



**WFP State of Palestine
SPECIAL OPERATION SO (200560)**

Country:	State of Palestine
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Strengthening the food security coordination platform in the State of Palestine
Total cost (US\$):	US \$ 1,257,892
Duration:	1 June 2013 to 31st May 2015 (24 months)

Executive Summary

The Food Security Sector (FSS) in Palestine was created in December 2012 to establish a food coordination mechanism in Palestine. It covers the food security continuum from humanitarian to development and includes stakeholders from the three former sectors which have combined into one: food assistance, agriculture and cash for work. The newly formed FSS is now the primary source of information and analysis on the food security situation in Palestine, and it coordinates humanitarian/development food security strategy and operations. The FSS aims to build stronger partnerships to support sustainable, comprehensive, and locally-owned food security interventions in Palestine. In order to achieve this, the FSS relies on both humanitarian and development funding streams, local expertise while also leveraging the comparative advantages of a wide range of NGOs, civil society and international organizations.

Project Background

1. The most recent joint FAO/WFP/UNRWA Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) survey estimated that food insecurity affects approximately one-third of Palestinian households with food insecurity levels increasing across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip reaching as high as 57% of the population in the Gaza Strip.¹
2. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, segments of the population are still living in extreme poverty due to a number of factors which include: movement restrictions, limited control over natural resources, restricted access to markets and agricultural lands, recurrent conflict in Gaza, limited access to work in Israel and low rates of economic production. The restrictions applied in the West Bank and the blockade of the Gaza Strip have seriously hampered access to and the movement of goods, services and people. In addition the agricultural and fishery sectors are severely

¹ In Palestine, the indicators used to define food insecurity in the SEFSec combine income and consumption levels and trends in food and non-food expenditures. Food insecure households are defined as a) having income and consumption below USD 5.39/adult equivalent/day, and b) showing a decrease in total food and non-food expenditure including households unable to further decrease their expenditure patterns

affected by access restrictions such as the West Bank barrier construction which isolates thousands of people and communities from their land, communities and essential services.

3. Food insecurity in the State of Palestine is primarily a consequence of income poverty and the erosion of livelihoods, making it increasingly difficult for households to access sufficient quantities of quality food, when/if it is available. Restrictions hamper local food production and processing, of which there is little. The current blockade on the Gaza Strip leaves limited prospect for improved food security and employment. Likewise, restrictions on the freedom of movement, work permits and access to land and water continue to hamper livelihood opportunities in the West Bank. The World Bank recently reiterated concerns that the economy and public finances of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are deteriorating as the economy is hobbled by persistent restrictions and increasing political uncertainty. The liquidity crisis has deepened, with large increases in arrears and domestic debt, affecting core government operations.²
4. The FSS was established in December 2012 following the global Food Security Cluster's recommendations for the development of a more efficient, effective and representative structure through the establishment of a joint food security sector.³ Before the creation of the FSS, food security related issues were deliberated in various fora: humanitarian strategy and response were discussed in three sectors (Agriculture, Food and Cash for Work – led by FAO, WFP and UNRWA respectively) while developmental interventions were tackled under Local Aid Coordination Structure's various sector working groups and strategic area groups. Additional coordination constraints caused by the geographic divide between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and enforced through access and movement restrictions, led to the development of analogous and sometimes contradictory coordination structures in the two areas.
5. It was decided to establish the new food security coordination body as a sector rather than a cluster in recognition of the protracted relief and recovery situation in Palestine which requires a range of simultaneous and inter-linked humanitarian and development interventions. The sector addresses the multi-faceted food security challenges facing the Palestinian population, and assimilates production, access and utilization for an integrated comprehensive approach. This sector approach and strategy supports the Palestinian Authority and UN priorities of linking relief and development. The FSS strategy and activities directly link to the six overall priorities for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and support national development priorities and line ministry strategies in key areas such as social protection. The sector collaborates closely with other cluster/sector actors – such as nutrition, protection and health – and facilitates linkages and partnerships to build working relationships and, through unity, increase visibility, recognition and impact.

² World Bank. *Fiscal Challenges and Long Term Economic Costs*. Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. March 19, 2013

³ A mission from the global Food Security Cluster to Palestine took place 3–13 September 2012 to review the existing Food Security related coordination structures in terms of strategic planning, interventions and the extent to which these structures respond to stakeholders needs.

6. The FSS is co-led by FAO and WFP, with strong engagement and collaboration on sector planning and implementation, and is composed of three interlinking units: a steering committee, food security analysis unit, and operations unit with coordination staff based in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The purpose of this structure is to provide accountability in leadership, inclusive and varied working groups, and ensures a partnership-driven approach to support the Palestinian Authority priorities in regard to food security. It leverages the existing expertise of UN organizations, NGOs and local authorities, in order to enhance coordination and provide stronger analysis and response.

Project Justification

7. The FSS will improve the coordination at the strategic, analytical and operational levels amongst the approximately forty government ministries, NGOs and UN agencies working to differing degrees in aspects related to food security. In order to ensure that food insecurity is addressed based on the appropriate analysis and using the full range of tools and interventions, the Food Security Sector has been established to ensure coordinated and informed responses.
8. The FSS will bring the following benefits:
 - a. Coordinated food security response that is fully inclusive of international and national NGO partners, authorities and local stakeholders;
 - b. Identify priorities, possible gaps or duplications for improved information and data sharing amongst sector members and with other sectors (including nutrition and protection) on food security analysis issues and operations;
 - c. Reinforce situation analysis expertise and strengthened linkage between analysis and response;
 - d. Provide a forum for establishing a common position among its members on access-related issues and enable consolidated sector inputs into larger humanitarian advocacy efforts; and,
 - e. Strengthened linkages and coherence between humanitarian and developmental interventions.

Project Objective

9. This Special Operation will provide the resources to allow the sector to:
 - a. Assume the leadership in regard to the coordination and information management of food security related analysis and activities until such time that the coordination is handed over to the local authorities; and,
 - b. Ensure that the FSS membership is strengthened to respond to the increasing needs of the affected population throughout Palestine in a coordinated and more efficient fashion.

Project Implementation

10. The FSS will be responsible for the coordination and management of a range of services offered to sector member organizations and agencies. The FSS will provide a common coordination infrastructure for all humanitarian and development actors in the area of food security and a coordinated cross-sector approach/strategy to ensure holistic service delivery to beneficiaries. The FSS will offer the following:
- a. Ensure coherence between both humanitarian and developmental policy through Food Security Sector planning and strategy inputs
 - b. Coordinate food security assessment planning, strategy and response
 - c. Provide effective and accountable leadership and strong partnerships. The FSS, co-led by FAO and WFP, will be guided by relevant Palestinian Authority ministries with active input and participation from NGOs and other local expertise. It will facilitate and strengthen partnership amongst sector members to ensure coherence, cost effectiveness and ensure inclusiveness amongst all food security sector stakeholders.
 - d. Share, learn and build upon best practices in food security, leveraging the expertise and experience of a wide range of stakeholders
 - e. Develop benchmarks and indicators for a common food security framework
 - f. Represent the food security community in relief and development coordination fora including: inter-cluster meetings led by OCHA, relevant UNDAF working groups, Humanitarian Country Team advocacy working group, Friday Group monthly donor meetings, as well as others as required. The FSS will develop formalized inter-sector strategic linkages to foster a programme-based approach and create opportunities for greater impact.
 - g. Advocate for the entire food security community, not just specific partners. Represent all sector members in the HCT Advocacy Working Group, other advocacy coordination initiatives and in donor fundraising.
 - h. Support the strengthening of national/local systems
11. At national level, the FSS will maintain a dedicated coordinator supported by two national coordination/information officers based in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The coordination staff will represent all sector members including both co-lead agencies. Notwithstanding the above, all staff will be contracted by WFP under this project.
12. WFP and FAO as sector co-lead agencies of the FSS intend to build on the coordination structure presently in place and jointly take on the responsibility to raise funds to support these activities with the support of the humanitarian/resident coordinator.
13. The FSS coordination structure is depicted in Annex 1 and is organised into three distinct levels and functions. The **Steering Committee** provides strategic guidance and has the oversight role for both the Food Security Analysis and the Operations Units. It endorses or reviews food security policy and operational issues, including the review of the FSS's budget. To ensure a wide range of views

are taken into account committee members include Palestinian Authority ministries, UN organizations, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) and Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations (PNGO) represented by senior staff members (ministers, heads of agencies and missions).

14. The **Food Security Analysis Unit** is responsible for coordinating and compiling secondary analysis as well as conducting primary analysis on food security data. The unit is led by an international coordinator who works closely with the existing technical staff of organizations represented in the FSS to jointly collect data and monitor key risks affecting the livelihoods and resilience of Palestinians. The analysis unit coordinates the joint FSS framework to help define what food security interventions are needed and why, which modality is most appropriate, and for how long the interventions are needed. It works in coordination with the Operations Unit to advise them of the most appropriate food security interventions and inform them of changes in political, environmental, economic and natural conditions as well as the anticipated impact on food security of targeted groups. Information produced by the Food Security Analysis Unit is compiled on behalf of all sector members and is packaged in a user-friendly manner and shared with stakeholders periodically to enable timely operational responses.
15. The **Operations Unit** coordinates the day-to-day business of the sector. It incorporates the strategy from the Steering Committee and advice from the Food Security Analysis Unit to ensure that all Food Security Sector operations are coordinated and harmonized to identify priorities, maximize synergies, avoid overlaps and gaps, and build on strong partnerships and performance. Amongst other things, the Operations Unit sets minimum standards, streamlines interventions, facilitates operational communication and coordination of inter-sector and intra-sector operations and reviews technical specifications. Thematic/operational/situational working groups are established according to need and dismantled once the need is addressed. The Operations Unit is staffed by two local coordinators; one based in the West Bank and one in Gaza. They are also responsible for information management.

Project Management

16. The Country Director of the WFP Palestine Country Office will manage the funds for this Special Operation and the WFP Palestine Finance Officer will be the Allotment Manager. The Food Security Sector coordinator and two operations officers will be responsible for the implementation of the activities.
17. The Country Directors of the sector co-lead agencies are accountable to the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team. The Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator – with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) – retain the final responsibility for the adequacy, coherence and effectiveness of the humanitarian and developmental responses in the State of Palestine.

18. The three food security sector staff (organizational chart shown in Annex 2) will be accountable to the Food Security Steering committee which includes Country Directors of WFP and FAO as co-lead agencies.
19. The recruitment process of the new coordination team will be done through the Food Security Steering committee to ensure full participation and representation of all major stakeholders in the Sector.

Project Cost and Benefits

20. The estimated project cost for 24 months is USD 1,160,736 and includes the start up costs of the sector coordination including: staffing, rental of facility, transportation leasing and maintenance costs, vehicle running costs, information management including maintenance and equipment, and offices supplies. WFP will fully administer the project on behalf of the co-lead agencies, but it has been agreed that both food security sector co-lead agencies will jointly fundraise for the full resources outlined in the budget. Budget details are provided in Annex 1.

Monitoring & Evaluation

21. The following key performance indicators have been identified in order that activities are continuously monitored.
 - a. Improved coordination
 - Bi-annual steering committee meetings held at the national level
 - At a minimum, quarterly general food security sector meetings held rotating between Gaza and West Bank
 - Regular working group operational and food security analysis coordination meetings on specific topics, themes and current issues.
 - The food security sector coordination officers will represent the sector in all inter-agency and inter-cluster/sector meeting convened by OCHA and the broader coordination establishment in Palestine.
 - b. Enhanced food security information management
 - 3/4 Ws (who, what, where, when) will be developed and integrated into existing coordination databases
 - A web-based portal developed and operational for information sharing amongst coordinators and sector members
 - c. Coordinated responses
 - Gaps and overlaps in the national response identified and appropriate response plan developed

Risk Assessment and Mitigation:

22. The dynamic political and security environment in Palestine and the Middle East Region pose numerous challenges and uncertainties when operating within Palestine. The FSS, in order to address the key risks outlined below, will undertake the following mitigation activities:
23. Contextual Risks:
 - Humanitarian agencies at risk of insecurity; and,

- Lack of access for staff.

⇒ These risks will be mitigated through:

- Creating a sector coordination staffing structure that draws from international, national staff and local NGO volunteers for continued coordination in areas where UN access is limited;
- Liaising with Government authorities and UNDSS to monitor the security situation; and,
- Requesting the Humanitarian Coordinator to intervene or resolve issues with the appropriate authorities on behalf of FSS when needed.

24. Programmatic Risks:

- Heightening insecurity which could restrict FSS member's access for assessments, implementation and monitoring;
- Inadequate funding for the FSS coordination and for co-lead agencies' and partners' response plans; and,
- Humanitarian actors engaged in food security programmes not willing to coordinate and share information on actual and planned operations leading to potential over or under support to affected populations.
- Donor funding tied exclusively to emergency or development themes limiting the FSS's flexibility to promote needs based interventions

⇒ These risks will be mitigated through:

- Regular sector meetings to ensure the FSS is capturing and reporting on all food security related;
- Regular donor briefings highlighting the current level of coordination and resource constraints as well as access related challenges of FSS members;
- Engagement with as many local and international NGOs as possible to reinforce the inclusive nature of the FSS.

25. Institutional Risks:

- Reputational risk of FSS co-leads agencies and partners, if coordination responsibilities are not managed properly.

⇒ This risk will be mitigated through:

- Participating and engaging in broader coordination forums to raise awareness of the value added services provided by the FSS to humanitarian and development agencies working in Palestine.

Exit Strategy

26. The SO has duration of 24 months and, is in essence, the first step to secure dedicated funding to strengthen food security coordination and information management. The 24 months is necessary to consolidate all activities under the former three sectors under one consolidated structure. The duration of the special operation will facilitate strengthening government capacity in the Ministry of Planning coordination structure and targeted initiatives with technical ministries. If the Humanitarian Coordinator and sector members determine that the coordination and information management service functions of the FSS should be

continued after this operation reaches its end date, then all funding options would be examined, including the incorporation into other projects and through the pooled funding mechanisms, until full hand over to the Government authorities is carried out.

27. The de-activation of the FSS will be done by consensus of its members (UN, Palestinian Authority, International NGOs, and Local NGOs.).

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from 1 June 2013 to 31at May 2015 at a total cost to WFP of US\$ 1,257,892 is recommended for approval by the Deputy Executive Director for Operations.

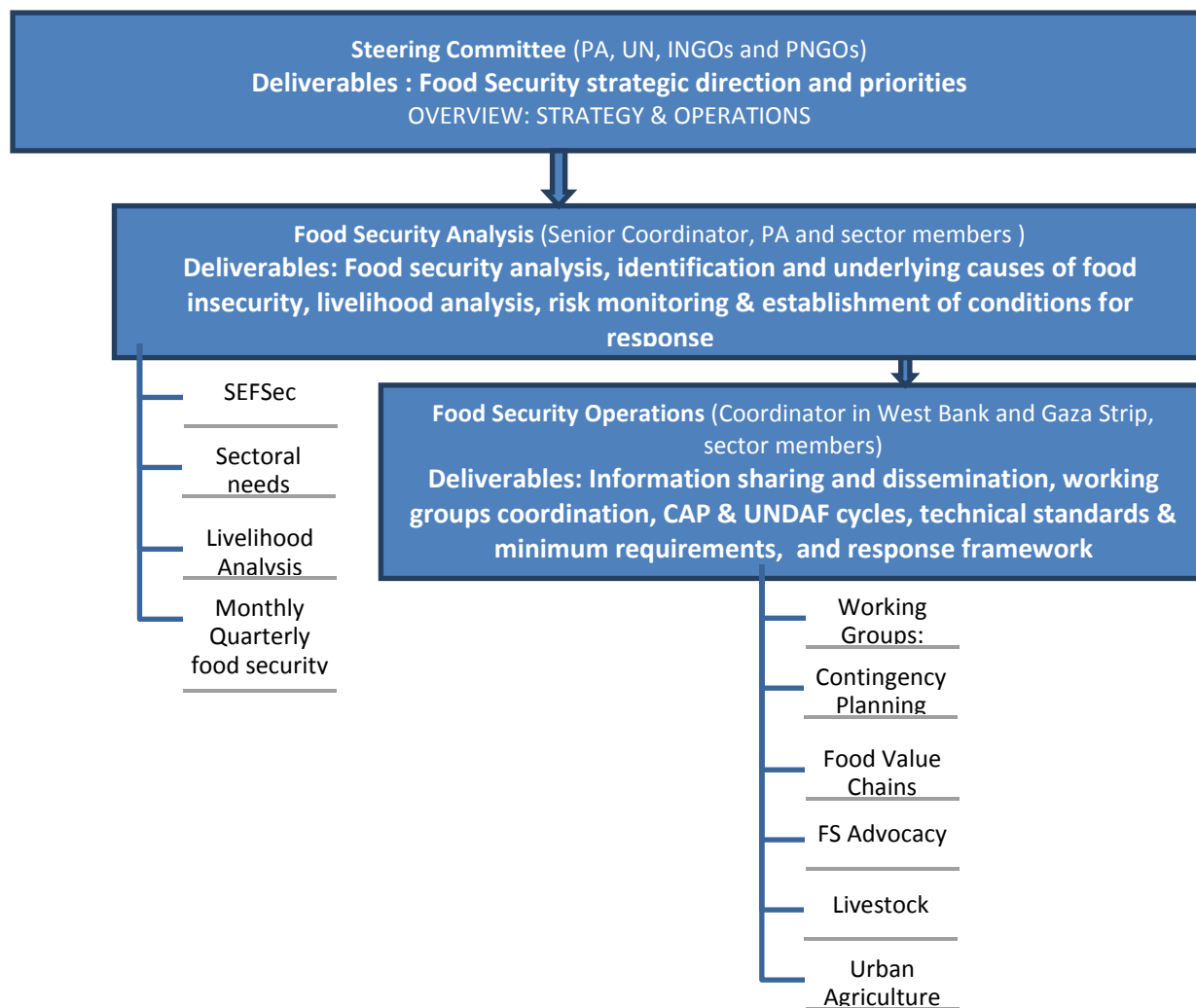
APPROVAL

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Amir Abdulla
Deputy Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer

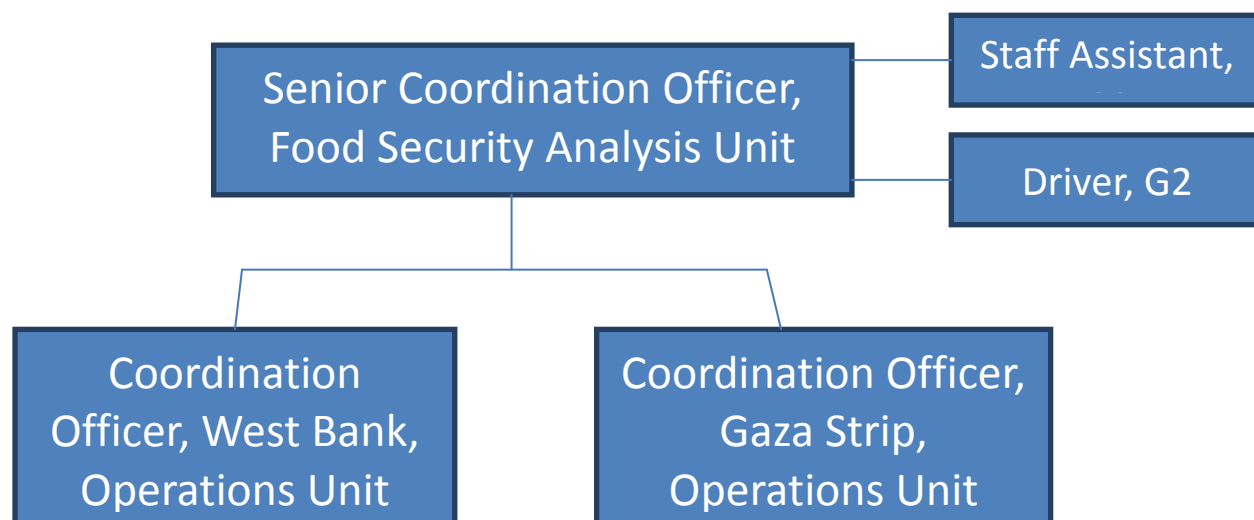
Annex 1 – Food Security Sector budget details

Description	
Other Direct Operational Costs (ODOC)	Value (USD)
Commercial Consultancy Services	110,000
Office Rental charges	30,000
Office Supplies. Communications & IT Equipment, security	58,000
Vehicle Leasing, Running & Maintenance costs	44,400
Total Other Direct Operational Costs (ODOC)	242,400
Direct Support Costs (DSC – Staff Salaries & other costs)	
International Professional Staff & associated costs	477,000
Local Staff – National Officer & associated costs	456,200
Total Direct Support Costs (DSC)	933,200
Total WFP Direct Costs	1,175,600
Indirect Support Costs (ISC – 7%)	82,292
Total WFP Costs (Overall Project Requirements)	1,257,892

Annex 2 – diagram of food security sector organisational structure



Annex 3 –Food security sector coordination staffing structure



Annex 4 –Map of Food Security Sector area of operation

