



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Madagascar

Belgium's contribution through the
Special Fund for Emergency and
Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) –
Anticipatory Action window



Contributing to increase the resilience of vulnerable farmers affected by drought in Madagascar

In a general economic context marked by high levels of poverty, Madagascar is particularly vulnerable to hazards that impact agricultural activities, which constitute the population's main livelihoods. Since 2015, the southern part of the island has been plagued by prolonged episodes of drought, mostly marked over the past three years. The effect of the drought is particularly observed during the main agricultural season.

Additionally, the incidence of poverty in Androy and Anosy regions is the highest in the country, with a record 81 percent of the population below the poverty line. Since 2019, different hazards have hit the population of southern Madagascar – strong and prolonged dry spells, sand-laden winds, attacks by crop pests such as locusts, fall armyworms and other insects harmful to vegetable crops. Emergency responses have been implemented by actors in the most

affected areas. This has partially improved the livelihoods of the households benefiting from these interventions, but the vulnerability of the population persists.

In Madagascar, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) adopted the Early Warning Early Action approach and developed its Anticipatory Action Plan incorporating a drought activation protocol that identified key meteorological forecast data (El Niño–Southern Oscillation [ENSO], precipitation and temperature), seasonal observations (rainfall anomaly, Normalized Difference Vegetation Index and Soil Moisture Index) and vulnerability indicators (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, household cassava stock and market price of maize).

Following an analysis of historical data in the south, a trigger threshold of 55 percent was set with the various stakeholders to activate anticipatory actions. The diagnosis of the ENSO published by the World Meteorological Organization in June indicated an increased probability of an El Niño climatic event between July and September 2023.



This means that there is more than a 90 percent chance of an El Niño event, and the various models point to a gradual development of El Niño conditions until October, coinciding with the start of the 2023/24 crop season. However, according to historical observations, this El Niño phenomenon leads to a widespread reduction in rainfall, and even to drought in the southern part of Madagascar between December and February.

This worrying combination of shocks will further deplete the resilience of agriculture-dependent communities and their food security. The Government of the Kingdom of Belgium has contributed USD 1 million, through SFERA, to FAO's Anticipatory Action in the south of Madagascar. Thanks to this generous contribution, FAO will provide 4 500 vulnerable households in the Districts of Betroka (Anosy), Ambovombe and Bekily (Androy) with support for livestock breeding, seed distribution, fishing equipment and cash distribution. In addition, a series of trainings will be delivered to project participants on fisheries and small-scale livestock, climate-smart agriculture and nutrition-sensitive agriculture, as well as the use of agrometeorological data.

It is imperative to implement timely anticipatory actions to mitigate the impacts of climate risks in Madagascar. These actions can help to safeguard the food security and livelihoods of the most vulnerable rural households in the country.

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