

Programme Evaluation Series

**Evaluation of the
Information on Nutrition, Food Security
and Resilience for Decision Making
(INFORMED) Programme**

Project code: GCP/INT/245/EC

Management Response

Management Response to the Evaluation of the INFORMED Programme					05/2021
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		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Responsible unit	Time frame	
<p>Recommendation 1.</p> <p>FAO should strengthen capacities for the production and dissemination of forecast, scenario-based early warning as a basis for early action.</p> <p>It is recommended that the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) conduct a review of i) the effectiveness of FAO-supported early warning systems (including GIEWS, IPC and EMPRES) and their relation to other external early warning systems; ii) lessons from supporting early warning system capacity development at national level and an assessment of the capacity building needs of regional and country partners.</p> <p>Based on this review, it is recommended that FAO headquarters develop a corporate strategy for its role in both the production of forecast-based early warning, and partnerships to strengthen early warning system capacities at various levels.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO conduct a review of lessons in developing triggers at country level to link early warning to anticipatory action. Such</p>	Accepted	<p>FAO corporate approach to Early Warning</p> <p>The development of a corporate approach on Early Warning and Anticipatory Action, based on a review conducted by OED, is welcome by the Programme team. However, it is recommended to discuss the review's scope and objectives as a corporate exercise, in particular through the involvement of the ES department.</p> <p>A corporate review of existing FAO EW systems would be a critical basis for a better calibration of FAO's overall EW capacity and global relevance in terms of agriculture and food security EW.</p> <p>Such an evaluation should propose a common definition of EW as well as key criteria associated to this definition as a starting point. For example, criteria such as 1) EW needs to be forward looking to be called 'early' 2) EW needs to be able to inform action in order to be relevant 3) FAO EW needs to warn about impacts of shocks on people's food security in line with the mandate of FAO.</p> <p>The review should provide a clear basis and recommendations for a review of existing systems that will lead to more alignment and calibration to allow FAO to achieve a coherent and dynamic forward looking global EW for agriculture and food security which can indicate potential impacts on food security and trigger timely action. This will entail the identification of gaps and areas for further investment.</p> <p>Hunger hotspots and the GRFC</p> <p>Since mid 2020, the quarterly EWEA report has transitioned into a joint FAO WFP product which is called 'Hunger</p>	<p>ESA OER EWEA (global EW)</p> <p>OER AA (country level triggers/AA)</p>	<p>Until end of GNAFC programme (end of 2022)</p>	Yes

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<p>review may include the conflict analysis dimension.</p> <p>It is recommended that the GNAFCPP transition the publication of the GRFC and quarterly EWEA reports to an online format with rolling updates. Furthermore, an explicit link should be developed between the two products, combining the backward-looking perspective of the GRFC and the forward-looking perspective of the quarterly EWEA report.</p>		<p>Hotspots', modelled much on the basis of the preceding FAO report. This publication is currently set to be issued three times a year and is still produced in a 'static' publication format.</p> <p>Steps have already been taken to study the feasibility of a 'digitalisation' process of the report. This could occur in two steps 1) relatively simple digitalisation of the current product and its possible hosting within the Global Network website. 2) a full digitalisation of the global EW process with corresponding information management system and links to existing corporate platforms (eg Hand in Hand).</p> <p>For this to occur, and in particular step 2, further capacities are needed in particular in terms of web design and content management.</p> <p>Country-level triggers</p> <p>Steps are already being taken in OER to conduct a review of the existing country trigger methodology related to anticipatory action projects. This will result in a review of the country guidance and toolkit for country offices.</p> <p>Under the GNAFCPP, a capacity building strategy is currently being implemented with a series of (currently digital) trainings on AA being carried out at regional levels. A significant part of this is dedicated to how to develop triggers for AA at country level.</p> <p>Further work needs to be done to incorporate the conflict dimension in the AA work, in particular in terms of identifying appropriate programming opportunities to mitigate the impact of foreseeable consequences of conflict on food security (eg displacement) as well as in</p>			

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		terms of which information can be used as a trigger for this kind of activity.			
<p>Recommendation 2.</p> <p>FAO should work in partnership to strengthen the delivery of early actions in selected priority high risk countries.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO update the corporate strategy to include operational processes and accountabilities for anticipatory action. This should clarify the distinction between forecast-based anticipatory action and early response.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO regional and country offices continue to work with national and regional authorities to pilot the development and monitoring of country EWEA plans in selected high priority countries. FAO should continue to develop the capacity of national institutions and humanitarian partners in the spirit of active learning in piloting of tools, rather than institutionalization of finalized products.</p> <p>It is recommended that the gFSC support country clusters to embed</p>	Accepted	<p>Corporate approach to AA</p> <p>Anticipatory action is a particularly time sensitive modality where the ability to protect people against shocks greatly depends on being able to access quality analysis in a timely way, but also crucially to act as fast as possible once the warning signs are evident.</p> <p>As such, FAO's ability to act early and retain its credibility and role as one of the leading agencies in AA at global level, is dependent therefore on a series of corporate processes and capacities and how well they can be linked – in both analysis and operations.</p> <p>If anticipatory action becomes one of the corporate priorities (as indicated by FAO Senior Management) when dealing with shocks to agriculture and food security, a corporate commitment should be formulated that fully enables the delivery of this modality.</p> <p>Some elements to be considered may include 1) investments in analytical capacities at global level (as per what is outlined under the previous recommendation) and at country level, 2) revision of existing, or creation of new/ faster track operational processes to ensure timely delivery on the ground 3) ensuring accountability of management in particular in food crises contexts to act on warnings and deliver AA.</p> <p>Scale up of AA</p>	OER	End of GNAFC and Germany AA scale up programme (end of 2022)	Yes

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<p>responsibility (in concert with national authorities) for EWEA planning, surveillance and implementation.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO advocate for a substantive increase in the SFERA EWEA window.</p>		<p>Activities are already ongoing for the scale up of AA systems at country level, in particular through a new three-year partnership with the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO).</p> <p>This work is complemented by a capacity building effort funded through the GNAFCPP, which will see a roll out of regional, country and global trainings on AA over the next two years. These trainings will target FAO staff, other partner organisations as well as relevant national authorities.</p> <p>Efforts to further mainstream AA in regional and national institutions have to be scaled up and may require further capacities.</p> <p>More participative and community based approaches to AA also need to be introduced which see meaningful participation of the potentially affected communities to a collective learning process in the design of AA systems and plans.</p> <p>Plans are underway for an AA advocacy and communications strategy which will support further resource mobilisation efforts.</p> <p>gFSC and AA</p> <p>Meaningful contact and dialogue with the gFSC on AA needs to be established, and the roles and responsibilities of cluster coordinators in this area of work defined. The Cluster has a key role to play as was already apparent in the inter agency AA OCHA pilots and must have its own</p>			

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		internal clear position, procedures and capacities on this front.			
<p>Recommendation 3.</p> <p>FAO should support policy and programme decision makers through a diverse set of resilience-related analytical tools and improved data access.</p> <p>It is recommended that the FAO develop a broad strategy to support the analysis of resilience. This should be based on a consideration of i) the specific needs of users for information to support decision-making; ii) the comparative advantages of FAO in responding to these needs; and iii) the skills required at headquarters (stakeholder analysis, quantitative and qualitative skills sets) to support the delivery of a range of methodological approaches.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO advocate for, and where appropriate support, the production of, and enhanced access to, food and nutrition statistics by the responsible agencies that contribute to resilience analysis.</p>	Accepted	<p>Through the Global Network Against Food Crises Partnership Programme several initiatives are underway between the RIMA and MEAL teams to implement these recommendations in the 12 country investments of the Partnership Programme and more broadly across the OER portfolio (covering approximately 25-30 countries).</p> <p>Developing a broad resilience analysis strategy</p> <p>Based on the work under INFORMED, an improved MEAL framework was developed and rolled-out in the 12 country investments, as well as in other countries characterised by food crisis. This includes a set of tools and recommended practices to enhance a programmatic approach to MEAL and resilience analyses.</p> <p>A closer collaboration with the KORE team was established for the development of learning agendas and integration of the MEAL and knowledge management component into MEAL frameworks for a stronger evidence base.</p> <p>Analytical capacities at country at subregional levels were increased through the development of Short RIMA and an automated R-based analysis template, making analytical efforts more accessible to country offices</p> <p>Efforts are being undertaken to produce learning materials and guidelines to facilitate the use/adoption of RIMA. This includes e-learning, certification process, youtube videos, technical notes.</p> <p>Increasing the evidence-base for resilience analysis</p>	RIMA, MEAL, CPU	Ongoing, first results expected in 2022 with completion of GNAFC PP country investments	Yes

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It is specifically recommended that FAO investigate the potential for supporting community-based, participatory investigations of pathways to resilience.		<p>A collaboration between the CPU, RIMA and MEAL teams has been established to develop a conflict module to integrate contextual data in relation to resilience measurement and analysis.</p> <p>Efforts are ongoing to implement and validate subjective perception of resilience capacity into resilience analysis.</p> <p>Investigating pathways to resilience</p> <p>Collaboration between MEAL/RIMA/KORE teams are ongoing for the production of webinars to provide insights on the links between RIMA and the Theory of Changes of the interventions.</p> <p>Efforts are being made to develop and use more qualitative tools to triangulate and enhance quantitative findings of resilience analysis.</p> <p>The RIMA tool is currently being tested and used to analyse food systems' resilience.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 4.</p> <p>Within this wider resilience analysis strategy, FAO should focus any continued investment on the development, application and training of the RIMA tool in contexts where it is demonstrating the greatest potential.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO focus continued investments on the development, application and capacity building for the use of the</p>	Accepted	<p>Development, application and training of the RIMA tool</p> <p>Guidance notes have been developed to promote and facilitate the use of RIMA tools and processes.</p> <p>Trainings with WFP and other partners have taken place in various countries to expand the application of RIMA (Cuba, Central America, DRC, Niger and Somalia will use RIMA in joint resilience programmes). Moreover, collaboration with the World Bank (Bangladesh) to use RIMA as standard approach to monitor and evaluate specific interventions. Also, in the context of the FNS REPRO Programme, the</p>	RIMA	Ongoing	Yes

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<p>RCI as a tool for policy and programme monitoring.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO collaborate with partners to skill test the accuracy of the RCI in predicting households' capacity to maintain welfare levels in the event of a shock.</p> <p>It is recommended that the GNAFCPP continue to pilot use RIMA II of the indirect analysis of resilience to research the determinants of the ability to bounce back from shocks.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO develop guidance notes in support of these differentiated analytical purposes, presented in an accessible language. FAO should also continue efforts to further simplify the technical and data demands of RIMA analysis.</p>		<p>team is working with Wageningen University to enhance learning on food system resilience using RIMA analyses.</p> <p>The creation of an automated R-based tool will dramatically improve the access to and use of RIMA.</p> <p>Under the collaboration with the Impact Evaluation task Force, the team is supporting the adoption of RIMA in impact evaluations so to build data-driven evidence on the drivers of bouncing back capacity.</p> <p>Additional cross-countries multi-datasets analyses are ongoing to improve understanding of determinants of growth/contraction of resilience.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 5.</p> <p>FAO should further and more sustainably invest in a function dedicated to capturing and disseminating lessons on the effectiveness of EWEA and resilience interventions.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO invest in establishing a knowledge management function within the</p>	Accepted	<p>Knowledge management</p> <p>Steps already taken to start implementing this recommendation (1.KORE team fully integrated within new OER structure;2. professional post created for team leader; 3. additional project funding sources secured for 2021; 4. effective collaboration plans with OER technical teams).</p> <p>Further actions needed are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. consolidation at management and inter-team level of KORE role and KM function within MEAL approach; 	KORE within Programme and Results team	2021–2021	Yes

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<p>Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER) tightly networked with others in and outside of FAO.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO further reinforce, and invest in, corporate capacities for monitoring, evaluation and learning and mainstream responsibility for capturing learnings around specific EWEA and resilience interventions and system accountability.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO investigate developing a decision support tool to help programme staff determine which interventions would have most relevance in their specific context.</p>		<p>ii. further integration of KORE and collaboration on KM with additional key OER teams (Outreach, resource mobilization, advocacy, and technical teams) with joint consultancies, initiatives and tools (including building efficient knowledge and good practices inventory to systematically track relevant resilience interventions/projects and capitalizes on knowledge generated); and</p> <p>iii. expanding knowledge sharing web potential for engagement with external audience and foster knowledge uptake.</p> <p>Early Warning and AA learning</p> <p>Activities are ongoing to further improve the methodology and tools to assess the impact of anticipatory action, including on avoided humanitarian assistance, nutritional benefits, food security, resilience, among others. Meta-analyses on the findings of impact analysis studies are ongoing in order to generalize lessons learned and support future evidence-based anticipatory action programming. Also, technical partnerships with relevant organizations, research institutes and experts involved in the impact analysis of EWEA/AA are being strengthened and broadened, including through the conduction of joint studies.</p> <p>FAO will reinforce its MEAL capacities on EWEA/Anticipatory Action by (1) strengthening the cooperation between the Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER) and the Agri-food Economics Division (ESA) on further development and application of methods to assess the impact of anticipatory action programmes</p>	<p>ESA OER EWEA OER AA</p>	<p>End of 2022</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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		<p>and projects; and (2) ensuring that MEAL capacities are strengthened in regional/sub-regional offices as well as priority countries where AA programmes and projects are implemented.</p> <p>Development of decision-support tool</p> <p>The ongoing work with various teams in OER (MEAL, RIMA, CPU, KORE) and partner TANGO aims to undertake a meta-analysis of RIMA datasets to better understand the resilience structures in different contexts; analyze primary and secondary sources to develop typologies, characteristics, or indices for understanding general crisis contexts to provide a starting point for decision making. This would need to be accompanied by systematic context analyses, under the guidance of the CPU, conducted to inform programming.</p>	MEAL RIMA	Ongoing, first results expected in 2022 with the completion of the GNAFC PP country investments.	