



Palestinian Food Security Sector

PALESTINIAN FSS

The Food Security Sector (FSS) in Palestinian territories was created in December 2012 and brings together UN and non-UN humanitarian organizations on an equal footing. It includes three thematic pillars namely; Food Assistance, Cash Programming and Agriculture.

The FSS is led by



The FSS in 2016 is funded by



FOOD SECURITY SECTOR
Strengthening Humanitarian Response

FSS 2016 4th Quarter Highlights

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In brief

HPC 2017

Within the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) 2017 process, FSS partners carried out an overall revision of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), initially at the working group (WGs) level in both West Bank and Gaza Strip, then through the work of the general meetings. Three WGs meetings were held in Gaza and two in Ramallah for this purpose. Thereafter, two area-specific HPC workshops took place, in both localities. These workshops were conducted with the participation of different FSS partners, line ministries, UN agencies, local and international NGOs, and were largely attended (~40 presence each). As a result of these meetings and workshops, FSS partners developed a response framework, by identifying major humanitarian needs and elaborating the



priorities of interventions in the coming round of the HPC. This informed FSS partners in defining their project proposals.

Having detailed projects' information is crucial for providing proper and comprehensive vision of the response plan. In this regard, the FSS developed a dedicated project matrix format, asking all partners to provide data at governorate level, and against the FSS set of indicators. This aims at facilitating coordination amongst FSS partners on the ground, avoid overlapping and duplications of projects, in either the type of intervention or the targeted governorates and localities. Finally, all data from these matrixes will be the basis for further elaboration and monitoring of activities related to the implementation of FSS projects throughout 2017.

The endorsement of the projects to be included into the HRP required the constitution of a vetting panel, with representative line ministries, UN lead agencies, and representatives from PNGO, AIDA, OCHA, and the FSS gender focal points. The FSS HNO and HRP 2017 documents have been finalized during the last quarter, through a participatory process.

A new approach has been introduced for the submission of project proposal from FSS partners. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) recognised that due to the protracted nature of the humanitarian situation/crisis in Palestine, no significant changes were appreciated compared with the previous year. It was therefore decided by the HCT to proceed with a re-validation and update process of the needs overview and the country objectives. Within this approach, FSS partners had the opportunities to re-validate and update projects that have been vetted during the 2016 cycle and were still eligible for submission for the new HPC. These projects could benefit from a fast-track process of vetting. The opportunity to submit new project proposals remained available too. 79 projects were submitted by 44 organizations (46 for Gaza Strip only, 30 for West Bank only and 3 for West Bank and Gaza Strip jointly) according to the following table:

Region	GS		WB		WBGS	Tot
	fast-track	new	fast-track	new	fast-track	
Submitted	22	24	15	15	3	79
Returned	1	17	3	10	0	31
Rejected	3	9	0	6	0	18
Approved	19	15	15	9	3	
Total Approved	34		24		3	61

Two vetting sessions took place separately in Ramallah and Gaza in order to review and approve projects

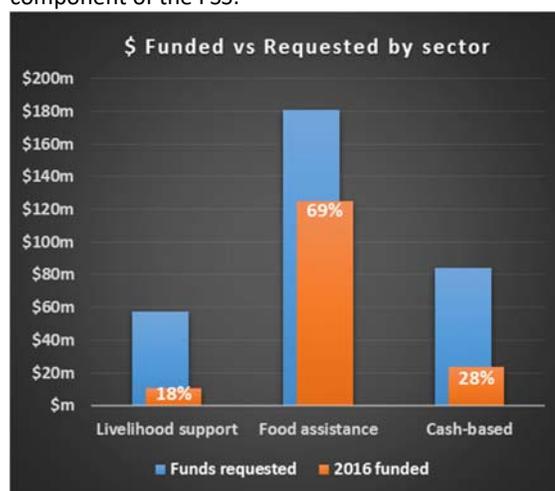
submitted by FSS partners. Based on the vetting panels' decision, 61 projects submitted by 20 partners have been approved under the FSS HRP 2017.

29 projects out of 61 are submitted by Palestinian organisations and the rest are international partners including UN agencies, mostly working in partnership with Palestinian implementers. Total FSS response plan, including the cost for coordination is ~\$300m (54.8% of the overall oPt HRP 2017, which amount to \$547m), aiming at reaching approximately 1.57m food insecure people, with ¼ of them living in the Gaza Strip.

HRP 2016 monitoring

The FSS is part of the global network of humanitarian coordination, and FSS partners contribute to feed monitoring systems like the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). The FTS is a global, on-line, real-time database of humanitarian funding needs and international contributions. It serves to improve resource allocation decisions and advocacy, by clearly indicating to what extent populations in crisis receive humanitarian aid, and in what proportion to needs. FTS offers a series of analytical tables that show humanitarian aid flows to specific crises, and also allows users to produce custom tables on demand. FTS is managed by OCHA (in Geneva).

The situation assessed as of 31st December 2016 showed a funding ratio of 49% for the HRP 2016, considering the whole year. This is equivalent to an overall amount of \$159m received by FSS partners in 2016 against a demand of \$322m. The graph below shows the 2016 funding ratio for the different component of the FSS:

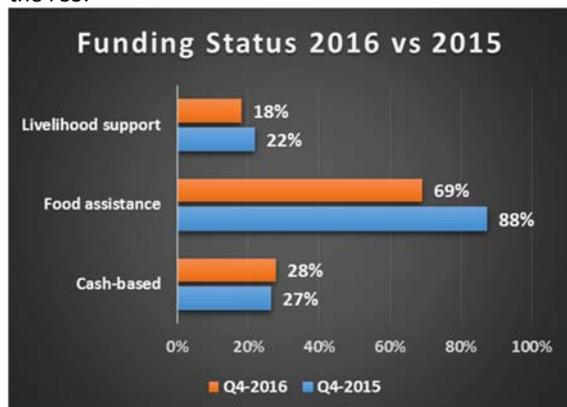


Graph.1: HRP 2016 FSS projects funding status as of end of 2016

Once again, also in 2016 it is quite evident the difference in the funding patterns among the three main components of the FSS, food assistance, cash-based interventions and livelihood support activities, where food assistance includes food in kind and e-vouchers modalities.

Livelihood support and cash-based programmes are still the most lower-funded components. Livelihood support in particular shows approximately 82% funding gap. With regard to food assistance, despite the larger absolute value in terms of funding received, the ratio of funding received compared to the request submitted falls down to 69%, compared to 88% last year.

The graph below shows a comparison between funding ratios of 2015 and 2016 for the three components of the FSS:



Graph.2: HRP 2016 FSS projects funding level 2015 and 2016

Only 11 NGOs out of 33 received funds for implementing 13 projects out of 38 proposals submitted by NGOs which were part of the response plan. The scarcity of funding for supporting vulnerable agricultural livelihoods continues its negative pattern. There is a very high risk that certain categories of people in need won't receive the required assistance. It is the case for vulnerable farmers and herders leaving in Area C.

Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) gap filler

During this quarter, the HPF projects approved under the FSS continued to be implemented. In November in Gaza Strip, field visits have been conducted to the HPF projects: Oxfam Italy (OIT) jointly with HPF team, ACTED and Mercy Corps (MC). OIT is implementing a project for livestock breeders including animal sheds rehabilitation and providing fodders and veterinarian services. MC and ACTED are implementing plant production activities including rehabilitation of greenhouses, open lands, water ponds and installation of irrigation water carrier lines. Most works are being implemented through the CfW scheme. Having achieved some budget savings, both MC and ACTED are expected to ask for approval adding new beneficiaries to their projects.

In the West Bank, field visits were also conducted to the HPF project. ESDC is implementing a project aiming at responding to the outstanding needs as result of the demolition incidents in 2016 as well as implementing

activities to improve the accessibility to the agricultural road located in Area C. The response covered three main governorate in the north of West Bank (Tubas, Salfit, and Nablus). Thanks to budget savings, ESDC is expected to increase the original outputs related to the rehabilitation of agricultural roads.

Resilience Marker (RM)

Following the finalisation of the vetting process for the projects for the HRP 2017, the FSS initiated the making of the Resilience Marker (RM) tool, for a specific analysis of projects proposals. With the facilitation of the FSS team, a group of committed partners constituted a panel of experts tasked to fine tuning the RM tool, and applying it to the set of the projects under FSS HRP. This process started in November and December in the West Bank and Gaza respectively. This phase of the RM process is structured in three phases:

1. Orientation/training of the local experts on the use of the RM. This includes implementation of amendments and agreement on the modalities adopted for scoring projects against a common set of criteria.
2. Individual scoring of the projects. This is approximately 4-6 weeks.
3. Consensus on the final marking. This is another meeting where members come with their personal scoring card, and the group elaborate case by case.

Following the training/orientation stage, two sessions were needed for the consolidation of the scoring process for the West Bank. The consolidation meeting was very important for increasing the understanding of the tool, and of the way to critically look at projects, as well as for clarifying the criteria of scoring and exchanging views and ideas.

In the Gaza Strip, stage one and two were carried out. In the next quarter, the FSS team will continue to facilitate the finalisation of the process.

...more on resilience...

In November, a Resilience Conference on Palestine took place in Amman, with the facilitation of UNDP. The head of FAO West Bank and Gaza Strip office was invited to present FAO's experience in this regard.

His intervention highlighted that resilience is a concept that bridges humanitarian responses and development efforts, which is necessary to adapt to changing operational realities that include more crises, involving more people, for longer periods; more Interdependent challenges; declining capacity to meet needs. Measuring resilience is essential to operationalizing it. For instance, once a methodology for measurement is agreed, resilience marking can be used to select projects based on their potential to enhance resilience. An example of prioritizing for resilience in

implementation modalities can be found in the response of the FAO West Bank and Gaza Strip office to the July-August 2014 conflict in the Gaza Strip, which protected the herders' animals through a market based approach. Rather than physically delivering fodder and water to herders, these inputs were procured locally, which both minimized costs and created positive externalities by injecting cash into the local economy.

Technical Working Groups (TWGs) update

Through some of the technical working groups (livestock, crop production, and emergency and preparedness), FSS partners met and discussed about winterization measures.

Meetings held separately in Gaza and Ramallah aimed at finalising practical guidance for FSS partners, focused on winter preparations good practices, based on experience accumulated from previous years. It was underlined how differently food security needs apply to vulnerable groups of men and women, in particular the elderly, boys and girls, and the need to prioritise accordingly. It was also stressed the importance of supporting self-production of food items, the logistical constraints to outreach the most vulnerable, pre-positioning/warehousing of food commodities, customization of targeting, assistance modality (inputs, products, cash, voucher, etc...) as well as distribution mechanisms. From previous years, the FSS was concerned for families living in shelters in Gaza Strip mainly, herders communities and farmers living in buffer zones and Area C. Due to winter-related livelihood threats, these groups are likely to have depleted their food reserves. This could force them to face significant shortage of nutritious food products in sufficient quantities to live the harsh winter months, if left without additional food and livelihood support.

Response to damages of livelihood assets

The FSS continued the efforts to support the victims of demolition cases at the household level. In order to ensure a coordinated, timely and effective response to destruction of properties, the FSS started sharing with partners the outstanding needs among the affected households aiming at mitigating the impact of sudden, external man-made shocks, which prevents households from continuing their traditional livelihood activities, and puts at risk their food security status. Four outstanding cases have been shared in this quarter.

Gaza Inter Agency Contingency Plan (IACP)

The focus of the contingency plan remains on the Gaza Strip, in particular on the arrangements related to the adaptation of the Designated Emergency Shelters (DES) for hosting potential IDPs. In this regard, it was agreed between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) that the science labs in the allocated schools as PA DES could be

used as kitchenettes for daily use, but not for cooking. All these arrangements were agreed upon with OCHA. For this purpose the FSS conducted 2 joint field visits with MoE and MoSD to verify the possibility of using these labs as kitchenettes. Needs and recommendations were delivered to OCHA, related clusters, and to agencies who have secured funds to support eight PA DES. WFP in particular is engaged in supporting this activity.

Gaza wastewater lagoon collapse

As planned, the emergency response works to address the lagoon collapse have been finalized on mid of November, thanks to funding secured by Oxfam. The implementation was undertaken in partnership with PARC. FSS Gaza team conducted a joint visit with Oxfam humanitarian coordinator to check the situation in the affected area after rehabilitation works have been carried out. In conclusion, 80 dunums of land were rehabilitated (vs. 67 planned) for 34 farmers. Activities included: land wash, soil testing, disinfection and soil mud cover in some areas, land reclamation and distribution of protection kits, along with conducting hygiene awareness sessions. Build Back Better (BBB) approach has been adopted during the implementation of this activity.

Updates from FSS partners

FAO

In 2016, as in previous years, the Humanitarian Response Plan was dramatically underfunded with only USD 2.9 million mobilized for FAO's work in the West Bank and Gaza Strip out of a needed USD 33.8 million. Nonetheless, FAO benefitted almost 2,600 households by enhancing their access to assets and resources, including through the establishment or rehabilitation of cisterns for agricultural use with a total capacity of 5,150 m³; distribution of drought tolerant seeds to revitalize pastures for 66,500 animals; restoration of 500 households' access to water through the rehabilitation of 11 agricultural groundwater wells, three reservoirs and 25 water ponds in the Gaza Strip. FAO support also included the construction of small-scale, home-based food production units for 160 households in the Gaza Strip.

For more information on FAO activities:

<http://www.fao.org/emergencies/countries/detail/en/c/161517/>

WFP

In October, November and December, thanks to contributing partners, WFP assisted more than 480,000 food insecure non-refugees in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank through both cash-based transfers (40 %), using an electronic voucher redeemable in local shops, and direct in-kind food assistance (60%). Women and children accounted for 70 percent of those reached.

Under its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200709, with an approved budget of USD 210 million over 2015-2017, WFP has three objectives: 1) meeting urgent food needs and enhancing the food consumption and dietary diversity of the most vulnerable non-refugee populations; 2) supporting livelihoods, fostering early recovery and enhancing the resilience and coping mechanisms of fragile communities in the face of socio-economic hardships; 3) supporting the Palestinian Authority's capacity to deliver cost-effective and protective national safety nets, and strengthening its readiness to respond to external shocks, in collaboration with United Nations agencies.

WFP links its food assistance to local production and uses its purchasing power to foster agricultural development and connect small-scale producers, food-processors, retailers and consumers. Since 2011, WFP has invested more than USD 215 million in the Palestinian economy, including USD 135 million through cash-based transfers. Approximately 96 percent of WFP food items available through vouchers are produced and/or processed locally. For the first time in December, WFP's vouchers were incorporated in the National Food Safety Net in Gaza, serving 10,000 people with the Ministry of Social Development acting as WFP's implementing partner. This transition is aligned with WFP's strategy to provide a diversified diet to its beneficiaries, support the Government national plan and food security objectives and boost the local economy. Through WFP's innovative development of the voucher platform, the number of beneficiaries receiving vouchers grew from 51,500 in 2009 when it was first implemented to 187,000 in 2016, marking a 260% increase. In 2017, WFP will further expand the use of the voucher modality in Gaza.

Insufficient and inflexible funding is hampering WFP's ability to operate and meet all of the immediate food needs of a highly-vulnerable population. WFP was constrained to reduce the voucher entitlements by 20 percent for 177, 000 people over October-December. Additional support is required to build on achievements and prevent a deterioration in the food security and nutrition status of the poorest Palestinian people. In 2017, WFP needs USD 60 million to reach and provide uninterrupted assistance to 500,000 people.

For more information on WFP's activities:
<http://www.wfp.org/countries/palestine>

FSS meetings/events in this quarter

- 2 HPC-HNO workshops
- 3 HPC orientation sessions for FSS partners
- 2 Vetting session for the HRP 2017
- 4 meetings for resilience marker (RM)
- 2 Winterization meetings in West Bank and Gaza
- 6 Field visit to HPF projects
- 3 Jerusalem ICCG meetings
- 2 Gaza ICCG meetings
- 1 Meeting with the HC for the access issues
- 1 HCT meeting
- 3 meetings with line ministries
- PCBS launch for SDGs monitoring
- 2 events of HRP-2017 launch (West Bank & Gaza)
- 1 event of CRS launch of the online registration system for the Envision Gaza 2020
- 3 meetings with gender and advocacy focal points
- 5 WG meetings; 1 Cash Program WG, 2 Livestock and 2 Crop production WG meetings
- 1 Emergency Preparedness WG meeting
- 2 OCHA meetings (IDPs, CwC)
- 1 HCT Advocacy WG, Jerusalem
- 1 DES coordination meeting
- 1 DES vetting session for the HRP projects
- 1 workshop about HEA
- 2 workshops to develop the agriculture sector strategy (Gaza and West Bank)
- 1 workshop for the GBV in Gaza
- 1 workshop for HPC gender feedback & lessons learned
- 1 ARA workshop by FSS Advocacy focal point, PUI
- 1 Field visit to shelter cluster interventions
- 1 Field visit with FAO in Gaza for hanged strawberry and pine apple cultivation
- Meeting with PUI and protection cluster
- Meeting with ACCO/PMO in Ramallah
- Meeting with CESVI country director
- Meeting with UNDP on the Conference on Resilience
- 2 Palm Dates Committee meetings
- 1 roundtable discussion for projects coordination organized by ACAD
- 2 meeting with different donors for possible funding for the FSS & SEFSec
- 4 Inter-cluster meetings and 1 field visit on demolition cases in the WB (with Shelter cluster)
- 3 FSAU meeting, RM sessions
- 1 inter-cluster training on gender in HPC 2017 WB
- 1 HRP 2017 Technical Workshop organized by OCHA

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<http://fscluster.org/state-of-palestine>