The Food Security Sector Working Group held its regular monthly meeting, the third one since resuming its activities with the appointment of the National Coordinator on 09 July 2019 at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) premises.

**Discussion**

The meeting was co-chaired by the MoA with a welcoming opening statement by Ms. Majida Mcheik, the MoA focal point for the Food Security Sector. It was followed by an intervention of Ms. De Gregorio, the FSS Coordinator, presenting the Agenda of the meeting which included the following:

1. **Presentation on The Environment Marker for the LCRP: “Applying Environmental Safeguards to LCRP’s Activities”** (the Ministry of Environment)
2. **Presentation on the revision of the Food Security Sector logframe** (the Coordination team)
3. **AOB**

**1. Presentation on the Environment Marker for the LCRP**

Ms. Daniel delivered a presentation on the Environment Marker with four main chapters: (i) a background on the Environment Markers; (ii) overview of the environmental safeguards in Lebanon; (iii) coding of LCRP Environmental Marker; and (iv) steps required in applying the Environmental Marker.

She explained that the reason of the Environment Marker is to mainstream environment challenges within the LCRP activities, applying the Do-No-Harm principles. It is worth mentioning that the Gender Marker was initiated in 2017.

Afterwards, a description of the legal basis of the Environment Safeguards along with the application decrees was presented stating that activities are coded based on the environment impact and this done in consultation with all sectors. It is to be noted that a Strategic Environment Assessment is
required for all interventions allowing to mitigate any potential environmental impact. The Environment Marker Guide describes the steps to follow, once a project is identified and more details on Environment safeguards are available at www.moe.gov.lb.

Currently, the Ministry of Environment is working on the development of the Environmental Marker for 2019. This includes the following: coding of activities in consultation with all sectors, drafting of the Environmental Marker Activity Review, drafting of the Environmental Marker Guide based on Lebanon’s Environmental legislation, presentation of the Environmental Markers to all concerned stakeholders (Inter-Agency, Inter-sector, Donors, Sector WGs and UN agencies) through the challenges and the lessons learned.

In addition, the Environmental Marker Code was further explained according to the level of environmental impact: (A) no negative environmental impact at all; (B) potential moderate negative environment impact requiring screening of the activity and an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE); and (C) significant negative environment impact requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the activity to be conducted.

It is to be noted that under the FSS, 26 activities were classified as “A”, 12 were coded “B” and no activities were classified as “C”.

The ETF team presented as well the main steps needed in applying Environmental Markers since the project identification and its impact classification requiring further screening under a specific template for Codes B and C activities for either an IEE or an EIA. The public institution participation is through certified consultants from the MoE carrying out the assessments and preparing scoping reports.

At the end, the ETF team presented examples of activities falling under each of the Environmental Marker Code and best practices to be adopted when designing a project in terms of early identification of environmental risks, incorporation of environmental design responses, the involvement of communities and stakeholders in the process and the consideration of gender and age.

The whole process is supported technically from the MoE.

Following the presentation, the main points raised were those related to the mandatory aspect of the environment assessment, its legal basis, awareness from the donors’ perspective, more clarification on the duration of the submission of the IEE and the EIA reports and their related costs. In addition, questions were raised regarding the way of classification of the environmental markers and, the environment management plan generally associated with a pledge.

As a result, it was recommended that each partner shall include a budget for such assessments and the MoE has its own list of certified consultants to perform the environment impact studies required.

Finally, it was agreed that for the FSSWG, additional sessions would be held to further understand how activities have been classified under A or B and eventually validate them.
2. Presentation on the revision of the FSS Log frame

Ms. De Gregorio presented to the FSSWG the main proposed amendments to the current FSS Log Frame that once approved and agreed will be reflected in the Activity Info Reporting.

Under Outcome 1 (indicator A) for food availability improvement: as no means of verification was available, it has been suggested to include a question on the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) to capture changes in the FSS and the impact on Food security.

In this context, some partners stated that PDM did not work properly in the past and that it was not too ethical to ask beneficiaries after cash distribution. However, partners explained that for the cash, WFP was monitoring food prices and the inflation effect.

The FSS Coordinator asked all partners to share the funding gaps for cash.

Under the outcome 2 for food access improvement, LOST explained that it has a cash for work activity with UNICEF and it has been agreed that they share a brief with the FSSWG.

Safadi Foundation stated that people attend training sessions and were paid and that was harmful to women as they couldn’t leave before the end of the sessions. In addition, they pointed out that there was a confusion between food aid and food security at a certain stage.

WFP explained that a difference should be made between FFA (where a unique number of participants is being cumulated) and Cash for work.

Under the output 2.4, employability skills were targeting youth (15-25 years), a suggestion was made to include 2 sub-activities one targeting the youth and the other one targeting elderly people disaggregated by age groups (example 25-60 years and 60+ years).

As for adding activities under output 2.5 for the creation of jobs, WFP suggested that money should be allocated after the end of the project to conduct a survey on sampling basis to monitor if after receiving trainings, the beneficiaries accessed jobs.

Under Outcome 3 for food Utilization, it has been suggested to rephrase it to better reflect the support in terms of trainings.

3. Any Other Business (AOB)

The FSS Coordinator informed the participants on the following:

- The new government policy on foreign work permits (with the ministry of labor);
- The hard structure dismantlement through the Lebanese Armed Forces interventions;
- The VASyR preliminary results will be made available by July 2019;
- The main dates for the Mid-Term Review of the LCRP;
- Review of the Targeting process for cash assistance;
• The results of the Survey Monkey on FSS technical subgroups and local coordination structure. Most participants showed interest in having two technical sub-groups: one for food security and the other for agricultural livelihood and 80% of respondents were in favor of having FS Coordination structure at field-regional levels.

As for the agriculture livelihood component, the importance of ensuring that the food rations are from Lebanese producers’ origin was highlighted.

**Action points**

• Partners to update their lists in the Contact hub (through the UNHCR portal) in order to identify the active ones;
• Partners to upload related documents and shared drive of the FS;
• Partners to provide the coordination team with the 4 Ws matrix which was shared previously along with the Ramadan food distribution packages (if applicable) in order to identify their respective interventions;
• Partners to present their candidature for the FSSWG co-chairs as until present only ACTED showed its interest;
• VASyR results to be presented in the next FSSWG meeting in August by WFP.

**Date of next WG meeting to be decided through a doodle survey (20 or 27 August 2019) as the current date of 13 August falls in a week with many religious holidays.**