



FOOD SECURITY and AGRICULTURE CLUSTER - AFGHANISTAN

Terms of Reference

The Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) in Afghanistan will provide an action-oriented forum for bringing together national and international humanitarian partners to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance on the lives of crisis-affected population in Afghanistan. In particular, it will help ensure coherent, coordinated and integrated humanitarian responses that are driven by the evidenced-based assessment of food security needs of the crisis-affected population.

National FSAC Structure

The Humanitarian Coordinator, with the support of OCHA, retains responsibility for ensuring the adequacy, coherence and effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response and is accountable to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

In line with mandate of the global Food Security Cluster, and with the approval of the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), will act as the Cluster co-leads in close collaboration with relevant line ministries and other stakeholders. Appointed co-chairs (both co-lead agencies and an NGO selected by an NGO forum) support Cluster operations to ensure the FSAC is functionally achieving effective humanitarian coordination of food security and agriculture response in Afghanistan and representing agreed FSAC priorities (see Annex 1).

The Cluster coordinator works on behalf of the cluster as whole, facilitating all cluster activities, and supporting the joint development of a strategic vision and operational framework. He/she also ensures coordination with other clusters in relation to inter-cluster activities and cross-cutting issues. The Cluster Coordinator also has a duty to all partners within the cluster, to act as a representative of the cluster as a whole rather than solely as a representative of his/her particular agency (see Annex 2). In addition, an FSAC Information Manager will manage the receipt and

organization of information, to display it in an accessible manner, and manage dissemination (see Annex 3).

Humanitarian actors who participate in the development of common humanitarian action plans are expected to be proactive partners in assessing needs, developing strategies and plans for the sector, and implementing agreed priority activities. Provisions are made groups for those humanitarian actors who may wish to participate as observers, mainly for information-sharing purposes. An outline of partner and observer functions is annexed to this document (see Annex 4).

Regional Cluster Structure

As requested by Cluster leadership (in consultation with OCHA), and endorsed by national FSAC, Cluster coordination structures exist at a regional level, following accountability lines as per the national level Cluster. Regional structures hold a separate TOR, but are an integrated part of the national FSAC.

FSAC Working Groups

The FSAC provides for the functioning of both permanent and adhoc working groups, aimed at enhancing the technical quality of coordinated food security response. Working groups may or may not comprise members of the FSAC, but will be accountable to the FSAC and inform sectoral analysis. Working groups will be established on the advice of the FSAC and hold a separate TOR.

FSAC Responsibilities

The FSAC will ensure/improve the quality of food security and agriculture responses in Afghanistan through the following:

Establishment and Maintenance of an Appropriate Food Security Coordination Mechanism

- Ensure appropriate coordination with all humanitarian partners (including government institutions, national and international NGOs, the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and other international organizations), through the establishment and maintenance of appropriate coordination mechanisms for the FSAC at the national and, where appropriate, regional levels;
- Secure commitments from humanitarian partners to respond to identified needs, ensuring the appropriate distribution of responsibilities within the Cluster, with clearly defined focal points for specific issues where necessary;
- Promote a timely and appropriate emergency response, while also considering the need for early recovery planning as well as disaster prevention and risk-reduction activities;
- Ensure effective links with other relevant Clusters, both bilaterally and through the OCHA coordinated Inter-Cluster Coordination mechanism;
- Represent the interests of the Cluster in discussions with the Humanitarian Coordinator and other stakeholders.

Provision of a platform for evidenced based food security assessments, analysis and appropriate response

- Undertake regular 3Ws mapping (“who, what, where”) to ensure that information on the programmes and projects of Cluster partners is comprehensive and up-to-date, as a basis of monitoring humanitarian response, and identifying eventual gaps;
- Develop and utilise an FSAC protocol for assessment and response options, based on agreed food security classification and appropriate action;
- Proactively organise and participate in needs assessment and analyze the data for sectoral application;
- Develop/update agreed response strategies and action plans for the Cluster and ensure that these are adequately reflected in overall country strategies, such as Flash Appeals or the annual Consolidated Appeal.

Planning and strategy development

- Ensure that FSAC priorities are guided by an annual workplan developed through the FSAC and based on common situational analysis;
- Ensure predictable action within the sectoral group for the following:
 - Identification of gaps;
 - Drawing lessons learned from past activities and revising strategies accordingly;
 - Developing an exit, or transition, strategy for the sectoral group.

Coordination with National/Local Authorities, State Institutions, Local Civil Society and Other Relevant Actors

- Ensure that Cluster member’s humanitarian responses build on local capacities;
- Ensure appropriate links to promote coordination and information exchange with national and local authorities, government institutions at the National and regional levels, local civil society and other relevant actors.

Attention to Priority Cross-Cutting Issues

- Ensure the integration of agreed priority cross-cutting issues in sectoral needs assessments, analysis, planning, monitoring and response (e.g. Environment, Protection, Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction);

Smooth Transition from Immediate to Longer-Term Programming

- Identify strategies and approaches that would enable FSAC members’ activities to efficiently bridge the gap between emergency assistance, early recovery and longer-term development assistance.

Application of Standards

- Ensure that Cluster members are aware of relevant policy guidelines and technical standards related to food security activities, and that their responses are in-line with them.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Ensure adequate reporting and effective information sharing, including the updating of the Humanitarian Dashboard and the FSAC webpage;
- Ensure adequate monitoring mechanisms are in place to review the impact of the cluster's activities and progress against implementation plans.

Advocacy and Resource Mobilization

- Identify common advocacy concerns, including resource requirements, and contribute key messages to broader advocacy initiatives of the Humanitarian Coordinator and other actors;
- Develop and implement a communication strategy on behalf of all Cluster members, and the Food Security sector in general, to ensure that key decision-makers, including government and donor partners, are aware of the needs, priorities and importance of necessary support to the sector in post-crisis situations;
- Advocate for donors to fund humanitarian actors to carry out priority activities in the sector concerned, while at the same time encouraging Cluster members to mobilize resources for their activities through their usual channels.

Training and Capacity Building

- Provide needs-based trainings and capacity building initiatives for Cluster members;
- Support efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national authorities and civil society.

Provision of Assistance or Services as a Last Resort

- As agreed by the IASC Principals, Cluster leads are responsible for acting as the provider of last resort (subject to access, security and availability of funding) to meet the agreed priority needs and will be supported by the HC and the ERC in their efforts in this regard;

Annex 1:

A: Role of UN Co-chairs

- Ensure regular cluster meetings are taking place;
- Ensure cluster coordinators attend Inter-cluster Coordination fora;
- Maintain appropriate links and dialogue with other national and local authorities, State institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors;
- Participate actively in cluster/inter-agency contingency planning and preparedness;
- Participate actively in gap analysis, priority setting and the development of a crisis response strategy and cluster action plan;
- Promote/support training of staff and capacity building of humanitarian partners and national authorities;
- Represent the interests of agreed food security and agriculture priorities in discussions with stakeholders on priorities, resource mobilization and advocacy.

B: Role of the NGO Co-Chair

- Ensure regular cluster meetings are taking place;
- Ensure cluster coordinators attend inter-cluster coordination fora;
- Share cluster based support to the coordinator with fellow co-chairs (not to supersede or be confused with the line management which rests with the recruiting lead agency);
- Maintain appropriate links and dialogue with other national and local authorities, State institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors – ensuring that the FSAC position is informed by the NGO perspective
- Ensure that the NGO members of the cluster are kept fully informed of the meetings and decisions that take place outside of regular FSAC meetings;
- Participate actively in cluster/inter-agency contingency planning and preparedness, ensuring that the NGO community is also contributing to and sharing FSAC responsibilities;
- Participate actively in gap analysis, priority setting and the development of a crisis response strategy and cluster action plan – on order to improve the quality of food security and agriculture based humanitarian responses in Afghanistan;
- Ensure that NGOs participate in and assume their responsibilities as part of any emergency response work, including planning, assessments, analysis and response;
- Ensure that each Cluster working group has active NGO participation to help ensure that NGOs support and participate in the clusters work;

- Ensure the accountability and transparency of the cluster's decisions and work. The NGO Co-Chair should act as a focal point for receiving NGO concerns in order to raise these with the other co-chairs and the lead agencies.
- Promote/support training of staff and capacity building of humanitarian partners and national authorities. Taking reasonable measures to proactively engage with and support local NGOs to participate in cluster coordination and the Consolidated Appeal;
- Represent the interests of the sector in discussions with stakeholders on priorities, resource mobilization and advocacy. Taking additional steps to ensure that the resource mobilisation and advocacy efforts, particularly the CAP, fairly represents and benefits NGOs as well as the UN agencies

Annex 2: TOR FSAC Cluster Coordinator - Afghanistan

The Cluster Coordinator is responsible for facilitating a coordination process at the sectoral level aimed at ensuring the following:

Establishment and maintenance of effective coordination mechanisms

- Ensure appropriate coordination with national authorities to the extent the political situation allows. This will involve liaising and working with relevant government counterparts to support or complement existing coordination mechanisms. The Cluster Coordinator will either represent the cluster at sectoral meetings led by national authorities or co-chair cluster meetings with national authorities as appropriate.
- Identify and establish contact with all other relevant sector stakeholders including national and international organizations, and representatives of affected populations. Invite these stakeholders to participate as partners in the work of the cluster as appropriate.
- Convene and facilitate meetings of the cluster (and/or joint meetings with another cluster), increasing or reducing their frequency as needed but being careful to avoid meeting overload. Ensure that cluster meetings are well-managed and action and results-oriented, with decisions clearly communicated to relevant cluster partners and stakeholders. Ensure that meetings are managed in line with the Principles of Partnership¹.
- Facilitate agreement on an efficient division of labour and the assignment of responsibilities amongst cluster partners which takes account of their comparative advantages and complementarities. Designate focal points or working groups for specific issues where necessary.
- Help establish and maintain appropriate inter-cluster coordination mechanisms, adapting them over time to reflect the stage of the emergency and the changing capacities and roles of local actors. Represent the cluster in inter-cluster coordination fora as appropriate.
- Work with the Country Director/Representative of the Cluster Lead Agency to ensure that arrangements are made to allow for a proper hand-over of Cluster Coordinator responsibilities at the end of a Coordinator's assignment, to ensure there is continuity and that institutional memory is maintained for the cluster as a whole.

Preparedness and capacity-building (including in the pre-emergency and postemergency phase)

- Lead early warning, contingency planning, and emergency preparedness efforts for the cluster; ensure adequate cluster participation in inter-cluster early warning, contingency planning and emergency preparedness activities.
- Together with cluster partners, undertake capacity mapping and gap identification exercises to develop a capacity-building strategy for the sector.
- Identify training needs of cluster partners and communicate them to the Country Director/Representative of the Cluster Lead Agency.

¹ The Principles of Partnership are equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity, as endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, July 2007 [see 1.13].

Needs assessment, analysis, prioritization and planning

- Ensure that the cluster covers all the identified and evolving sector needs of the affected population, and not only those that relate to the specific mandate of the Cluster Lead Agency.
- Facilitate cluster needs assessments and analysis and participate in joint inter-cluster needs assessment exercises as appropriate.
- Facilitate strategy development for the cluster with linkages between disaster risk reduction, relief, recovery and development. To the extent possible, ensure the strategy complements government policies and plans.
- Ensure that the strategic operational framework of the cluster is updated regularly according to evolving needs and that it establishes indicators by which performance of the cluster can be measured.
- Ensure that cluster strategies are adequately reflected in overall country strategies such as Flash and Consolidated Appeals.
- In terms of inter-cluster coordination, identify issues of mutual interest and identify information which (i) should be proactively shared with other clusters, and (ii) should be acquired from other clusters to ensure a more effective overall response. Identify potential areas of duplication between clusters so that they can be avoided, and identify potential gaps which may fall between clusters so that they can be addressed through the clear assignment of responsibilities.
- Inform the Country Director/Representative of the Cluster Lead Agency of any critical gaps in the response that cannot be covered by any cluster partners and that require the Cluster Lead Agency to intervene as Provider of Last Resort; advocate for the
- Advocate for the utilization of rights, participatory and community-based approaches in the planning and implementation of projects. Promote measures which increase accountability to affected populations and the identification of durable solutions.

Transition planning

- Depending on the specific country situation, lead on the design of appropriate transition strategies for the cluster to ensure continuity between the humanitarian response, recovery and development phases and disaster risk reduction initiatives. Ideally this will involve working closely with national counterparts to ensure a resumption of national ownership of cluster activities. It will also involve consideration of how coordination mechanisms and cluster membership should change as the humanitarian emergency subsides.

Annex 3: TOR FSAC Information Manager - Afghanistan

Duties:

- Analyse Information Management Systems, capacity and processes currently active in the Food security and closely related sectors in Afghanistan
- Identify gaps in Information Management capacity and provide recommendations for the improvement/establishment of appropriate systems able to serve, cluster partners, donors and other stakeholders.
- Specifically assess training and capacity building needs and provide recommendation on how gaps could be filled, including elaboration of ToR and training programmes
- If and when needed build additional and appropriate capacity through the training of staff and managing, organizing, and conducting these activities;
- Support the provision of IM services to the FSAC;
- In close liaison with cluster lead agencies provide support to the development/maintenance of a database concerning organisations and actors active in the food security sector in accordance with set minimum criteria.
- As appropriate, assist in the design of data collection forms, ensuring that the purpose and use of all data collected is clear, questions are simple, clear, easy to collect and manage, highlighting where potential problems might arise;
- In close liaison with cluster lead agencies and relevant governmental bodies provide support to the collection and compilation of data concerning activities/projects in the food security sector and support the management of the data base inventory.
- Support analyses of information collected by relevant entities and ensure that data are collated and accurate reports and presentations are produced on a regular base.
- Ensure that Information Management Systems in the Food Security sector are adequately updated and maintained.
- Closely liaise with others Information Management System established within the Afghanistan humanitarian country team for the gathering, exchange, and dissemination of information relevant to early warning, response and preparedness decisions.

Annex 4: Role of Cluster Partners and Observers

Humanitarian actors who participate in the development of common humanitarian action plans are expected to be proactive partners in assessing needs, developing appropriate strategies and plans for the sector, and implementing agreed priority activities. Provision is also made in the Cluster for those humanitarian actors who may wish to participate as observers, mainly for information-sharing purposes.

Partners focused on three core areas: support (technical, operational and strategic), guidance (technical, operational and strategic) and advocacy. These are areas where the diverse perspectives and direct contributions from organizations actively engaged in food security preparedness, response and recovery.

Observers allow connected stakeholders to provide additional insights, contribute to strengthening mechanisms for dealing with inter-cluster gaps and enhancing inter-cluster coordination, as well as contributing to strengthening operational coordination.

Partners and observers

- Each partner organisation will identify a dedicated focal point to facilitate communications, as well as to ensure that partners have the opportunity to participate to their maximum capacity;
- The partner organisation will, as much as possible, attend monthly national or regional FSAC meetings; The focal point person, or designate, will be available for regular FSAC meetings;
- The focal point person will assist in the strategic planning process and with the development of the annual FSAC work plan;
- The organisation will, if possible, provide support to the FSAC through participation in assessment missions and joint analysis;
- The organisation will provide necessary data to the FSAC so that an up to date picture of programmatic operations can be maintained
- The focal point person, or a suitable technically skilled alternate, if available, will support relevant working groups established by the FSAC.

Observers

- Each observer organization will identify a dedicated focal point to facilitate communications between the FSAC and the observer organization;
- As determined appropriate by the partners of the FSAC, this dedicated observer focal point (or their delegate) will be invited to:
 - Provide input on technical and strategic documents;
 - Attend FSAC meetings on a regular basis;
- Update FSAC partners on specific areas of concern.