

FSAC Monthly Meeting
Virtual meeting, 24 April 2024
Minutes of Meeting

Type of meeting	FSAC Monthly Meeting
Date and location	Wednesday, 24 April 2024, Kabul, 1:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Chairperson	FSAC
Note taker	FSAC
Attendees	130

Meeting Agenda

Min	Action Item	Responsible Party
1	Early Warning Information Update	EWI WG
2	IPC Findings	FSAC
3	Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) Updates	FSAC
4	Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) Revision	FSAC
5	NGO Co-Chair and SAG Election Results	FSAC
6	Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) Update	FSAC
7	AOB Date of Next Meeting	FSAC

Minutes No	Agenda	Facilitator
1	FSAC Early Warning Information Updates	EWI WG

The Early Warning Information Working Group (EWI WG) presented a comprehensive overview of early warning information to the cluster partners. Here are the key highlights from the presentation.

- **Precipitation:** rainfall for the 2023/24 winter wet season, from October 2023 to March 2024, is most likely to be below average, with areas with average values. Average precipitation is most likely to occur from March to May 2024, during the wet spring season. Spring rains are expected to have normal timing and distribution, with minimal adverse impact on typical agricultural activities through flooding.
- **Temperature:** Above average daily mean temperatures are most likely through September 2024. Extreme temperatures during May-July and July-September (upper quintile) are 2-3 times more likely than climatology. The consequences of the above-average temperature may be moisture stress in rainfed crops and rangelands and reduced water availability, mainly in the downstream areas that may experience extended dry spells.
- **Snow Water Volumes:** Given below-average antecedent precipitation and current snow water volumes, below-average snow water volumes are expected in the coming months. However, there is more snow than in 2023, given recent accumulations due to above-average precipitation in February and March. Above-average temperatures will likely result in an early snow melt through May 2024.

- **Wheat planting:** Farmers are expected to use the spring window to complete the wheat planting process this season. The success of the coming cropping season depends on timely and well-distributed precipitation in the coming months & the availability of irrigation water in the summertime.
- **Rangeland vegetative conditions** during the 2024 spring (March-May) are expected to improve and most likely to be near average in most areas, with some below-average areas due to the persistence of current conditions and above-average temperatures. During summer (June-September), most areas will turn to below-average, due to below-average cumulative 2023/24 precipitation, above-average temperatures, or both.
- **Possible risks:** The combination of average to above-average precipitation and above-average temperatures during the remainder of the 2023/24 agricultural season may elevate the risk of yellow rust affecting the yield and productivity of wheat in the eastern, northern, northeastern, and southern provinces. Moreover, concerns exist about the risk of locust infestation in crops and pasture areas. The anticipated near-average to average cumulative precipitation in 2024 will enhance vegetation conditions, which may facilitate the growth of locust populations in the coming months, particularly in the northern and northeastern provinces.
- **Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI):** A worsen NDVI mainly in northern and eastern and central parts of the country is seen. The land surface Temperature (LST) has reduced significantly in the southern and western. This means that due to the negative LST the vegetation could be impacted.
- **Soil Moisture:** Currently below average and better than last year but expected to improve given soil moisture and expected precipitation.
- **Exchange Rate:** After its surge in January 2022, the value of AFN started to consistently appreciate against the USD during the year 2023 and remains relatively stable, hovering around AFN 70-74 per USD since November 2023. The monthly average exchange rate between AFN and USD was recorded at AFN 71.4 per 1 USD during March 2024 and the weekly average rate in third week of April stands at AFN 72.1 per 1USD.

[For more detailed information, please click here for the full meeting presentation.](#)

Action point:

1. For more updated information, please refer to the **EWIWG [key messages](#)** .

Minutes No	Agenda	Facilitator
2	IPC Findings	FSAC

IPC TWG conducted IPC AFI analysis workshop between 30 March- 4th April 2024 in Kabul to analyses the food security situation.

- **Analysts Involved and Main Datasets Used:** A total of 85 analysts and experts (28% female and 72% male) from 24 NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies collaborated in this comprehensive analysis, highlighting the multi-agency effort in tackling food insecurity through informed and data-driven approaches. The IPC analysis workshop utilized a variety of datasets including the Seasonal Food Security Assessment, humanitarian situation monitoring by REACH, FEWSNET's climate data, and nutrition data from the SMART Survey 2022 and other available datasets.
- **Current Findings (March - April 2024):** The analysis revealed that approximately 14.2 million individuals, or 32% of the population, are currently in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse, necessitating urgent food assistance to prevent further deterioration. The distribution and intensity of food insecurity across various regions were discussed, underlining the critical areas requiring immediate attention.
- **Projected Outlook (May - October 2024):** Looking ahead, the situation is expected to slightly improve with projections indicating that around 12.4 million people, or 28% of the population, will

remain in IPC Phase 3 or above. This projected decrease is attributed to the positive impacts anticipated from the forthcoming harvest season, improved market access, and increased livelihood opportunities.

- District Level Analysis:** In the district-level analysis of food insecurity in Afghanistan, the IPC findings indicate a concerning situation. For the period of March to April 2024, certain districts of provinces like Badakhshan, Bamyán, Nangarhar, and Herat are highlighted with significant populations—amounting to 208,000 individuals—experiencing IPC Phase 3 or higher levels of food insecurity. This represents 45% of the analyzed population in these areas facing crisis levels or worse. Projections for May to October 2024 suggest a marginal improvement due to upcoming harvest, access, and livelihood opportunities, with 194,000 individuals, or 42% of the population, anticipated to remain in serious conditions (IPC Phase 3 and above). These insights call for focused humanitarian efforts in the identified regions to alleviate the plight of those most at risk.
- Impact of Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA):** The effectiveness of humanitarian food assistance provided from January through April 2024 was analyzed. It was noted that the WFP is currently providing 50% of the required rations, which has played a crucial role in maintaining the vulnerable group above IPC Phase 4 and 5. Despite this, the assistance meets only half of the caloric needs, which is insufficient to elevate affected households to full food security (IPC Phase 1 and 2). WFP will assist 15% of the population in the current period while only 1% of the population is planned to be assisted in the projection period.
- Key Messages and Way Forward:** The meeting underscored the severe and persistent food insecurity challenges facing Afghanistan, highlighting the crucial need for escalated humanitarian food assistance and stronger advocacy for resource mobilization. The key messages stressed the necessity of gender-sensitive interventions and high-level advocacy to support vulnerable populations, particularly women and children. Looking forward, the cluster advocated for sustained food assistance, increased collaboration between humanitarian and development programs, and continuous monitoring of agricultural threats to ensure food security and resilience against future crises.

[For more detailed information, please click here for the full meeting presentation.](#)

Action point:

- FSAC will share both the snapshot and the complete Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report to partners, subject to the approval of steering committee.**

Minutes No	Agenda	Facilitator
3	Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) Updates	FSAC

FSAC presented the result of Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) workshop conducted on 25th of March 2024 with the participation of 18 NGO and INGO members.

Looking into 2024, the CCPM action plan intends to continue improving service delivery, strategic decision-making, and the overall planning and implementation of Cluster strategies. The action plan underscores the importance of coordination, gap analysis, capacity building, and accountability to affected populations. Advocacy efforts will also be strengthened.

During the FSAC meeting, the FSAC 2024 CCPM Action Plan was presented, detailing strategic actions for the upcoming year aimed at enhancing the cluster's service delivery and overall effectiveness in Afghanistan.

The action items include:

- Increasing coordination at national and regional levels to align service delivery with strategic priorities and developing mechanisms to prevent service duplication.
- Conducting comprehensive needs assessments and gap analyses to inform strategic decision-making and prioritization, with a focus on localized approaches to address emerging challenges.
- Developing and regularly updating sectoral plans, objectives, and indicators, while also ensuring adherence to common standards and guidelines, to support the response's strategic objectives.
- Providing monitoring and evaluation tools, allocating budgets for M&E activities, and offering specific training to enhance performance evaluation.
- Building capacity for preparedness and contingency planning through training based on donor requirements, defining cluster roles and responsibilities, and disseminating early warning reports among partners.
- Engaging in advocacy by identifying key concerns and establishing guidelines for messaging and action, along with forming Technical Working Groups for clearer advocacy roles.
- Strengthening accountability to affected populations by consulting with and involving them in decision-making, improving complaint mechanisms, and addressing issues related to protection from exploitation and abuse.

All actions are scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2024, the plan represents a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptive response in a challenging humanitarian context.

The Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) results for 2023 were discussed, with a focus on how the FSAC has performed against its core functions as defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The CCPM is integral in assessing the Cluster's accountability to affected populations and the efficacy in achieving strategic priorities.

The CCPM 2023 results on overall satisfaction with the Food Security Cluster/Sector show that no respondents rated the cluster as weak. A small percentage, 9.3%, found the cluster's performance to be unsatisfactory and indicated that improvements are required. The majority, 58.14%, rated the cluster as satisfactory but also noted that some improvements are necessary. A substantial 32.56% of respondents expressed strong satisfaction with the cluster's performance. This data reflects a generally positive perception of the Food Security Cluster's effectiveness, with recognition that there are areas where enhancements can be made.

[For more detailed information, please click here for the full meeting presentation.](#)

Action Point:

1. FSAC will share the CCPM report with partners

Minutes No	Agenda	Facilitator
4	Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) Revision	FSAC

FSAC presented the MEB revision of the transfer value and requests partners endorsement.

The Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC), in collaboration with other clusters, is undertaking the biannual revision of the intersectoral Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB). The revision process includes a review of the transfer value of the FSAC food basket in response to market price fluctuations. FSAC has established a mechanism for continuous monitoring of market prices through WFP's VAM and the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI). Since January 2022, there has been a downward trend in food basket prices, concurrent with the Afghani currency appreciating against the USD and decreasing diesel costs.

Recognizing the discrepancies between the actual costs of commodities in the FSAC basket and the previous transfer value, there has been an extensive consultation process. This involved discussions within the

Technical Working Group (TWG), the Agriculture and Livelihood Working Group, and the Cash and Voucher Working Group. Based on these consultations and the acknowledgment that while the dollar value may be higher, the cost in Afghani is less, a decision was made to adjust the transfer value to reflect the current market more accurately in Afghani terms.

The Technical Working Group (TWG) has reached a consensus that the revised transfer value should be set at 5800 AFN, reflecting the market's current state, and providing adequate purchasing power for the FSAC basket commodities. This decision will stand until the thresholds for revision are met or a further need for adjustment arises. Today, we seek endorsement from FSAC partners for this revised transfer value of 5800 AFN, ensuring our response aligns with the prevailing economic conditions and continues to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

PIN representative stated that in October of last year, when the new Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) was approved, the transitional processes regarding transferring values to new projects were unclear. Specifically, the cutoff dates were not adequately defined, causing potential disruptions during this transition period. To minimize such disruptions, it is essential to clarify the transitional guidelines and cutoff dates immediately and communicate these clearly to all stakeholders involved. Additionally, earlier this year, there were discussions with the CVWG regarding the appreciation of the Afghani against the US dollar. While solutions were proposed, ongoing mitigation measures need to be considered to handle potential future appreciations of the Afghani against the dollar.

FSAC responded that they will monitor and plan budgets in Afghani to ensure partners using the correct conversion rates between Afghani and USD. Notably, FSAC has ceased using USD transfer values, instead encouraging partners to plan their budgets based on prevailing USD values. They should inform donors that, although the current transfer value is in Afghani, budgeting is done in US dollars considering the exchange rates. To accommodate market volatility, FSAC advises partners to include a margin of approximately 5% for any financial adjustments. At the project's conclusion, this margin could be used to increase benefits to the beneficiaries, given the volatile market conditions. FSAC will continue monitoring price fluctuations and provide necessary advice. It is important to note that there will be flexibility for ongoing and existing projects concerning the new transfer values, which will apply only to new projects.

Regarding donor interactions, FSAC highlighted when applying for funding, it is crucial to specify the amount of money and explain that the FSAC-approved MEB includes a 5% buffer due to price volatility. However, it is ultimately up to the donors to accept this budgeting approach.

Lastly, the RRAA representative suggested including transportation costs in budget considerations. FSAC has clarified that these costs are covered by implementation costs.

[For more detailed information, please click here for full meeting presentation.](#)

Action Point:

FSAC is committed to regular monitoring of market prices FSAC's updated MEB guidelines will reflect these discussions, particularly the inclusion of a 5% buffer to account for financial volatility, aiding in more accurate and flexible budgeting across projects. Approval of the buffer is subject to the donor's consideration.

Minutes No	Agenda	Facilitator
5	NGO Co-Chair and SAG Election Results	FSAC

The FSAC NGO Co-Chair elections for 2024 conducted with robust engagement from 75 organizations, affirming the collective commitment to enhancing the coordination of humanitarian aid within

Afghanistan's food security and agricultural sectors. Welthungerhilfe (WHH) secured the leading position with 33% of the votes which was elected for FSAC NGOs co-chair role for 2024.

The elections for the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) concluded with participation from 59 organizations. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) took the 36% vote and CARE with 20% where For National NGOs, Just for Afghan Capacity and Knowledge (JACK) led with 43%, with the Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan (RRAA) also securing 21%. The four mentioned organizations, elected and representing both national and international NGOs, are now poised to take seats in the FSAC SAG, ready to drive strategic direction and influence the framework and priorities of the cluster's operations.

[For more detailed information, please click here for the full meeting presentation.](#)

Action Points:

- 1. FSAC will communicate with elected organizations for next steps.**

6	Agenda	Facilitator
	AHF update	FSAC

The allocation paper for the 2024 1st Allocation Paper is currently in the making and not endorsed by the AHF Advisory Board. This process implies to pre-identify locations and partners, chosen by AHF. The locations have been identified based on inter-agency analysis. organization's presence and operational capacity. The allocation will address two primary areas: drought and returnees, funding streams are allocated accordingly. For this allocation, the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) will exclusively consider national NGOs but one, in order to promote NGOs operation capacity eand presence on the ground.. The final list of NGOs has been completed by FSAC and submitted to OCHA for final approval. FSAC's strategy includes an integrated approach to support the returnee component, whereas FSAC activities will complement and integrate with other cluster activities, namely Health, Nutrition, and WASH.. If your organization has not been contacted by the FSAC team, your involvement is not required at this stage. The allocation paper is scheduled to be released between the end of April and early May.

[For more detailed information, please click here for the full meeting presentation.](#)

Action Points:

- 1. FSAC will communicate with pre-selected partners for the next steps, including arranging a dedicated meeting.**

7	Agenda	Facilitator
	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of Next Meeting 	FSAC

FSAC next meeting will be conducted on 3rd week of May, Wednesday 2024.