



Programme Workplan for the State of Eritrea

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Eritrea is one of the focus countries of Phase II of the EC/FAO Food Security Programme "Food Security Information for Action".

Problems identified in Eritrea concerning food security information generation and utilisation are mainly related to constraints in regular and timely data quality and quantity; this is complicated by a difficult analysis and planning process for the decentralization of food security relevant decisions to sub-national levels.

The Programme will assist the Government in enhancing food security information by:

1. *Applying the Food Security analytical tool kit through:*
 - a) *Installing and training in the use of the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) Workstation.*
 - b) *Introducing CountrySTAT to organize and disseminate statistical data and metadata on food and agriculture.*
 - c) *Providing additional food security analysis on the basis of existing surveys*
2. *Building national capacity at different levels through:*
 - a) *Supporting Capacity Building in Food Security Analysis, in particular through training aimed at enhancing food security analysis and planning capacity at decentralized levels*
 - b) *Capacity Building in "Statistical Information for the Application of Climate Data" (SIAC Training) for two participants from Eritrea in 2006 and 2007.*
3. *Reinforcing capacity in formulating food security policies through:*
 - a) *Stakeholder meetings to introduce, adapt, and apply food security and analytical frameworks that examine the interactions between short and long-term policies, strategies and programmes to enhance food security.*

1. Background

Eritrea has a GDP per capita of US\$ 150 (2002), with negative growth in 2003 and 2004. About 80% of the population relies on agriculture, pastoralism or fishing for income and employment, and food and live animals dominate the composition of exports (rising from 21% in 1997 to an estimated 73% in 2002). On average, in good years, the country produces only about 60-70% of its total food needs and in poor years, not more than 25%. Once every ten years, the country is threatened with famine and faces a major challenge in meeting national food requirements.

Eritrea has a small agricultural base which has been weakened by decades of war. The main constraints to the development of agriculture are the lack of irrigation, extensive soil erosion, outmoded technology, a lack of rural financial and marketing services and social infrastructure. Closed borders with Sudan and Ethiopia strangled cross-border trade which was the basis for the livelihoods of people in the most productive areas of the country.

The war has caused immense social and economic damage including displacement/dislocation and loss of productive assets. Large areas of fertile grounds in the vicinity of the border have been inaccessible for farming and grazing due to insecurity and landmines. Despite the fact that the majority of displaced people have returned to their devastated home-villages, they have not yet revived their full productive capacities.

In general terms food security is affected by:

- Inadequate food availability
- Unstable food supplies
- Inadequate access to food
- Poor food utilization (caused by diseases, lack of drinking water, poor sanitation and poor diet)

Other factors such as prolonged droughts, incapacity to import national food requirements and dependency on food aid complicate the picture.

The National Food Information System of Eritrea (NFIS), supported by an FAO project funded by the Italian Cooperation, collects relevant data on food insecurity.

2. Problems to Be Addressed

Some core food security information to action issues in Eritrea relate to constraints in regular and timely data quality and quantity, even though a number of sources of poverty related information are available (LSMS, participatory poverty assessment, rural livelihood assessment 2003).

There are also issues related to data sharing and coordination within and between ministries and partners. Additional challenges for analysis and planning arise from the decentralization of food security relevant decisions to sub-national levels.

3. Previous and Ongoing Assistance

In terms of strategies relevant for food security issues, it is worth highlighting the following documents and objectives:

- **The Government of Eritrea Food Security Strategy** based on three pillars:

1. Enhanced domestic production capacity in agriculture and fisheries;
 2. Enhanced national capacity to import adequate quantities of food by increasing export earnings (high value agricultural crops; high value fisheries products; tourism; manufacturing); and
 3. Effective use of food assistance.
- **The Government of Eritrea Interim PRSP** based on four pillars:
 1. Reinvigorating growth;
 2. Creating income generating opportunities for the poor;
 3. Improving human resources; and
 4. Creating and enabling environmental and institutional capacity.
 - **UNDAF** underlines three strategic objectives:
 1. Promote democratic governance;
 2. Promote access to basic quality social services (including health and nutrition);
 3. Promote sustainable livelihoods and pro-poor economic growth, including food security with the following operational objectives:
 - food security policy development;
 - policies, strategies and law related to land, agriculture and fisheries;
 - strengthening capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate national and household food security information for policy decisions and planning;
 - supporting livelihood diversification;
 - supporting improved water management;
 - establishing rural financing mechanisms; and
 - assisting vulnerable groups that become food insecure.
 - **The European Community Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme 2002-2007** is based on:
 1. Short term areas of concentration including supporting the peace process and post-conflict rehabilitation (focusing on the demobilisation and reconstruction of the transport infrastructure).
 2. The medium-term approach focuses on tackling the root causes of food insecurity and building coherence between emergency and development funding instruments, as well as the formulation of sector frameworks for the transport and education sectors.
 - **The World Bank:** supported an Emergency Reconstruction Project and an allotted a Supplemental Grant to mitigate the effects of drought and fulfil the ERP objectives of long term reconstruction and economic recovery. The program consists of three main components: agriculture, social protection, and infrastructure rehabilitation.
 - **UN Consolidated Appeal 2005**

Strategic priorities include:

 1. Save lives in displaced, refugee and other emergency situations;
 2. Protect livelihoods of vulnerable persons and communities; and
 3. Mitigate disaster by restoring the coping mechanisms of affected populations and preventing diseases.

Agriculture and food security-related objectives include:

 1. Improving production of food for poor farmers and their families;
 2. Assisting drought affected livestock farmers in maintaining animal production;

3. In the livestock sector, FAO will be supporting disease surveillance, monitoring and distribution of essential medicines, vaccines and equipment to reduce morbidity and mortality among livestock;
4. Providing supplementary feeding to target beneficiaries and emergency assistance to drought affected livestock owners; and
5. Providing training and inputs to promote planting of fodder crops in agro-pastoralist communities as a longer-term intervention;

4. Objectives of the Programme in the Country

The EC/FAO Food Security Programme activities proposed for implementation in Eritrea should be complementary to those of the National Food Information System (NFIS); the latter has been reinforced by the Project “Strengthening and Expansion of the National Food Information System (Project GCPS/ERI/002/ITA).

The project “Strengthening and Expansion of the NFIS” aims at further enhancing the capacity of NFIS, including at decentralized administrative levels. With support from this project, the NFIS has implemented activities for building capacity within and among partner institutions and improving the collection, processing and elaboration of information on food security in Eritrea. These activities focused on capacity building at the Zoba level and strengthening NFIS’s role at the central level within the National Food Security Strategy framework.

In this framework, the FAO/EC programme, among others, should integrate its activities as far as possible with the proposal to strengthen agricultural statistics submitted by FAO for EC funding and with efforts to improve remote sensing capacity under the NFIS and the Ministry of Agriculture in particular.

Taking the above issues into consideration, the Programme shall:

- Improve access to and quality of information by strengthening communication and data exchange among key national institutions. This objective involves the delivery of software tools (GIEWS Workstation, CountrySTAT) and standardizing core datasets to enhance compatibility among information systems.
- Provide analytical tools – such as software/guidelines – and training to build capacity in better analysing food insecurity and vulnerability indicators and improving early warning, needs assessments and planning of interventions.
- Provide assistance in the preparation of the agricultural census as a tool for acquiring reliable information on the agricultural situation and as a decision support tool for better agricultural policy planning.

5. Expected Outcomes at the End of the Programme

The following outcomes are expected to be achieved by the end of the Programme:

1. Increased national capacity to manage food security information
The Programme will build national capacity in maintaining and disseminating food security related databases. Digital information will be better organized and standardized. Sophisticated systems for remote sensing and data integration will be set up.
2. Enhanced local capacity to analyse food security and plan interventions
The Programme will build capacity, at the local level, for analysing the state of food security and planning adequate interventions. In particular, the Programme will provide training to enhance local human resources’

knowledge base and support the organization of meetings to improve the formulation of adequate food security strategies.

6. Results, Activities and Inputs

The activities envisaged in the present workplan are consistent with the overall logical framework defined in the EC-FAO Food Security Overall Programme Document.

Foreseen interventions fall into the domain of “Specific Objective 1: Improve availability and quality of relevant food security information” because the gaps identified in this area considerably affect the food security formulation process. Eliminating these gaps is a priority for the government and EC-FSP, they are likely to channel programme resources in this direction.

Several interventions also fall into the domain of “Specific Objective 2: Reinforce capacity in formulating food security policies, strategies and programming based on food insecurity and vulnerability information”, to make sure that there is a concrete link between the food security information tool and consequent action at the policy and strategic level.

As specified in paragraph 4, activities will be implemented in a way that ensures synergies with other FAO activities that support the National Food Information System.

The activities identified are:

- 1. Applying the Food Security analytical tool kit through: a) installation and training in the use of the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) Workstation and b) introduction of CountrySTAT in conjunction with work on strengthening agricultural statistics and c) provision of additional food security analysis on the basis of existing surveys such as LSMS and others.*

a) The GIEWS Workstation is an Internet GIS mapping tool for food security and early warning data management. It allows remote sensing data to be integrated with tabular data for early warning and food security analysis.

The GIEWS Workstation in Eritrea will add value to the work of the National Food Information System (NFIS) and NFIS could act as an entry point for placing the workstation. The database function of the workstation is expected to provide a platform for data exchange and management among a variety of stakeholders and to provide catalytic support for linking information to action.

The following steps have been proposed for the introduction and sustainable use of the GIEWS Workstation in Eritrea:

1. For demonstration purposes populate the GIEWS Workstation with data on food and agriculture on Eritrea readily available externally and prepare a presentation for decision-makers in the country.
2. Prepare and conduct a workshop in Eritrea to present the functionality of the Workstation to the Government of Eritrea for review and potential endorsement. Such a workshop could also provide a wider forum for discussing the potential benefits and services the Workstation could offer to a larger group of stakeholders, as well as clarify what requirements and data will be needed to populate the workstation and make it fully utilizable.
3. While the workstation should be housed in NFIS, its detailed placement should be determined on the basis of government priorities, in particular the Ministry of Agriculture, in conjunction with potential efforts for

rationalising the institutional infrastructure of NFIS proposed for follow-up work with Italian funding.

4. Deploy the workstation at country level and build local capacity in populating, operating and maintaining the workstation.
5. Evaluate the use of the work station for early warning and programming purposes.

b) CountrySTAT is a system for organizing and disseminating statistical data and metadata on food and agriculture. CountrySTAT, as it is now, gathers and harmonizes existing but scattered institution-wide statistical information so that information tables become compatible with each other at the country-level and with data at the international level. The approach consists of the application of FAOSTAT and SDMX (Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange promoted by IMF, WB, UNSD, EUROSTAT, FAO) data and metadata standards which are then integrated into CountrySTAT by definition. As with the GIEWS Workstation, CountrySTAT should be implemented in years 2 and 3.

Making CountrySTAT available in Eritrea is considered by stakeholders (EC, FAO, Ministry of Agriculture, NGOs) an activity that can potentially add value to food and agricultural information available in the country and to ensure the use of newly generated information by decision-makers. Stakeholders expect the CountrySTAT System to add value to the proposed activity for strengthening agricultural statistics and the preparation of an agricultural census.

Preparatory work for introducing CountrySTAT is deemed necessary for a better understanding of what information and statistics are presently available, where it is located, what format it is stored in and to how it can be shared. Such preparatory work would need to involve the Ministry of Agriculture, the NSO, as well as UN agencies and NGO's. Such preparatory work could also include a review of existing surveys, in order to determine if additional food security analyses could be drawn out of existing surveys.

A number of considerations need to be met to make the introduction of CountrySTAT successful and sustainable. These include:

- Prepare/update a data inventory (what data are available, where can they be found; which sources hold data in an electronic format). An inventory was prepared by the NFIS project for the Eritrea food aid working group in 2004.
- Design the activity in a way that involves a range and variety of institutions and catalyses access to information that may not be widely known.
- Ensure links between CountrySTAT and the GIEWS workstation as well as other database initiatives (e. g. the sector databases developed und the EC-funded project for Technical Support to the Ministry of Agriculture.

c) The work plan also foresees to provide additional food security analysis on the basis of existing surveys such as LSMS and others surveys. Detailed steps for such additional analysis will be designed in collaboration with the relevant government institutions and the National Food Information System.

II. Build national capacity at different levels: a) Training in Food Security Analysis at decentralised level; b) Training in Statistical Information for Application of Climate Data (SIAC training) for two participants from Eritrea for 2006 and 2007.

The EC/FAO programme is developing a Distance Learning Course for Food and Nutrition Security Information Systems and Networks. The identification of training needs and lessons from training activities in Eritrea will feed into the development of the

Distance Learning Course. On the other hand, given the focus of proposed NFIS activities on strengthening capacity at decentralised levels in food security analysis, the EC/FAO Food Security Programme also intends to support the design and implementation of capacity building efforts in Eritrea. In particular, the training officer will provide backstopping support in the design and implementation of country level capacity building plans. In addition, specialized training in Statistical Information for the Application of Climate Data (SIAC training) for two local participants will be provided.

III. *Reinforce capacity in formulating food security policies by organizing stakeholder meetings to introduce, adapt, and apply food security analytical frameworks that examine the interactions between short and long-term policies, strategies and programmes to enhance food security.*

This activity will increase national decision-makers' capacity to elaborate food security strategies by stimulating stake-holders' exchange of views and providing sound analytical methodology for the better elaboration of strategies and programmes.

The table below shows how the above areas of intervention relate to the Programme's logical framework:

Specific objectives	Results	Outputs	Areas of intervention
1. Improve availability and quality of relevant food security information.	A – Collection of food insecurity and vulnerability data and information is improved and strengthened.	1.A.1 – Food insecurity and vulnerability data and information are improved.	1a, 1b,1c,2b
	B – Analysis of food insecurity and vulnerability data and information is strengthened.	1.B.1 – National and regional capacity to analyse food insecurity and vulnerability data is strengthened.	1a, 1b, 1c,2a,2b
		1.B.3 – GIEWS Workstation is established at global and national levels and capacity in its use is strengthened.	1a
		1.B.4 – National and regional capacity for food security assessment is reinforced.	1a,1b,3a
2. Reinforcing capacity in formulating food security policies, strategies and programming based on food insecurity and vulnerability information.	A – National and local capacity to produce and use information for policy making are reviewed and updated.	2.A.1 – Gaps in national and local capacity to produce and use information for policy making are identified.	1a,1b,1c
	B – National and local capacity to produce multisector food security information is strengthened	2.B.1 – Response mechanisms to crises and food security policy formation are improved.	1a,1b,3a
		2.B.2 – National institutional structures and systems are reviewed.	1a,1b,2a
	C – Dissemination of food insecurity and vulnerability data and information is strengthened.	2.C.1 – Integrated food insecurity and vulnerability data and information dissemination systems are strengthened	1a,1b
	D – Capacity to formulate appropriate food security policies in different contexts using adequate information is increased.	2.D.1 – Methodological approaches for integrated use for household, food insecurity and vulnerability data are strengthened.	
		2.D.2 – Guidelines to switch from rehabilitation to development and using appropriate data and information are prepared.	
		2.D.3 – Awareness to embody gender aspects in policies using gender disaggregated information is increased.	

		2.D.4 – Capacity to formulate food security and rural development policies in countries with natural resources under pressure is increased.	
		2.D.5 – Support to selected countries in preparing strategies and operational plans for food security agricultural and rural development is provided.	2a
3. Raise awareness of governments, local actors and international community, on impact of food security & poverty.	A – Causes of food insecurity and vulnerability are better understood.	3.A.1 - National context analysis of food insecurity and vulnerability are better understood.	1a,1b,1c,2a
	B – Good practices in food security, poverty and rural development, institution building and networking are identified, analysed and disseminated.	3.B.1 – Good practices in food security, vulnerability, institution building and networking are identified, analysed and disseminated at national level.	2a,3a
		3.B.2 – Good practices in food security, poverty and rural development are disseminated.	3a
	C – Dialogue and exchange of experience within the international community are improved.	3.C.1 – Dialogue and exchange of experience among international community are facilitated	
		3.C.2 – Improved information in qualitative and quantitative terms is provided to the GDPRD.	