

FSLC Monthly Coordination Meeting

Minutes | March 28, 2024



DATE: 28 March 2024 (15:00-17:00)

LOCATION: Kyiv and Mykolaiv in-person, and online via Zoom

CHAIR: **Charles Hopkins and Sarka Vlckova**, Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster (FSLC) Coordinators

- AGENDA:**
1. Introduction of new partners.
 2. An update from Mykolaiv Bakery #1.
 3. Spring seeds distribution to households - by USAID AGRO.
 4. FSLC Updates on the following:
 - Partners response for January and February 2024.
 - IM Updates: observation and ActivityInfo reporting in 2024.
 - Updates from regional hubs.
 5. Case Study: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Poltava region - by IMMAP Inc. Ukraine.
 6. Food programs and activities in Kherson region – by NGO 'I Am Kherson'.
 7. Lessons learned from JERU's micro business grant – by JERU.
 8. The results of 2023 Country Cluster Performance Monitoring (CCPM).
 9. AOB

Over 110 participants representing more than 50 organizations attended the FSLC partners meeting. Thanks to all the partners who attended in person and online.

Organizations who attended the meeting: Mykolaiv Bakery #1, DRC, GEM, NEW WAY, IRC, ACTED, Misto Syly, National Assembly of People with disabilities in Ukraine, Samaritan's Purse, People in Peril, Save UA, AUAC, ERC, MHP-Gromadi, LHI, Ukrainian Charity "Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini", Poruch, Light of Hope, Airlight, Caritas-SPES, Posmishka UA, REACH, Mavi Hilal Ukraine, PAH, IOM, Association of Mothers and Wives of Defenders of Ukraine, RCC, Team4UA, GoodWill, East-SOS, Caritas-Ukraine, WFP, Corus International, iMMAP Inc. Ukraine, ASB, Shchedryk, URCS, Integra, ADRA, CRS, WVI, PWJ, NRC, DKH, IFP, BiY, JERU, Rescue Now, CARE, HIA, MC, USAID AGRO.

An update from Mykolaiv Bakery #1

Alyona Rakova from the Mykolaiv Bakery presented bakery's initiative on the Easter gifts for children and called partners for support the initiative.

Spring seeds distribution to households - by USAID AGRO #1

CONTACT: agro.office@chemonics.com, @usaid.agro in Twitter. Andriy Zaika presented.

USAID AGRO reached over 15,000 agri-MSMEs since 2020, collaborated with 106 private and public sector partners, and have 63 active ongoing projects all over Ukraine. Part of USAID ARGI-Ukraine launched to bolster Ukrainian agricultural production and exports and to help alleviate the global food security crisis.

The way of working on the project goes the following way:

1. Resources (seeds development program).
2. Production, which includes emergency response and capacity building.
3. Storage (Grain sleeves and temporary storage and expanded silo storage capacity).
4. Processing (Flour fortification, Processing to feed and food, LEAN – optimization of production processes, Skill development program for grain silo specialists, Potato post-harvest handling development).
5. Marketing (Developing B2B cooperation, Export-oriented program (trade missions)).

Partnerships include USAID's financing under AGRI-Initiative, private sector and international partners (especially Republic of Korea).

In 2022-2023, 14,153 farmers were reached with 6 distributions, 1,998 tons of help for 658 communities was provided with huge support of All-Ukrainian Association of Communities.

6,300+ 1,916 agricultural MSMEs received inputs for the spring 2023 sowing campaign, 12,000+7,691 agricultural MSMEs received inputs for winter 2023 & spring 2024 sowing campaigns.

Inputs distribution modality:

- Collect applications via State Agricultural Register (DAR).
- Local partner for administrating distribution and reporting.
- 2-3 distribution hubs per oblast – farmers come to collect when notified.
- Telegram chat-bot for communicating with farmers-recipients.
- Monitoring results.

Impact: 30% of registered MSMEs received support from USAID AGRO. 6 distribution programs supported the application of nutrients on 460,000 hectares during the 2023 and 2024 seasons. This resulted in an estimated additional crop production output of 278,000 tons of grain. Production volumes will be sufficient to feed 5-10 million people. In 2024, USAID AGRO is going to partners in the private sector to provide seeds and provide critical inputs throughout a season.

Emergency response is to help to the communities and households and strengthen the resilience of communities: organizing the delivery of essential goods from Ukrainian and international donors to restore the vitality of communities. From 2022 until now they provided:

- **39** tons of vegetable seeds
- **35** tons of potato seeds
- **1,998** tons of necessities
- **17** modular houses
- **125** tons of humanitarian aid for affected communities due to undermining the Kakhovska HPP
- **279** household and industrial generators

In spring 2022-2023, vegetable seeds were delivered and administered by two USAID-supported associations: All-Ukrainian association of communities (AUAC) and Ukrainian Agricultural Council (UAC). 29 tons were provided in 23 Oblast for 458 communities. It includes 530 kg of Bayer carrot seeds and vegetable seeds (cabbage, carrots, reddish, tomato, cucumbers, sweet corn, onion, watermelon, melon, zucchini) from 7 companies (Enza Zaden, Lark Seeds, Nunhems, Hazera, Seminis, Rijk Zwaan, Syngenta and other donors).

In 2023, the focus was on de-occupied communities, internally displaced persons, vulnerable groups: seeds quantity defined per community based on request. 98,000 HHs received seeds. 3,326 hectares of land were planted, 121,549 tons of vegetables were harvested.

In 2024, USAID AGRO is going to provide seeds to 200,958 households in 476 communities. According to AUAC, 359,708 households still have needs in seeds.

Partners response in January-February 2024

- **Food Assistance:** 36 partners reported providing food for 1,870,560 people in February 2024: 67% of them received general food distribution, 27% - institutional feeding, 5% - RRR, 1% - hot meals, and others – provision of market-based assistance. Kharkivska, Donetsk, Zaporizka, Khersonska and Dnipropetrovska Oblast are among the biggest assisted with food.
- **Livelihoods:** 16 partners reported providing livelihoods for 40,440 people in January and February 2024. 51% of them received sectoral cash for animal feed, 13% sectoral cash for livestock shelter, 7% - business trainings and workshops, 6% job placement and counselling,

5% - employment and reskilling, 17% - other activities. Kharkivska, Donetsk, Zaporizka, Khersonska and Sumska Oblasts are among the biggest assisted with livelihoods.

Information Management Updates

- ActivityInfo training materials: [\[Link\]](#)
- The reporting deadline for March 2024 – April 10.
- 51 reporting partners in 2024 so far.
- The IM Coffee Corner will be held on Wednesday, April 3, 10:00 – 11:30.
- FSLC website: <https://fscluster.org/ukraine/>
- FSLC LinkedIn: [\[Link\]](#)
- Join the mailing list of FSLC: [\[Link\]](#)
- **Next FSLC national coordination meeting – April 25, 15:00 – 17:00.**

Updates from hubs

- **Eastern hub:** main focus on emergency response, as eastern Ukraine is under intense attack. URCS, WFP, Svitlana Svitlychna fund, Posmishka UA and other NGOs supported activities. Warren Buffett brought the train to Kharkiv with his fund to distribute 10,000 hot meals in Kharkiv. In Zaporizhzhia the situation is controlled.
- **North hub:** Food security is critical for border communities in Chernihiv region. An agricultural support project is ongoing, providing seeds, fertilizers and equipment. In Poltava, initiatives have been launched to provide retraining and microcredit in agriculture. Continued shelling of the border areas of Sumy region leads to evacuations and increased demand for food assistance; 176,682 people received assistance in January-February. The Kyiv Working Group is assessing the needs of the region and thanking partners for their support after rocket attacks.
- **Western hub:** In 2024, the main focus of the hub is on livelihoods. On March 26, the sub-national cluster meeting was held in Vinnytsia, where partners such as R2P, URCS, ACTED announced their employment programs. Caritas-SPES presented their Got-Job program on employing IDPs in Vinnytska Oblast. In April, the cluster is considering establishing local cluster in Lviv and Chernivtsi, and on April 18 is the next sub-cluster meeting in Vinnytsia.
- **South hub:** in Jan-Feb 2024, 16 reporting partners of FSLC in the region, about 700,700 people. Most of the assistance concentrated near the frontline. GEM, GCS, SP, T4A, WFP are among the biggest partners. In Odesa, after the city strikes, WCK and URCS provided emergency support to 300 people, the city is under blackout now. In Mykolaiv, 2000 people received food during last week after the shelling on March 17.

Case Study: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in Poltava region - by IMMAP Inc. Ukraine

CONTACTS:

- Regarding iMMAP Inc. Cluster support project: Fridon Japaridze, fjaparidze@immap.org, Ukraine team lead
- For IM support inquires, including PRA, please contact: IM Coordinator: Hesham Othman hothman@immap.org
- For CB inquires please contact: CB Coordinator: Iryna Tkachuk itkachuk@immap.org

The use of **Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)** method directly involves residents in identifying issues and challenges and implementing solutions.

The PRA was started to:

- Facilitate swift data collection providing accurate responses to challenges.
- Empower local voices.
- Enable people to identify and rank their own needs.

- Better understand day-to-day challenges of the local population.
- Foster the quality of humanitarian aid.

PRA is a community-based and participatory approach to assessing and understanding rural (local) communities, their needs, resources, and priorities. It is a method used to empower local communities and involve them actively in the process of data collection, analysis, and decision-making.

PRA methods:

- Semi-structured and structured interviews
- Historical profile
- Mapping exercises and diagrams
- Seasonal calendar
- Transect walks
- Ranking and scoring

In December 2023, iMMAP Inc. conducted rapid agriculture needs assessment in Poltavaska oblast using Participatory Rural Appraisal methods to collect information. Overall, a total of 16 farmers from 9 hromadas participated in FGDs. The semi-structured interviews were conducted through two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with participants involved in the agricultural sector.

A checklist was developed to guide the discussion and included the following modules: most cultivated crops, market access, access to financial instruments, and challenges faced by farmers since the start of the full-scale invasion.

The iMMAP team used **a seasonal calendar** as one of PRA methods presenting the model and trends of work or behavior throughout the year.

The PRA method helped to outline **the challenges** the farmers are currently facing. Among them are:

- low prices for crops and an increase in the logistics costs due to the ongoing conflict
- involvement of intermediaries adding extra costs to selling agricultural products
- labor shortage and the lack of adequate storage and drying facilities.
- insecurity and lack of guarantees in international sales
- lack of cooperation between farmers and the acute issue of trust and knowledge sharing.

How iMMAP help with the PRA?

- We can teach how to use PRA and thus facilitate capacity building.
- We can run PRA assessments.
- We can teach how to use PRA and thus facilitate capacity building.

Food programs and activities in Kherson region – by NGO 'I Am Kherson'

CONTACT: Serhii Mukoriz, iamkherson@gmail.com, +380995111738

The NGO was established in 2022 from scratch. They aid in Shelter/NFI sector, Protection and FSL, especially food kits and bread distribution in the frontline areas, Seeds of Victory program for households in 2023 and 2024, Assistance to farms with seed, fertilizers, herbicides and support with expertise from Eurosem agronomists.

Priority for 2024 is creating the possibilities of development for small farmers in Kherson oblast, such as:

- In-kind assistance (seeds, poultry, small livestock).
- Improvement of farmers working conditions (provision of mini tractors, incubators, restoration of damaged agricultural buildings and facilities).

- Providing advice and support to farmers (free services of an accountant, economist, lawyer, veterinarian, and agronomist).
- Training, searching for ways to sell products, optimizing costs, increasing sales volumes.
- Initiating the creation of trade unions to ensure sustainability.

Lesson learned from JERU's micro business grant - by JERU

CONTACT: Kamran Said, Kamran.Said@welthungerhilfe.de.

Objective: Support self-employment, income generation, improved employment opportunities.

Target Recipients Microbusiness Grants - MBGs: Socio economic vulnerable Households

Target Recipients Small and Medium Enterprises - SMEs: Enterprises (relocated, war affected etc.)

Geographic Areas: Khmelnytsky, Ternopil, Sumska, Poltava, Mykolaiv, Zaporizka, Kharkiv

Support:

- Financial support: Grant value up to Approximately 1500 Euro (60,000 UAH), Approx 20,000 Euro (800,000 UAH)
- Business support services: Access to business management learning opportunities (IEC material, training)
- Job Matching services, Job fairs (networking employers, potential employees etc.)

Selection Criteria:

Microbusiness Grants:

- Eligibility: Existing Skill or experience in the field, having existing business/assets that were destroyed/damaged, Being the skilled worker in the sector and have the client/relations in the field to provide the services/products
- Vulnerability: Single parents, Households with disabled members or members with chronic illness, Households with larger family size, Households with pregnant/lactating women members, Households with 3+ children

SMEs Grants:

- Eligibility: Existing Skill or experience in the field, having existing business/assets that were destroyed/damaged, SME working in sector which qualify the criteria of growth, aimed at supporting vulnerable, feasibility and registration.
- Priority: Women led, environmentally friendly, generating more employment opportunities.

Outputs from Microbusiness

- JERU received 248 applications out of which only 69 were accepted, i.e rejection rate of 80%.
- 77% grant recipients – Female.
- 69 microbusiness grants disbursed @ 60,000 UAH.
- 36% Food sector, 22% services (car maintenance etc.) 14% retail (sale purchase of basic goods).
- 54% of grant recipients – IDPs, and 46% host/non-displaced.

Outputs from SMEs

- JERU received 72 applications out of which only 28 were accepted, i.e rejection rate of 61%.
- 29% grant recipients – Female, 71% male.
- 28 SMEs grants disbursed @ 800,000 UAH.
- 18% grant recipients – IDPs, and 82% host/nondisplaced.
- On average 4 employees will be hired per SME.
- Grants used to purchase equipment's that is related to business expansion and restoration.

Lessons learned:

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

- Tailoring the outreach strategies is necessary to suit the diverse needs and contexts of target beneficiaries (as per locations, rural/urban, sectors of activity).
- Focusing the outreach activities and clearly delineating eligibility criteria and utilizing relevant information dissemination channels in specific, targeted locations is necessary to reduce rejection rates, and receive more relevant applications.
- Increasing face-to-face interactions and community outreach to build trust and ensure to convey the legitimacy of assistance.
- Showcasing success stories, and their results is necessary for trust building and explanation of the assistance.
- It is important to utilize further formal, institutional forums such as chamber of commerce, business centers, Local authorities to reach/target SMEs, as announcements through social media channels are not the most appropriate for this type of assistance.

TARGETING

- Use simple, user-friendly application processes and where possible provide individualized support to people with accessibility challenges.
- Establish cross sector referral mechanism (internal/external) , that could serve as channel for graduating participants from MPCA to Livelihoods assistance, and from Livelihoods assistance to other relevant services. Including those who don't qualify for Livelihoods.

OTHER POINTS

- Integrated approach needed: Strategically planning of livelihood activities implementation to maximize the impact, and sustainability of the assistance.
- Need to establish coordination mechanism at regional FSLC between the livelihoods actors to refer cases, harmonize the approach and minimize the negative impact (adhere to do no harm principles).

The results of 2023 Country Cluster Performance Monitoring

You can access the 2023 Country Cluster Performance Monitoring report by the link:

<https://fscluster.org/ukraine/document/ukraine-fslc-country-cluster-performance>

