The first Food Security Sector (FSS) Working Group of 2019 was held with the aim of: i) revitalizing the FSS after a gap period due to the vacant position of the Coordinator since December 2018 and ii) re-establish a working relationship among partners and with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

**Discussion**

The meeting was co-chaired and opened by the MoA focal points, where Ms. Carla De Gregorio, the new FSS Coordinator was welcomed and wished success in her new assignment.

The FSS Coordinator presented herself highlighting her expertise in different areas and organizations and focusing on the importance of resuming the monthly meetings for the FS Sector after the six-month vacuum and reactivate the entire sector.

The floor was opened for all participants to present briefly themselves through a tour de table.

The Coordinator presented the Agenda of the meeting:

1. Introduction of the new FS Coordinator and Information Management Officer
2. Tour de table of FSS partners
3. Coordination Issues (4 Ws Matrix, Activity Info reporting, Q1 Log Frame, Ramadan distribution packages, Funding gaps and Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring Survey (CCPM))
4. Main events and next steps

Afterwards, the FSS Coordinator made a presentation tackling the different topics of the Agenda.
1. **Introduction of the new FS Coordinator and the Information Management Support**

A brief presentation on the Coordination team (Coordinator and the Information Management Officer) and their role in the FSS was done. In this context, a special acknowledgment was presented to Ms. Dabbak, OCHA, for her long term and current support to the FSS reporting.

2. **Self-introduction of the FSS partners and their interventions**

Representatives of the FFS WG partners introduced themselves and briefly presented their interventions in the different governorates. This was an opportunity for partners to become better acquainted with each other’s interventions.

**Dorcas:** Delivering school feeding for children in Antelias, Aley and Burj El Barajneh camp that are prepared by volunteering women. In addition, following the winter storm, around 10,000 food parcels were distributed.

Comments were raised about distribution of fresh milk to children and to share a fact sheet of the products they are distributing.

**SHEILD:** Working with WFP in South and Nabatiyeh in direct food assistance to refugees and Lebanese though e-cards.

Under the WFP Livelihoods Programme, Food for Assets (FFA) and Food for Trainings (FFT) are being implemented. For FFA, in 2019, around 10 sites were afforested (86 ha) and the labors were paid by SHEILD. However, the mortality rate was high and for the maintenance, in the majority of the cases, it was done on voluntary basis, as the municipalities have no budget for that. As for the FFT, 15 trainings were carried out in the South on topics such as mechanics, electricity but not agriculture.

For Reforestation, a comment was raised regarding the extent of coordination with the municipalities.

**CONCERN Worldwide:** They are working on 5 value chains in Akkar/Danniyeh: peaches, quinoa, potatoes, aromatic plants (herbs, oregano) and tomatoes under greenhouses.

Most interventions aim at strengthening the capacity of farmers in adopting good agricultural practices and integrated pest management. CONCERN has Memorandum of Understanding with the Lebanese Agriculture Research Institute (LARI) and a Letter of Agreement with FAO for the establishment of two Farmers Field Schools (FFS) in Akkar for tomatoes under greenhouses and improve the practices as well as the water efficiency.

As for potatoes, CONCERN is working closely with René Moawad Foundation for the adoption of the Global gap. In addition, an intervention on dairy is being implemented (for home-based processing).

A cash for work component is also being implemented where agricultural workers received trainings (50% women) to build chicken coops (200 beneficiaries).

Comments were raised on the importance of markets assessments to be conducted for the value chains as the objective and the main concern of the farmers is to find markets to sell their local products in addition to ensuring sustainability once projects (subsidy/support) ends.
**IOCC:** Working on community kitchens (Tripoli, Zahle, Khyara and Miniara) involving 670 households (60% Syrians and 40% Lebanese in rural areas and 70% Lebanese and 30% Syrians in urban areas). Lebanese women prepare the food and the hot meals are distributed. IOCC and the cooperatives manage the community kitchens. The assumed cost per meal is 12 USD.

In addition, IOCC and WFP are distributing school snack in 40 public schools, including fruits and milk.

**LOST:** The main interventions include FFA for the rehabilitation of agricultural roads and reforestation. In addition, irrigation pipelines have been installed in Budai (Baalbeck) and they were conveyed from a lake built by the Green Plan. Around 5,880 pomegranate seedlings have been planted with drip irrigation pipes. For the maintenance of irrigation canals, an agreement has been signed with the municipality for 3 years.

For reforestation, carobs are cultivated especially in Arsal (Anti-Lebanon) where reforestation component is in line with the production of edible products.

FFT is also carried out with the support of LARI who are training farmers on practices from planting until the agro-processing of pomegranate to produce a Balsamic vinegar “دبس الرمّان”

LOST is working as well on the community farm approach, where a local market will allow farmers to purchase seedlings at lower price and a market to purchase vegetables seedlings after their germination. With the support of the MoA extension services in Baalbeck, farmers are trained on the different agricultural practices. In the same context, LOST is working on rehabilitating markets to allow farmers to sell their produce directly at the market place.

Furthermore, LOST is establishing field kitchens in Bekaa in 6 municipalities where 500 families per day are provided with food and employing 1,800 families and there are gaps to fill the running costs.

LOST is also working with WFP to develop a nutritional curriculum for students in cooperation with the Ministry of Education.

LOST is working with cooperatives to carry out trainings to farmers to become skilled in what?

The beneficiaries in Baalbeck are 60% Lebanese and 40% Syrians whereas in total they are split equally between Lebanese and Syrians.

**MCC:** is providing food vouchers in Beirut and the South for Syrian Refugees in cooperation with the Civil Society organisations.

**LRI:** The Lebanese Reforestation Initiative is working on reforestation, forest management and eco-tourism.

**ACTED:** is supporting cooperatives in two value chains: honey and olive oil. The aim of the support is to improve productivity and the services provided in addition to build capacities of farmers in marketing. To this effect, work is carried out to enhance cooperatives grouping allowing lessons learned and exchange of expertise as well as supporting marketing of products.

**AVSI:** is working with MoA and FAO in revising the curriculum of the agriculture education technical schools for the Baccalaureate Technique (BT) and providing vocational trainings for both Lebanese and
Syrians youth on food production and food processing. Trainings on entrepreneurship were also carried out for 40 beneficiaries. The outreach materials will be shared with the FSSWG once finalized.

**WVI**: Supported Lebanese farmers after the winter storm with cash money (444 farmers supported with 330 USD each) for replanting their lands. In addition, Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration is being implemented in Akkar for 580 beneficiaries with the involvement of the municipalities by providing cash for work for reforestation purposes.

Furthermore, WVI is digging canals to reduce flood risks and is working with WFP and UNHCR in Bekaa to provide food assistance.

3. **Coordination issues**

The Coordinator recalled the most important pending coordination issues. Main gaps were noticed in:

- **The update of the 4Ws Matrix**, previously shared with all the partners by the current IMO. The objective is to identify the intervention of the partners (Who, what, to whom and where) in addition to identify the reasons for not reporting under the Activity Info. This will help to identify active partners, update the partners’ mailing list and include the contact focal point for the FSS;

- **The Ramadan distribution package** matrix was also shared with the FSS partners to identify the food packages distributed during the Holy season of Ramadan as well as the beneficiaries and the area of intervention;

- **The Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring Survey (CCPM)** prepared by the Global Food Security Cluster (gFSC) whose link was shared with the partners via email. The aim of this survey is a self-assessment of the performance of the FSS sector (against core functions and accountability to affected populations). The results are supposed to be shared with the FSSWG to come up with an action plan to reinforce weakness areas and seek for improvements; **Funding gaps during the 2019 first quarter** was presented against the budget appeal for the Sector highlighting that 11% of the total appeal was received during the first quarter;

4. **Main Events**

The FSS Coordinator announced the following events for the months to come:

- A one-day workshop (tentative June-July 2019) with all partners for the revision of the FSS Log frame and its indicators (participatory approach);

- The FSS planning process under the LCRP 2020 scheduled to start in August 2019 (until December 2019) with the update of the FSS strategy with the core group. The draft of the strategy will be shared for comments with the partners. The logframe as well will be updated;

- Mid-year update on the Support to public institutions (PIST). Partners shall contribute by sharing information with the Coordination team.

The updated reporting calendar was as well presented.
**Action points**

- Request from the partners to update their lists in the Contact hub (through the UNHCR portal) in order to identify the active ones;
- Brainstorming meetings with partners during the next LCRP planning process for 2020 and the preparation of the FSS strategy to include as an indicator food packages if storms hit a particular area;
- Request the partners to respect to the extent possible the dates of the following: monthly reporting of activities under the Activity Info, attending the monthly meetings of the FSSWG, sharing assessments from the field and success or case study stories, the quarterly funding update and the quarterly log frame update. In addition, contribute to the preparation of the mid-year dashboard and the end-of-year dashboard of the FSS;
- A survey will be shared with partners to request their feedback on setting up technical sub-groups.

**Other**

Ms. Salibi, MoA focal point, requested more information on the Mid Term Review mission of the LCRP/UNSF carried out in May 2019 and it was agreed that WFP Head of Programme, will share the Terms of References, the presentation made during their first mission as well as the draft inception report recently prepared.

A second mission as a follow-up will be carried out in June 2019 and the final report to be ready by end of July-mid August.

**Follow up**

- Bilateral meetings between the Coordination team, FSS partners and other Sectors Coordinators will continue and create linkages specifically with basic assistance, livelihoods, social stability and education sectors;
- Training on Activity Info reporting and select training needs;
- Work towards setting up coordination structure at decentralized level.

**Next WG meeting will be held on June 11 at MoA.**