



# Locust Crisis in Madagascar

28 March 2014

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a **plague** of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, that threatens the livelihoods of **13 million people** in the country, 9 million of whom earn a living from agriculture.
- Findings from a damage assessment conducted in May 2013 indicated that **rice crop losses due to locusts in 2012/13 vary from 10 to as much as 40 percent** in 17 of Madagascar's 22 regions.
- The Ministry of Agriculture of Madagascar declared a **national disaster on 27 November 2012** and requested assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to address the current locust plague.
- It is estimated that at least **three successive locust control campaigns costing USD 43.9 million\*** are required to return to a recession period by treating over 2 million hectares between September 2013 and September 2016. **One or two campaigns alone, will not be enough to reach this objective.**
- The [three-year programme](#) jointly prepared by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture in response to the plague **focuses on:**
  - **Improving the monitoring and analysis of the locust situation**
  - **Large-scale aerial control operations**
  - **Monitoring and mitigating the impact of locust control operations on human health and the environment**
  - **Assessing the effectiveness of each locust campaign and the impact of locusts on crops and pastures**
- The **current funding gap is of USD 17.7 million** required for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 campaigns. Should all the funds not be available on time to undertake the campaigns, the plague could severely affect a family's ability to provide for itself.

## LATEST UPDATE

The second generation of breeding of the rainy season, which started during the first half of January 2014, is coming to an end. Therefore, more and more winged populations are appearing, much more visible than hopper bands, that results in numerous reports. The current infested area stretched from Soalala area (at 100 km south-west of Mahajanga) to the southern part of the Mahafaly Plateau (south of Toliara). In the outbreak area, late instar hopper bands as well as young adults and swarms are present along a coastal area of less than 100 km width. In the invasion area, hopper bands and swarms are present in the Middle-West while young hopper bands are reported from the Soalala area. It seems that the rainy season is slowly coming to an end, the wind pattern is changing and the coastal areas will progressively dry out. It is therefore expected that the new swarms of the second generation will be highly mobile and move towards the interior.

## RECENT ACTIONS TAKEN

**Locust Watch Unit**, mandated with the collection, storage and analysis of locust, weather and socio-economic data as well as anti-locust information since the beginning of the control operations produces ten-day and monthly bulletins illustrated by pertinent and updated maps which are distributed to the technical and financial partners in Madagascar and published on the FAO website dedicated to the locust emergency in Madagascar.

**The first locust campaign (September 2013 – August 2014):** Following extensive aerial surveys and the redeployment of two aerial bases in the western coastal plains of Madagascar, one in Morondava and one in Toliara, by mid-January 2014, locust control operations restarted on 21 January 2014. A third aerial base was set up in Befandriana-Sud on 11 February 2014 after the arrival of a third helicopter. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014, a fixed-wing spraying aircraft, which will carry out control operations in areas too remote to be accessible by the helicopters, was deployed in Tsiroanomandidy (in the Middle-West), where the helicopter based in Morondava moved in view of the changing locust situation. Since the beginning of the aerial operations in late September 2013 and up to 20 March, it is estimated that more than 20 million hectares were surveyed and more than 400 000 hectares were treated or protected with conventional pesticides and insect growth regulators respectively. Critical inputs such as conventional pesticides, insect growth regulators and biopesticides, as well as vehicles, camping, survey and personal protective equipment, etc. have been (and continue to be) delivered. Key international technical specialists, including a Campaign Coordinator, two Junior Locust Experts, one Junior Logistician, one Logistics and Security Expert, a Geographical Information Systems Expert, two Aircraft Logistics Experts, a Biopesticide Expert and an Environmentalist Expert are or were recently on site to organize field activities and train national staff. In close collaboration with the National Anti-Locust Centre, the Plant Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Coordination Unit, national specialized expertise has been mobilized and the [Human Health and Environmental Management Plan](#) is being implemented.

**Pesticide triangulation (donation of pesticides from a country with available stocks to a recipient country):** Almost half of the conventional pesticide required for the first locust control campaign was donated by the Governments of Algeria (30 000 litres), Mauritania (30 000 litres) and Morocco (200 000 litres) from their pesticide stocks, thus limiting the environmental risks associated with the storage and disposal of surplus stocks in the Sahel. The pesticide donated by Morocco and Mauritania was fully delivered by late February 2014. The delivery of the remaining quantities donated by Algeria is expected by mid April 2014.

Funding required (USD)	Funding received by FAO (USD)	Funding gap (USD)
<b>43.9 million*</b> FAO Appeal, 18 December 2012	<b>26.2 million</b> (Government of Madagascar through a Work Bank loan, Austria, Belgium, CERF-OCHA, European Union, France, Italy, Norway, and USA)	<b>17.7 million</b>
* The budget for the three-year programme required adjustment from the previous estimate of USD 41.5 million to USD 43.9 million based on current (actual) market prices of inputs and services required for the first campaign.		

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- All up-to-date information is available on our Website: [www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/](http://www.fao.org/emergencies/crisis/madagascar-locust/en/)
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