



FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER
Strengthening Humanitarian Response

Global Food Security Cluster 2013-2014 Strategic Plan

The global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) became operational in April 2011 as the eleventh Global Cluster of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The gFSC is led jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) and represents a partnership of approximately 35 institutions from the UN, NGO and International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. More details of the FSC can be found on www.foodsecuritycluster.net.

Vision, Mission Statement and Values

The **Vision** of the global Food Security Cluster is that “**Food security needs for individuals and communities in humanitarian crises are met.**”

The Vision is supported by a **Mission Statement** “**To ensure improved, coordination of preparedness, response and recovery actions at national and global levels.**”

The gFSC aim is to strengthen food security responses in crisis situations, mainstream early recovery approaches and enhance national capacity to:

- deliver predictable and accountable leadership and coordination on food security responses;
- strengthen existing national and local humanitarian management and coordination systems, building on local capacities through the active participation of women and men from the affected population
- optimize collaboration and partnerships with governments, UN agencies, NGOs, The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, donors and other stakeholders to ensure a holistic response.

The gFSC is committed to ensuring that planning and implementation of humanitarian response takes into account appropriate standards, indicators and cross-cutting issues, as well as to ensuring that the services provided increase the positive impact for the most vulnerable within affected populations. The gFSC will bring food security related, key cross-cutting issues into policy, decision making processes and operational implementation of humanitarian response.

Structure of the gFSC

Partners, Observers and Associates

Partnership is at the core of the work of the gFSC. Each partner is unique and the overall diversity allows us to address the broad spectrum of food security in a coordinated manner. The gFSC uses three levels of engagement; partners, observers and associates. Focal points of those institutions are involved in technical areas, responsible for keeping colleagues updated on developments and committed to encouraging their national focal points to participate in the national FSCs.

Partners are Organisations, including; International and National Non-Governmental Organisations, International Organisations and United Nations Agencies who have an operational mandate that includes assisting vulnerable people to; prepare for, respond to or recover from the impacts on food security of natural or man-made disasters, and;

- actively deliver against their mandate in five or more countries, and;
- have a commitment to humanitarian principles and the Principles of Partnership^[1], and;
- participate in actions that specifically improve accountability to affected populations, and;
- participate regularly within the cluster and consistently engage in the gFSC's collective work, and;
- have capacity and willingness to contribute to the gFSC Strategic Plan, and;
- work cooperatively with other GWC partners to ensure effective use of available resources, including sharing information and organisational talents, and;
- request to be considered partners of the GWC.

Observers are organisations who would otherwise be Partners of the gFSC but choose Observer status over that of Partner.

Associates are organisations, including; International and National Non-Governmental Organisations and Consortia thereof, International Organisations, United Nations Agencies, instrumentalities of national governments, educational and research entities who are not directly engaged in food security activities as per the Partner description, yet intersect strongly with the work of such Partners, and request to be considered Associates of the gFSC.

Global Support Team

The Global Support Team (GST) is an implementation unit, drawn from gFSC organisations. The leader of the GST is the Global Cluster Coordinator (GCC), who with the GST is housed at WFP Headquarters, Rome. Currently the GST consists of 12-15 individuals drawn from FAO, GenCap, HelpAge, IFRC, ProCap and WFP. The GST's role is to support and enable country clusters as well as the network of gFSC partners to achieve the vision, mission and implementation of identified priorities.

Working Groups

As a specific strategic response to provide technical direction to the gFSC on key areas of humanitarian food security related responses, the gFSC has established four working groups: Communications and Advocacy; Assessments; Inter-cluster Food Security and Nutrition; and Food Security and Livelihoods in Urban Settings. They are reviewed every six months by the gFSC organisations.

Four strategic pillars for 2013-2014

In October 2012, gFSC organisations identified four priority pillars which will represent the core areas of work requiring direct action from 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2014. These four pillars are:

1. **Capacity Development in Support of National Clusters.** This involves training at country level and for individuals. It includes development and application of specific tools, offering guidance and support to ensure delivery of quality programmes.
2. **Information Management and Learning.** This includes management of relevant data, learning and knowledge and compilation and sharing of best practices.

^[1] Equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity as defined in the statement of commitment contained in www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org

3. **Operational and Surge Support to National Clusters.** This pillar includes support missions; surge development and response mechanisms.
4. **Advocacy, Communication and Partnership.** This pillar involves internal and external communications to influence policy and resource mobilisation to enhance coordination systems and building partnerships.

Specific strategic directions for each gFSC Pillar

Pillar 1 Capacity Development in Support of National Clusters

Primary Objective

The objective of this pillar is to ensure that the gFSC is a learning hub that is able to reach all of its stakeholders. In 2012-2014, the global Food Security Cluster's capacity building efforts will focus on reaching a broader country level target audience through national level training, regional training and e-learning courses. As new entry points to learning, the gFSC will introduce national level training as well as e-learning modules that will open opportunities to broader spectrum of stakeholders.

Primary Results

By providing relevant training and access to information to all stakeholders, the accountabilities and leadership of the global and country clusters can be strengthened resulting in more efficient and effective food security preparedness, response and transition out of humanitarian emergencies.

Primary Activities

Ten in country trainings for country level clusters – an e-learning syllabus is being developed that will support delivery at country level and empower a broad cross-section of partners to participate productively in the food security coordination process. Representatives of cluster-lead agencies, cluster members, national and local government, representatives of civil society and donors will be part of these workshops. This approach will also result in all stakeholders having a common understanding of the cluster system

Eight in country trainings supporting quality programming – these will draw specifically on the cross-cutting skills available from the GST and Cluster Partners, showing how aspects of gender, protection, age and so on, can be directly applied to operational delivery of cluster partners at country level, enhancing effectiveness and improving accountability to affected populations.

Four face to face trainings for Cluster Coordinators and Information Managers – building on experience from 2011-2012, two trainings will be held per year, one in English and one in French. A third training in Spanish will be held if sufficient demand is identified and resources are available. These training sessions will have an operational focus including assessment methodology, information that allows for a wide range of response activities and includes gender, protection, age, disability and environment in the design and development of programs

Development of an e-learning curriculum – by the end of 2013 and as an instrument for ensuring a common conceptual understanding and for developing awareness around responsibilities, skills and attitudes of specific target groups. The curriculum will be based on a review of key activities and sub-activities of the major stakeholders and the identification of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform the activities.

PILLAR 2: Information Management and Learning

Primary Objective

All relevant information about cluster activities will be collected, stored and analysed, enabling partners to retain and build from the institutional memory of the gFSC. Work on lessons learning and good practices contributes to improvement of response, helps in the generation of new ideas and increases quality of food security preparedness, response and transition.

Primary Results

The accountabilities and leadership of the global and country clusters will be strengthened, resulting in more efficient and effective food security preparedness, response and transition out of humanitarian emergencies .

Primary Activities

Website *foodsecuritycluster.net* - the website will be maintained and regularly updated to provide in-depth information, tools and guidance to country Food Security Clusters and global partners. This will include a repository for and tools and guidance notes. The website will remain the key tool for information sharing and dissemination of standardised tools and reporting templates.

Lessons Learning and Good Practice - In close cooperation with country-level clusters, information managers and partners, the Global Support Team will collect lessons learned and good practices of national and sub-national food security cluster coordination. Challenges and good practices will be used in capacity development modules in trainings and e-learning provided by the F SC.

Tools - building on existing expertise and knowledge around reporting and information management, a standard reporting tool for country-level clusters will be developed. Gaps in country level needs will be identified and developed in co-operation with the country clusters.

Support to gFSC Working Groups – the Working Groups provide a platform for the community of practitioners to develop technical direction for the gFSC as a whole on key areas of humanitarian food security related responses. The number and content of Working Groups will be reviewed at each bi-annual Global Partners Meeting.

Pillar 3: Operational and Surge Support to National Clusters

Primary objective

The GST and Cluster Partners will provide appropriate and timely backstopping and surge support to country food security clusters and sectors in response to anticipated or identified needs. This contributes significantly to improving humanitarian food security delivery.

Primary Results

There will be improved capacity at country level and in the gFSC as a whole for support to quality programming, allowing all gFSC partners to hone their experience and perspective on providing a joint response.

By providing appropriate, timely and quality-oriented operational and surge support, the gFSC will:

- strengthen the accountabilities and leadership of the global and country clusters resulting in enhanced coordination and efficient humanitarian responses;
- improve humanitarian food security strategies and coordinated programming at global and national levels
- provide support needed to country-level clusters for preparedness, response and transition.

Primary Activities

Deployments - budgetary estimates for these activities are based on experience over the first eighteen months of gFSC operations. The actual situation in 2013-2014 will depend on frequency of emergency episodes, especially in relation to surge events.

Ten support missions (70 person days) – relatively short missions, backstopping and/or problem solving in nature.

Six medium-term deployments (126 person days) – missions of up to three weeks in duration, for example at the start of a new emergency, thereby allowing preparation time for a longer deployment

Six surge deployments (12 person months) – extended missions, for example at the onset of a natural disaster where coordination / information management capacity is not already in place. This is particularly the case for an IASC system-wide Level 3 Emergency, where the Cluster has to be ready to deploy on a no-regrets policy.

Expanding the pool of mission-ready people – Most often the Global Support Team (GST) has the personnel, expertise and experience to address short-term mission needs. In the case of medium to long-term missions, the GST will maintain and use list of qualified, available practitioners, as well as through strengthening of and increasing bilateral standby agreements with partners, such as :

- bilateral agreements with partners such as ACF, DRC, HelpAge, IFRC, Samaritan's Purse, NRC
- use of initiatives such as ProCap and GenCap;
- establishment of a mentoring system to provide on the job guidance for less experienced colleagues in large humanitarian responses.

Support to Quality Programming - Sex and age are universal determinants of access to and control over resources and opportunities, but there is a need to step up its systematic reflection in all phases of the programme cycle of humanitarian response and make sure it is highlighted in the appropriate assessments, response analysis, targeting and impact analysis.

Support to quality programming is linked to Pillar 1 and is taken here as the process of ensuring that in humanitarian response programmatic planning and implementation take account of all aspects (standards, indicators and cross cutting issues) that make up the project cycle and ensure that the services provided have the ultimate goal of increased positive impact for all vulnerable people within affected populations.

Pillar 4: Advocacy, Communication and Partnership

Primary Objective

A major role of the gFSC is to disseminate timely, accurate information and messages to all relevant stakeholders. The gFSC will work with partners at the global and country levels to provide support to country-level food security clusters, so that they may in turn provide standards, guide on policy and build response capacity and operational support. Most importantly, such responses will emanate from a people-centred approach, that recognises, analyses and responds to the different needs of different people.

In order to achieve this, it is important for the gFSC to gather and share information, expertise and good practice on food security in humanitarian contexts among partners and stakeholders. The gFSC will develop, maintain and refine specific systems to facilitate exchange of information and coordination of responses in ways which maximise use of available resources and expertise.

Primary Results

Work under this pillar will enhance support, awareness and links between and among global and national food security partners, observers and associates as well donors other clusters and the wider IASC community.

By ensuring transparency and reinforcing communication systems, the accountabilities and leadership of the global and country clusters can be strengthened, resulting in enhanced coordination and efficient humanitarian responses.

Primary Activities

Four Global Partner meetings – Bi-annual meetings of gFSC Partners, Observers and Associates provide a platform for information sharing, progress review and strategic discussion. Meeting content will be enhanced through the participation of selected country cluster personnel, providing direct discussion around best practices and areas of needed support.

Twenty Partner Teleconferences - monthly teleconferences with partners will continue to provide opportunity for discussion of progress against agreed priorities and reporting and sharing information on areas of concern. The GST will also call *ad hoc* teleconferences to discuss major policy issues likely to have a direct effect on the global and country clusters, such as policy discussions at the IASC Principals level that require gFSC input.

Teleconferences with Country Clusters - regular teleconferences will continue to be held between the GST and country cluster coordinators to discuss key issues and identified areas of needed support. Minutes of each teleconference will be circulated to all participants – present or not present.

Documentation and Information - Essential documentation, agendas, briefings papers, minutes, etc. relating to gFSC meetings will be prepared and disseminated as appropriate. gFSC Partners are also encouraged to use the GST as a networking agent for items of information or issues of concern. The aim will be to maintain a balance between overloading and ensuring that all relevant information is shared. Electronic notification of the source of information will be on-going, using the web page and general email exchanges. The gFSC website will be used as an online repository for all information shared.

Resourcing Requirements

The Strategic Plan for 2013-2014 described herein has an estimated cost of USD 4.6 million, which includes all staffing requirements, an extensive training component, backstopping and surge to national operations, advocacy and communications. Some funds have already been identified for 2013-2014, largely from Cluster Lead Agency mainstreaming and gFSC Partner cost-sharing, as well as from donors. As of End-January 2013 there is a resource gap of for 2013 of around USD 870,000. Funds to fill that gap, as well as in to 2014, are being aggressively chased by the Cluster Lead Agencies

To determine the full contribution of cluster partners, the FSC is compiling a database of financial and personnel contributions. This will then be compared to the value of the emergency food security sector and, as a further step, the benefits accrued through improved coordination. A similar approach will then be taken in selected countries, all with the goal of adding quantitative data to the perceived wisdom that coordination improves effectiveness and efficiency.