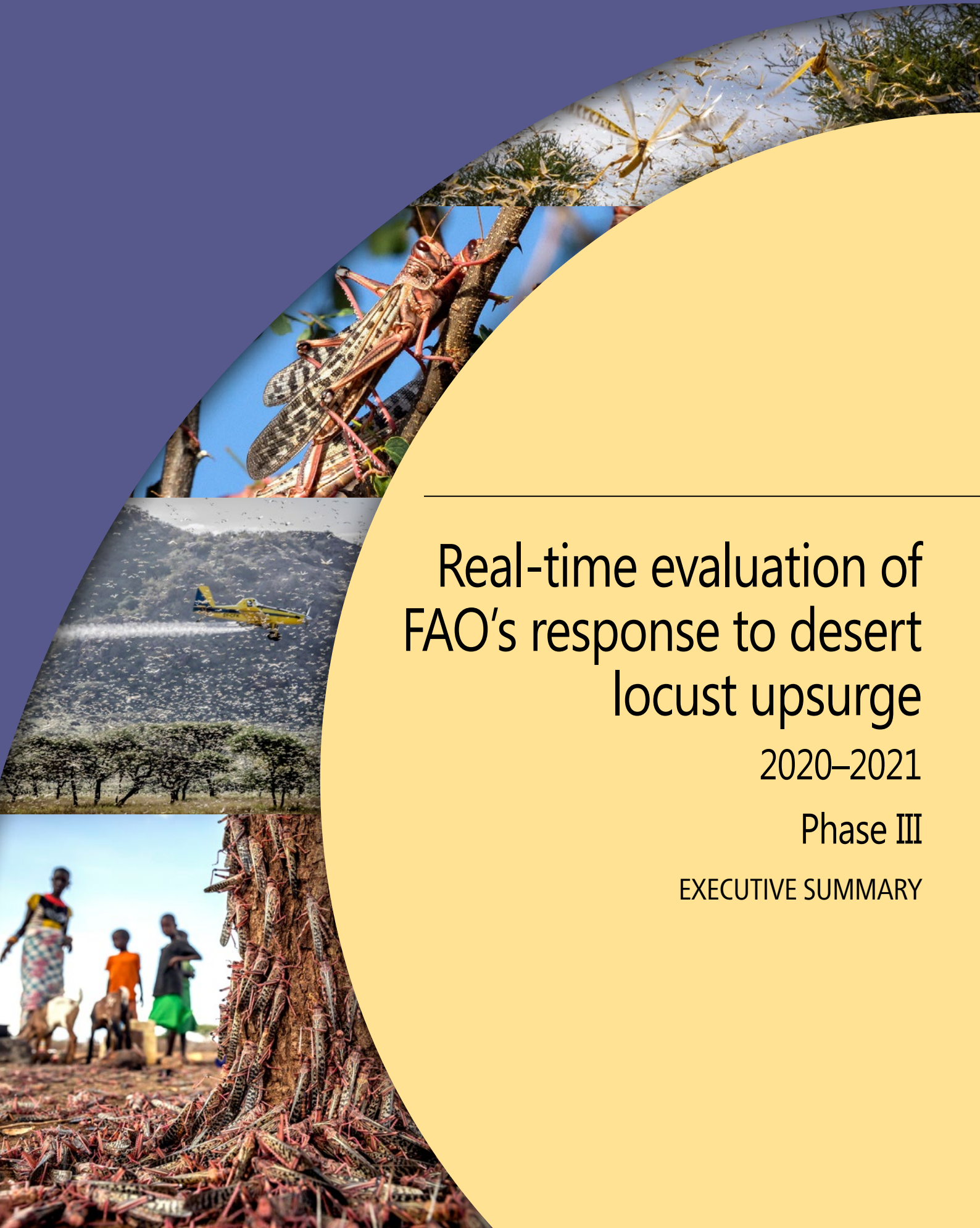




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
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Programme Evaluation Series  
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# Real-time evaluation of FAO's response to desert locust upsurge

2020–2021

Phase III

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Over the course of 2020–2021, the world witnessed the most devastating desert locust upsurge of the past 25 years, with several generations of desert locust breeding in parts of the Near East, the Greater Horn of Africa and Southwest Asia. FAO and its partners mobilized more than USD 243 million since January 2020 (FAO, 2021). The response included three key pillars: i) curbing the spread of desert locusts (including surveillance); ii) safeguarding livelihoods and promoting recovery; and iii) coordination and preparedness of the rapid surge support.

In this context, the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) was requested to conduct a real-time evaluation (RTE), conducted across three phases. This report presents the third and final phase of the RTE, which focused on identifying areas for improvement in preparedness and operations for future upsurges.

During this third phase, through a consultative engagement with 50 key experts from across the desert locust response community, the evaluation team found eight areas for future improvement, with 27 specific recommendations for follow-up:

#### Area 1 - Procurement and pre-positioning

- R1 FAO should conduct a learning exercise regarding procurement for future desert locust upsurges, including (R1a) drawing up and regularly reviewing/updating pre-approved supplier lists for desert-locust specific items; and (R1b) using the periodic review of such lists to prepare supply markets in advance of future upsurges.
- R2 Pre-positioning of pesticides and non-perishable items should be encouraged as far as possible prior to future upsurges, with stocks regularly reviewed and maintained.

#### Area 2 - Training

- R30 The “training-of-trainers” model developed under EMPRES should be re-booted for the future.
- R4 The newly established desert locust training facility in Sudan’s Red Sea Coast should be used as a hub for operational training in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

#### Area 4 – National capacity

- R5 FAO and the regional commissions should encourage all frontline countries (those with regular seasonal locust infestations) to establish and maintain autonomous desert locust units with earmarked spending from national ministries of finance.
- R6 For invasion countries such as Kenya, where locust infestations are less frequent, desert locust training and resources should be developed and maintained within the units responsible for other transboundary pests affecting the Horn of Africa, such as the fall army worm.
- R7 In all countries of the Horn of Africa and Yemen, it is vital to continue practicing survey and control operations in order to maintain the momentum gained over 2020–2021.

#### Area 4 – Regional architecture

- R8 FAO and its partners should provide a package of capacity support for the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region (CRC), including a funding a “roving” technical expert with recent experience of ground and air operations, national staff training and liaison across the Horn of Africa and Yemen region.
- R9 FAO and its partners should also support CRC to improve its liaison with non-member countries on the boundary between frontline and invasion zones, such as Somalia, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan.
- R10 DLCO-EA member countries should commission an external review of the capacity of DLCO-EA to respond to future upsurges, and FAO should, where possible and appropriate, offer to support the resourcing of such a review.
- R11 Finally, FAO should actively engage all parties to re-convene efforts to improve the regional architecture during the 2020–2021 upsurge.



#### Area 5 – Pesticides

- R12 FAO and CRC should work to address national registration, acceptance and supply of biopesticides.
- R13 FAO should also continue recommending the increased use of insect growth regulator (IGR) with strip and barrier treatment as a means to treat nymph populations.
- R14 FAO should continue to support chemical pesticide use where crops are threatened by locusts.
- R15 FAO and its donor partners should also agree to avoid repeating imposition of requirements for the use of certain pesticides linked to particular aircraft.
- R16 FAO should consider commissioning “how to” guidance for gathering data on innovative practices in pesticide applications.

#### Area 6 – Data

- R17 The wider desert locust response community should look to ensure that early warning data is turned into *timely response* and action in future desert locust upsurges.
- R18 Desert *locust surveys* must be continued during recession periods across the Horn & Yemen.
- R19 FAO should begin *succession planning* within the Desert Locust Information Service (DLIS).

#### Area 7 – Livelihoods protection activities

- R20 FAO should increase NGO participation in early-phase response design by working in the first instance with *NGO consortia* such as the RDLA membership.
- R21 FAO should increase the use of *cash distributions* to help tailor the response to local needs.
- R22 Coordination with national *social protection mechanisms* and cash working groups should be encouraged to support rapid delivery of livelihood protection support at scale.

#### Area 8 – Innovation and learning

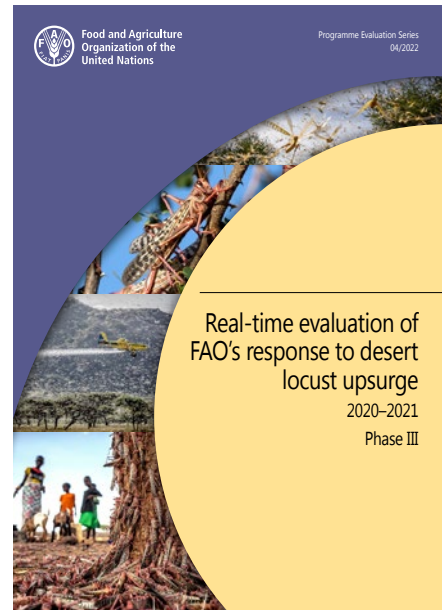
- R23 FAO should develop a *dedicated mechanism to share learning* between countries during remission periods.
- R24 FAO should work with CRC to encourage sharing of lessons between countries.
- R25 FAO and CRC should consider adding a *requirement to document new techniques* used.
- R26 FAO and CRC should continue to work with affected countries to increase the use of *improved satellite monitoring systems* with enhanced definition to locate potential survey areas.
- R27 FAO should consider *novel learning methods* for supporting learning about new tools and approaches, such as the use of EarthRanger and eLocust3 platforms.







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[Link to the full evaluation report – Phase III](#)

Office of Evaluation  
E-mail: [evaluation@fao.org](mailto:evaluation@fao.org)  
Web address: [www.fao.org/evaluation](http://www.fao.org/evaluation)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Rome, Italy

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