

Palestinian Food Security Sector



FOOD SECURITY SECTOR
Strengthening Humanitarian Response

Background

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

Lead Agencies



Donors

This FSS publication was made possible with 2015 funding from:



FSS 2015 1st Quarter Highlights

- ✓ **SEFSec new methodology agreed by the FSAU**
- ✓ **PCBS and WFP signed the LoA for SEFSec 2014**
- ✓ **In-depth Agricultural Damages Assessment in Gaza**
- ✓ **Winter storms needs and response**
- ✓ **EFSA Agric component survey report finalised**
- ✓ **Operational coordination**
- ✓ **Sector performance evaluation survey**
- ✓ **FS Watch new edition**
- ✓ **Technical Working Groups review**
- ✓ **Steering Committee held in February**
- ✓ **List of partners update**
- ✓ **25 FSS partners signed the Charter**
- ✓ **3 Trainings events on Protection**
- ✓ **8 meetings** – this includes FSS general meetings, FSAU and the TWGs.

In brief

SEFSec new methodology agreed by the FSAU

The Food Security Sector Analysis Unit (FSAU) has reached an agreement on the revised methodology for analysing data for the next Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey (SEFSec) exercise. The three main pillars of the new methodology are poverty, food deprivation and resilience. Following this important milestone within the revision process, it is now time to focus on more technical and statistical fine-tuning and validation. With the support of FSS lead agencies staff, the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) will lead this next crucial phase aiming at a final endorsement of the methodology by national stakeholders. Data collection for the next SEFSec exercise started in April 2015.



In-depth agricultural damages assessment in Gaza

The agricultural sector suffered extended and intensive damages due to the last conflict in Gaza. The FSS carried out a detailed assessment at farm level. The FSS took the lead to assist MoA in the data entry process. Specialized data entry clerks were hired and they worked at MoA office under the supervision of and in coordination with FSS staff.

FAO also supported the MoA with laptops to speed up the data entry process and increase the capacity of working team. More than 26,000 questionnaires were fed to the system.

Winter storms needs and response

Two winter storms hit Palestine in January and February 2015; these two storms, called Huda and Jana, brought low temperatures, strong winds, snowfall, and rains. This resulted in temporary additional food needs and severe but localized floods affecting open fields, farmers' greenhouses, and livestock herders. More than 9,000 farmers were directly affected in the West Bank and Gaza strip.

The FSS, in close coordination with MoA, has been working closely with partners and field coordination has been ongoing between national and international partners to optimize existing capacities and avoid overlaps. The response was managed at the governorate level through an on-line system directly managed by Palestinian authorities. FSS and other clusters/sectors were therefore able to track needs and response at community level.

The FSS and MoA called for four ad-hoc meetings in order to coordinate assessments, response and mobilize the funding. Two potential projects are identified in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, and the FSS is actively engaged with implementing NGOs in order to validate the list of beneficiaries, to set eligibility criteria and to support the submission of project proposals to the OCHA-

coordinated pooled-fund Emergency Response Fund (ERF).

Damages and Losses Assessment (DaLA) agricultural survey

The FSS contracted Al-Sahel Company to undertake an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the 51-day conflict in 2014 which includes a rapid Damages and Losses Assessment (DaLA) in the agricultural sector. The DaLA provides an in-depth understanding of the livelihood conditions and needs of farmers in the Gaza Strip by:

- assessing the level and scale to which Gaza farmers (in plant, livestock and fishery sub-sectors) have resumed production, according to the level of damage and losses sustained in the various farming communities;
- identifying the constraints faced by Gaza farmers to resume production at pre-assault levels, with a focus on constraints that remain largely unaddressed; and
- making actionable programming recommendations for supporting early and long-term recovery in the agriculture sector.

The assessment methodology followed a qualitative inquiry approach based on rapid participatory assessment techniques, and guided by standard data collection tools such as focus group discussions, secondary research and in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

The FSS shared and presented the report to all partners and highlighted short and medium term recommendations. For the short term, the report recommended urgent support for plant production farmers through subsidizing the cost of land leveling, soil testing, and rehabilitation activities as needed. Rebuilding and repairing damaged wells and irrigation networks, and providing fuel subsidies to farmers to enhance the viability of their agricultural activities were highlighted. For livestock farmers, provide them with material

and cash assistance to rebuild makeshift animal sheds using local materials as well as assistance to restock their animals which includes provide adequate feed (3-6 months) for the restocked animals. For fisher folks, support them by providing boats and fishing equipment such as (GPS, sonar equipment, motors, nets, etc).

On the medium-term, the report recommended providing farmers, farmers organizations and agricultural value chain actors with technical assistance and incentives to enhance production and productivity. Examples include extension, improved farm management, crop diversification and greater capacity to produce high-value, climate and saline-tolerant crops. Additional recommendations include reduce production and marketing costs through enhanced agricultural practices, tapping wind and solar energy, collective marketing and purchasing, and greater local market linkages.

The full report is available for download at the FSS website <http://foodsecuritycluster.net/document/dala-efsa-2nd-component-report>.

Operational coordination

The FSS continued its active participation at various levels of the inter-cluster coordination system led by OCHA. In January, FSS team attended the 1-day inter-cluster retreat focused on 2015 work plan and the revision of the inter-cluster terms of references. The FSS is also contributing to the inter-cluster contingency plan preparations. During the Huda winter storm in Palestine, the FSS worked in coordination with the emergency rooms systems (in West Bank) and with the emergency team (in Gaza Strip). Coordination with line ministries continues to be a FSS priority. The FSS provides support to implementing organisations in beneficiary selection, facilitation, and coordination matters across the three main pillars of the sector's activities: food, agriculture and cash programmes. In response to the winter storm,

the FSS worked to mobilise resources from donors, in particular through the ERF.

Sector performance evaluation survey

The FSS launched an on-line self-assessment in February 2015 which captured feedback from 29 partners and stakeholders. The survey highlighted FSS core strengths and weaknesses and will inform the FSS 2015 workplan. The findings of the survey were circulated and presented at the 24th March 2015 FSS meeting.

Food Security Watch

FSS stakeholders requested monthly/quarterly updated food security indicators and figures in a June 2014 survey of the FS Watch publication. The revision of the FS Watch was delayed last year due to the Gaza emergency related priority operations, but has resumed in 2015 with the possibility of using a web tool to provide regularly updated information through an easy-to-access portal.

The FSAU and the wider FSS assembly were involved in agreeing that both data resources – representing the governmental and civil society's figures – will be available on the dashboard. While the governmental figures will be displayed by default, alternative reliable data provided by FSS partners will be made available too. A quarterly FS Watch will also be produced to include analysis to provide an overall picture and better understanding of all the indicators and their impact on food security and related livelihoods.

Technical Working Groups review

A revision process to optimise the scope and work of the ten current Technical Working Groups (TWG) started. The FSS TWGs review will cover the main thematic areas of the sector, avoid duplication, and assure clear mandates. Through a participatory process, the consensus was reached was:

- TWGs are task oriented and can also be time-bound, upon agreed needs;
- reduced number of groups with extended mandates, possibly with a co-chairing

- approach, to share the workload and facilitate partners involvement; and,
- four to five TWGs will cover the food, agriculture and cash main pillars of the sector with more in depth focus on technical aspects: agriculture (plant production and livestock), food assistance, cash-programming, emergency & preparedness, and food value chain.

FSS Steering Committee

The FSS SC met on 24th of February and made the following key decisions:

- a. carry out a lessons learned exercise focused on the role of the FSS during the conflict in Gaza in 2014;

- b. extend the current FSS project using current structure and priorities using available funding from Canada through the end of 2015 with a workplan focus on strong sector coordination of needs and response plans in the upcoming Humanitarian Program Cycle process; and
- c. plan for a new 2-year food security sector project to begin in 2016 with a main emphasis on transition to national institutions. A concept is being developed and will form the basis of extensive consultations with FSS stakeholders in the coming months.

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<http://foodsecuritycluster.net/countries/occupied-palestinian-territory>

The Palestinian Food Security Sector in 2015 is funded by CANADA